

ANNEXURE A - BECOMING AWARE OF RACISM IN THE CHURCH

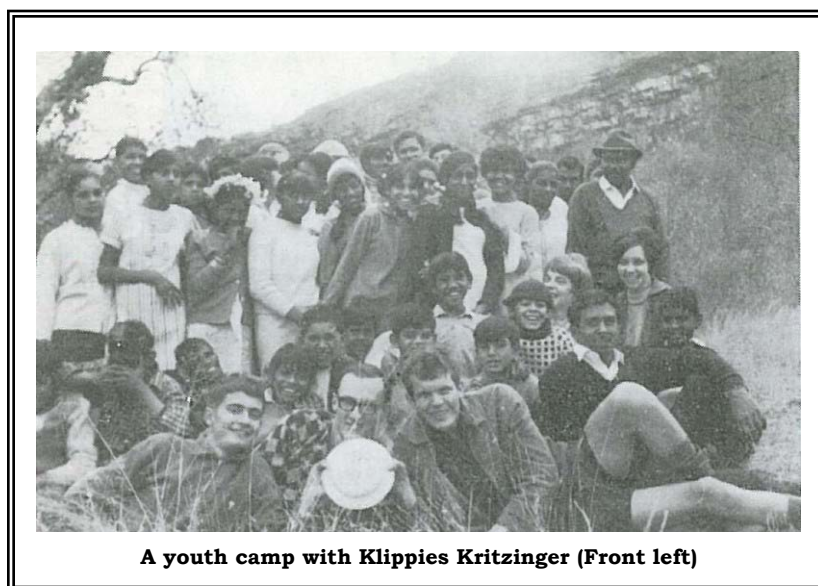
The Story of a Personal Journey

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Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology

Essays in honour of Albert Nolan



Introduction

Racism is an emotive issue in South Africa. It often calls forth defensive and self-excusing responses from white people, who feel they are being accused of being cruel and insensitive, as well as hurt and angry reactions from black people, who feel that whites still do not understand the suffering and pain caused by racist attitudes and actions. There are two approaches I wish to avoid in dealing with racism in this paper. On the one hand I avoid an abstract academic discussion, in which the main emphasis would fall on definitions and scholarly debates. On the other hand I avoid an approach that concentrates solely on experiences of suffering and which elicits the

defensive and angry response mentioned above. Instead I tell the story of my own pilgrimage as a white person and Christian, with an emphasis on how I became aware of racism and how that related to the church. I give a *thick description* of my personal journey because I believe, in line with feminist scholars, that the personal is political. Halfway through the paper, however, my tone changes somewhat and the paper becomes more reflective than narrative in character. Since there are different interpretations of the meaning of 'racism', I will give my definition of it in due course. I do not want to make this a typically academic paper by starting with definitions.

In offering my paper for this publication I honour Albert Nolan, whose contextual theologising, tireless work for justice, and earthy spirituality of liberation made a distinct impression on my life. I hope that the struggle to build a church and a society that embodies all-inclusive justice, which Nolan so fervently promoted, will continue in the hands of young theologians who read the papers in this volume.

The Making of a Racist Youth

As an Afrikaner child born in 1950 in Potchefstroom and whose family moved to Johannesburg in 1952, I first became aware that not all people are the same when I was about five years old. Both my parents were school teachers and we had a black woman in the home to do the housework. Her name was *Mina* but my sister and I were told to call her *Aia Mina*. *Aia* was a term we were taught to use when speaking to an older black woman. Patronising and paternalistic as the term was, it was also a sign of respect, because my parents insisted that children should always address adults as *oom* (uncle) and *tannie* (aunt), and all the black adults as *outa* (in the case of a man) and *aia* (in the case of a woman). I do not remember much about *Aia Mina*, except that she bathed my sister and me and that she worked in the kitchen. I also remember that she and her daughter, whose name I can't remember, but whom we called a *meidjie* (a young black girl), lived in a single outside room called a *bediendekamer* (servant's quarters) adjacent to the garage of the house that our family was renting at the time. I also remember that their room was very dark and smelt stuffy: and that I was rather scared when I entered it to retrieve a tennis ball. I also remember how my mother scolded me for going into a black person's house. I asked why, and I cannot

remember the exact answer, but it made me apprehensive and scared of the dark stuffy houses where dark people lived. I was also surprised by the discovery that *Aia Mina's* bed stood on bricks, which made it much higher than the beds I knew in my white world. That experience of *otherness* and fear were the basis on which my own racist attitudes were gradually formed and reinforced as I grew up in Afrikaans primary and secondary schools.

My parents were born shortly after the South African War, in 1902 and 1904 respectively, and I heard the stories of my grandfathers and uncles who had been exiled to St. Helena and Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and of my grandmothers and aunts who were in British concentration camps during that war. I cannot remember a single occasion, though, when my parents instilled in me any hatred of ill-feeling towards the British. We were not a family that saw ourselves as victims, most probably because by the time I was born the National Party had taken over the government of the Union of South Africa, so that the suffering and humiliation of the *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* (second liberation war) had been cancelled out and largely forgotten.

My parents were children of their time, and they transferred to us most of the dominant elements of Afrikaner ideology. My mother for example, sometimes used the word *skepsel* (creature) for a black person, especially when she was irritated. I remember once, as we saw a herd of cattle standing in pouring rain that she spoke of them as *stomme skepsels* (dumb creatures). The use of the word *skepsel* in these two contexts meant that black people were perceived to be intellectually inferior, perhaps not as inferior animals, but certainly not at the level of ideal human beings, namely, whites.

When I was seven years old, we moved out of the rented house in the suburb of Linden and into our own home in the small suburb of Berario, near Northcliff. There we did not have a black woman to do the housework, for a number of reasons. Both my parents were school teachers, who did not get huge salaries, so they battled to pay off the bond on the house. They could not afford a full-time domestic worker, so the house stood empty while we were all at school. My father, who had earlier worked as a self-employed photographer, converted the *maids room* into a darkroom where he

developed the occasional wedding photographs he took (through which he made some extra money). We therefore did not have accommodation for a domestic worker. My mother did most of the housework herself, except for some of the chores that we as children had to perform, such as making our beds, washing the dishes, sweeping our rooms, and mowing the lawn.

From time to time we employed a black casual labourer on Saturdays to work in our garden. Like most Afrikaner families, we had a separate enamel plate and mug for him and he had to sit on the ground outside the back door of the house when he ate his meals, which usually consisted of a mug of coffee and a heap of thick slices of bread with butter and jam. By observing and participating in the day-to-day relationship with a black worker, I learnt the crude and subtle aspects of racial prejudice and discrimination.

My father taught Afrikaans at a High School and was very interested in languages. He was always discussing words and looking up their meanings in the various dictionaries (Afrikaans, Dutch, English, German, Latin) that we had in the house. He also made a point of trying to pronounce African place names (like Ixopo) correctly, even though he couldn't speak an African language. He was deeply influenced by the more liberal Afrikaner nationalism expressed in the writings of N P van Wyk Louw, a poet and intellectual who taught at Wits University at the time.

He taught us never to use the words *kaffer*, *koelie* or *hotnot*, because he regarded them as insulting. He had read some books written by Afrikaner anthropologists who expressed deep respect for African cultures. I distinctly remember him quoting the anthropologist P J Schoeman, who spoke of *aristocratic* Zulu elders exhibiting great wisdom as they told stories at the fireside and dispensed justice in village courts. In this connection he taught me one of the most valuable lessons I ever learnt, which helped me greatly in later years: *Never underestimate anybody*. He said that whites often looked down on black people and underestimated them, because they thought too much of themselves and did not understand the unique features of African culture.

My father was an urbanised Afrikaner who read the English newspaper, *The Star*, every day. So I learnt to read English from my young days and played with English friends. When it came to party politics, however, my father was a staunch Afrikaner nationalist, who would spend hours on election days transporting National Party voters to the polling booths to cast their votes for *separate development*. For him the structures of society were very important, so Afrikaners had to ensure that whites retained power in their hands, to be able to preserve their safety and to allow *Bantoes* (as African people were called in polite Afrikaner conversation in the 1950's) to develop along their own lines, far away from us.

I cannot remember the Sharpeville shootings, since that happened when I was only ten years old. It may be that my parents deliberately kept the information away from us. What I do remember is a rugby test match I attended with my father in 1963, when the Springboks played against the Wallabies (Australians) at the Ellis Park stadium. There was one section of the pavilion reserved for black spectators and they cheered loudly for the Wallabies. I can still remember my feeling of disappointment and estrangement: Why don't they support *our team*? I asked my father about it and he explained that many black people were not happy in South Africa due to the government's policy. I wasn't angry at them, but got the sinking feeling that everything wasn't in order in our country; that there was a process of polarisation based on whether one was white or black. 1963 was also the time of the Poqo killings in the Western Cape, something that gave me quite a scare.

My fear and distrust of black people was gradually developing, along with the soft Afrikaner nationalism I learnt from my parents. The latter was quite firmly entrenched in my mind and attitudes by the time I reached matric in 1965. The ambiguity of my own view at the time can be illustrated by two incidents. In the matric history class, when I was asked to write an essay on *The Indian South Africans* I wrote something to the effect that if the Indians were not happy with our policy of separate development, they could pack their bags and go back to India. I did not have a particularly anti-Indian feeling and did not know any Indians personally, so I can only attribute my view at the time to the history text books we were using in class. I also had a general sense of irritation that blacks were always misinterpreting the government's

good intentions, since we meant well by allowing all groups to develop in their own way. As a young Afrikaner in the 1960's, I shared with my peers strong anti-Communist views, blaming them for inciting black resistance to the government. I admitted, though, that whites needed to take black people seriously and come to understand their world: In a class essay on *Knowledge of the non-white population is essential*, I wrote in 1965:

A thorough knowledge of our Bantu is essential, in order to understand their demands as well as the reaction of government to these demands. It is everyone's duty to ensure that this image becomes the dominant one overseas. The level of understanding of the common Bantu cannot be improved, and if the Bantu take over the South African government it will soon become a second Congo or Kenya, where whites flee in all directions into the sea! In spite of all the promises they will certainly chase out the whites, especially the lower level Bantu, who cannot appreciate what whites are doing for them [own translation].

These words show me up as a typical urban Afrikaner of the 1960's, living with a deep distrust of black political intentions (and their ability to rule a country), but also with a benign paternalism towards *our Bantu*, who needed to be understood and convinced of our good intentions.

The second anecdote had to do with a series of Time-Life publications on different countries of the world, to which my father was subscribed. When the issue on South Africa arrived, there was a hue and cry about it in the Afrikaans press, since it allegedly presented a distorted and negative picture of our country and its policies. My father promptly returned the publication to the publishers, but not before I had the time to page through it and even write down some of the views expressed in it. I felt my father was overreacting by sending the book back and that one could only benefit by reading what the rest of the world were saying about us. I clearly remember a photograph in the book of a black domestic worker with a white child on her hip, with the comment that black women were good enough to grow up white children but not to live next-door to them or to study in the same schools, etc.

I remember thinking that the criticism was true; we were indeed observing double standards by having such policies.

By the time I left school at the end of 1965, the Afrikaner nationalist ideology into which I had been socialised by my parents, friends and teachers, had these two major dimensions: a) a personal, attitudinal dimension of apprehension, fear and irritation towards black people, and b) a structural, political dimension of power systems and public processes.

In the light of this, I define racism as an ideology, a system of social, economic and political power structures that perpetuates and justifies itself by creating racist stereotypes and fostering attitudes of racial prejudice. These two dimensions of racism (power structures and personal prejudice) constantly reinforce each other, which makes racism an extremely difficult ideology to eradicate, once it has become entrenched in a society.

Becoming Aware of Racism in the Church (1)

The first sense in which I use the title of my paper (Becoming aware of racism in the church) is to emphasise that it was in the church that I became aware of racism. In my experience, the church was in the first place a positive factor, since it opened my eyes to the existence - and the wrongness - of racism.

Ironically, I was fortunate that my parents were not active churchgoers. This meant that my soft racism did not have a hard religious superstructure to legitimate it. My parents stopped going to church when I was about nine years old and I never understood exactly why that was. A year or two later, partly influenced by my eldest sister - then a student at the University of Pretoria and an active churchgoer - I got on my bicycle and rode to church myself, five kilometres up the steep hill of Northcliff, to the neighbouring DRC congregation of *Aasvoëlkop*. My brother, who had already left home at that stage, had married a member of that congregation, where Rev Beyers Naudé was the minister. I remember being very impressed with *Oom Bey* (as he was universally known) when I met him at my brother's wedding when I was ten years old.

I did not know enough about the Christian Institute at the time to understand the political dimension of Beyers Naudé's ministry. I found him attractive because he was a friendly, open and honest person. I still remember the gist of two sermons he preached in 1962 - 63, because they made a deep impact on my life, as I began to identify more consciously with the gospel. Perhaps the softness of my Afrikaner racism at the time was partly due to the influence of Beyers Naudé, even at that early age.

A very important turning point on my journey was the fact that I didn't do a year of conscripted military service in the South African Defence Force (SADF), as all white males had to do at the time. The reason for this was that I was too young when I completed matric. One was only *called up* at the age of 18. So (at age sixteen), I went off to the University of Pretoria to study chemical engineering and at age eighteen got permission from the SADF to continue my studies, on the assumption that I would do my military service after completing my engineering degree.

At university I got involved in Christian youth groups, especially one pietist group doing *mission work among Indians*. As I started teaching Sunday school on Sunday afternoons in a poor part of Laudium, the Indian *group area* outside Pretoria, a number of political questions came up in my mind: Why are the people's houses so small? Why do Indians have to live in a separate group area? Did they have to be forcibly removed from Lady Selbourne and Marabastad to fit into the big apartheid plan? For the first time in my life I found myself on the other side of apartheid's *barbed wire fence* to see *the other side* - and it was the much maligned *narrow Pietist theology* of missionary Christianity that got me there! As I met Indian people - as people - for the first time in my life, and made friends with some members of the small Christian community there, I started seeing the world through new eyes and started asking awkward questions.

At the beginning of my third year of engineering studies I entered a crisis in my personal life. As I became more and more involved in Christian activities, I increasingly lost my motivation to become an engineer. And then I had a clear experience of calling to the ministry. To the surprise of my fellow students and family, and to the initial dismay of my father, I switched to studying theology. This meant, of course, that I would get further annual permission from the SADF to postpone my military service.

A year later, at age 19, I joined a fellow theological student, Pieter Maartens, to do Sunday school and youth work at weekends in a congregation on the East Rand - also concentrating on Indian groups areas - which was led by Dr Charles Roux and Rev Gopal Sooklingam. That congregation was more firmly established and mature than the one in Laudium, with more mature leadership, so I was immediately challenged more deeply and directly concerning the political situation. The first day I accompanied Pieter Maartens into Germiston Asiatic Bazaar, some church members showed us a notice from the Germiston Municipality, announcing that the whole Indian community would be removed to a new area, to make place for industrial development, since the area had been declared a *slum*.

I remember my sense of shame and disgust as I looked into the eyes of those fellow Christians, holding their letter of impending eviction - shame at what *my people* (Afrikaners) were doing to fellow South Africans and disgust at the way they were doing it. Many years later, when I read an article of Dorothee Sölle (1988), in which she quoted the words of Karl Marx that shame was a revolutionary emotion, I realised that it was true to some extent of my discovery of racism. My feeling of shame moved me to reject, at first cautiously and inconsistently, but later more deliberately, a political and economic system that discriminated against people on the basis of alleged *racial* characteristics.

In the process of awakening to racism, a number of people played a key role. In addition to Pieter Maartens and Charles Roux, whom I have mentioned already, Shun Govender influenced me significantly as well. He was studying theology at the University of Durban-Westville (one year ahead of me). but his family lived in the Germiston Asiatic Bazaar and he came home during university holidays. His razor sharp intellect and original way of formulating his thoughts jolted me into thinking more deeply about many issues of faith and politics. But perhaps the greatest influence on my thinking came from the youth and women of the congregation. The women welcomed me like mothers into their kitchens - always the heart of the home, the cosiest and friendliest place in a small house - taught me to appreciate masala tea and curry food (and to eat it with my fingers!), shared their joys and problems with me, and explained the strengths and weakness of *Indian culture*.

The young people became my friends. We arranged many youth camps during school holidays and long weekends, where we slept together in tents, climbed mountains, did Bible study, etc. A common feature of all youth groups is humour. One of my fondest memories is of some variety concerts we staged as youth groups on the East Rand, with hilarious results. A very important aspect of the struggle against racism is to laugh together, and specifically to laugh at injustice, to make a mockery of it. There is a fine line between racist jokes and anti-racist jokes, with much depending on who tells the joke, to whom, in what context, and with what purpose, but my own politically correct reluctance to laugh about the serious business of apartheid was gradually broken down as I heard my black friends take the micky out of racism with their jokes. When we organised a youth camp on a farm near Warmbaths in 1970 and I was barred from entering the non-white swimming pool in town, Shun Govender told me that I had been weighed and found too light.

That natural sharing of life, adventure and faith as young people created a deep bond between us. But there were also unintended consequences. During one youth camp held in April 1970 at the St. Anskar's camp site in Roodepoort, which belonged to the Lutheran Church, I went into the home of the caretakers, Dr Markus Braun and his wife Ilse, to pay for the use of the camp site. And there in the kitchen I saw, for the first time in my life, black and white children sitting together around a table, eating a meal. For a moment I was taken aback, because the situation felt wrong for me, but then I recovered and realised that this abnormal table was in fact the normal way to live our lives as white people in Africa.

I also remember the first time the Coke bottle was passed around at a youth camp, with no cups or glasses to drink from. Coming from my home background of separate cups and plates for other people, I recall the sense of freedom - and just a little bit of guilt and fear - with which I drank from that bottle. But I also recall a little bit of pharisaic self-righteousness Thank you, Lord that I am not like those racist Afrikaners, over there. I experienced a growing sense of disgust at some of my fellow Afrikaners, sometimes bordering on self-hatred. At times I hated the fact that I was an Afrikaner, given the policies and practices *my people* were carrying out in the name of Afrikanerdom, civilisation and Christianity.

As a result, I decided to adopt a few specific demonstrative actions to distance myself from Afrikanerdom. I refused to sing Die Stem (the Afrikaner national anthem). I switched from watching rugby (the Afrikaner sport) to watching soccer, a move that was helped along by the fact that our church youth groups played in clubs of the local soccer leagues on Sundays. Since English was the language of worship and preaching in the Indian congregations, I read English Bible translations most of the time, along with the Greek and Hebrew texts I was learning to understand through my theological studies.

I stopped attending worship services in the DRC, and for all practical purposes became a member of the East Rand congregation of the *Indian Reformed Church* (IRC). This meant that I gradually became estranged from the Afrikaans Bible translation, Afrikaans hymns and the whole ethos of the DRC. I did not become a member of the IRC, however, because I had been officially accepted as a theological student under the aegis of the DRC and been licensed by them for the ministry.

I hoped that I could join the IRC later, after being licensed by the DRC and (hopefully) called to an IRC congregation. This was a compromised decision on my part, which should be understood against the background of the DRC mission policy at the time, which determined that a white minister working in a daughter church could not become a member of that church but was only loaned to it by the mother church for the time of his ministry there. In the final instance, however, such a missionary remained a DRC member, to ensure that he could belong to the DRC's pension and medical funds and not be subject to the final steps of discipline of a black church in case of misconduct. If a white minister wanted to work in a black church, something that was only possible with subsidy support from a DRC structure, he had to abide by the stipulations of DRC mission policy.

When I was licensed for the ministry by the DRC in November 1974, I received a call from the *Transvaal* congregation of the IRC and was ordained in January 1975. Since the SADF at that stage did not use newly qualified theological candidates in its ranks but only hand-picked ministers with some years of ministry experience, the SADF sent me a letter saying that I was permanently exempted from military service. I was deeply

grateful (and very fortunate) in this regard, since my political convictions at the time would have made it extremely difficult for me to serve as a chaplain in the SADF. I remember how - while still a theological student - I differed sharply from Prof Johan Heyns in an ethics lecture in 1974 on the question of the participation of Christians in the border war in Angola. I argued that it was a civil war between white and black South Africans, whereas he argued that it was a (just) defensive war, fought by loyal South Africans against foreign *communist* aggressors, who were threatening the orderly and Christian nature of our civilisation. Had I been confronted with call-up papers at the time, I would probably have opted to become a conscientious objector. Since I was not a political pacifist, however, I may have found it difficult to get official permission to do the six years of conscription. Had I faced that choice, my life would have developed very differently.

Since this paper is not meant to be a complete autobiography, let me jump some years forward to reflect on the influence of the church - in the form of the Belydende Kring (BK) - on my growing awareness of racism. The BK was established in 1975 in Bloemfontein, but the idea was first suggested in December 1974 by a group of ministers from the NG Sendingkerk and NG Kerk in Afrika attending the Black Renaissance Convention in Hammanskraal. During the Convention a proposal had been adopted that *homeland* leaders be excluded from the proceedings. A similar proposal was then made that ministers of the black DRC churches should also be excluded, because they were likewise operating in apartheid structures. The DRC ministers present convinced the Convention not to exclude them, but then met together that evening to ask themselves why they were perceived in such a negative way by the broader black community. The BK therefore arose within the Black Consciousness movement as a pressure group working for structural unity in the DRC *family* of churches and for a clear prophetic witness against the political economy of apartheid. A publication of the BK in 1984, celebrating ten years of its existence, appropriately bore the title Unity and Justice. It is understandable, within the Black Consciousness paradigm, that the BK initially had no white members, but in the late 1970's the decision was made to admit white ministers serving in black churches, who did not see themselves as *missionaries* of the white church but as ministers of the black church. Beyers Naudé, Rudolph Meyer, Frikkie Conradie and Gerrie Lubbe were

amongst the first white BK members in the Transvaal. Through my friendship and co-ministry with Gerrie Lubbe in Lenasia, I also became part of the BK and came to know a large group of colleagues who to this day constitute my closest theological allies, even though the demise of the BK as an organisation has led to the weakening of some of these ties.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the BK was to create a new (and united) corps of leaders within the three black DRC churches who were committed to achieving a united Reformed church. Along with this went the development of a Reformed anti-apartheid theology, which reinterpreted the tradition of John Calvin as a liberating and unifying force in history. At least one key phrase that found its way into the Belhar Confession (1982, finalised in 1986) came from a confession of faith drawn up by the BK in the late 1970's at a conference in Hammanskraal. The BK had a deep theological influence on me: it taught me to see theology not as a set of doctrines but as praxis, i.e. the constant interplay between theory and practice, doctrine and ministry.

The BK empowered me to work for visible and structural church unity in Pretoria, where I was a minister in the Charisma congregation (situated in Laudium) of the Reformed Church in Africa between 1979 and 1986. A small group of no more than ten BK members, belonging to different congregations of the RCA, NGSK and NGKA, spread across the townships of Pretoria, formed the *Committee for Dutch Reformed Unity in Pretoria* (CODRUP) to arrange regular joint services and conferences for members of the DR churches in Pretoria. This committee played a significant role between 1982 and 1987 to bring together eight participating congregations, six from the NGKA and one each from the NGSK and RCA. In this way it prepared the way and laid the foundations in Pretoria for the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, even though it failed in its attempt to set up a preliminary structure of unity to anticipate the formation of the URCSA in 1994.

One of the most important influences the BK had on me was to teach me to accept the leadership of black colleagues. Perhaps the most difficult thing for a white person to learn is to respect black colleagues deeply enough to follow their leadership. It became

clear to me rather early in my membership of the BK that I could supply neither the theological nor the political leadership in the process of unifying our churches against apartheid. Due to the very nature of racism as an oppressive power structure, the victims of racism must take the lead in defining what is wrong with the system and what needs to be done to break it down. In this process I learnt to identify the position of the stereotypical *white liberal*, who knows best for black people and wishes to play a leading role in the struggle for justice, as a temptation to avoid. My role as a white opponent of apartheid could only be that of comradeship and solidarity with black colleagues, without any claim to special treatment or privileges. From that position of solidarity I tried to make a contribution and also expressed my criticism when I thought it was necessary.

As a member of the BK, I never stopped being amazed at the creativity and originality of my black colleagues in their interpretations of the gospel and in strategising about what role to play in church meetings. Along with the Institute for Contextual Theology, it was the most creative theological movement that I have ever belonged to. Here too, I must mention the central role of humour. In the midst of our most serious debates about strategies to follow in winning crucial synodical debates, humour was never far from the surface. And certain hilarious incidents were repeated over and over, as for example the story of the missionary who was giving his farewell sermon in Sotho to a congregation in the Northern Province. His Sotho was not very good, so while he was trying to say that he had taught (*ruta*) the people well over the years, he was pronouncing it *rota* (urinate). This story provided endless mirth as we reflect on the difference between what missionaries really achieved and what they thought they achieved, while doing things for black people.

The joy of discovering one another as co-ministers of the gospel, structurally separated through the mission policy of the DRC but now overcome apartheid in church and society, created a deep sense of community, which heralded the coming of a new church and a new society in South Africa. When the BK changed its name from Broederkring to Belydendekring in 1983, to allow women to become members, I experienced the added joy of seeing my wife, Alta, become an active BK member and organise various women's conferences together with Elsie Mokgoebo and many other

colleagues. In many ways my wife connected and identified more naturally and emotionally with people than I did, thus helping me to be more aware of my emotions and more honest about them. And in coming to terms with racism in one's life it is essential to be honest with one's emotions.

It is not nearly enough merely to reject racism at an intellectual level, since the prejudices and fears on which racism feeds are deeply rooted in one's psyche as a result of earlier experiences and childhood socialisation. The privilege of having my wife, who accepts me unconditionally, as a discussion partner and colleague in talking through my emotions and attitudes, has played a major role in helping me to confront my residual racial prejudices and attitudes. But the struggle continues, because racist stereotypes and attitudes are once more on the rise among whites, as the Mandela honeymoon of the post-apartheid South Africa ends and the long journey to create an African Renaissance begins in earnest.

In this connection I need to relate another turning-point in my intellectual development as a theologian trying to understand (and to combat) racism. Thanks to the BK, I received a scholarship to visit the Netherlands for five months in 1986, while working on my doctoral thesis. The theme, *Black Theology - challenge to mission*, meant that I was examining and systematising the views of South African black theologians on the calling (mission) of the Christian community in a racist society. While in the Netherlands I learnt a great deal from Anton Wessels and Jerry Gort in Amsterdam, but perhaps the most significant moment was a discussion with Dr Mpho Ntoane. He was an NGKA minister who went to the Netherlands to do a doctorate in systematic theology, subsequently married a Dutch wife and was working in a WCC-sponsored anti-racism programme in Rotterdam. Mpho enquired about my research and then asked whether I was giving the same attention to my own white history and identity as I was giving to the struggle of black Christians with their black history and identity. I had to admit that I was not, and realised that I had to add a chapter on white responses to Black Theology and to situate my whole study as a particular type of white response to it. Through Mpho's perceptive and penetrating question, I discovered that I was following, to some extent, a *voyeuristic* or *fly-on-the-wall* approach, in which I was observing the struggles of black Christians to make

sense of being black and Christian in a racist society, without struggling to make sense of being white and Christian in a racist society. I gradually became convinced that the only credible way to pursue my theological vision was to come to terms with my whiteness, religiously as a Reformed Christian, culturally as an Afrikaner, economically as a member of the privileged middle class, and politically as a person who was legally allowed to vote under apartheid. I set out to do this in dialogue and solidarity with the creative theological initiatives of Black Theology.

Another black theologian, Bonganjalo Goba, a colleague at Unisa during the 1980's also helped me in this regard. One day, while having lunch together in the Unisa cafeteria, we heard *boeremusiek* being played over the loudspeakers. When he said to me, *This is your music*, I denied it and told him that I did not identify with that kind of music at all. In my own mind it was part of a particularly narrow expression of Afrikanerdom, associated predominantly with rural, working class and racist Afrikaners. He insisted, though, that it was my music and that I should *own* it. Once again, a black colleague had put his finger on a *liberal* and individualist streak in my thinking, which meant that I was not willing to admit that I was rooted in a specific community with a specific history and that I therefore had to wrestle with (the terms of) that rootedness.

As a result of this awareness, I joined forces with a few fellow members of the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) to explore the possibilities of a *liberating ministry to whites*, a motion that had been proposed in the early 1970's (as part of the SPRO-CAS programmes) by people like Peter Randall, but that never really got off the ground. We organised a number of small ICT workshops, with the support of theologians like Wolfram Kistner, Beyers Naudé and Albert Nolan, but the project lacked a strong organiser with enough time to pursue practical projects and publications. The growing dominance of the *non-racial* rhetoric of the UDF and ANC also contributed to making the notion of a Black Theology and a (liberating) White Theology less and less plausible as the 1980's progressed. For myself, this project gave rise to two publications, A theological perspective on white liberation (Kritzinger, 1990) and *Re-evangelising the White Church* (Kritzinger, 1991), but the ideas expressed in them seemed to be largely ineffectual in the broader white community. The main reason for this was probably

that I was - due to my close involvement in black congregations since 1970 - so out of touch with the fears and needs of the broader white community that I was unable to present my ideas to them in a relevant way. I simply did not share enough common ground with them to make a deep impact. It seems to me, though, that the effective communication of such ideas within the white community is a prerequisite for successful anti-racist programmes.

Let me conclude this section of my paper by reiterating that I interpret the theme *Becoming aware of racism in the church* first of all in the sense that the church is part of the solution, since it was in the bosom of the church that I became aware of racism. Had it not been for the church and my exposure to black communities through the church, it would have taken me many (more) years to understand anything at all about racism. I am deeply grateful to the church - and therefore deeply loyal to the church - for providing me a space of freedom and humanity where I could begin to experience liberation from the racist ideology into which I had been socialised.

The dynamics of this ongoing process of personal liberation are complex, as is becoming clear as my story unfolds, but let me summarise its main dimensions as I have tried to describe them, even though I did not develop all the dimensions listed below in the same detail. I found myself moving from a sense of disgust and self-hatred at being an Afrikaner to an owning of my past and a sense of anger at injustice. I moved from a paralysing sense of guilt to a sense of shame that moved me to action. I moved from initial alienation from family and friends to an acceptance into the inclusive community of the church and back to a critical self-acceptance as a white African. I journeyed from a pharisaic judgment of fellow whites to a commitment to re-evangelise the white church. Finally, I managed to leave behind a liberal, individualist preoccupation with black theological initiatives in order to make an organically rooted attempt to make theological sense of my own whiteness.

Through worshipping, eating, playing, struggling and simply being with black fellow Christians, I experienced a long, slow process of growth towards self-acceptance as a human being, as an Afrikaner, as a Christian, and as an African (of sorts). All of this happened not because anybody saw me as a do-gooder missionary, or because I

thought that I was doing something for other people. It was through mutual human interaction in the church - becoming friends, sharing the gift of community, receiving the sacrament of the brother and sister - that I became aware of my racism and how to overcome it, how to re-socialise myself into new attitudes, new patterns of thinking and acting. It was through this same process that I discovered the urgent need to struggle for new social structures and processes, power dimensions of racism - also within the church.

Becoming Aware of the Church's Racism (II)

In this second section of my paper I interpret the title to mean: *becoming aware of the church's own racism*. In other words, looking at the church as part of the problem, rather than as part of the solution. Whereas in the first section of the paper I described the way in which the church enabled me to become aware of racism in myself and in society generally, in this section I explore the way in which I became aware of the church's own racism. In keeping with my definition of racism as both personal and structural, I divide this section in two parts: The church as a racist institution and the church as a factory of racist attitudes.

The Church as a Racist Institution

As I gradually became more aware of the nature of racism, I discovered how it entrenched itself in social, religious, economic and political structures, thus making it extremely difficult to root out. One of the most painful realisations for me was that racism has entrenched itself also in the structures of the church. The first issue confronting me in this connection, in the early 1970's was the name of the church I was working in and of which I was, to all intents and purposes, a member. It wasn't long before the name Indian Reformed Church became a huge embarrassment to me theologically. How was it possible that a cultural adjective, especially one that had such clear racial connotations in South Africa, could be used to describe the identity of a church? When the five or so small congregations, produced by the witness of various DRC members across the country formed a synod in 1968 - as the last of the four racially defined *daughter churches* of the DRC's mission policy to come into

existence - this was the name they chose for themselves. It must be added, though, that the *mission secretaries* of the DRC were all present and played a huge role in the proceedings. It can therefore not be said to have been the decision of black Christians. At the very first synod of the IRC that I attended as a delegate, in February 1976, we changed our name to *Reformed Church in Africa* and also committed ourselves to the unification of the whole DRC *family* and the establishment of one, racially inclusive Reformed church. Even though cultural reasons were advanced by DRC missiologist for establishing separate congregations and denominations, it was clear that the racist framework of grand apartheid underpinned the DRC's mission policy. By changing our name and committing ourselves to the formation of only one Reformed church, we in the RC indicated our awareness of structural racism and our desire to dismantle it.

In broader DRC church gatherings, the RCA became increasingly impatient with the way in which the DRC's mission theology justified and tried to entrench the separate church structures, while setting up 'federal' structures to ensure co-operation and debate between them at the *top level*. I found the view of Lesslie Newbigin (1954) very instructive in this regard and quoted it at a meeting of the Federal Council of DR Churches, which I attended on behalf of the RCA in the early 1980's. The chairperson opened the proceedings by reading from Ephesians 4:3 ... *making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* and calling on participants to interact with one another in a peaceful and gentle way, so as to maintain the Spirit-given unity that we share as *family* of Reformed churches. When my turn came to convey the greetings of the RCA to the conference, I pointed out that Paul's words in Eph 4:3 should not merely be used to urge us to observe kind attitudes towards one another. In Eph 4:4-6, following directly on the verse used, Paul uses the word *one* no less than seven times to hammer home his vision of the church as the single Body of Christ in the world. I expressed the view that it was more fitting for us (when reading Eph 4:3) to confess that we had not maintained the unity of the Spirit, since we had allowed our churches to be organised into racially separate denominations! I then quoted Newbigin:

I am bound to believe that all conceptions of reunion in terms of federation are vain. They leave the heart of the problem - which is the daily life of men and

women in their neighbourhood - untouched. They demand no death and resurrection as the price of unity. They leave each sect free to enjoy its own particular sort of spirituality, merely tying them all together at the centre in a bond which does not virtually and constantly involve every member in every part of his daily life. They envisage a sort of unity whose focuses are not the word and sacraments of the Gospel in the setting of the local congregation, but the conference table and the committee room. The disastrous error of the idea of federation is that it offers us reunion without repentance (Newbigin, 1954:14).

Even though Newbigin was addressing denominationalism, not racism, I argued that his view was pertinent to the struggle against racism as much as to the struggle against denominational *sectarianism*. Such interventions usually had little effect, since the RCA was a very small church that could be easily ignored, and since the agendas of such meetings were carefully determined beforehand, so that nobody could really rock the boat.

As I became more aware of racism as a poor structure, also in the church, I discovered the role of its economic dimension. What made it very difficult for ministers and congregations of the three black Reformed churches to express their opposition to apartheid, even if they wanted to, was the fact that they were financially dependent on subsidies from DRC congregations, presbyteries or synods. This economic dependence entrenched the power of white Christians and the disempowerment of Black Christians. It reminded black people that they were powerless and dependant on whites: *Powerlessness breeds a race of beggars* (Biko, 1978:78). At the same time it gave whites the illusion that they were not racists because they cared about blacks and were willing to make financial sacrifices to help them.

Ironically, it was from the *good* white Christians that we as a poor congregation needed to be liberated more than anyone else! I say this as a white person myself, without an attitude of judgmental superiority and with deep sadness. From time to time in the early 1980's when I *called the bluff* of good, mission-minded white Christians by asking them whether I could bring a group of Indian Christians with me when I was invited to preach in their congregations, they usually fell strangely silent.

Many were simply not willing to sacrifice their popularity in their own congregations by sticking their necks out to *allow blacks in the church*.

Let me hasten to add that there were DRC members in various congregations who made themselves unpopular by constantly insisting on precisely this breaking down of racial barriers in the church, but they were a small minority and were effectively sidelined and silenced by their church councils. Personally, I could not understand why they remained in the DRC under those circumstances and sometimes suggested that they join one of the black DRC churches. The amazing thing is that today one will hardly find a single DRC member who will admit that she/he supported the idea of preventing black Christians from struggling against racism, now as much as before 1994, it is not *liberal* people who declare their good intentions or even make financial contributions for black people, but people who are prepared to move beyond notions of *federal* unity between churches and communities and commit themselves to walk the costly road of repentance that leads to organic Christian unity.

When I arrived in the Charisma congregation of the RCA in Laudium in 1979, I found among its members an attitude of virtual total dependence on DRC finances. The monthly contributions of the members were appallingly low, and when the church's roof leaked (as it always did - it was a basic design fault), the church council kept on approaching the DRC Mission Board for money, because they had a special fund for the RCA. After a few months in the congregation, I suggested that we start empowering ourselves, both financially and in terms of leadership development. In my experience, these two dimensions always go hand in hand: unless one can break the crippling sense of financial dependence, no real leadership development is possible in an organisation, least of all a church.

When I decided to become a tent-making (self-supporting) minister in October 1981 by applying for a job as lecturer in the *Department of Missiology and Religious Studies* at Unisa - after careful consultation with the church council and the whole congregation - I did so to challenge the congregation to take more responsibility for its own affairs, both financially and in terms of leadership. This move caused a significant growth in giving and in commitment to church, as well as a whining response from some

members, who believed that the minister was there basically to cater for their needs. For the first time in its history, the congregation drew up a budget and began to plan its own affairs.

Gradually I saw the destructive personal effects of racism - a negative self-image and distrust of fellow oppressed people - make way for a measure of self-reliance and co-operation. My two RCA colleagues, Gerrie Lubbe and Charl le Roux, who also became tent-makers in the early 1980's had similar experiences (and in the long run more enduring success) in the Lenasia and East Rand congregations respectively. For the three of us, and the congregations we were serving, there was also a larger political dimension to the tent-making ministry: We were no longer prepared to accept a salary subsidised by the DRC, as long as it was lending official theological support to apartheid, which they still did very clearly in 1981. It seemed dishonest to us that we criticised apartheid and the DRC's support of it in a rather radical way, which the RCA did very pertinently at our 1980 synod, but still to receive DRC funds as if nothing had happened. So the three of us decided to go the route of supporting our families by working during the day and being church ministers in the evenings and over weekends. Setting out on this risky and uncertain road of joint commitment and sacrifice, together with the congregations, engendered a deep sense of partnership and community, even though it was by no means an easy journey. It seems to me that the poisonous effects of racism can only be overcome when black and white people jointly commit themselves to a course of action that somehow addresses all the dimensions of racism: economic, political, cultural and personal. Perhaps the problem is that there are too few such concrete anti-racist projects that are initiated - and sustained - in civil society, especially now that apartheid has been declared officially dead.

I explained earlier that DRC missionaries working in the *daughter churches* were expected to remain members of the DRC and were merely *on loan* to the black church. This policy precipitated a crisis very early in the history of the IRC/RCA. The IRC synod was constituted in 1968, but at its second synod in 1970, the (completely legitimate) question was raised by the Indian evangelists how it was possible that white ministers, who were not even members of the IRC, could occupy positions such as moderator or scribe of the IRC synod. The white ministers agreed with the view, and

it was decided that the IRC synod would not meet again until the white ministers had become full members of the IRC. Thus started a protracted process of negotiations to convince the DRC authorities that the white ministers working in the IRC should become members of that church. Eventually, late in 1975, the actuary of the DRC's general synod agreed, so that we could become members of the IRC. The IRC synod convened in February 1976, two years after its scheduled date. This 'solved' the constitutional crisis in the IRC/RCA for the time being, and also created a better relationship at the personal level between white and black church workers. In another sense, however, it only served to highlight the racist structures of the church, since there were now two kinds of RCA ministers: the white ministers - who were paid according to the DRC salary scale (much higher than the RCA scale) and could belong to the DRC pension and medical funds - and the Indian ministers, who could not belong to these funds and whose basic salary alone was subsidised by the DRC, since the RCA congregations were expected to pay all their increments (but couldn't). Our decision as three RCA ministers in the 'Transvaal' to become tentmaker was motivated partly by the desire to eliminate this injustice: rather than receive a higher salary from the DRC than our black colleagues - for doing the same job - we preferred to raise our own income through another profession.

In 1982 matters took another turn, however, when the Ottawa assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) elected Dr Allan Boesak as its president, declared apartheid to be a sin, and branded any theological justification of apartheid a heresy. This happened in response to a group of black Presbyterian and Reformed South African theologians, who had formed ABRECSA (Alliance of Black Reformed Christians in South Africa) in October 1981 and had accepted a resolution declaring the theological legitimation of apartheid a heresy (see De Grunchy & Villa-Vilencio 1983:161 for the ABRECSA Charter). The RCA synodical committee met late in 1982 to discuss the implications of the Ottawa resolution. It had the mandate to act on behalf of the church in the period between synodical sessions, and decided that the recognition of the licensing of the DRC had become problematic in the light of the Ottawa resolution. The committee resolved that a congregation of the RCA could not call a DRC minister unless he was willing to declare that the theological support of apartheid was a heresy and be willing to be (re)licensed by the RCA.

This had another implication for the RCA. Its committee that admitted candidates to the ministry was composed of 3 RCA members and 3 DRC members. For some years we had tried to take over full responsibility for our own ministerial training and admission to the ministry, but the DRC mission boards did not wish to relinquish their influence over theological training in any of its *daughter* churches, regarding it as too sensitive a responsibility to leave in the hands of a *young* church. In spite of all the rhetoric about desiring autonomy for its daughter churches, the fact was that certain key functions in them had to be carefully monitored and controlled, partly through financial power and partly through joint committees, in which the DRC had a controlling (or an equal) representation. In December 1982, the RCA Synodical Committee decided that its decision about the recognition of the status of DRC ministers by the RCA made the composition of this committee highly questionable, so that the ministerial status of anyone licensed for the ministry by that committee would also be questionable. This had serious implications for Alex Bhiman, a black theological student who had just completed his training at the University of Durban Westville and was preparing to appear before this committee to be licensed for the ministry. When he heard of this development, he took the unprecedented step of applying to the equivalent committee of the NGSK to be licensed by them. They obliged, and Alex Bhiman was subsequently called and inducted as a minister by the East Rand congregation. In the issuing theological and political battles within the RCA, Alex Bhiman, Shun Govender and the three white ministers worked together very closely.

In the meantime, the DRC's general synod had met in Pretoria and the lengthy debate ensued in the discussion of its 'Mission Report' on the question whether the tent making ministers in the RCA could remain members of the DRC pension and medical funds. We were dismayed to hear that they were (still) discussing us, as if we were still DRC members. We came to the conclusion that the DRC would continue viewing us as 'their missionaries' until such time as we handed our licensing certificates back to them, so that it may be absolutely clear that we were members and ministers of only one Church, namely the RCA. In the light of the decision of the RCA synodical committee no longer to recognise DRC members (see above), we reckoned that it could not affect our position in the RCA to take such a step. After all, the very point of the

move was to identify ourselves fully with the RCA.

After returning our licensing certificates to the DRC, we were in every respect in the same position as our black colleagues: we could not be called to a DRC congregation, would be paid according to the RCA scale (if we were to be full-time ministers) and could not belong to the DRC pension or medical funds. Since the DRC was in no mood in 1982 to open the membership of its funds to black ministers or to allow them to be called to white congregations, the only way to remove the unjust and racist structures within the RCA, caused by the DRC's racist policies, was for us as white ministers to give up our privileges in the DRC and identify fully with our black colleagues. In our view, that was the only way in which we could make a concrete and visible stand against structural racism at the time.

The events preceding and following the elections for tricameral parliament in 1983 - 1984 precipitated a serious crisis in the *Indian* and *Coloured* communities, and especially in the RCA. In fact, it was the direct cause of a schism in the RCA. The Presbytery of Transvaal, consisting of the three congregations in Lenasia, East Rand and Laudium, issued a pastoral letter calling on RCA members not to vote in the elections. The reasoning was that voting in the tricameral elections would amount to open support of racism, since the black majority were left out all together. When the Transvaal Presbytery submitted this pastoral letter to the RCA synodical committee in March 1983 for adoption and (by implication) for circulation to all members of the RCA, it set in motion a process that led to the defrocking of the three tent-making ministers in the Transvaal Presbytery and the non-recognition of the status of Alex Bhiman. The three congregations rallied around their ministers and refused to co-operate with (what was left of) the synodical committee, until the injustice to their ministers had been set right. The impasse dragged on until 1986, when the three of us whose ministerial status was judged by the RCA authorities to have lapsed (but were still working as ministers), were confronted with an ultimatum from a newly constituted synodical committee: Since the DRC did have money available to pay our salaries, we were compelled to be full-time ministers; if we refused to give up our tent-making ministries and return to the full-time ministry, we would not have ministerial status in the RCA.

This presented us with a painful choice. We had made a matter of conscience of the fact that we could not allow the congregations we were serving to be dependent on funds from a church that was openly supporting apartheid. In order to belong to the RCA - a denomination designed as an ethnically exclusive church for Indians and beginning more and more to function as such - our congregations were forced to give up the precious sense of freedom and responsibility we had gained for ourselves by means of the tent-making ministry. We were confronted with the fact that the ordained ministry in the RCA was made to hinge on whether one accepted money from the DRC.

Since we had not opted for the tent-making ministry lightly, but as a matter of Christian witness against the DRC's theological support of apartheid, at great personal cost to ourselves and our families, none of us accepted the ultimatum as it was put to us. This led to the withdrawal of the Lenasia and East Rand congregations from the RCA (since those congregations unanimously threw in their weight with their ministers to leave the RCA) and a split in the Charisma congregation in Laudium. In the latter case a small group of members, of which I was a part, left the RCA to form the Reformed Confessing Community, waiting for a united Reformed Church to be established. After my final *defrocking* in December 1986 and the call of a young Indian minister to Charisma, it became very clear to us as a group that the direction of the RCA (under the control of a few Durban-based leaders) had become diametrically opposed to the goals we were pursuing, namely a united Reformed church committed to justice in society. The new-look RCA developed a very strong ideological stand: it identified itself as aggressively evangelical and as totally opposed to liberation theology. In fact, some of its leaders publicly expressed relief and gratitude that the Lord had delivered the RCA from the threat of liberation theology, after we had left the RCA.

This sad sequence of events raises questions about how to combat racism in the church. Was it justified for the two congregations to leave the RCA or for a group of members to resign from a congregation - i.e. to cause division - as part of their witness against racism and (paradoxically) in the interest of greater church unity? Should racially constituted denominations such as the RCA be regarded as legitimate churches or as illegitimate *sects*, with no theological right of existence?

Theologians will answer these questions differently, depending on their respective theologies of the church.

Let me just say that, if we had done certain things differently at a few crucial junctures, history could have taken another course. However, the comradeship we experienced on the journey we undertook and the lessons we learnt about Christian witness have been invaluable. Who is to judge whether a particular course of action represents faithfulness to the gospel or the expression of selfish and stubborn designs? What I do not regret, however, is that I remained true to the principled refusal to let my salary be the reason why a black congregation became dependant on subsidies from a church that officially practised and justified racism.

Since the unification process of the DRC *family* was taking very long, the Reformed Confession Community decided in 1991 to give up its self-imposed exile and join the NGKA. In January 1992, we became *founder members* of the new Nelodi Ya Tshwane congregation of the NGKA, which at the time consisted predominantly of black domestic workers in the suburbs of Pretoria.

After joining the Nelodi Ya Tshwane congregation, I discovered new dimensions of the struggle against structural racism. Domestic workers were (are?) a particularly powerless and vulnerable group of people in the political economy of apartheid, overshadowed in this regard probably only by farm workers. Even though many of them have lived in Pretoria for ten or twenty years, they do not own a thing in the city: neither the backyard rooms they occupy, nor the pavements or parks where they sit and talk, nor indeed the garages or DRC church halls where they worshipped at 15:00 on Sunday. Since the Group Areas Act determined that no black person or church could own property in a *white area*, the religious experience of domestic workers has always been one of exile. They were made into members of the nearest township congregation, to which they were bussed once a month for a Communion service on a Sunday afternoon, but in which they were never really at home. When the Group Areas Act was repealed early in the 1990's, it became possible for the first time to establish a congregation of the NGKA in a formerly *white* part of the city, to reclaim the city for the people who had erected its buildings and worked in its kitchens for

decades.

It has been a humbling learning experience for me to become part, to some extent, of the lives of women and men who live in the backyards of the city. But it has also led to new tensions with the DRC. The search for a building for our congregation, in particular, gave rise to an unexpected encounter with racism in the church. In 1993 - 1994 we were negotiating with a DRC congregation to buy a vacant building that had become redundant through a merger between two neighbouring DRC congregations. When the DRC congregation sold the building to an independent white charismatic church rather than to us, on repayment terms that were more favourable than for us, we were shocked and told them that they were reinforcing racism in Pretoria. They were deeply hurt and defended their actions, pointing out that their attitudes were always kind and well-intentioned towards us. In a letter to their congregation we said:

In discussion with the ministers of your congregation we stated that we experienced your action as racist, something which they strongly denied. For that reason we want to explain it more clearly. Racism is not merely a matter of racial prejudices or attitudes. It is primarily a matter of power structures in society which make (and keep) some people powerless, jobless and homeless on the basis of allegedly *biological* characteristics. As a result of decades of legalised racism, there exist very serious imbalances in facilities such as schools, sports grounds, homes and churches between white and black people in South Africa. Although racist laws have been scrapped, these racist societal structures are still alive and well and it will take generations to eradicate all the imbalances. Our objection against your actions are that they reinforced the racist structures of Pretoria, which have been keeping our members strangers and exiles in the city for the fifty years that services for black Christians have been held in *white* Pretoria. You have not helped to begin redressing these imbalances. Like the priest and the Levite you walk by on the other side, because your own survival and living standard were more important to you than the establishment of justice. It is possible to be very pious and yet to contribute to oppressive structures that make life miserable for other people. This is what the prophets have said through all the centuries (cf. Amos 5:21-24,

Isaiah 1:12-17, Isaiah 58:1-12). This is what we experienced in your actions.

It took me many years to arrive at this kind of a view, because the evangelical theology through which I experienced the call to become a minister does not have a structural ethic and concentrates primarily on personal ethics and good intentions. As long as racism is seen as merely a matter of personal prejudice, too many white people are able to exonerate themselves. In that way, we will not be able to mount effective joint projects to dismantle racism; we may even be reinforcing it, in spite of our good intentions.

The Church as a Factory of Racist Attitudes

The Biblical verse which states that judgment must begin with the household of God (I Peter 4:17) had direct relevance here. We are good at pointing out the sins of government, big business and the entertainment industry, but we seldom do deep soul-searching to purge the church of its own sins of commission and omission. It was John Calvin who called human nature a *perpetual factory of idols* (Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, 11, 8). In a similar way I think one could call the church a perpetual factory of ideologies. It is a site of constant struggle between contending Christian visions of how human life and society should be structured, and I must say with deep sadness that many Christian churches in South Africa have been factories (or at the very least retailers and consumers) of racist prejudices and stereotypes. Let me begin by sketching the ways in which churches have done this, and then move on to some reflection on how racist socialisation could be encountered in the church.

How Churches Perpetuate Racism

Churches produce and reproduce racism in different ways. The first is by overtly and deliberately propagating racist ideas. This is evident in its crudest form in groups such as the Church of the Creator, which regards black people as *mud races* that are not fully human and therefore destined to perpetual inferiority. Such *white supremacist* movements are found in various countries and seem to be developing some momentum, especially in the USA, but I believe they will remain fringe groups in the

larger Christian movement. However, we must not forget the once powerful (and until recently socially acceptable) justifications of apartheid propagated by Afrikaner churches. The way in which the Bible was interpreted in support of apartheid has often been analyzed and critiqued. Let me just state here that the after-effects of this theology on the attitudes of people should not be underestimated, even though these effects are impossible to assess adequately, except through careful empirical research. The fact that good Afrikaner Christians were told for decades that apartheid was the will of God did not leave a superficial impression on their sense of identity. It has decisively shaped their self-understanding, whether they now reject Christianity along with the Afrikaner nationalism it legitimated, or leave Afrikaner churches to join charismatic churches, or remain faithful members of those churches. The rate at which many of them are now leaving the country may be one indication that the cognitive dissonance between their self-understanding and expectations of the future on the one hand and the realities of post-apartheid South Africa on the other has become so serious that they are no longer able to bear it. Let me conclude this subsection by admitting that there is not much overt and strident propagation of racist ideas any more in South Africa, but that the after-effects of such propagation in the past should not be underestimated.

Another way in which churches contribute to the entrenchment of racist attitudes is by placing undue emphasis on cultural differences. One of the ways in which racism was made acceptable to the white community under apartheid was precisely by justifying it in terms of irreconcilable cultural differences. As a result of this, most anti-apartheid theologians did not place much emphasis on differences in culture during the theological struggle against apartheid. What is happening now is that new forms of racism, subtle and more *civilised* forms of racist ideology, disguise themselves by discriminating against black people under the labels of *disadvantaged*, *Third world* or *culturally distinct* communities. The almost total absence of commitment to learn in a post-apartheid society, is just one sign among many that the ethnocentric sense of superiority inherited from colonial times is still pretty much intact, despite many positive changes.

A third way in which churches have been part of the development of racist attitudes is in the use of symbols that are not racist in themselves, but attain racist connotations due to their regular use as part of the dominant discourse of a racist society. I am thinking there of the symbolism of light/darkness and white/black, which have an ethical focus in the Bible, but came to be used in a racist way because evil, inferiority and blackness came to be firmly linked in the minds of many white (and black) people. The many visual images of Jesus as a white person and of the devil as a black creature contributed to this. Even though I grew up with the idea that the devil was red - because he was at home in the fire of hell - I believe that substantial numbers of other people have come to visualise the devil as black. Coupled with the image of God as an old (white) man with a grey beard and Jesus as a young white dreamer, often with blond hair, this symbolic system simply had to contribute to the formation of racist interpersonal attitudes.

In the inner-city congregation to which I belong, there was an interesting incident in a Sunday school class, which consisted of 90% black, 5% Indian and 5% white children. After the lesson about an episode from the life of Jesus, a 12-year old black child, a newcomer to the class, asked: *This Jesus, was he black or white?* The teacher decided to put the question to the whole class, which led to an interesting train of events. First of all the children looked down at their own hands and arms, then they looked around at one another, and finally started discussing the question. Eventually someone pushed an Indian child forward, and the others were happy to agree that Jesus looked like that. Much can be said about the theological method that the children seemed to have followed in arriving at their answer, and about the appropriateness of that answer, but it seems as if they sought an image of Christ that would unite them as a group. If this is the case, then at least part of the solution to racist stereotypes and theologies lies in getting black and white Christians to talk together openly and honestly about their experiences of life, as these relate to their Christian faith. If Paul's insight in Eph 3:18 is followed, then it would mean that the full length, breadth and depth of who God is can only be grasped *together with all the saints*. The smaller and more exclusive the community within which we theologise, the smaller will be our (image of) Christ.

A fourth way in which churches produce or reinforce racist attitudes is far more subtle, but also more widespread. It is by remaining silent about it and making as if it doesn't exist. By privatising the Christian faith into a set of beliefs and morals that preserve family life and pave the way to heaven, a vacuum is created which is often filled by racist (and other negative) ideologies. The saying of the Jewish author Elie Wiesel is pertinent here: *The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference*. He said that as a holocaust survivor, with reference to the passivity of millions of good people, Christians and others, during the Nazi extermination of Jews during World War II. Being indifferent to racism doesn't mean being innocent of racism. In the face of the glaring evil of racism is tantamount to taking side for it. Neutrality is impossible with regard to moral evil; to be indifferent is to be *lukewarm* (Rev 3:15f) and thus to risk being *spat out*, i.e. become irrelevant and unfruitful to God's work of renewing creation.

How Racism can be Combated in the Church

It is good to heed the warning of the Kairos Document to avoid vague generalisations by speaking of *the church* in general, and to speak as concretely as possible about real life congregations with whom we have organic links and to whom we are committed. This brings me back to what I said about socially engaged knowledge and the use of a praxis cycle. The modified praxis cycle that I prefer has five dimensions: insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, spirituality, and strategic planning. It is not possible to develop a full-blown anti-racism praxis in this paper, so what I say in the rest of this paper focuses mainly on concerns of strategy and spirituality.

Basic Approaches

In making church members aware of racism, one should avoid two extremes. On the one hand a direct and confrontational approach cannot be the standard practice. It can be very useful at times, as the prophetic tradition from Moses to Jesus has shown, but when used regularly it tends to alienate people. Especially when this approach is used to make white Christians aware of the dynamics of racism, it is usually guilt-inducing and causes people to close their minds, resulting in an attitude of: *There they*

go again. On the other extreme, there is the soft and cautious approach that wishes to influence others by setting a good example and modelling a new way of living. as a basic approach of *show rather than tell*, it is indispensable to lend credibility to any anti-racism strategy, but is too low key and indirect in itself to make a significant impact in the short term. An anti-racism strategy that has any hope of making a difference needs to use wisdom, by: a) selecting certain issues as occasions to create public awareness and to confront the community at large with its racism; b) developing well-planned projects to serve as models; and c) devising regular means to conscientious church people in a non-threatening way, through literature, sermons, worship, etc.

Understanding of Race

In combating the (re)production of racist attitudes and stereotypes - in the church as elsewhere - a key question is whether one should regard differences between people as racial differences. I hope I will get widespread agreement when I say that *race* is a social construct, which doesn't exist in the same way that a stone or a tree exists; it is a way of experiencing and describing social reality. I would agree with Robert Sobukwe and others that if we are to use the term *race* at all, we should use it to refer to the human race as a whole. To my mind, the elevation of biological differences between people into matters of anthropological significance lies at the heart of perpetuating racism. We need to use concepts like *black* and *white* to acknowledge that they describe very significant patterns of privilege and disadvantage created by a racist society, that is, we should use them in an anti-racist way, but not to suggest that they refer to any significant differences between people. The significant differences between people that need to be described and theorised about can be adequately expressed by terms such as personality, culture, class and religion. These are also social constructs, but refer to significant differences between people that can be interpreted in respectful and non-discriminatory ways. When I describe myself as white, therefore, I do not refer to my skin colour or any other biological feature, but to my social position as a person privileged through decades of 'race-based' affirmative action under apartheid. To take this one step further, I suggest we should use the situation black and white in a 'dialectical' way, working for a situation in which it will soon no

longer be necessary or meaningful to use them. In other words, I do not use these as racial categories but as anti-racist categories.

I take my cue in this regard from Steve Biko, who referred to the thesis of white racism, the antithesis of black solidarity and a synthesis he described as *a true humanity where power politics will have no place* (Biko, 1978:90) and a South Africa with *a more human face* (:98). He also described a future South Africa, liberated from white racism, as an integrated and African society:

If by integration you mean there shall be free participation by all members of society, catering for full expression of the self in a freely changing society as determined by the will of the people, then I am with you. For one cannot escape the fact that the culture shared by the majority group in any given society must ultimately determine the broad direction taken by the joint culture of that society. This need not cramp the style of those who feel differently but on the whole, a country in Africa, in which the majority of the people are African must inevitably exhibit African values and be truly African in style (Biko, 1978:24).

Elsewhere, Biko defined *true integration* as a situation where black people deck the table in a uniquely African way and then invite whites to join them. In the light of these views, I venture to say that the synthesis we are striving for beyond the thesis of white racism and the antithesis of black solidarity should be described as an inclusive African identity, or a set of open and flexible African identities, in which there is free cultural interchange, without *cramping anybody's style*. As this intended synthesis is beginning to take shape among us already, we could identify ourselves as black, white, coloured and Indian Africans respectively, but I hope that the day will dawn when it will be sufficient to identify ourselves simply as Africans, without the need for any of these anti-racist qualifiers.

In this respect I have a problem with the terms used by the Employment Equity Act in describing how the imbalances of apartheid groups need to be redressed. It identifies the designated groups that need to be affirmed as 'black' (used as an inclusive term), which is then subdivided into 'African,' 'Coloured' and 'Indian' groups. I agree fully

with the Act's intention of political and economic redress, but its use of *African* as one subset of an inclusive 'black' identity does seem problematic to me, for two reasons. First, it betrays the liberating use of 'black' in Black Consciousness as an identity which was to replace and destroy the racist constructs such as *Bantu* and *Coloured* that were foisted on people by apartheid. Now blackness becomes a term which includes, and thereby confirms, group identities designated as African, Coloured and Indian. Secondly, the term African, which is the only all-inclusive term we have to unite us in a post-racist South African society, is reduced to become the description of one subset of blackness. To my mind, this use of the mentioned terms makes them into racial categories rather than anti-racist ones, which could have the effect of keeping us trapped in the snare of racism.

Let me conclude this section by saying that racism can be effectively combated in the church only when we succeed in jettisoning the notion of *race* from our minds altogether. By working to foster positive and gospel-driven interpersonal, intercultural and interreligious relations in our congregations, we can succeed in uprooting racism from the church through the radical strategy of eliminating the very ground in which it grows, namely the notions of the existence of 'races' and improving 'race relations'. By doing this, we will simultaneously be creating space for the development of complementary and mutually interacting African identities in our churches.

A Spirituality for Anti-Racist Action

The Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama, who taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York for many years, remarked during a visit to South Africa in 1983 that the reason why the DRC could support apartheid theologically was that it didn't have a well developed Eucharistic theology. By underplaying the importance of this potentially powerful sacrament, and thus burying this talent, various South African churches have contributed to the perpetuation of racism in society over the past hundred and fifty years. If there is one ritual in the church's repertoire that fundamentally undermines racism, when understood properly and celebrated imaginatively, it is the eucharis. It is perhaps not accidental that the first official manifestation of racism in the DRC occurred precisely at the Lord's Table. As it is well

known, the 1857 synod of the Cape DRC decided that black and white believers should not partake of the Supper together, due to *the weakness of some (white) members*. In my experience of various black congregations, the Eucharist - when meaningfully planned and administered - is a most potent tool to break down prejudice and create a new community of trust and respect. If we, instead of ignoring prejudice and distrust in and between congregations, bring it to the surface and deal with it ritually on a regular basis around a table of unity and justice, then there is much hope that the church will not remain part of the problem but become part of the solution. It could become a liberating and reconciling community in which racist prejudice and distrust is gradually broken down on an interpersonal level in the name of Jesus and replaced by trust and appreciation. When exclusion makes way for embrace by the soft power of the Holy Spirit, there can flow at the Lord's Table a new sense of mission and service to liberate society from the shackles of structural and institutional racism.

Such a eucharistic spirituality nourishes anti-racist action most fundamentally by creating hope, the kind of hope that makes us keep on working for freedom, even when the resistance seems insurmountable. The African 'church father' Augustine once declared: *Hope has two beautiful daughters. Their names are anger and courage; anger at the way things are, and the courage to see that they do not remain the way they are*. This is the kind of earth-bound and world-formative spirituality we need to nourish our struggle against racism. However, the North American feminist theologian, Susan Thistlethwaite, remarked that Augustine's theology of hope was too serious and male-orientated. She suggested instead that mother hope had three beautiful daughters: anger, courage and joy. In our struggle against racism we should not become like the figure of Atlas in Greek mythology, who carried the whole world on his shoulders. Here again, the dimension of humour comes into the picture. We will retain a liberating Christian perspective in our angry and courageous struggle against racism only if we frequent the Lord's Table to celebrate there with deep joy the fact that evil and oppression in all its forms has already been decisively conquered in the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth.

ANNEXURE B - MISSION AND CONVERSION AS UNDERSTOOD IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA AND AS REFLECTED IN THE LAUDIUM DECLARATION

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Abstract

When one considers the Laudium Declaration (LD), it is good practice to determine the theology that supports and gives substance to such a declaration. This determination also assists in understanding the contents as one reads it so as not to draw conclusions which were never the intention of the authors. It also becomes paramount to subject the LD to the evangelistic ethos that is portrayed by the RCA and its position in relation to mission and conversion. This article therefore serves as an attempt to express the theology and the intention of the RCA which undergirds the development and formulation of the LD.

1. Introduction

The Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) is the fourth and youngest member of the Dutch Reformed family of churches in South Africa. It was formerly established on the 27 August 1968 (Pypers s.a.:2) as an independent church. As part of its constitution and doctrinal standards, the confessions of faith, as adopted by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619 CE, became the doctrinal standards accepted by the RCA, namely: The Thirty-seven Articles of the Belgic Confession (Netherlands Confession of Faith), the Heidelberg Catechism and the Five Canons of Dordrecht.

The ideology of apartheid and especially the Group Areas Act played a significant role in determining the focus of the ministry of the RCA which was predominantly towards South African Indians. The majority of South African Indians were either Hindus or Muslims. It was therefore within this

context that the RCA developed a more evangelical approach to missions, with the aim of missions being the conversion of Hindus and Muslims.

During the years of the ideology of apartheid there was an uprising from especially the church community of which the Dutch Reformed Mission Church was instrumental. This uprising was against the church that instituted the ideology of apartheid which brought untold pain and human suffering to the so-called non-white people of South Africa. There were a number of documents, declarations and confessions of faith drafted during the 1960's-1980's CE to express either solidarity against the ideology of apartheid or to challenge this ideology based on biblical principles. Some of the documents are: Broederkring Theological Declaration, *Kairos* Document, and The Road to Damascus, Evangelical Witness, Rustenburg Declaration, Church and Society, *Belhar* Confession etcetera. These documents reflected the struggle for liberation and the restoration of the dignity of people. The RCA saw it as a strong social and liberal movement where the evangelistic thrust of the gospel was being compromised at the expense of a social and liberation gospel. The RCA itself was not immune to this influence of what it considered to be a social/liberation gospel.

It was during the early 1980's that the RCA came under tremendous pressure by what was seen to be political interference in church polity. Allegations of a social and liberal theology from within its ranks were seen as an attack on the evangelical nature and ministry of the RCA. This caused a serious schism in the RCA which led to the defrocking of ministers who were seen as the ones propagating this social and liberal theology (Sukdaven 2006:35). The result of these events was seen as a very difficult and trying time for the RCA. These events prompted the RCA to draft and adopt what is now known as the Laudium Declaration. The intention of this declaration was to restate its position as an evangelical reformed church. This declaration was adopted at the RCA Synod of 1990.

2. The Laudium Declaration

The LD deeply pronounces the character of the RCA. It not only establishes the RCA as an evangelical church, but it also expresses the strong mission character of this church (Sukdaven 2006: 40).

3. Pietistic Understanding of Conversion

Kenneth Latourette (1964:813-814) refers to the *Puritans* as those that wanted to purify the Church of England from traces of what they held to be the remains of the corruption which survived from the Roman connection. Williston Walker (1959:403) dates this movement to about the early 1560's CE. Although they differed amongst themselves concerning what needed to be purified, they generally held to a covenant or federalist theology. This understanding will be discussed later in the paper. According to Willem Saayman, in the pietistic understanding of mission, repentance and conversion was a move out of the realm of sin and into the realm of holiness. This seemed a withdrawal from the sinful world (Kritzinger et al 1994: 27). David Bosch (1996: 252-253) claims that for the pietist *a disciplined life rather than sound doctrine, subjective experience of the individual rather than ecclesiastic authority, practice rather than theory* were the hallmarks. Saayman (Kritzinger et al: 1994:27) therefore suggests that this kind of mission understanding left little scope for social development.

4. Social Understanding of Mission

Bosch (1996:323) regards the move from evangelism to social concern to be a shift from the individual to society. According to Saayman (Kritzinger et al: 1994: 29), the social understanding of mission evolved as result of an awareness of poverty, disease, ignorance, oppression, etcetera in the colonies. What transpired was that social gospellers felt that all Christian missionary reserves focus on fighting these social evils so that the world could reflect the ideal of the Kingdom of God. He suggests that in this the task of mission was not to work for the conversion of these people but rather for western missionaries to provide social and economic upliftment.

At the World Council of Churches in Uppsala in 1968, the focus was on humanising the world through socio-political development projects. Within such a framework therefore the need for conversion has disappeared to such an extent so as to be non-existent.

The above considerations reflect two radical expressions of mission and conversion which need to be addressed and reflected upon based on

scriptural understanding. The RCA and the LD do not support either of these expressions in isolation but have developed its theology around what George Peters (1972:166-171) calls as the twofold mandate.

5. Understanding of the Twofold Mandate

According to Peters (1972:166) God gave a fundamental twofold mandate to man. This twofold mandate was given at the beginning of each Testament in the Bible to each humanity: the humanity in the first Adam, and the humanity in the second Adam, Christ. He sounds a note of caution though in that the second mandate 'does not negate, supersede, duplicate, or absorb the first mandate. While it closely relates itself to it, it is unique. It does not depend upon it, since it is a distinct mandate arising out of different circumstances and serving different needs and purposes.'

The first Adam was regarded as the representative of the race and as well as the whole realm of human culture. This also included an inclination of religion as is found in the doctrine of General Revelation. The first mandate therefore serves man in his need as a socio-religio-cultural creature which was to benefit man and glorify God.

The second mandate according to Peters (1972: 167) was given to the apostles as representatives of the church of Jesus Christ. This mandate involved the whole realm of the gospel. Its focus is primarily on the spiritual liberation and restoration of man yet taking into consideration man's physical and social welfare. This could be construed as the gospel being designed to make man whole, restoring both his spiritual and socio-cultural needs.

This second mandate is promulgated through evangelism and deals principally with the problem of sin and guilt with the intention of restoring man to the original position and purpose as God intended.

The RCA believes that these two mandates must not be confused with each other, but must be viewed simultaneously with the focus of the conversion of humanity in its missiology. The RCA also sees this twofold mandate

embedded with the covenantal theology expressed by an understanding of reformed theology.

6. Mission and Conversion During the Reformation

By way of introduction a statement by Gustav Warneck (1906: 9) reflects the opinion of many when he says that there was neither a missionary action nor a missionary idea developed by the Reformers. The intention in the following argument is certainly not an attempt to exhaust all the pros and cons for the position of the Reformers with regards to mission and conversion. It merely serves to highlight that there were hints of an understanding of the spread of the gospel as we understand it today in terms of mission and conversion.

In defence of the Reformers some scholars have said that one has to understand the thrust of the theology and ministry of these Reformers for their time and purpose.

Notwithstanding the above statement of Warneck, some scholars have suggested that Luther in particular should be regarded as a ‘creative and original missionary thinker’ (Scherer 1987: 65-66). The premise of Luther’s contribution was seen in the statement that it is not what people can do for the salvation of the world, but what God did through Jesus Christ.

Bosch (1996:245), who quotes from Walter Holsten, makes reference to Luther’s response to a Christian who finds himself/herself in a place where there are no other Christians who “should be under the obligation to preach and teach the gospel to erring pagans or non-Christians because of the duty of brotherly love, even if no human being had called him/her to do so”.

With regards to John Calvin, Frank James (Urevolutionary.com - Calvin the evangelist: 2006) claims that history depicts another story of Calvin and missions. He recalls that during the 6th CE persecuted Protestants fled to Geneva. In 1550s the population of Geneva literally doubled. Most of the refugees came from France as they were French speaking. Through the teaching of Calvin many felt a conviction to return to their homeland. Calvin,

as James recalls, did not want to send uneducated missionaries back to France. He believed that you have to be a good theologian to be a good missionary. He therefore educated them and inspired and trained them for this task.

From the above brief discussion one may conclude that the Reformers were not altogether ignorant of what we understand today as missions. During the time of the Reformation they were certainly on another mission to address the issues of their time, which was necessary, and laid the foundation which mission work today has to acknowledge.

To the RCA, one of the significant contributions of these Reformers was the development of the concept of Covenantal Theology. It is within this theology that the RCA finds its twofold mandate of missions as mentioned earlier by Peters. Robert Sproul (1997:107-114) indicates that there are basically three prominent covenants that can be acknowledged. These are as follows:

6.1 Covenant of Redemption

It is important to note that this covenant is rooted in eternity. This does not directly include human beings but demonstrates the harmony of the roles of each person within the Trinity in effecting human redemption. It stresses the total agreement between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation. This could be expressed as follows: the Father sends the Son and Holy Spirit. The Son enters the arena of the world by incarnation voluntarily. The Holy Spirit applies the work of Christ to us for salvation. All these actions are necessary to fulfil the terms of redemption which were agreed upon in eternity.

6.2 Covenant of Works

This was the initial covenant God made with mankind through Adam as the representative of the human race in the Garden of Eden. Life was promised to Adam as a reward for personal and perfect obedience (Rom. 5:21). Due to his disobedience Adam lost this reward of life and death became imminent. This did not mean that the Covenant of Works is no longer valid, but it

became impossible for man to obey God because of the fall. The demands of the Covenant of Works still remain in force but can now only be achieved through the Covenant of Grace.

6.3 Covenant of Grace

The Covenant of Grace, as the word implies, is a covenant made between God and sinners as opposed to the Covenant of Works made between God and unfallen man. Thus man's only hope was through divine grace of God. This is not to say that the Covenant of Grace only came into being because of the violation of the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Grace was already decreed in the Covenant of Redemption. Man can only be redeemed and restored to his original position through the grace of God and not through the demands laid out by the Covenant of Works although within the Covenant of Works the grace of God is active.

This therefore brings me to the point of Peters' (1972:166-169) concept of the twofold mandate which the RCA expresses through the LD.

7. The Twofold Mandate and the RCA

This twofold mandate expresses itself with the Covenant of Works and Grace as alluded to earlier. Within the first mandate which was given by God to man, it was man's responsibility to build a wholesome culture in which he could live as a true man according to the moral order and creative purpose of God. To this end the LD in paragraph 2.3 declares that 'it would demonstrate God's love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter'. As a result of the fall, God never absolved man from his divinely ordained mission and responsibility as found in Genesis 1 and 2. Man remains man and stays within the providential care of God even after the fall (Peters 1972:167).

The second mandate, according to Peters (1972: 167) was given to the church of God. It involved the whole realm of the gospel. Its primary focus was on the liberation and restoration of man although it does not overlook

his physical and social welfare. This mandate is carried out by evangelism. This position is also documented in the LD in paragraph 2.1.

Peters cautions those who do not distinguish between the components of the twofold mandate, but blending them together as a unity. He says that this will result in the suffering of the gospel. The divine priorities will become blurred and man's spiritual welfare will be imperilled. This then will promote either a pietistic or a social/liberation understanding of missions. The LD brings a sombre thought into this equation when it states in paragraph 2.3 that "we affirm that the congregation of believers should turn itself outward to its local community in evangelistic witness and passionate service and then again governments, religious bodies and nations will continue to be involved with social responsibilities, but should the church fail in her mandate to preach the gospel no other body will do so".

The LD also considers the importance of the evangelical witness within a form of unity with other churches. In paragraph 2.4 it states that 'the RCA will foster structural unity with those who share the same confession provided that such structural unity will not stifle the evangelical witness of the RCA.'

8. Mission and Conversion in the RCA

When the topic of mission and evangelism is tabled one begins to see the tension in Missiology beginning to appear. The tension between evangelism and social concern becomes a widely debated discussion. Questions that arise from these discussions are: Which came first? Which is more important? Can they co-exist? Can the one exist without the other? Is social concern a mandate or a means to an end?

An attempt was made in this article to clearly show how from the very beginning two fundamental mandates existed. If one draws these mandates in a vertical linear structure, then on the left one can allocate the first mandate to be between God and Adam as the representative of man. In this vertical linear structure one can identify the Covenant of Works that God entered with man. Here man failed God and the result was death. Yet God

did not cancel this mandate or Covenant of Works, as man was supposed to continue in this mandate although it was made extremely difficult. Man lost his status and became a depraved being.

On the right side of the vertical linear structure one can allocate the second mandate. Together with it one can identify the Covenant of Grace that God offered through Jesus Christ. This mandate was given to the church of God. Although the church of God is in the world, it is not of the world. It can therefore not divorce itself from the world. The church as the bearer of the gospel has a mandate to evangelise the world. The message of this gospel is that only through grace in Jesus Christ can man be restored to his rightful place and be made acceptable to God as he was at the beginning of His creation.

It is in this context and understanding that the LD declares that for the total liberation and restoration of man, both mandates, though separate, become viewed together for the salvation of humanity.

The LD makes it crystal clear that other worldly institutions can work for the betterment of society, but these works can never offer eternal salvation to humanity or restore humanity to what God intended humanity to be. These works of worldly societies are for temporal appeasement, but faith in Jesus Christ is for eternal appeasement. The RCA and the LD carry the message that conversion is the primary aim of its missionary endeavours but at the same time it does not exclude the first mandate of its involvement in being involved in its social responsibility to God's creation.

9. Conclusion

The LD has brought the RCA in line with biblical theology for its missiological understanding of its existence on earth. Its theology is based on the understanding of the twofold mandate, yet not separated from each other but yet distinguished from each other with regards to its mandate. This seems to be in agreement with Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). According to Bosch (1996:403) Jonathan understood God's work of redemption in two facets. One consists in the converting, sanctifying and

glorifying of individuals; the other pertains to God's grand design in creation, history and providence. Still for Edwards these two *mandates* were inseparable.

Further to this, according to Lindsell (1966:234), the *Wheaton Declaration* of 1966, although it acknowledged the involvement of the 18th-19th century CE evangelicals in being involved with matters of social concerns, it stated that this should be done 'without minimising the preaching of the gospel of individual salvation.

If one has to summarise the theology of the RCA and the LD, it can be likened to the lawyer who asked Jesus a question, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? And Jesus said to him, You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the Prophets" (Mt. 22:36: *The Reformation Bible*. 2005).

Would this be the same answer if one must ask God as to which is the great mission task of the church? The RCA and the LD both affirm it would be.

ANNEXURE C - SPESIALE VERSLAG: ISLAM IN SUID AFRIKA

**Mnr Fred Nel: NG Kerk arbeider onder Moslems
Sendingblad Jaargang 27 No 4, April 1991**

Vir driehonderd jaar ons bure...

Die oorsprong en groei van Islam in Suid-Afrika hang ten nouste saam met die invoer van Kontrak-arbeiders en passaat-Indiërs uit Indië.

Vanaf 28 Maart 1658 arriveer die slawe in die Kaap. In 1667 arriveer die eerste groep Maleise slawe. Party word na Batavia teruggestuur; ander weer gehou vir die Kompanjie se diens en ander word aan die vryburgers en beamptes verkoop. Die snelle groei van die Moslem-gemeenskap aan die Kaap is bevorder deurdat die Raad van Batavia 'n hele aantal ontwikkelde Moslem leiers na die Kaap gestuur het omdat die Kaap toe alreeds as verbanningsoord gekies is.

Hoewel die koms van die Indiër Moslems na Natal ook die gevolg was van 'n arbeids probleem het die geskiedenis baie anders verloop as die van die Kaapse Maleiers.

Terwyl Sir George Grey Goewerneur van die Kaap was, het hy in November 1855 Port Natal besoek. Die arbeidstekort en die probleem is aan hom uitgelig en hy was dit eens dat voortgegaan moet word om Indiër kontrakarbeiders uit Indië in te voer. Die eerste 432 Indiër kontrakarbeiders het dan ook op 16 November, 1860 in Durban aangekom vanaf Madras – hoofsaaklik Hindoes maar ook 'n aantal Moslems. Op 26 November het die tweede skip vanaf Calcutta in Durban met 351 Indiërs geanker. Teen die jaar 1890 was daar alreeds oor die 30,000 Indiërs in die land.

Vir vyftig jaar is daar voortgegaan om Indiërs in te voer totdat dit in 1913 deur wetgewing verbied is.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems verdeel hulle dus hoofsaaklik in twee groepe, naamlik, die Maleise of Kleurling Moslems én die Indiër Moslems. Dan is daar ook nog die godsdienstverdeling, naamlik, die SUNNI of ortodokse Moslem en die SHIITIESE Moslems of sektegroepe aan die ander kant.

Die Sunni Moslems verdeel hoofsaaklik in vier skole, naamlik, die Hanafi, Shafi, Hanbali, en Maliki skole. Die Indiër-Moslems verteenwoordig meerendeel die Hanafi-skool en die Malei Moslems die Shafi-skool.

Wat die Shi'itiese Moslems aanbetref, is die Sufi Moslems die bekendste in S.A. Dan is daar ook nog die Sazibar Moslems - swart Moslems uit Zanzibar en die Admadiya-groep wat vermelding verdien.

- **Sending in die Verlede**

Die feit dat die Politiekeraad van 1770 bepaal het dat gedoopte slawe nie gekoop of verkoop mag word nie, terwyl slawe se prys baie hoog was, is beslis een van die belangrikste faktore, volgens baie gesaghebbendes, waarom daar so 'n antipatiese houding teenoor sending ontwikkel het. Ironies was dit dan juis die koloniste wat indirek daarvoor verantwoordelik was dat Islam soos 'n veldbrand onder die slawe versprei het.

Baie slawe het dan ook gesê: 'n Godsdienst moet ek hê en 'n Christen mag ek nie word nie. "Nou is ek maar *Slams*."

Maar die kerk van Jesus Christus het voortgegaan om sy getuienis uit te lewe al was dit partymaal net die roepstem van 'n enkeling in die woestyn van teenkanting.

So het Ds Vos van Tulbagh, die stigter van die Suid-Afrikaanse Sending-Genootskap 'n brief in 1812 aan die Britse Owerhede geskryf waarin hy pleit dat die wetgewing van 1770 verander moet word. Sy versoek is toegestaan en die wetgewing herroep. Hierdie Sending-genootskap het met onverdeelde aandag onder die slawe gewerk ten spyte van groot teenkanting.

Goewerneur Caledon raak bekommerd oor die groei van Islam in 1807 en drie aandskole word begin onder leiding van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde en Lutherse leraars. Omdat dit slegs vir kinders en in die aand was, is dit baie swak bygewoon.

Die Nederduitse Sending-genootskap het die noodsaaklikheid ingesien om die groei van Islam te stop en in 1825 word Ds William Elliot beroep, spesifiek vir Moslem evangelisering. Na drie jaar gooi hy egter tou op. Omtrent hierdie persoon se werk sê J du Plessis in *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, p98 - The soil was barren, the prejudice deep-rooted and the support of Christian friends slack.

In 1861 word Ds Frans Lion Cachet beroep vir Moslem werk deur die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. Hy is baie entoesiasies oor sy werk en lê groot ywer aan die dag. Cachet, egter aangewees op homself, weens die onbetrokkenheid van die kerk ondervind te veel druk - veral as die Moslem-leiers hom ook teen staan - en hy verlaat ook die werk.

Eers weer in 1897 het Ds Steytler die volgende voorstel gemaak by die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sinode: “Die Sinode lê dit op die hart van die broers, betrokke by die plaaslike en oorsee sending-komitees om ’n werk te begin onder die Kaapse Moslems.”

Ten laaste, in 1913 het die Ring van Kaapstad Ds Gerdener aangestel as sendeling onder die Moslems in die Kaap.

Ongeveer dieselfde tyd het die Anglikane sowel as die Presbiteriane ook begin met ’n werk onder die Moslems in die Kaap. Die name van Mnr Nisbet; Dr Phillips; Biskop Grey; Henry Solom en ’n paar ander word genoem i.v.m. Moslem Bearbeiding gedurende 1840 tot 1880.

Hoewel die arbeid onder die Indiërs alreeds in 1861 deur Rev E Scott van die Metodiste begin is, het die werk eers momentum begin kry onder leiding van pastoor Rolands wat die Bethesda pinkster-kerk begin het in die vroeë twintigste eeu. In 1946 het die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk begin met Indiërwerk en tans het die RCA ongeveer 12 gemeentes oor die land.

Baie faktore het aanleiding gegee dat daar nie direk met Moslem-sendingwerk begin is nie. Dit wil voorkom asof daar werklik hoop was dat die Moslems uiteraard van sy herkoms opgevang sou word onder die bestaande werk van die Kleurlinge en Indiërs, omdat die meeste Moslems onder hierdie groepe val. Ongelukkig het dit vir baie jare nie so in die praktyk gewerk nie, weer eens om verskeie redes en sal die Moslem-sendingwerk opnuut vanuit 'n nuwe oogpunt beplan moet word om effektief te mag wees.

Die feit dat Moslems nie so aggressief aan die begin en middel twintigste eeu was nie, mag moontlik een rede wees waarom die kerk liever gewag het op 'n spontane reaksie van die kant van die Moslems, as om twee sendinggroepe binne een bevolkingsgroep te behartig - die een volksgerig en die ander godsdiensgerig.

Tog het die kerk sy kommer oor die Moslems oor die jare uitgespreek en was daar gereeld enkelinge wat die kerk op hoogte gehou het omtrent die Moslems en selfs uitgegaan het en met die Moslems in gesprek getree het.

- **Die Invloed van Samuel Zwemer**

Wat nou besig is om oor die laaste veertig jaar in Amerika en oor die hele Europa, te gebeur, het alreeds oor die afgelope dekades in Suid-Afrika plaasgevind. Dit is naamlik, die vestiging van klein Moslem-gemeenskappe binne 'n oorheersende Protestantse, Evangeliese gemeenskap. Dit het teweeg gebring dat die Moslems van S.A. alreeds vir jare verwesters is, albei landstale magtig is en selfs in baie gevalle dit as enigste voertaal gebruik. Hierdie tendens hou vir die plaaslike kerk, wat Moslem-sendingwerk aanbetref, groot voordele in, want nêrens elders in die wêreld is Moslems al so geïntegreer tussen Christene nie.

Samuel Zwemer, een van die wêreld se bekendste sendelinge onder Moslems, 'n Amerikaner van Hollandse afkoms (1867 - 1952) en outeur van baie boeke, het hierdie groot potensiaal vir Moslem-bearbeiding in S.A. alreeds vroeg in die twintigste eeu raak gesien.

In 1911 begin Zwemer die kwartaalblad *The Muslim News* en in 1915 volg *The fellowship of faith of Muslims*. Nie een van hierdie twee publikasies het ooit die lig sonder een of ander artikel oor die Moslems van S.A. gesien nie. In 1916 wy hy 'n hele hoofstuk aan die Moslem-sendingwerk in S.A. in sy boek *Mohammed or Christ*.

In 1925 besoek Zwemer S.A. op uitnodiging van die Protestantse kerke en spreek menige konferensies oor die land toe oor sendingwerk onder die Moslems.

Christy Wilson skryf oor Zwemer se besoek aan S.A. as volg: “One of the chief results of Zwemer’s visit was to awake the churches of Europe and America to the extent of Muslim problems in Southern Africa. The Apostle to Islam had travelled 6,245 miles during the campaign, and by census figures and careful estimates nearly three hundred Muslims had been counted in the countries visited.” (Flaming prophet: The story of Samuel Zwemer p21).

In al Zwemer se boeke wat volg en in konferensies oorsee spreek Zwemer die kerk aan en moedig mense aan om onder die Moslems van S.A. te kom werk. Baie keer het hy hom as volg uitgedruk: “The Muslims of S.A. are accessible and live in die midst of Christian communities. They are approachable and responsive to kindness in a remarkable degree. Many of them are strangers in a strange land and hunger for friendship.” (Zwemer, *Across the world of Islam* p255) “A larger percentage of people are literate than perhaps in any other section of the Muslim world.” (Zwemer, *Two Moslem Catechisms* published at Cape Town, *The Muslim World* vol. 15 p349).

Hierdie groot geleentheid vir Moslem-evangelisasie is vandag nog groter op die kerk se drumpel. Die taal, intellektuele, morele en ekonomiese ontwikkeling in die land dra net nog verder daartoe by tot nog groter en meer geleenthede om die Evangelie aan die Moslems te verkondig wat alreeds op baie gebiede die inisiatief neem vir ontwikkeling.

- **Wat word vandag alles gedoen?**

Vanaf Zwemer se tyd het verskeie persone bygedra tot sendingwerk onder die Moslems in S.A. en is verskeie pogings aangewend om 'n gevestigde volgehoue werk op die been te bring – elkeen met 'n mindere of meerder mate van sukses.

Die name van Prof J A Naude; Prof A van Selms; Prof W D Jonker; Dr C J A Greyling; Prof P Els, Ds Dawie Pypers en Ds J Cilliers verdien beslis vermelding vir hulle bydrae wat hulle nog steeds lewer om die uitdra van die Evangelie onder die Moslems te bevorder.

Daar is drie organisasies wat huidiglik met min of meer dieselfde doelstellings en werkmodes intensief onder die Moslems in S.A. werk, naamlik, Jesus to the Muslims, Life Challenge SIM, en Eternal Outreach met John Gilchrist; Gerhard Nehls and Fred Nel as hoofde onderskeidelik.

- **Jesus to the Muslims**

John Gilchrist, 'n prokureur van Benoni, 'n Baptis verbonde aan die Baptiste sending departement, het in 1973 uit eie inisiatief begin om sendingwerk onder die Indiër gemeenskap van Benoni te doen. Vanaf 1976 konsentreer hy op Moslems sistematies regoor die hele Transvaal te midde van 'n druk program as prokureur. Weens die gebrek aan literatuur vir Moslem-bearbeiding, begin hy sy eie literatuur te skryf vir verspreiding onder Moslems. Vinnig merk hy die raakpunte tussen Islam en die Christendom en gebruik dit as aanknopingspunt in sy literatuur. Die literatuur word dan afgesluit met die hoop van die Gekruisigde, Opgestane Here Jesus Christus wat ons sondes op Hom geneem het.

Toe Mnr Deedat, die president van die Islam Propaganda Sentrum in Durban, begin om sy aanvalle op die Christendom te loods en ook deur gratis literatuur te versprei, was dit John Gilchrist wat hom teengegaan het. Hy het al Deedat se aanslae op die Christendom in boekvorm beantwoord. Gilchrist het op grond van die feit dat Moslems daarop aanspraak maak dat hulle die Koran uit hulle koppe kan resiteer, twaalf jaar gelede begin om die Nuwe Testament uit sy kop

te leer. Vandag maak hy daarop aanspraak dat hy die hele Nuwe Testament uit sy kop kan resiteer.

Gilchrist lewer beslis 'n groot bydrae tot Moslem-sending in S.A., sowel as oorsee, deur sy literatuur wat ongeveer twintig verskillende uitgawes van verskillende onderwerpe dek. Die groot pluspunt van Gilchrist se literatuur is die feit dat hy nie net van Islam en Moslems praat nie, maar met Moslems praat. Ook dat hy nie net by die gewone geskilpunte bly nie, maar aanknopingspunte vind wat Moslems voor die keuse van die evangelie bring.

John Chilchrist is tot vandag toe nog getrou aan sy roeping saam met sy ou vriend Ben Platinga. Verskeie persone het van tyd tot tyd baie nou saam met John Gilchrist saamgewerk. Ongelukkig het sy aksie oor die jare heen eksklusief gebly, moontlik a.g.v. sy werklading, met nie veel betrokkenheid van die kerk in sy geheel nie. Gilchrist se literatuur, wat werklik goed is, word met groot vrug oorsee gebruik en versprei. Maar weer eens is dit hartseer dat hierdie literatuur hoofsaaklik eksklusief deur hom en sy paar medewerkers versprei en nooit onder die aandag van die breër kerk gebring is vir verspreiding onder die Moslems nie. Ons is baie dank aan hom verskuldig dat hy verlede jaar ingewillig het dat ons hierdie literatuur mag druk en versprei. Ons glo dat ons hierdeur die hele kerk by Moslem-evangelisering betrokke kan kry. Ons glo dat Gilchrist wat in baie opsigte baanbrekerswerk gedoen het tot groot seën vir Moslem-bearbeiding kan wees in die toekoms met 'n paar strategie veranderings en wedersydse samewerking met andere en die kerk.

- **Life Challenge**

Gerhard Nehls van Duitse agtergrond, stig in 1962 Bible Band – 'n organisasie wat hom daarop toelê om die Evangelie aan jong Kleurlinge te verkondig d.m.v. kampe en Bybelstudie kursusse.

In 1975 stig Nehls Life Challenge. Hy lê hom veral daarop toe om vertrouwd te raak met die Moslems in die Kaap. In 1990 begin hy dan ook om in alle ywer te werk onder die Moslems in Soutrivier en later die Kaap. Nehls, wat ondersteun word deur die German Missionary Fellowship, se aksie brei uit en 'n hele paar Duitsers sluit hulle by hom aan as sendelinge onder die Moslems. In 1986

verkry Nehls die samewerking van die Kaapse Sinode en prop. Goosen sluit hom by Life Challenge aan as die NGK se werker onder die Moslems in die Kaap. Die Algemene Sinode van 25 Oktober 1986 beveel dan ook aan dat daar nouer samewerking moet geskied met Life Challenge. In 1984 het Nehls ook met 'n werk in Johannesburg begin.

Gedurende 1986 sluit die Life Challenge aan by SIM en staan bekend as Life Challenge Sim. Die samewerking gaan voort tot November 1987 toe daar 'n totale nuwe bestuur gekies is en die hoofkantoor van Johannesburg na Kaapstad verskuif is.

Gerhard Nehls bly 'n geassosieerde lid van Sim, maar begin 'n nuwe organisasie nl. Life Challenge Africa, wat hom toelê op die beskikbaarstelling van literatuur vir Moslem-bearbeiding – nie net in S.A. nie, maar ook verder oor die kontinent.

Nehls, wat 'n diep studie gemaak het van Islam se literatuur, is hoofsaaklik daarop ingestel om die Christen in te lig en toe te rus oor die dieperliggende valshede en onwaarhede van Islam en die weersprekinge in die Koran. Daarby het Nehls ook 'n goedgefundeerde antwoord op die Moslems se aantygings teen die Bybel en die Christendom. Hy bied ook 'n Skrif-gefundeerde oproep en motivering tot die kerk met 'n praktiese plan om betrokke te raak by Moslem-Sendingwerk.

- **Eternal Life Outreach**

Na 'n aantal jare van evangelisasiewerk op hulle vakansieoord in Hibberdene verkoop Fred Nel en sy gesin hulle oord in 1984 om hulle voltyds aan Moslem Sendingwerk te wy, waar Fred ook eers betrokke was by Indiër-Sendingwerk aan die Suidkus. Hulle begin in Floraunapark NG Gemeente by Ds Sors Geldenhuys. Die werk onder die Moslems vorder so goed en Fred raak betrokke by die plaaslike Charisma Gemeente in Laudium deurdat bekeerlinge van sy werk daar inskakel.

Die gemeente Floraunapark het Fred afgesonder as evangelis onder Moslems op 17 November 1985. Pragtige verhoudings is opgebou tussen plaaslike gemeentes, die NGK en RCA, as gevolg van hierdie werk.

Die sendingsekreteraris van Noord-Transvaal, Dr J P Theron het dit onder Fred en Ds Geldenhuys se aandag gebring dat daar wel 'n vakante pos die afgelope vyf jaar vir 'n geordende persoon, vir Moslem-bearbeiding in Noord en Oos Transvaal bestaan. Siende dat die pos so lank bestaan, is die vergunning toegestaan dat die gemeente van Floraunapark en Fred aansoek kon doen vir hierdie pos en aangevra kon word dat die pos aangepas word vir 'n ongeordende. Na twee jaar se beraadslaging met die Ring, die RCA en die SSK is die pos dan ook in Oktober 1987 aan Fred toegesê deur die Noord en Oos-Transvaalse Sinodes.

Omdat die werk aanvanklik begin is onder die naam Eternal Life Outreach en dit hoofsaaklik 'n bediening in Engels is, is besluit om voort te gaan om die werk onder die naam te bedryf.

Nel, wat nou met Gilchrist en Nehls saamwerk, se metode om die Moslems te bereik is:

1. Afgesien van persoonlike uitreik en kontak met Moslems, ook om die plaaslike gemeentes toe te rus vir Moslem-bearbeiding deur skoling en kontrolering te bevorder.
2. Om die kerk toe te lig aangaande die aanslag van Islam. Betrokkenheid aan te moedig (in die vier jaar wat die aksie bestaan, is menige kerke, ringe en sinodes ingelig omtrent die groot nood om die evangelie aan die Moslems uit te dra. Die gemeentes van Floraunapark, Florandia, Pretoria-Tuine en Brits, sowel as die Ringe van Krokodilrivier, Pretoria-Noord en Kempton Park is alreeds betrokke en ondersteun die werk).
3. Literatuur, skolings-video's en materiaal op te stel en te versprei.

Intensiewe in diens-opleiding en praktiese werk is in Brits en Pretoria aan die gang. 'n Hele paar nuwe werke word beplan in Oos-Transvaal en Suid-Transvaal en ook in Randburg.

Fred Nel het alreeds 16 medewerkers wat hom bystaan in hierdie werk en een voltydse werker in die Kaap wat ook onder die vleuels van die organisasie werk. Daar kan geen twyfel wees dat die ontstaan van hierdie jongste sendingaksie binne die NGKJ van die belowendste ontwikkelings blyk te wees t.o.v. Moslem-bearbeiding waardeur menige bruë gebou gaan word.

'n Video "Islam in Perspective" is in samewerking met Gerhard Nehls en MEMA gemaak. Verdere gesamentlike projekte word beplan. 'n Boekie *A Qur'anic Truth Unveiled* is met groot welslae onder die Moslems versprei en 'n herdruk verskyn eersdaags. Die potensiaal en moontlikhede is nog onbeperk.

Islam in Suid-Afrika

- **Tien Goue Reëls**

Vertel ander van hierdie nood in Moslem-sending en raak self betrokke. Ons wil 'n vriendelike beroep op u doen om by u eie gemeente daarop aan te dring dat u gemeente saam met u nader kennis maak met u kerk se Moslem-Sendingaksie. Dit is natuurlik des te meer nodig indien u in 'n stad, dorp of gemeenskap woon waar daar ook Moslems is. As Christene het ons 'n heilige roeping om die Evangelie en God se vryspraak aan hulle bekend te stel, sodat hulle nie verlore hoef te gaan nie, maar die ewige lewe kan beërwe.

Maar dit is nie bloot 'n saak van kennisname of bekendstelling nie. Nee, hoofsaak is dat ons binne die kerk intens betrokke moet raak by hierdie Moslem-Sendingwerk. Die geringste vorm van betrokkenheid wat u en ek by enige werk kan hê, is om dag na dag daarvoor te bid en ons geldelike offers te bring soos ons deur die Here gelei word om te doen.

Daar is nog 'n rede waarom Moslem-Sendingwerk wyd en syd bekend gemaak moet word. Dit is omdat daar werkers in hierdie veld is, sowel voltyds as deelyds. Ook vir hierdie behoefte moet daar voortdurend gebid word sodat die wat deur God geroep word vir hierdie werk hulleself in volkome gehoorsaamheid beskikbaar kan stel vir opleiding en skoling.

- **Hierdie Reëls is van die Belangrikste**

Intussen, vir elkeen van ons wat op watter wyse ook al in 'n gesprek met ons Moslem-bure beland, geld tien goue reëls.

1. Gebruik die Woord van God. Moslems respekteer die heilige geskrifte: Die “Wet van Moses, Psalms, Evangelie en die Koran laat die Woord van God vir homself praat.” Begin met die evangelies van Mattheus en Lukas.
2. Bid sonder ophou. Dit is die Heilige Gees wat mense oortuig van Christus se verlossingswerk.
3. Wees 'n ware vriend. Stel belang in sy probleme.
4. Vra vrae wat hom sal laat dink, bv. “Dink jy, jy sal hemel toe gaan? Het jy die versekering dat God jou sal aanneem? Wat leer die Koran omtrent vergifnis?” Sulke vrae wys dat u belangstel in die belangrike dinge van die lewe.
5. Luister aandagtig. As u 'n vraag vra, luister na sy antwoord volledig. U sal verbaas wees hoeveel u leer.
6. Sê wat u glo – duidelik sonder om apologeties te wees en benadruk dit deur die Woord van God aan te haal.
7. Redeneer, maar moenie stry nie. Deur te argumenteer, kan 'n standpunt gewen word, maar 'n persoon verloor word. Dit beteken nie dat u nie mag verskil nie. Nee, dit beteken net dat u met groot liefde, nederigheid en begrip moet optree.
8. Moet nooit Mohammed of die Koran afkraak nie. Voer 'n gesprek so dat die persoon self ontdek wie Mohammed is en wat die Koran is.

9. Respekteer hulle tradisionele gebruike en etiket; bv. Moet nooit u Bybel op die vloer neersit nie; hul gasvryheid van die hand wys; oor godsdienst skerts nie; moenie oorvriendelik met die teenoorgestelde geslag wees nie.

10. Volhard. Moslems het baie tot nadenke as hulle met die Evangelie gekonfronteer word. Wees verseker dat God Sy werk sal doen op Sy eie tyd. U moet net volhard.

ANNEXURE D - REACHING MUSLIMS FOR CHRIST

The following notes apply to the outreach work among Muslims. It is here presented in order to assist those involved with Muslim Evangelism.

1. Muslim Evangelism

The following article by the author of this thesis was published in *Die Kerkbode* of 9 February 2002.

In Cape Town, Rev D J Pypers was challenged by Mr Ahmad Deedat to an open debate. Mr Deedat was a well known defender of Islam over against the Christian Faith.

What is His Name, 50,000 Errors in the Bible, Christ and Islam, What's the Sign of Jonah? Is the Bible God's Word? Who moved the Stone? Mohammed, the natural successor to Christ, Crucifixion or Cruci Fiction? Resurrection or Resuscitation? (Ahmed Deedat).

Mr Deedat challenged the students in Pretoria that were reaching out to the Muslims, to a debate and the writer had the opportunity to attend such a debate. The emotions ran sky high in the Islamic hall. The writer felt at the time that this way of reaching out to the Muslims was of little value in terms of mission.

We mentioned earlier that Mr Deedat approached Rev D J Pypers to such a debate: In an interview with Rev Pypers, he recounted the debate (Interview with Rev D J Pypers at St Francis Bay on 26.05.2008 and at Jeffreys Bay on 28.06.2008).

Deedat requested the debate within a week, but I refused and agreed to a later date. The date was set for 13 August 1961. I arranged that 400 letters be sent to the surrounding churches and supporters. The planned debate was broadcast over the regional and national news. Messages poured in from all over: "we pray for you. In the Karoo 200,000 people came together to pray and

to intercede.” The venue for the debate, suggested by Mr Deedat, was Green Point.

In the meantime I set up my tent in the Bainskloof Pass where I spent the time in prayer and preparation. God spoke to me from 11 Chron 15:2-5, 16. With the reading of a booklet by Dr Andrew Murray regarding healing, I felt constrained to give an invitation for healing. The message would consist of four parts: “God is in control; He had to die and did die, and arose from the dead; and divine healing.” I took my message to Prof Jac Muller. His response was: “this may cost you your ministry in the DRC!”

When the arrangement for the debate was made, it was agreed that Mr Deedat would speak first because he was the challenger. However, on the day of the debate he asked me to speak first. I accepted.

Rev Pypers having concluded his message gave the opportunity for healing and a white lady was helped up to the podium. Rev Pypers prayed for her and God healed her.

In his Newsletter of December 1965 Rev Pypers writes as follows regarding the healing of Mrs Witthuhn:-

Van die begin van 1962 af het sy ook deelyds en later ook voltyds as vrywillige werkster in die kantoor van die Moslem en Hindoe Sending van die NG Kerk ingeskakel en wel a.g.v. ’n wonderlike ondervinding wat haar te beurt geval het tydens die simposium wat op 13 Augustus 1961 op Groenpunt, Kaapstad, gehou is. By hierdie geleentheid, waar Ds D J Pypers moes antwoord op die uitdaging van ’n Moslem-leier, Mnr Deedat, om uit die Bybel te bewys dat Christus aan die Kruis gesterf het, het sy eintlik per toeval uitgekom. Op die laaste oomblik is sy deur Mej van Reenen van Rondebosch gevra om saam te gaan. Hier het sy op die ope uitnodiging van Ds Pypers aan alle krankes om na vore te kom, gereageer, sodat Christus, wat gesterf het, maar ook opgewek is en lewe, en gister en vandag dieselfde is en tot in ewigheid, ook vir haar kon aanraak waar sy onder diepe besef van Sy werklike nabyheid na vore gestap het. Na ’n gebed met handoplegging deur die sendelinge het sy

geglo dat die Here haar genees het – en hoewel alle pyne en simptome nie onmiddelik verdwyn het nie, was sy uiteindelik heeltemal genees van die siekte Myxoedema, waaraan sy vir ’n hele aantal jare gely het. Hierdie feit is bevestig toe al die toetse wat sy moes ondergaan en plate wat van haar geneem is, getoon het dat daar geen teken hoegenaamd van so ’n ontkalkte beenstruktuur was nie.

(Nuusbrief van die Moslem en Hindoe sending in Kaapland)

As expected, Rev Pypers was called to order by the NGK regarding his view on healing. His response was a call for an explanation of their position on “divine healing.” He made it clear to the committee that their documents were only dealing with the question of faith healing. Rev Pypers explained that he believed in divine healing and did not accept faith healing because it is a human action, whereas divine healing is God’s action.

(Interview Rev D J Pypers 26.05.2008)

Rev D J Pypers who was called to Hindu and Muslim evangelism in the Cape recounts the following incident in his newsletter:

Op ’n dag het Freddie Smith se moeder, lidmaat van een van ons oudste sendinggemeentes in die stad, met tranes gesmeek dat ons tog moet kom help, want haar seun, naamgenoot en kleinseun van een van die groot voorstanders in die wordings-jare van die gemeente, het sy hart verloor op ’n Moslem meisie en is gedetermineer om met haar te trou. Maar soos dit ongelukkig gaan met meeste van sulke huwelike, kan daar alleen van ’n huwelik sprake wees as die ander party draai. En Freddie was op die punt om te draai. Dit sou die Vrydag-aand gebeur wanneer hy sy Bybel sou moes afsweer, ontken dat Jesus Christus die Seun van God is en aan die kruis gesterf het - en bely dat hy Allah aanbid en glo dat Mohammed sy groot profeet is - en as sluit-seël op hierdie Moslem-draai, hom laat besny. Dinsdagmiddag het ek hom gaan opsoek en onder dwang van sy moeder het hy geluister ... Van ’n gesprek het niks tereg gekom nie en met ’n biddende hart het ek Freddie agtergelaat met die volgende paar gedagtes: Islam het nie ’n sonde-besef nie; Islam het nie ’n Verlosser nie; Islam het nie sekerheid van saligheid nie; Islam het nie ’n Trooster nie.

Ongeveer 'n maand later het Freddie onverwags een Sondagaand, terwyl ek vir 'n tydjie stil in die konsistorie was, by die kerkie in Rylands, my feitlik om die hals kom val ... van blydschap en dankbaarheid omdat die Here Jesus daardie Donderdagnag aan hom verskyn het en hom vrygemaak het van die mag (the spell) wat Islam oor hom gehad het. Hy is intussen tot diaken verkies in sy gemeente. Ongelukkig het die Simson's-liefde bly steek en is hy later voor die magistratuur getroud – 'n set van die meisie se ouers, want nou probeer hulle allerlei dwang-maatreëls op hom toepas om hom te draai. Bid, bid in die Heilige Gees, vir hierdie jong man en sy vroultjie, Mareldia. Hulle het dit beslis baie nodig! Bid vir die baie ander Freddie's - en daar is baie - wat op hierdie wyse Moslems gemaak word - om nie te praat van die jong meisies nie! Dit is Islam se sendingmetode.

(Pypers, 1966:27)

In December 1966 a marriage between an ex-Muslim and an ex-Hindu was registered in the Cape Town RCA Congregation: Brother Sam and Sister Phosey Chettiar.

(Pypers, 1966:21)

Daar was ook dure lesse te leer. Ds Pypers het op 7/5/1966 'n veldtog te Faure, naby Kramat gehou en sommer die eerste aand teëspoed gekry!

Dit het so gekom: A.g.v. verkeerde inligting wat van die Afdelingsraad op Stellenbosch verkry is, het ons ons mobiele eenheid op 'n oop stuk grond naby die Eersterivier getrek, plate begin speel, film gedraai, 'n uitnodiging oor die luidspreker gedoen en, as ons eerste boodskap in die reeks, die woord gevoer oor: Wat maak ons hier? Teen hierdie tyd het 'n groot aantal Moslems begin saamdrom - veral vroue - en heftig geprotesteer teen ons aanwesigheid. Later het dit duidelik geword die grond waarop ons gestaan het, Heilige grond is, wat aan die Moslem-gemeenskap behoort en dat die dooies in hul grafte sal omdraai as die lasterlike taal van Christene, wat sê dat Jesus God se Seun is en God self is, op daardie heilige grond verkondig sou word. Op grond van inligting nl. dat ons op 'n strook niemandsland staan, het ons ons staanplek behou - beslis om nie te wyk van niemandsland nie, maar heeltemal bereid om te skuif indien ons sou oortree. En geskuif het ons! Maandagaand nadat ons persoonlik al die

kaarte en diagramme - waar self groot verwarring heers vanweë 'n veranderde loop van die rivier - op Stellenbosch gaan deurkyk het en nadat ons plegtig om verskoning en vergifnis gevra het. En dit, nadat ons Sondagaand byna deur 'n fanatieke jong Moslem-seun met petrol natgegooi en aan die brand gesteeek was! Sy moeder, wat blykbaar so iets te wagte was, het gelukkig sy planne gefnuik, deur op hom te val terwyl hy met sy plan besig was. In die proses het sy haarself beseer - maar toe een van ons dames haar die volgende dag na 'n besoekie 'n bos wit rose agterlaat, was ons alles vergewe ...wit rose dra die boodskap van vrede en versoening vir Moslems!

Opmerklik was ook die verandering in gesindheid en die terugkeer van hul natuurlike hartlikheid, nadat ons ons opregte verskoning en erkenning van skuld aangebied het.

Onnodig om te sê dat ons hierna, wat gesindhede betref, 'n wyd ope deur gehad het waardeur die Getuienisgroepie van Faure kon ingaan! Dit beteken egter nie dat hul harte ook oopgegaan het vir die Evangelie nie! Hier is soveel geleentheid juis om in die Heilige Gees te bid! Nou dat ons rustiger kan nadink oor al die gebeure, wonder ons of ons wêl hierdie ingang sou gehad het as alles nie presies verloop het soos dit wel gebeur het nie...

(Pypers: 26, 27)

The training for Muslim evangelism played always an important role. Rev Pypers invited all interested to hear Dr Fronel Gurney from the Red Sea Mission and Miss Scott from the Libanon Evangelical Mission.

2. Training for Muslim Evangelism

One of the students that reached out to Muslims in Pretoria and received training from Prof van Selms, (as mentioned earlier), furthered his theological studies and received his doctorate with a thesis, titled *The Name Allah* (December 1971). In his foreword he writes:

It is a little more than ten years since I made my first acquaintance, quite unintentionally, with members of the Moslem community in South Africa... their deeply religious way of life, their meticulous observance of religious precepts, and their arduous study of their Holy Book in the Arabic language, made me take a profound interest in the Qur'an, the centre of their faith. This event changed the course of my life. The keen interest of Prof van Selms (who suggested the theme for this dissertation) has also been an inspiration and a stimulation to mine still deeper for the rich treasures of the Semitic languages. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation towards my friends, the ministers of the Indian Reformed Church...

(Naudé, 1971: v, vi).

Training of this specific ministry played an important role in the rather small Reformed Church in Africa. Apart from those mentioned above several other ministers furthered their studies in order to be better equipped for this specialised ministry. Prof C J A Greyling, pioneered the work in Johannesburg Lenasia.

The contribution of Prof Greyling is an important call to avoid public debates.

Die Bybel en die Kruis is geen debatspunte nie. 'n Debat is 'n vorm van intellektuele gimnastiek, waarin elke verdediger sy uiterste doen om sy teenstander te troef met skrepsinnige argumente. Dit gaan daarin selde om die werklik ernstige soeke na waarheid en kennis. As daar een plek is waar die Christen in gevaar staan om wat heilig is vir die honde te gooi (Mat 7:6), is dit die debatspodium. Oor die dinge van God en Sy Woord mag alleen in werklike erns en eerbied gepraat word en elke regdenkende Moslem sal daarmee saamstem. Dit is die plig van elke Christen om te weier om oor die dinge van God te debatteer en hy moet dit teenoor die Moslem duidelik stel waarom hy weier. Debattering is dikwels juis 'n ontvlugting, waardeur 'n diepgaande gesprek vermy word. Die gesprek met Moslems kan op die beste manier gevoer word slegs waar Moslems en Christene met 'n oop Bybel en 'n oop Qur'an voor hulle, eerlik voor God soek om te verstaan wat die plek van Jesus in God se heilse ekonomie is. (Greyling :265, 6).

With reference to the history of apologetics between Islam and the Christian faith Bijlefeld, wijst op het gebrek aan een waarachtig verstaan van elkaar, ververzaalt door het ontbreken van een werkelijke communicatie met elkaar! (Bijlefeld: 168).

Prof Greyling concludes his thesis with the following great expectation:-

Hulle sal teen die Lam oorlog voer, en die Lam sal hulle oorwin want Hy is die Here van die here en die Koning van die konings (Openb 17: 13-14)
Die oproep van die kerk tot die Moslems is daarom dat hulle hulle nie moet aansluit by die werklike magte wat teen die Gesalfde van God stry en sy heerskappy betwis nie, maar dat hulle die koningsheerskappy van die Gesalfde sal erken en met verwagting saam met die Gees en die Bruid sal sê: Kom! Amen, ja Kom! Here Jesus. Wanneer die wêreldgeskiedenis sy einddoel bereik, die ware Islam, die ware onderworpendeheid aan God as alles wat asem het, die Here loof. Halleluja! (Ps 150: 6).

Prof Greyling was the first missionary of the NG Kerk who was sent to the Indian folk of Transvaal. He was stationed in the Johannesburg area and reached out amongst other areas to Vrededorp, Fordsburg, Benoni, Germiston, Lenasia and Pretoria. He inspired many young people in this ministry. This was especially true in the Pretoria region, where he assisted the KJA Indiërsending in the Marabastad area.

A special training session was arranged by Prof C J A Greyling when he was stationed at the NG Sendingkerk, in Parow East.

The venue for the training occasion was the Windsor Castle on its way from Cape Town to Durban and back from 7 - 17 Sept 1972.

The subject was: *The Testimony of the NG Sendingkerk among the Muslims of South Africa*. The speakers for the occasion were Prof A van Selms, Dr J A Naude and Dr W J Jonker.

Dr Naudé lectured on *The Name Allah* and Prof A van Selms on *Mohammed, the Messenger of Allah* while Dr W Jonker spoke on the theme *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*. Ministers of the RCA were also invited to attend.

3. Ministry of Prayer

Many of the ministers and elders can testify to the answers to prayer for the sick. Some of the congregations would have a daily prayer and counselling ministry during weekdays at their church building for those in need. Remarkable testimonies of divine healing of the sick and the demon possessed as well as conversions to Christ were reported.

The Jeshurun congregation started such a ministry in a caravan parked on the church site at Avoca in Durban North. The need for this ministry was so keenly felt that Mr Piet Smith, a worker of the Dorothea Mission, shared this burden with Mr Murray Armstrong who in turn offered an old hotel on his farm. Rev Greg Denyssen was stationed here on behalf of the Jeshurun Congregation in Durban North. The place was called Jivannadi Mission. Mr Johan Naudé, the local Indian workers of Jeshurun and of Dorothea Mission were involved in the ministry. The example of KwaSiza-Bantu in the Northern Natal was endemic from the beginning and had a profound influence on the centre as the place of confession of sin. The RCA, however, kept their distance as this centre was not linked to the RCA in any formal way. This work was also not reported to the Presbytery. The centre served Hindus, Muslims and Christians. A Muslim convert from the RCA Charisma in Pretoria, Fatima, served in a full time capacity at this centre and was in charge of a programme for children broadcasting through the Jivannadi radio station. Few Muslims came for prayer. The desire that Muslims will come to Christ was decidedly there from the beginning.

The so-called prayer walks were regularly held in some of the congregations, especially those that found themselves in a predominantly Muslim environment. This was the case particularly in Pretoria. Members of the local congregation, the RCA Charisma and several DR Churches supported the effort. The occasion was during Ramadan when Muslims were fasting and praying to Allah. This call to prayer for Muslims originated during a meeting in 1992 of

several Christian leaders in the Middle East. These men and woman strongly sensed God's desire to call as many Christians as possible to pray for Muslim people world wide. The prayer movement was planned to coincide with the Islamic month of Ramadan. The dates for Ramadan are established according to the Muslim lunar calender. The fasting period ends upon the sighting of the next new moon which occurs at the end of 30 days. (Jericho Walls:12) In 1996 it was estimated that 5 million Christians world wide persevered in prayer for a spiritual breakthrough among Muslims. In 1997 the Charisma congregation in Laudium arranged an all night prayer session in the church building on the 27th of the month of Ramadan, known as the Night of Power. In January 1999 several ministers from other churches ministering in Laudium and other members participated in the *prayer walk* between 24:00 and 01:00; 03:00 and 04:00; 05:00 and 06:00. In November 2,000 members of the Macedonia project participated in a similar prayer walk in Laudium from 11:00 – 16:00.

(Private Collection).

The prayer walks were popular among some. For others it created a stumbling stone, referring to the Middle Ages... The Crusades through which Western European Christians invaded Palestine with massive force to reclaim the holy city of Jerusalem from the Muslims, has left a bitter legacy. Between the years 1095 – 1291, Roman Catholic Christendom waged a holy war against Muslims, Jews and even other Christians in a misguided display of zeal, devotion, bloody barbarianism and brutal atrocity.

Most Muslims in the Middle East remember the Crusades as if it happened only a hundred years ago. The legacy of Christian aggression against holy places of Islam has been told and retold in oral and written history by Muslims. This is one of the principal reasons why relations between the two religions have been difficult and marked by mistrust, misunderstanding and even hatred over the centuries.

The fiery monk Peter the hermit returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1093, he travelled throughout France preaching against the Muslims (then called Saracens), saying that he had seen Christians chained, beaten and killed by the infidels. Peter attracted more than 20,000 followers. The effect of this rag-tag army was nonetheless electric, and all Europe was captivated by his

bold commitment. The infamous *Peasant's Crusade* made it to Constantinople, but as soon as they crossed into Muslim territory 50 miles east of the Christian capital, they were massacred by the Saracens. A witness wrote that '*their monument was a heap of bones*'. However, Peter escaped and returned to France, for he still had a vital role to play.

Back in Europe, Pope Urban II implored the men of Europe to defend their fellow Greek Christians who had been invaded by the Turks and to Liberate Jerusalem. When Urban finished a great cry arose, "God wills it! God wills it!" The army that numbered over 40,000 when they began their march onto Jerusalem was now down to 15,000 fit personnel.

On 8th July 1099 the army of proud crusaders walked barefoot around the city as the Saracens howled in derision from the walls, but the act of penance strengthened their resolve to take the city.

Seven days later, the Crusaders breached the wall and poured into the Holy City, routing the Muslim armies and killing woman and children, sacking and taking everything in sight. Thousands of Muslims took refuge in the al-Aqsa Mosque but the Crusader armies broke open the doors and hacked everyone to death.

In the end the Muslims regained the holy city of Jerusalem in 1187 under the brilliant leadership of the Kurdish Muslim general, Saladin, a man greatly respected even by the defeated Crusaders. (Reconciliation Walk Dec 1996)

The Reconciliation Walk was planned to continue through 1997, 1998 and 1999 on the route that the crusaders took. The whole march would be bathed in prayer. The desire would be the defusing of the bitter legacy of the Crusades.

On Easter Sunday morning, 1996, another group of 150 Christians set off from Cologne and also headed for the Holy Land. Their first stop was at the Turkish Mosque. When everyone was seated on the carpeted floor, the Imam officially welcomed them. The group explained that they had come to apologize for the atrocities committed in the name of Christ during the Crusade.

The reading of the message of apology in German, Turkish and English was greeted with loud, sustained applause. The response of the Imam was heartening: “When I heard the nature of your message, he said, I was astonished and filled with hope. I thought to myself, Who ever had this idea must have had an epiphany, a visit from God Himself”.

We are expecting, said Ferandez, that folks would be open to hear the gospel and that churches will be planted along the way.

The writer had the opportunity to present such a statement for reconciliation to the Imam at the Jewel Street Mosque in Laudium, Pretoria.

The statement reads as follows:-

Nine hundred years ago, our forefathers carried the name of Jesus Christ in battle across the Middle East. Fuelled by fear, greed and hatred, they betrayed the name of Christ by conducting themselves in a manner contrary to His wishes and character. The Crusaders lifted the banner of the Cross above your people. By this act they corrupted the true meaning of reconciliation, forgiveness and selfless love.

On the anniversary of the first Crusade we also carry the name of Christ. We wish to retrace the footsteps of the Crusaders in apology for their deeds in demonstration of the true meaning of the Cross. We deeply regret the atrocities committed in the name of Christ by our predecessors. We renounce greed, hatred and fear, and condemn all violence done in the name of Jesus Christ.

Where they were motivated by hatred and prejudice, we offer love and brotherhood. Jesus the Messiah came to give love. Forgive us for allowing His name to be associated with death. Please accept again the true meaning of the Messiah’s words:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the

captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

(Private Collection)

The outreach to the Muslim community was no easy task. The young people that started their mission outreach to the Indian people in Pretoria spent initially most of the time in reaching out to the Muslim community. They felt that there was so much more common ground with the Muslims than with the Hindu community. Their experience in the Muslim field however, changed the mind of many of the young people and they began to concentrate their efforts upon the Hindu community instead. Islam as post-Christian religion, holding serious criticism of the Christian faith, put her in a position of replace of the Christian message.

The tragic history of the crusades brought an almost insurmountable distance between the two religions. This dark relationship of tension between the two religions was treated by history in different ways. An important event in this field followed upon the realization of Christians world-wide in the late 1980's that the road of reconciliation should be taken. Christians went on a prayer walk from mosque to mosque all over the world, presenting the Muslim leaders with an apology as to the unfortunate role of the crusaders. The writer and member of the local church in Laudium, presented the Maulana of the Laudium Mosque in Jewel Street with such an apology. The reaction of the Moulana was extremely positive.

In 1999 we were invited to participate in a symposium at the Rand Afrikaans University. Ds de Beer, leraar van die Hervormde Kerk in Afrika se gemeente Charisma in Laudium, Pretoria, en Moulana Asras Docrat van die departement Semitiese tale aan die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit tree Maandag as sprekers op tydens die gesprek-groep: kerk/universiteit. Dit sal handel oor geloofs-verdraagsaamheid - Christen en Islam. Dit begin om 10:00 in die raadsaal...

(Beeld, 13/08/1999)

This was a meeting with a difference. It was not the atmosphere of debating but rather seeking ways to work together. Such opportunities where Muslims and Christians met in an informal way were particularly conducive for sharing the faith. A co-minister in Laudium, Rev Hendrik Pieters, and the young people

offered to work for free in the gardens of Muslims in order to share something of the love of Christ.

A Muslim will not simply attend a church service. This only happened once in the writer's ministry. The gentleman picked up a tract that the wind blew upon the steps of the Mosque in Laudium. He was wonderfully saved and eventually attended our services and catechism classes. Later his own sons had an argument with him, a fight broke out and on his way to hospital he died in the ambulance. Several others paid the highest price for their faith. Few Muslims found Christ through the work of the RCA.

Prayer and intercession for the Muslim world played always a key role in the RCA.

It is quite significant that every RCA congregation was programmed to have prayer meetings and cottage meetings every week, usually on a Tuesday at the church and a Thursday at various homes. The host at home where the cottage meeting would be held, will invite his relatives and friends (some Hindus or Muslims) to the occasion at his home. In a way these cottage meetings, as they were called, became a tremendous asset in terms of outreach. The writer recalls the deep felt joy and awe as people streamed into these, some very small homes, with people standing outside and peeping through the windows. These meetings were indeed the heartthrob of the RCA.

In Laudium the RCA had regular times of prayer for the Muslim world. Many believers from the Dutch Reformed Church joined with the local RCA congregation to intercede for the Muslim world. Along with intercession worldwide, they would attend to a message regarding the need for Muslims to come to Christ.

Mr Fred Nel felt called to reach out to Muslims. He was stationed in Pretoria and gave attention to the Muslims in Laudium and other parts of the country through the support of the Dutch Reformed Church. Here is his story.

(Sendingblad 1991:10-13, 24.)

To present the Gospel to people who are religious one need to understand what God has purposed in terms of the Gospel for people of other religions.

Verkuyl advocates that God has been and is busy with people of other religions. Peter Beyerhaus calls it a *tri-polar relation within which man lives and moves*. The powers, which collectively influence us for good or evil (Gal. 4) are repressing, projecting, searching, groping, wondering, questing and fleeing. No one but God really knows how in a specific religion or in a specific situation or with a specific person these three influences of the tri-polar relations are at work.

There is a tension between revelation and religiosity, between tradition and genuine encounter with God, which is visible throughout the whole history of religions. I do not believe, says Verkuyl, theologians as Rahner Schlette, and Panikkar are not warranted in stating a priori that religious systems even though they do not know Christ must nevertheless be acknowledged as means of salvation. Failure to maintain this tension leads one to declare that all religions are legitimate paths to salvation. We must reckon with the fact that the Creator of heaven and earth is alive and leaves no human being without a witness to his existence (Acts 14:17).

Throughout the ages the Christian church has confessed that Jesus Christ is the very incarnation of God and man and that in and through Him God has laid the foundations for a new order, the messianic kingdom. Every attempt to bring salvation through human beings or religions having failed, God gave him, the one for all, to restore the communication between God and mankind.

“To whom then will you compare him that I should be like him?” says the Holy One (Isa. 40:25). And when God comes to us in the New Testament clothed in the new figure of Jesus Christ the Lord, we can hear an echo of this question: “With whom can you compare Him?” He is unique, incomparable, irreplaceable, and decisive for all ages and peoples. We are from below; he is from above. We need forgiveness; He provides it. We thirst for liberation; He is the liberator. We grope upon the chance that we might find God; He is God’s revelation. We have lost our way toward God and our neighbour; He is God manifested in the flesh. (Verkuyl: Contemporary Missiology: pg. 356-358)

Religious men put Christ to death on the cross. Therefore, says Paul; Christ's cross is God's judgement upon all human efforts to achieve salvation through religions. Gathered around the cross were individuals who followed the paths of magic and mysticism, moralism and legalism, and knowledge and Gnosticism to secure their own liberation. But in the cross of Jesus all our cheap judgements for what is good and valuable in religions and cultures are called up short (:359).

Max Warren called for a theology of attention, of love, of communication. Many individuals tend to play proclamation of the gospel off against dialogue as though the two oppose each other. Such is useless and idolatry.

ANNEXURE E - BENJAMIN VAN DIE NG-FAMILIE

RCA in Zuid-Afrika Staat in Traditie van Schotse Andrew Murray

PRETORIA - Andrew Murray, de ook in ons land bekende opwekkingstheoloog en geheel onthouder (1828-1917), zette een geestelijk stempel op die kleine Reformed Church in Africa (RCA). Dat deed de Schot, die in Nederland theologie studeerde maar vooral in Zuid-Afrika zijn sporen trok, overigens al ver voor jonge en uiterst kleine kerk van gereformeerde snit. Eigenlijk is de kerk een beetje een Hollandse erfenis.

Met rond de 3000 leden, twaalf predikanten en twee Evangelisten - vrijwel allen nazaten van Indische contractarbeiders die door de regering naar Zuid-Afrika werden gebracht - zet deze kerk vandaag de dag echter wel een principieel stempel op de hele familie van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerken.

De zelfstandige RCA begon als dochterkerk van de Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NG-Kerk). Deze kerk noemde de boreling Indian Reformed Church, de Indiër Gereformeerde Kerk. Maar de leden wierpen deze door apartheid gestempelde naam al snel van zich. Sindsdien gaat ze als RCA door het leven.

De wenkbrauwen van ds. Perold J P de Beer, de Moderator (voorzitter) van de Synode van de RCA, fronsten toen hij twee maanden geleden de voorstellen over de godsbeschouwing op de Synode van de 1,2 miljoen leden tellende *moederkerk*, de NG-Kerk, zag. Het besluitsvoorstel luidde dat *“de God over wie de Joden spraken als JHWH en de Muslims als Allah geen andere God is dan de levende God”*. Die toevoeging luidde *“dat deze God pas in Christus op de rechte wijze gediend kan worden”*.

In de Synode heerste verwarring en onbegrip. Onder anderen ds De Beer werd geraadpleegd en hij noemde de tekst onaanvaardbaar. In een nieuw voorstel werd de uniciteit van de ene levende God benadrukt, de doorwerking op onderdelen van de algemene genade in andere godsdienst erkend en de noodzaak om het Evangelie van Jezus Christus aan Jood en Muslim te betuigen. Moderator Dr Coenie Burger presenteerde het nieuwe voorstel met de

mededeling dat dit ook de instemming had van de RCA – “die met name onder Hindoes en Muslims werkt. ”Vrijwel unaniem werd dat toen aangenomen.

Om de geschiedenis van de RCA te kunnen begrijpen, moeten we terug naar de Oost-Indische Compagnie. Deze bracht in de Gouden Eeuw veel Muslims mee naar Zuid-Afrika. Rond 1700 was de helft van de slaven van Indische afkomst.

Al heel snel begon de NG-Kerk met zendingswerk onder de Kaapse Muslims. De meeste Indiërs kwamen echter na verloop van tijd in de suikerindustrie in Natal terecht. Zij arriveerden tussen 1860 en 1911.

De oprichting van de latere RCA was echter niet zozeer het gevolg van het werk van zendelingen of kerken. Het begon met het spontaan getuigenis van gewone leden van de NG-Kerk die op initiatief het Evangelie tegen Muslims en Hindoes gingen verkondigen in woord en daad. Het gebeurde hier en daar zelfs dat de gevestigde kerken negatief reageerden op dat particuliere initiatief. Toch zou het in 1968 de NG-Kerk zijn die de eerste vier gemeenten die in de Zuid-Afrikaanse Indiërgemeenschap ontstonden in een overkoepelend orgaan, een convent, bijeenriep.

Met de Britse kolonisering van de Kaap kwam de eigen identiteit van de Boeren met hun Nederlandse, gereformeerde wortels onder druk te staan en werden theologische invloeden uit het brede Europa meer merkbaar. Het grootst was wel de invloed van het methodisme van John Wesley met zijn arminiaanse inslag. Het gegeven dat de Nederduitsch Gereformeerde Kerk, zoals de gereformeerde kerk in Zuid-Afrika toen werd aangeduid, van de Britse overheid alleen maar predikanten uit de presbyteriaanse traditie uit Engeland en Schotland mocht beroepen, heeft de Engelse invloed versterkt. De bekende opwekkingsprediker Andrew Murray, die een stempel zette op de RCA, is daar een voorbeeld van.

Om nog eens duidelijk aan te geven waar de kleine kerk zich tegenwoordig principieel bevindt, gaf zij tijdens haar zesde synod in Oktober 1990 de zogeheten Verklaring van Laudium af. “De aanleiding was een minder prettige: kerkscheuring. In de jaren tachtig kwam er een meer sociaal denkende vleugel op. Spanningen ontstonden in de kerk toen liefde tot de naaste heersen boven

de persoonlijke verhouding tot God”, aldus ds. De Beer. “Het besluit in 1982 van de Wereldbond van Hervormde en Gereformeerde Kerken de NG-kerk te veroordelen inzake apartheid leidde tot scheuring en verlies van twee gemeenten. De WARC typeerde destijds het standpunt van de NG-Kerk inzake apartheid als ketterij. Hierop namen drie NG-Predikanten die bij de RCA dienden afstand van de NG-Kerk. Daarop volgde de Verklaring van Laudium.

Te midden van allerlei theologische ontwikkeling die ook Zuid-Afrika niet voorbijgaan, en na de eigen interne discussie, wilde de RCA publiekelijk een principiële getuigenis afleggen. Deze verklaring is als het ware het visitekaartje, of keurmerk, geworden van de kerk. Net zoals de belijdenis van Belhar zo ongeveer synoniem is voor de Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk in Zuid-Afrika (VGKSA).

De “Laudium Deklarasie” wordt gekenmerkt door vijf onderwerpen: vasthouden aan het bijbelse Evangelie, het doorwerkend getuigenis van de Heilige Geest, het samengaan van evangelisatorisch getuigenis en de dienst der barmhartigheid, het streven naar eenheid en het geven van een krachtig profetisch getuigenis in het publieke leven.

Afgelopen September voegde de RCA-Synode daar een aantal actuele zaken bij. De Synode kwam terug op haar standpunt de vrouw in het ambt toe te laten. Vrouwen kunnen wel diaken worden, maar geen ouderling. Hiermee ontstond een kloof tussen de RCA en de NG-Kerk. Eenheid met de oude kerkenfamilie blijft wel hoof in het vaandel staan. Verder somde de synode een aantal zaken op waarbij geen compromis mogelijk is: de homofiele praxis, abortus, prostitutie, drugs en alcoholmisbruik en voorouderverering.

Die postmoderne invloeden in de theologie werden in September met kracht afgewezen. In gesprekken met afgevaardigden van de oude *zuster*, de VGKSA, en de *moeder*, de NG-Kerk, bestaat er overeenstemming dat *Laudium* een plaats krijgt in de kerkorde van de beoogde toekomstige eenheidskerk. Met de belijdenis van Belhar, gericht tegen apartheid, heft de RCA geen moeite. Met de vanouds zwarte NG-dochter, de NGKA, bestaat een goede geestelijke band.

Die RCA-Synode betreurt het dat haar aankomende predikanten niet meer terecht kunnen bij de universiteit van Durban-Westville omdat de theologiefaculteit daar is opgedoekt en veranderd in een multireligieus centrum. Pretoria, Stellenbosch en Bloemfontein, met elk hun eigen theologiese kleur, zijn nu de alternatieven. Maar tegelijk sprak de synode uit dat één universiteit met een dergelijke “evangelisch gereformeerde” uitstraling geen kwaad zou kunnen voor de hele NG-familie. Voor de opleiding van evangelisten en andere kerkelijk werkers is er de RCA-bijbelschool, die onlangs een nieuwe naam kreeg: “Christian Leadership Academy.”

Onderhoud met skrywer S C Base

Van Reformatorisch Dagblad 17.12.2002

ANNEXURE F - GEEN ANDER NAAM NIE

Enkele jare gelede het ek die belangwekkende boek van Knitter, 'No other Name' met groot verwagting in die hand geneem: hier is nou iemand wat werklik glo soos die Skrif sê, dat daar "geen ander naam onder die hemele aan mense gegee is, waardeur hulle gered moet word nie" (Hand 4:12). Die skrywer het egter presies die teendeel probeer sê.

Die gevolgtrekking waartoe Knitter in die boek kom, is dat Christus nie die Verlosser van die wêreld is nie. Mettertyd is hierdie sentimente ook op die kerklike terrein van Suid-Afrika gehoor. Met die koms van die "nuwe" Suid-Afrika het hierdie stemme 'n koor begin word. Nou is dit nie meer polities korrek om te praat van Christus as die enigste Verlosser nie. Dit sou 'n vergryp wees teen die ander godsdienste. Islam, Hindoeïsme, Boeddhisme, om maar 'n paar te noem, verwerp hierdie stelling. Dit is vir hulle in stryd met versoeningsaksies in Suid-Afrika en die Grondwet.

Vir Christene is daar nou allerlei vrae: Is Christus die enigste Verlosser? Is Hy die Seun van God? Is daar net een God of dalk 'n paar of baie gode? Is die Hindoe nie dalk reg dat al die godsdienste soos riviere in dieselfde oseaan eindig nie? Is sendingwerk onder mense van ander godsdienste nog enigsins geldig?

Dat daar talle ander godsdienste bestaan met wonderlike elemente wat Christene beskaam, is waar. Maar Hindoeïsme, byvoorbeeld, met sy 330 miljoen gode, ken geen Verlosser nie. In al die godsdienste is daar niemand soos die Christus van die Bybel nie.

Die oomblik dat die geloof in Christus as die enigste Verlosser op losse skroewe begin staan, bly daar min van die Christelike geloof oor, en staar jy 'n toekoms sonder hoop en sonder God in die gesig. Ten spyte van die stemme wat opgaan in hierdie tyd, moet Christene opnuut weer langs Luther gaan staan en sê: "Hier staan ek, ek kan nie anders nie."

Oor hierdie saak kan en mag gelowiges nie verskil nie. Hoe sal gelowiges kan ontvlug, as hulle wat die verlossende genade in Christus ontvang het, dit weerhou van godsdienstige mense wat verlossing nodig het?

Deur Ds Perold de Beer, Moderator van die Sinode van die Reformed Church in Africa. (Uit: Die Kerkbode)
9 Februarie 2002

ANNEXURE G - CHURCH UNITY IN THE DRC FAMILY

VIEWS FROM AN RCA PERSPECTIVE

Rev Victor Pillay

One needs to first state the official RCA Synod's decision regarding the unity and its process. The RCA Synod is fully committed to the unity process and has always been. At no stage did we boycott or withdraw from the discussion table. We are committed to a multi-lateral unity process where all four churches enter into a process of becoming the one church. Synod does not support any bi or tri lateral unity notions.

As the RCA, there are some genuine concerns, which are:

- about our own history and origination as a church that determines our purpose, operation, goals and vision
- the ministry focus in our specific context of the un-churched communities in which we are predominantly located.
- the pertinent mission perspective and dimension to the people of Asian backgrounds and religions
- the evangelical stance on life and living in order to maintain the witness of the RCA in its challenge of where the church is located
- the direction in which many contemporary issues are being discussed and resolved with theological justification, which gives rise to the contentious manner in which hermeneutics and exegesis is being applied to scripture, our contexts and the burning issues that face us in the 21st Century post-modern milieu of where the church needs to live, practice, minister, make meaningful contributions and be relevant.
- In understanding these concerns our great fear is that the impending situation may dilute, affect, cause us to lose impetus and or erode that which is central and crucial to the RCA. This could be due to the energy, time, resources and all else that will become the all imposing agenda for us in the transition or transformation.

Against the brief background of the above reasons and explanations which informs our theology, life and practice in the RCA, we would appeal for some consideration of our position within the unity and its process.

Perhaps a view would be for an “ENTITY” to be created as a possible sub or regional Synod that could accommodate the RCA and other congregations from the other three churches in the Family of the DRC that are so inclined to maintain these perspectives in their ministries. This should certainly not be viewed as another division within the family. Here the driving impetus is the focal and attainable goals of what a church wants to be, wants to do and how it lives out its challenge based on its context.

The appeal here is to create space to accommodate divergent but fundamental principles on which a church and its ministry finds its ethos and compulsion to exist. Without these defined motivations for our existence as the RCA, we have no, little or any other direction of whom and what we are. Therefore, this is an earnest, sincere, genuine and crucial outcome for the RCA. Thus our pleading for understanding, co-operation, mutuality, consideration and accommodation of what is the life blood and compassion of a church, the RCA. Our heart’s request is that this line of thinking and operation should not be misconstrued in any other way or for any other purpose or intention but for what is explained in and out of our small, simple and humble church as we endeavour to be faithful to our “CALLING AS THE RCA” within our context, our communities, family of the DRC and the wider context of South Africa.

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