

**CHURCH PLANTING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN
INDIAN COMMUNITY, WITH REFERENCE TO THE
REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA**

by

Petrus Johannes Perold de Beer

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree

Doctor Philosophiae (Ph.D)

In the Department of Missiology
Faculty of Theology
University of Pretoria

Promoter: Prof Dr P G J Meiring

Submitted: April 2010



“You are not your own,
you were bought at a price.”
(1 Cor 6:19-20)

To Marietha

The “romance” of a missionary is often made up of monotony and drudgery; there often is no glamour in it; it doesn’t stir a man’s spirit or blood. So don’t come out to be a missionary as an experiment, it is useless and dangerous. Only come if you feel you would rather die than not come. Lord Wolsey was right: “A missionary ought to be a fanatic or he encumbers the ground”. Come if you feel there is no greater honour, after living for Christ, than to die for Him.

C T Studd

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Upon the completion of this dissertation the overpowering emotion is one of deep thankfulness. The goodness of God and his gracious undertaking with his church in a world of many religions has left one with speechless admiration: How great is God!

I regard it a great privilege that I could write a first history of the life and mission of one of the youngest churches of the Dutch Reformed Family of Churches.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following:

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The ministers and members of the Reformed Church in Africa who so willingly responded to interviews.

To Rita Naudé, thank you for thousands of hours of selfless service in the typing and editing of the thesis. Additional gratitude to the following people; Daleen Muller, Nalini Moonsamy, Nundy Naudé and Sannie Meiring for their contributions.

My wife, Marietha and family for their inspiration and sacrifice.

Above all I am forever indebted to God, my Saviour Christ Jesus, for grace undeserving.

PREFACE

In 1956 the DRC invited the renowned Dr Oswald J Smith from the People's Church in Toronto, Canada, to conduct evangelistic services in South Africa. I was seated in the top gallery of the Bosman Street Dutch Reformed church in Pretoria when I heard this anointed servant of God speak on the incident when Jesus took the meagre meal of bread and fish from the little boy, prayed and then had it passed on to all present. 'What would have happened,' asked Dr Smith 'if Jesus only served the first three rows and then began again and again with the first row?' 'Surely' he said 'the people in the back rows would have shouted, 'and what about us?' It was then that I realized what God was saying to me: 'Go share the Gospel to the neglected Hindu and Muslim people in South Africa. You give them something to eat. That unforgettable Sunday evening my whole life changed and I never looked back again. Dr Smith's watchword rings in my ears to this day: 'Why should anybody hear the Gospel twice before everybody heard it at least once?'

I made my first acquaintance with the Hindu and Muslim community in South Africa when the local minister, Rev J P W de Vries of the DRC Hartbeespruit, Pretoria shared with our youth group his heart-felt concern for the Indian folk of Marabastad.

When I saw the physical and spiritual plight of the community, my heart broke. That was 10 June 1956.

Prof A van Selms who taught Semitic Languages at the Pretoria University lived just down the road from where I stayed with my parents. He offered to teach us the religion of Islam at my parent's home. Once a week we sat glued to our seats as he passed on his unsurpassed knowledge of Islam.

My first congregation was the DRC of Adelaide in the Eastern Cape. Though I simultaneously received a call to pioneer missions among Indian people in Northern Transvaal, I decided to decline the call. Two years later I was called again and this was the opportune time to accept the call. I was inducted in a tent

erected on the Church site in Laudium, Pretoria.

At that time the work in Laudium was part of the Transvaal congregation, with preaching stations in Benoni and Lenasia. My colleagues were Dr C du P le Roux in Benoni and Prof C J A Greyling in Lenasia. The work in Laudium prospered and a beautiful church building was erected at 261 Jewel Street. Funds were obtained through the selling of Christmas cards by the young people of the 'KJA Indiërsending'. Through the tremendous efforts of Mrs Katie du Toit (Prof H D A du Toit's wife) funds were generated for the church building.

On the 29th of October 1972 the foundation stone was laid and the Charisma congregation established.

I was privileged to serve the following congregations:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | NGK Adelaide (Eastern Cape) | 1964 – 1965 |
| 2. | IRC Transvaal (Pretoria) | 1966 – 1971 |
| 3. | RCA Charisma (Pretoria) | 1972 – 1979 |
| 4. | RCA Emmanuel (Durban) | 1979 – 1981 |
| 5. | RCA Jeshurun (Durban) | 1981 – 1991 |
| 6. | RCA Charisma (Pretoria) | 1991 – 2004 |

OVERVIEW

The spice route around the Cape of Good Hope established links between the refreshment station in the Cape and India. This foreshadowed the official involvement between South Africa and India. By 1700 up to 50% of the slaves in the Cape were of Indian descent.

As early as the 17th century, the DRC had been involved in outreach work to the Muslim community in the Cape. It took a considerable length of time after the Indians had settled in Natal in 1860, however, before the DRC became involved in this new field. It was only in 1946 that the church officially began mission work among the Indian people and more specifically the Hindus. A number of factors however hampered the outreach work, such as political antipathy, the English language, fear of economic competition, the foreign culture, and their religion.

The Mission Boards of the DRC, in time, acquired not only the necessary funds, but also the manpower for the task. In the sixties they commenced to work in Natal, as well as in the Cape and Transvaal. A number of important issues landed on the desk of the Mission Board, such as membership of ministers, the form of baptism, the period of catechism for older believers, aspects of organizational questions regarding the formation of a new church, the training of evangelists and ministers, and a church order for the newly established church.

The first missionaries, being pioneers in the work among the Indian people, were all white ministers either from the DRC, the DRC Missions Church (NGSK) or the DRC Church in Africa (NGKA). These early missionaries were determined to ensure that the Gospel was brought to this neglected community in a clear and forceful way. The challenges involved were obviously enormous.

The first evangelists were all Indians and by and large workers belonging to other churches. The appointment of evangelists proved to be a great asset. As co-workers of the missionaries, they opened doors to Hindu homes that would have been closed to the foreign missionaries.

By 1962 four congregations had been established and in 1968 the Indian Reformed Church was formed. Two years later the use of evangelists in the IRC was discontinued. Six years later the name of the church was changed to 'Reformed Church in Africa', establishing the church as an open community. Strong resolutions were taken against any form of racism. The church was now established as an open church where all races would be welcome. In the seventies it was the RCA that took the initiative to call upon the NG Kerk, the NG Kerk in Afrika and the NG Sendingkerk to consider possible unification. The RCA remained strongly focussed on reaching Muslims and Hindus.

The resolution of the WARC in 1982 to suspend the NGK and the denouncement of apartheid as heresy by certain members of the RCA led to a serious confrontation with the NGK and a schism in the RCA.

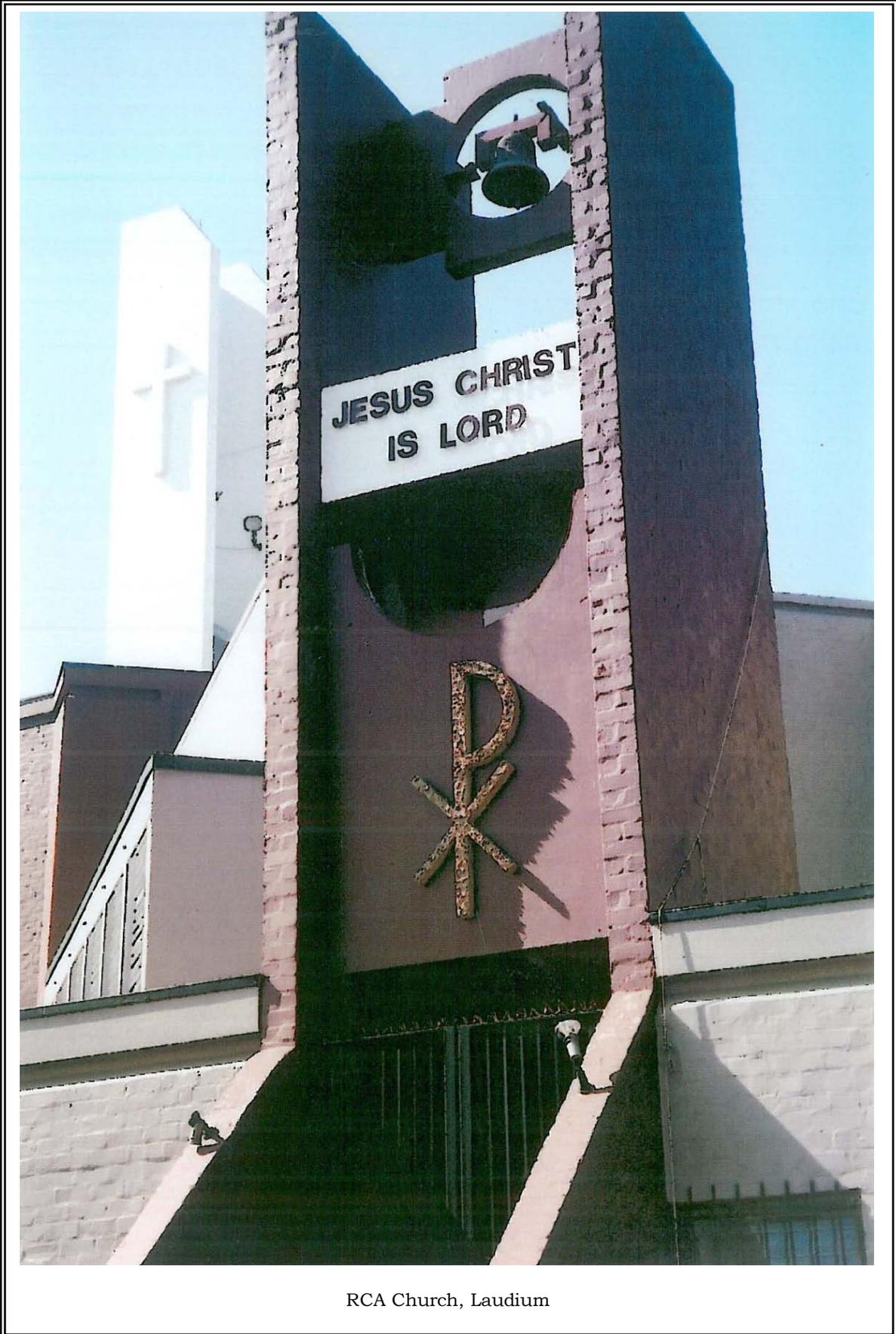
The reconstruction of the RCA began in 1986 and in 1990 the RCA adopted the Laudium Declaration, affirming that the church was Reformed, and an Evangelical Reformed Church. A period of remarkable rebuilding and growth ensued. The Laudium Declaration became the hallmark of the RCA. The specific reformed, evangelical and mission orientated qualities had to be met. Evangelists were again trained and sent out.

The RCA offers important insights to all believers in a pluralistic community. In spite of a flood of liberal theological thinking, the RCA holds zealously to her Reformed Evangelical position as expressed in the Laudium Declaration.

ABBREVIATIONS

AFM	-	Apostolic Faith Movement
ASSK	-	Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie
CMS	-	Church Missionary Society
CCLI	-	Christian Copyright Licensing International
DRC	-	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCA	-	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRMC	-	Dutch Reformed Mission Church
DRIC	-	Dutch Reformed Indian Church
EEIC	-	English East Indian Company
GSMC	-	General Synodical Missions Committee
IRC	-	Indian Reformed Church
IMC	-	Indian Mission Committee
KJV	-	Kerkjeugvereniging
KJA	-	Kerkjeugaksie (Church Youth Movement)
LD	-	Laudium Declaration
LMS	-	London Missionary Society
MYM	-	Muslim Youth Movement
NGK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (DRC)
NGKA	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (DRCA)
NGSK	-	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (DRMC)
N-Tvl	-	Northern Transvaal
RCA	-	Reformed Church in Africa
RES	-	Reformed Ecumenical Synod
REC	-	Reformed Ecumenical Council
SSK	-	Sinodale Sending Kommissie
SACC	-	South African Council of Churches
SC	-	Synodical Committee
S-Tvl	-	Southern Transvaal
SSBD	-	Sentrale Sendingbestuur van Durban
SAGM	-	South African General Mission
SANSSA	-	South African National Sunday School Association
UTM	-	Universal Truth Movement
URC	-	Uniting Reformed Church

- UDW - University Durban Westville
- URCSA - Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa
- WARC - World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- YMMA - Young Men's Muslim Association



RCA Church, Laudium

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 Relevance

If you know where you come from you will know where to go to. In terms of the age of churches, the Reformed Church in Africa (previously known as the Indian Reformed Church) is an extremely young church. The humble beginnings of this Church may yet inspire her not to repeat the mistakes that the older churches have made. For the RCA this would mean never to lose the glory of those early years or fail to teach the succeeding generations to walk humbly before God! For the older churches this study may inspire a rediscovery of the so often forgotten truth that the Church is mission.

1.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of my research is that a small and relatively young church, like the Reformed Church in Africa, can play a significant role in the wider community by witnessing to the love of Christ, in word and deed, in every context and every community that the church is sent to. In order to do this the church needs to know and understand its own history and needs to be willing to learn from its own experience.

In my research I point out what the impact of the Gospel was among people of Hindu and Muslim persuasion. If Paul who was a Pharisee devout to his Jewish religion could find salvation in Christ, the same holds true for people of other religions who may discover the saving grace in Christ Jesus. The power of the Gospel is available to all, irrespective of their religious persuasion. The story of the Reformed Church in Africa is an example of the power of the Gospel in the lives of all who would believe.

1.3 Goal of the Study

This missiological study focuses on the pre-history and history of the Reformed Church in Africa that was established under the auspices of the Dutch Reformed Church in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, on 27 August 1968.

The goal of the study is:

- To record the history of the RCA in SA.
- To evaluate the missionary contribution of the RCA.
- To draw lessons from the past in order to guide the RCA into the future.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology applied to our theme is one of quantitative and qualitative research from the vantage point of a participant observer.

In pursuing this goal I have entered into a quantitative research. This included available material relevant to my thesis as well as information gathered from various ministers, elders, deacons and members of the RCA. In my research I made use of published material as well as unpublished material, minutes of the Synod of the RCA, as well as minutes of Church Councils and Presbytery meetings where applicable.

In terms of qualitative research I have interviewed various ministers and other role players of the RCA. Their contributions assisted me to come to a more accurate conclusion in respect of the theme of my research.

As a participant observer, I was privileged to spend almost a lifetime in the ministry of the DRC Mission and later the RCA. I have established two of the congregations of the RCA and was involved in extensive mission work among Hindus and Muslims in South Africa. I was one of the founding members of the Reformed Church in Africa and served as administrator, clerk and moderator of the Synod of the RCA. The upside of this situation was that I had a very close involvement with the development of the RCA. The downside was that I had to find an objective distance to do justice to the writing of a history of the RCA. My primary concern was to present an authentic and objective profile of the Reformed Church in Africa.

The outreach of the Church to people of Muslim and Hindu persuasion requires an in depth understanding of Islam and Hinduism. A study of Hinduism and Islam in South Africa, however, has been attended to, in this thesis, in a

cursory manner. I am in this connection indebted to Prof C J A Greyling and Dr C du P le Roux, former ministers of the RCA, who have dealt with these subjects in greater detail.

1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 Mission:

In missiological circles today there are many theoretical formulations of what mission is all about. J J Kritzinger (1989:23) classifies them as the narrow and broader views of mission. The narrow definition implies that mission is predominantly interested in the spiritual salvation of man. The means of mission in this sense would be preaching, witnessing and proclamation J H Bavinck (1960:90). Orlando Costas (1977:306) states that mission is interested in many life's situations. It is within the context of a changing world that God sent his Son. Harry Boer agrees that it would be folly not to take seriously the social, political, economical, cultural and religious milieu in which the Church finds herself (1961:175). He confirms that the decisive initiating factor for mission in the early church was not obedience to a command, but the activity of the Holy Spirit since Pentecost (109-110). Gysbertus Voetius, Dutch theologian belonging to the seventeenth century Second Reformation School of Dutch theologians, was responsible for the threefold formulation of mission which according to Bosch (1991:256) is still unparalleled today (Kritzinger, Meiring, Saayman (1994:1) and which reads as follows: The conversion of the Gentiles, the glory and manifestation of God's grace, and the planting of the Church. I, as will be explained in the thesis, prefer to use a comprehensive definition of mission that includes the dimensions of *kerugma*, *diakonia*, *koinonia*, and *leitourgia*.

1.5.2 Dutch Reformed Church Family

The Dutch Reformed Church Family (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerkfamilie) comprises the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) and the three South African churches that resulted from the church's mission work in the country, the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa. The history of

these churches as well as developments in the family are discussed in the next chapters.

In this thesis both Afrikaans and English names are used for the Churches:

- Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk / The Dutch Reformed Church (NG Kerk/DRC)
- Die NG Sendingkerk Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NGSK/DRMC)
- Die NG Kerk in Afrika / Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA/DRCA)
- Die Verenigende Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid Afrika / The Uniting Reformed Church of South Africa (VGKSA/URCSA)

1.5.3 Indian Reformed Church (IRC) and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA)

The smallest and youngest member of the DRC family was initially named Indian Reformed Church. In due course (see the following chapters) the name was changed to Reformed Church in Africa.

1.6 Structure of the thesis:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Events that led to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa: early beginnings

Chapter 3: The arrival of the Indians in South Africa from 1860-1911 with particular reference to their religious affiliation and customs

Chapter 4: First efforts to share the Gospel with Hindus and Muslims in South Africa

Chapter 5: A church between the temple and the mosque: the establishment of the Reformed Church Africa

Chapter 6: Crucial issues in the establishment and life of the RCA

Chapter 7: Crises and opportunities in the life of a young church

Chapter 8: The RCA on its way to the future

Chapter 9: Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO - EVENTS THAT LED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA EARLY BEGINNINGS

In this chapter we will revisit the story of the RCA long before the establishment of such a church was envisaged. The spice route around the Cape of Good Hope welded links between the settlement at the Cape and India that foreshadowed an involvement between India and the fledgling South Africa.

We will address the issue of missionary interest shown by the churches in South Africa in the peoples of India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) before their arrival in 1860.

Finally we will analyse the events that led to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa in 1968 (then called the Indian Reformed Church).

2.1 Christianity in India in the late 19th Century

A total of 152,184 indentured immigrants arrived in South Africa from India during the period 1860 – 1911 as well as a considerable number of passenger Indians who had come at their own expense under the ordinary immigration laws of the colony. Both groups included a predominance of Hindus but there were also Muslims, Christians, a few Parsees, and a handful of Buddhists. They were all free to practise their own religion and provide their own places of worship (Brain, 1983:4).

In this thesis we are concerned with the Christian minority that arrived in the colony. The fact that many of the indentured Indians were Christians encouraged the Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Lutheran, and Baptist churches to establish missions among the Indians of Natal.

Christian immigrants supplied one of the following alternatives in the column marked “caste”: Christian, Syrian Christian, Native Christian, Malen Christian, Pariah Christian or more rarely Roman Catholic or Protestant. According to Brain in “Christian Indians in Natal (1860 - 1911)”, positive identification of the

denomination of Christian Indians is possible for only a small proportion and that to attempt it from place of origin alone is unjustifiable. (Brain, 1983:4).

Pandita Nehru said, 'The history of the Christian Church in India is as old as Christianity itself' (Potts, 1967:3). According to tradition the Apostle Thomas travelled through Pandita to preach in Northwest India, arriving in Malabar in AD 52. His mission was initially to the Jews living in Malabar but he soon began to reach out to the Hindu inhabitants and enjoyed remarkable success. It is believed by present day Syrian Christians that he was able to convert an entire Brahmin Community. His missionary success drew the enmity of a group of Brahmins at Mylapore and Thomas was martyred and buried at St Thomas Mount (Thomas, 1954:18).

Western acceptance of the tradition concerning 'Thomas's visit to India seems to rely on a statement of St Jerome who wrote in the 4th century: The Son of God was present in all places, with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyrica, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia, and with every preacher of the gospel in all the regions they traversed' (quoted by Thomas:19)'.

There is no further information about the subsequent growth of the Syrian Church in South India until the 4th century when a large colony arrived to settle in Malabar. They were reinforced in the 7th – 9th centuries when considerable numbers of Nestorians arrived until their position deteriorated with the later Muslim domination of trade and sea. (Latourette, 1944:375). In spite of the fact that Christianity was represented by minority groups it became a prominent part of the Indian scene. Yet, walled off by the prevailing social structures into what in effect was a distinct caste system, Christians apparently exercised very little if any influence upon the thought and the religious life of their fellow Indians. The Indian Christian community preserved outside connections and retained something of an alien aspect (Latourette, 1938:281-283).

After Da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India, the Portuguese established themselves permanently at Goa at the end of the 15th century, bringing with them Western Christianity as well as energetic missionaries to spread the Gospel. The arrival of Francis Xavier in 1542 marked the beginning of the first major period of Christian expansion in India. When he died 10 years later some 700,000 had

been converted to Christianity (Thomas, 1954: 62). Soon after his death divisions occurred. The Roman Syrian group owed obedience to the Pope whilst the Jacobite Syrian group recognised the authority of the Patriarch of Antioch.

Both branches of the Syrians as well as the Roman Catholics suffered persecution in the 18th century during the invasion of Jacobite Syrian and in the aftermath of the Mysore wars (Brain, 1983:169). As many as 10,000 were executed (Paolino of San Bartolomeo, 1800:149 - 150) while others reverted to Hinduism or were forcibly converted to Islam (Firth, 1976:127).

Among the Indian Christians who came to Natal were a number who identified themselves as Syrian Christians (Brain, 1983:170).

Moving now beyond the Syrian Church, Christianity penetrated all India through its two major wings, namely Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

2.1.1 Roman Catholic Missions

The Roman Catholic Church began to establish itself in India even before the Reformation, and passed through two distinct phases. The first phase that saw the arrival of small groups began in the 14th century. The first group of missionaries that intended to remain permanently in India were Franciscans who settled at Tana, near Bombay, circa 1320.

Francis Xavier (1506 - 1552) was the first Jesuit missionary who set out to India in 1541 arriving at Travancore where he won twenty thousand converts among the fishermen. He concentrated his attention on the children, encouraging them to teach their elders and to destroy idols and other symbols of their former religion. He baptized whole villages and trained and appointed catechists. He cared for the sick and the prisoners, preached, heard confessions, taught the children and founded a college to prepare the youth of several races and nations to be missionaries. Often in a single day he baptized whole villages. The converts eventually constituted a stronghold of Roman Catholicism (Latourette, 1953:928 - 930). In 1605 Robert de Nobili arrived in Madura, a centre of Tamil culture. He was able to study the Vedic writings and to argue on an intellectual level with his Brahmin listeners and eventually baptised 600 members of the

higher castes (Neill, 1964:183 - 7). In 1700 there were about 80,000 Christians in the Madura mission (Firth, 1976:120).

Outside the Portuguese and French enclaves and in Northern India the growth of Christianity was extremely slow. However, in Bengal, where both Augustinians and Jesuits were active, an extraordinary man, Don Antonio de Rozario, converted over 20,000 Hindus to Christianity. It is believed, however, that the majority subsequently lapsed into Hinduism in the face of Muslim opposition and disagreement between the two Catholic religious orders (Brain, 1983:173).

The declining power of the Portuguese hastened the collapse of the Catholic missions in India. Wherever the Portuguese withdrew, the English East India Company stepped in and Protestant missionaries entered the field. The number of Catholics in India is said to have declined from over 2 million in 1700 to about 700,000 in 1800 (Latourette, 1944:73). It is estimated that by 1815 there were only 20 missionary priests left in India (Brain, 1983:174).

The second phase or new mission effort of the Roman Catholic Church began in 1830. A number of new vicariates were established: by 1859 there were 16 in existence, including one in Burma and one in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). Up to 1914 considerable progress was made. In Bengal Jesuits worked in the west as far as Orissa. The Capuchins were active in the whole area from Bihar to the Punjab including the area of the old Tibet-Hindustan mission and Agra was proclaimed a vicariate in 1820. In 1860 a second vicariate was set up under a Capuchin Bishop to include Patna, Allahabad and Lucknow.

In Madura in South India the Jesuits re-occupied their old mission area south of the Cauvery River and established Madura as a Vicariate. The Missions Etrangères de Paris that had worked in Pondicherry since the 18th century extended its work further south to Coimbatore and Kumbakonam. A new vicariate was established in Madras in 1834 reaching the Telegus in 1875. Hyderabad was the centre of the Italian mission work. Congregations of nuns entered the field for the first time in the 19th century providing invaluable assistance as teachers, nurses, etc. An acceptable arrangement with the Archbishop of Goa, enabled Pope Leo XIII to establish a hierarchy in India in 1886 (Latourette, 1953:1,316). After 1886 Roman Catholic missions grew in the number of mission stations

established as well as the number of converts gained. Most of the converts came from the Sudras, the lowest castes, and from aboriginal tribes. In Nagput and a few other areas, there were a number of mass movements urging people to accept Christianity but this was the exception to the rule. Usually the process of conversion was long and frequently discouraging (Brain, 1983:177).

In 1861 there were an estimated 1.01 million Roman Catholics in India and this had risen to 2.22 million by 1911 (:98), the year in which Indian immigration to Natal came to an end. It seems safe to say that there were more Catholics than Christians of any other denomination among the immigrants who arrived in Natal from Madras (Brain, 1983:178). This will be dealt with in more detail in a following section.

2.1.2 Protestant Mission

The first Protestant missionaries to enter the Indian field were the Lutherans who were invited by King Frederick IV of Denmark to settle in the Danish settlements of Tranquebar in south-east India. The mission had its roots in Pietism. The first two missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, had been students at the Pietist Centre, Halle. They learned Tamil and won converts from Hinduism and Roman Catholicism (Latourette, 1953:933). Ziegenbalg was particularly active in translating into Tamil the New Testament and part of the Old Testament. The first Indian pastor was ordained in 1733 and several others followed. (Neill, 1964:228 - 9)

2.1.2.1 Baptist Missions

Protestant interest in India was rekindled by the Moravian movement and in 1777 Moravian Brethren worked at Serampore in Bengal, North India. In 1793 the father of Protestant Missionaries, William Carey, from the Baptist Missionary Society, and his colleagues arrived in India. After spending some years in other parts of the country, and after overcoming many setbacks, Carey and his party settled their mission in Carey Serampore and translated the Bible into various Indian languages, beginning with Bengali. By 1837 the British Baptists had translated and printed the Bible and parts of the Bible into 46 languages or dialects (Potts, 1967:79). Latourette (1953:1,031) points out the tremendous

impact that the British Revival of the 18th Century had on missions. The emphasis of the revival was upon the transformation of the individual. Those so committed were ardent missionaries and sought to win others to a similar experience. They also strove to alleviate or abolish social conditions which warped or destroyed human lives. The result was radiant hope and intense and unremitting activity.

Henry Martyn arrived in India in 1806 as a Chaplain of the East India Company exclaiming in his diary: 'Now let me burn out for God!' He did just that and established schools for Indians, preached to Muslims and Hindus and translated the New Testament into three different languages, before he died 6 years later (Latourette, 1953:1,034).

The American Baptists began missionary activities in India in 1835. Rev Samuel Day established a mission among the Telegus of Madras. In 1840 he opened a Mission at Nellore where he experienced many setbacks; this mission became known as the Lone Star Mission (Downie, 1924). Together with Rev S van Husen they persevered and opened another station at Ongole where their converts numbered 20,865 in 1882. In 1886 they had 31 missionaries and 20 stations (:304). Brain (1953), who made a comprehensive study of the Indians who immigrated to Natal, discovered that many of them came from this area. By 1900 there were about 65,000 Telegu Baptist Christians in the Madras Presidency alone (Brain, 1953:181).

The Canadian Baptist missionaries entered India in 1866 and established a mission near the mouth of the Godavery River. There were a fairly large number of Indian Christians who gave their place of origin as Godavery and may have been converts of the Canadian Baptists (Brain, 1953:181).

2.1.2.2 Anglican Missions

The English East India Company (EEIC) was opposed to Christian missionary activity of any kind, fearing they would lose the goodwill of the Indians and reduce the growth of trade. Carey, for one, went to India against the express instructions of the EEIC. It was not until 1813 under the influence of William Wilberforce that missionaries were permitted to work in Company territory. This marked the

beginning of the Protestant missionary drive to evangelise India. From this date the London Missionary Society entered the Indian mission field in earnest.

The Anglican Church could now extend its work in India. Bishop Thomas Middleton, Bishop of Calcutta, appointed archdeacons at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The Church Missionary Society, the evangelical branch of the Anglican Church mission, sent 26 men to India, 14 went north to Bengal and up the valley of the Ganges, while 11 worked in South India in Godavery River. Work was also begun among the Telegus while the German missionary Pfander worked among the Muslims in Agra. Centres were opened in the Punjab from 1849. The Calcutta mission was extended into Assam.

The Church Missionary Society attempted to revitalise and assist the Syrian Church. Although the close association with the Syrians ended in failure, much was done for the education of the youth, many of them becoming Anglicans.

By 1851 Protestant missions had only 339 missionaries in India. Protestant Christians counted 91,000 of which 51,300 were Anglican converts from Tinnevely and Travancore.

The Indian mutiny of 1857 affected Christian missions in Northern India. Some 38 chaplains and missionaries were killed together with 20 Indian catechists and their wives.

The diocese of Madras enjoyed spectacular growth under the devoted leadership of Frederick Gell who was bishop from 1861 to 1899. During his administration, Anglican converts increased from 39,938 to 122,371 (Brain, 1953:142). Theological education of a high standard was provided by two colleges maintained by the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

No other non-Roman Catholic denomination covered so much of India as did the Anglicans. Of all the Protestant denominations the Anglicans had more missionaries, more educational and medical institutions and more converts in India than any other. It might be assumed that a large proportion of the

Christians who came to Natal would have been members of the Anglican community, but the exact numbers cannot be ascertained. No immigrant gave his caste as Anglican but several from the known Anglican mission areas described themselves as Protestants (Brain, 1983:186).

2.1.2.3 Methodist Missions

The Wesleyan-Methodists started their Indian missions in 1817 but it was not until the 1850's that the pioneering period of uncertainties gave way to encouraging expansion and growth.

The largest of the enterprises founded by American religious bodies in India was that of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In numbers of missionaries and of the Christian community they had gathered, it ranked next to those of the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans. In 1856 under the leadership of William Butler, work began in the United Provinces. By 1864 nine cities were entered and twelve congregations were established with a large membership.

According to (Latourette, 1971) *The Great Century, a history of the expansion of Christianity* (Vol VI, New York and London: 141-142) the Diocese of Madras enjoyed a striking development under Frederick Gell, who was appointed bishop to India in 1861 at the age of 40, and remained until 1899. A celibate, he gave himself with single devotion and during his earlier years in India toured his vast see incessantly. During his administration the number of Baptized Anglicans increased from 39,938 to 122,371 and the body of Indian clergy from 27 to 154.

Federick Gell was succeeded by Henry Whithead who came to the post from the principleship of Bishops College, Calcutta and the leadership of the Oxford Mission. Frederick Gell continued the work with great zeal. He urged the Church to broaden its field and eventually regarded all of India as his parish (Thomburn, 1887:425). By 1914 all of India was divided into six conferences yet its numerical growth was very unevenly distributed. Schools, orphanages and hospitals, etc. were established (Latourette, 1944:173).

2.1.2.4 Lutheran Missions

We saw earlier that the Lutherans were the first Protestants to enter the Indian mission field when they established the Danish-Halle settlement. Next the Basel mission sent missionaries to Bangalore in 1834. By 1914 they had by far the largest Lutheran missionary body. The mission established independent mercantile and industrial companies to help carry the mission's work (Latourette, 1971:180).

The American Lutherans established a mission among the Telegus in the 1850's. A very discouraging decade followed. The American Civil War and dissensions in the Lutheran General Synod led to lack of funds and no further recruitments. A new impetus was given to the work in 1869. Mass movements began after the famine of 1876. In that year the mission numbered 49,605 converts (Latourette, 1971:176). The main centres of the American Lutherans were Gunter and Rajamundry. According to Brain (1983:190) a large group of Indian Christians in Natal came from these towns.

The fact that we are mostly concerned with the Reformed or Presbyterian missions in India and their possible influence upon the Dutch Reformed Church at the time, gives us reason to look at their work in India in greater detail.

2.1.2.5 Presbyterian and Reformed Missions

In 1829 Alexander Duff went to India as the first missionary of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He was determined to introduce a form of Christian higher education which would both undermine Hinduism and be a safeguard against religious agnosticism. Duff formed a friendship with Ram Mohan Roy, a deeply religious Brahmin and founder of the Brahmo Samaj, and with his assistance he opened his first school in Calcutta. Duff gained some converts from the more highly educated castes and from them he trained Indian leaders (Latourette, 1971:115-6). He energetically pushed for schools for Indian women. He helped in the creation of a medical school and a hospital in Calcutta. Duff's greatest contribution was to Indian education. The results in the permeation of India with Christian ideas were more striking than direct conversions. Another

great Scottish missionary, John Wilson concentrated his efforts in Bombay from 1829. Wilson quickly acquired the languages of the main communities and established contacts with Hindus, Muslims and Parsees. Wilson began many schools and was the first vice-chancellor of the University of Bombay (Latourette, 1971:118, 9).

In 1844, Stephen Hislop, also from Scotland, opened a mission at Nagpur, in the Central Provinces, working among Tamils, Telegus and Mahrattas. He established a college that was affiliated to the University of Calcutta. A school founded by Anderson, later developed into the Madras Christian College and won an outstanding place in Christian higher education in India. It was in education that Scottish Presbyterianism made its most distinctive contribution (Latourette, 1971:120). In 1841 the Welsh Presbyterians arrived in India to work among the Khasis people of Assam. The revival which deeply stirred Wales in 1904, spread to India and had profound effects in the Khasia Hills. Schools were opened and churches gathered. The Irish Presbyterians bought land for farm colonies on which to settle their converts so as to form a strong community and protect them from persecution (Brain, 1983:187).

In the lower part of eastern Bengal the Presbyterian Churches of Australia and New Zealand were also represented in their missionary endeavours (Latourette, 1971:158). It was however the Presbyterians from Canada that had a much larger contingent in India. Beginning as early as the 1850's Canadian Presbyterians began participating in missions in India. By 1875 they constituted an official body to undertake missions to India. A field was found in Central India in the state of Indore. Several stations were opened and churches gathered. Schools were developed culminating in a college in Indore, where Indian clergy were trained. A women's and girls' industrial home was founded, a leper asylum was established together with hospitals and a mission press (Latourette, 1971:160).

In Punjab missionaries from the family of Reformed and Presbyterian churches worked from 1855, when Andrew Gordon and his family, sent by the Associate Presbyterian Synod, arrived in India. Three years later the Synod joined to form the United Presbyterian Church. The 1880's saw a rapid increase in church membership, from 1,373 in 1891 to 8,033 in 1893. This advance was registered

chiefly among the Presbyterian and Wesleyan-Methodist Churches. There were also solid developments in schools, in hospitals and dispensaries, including a theological seminary and a college. In 1913 there were 54 congregations, a church membership of 31,631 and a Christian community of 58,034 (Latourette, 1971:123, 164, 5).

2.1.3 Overview

In 1911 Roman Catholics numbered 2.2 million and Protestants in 1914 almost 1 million. Both Roman Catholics and Protestants were most numerous in the South of India, below the latitude of Bombay. Here too were most of the Syrian Christians (Latourette, 1971:194).

It is noteworthy too that most of the Christians came from the depressed and underprivileged members of the Indian society. For those who became Christians this meant a better life and future. The important place that schools and colleges enjoyed in the wake of the missionary enterprise meant a remarkable growth in literacy, job opportunities and leadership.

Of the Protestant groups, the Anglicans were the most widespread and numerically the strongest. The Presbyterian and Reformed, the Methodist and the Baptist groups were also prominent.

Reading the story of Protestant missionary endeavour in India reveals a striking resemblance as to missionary methods and procedures employed, in spite of the multiplicity of denominations and missionary societies engaged in propagating Protestant forms of Christianity. Through the programmes of most societies and denominations ran a common pattern. Apart from the obvious endeavour to preach the Gospel to the crowds and to the individual, Protestant Missions placed great emphasis on schools and higher forms of education. Most regarded schools as a means of winning converts; others did it from the humanitarian point of view, many placed the emphasis upon training leadership for the emerging churches. Great efforts were made for the translation of Scripture and the printing and distribution of Christian literature. Much emphasis was placed on medical care. This was partly for the purpose of relieving physical suffering and partly as a means of propagating the Christian faith. On the eve of 1914 there

were 335 medical missionaries in India (Latourette, 1971:191). During a severe famine, missionaries provided relief. Mass movements of the outcastes towards Christianity led to marked efforts to help improve the physical status of these poorest of the poor. In the process of the growth of the work, mission stations were set up and many churches planted.

It was specifically in India that great strides were made on the ecumenical front. There were many efforts to bring together those of the same denominational families. This culminated, in 1904, in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in India (Parker, 1936:94). In 1905, the United Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church in America, the London Missionary Society, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions formed themselves into the South India United Church. The missionary movement from the beginning has had a commendable bias away from sectarianism. And even when strong denominational societies and boards were organised, they fell in with the trend toward co-operation and comity, their missionaries, on the whole, being less exclusive than their brethren at home (Lamott, 1958:159).

William Carey, who blazed a trail for Protestant missions in India proposed a decennial conference composed of all denominations from the four quarters of the world to meet at the Cape of Good Hope regularly from 1810. This was in fact the starting point of the present ecumenical movement in all its ramifications (Hogg, 1952:17).

We noted in the above section the various places in India where missionary outreach planted the Church. How many of these Christians eventually came to Natal and what their situation was is the question we will address in the following section.

2.2 The South African Connection

Crafford points out that missionary interest was stimulated in South Africa by a good number of missionaries who, on their way to or return from India, stopped over at the Cape (Crafford, 1982:16). During the ministry of Rev Kalden (1695 - 1707, the two well-known Danish Halle missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, disembarked at Cape Town on their way to India. They saw the sad

plight of the Khoi and wrote a letter to the responsible bodies, pleading for someone that could come to work among them (Moorrees 1937:362, 3). In 1715 Ziegenbalg stopped for the second time on his return to Europe, to report personally on the dire need for missions in the Cape. Among those that heard him was Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the father of the Moravian Movement. He would later send Georg Schmidt to the Cape as missionary (Crafford 1982:16). Their involvement with mission work in India, indirectly linked India (and Ceylon) with the Cape. This was remarkably strengthened by the departure of William Carey to India in 1793 (marking the beginning of the Modern Mission Era). Two leaders of this new era at the Cape were the ministers Helperus Ritzema van Lier (1786 - 1793) and Michiel Christiaan Vos (1794 – 1818). According to Crafford both were deeply concerned for the spiritual well-being of the Khoi and the slaves at the Cape (Crafford, 1982:22, 3). By 1788 sixty Christians had resolved to join Van Lier in sharing the Gospel with the Khoi and the slaves (Kriel, 1961:14, 5). Representatives of the London Missionary Society and the Dutch Missionary Society linked up with this group to establish the South African Missionary Society in 1799 under the auspices of Rev M C de Vos and Dr J T van der Kemp (Crafford, 1982:22, 6).

One of the members of the group of friends concerned for mission, Mathilda Smith of Tulbach, who assisted Vos in his work among the slaves at the Cape, corresponded with Christians in India and various other countries. This fact underlines the missionary interest in India of members of the Dutch Reformed Church (Marais, 1919:100, 1).

2.2.1 First Dutch Reformed Missionary to Ceylon, Rev M C Vos (1804 - 1809)

Rev Vos was actively involved in overseas missionary work before he became a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. As representative of the London Missionary Society he left South Africa for Ceylon in 1804 as a missionary. This was the first contact between a South African church leader and Ceylon and India (Cronje, 1981:275). According to Du Plessis, Vos mentions the poor condition of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon (Du Plessis, 1911:266) and of the joy among the people to have a minister in their midst (Du Plessis, 1911:264).

Previously people had to have their children baptised in the Roman Catholic Church because there was no minister to officiate. The Government placed him in Galle and he was advised to learn one of the vernacular languages. He began his ministry by distributing tracts and preaching wherever the opportunity presented itself. He taught catechism in spite of the fact that there was no material available (Du Plessis, 1911:264-270).

Vos mentions the existence, at the time, of an old law in Ceylon that prohibited children from receiving their inheritance unless they were baptised. The young people in school, who requested baptism, received baptism with little or no catechism. The question of repentance, conversion and faith hardly featured. The result was that the church had members who were not truly Christians. Most of them were nominal Christians, Vos concludes (Cronje, 1981:276).

Een honderd duizend van degenen, die Christenen genaamd worden (omdat zijn gedoopt zijn), behoeven niet naar het heidendom terug te gaan, want zij zijn nooit iets anders dan heidenen geweest (Du Plessis, 1911:266).

2.2.2 Revival of Missionary Interest: The Boer Prisoners of War (1900 - 1902)

At the turn of the century, by October 1899, South Africa found herself in a full-scale war with Britain. The Anglo Boer War, also known as the Second War of Independence, resulted in 26,600 Boers interned at prisoners of war camps in India, Ceylon, Bermuda and St Helena, while women and children were placed in concentration camps in South Africa. Of the 28,900 that died in the camps, 22,000 were children (Kok, 1971:12). The Afrikaner Republics finally agreed to negotiate a peace settlement with Kitchener and Milner on May 31st, 1902 and the entire South Africa came under the British flag.

The period of exile (1900 – 1902) proved a very painful experience. The many graves, of especially young people, in these far-flung countries solemnly attest to this fact. Yet, there was also an upside to the exile. Du Plessis, in his detailed study of the missionary involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church (Ned. Geref. Kerk) in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), refers to the circumstances of this period of exile and concludes that it was used by God for a sweeping spiritual revival among the Boer

prisoners (Du Plessis, 1996:101, 103). Their relationship with the Lord was strengthened and many were converted (:101). At the Diyatalawa Camp in Ceylon much quality time was spent with the Word and in prayer. A thousand Boers divided spontaneously into small groups to pray and intercede during the evenings. This time of scripture reading and prayer in small groups was a daily occurrence. They were so intensely devoted to the Lord that they made a lasting impression upon the British authorities and the local population.

Apart from Diyatalawa there were three other smaller camps in Ceylon: Ragama, Hambantota and Urgamanhandiya. At the latter camp, 39 prisoners of war were received as new members of the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon. All in all 5,000 prisoners of war were deported to Ceylon. Approximately 4,000 were interned at Diyatalawa (Du Plessis, 1996:77, 90).

The positive attitude of the church towards missions, prior to the Anglo Boer War, survived the ravages of war. During the war it seemed as if the church and its missionary zeal would be destroyed, but the exile in foreign countries and the resultant renewal and spiritual revival of many of those interned had the opposite effect. There, in a strange land, their spiritual eyes were opened and their hearts were strangely stirred for the salvation of the lost in Ceylon and elsewhere. Crafford points out that hundreds of the prisoners of war offered their services towards mission (Crafford, 1982:146). In Diyatalawa alone 101 indicated their interest to become missionaries and requested the church to provide the necessary training. They knew they had to start with mission work at the camp and began to reach out to the indifferent among them. Similar reports of a renewal of interest in missions at the camps in St Helena, India and Bermuda filtered through to the church in South Africa. The Ceylon Assistance Missionary Society (*Ceylon Hulp Zendelinggenootschap*) was established to collect funds for someone desirous to preach the Gospel to the people of Ceylon. The Reformed Church in Colombo was enabled to appoint an evangelist on behalf of the prisoners of war (Kok, 1971:40). Later this body supported the first South African set aside for this work in Ceylon. He was Rev A J K de Klerk who arrived in Colombo in 1925. After his untimely death he was succeeded by Rev S F Skeen in 1927, also supported by the Ceylon Auxiliary Missionary Society. The prisoners of war undertook to pay one shilling (10 cents) per year each towards this body. Concurrently young men from the camp in Ceylon (Diyatalawa) formed the South

African Youth Penny Society (*Suid-Afrikaansche Jongeliede Pennie Vereeniging*) undertaking to pay one penny (one cent) every month for missions (Crafford, 1982:146-147).

At St Helena the Christian Endeavour Missionary Artisans' Society (*Christelike Strewers Zendeling Handwerkers Genootskap*) was formed to produce articles that could be sold in aid of missions (Crafford, 1982:146). Early in 1902, the St Helena Missionary Assistance Commission (*St Helena Zending Hulp Commissie*) was established. The members of this body undertook to do everything in their power for the extension of the Kingdom of God. They proposed to do this through their congregations and church councils. Eighteen congregations in Transvaal and twenty in the Free State provided volunteers to serve on this commission. Rev A F Louw was the stimulus behind this renewal of interest in missions (Louw, 1963:46ff).

The same revival of missionary zeal occurred in the prisoner of war camps of Bermuda and India. Two hundred young men from all the camps offered themselves for missions. In 1903 the so-called Boer Missionary School (*Boere Zending School*) opened at Worcester with Rev A F Louw as principal. At least 175 young men offered themselves here for missions as a sacrifice for the two Republics (Crafford, 1982:147).

Sixty-one ministers from South Africa were commissioned to provide pastoral care for the prisoners of war (Crafford, 1982:146). Apart from the establishment of missionary organizations at the camps they were also instrumental in the forming of Christian endeavour and youth organisations as well as the provision of church council meetings, church services, prayer meetings, Bible study meetings, catechism classes, missionary conferences, missionary classes and personal interviews (:146 du Plessis, 1966:84-88, 92-95). Outstanding work was done by the ministers A F Louw in St Helena; D J Minnaar and P Roux in Ceylon; and A P Burger, J P Liebenberg, D J Viljoen and J de V de Wet in India (Crafford, 1982:146).

From the Diyatalawa Camp we learn that every Sunday was set aside for a prayer meeting for missions. Some were willing to remain behind in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to do missionary work. The Indians are calling, *Come over and help*

us (Die Kerkbode, 1902:445). In 1901, 32 young people stood up, indicating that they were called by God for missions (Die Kerkbode, 1901:708). At the Ahmednagar Camp in India three services were held every Sunday. Almost all services were attended by Indian enquirers (Die Kerkbode. 1901:345). About 20 young people decided to give themselves to missions (Die Kerkbode, 1902:160).

The reports of spiritual revival and missionary zeal brought back to South Africa as well as the many articles published in *Die Kerkbode* and *De Strever* at the time, revived missionary interest in the Dutch Reformed Church back home. The loss suffered in terms of the missionary front, where most of the work was brought to a close, was indeed serious. However, with regards to the home front, where the spiritual revival and missionary zeal of the prisoners of war stirred many, the gain was enormous: this revival would carry the missionary endeavour of the Dutch Reformed Church into the following decade.

CHAPTER THREE - THE ARRIVAL OF THE INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA FROM 1860 - 1911 WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THEIR RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND CUSTOMS

What a splendid threefold cord will cotton, indigo and sugar not make to our anchor of hope! Sugar as a third strand has proved a rope in itself to hang ourselves with in Natal, for the sugar industry was the first and the main reason for the importation of Indian labour (Calpin, :1).

Commission after Commission of Enquiry found that Europeans had no objection to the Indian, as long as he remained a labourer. It was the trader and the free Indian they feared (Calpin, :17).

Muni Gadu, who left South Africa with his Colonial born children... failed to trace his relatives. He decided to return to South Africa. When he reached Dar-es-Salaam he wrote to the interior minister of South Africa, for leave to enter Natal. When he was refused they set out to walk 1,000 miles to eventually reach Zululand. At the Natal border they were arrested and deported to India (Calpin, :56).

The Indians are the only part of the population of Natal who came by special and urgent invitation (Brookes, 1965:85). The express reason for their immigration to the Colony was directly related to the economy of the Colony, particularly the agricultural sector and the need for suitable workers in the sugar cane industry.

In the chapter we will carefully analyse the religious affiliations and customs of the Indians who came as contract workers and immigrants in 1860. We will also give a cursory glance at the Christians amongst them and how their numbers affected the local churches in South Africa. How did the churches react in terms of missions to the Hindu majority and Muslim minority that settled in South Africa in the early years? Why was the Dutch Reformed Church such a latecomer on the scene of missions to the Indian settlers?

3.1 The Indian Immigrants to South Africa

3.1.2 Natal Sugar Industry

In common with many other local enterprises, the Natal sugar industry owed its origin to the process of European emigration which characterized the middle decades of the nineteenth century. The cultivation of grass and root crops for the production of raw sugars was associated with some of the most important developments in the international economy. A growing demand for more sugar and the expansion of production had many effects. A new international circulation of competitive labour to work on the sugar estates followed in times of falling prices and slave emancipation. The demand for cheap sources of labour grew dramatically. Affordable labour was supplied predominantly by Asian countries. The sugar industry in Natal owed something to all these influences. During its initial phase of development the sugar industry experienced its fastest-growth rate due to a combination of favourable prices, a protective tariff structure, and low wages for indigenous blacks and after 1860 for recruited indentured Indians.

From the annexation of Natal in 1843 until the granting of responsible Government in 1893 Britain was guided, as in her other colonies, by two principles: to retain the Colony for strategic and economic reasons and to keep expenditure as low as possible to lighten the burden for the British taxpayer (Brain, 1985:198-9).

3.1.3 Negotiations and Recruitment

As early as October 1851 a public meeting in Durban called for labour from the East Indies, a suggestion strongly opposed by Edmund Morewood and William Campbell who protested that there was no shortage of African labour (Brain, :200). Those planters who were in favour of the importation of labour into the Colony took the opportunity offered by the forthcoming visit of Sir George Grey, the newly appointed Governor at the Cape, to Natal in 1855 to raise the matter again. This time the proposal was implemented. The planters who had been encouraged to immigrate to Natal, argued that the British Government was morally obliged to provide them with labour. In 1859 the

'Natal Mercury' produced an editorial with the opening sentence: 'The fate of the Colony hangs on a thread and that thread is labour' (*Natal Mercury*, 28 April 1859 as quoted in Brain, :200).

A bill providing for Indian immigration was passed in 1857, but disallowed by the Secretary of State of the Colonies. The Indian Government only reluctantly consented to sanction the immigration of Indian labourers to Natal, and stipulated that the whole responsibility rested most definitely with Natal (Palmer, 1957:16, 19).

The Colony was responsible for the transport of the Indian labourers, and employers had to pay three fifths of the passage money (Palmer, :16). All the necessary arrangements in India and at the ports of departure were to be made by emigration agents who acted as representatives of the Natal Colony. They had all their duties carefully prescribed by the 'Government of Natal' (Natal Government Gazette: 20.11.1874).

The Lieutenant-Governor was to appoint an immigrant agent who was to keep a register of immigrants, to assign them to employers for a period not exceeding three years. Husband and wife, parent and child were always to be allotted together and the wishes of the immigrants were to be respected as far as possible. The Indian labourer who was indentured for three years, could be re-indentured for another two years (possibly with another employer), but after these five years he would be free.

Few of the colonists realized that the continuous immigration was to lead to the establishment of a permanent Indian community in Natal. What the planters wanted, did not comply with what the people of Natal apparently understood they would be provided with, a continuous supply of reliable cheap labour. The Indian Government, on the other hand, envisaged the movement as a permanent migration which would relieve the population pressure in India. It, therefore, laid down that the emigrants were not to be forced to return to India. They also insisted that Indians who wished to remain in the Colony as free workers, should come under the ordinary laws applying to the rest of the population (Palmer, :26, 27). The Durban City Council requested the immigration of Indian labourers on a limited scale but when Sir George Grey communicated with the

British Government there was no indication of limited immigration (Thompson, 1952:10). In 1855 he writes to the British Minister of Colonies that sufficient Indian immigrants for Natal will turn the Colony into a rich sugar and coffee producing country. He wanted to leave the impression with the authorities that Indian immigration would make Natal a rich British Colony (:9, 22).

As far as Natal was concerned, Act 12 of 1872 provided for the appointment of a Protector of Indian immigrants. It was his task to receive the formal requests from the colonists for Indian contract labourers.

The Immigrants Trust Board of Natal was to monitor the work of the emigration agent and the recruitment officers and to take care of the general well-being of the emigrants that were waiting at the depots for passage or transportation. Natal eventually opened emigration offices in Madras and Calcutta. The recruitment officer had to obtain a certificate of good character from the magistrate of the district in order to be licensed by the emigration agent. Natal paid such low fees for the work of the recruitment officers that they would only recruit for Natal when they had no other recruitment work to do (Beyers, 1976:9, 10).

The Government of Natal made sure that proper printed notices with all the relevant information were disseminated by the recruitment officers. An example of the information on such a notice issued by the Natal Calcutta agent included that the following: shipment would be free; medical treatment and the provision of medicine would be free at all depots, during the journey and at the Natal plantations; freedom of religion would be enjoyed in Natal and a free passage would be provided on return to India. Complete details regarding their prospective work, wages and rations were provided; males were required to work six days a week for nine hours daily (Beyers, 1976:10, 11).

The Medical Inspector had the responsibility to ensure that no prospective immigrant would be allowed to emigrate if he was physically incapacitated. On occasion as many as 50% of the applicants were turned down for medical reasons. Following registration at the magistrate's office they were transported to Calcutta or Madras. At these depots they were once again checked for physical ailments but this time by the depot doctor appointed by the Natal authorities. (Beyers, 1976:11 - 13).

In spite of all these precautions farmers complained bitterly about the physical condition of Indian labourers. This was usually the case when smaller groups were shipped to Natal or during certain emigration periods. One of the causes was the fact that Indian women could not be forced to be treated by physicians and caused the spread of disease. (Beyers, 1976:14).

On paper the contracts of the indentured Indians appeared reasonable enough at the time. In practice working conditions were far from satisfactory, for employers commonly spent as little as possible on the needs and welfare of their workers. On the labour-intensive sugar plantations where between 60 and 70% of the Indians worked, a twelve to fifteen-hour day was common practice during the busy seasons. Workers were often poorly housed and did not always receive their full rations. (Brain, 1989:253, 4).

By the late 1880's informal as well as formal controls had whittled away their legal rights. The employers received sympathetic support from the local courts and the police, so that the powers of the Protector became progressively weaker (Brain, 1989:255). The appointment of the Indian Immigration Trust Board in 1874, consisting predominantly of employers made the task of the Protector extremely difficult. Many farmers were reluctant to grant employees leave which they required when they wanted to lay a charge of assault. In 1891 the position was improved when it was resolved that indentured labourers on their way to lay a charge could not be prosecuted if they did not have a pass with them. Later in 1903 however, it was expected that the employee must first obtain a pass from the magistrate before he could lay a charge. If the magistrate was a friend of the employer, the chances of obtaining the necessary document would be meagre (Beyers, 1976:194). The only way that the Protector could act against the employer was to disallow any further indentured Indians or in serious cases to remove all indentured labourers from his estate (Beyers, 1976:194). In the absence of formal channels for complaint, other forms of protest were employed. These included malingering, absconding, petty larceny and the destruction of property belonging to the employer. Organised protests were rare, and when they occurred, were small in scale and short-lived (Brain, 1989:255).

Since non-plantation labour was generally better treated and better paid, many Indians preferred to work for the Natal Government Railways, the municipalities,

or for a private concern like the Nelsrust Dairies at Baynesfield or the Clan Syndicate. Even the coal-mines, despite their many hazards, were preferred by some workers to the large estates. Ex indentured or free Indians who chose to remain in the country were able to sell their labour in most parts of South Africa. Many entered the economy as farmers, smallholders, independent fishermen, tradesmen, hawkers or traders (Brain, 1989:255, 257). Indian artisans and tradesmen whose skills had initially been welcomed in a Colony where the white tradesmen were in short supply, soon came into conflict with the white artisans, who complained bitterly about their loss of income due to the 'unfair' way in which Indians were cutting their costs. This resulted in restrictions upon Indians who wished to sell their goods in the market-place.

The free Indian shopkeepers, however, experienced competition as well with the 'passenger' Indians from about 1880. Within a few years most of the original shopkeepers disappeared to be replaced by 'passengers' (Brain, 1989:257, 8).

3.1.4 Passenger Indians

Passenger Indians, so called because they paid their own way to the Natal Colony, came mainly from Western India, in what is today the state of Gujarat. They came from towns like Rajkot and Porbander and a host of villages in Kathiawar, as well as from Broach, Surat, Navsari and Bombay and the nearby villages. There were Gujarati speaking Muslims and Hindus. Among the Muslims were groups like the Memons, Bohras and Kokanis. Other groups included Khojas, followers of the Aga Khan or Shia Muslims, and Parsees (Brain, 1989:258). The many villages from which they came were remarkably close with the result that word got around quickly of opportunities in Natal and the Transvaal. A common origin or shared language or religion often created a strong bond among them and this frequently drew them to the same town in South Africa. Hence Pietersburg, Potchefstroom and Bethal in the Transvaal attracted persons predominantly from Bhanvad, Runavav and Eru respectively (Brain, 1989:258, 9). More detailed information on the origins of the 'passenger' Indians can be obtained from the three volumes of the *South African Indian Who's Who* for 1938, 1940 and 1960.

Because the 'passengers' served the needs of the indentured and ex-indentured population, they settled largely on the coastal belt until about 1885. They then

began to move into the hinterland, where they saw the opportunity to extend their activities to the Black population, often underselling their white competitors. By 1900 the bulk of the Black trade was in their hands. The extent of their penetration is shown by the fact that in 1908, 1,008 licences were issued to Indians in all parts of Natal (excepting Utrecht and Paulpietersburg). The total number of licences issued to non-Indians in that year was 2,034 (:259 - 60). (Government House Records, 1599:374/1908).

The large scale 'passenger' or 'Arab' traders (as they were colloquially called) had the advantage of being able to draw on the capital resources and expertise of family businesses and as the Protector remarked, employed few if any outsiders of any race (Government House Records, 1598, 1886:210). Smaller Indian traders bought goods from them on credit. M C Camrooden had nearly 400 shopkeepers and hawkers on his books, owing him more than 25,500 pounds (Swan, 1989:9). With their large commercial interest, the traders considered themselves an elite group. The small Indian traders, who were more numerous and whose interests were linked with those of the merchants, readily identified with them (Brain, 1989:262).

These merchants and many others who arrived in the Colony brought with them knowledge of wholesale and retail trade. The dominance of the 'Arab' newcomers over the earlier ex-indentured traders was most apparent in Durban (Bhana, 1985:241). The 'Arab' trader worked for longer hours; thus he persevered and pleased his customers. He was also adaptable. He saw the opportunity for commercial ventures into the Black market (Brain, 1989:246).

Natal's Indian traders played an essential role in the economic development of the Colony. A J Arkin has calculated that the annual combined turnover for both Indian traders and hawkers in South Africa in 1904 was nearly 25 million pounds divided evenly between the two (Brain, 1989:114).

Once the laws governing Indian immigration to Natal had received Royal assent and the Government of India passed the necessary enabling legislation, the first Indians were introduced into Southern Africa. They carried with them Natal's hopes for a prosperous future, but unsuspected by the colonists, also the seeds of discord and traumatic confrontation (Huttenback, 1971:7).

The first Indian labourers arrived on the 'Truro' on 16 November 1860. Thereafter until 1866 when immigration was temporarily stopped, a total of 6,445 immigrants comprising of men, women and children arrived in the Colony (Brain, 1985:202). The indentured Indians in the sugar industry helped to alleviate the extended crisis which it experienced during the latter decades of the century by helping many estates in production. Both indentured and free Indians became involved in many other areas of local economic activity (Brain, 1985:198). In 1911 when the importation of indentured labour came to an end, a total of 152,184 Indians comprising of men, women and children had arrived in the Colony to complete a five year period of indenture.

On paper the contracts appeared reasonable at the time but in practice the working conditions were far from satisfactory. Employers usually spent as little as possible on the needs and welfare of their workers (Brain, 1989:253).

The Government expenditure required for the process of introducing Indian labour to the Colony was not well taken by the up-country colonists. This was the beginning of a controversy between coast planters and up-country settlers that was to be a sore point when indentured immigration came to an end in 1911 (Huttenback, 1971:4 - 5).

After the initial group of 413 immigrants returned on the *Red Riding Hood and Umvoti* to India in 1871 with serious complaints regarding the way they were treated in the Colony, the whole matter of immigration to Natal was reviewed by the Indian Government; matters changed for the good. However, this time most time-expired Indian labourers did not return to India as had been anticipated by Natal. By 1891 there were 41,142 Indians in Natal, 46,788 Europeans and 455,983 Africans according to the census of that year (Huttenback, 1971:14).

3.1.5 Socio-Political Position

The presence of a significant body of Indians permanently resident in Natal became progressively more undesirable to the majority of white settlers as the number of immigrants grew. The fact that upon becoming free they would have the same rights as all other British subjects was particularly unacceptable. However if many colonists thought that Indians in Natal had too many rights, the

Government of India thought they did not have enough. The Wragg Commission that reported in 1887 on the question of the whole Indian problem came under heavy up-country pressure to recommend the abolition of indentured Indian labour in Natal. Regarding the proposal that Indians already in Natal whose indentures had expired be immediately sent back to India, Commissioner J R Saunders replied:

I wish to express my strong condemnation of any such idea. What is it but taking the best of our servants and then refusing them the enjoyment of their reward, forcing them back (if we could but we cannot) when their best days have been spent for our benefit. Where to? Why? Back to the prospect of starvation from which they sought to escape when they were young. (Wragg Commission Report, Chap XIV:100, as quoted by Huttenback, 1971:16).

During 1880 - 1881 several attempts were made to deprive the Indians of the right to vote in parliamentary elections. It soon became evident that the franchise question was not to be resolved. Accordingly, Natal hoped to convince the British and Indian Governments to permit the termination of all indentures in India itself and that Indians be forced to remain in service for the full 10 year period. Neither the British nor the Indian Government could accede to such a request (Huttenback, 1971:20 - 21).

Frustrated, Natal did what it could. From 1891 all land grants were stopped; no immigrant would be allowed to leave Natal before the conclusion of 10 years residence (Huttenback, 1971:22). Despite all advantages gained from the Indian presence, white Natal was prepared to do very little for its new Indian fellow men (Huttenback, 1971:34).

By 1894 there were already 43,000 Indians to 40,000 Europeans according to Huttenback (1971:39). If the spectre of being swamped by a permanently resident Indian population caused considerable concern among the white population of Natal, it was nothing compared to the alarm spread by the advent of the *Arab* or *passenger* immigrants. They did not come to labour in the fields of the white man but to engage in the retail trade. Nor did they supplement or complement white enterprise but rather competed with it directly. By 1904 when the Europeans and

Indians were about equal in number, the Indian hawkers outnumbered the European 1,487 to 19 (Huttenback, 1971:41). But it was not just their numerical strength that helped but also their self-confident and ambitious attitude as they vented their feelings of discontent in a petition to the Secretary of State for the colonies (Huttenback, 1971:42). Two rival camps now faced each other. On the one hand the governing White Settlers and on the other hand the Indians that were just as convinced of the superiority of their own cultural heritage as the white man was of his. The whole drama was to be played out without reference to the silent and essentially unnoticed majority of the population - the Africans, who in 1911 accounted for more than 82% of the total population of South Africa (Huttenback, 1971:43).

The year 1893 was significant for both Natal colonists and the Indian population. In that year responsible Government was granted the Natal Government and the power to legislate. In that same year Mohandas K Gandhi arrived in South Africa and was eventually to take up the cause of the Indians of South Africa.

In 1894 a bill was tabled which would have deprived Asians of the franchise, but royal assent was refused by Britain. The following year the first part of a package of discriminatory legislation was introduced in the Natal parliament. By 1896 the bill to deprive Indians of the franchise which had been refused consent in 1894, was reintroduced and became law as Act No 8 of 1896 (Brain, 1989:261).

The part played by Gandhi in Indian politics in South Africa has been the subject of numerous studies. He arrived in South Africa in 1893, a London-trained barrister who was sent by his firm to assist in a lawsuit in Pretoria. Gandhi had intended to return to India at the conclusion of the case but, shocked by the prejudices against Indians and urged by the merchants, he decided to remain and only returned to India permanently, 21 years later (Brain, 1981:263).

Brain mentions three important events in Natal that Gandhi was involved in. He was associated, in 1894, with the establishment of the Natal Indian Congress. The second event was the establishment of the newspaper *Indian Opinion* in 1903. The third event of importance in South Africa was the purchase of land outside Durban where he established his Phoenix settlement modelled on the ideals of Ruskin and Tolstoy (Brain, 1989:263).

It was in the early 1900's that Gandhi devised the political strategy of 'satyagraha' or passive resistance. Satyagrahis deliberately chose arrest and imprisonment rather than accede to the Transvaal Government's enactment requiring them to register when they entered the territory. Yet it was only after 1910, when the campaign embraced issues affecting the masses, that mass support became a reality (Brain, 1989:265).

Huttenback maintains that it is hard to imagine what would have been the lot of Natal's Indians without the presence of Gandhi. Not that he materially changed the course of colonial legislation, but his eloquence and sheer literary fecundity kept the Government of Natal under the merciless scrutiny of liberals and humanitarians in Britain, in India and, for that matter, in South Africa (Brain, 1971:88).

The history of the Indian community in South Africa is according to Huttenback at least in part, a case study of moral bankruptcy and imperial futility (Huttenback:333). The South African Governments were only interested in Indian labour and were determined not to countenance Indians as citizens in a 'white man's country' (sic!). The British Government, the guardian and enunciator of the imperial philosophy of equality, had, for many reasons, not been able to influence racial policy decisively in South Africa. Gandhi had made the world aware of the Indians' dilemma in South Africa. He had fought a battle based on principle, and he had largely prevailed on most of the questions specifically at issue (Huttenback:333 - 4). Unfortunately it was a more limited victory than either he or his followers had anticipated.

Gandhi felt that the establishment of a single Government for the whole of South Africa would be a menace to the Indians in South Africa, unless the policy of the Europeans with regard to the Indians could be changed. Through Gandhi's intervention the Indian Government finally (in 1911) stopped indentured Indian immigration to Natal in 1911 (Palmer, 1957:69).

After the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910, General Smuts announced, in the House of Assembly, that the Government would not permit the lifting of the 3 pound annual tax. This led to a renewal of civil disobedience, which was further fuelled by the decision of a judge of the Cape Supreme Court on

14 March 1913 that only Christian marriages were legal in South Africa and that rites carried out under a religion which recognised polygamous marriages, were illegal. This reduced large numbers of Indian women to the status of concubines and so the women themselves, with great indignation, also began to participate in large numbers in the Satyagraha campaign. A group crossed the boundaries from Transvaal into Natal and another group from Natal into Transvaal. Gandhi was arrested. This led to further sympathetic strikes (Palmer, 1957:70 - 72).

Finally the Union Government appointed a commission to investigate the cause of the trouble and made recommendations to the Government. The Smuts Gandhi Agreement abolished the 3 pound tax and cancelled all arrears; it settled the marriage question by recognising Hindu, Muslim and Parsee marriages. However the Act did not grant freedom of movement between Provinces, prevented Indians from holding land in Transvaal and maintained the right of the Orange Free State, to exclude any Indian settlers. This Act was a compromise, not entirely satisfactory to either side, but it did relieve the worst of the grievances and to a large extent, it embodied Gandhi's policy that there should be no racial discrimination against Indians as such. Having achieved victory through the policy of passive resistance, Gandhi left South Africa for ever. He returned to India to begin his much greater and more important career as a politician and popular leader, putting into operation on a wider scale the principles of political opposition and agitation which he had first conceived and developed in South Africa (Palmer, 1957:72 - 74).

Indians eventually became the victims of the group areas legislation after having suffered a whole series of enactments. Those enactments were intended to stop the influence and presence and further immigration of Indians, such as the Transvaal Asiatic Land and Trading Amendment Act of 1921, as well as the Group Reservation and Immigration and Registration Bill of 1925. A series of enactments to curtail Indian occupation of land culminated in the Trading and Occupation of Land Restriction Bill of 1943, the so-called Pegging Act that was made permanent by the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill in 1946 (Palmer, 1957:334 - 6).

In 1950 the Group Areas Act was passed by the new National Party Government (Act 41 of 1950). It had been amended almost every year since. In essence it was

the logical result of the policies of the original Class Areas Bill and the Asiatic Tenure Representation Act. Obviously the threat to Indian vested interests had been considerable (Brookes, 1965:293).

The cause of the immigration of more than 150,000 people is not only related to the general social and economic trends at the time but also related to their own problems, aspirations and reasons for leaving India. The majority of the Indians in the 19th century were agricultural workers; most lived in poverty, in unfavourable climates and in regions subject to periodic famine. The worst famine years were 1877 – 1878, 1896 – 1897 and 1899 – 1900 (Anstey, 1952:436). Socially India adhered strictly to the caste system. ‘Datta’s’ description of the caste system is helpful: ‘an attitude of reverence to members of the higher castes, of friendliness to those of equal status, and of antipathy to those of lower degree’ (1908:66). Among the emigrants from India to Natal were people from every caste: a very small number of Brahmins, many pariahs or untouchables, and most from all castes in between.

Life in the Colony, of course, also impacted upon the immigrants. L P Booth in his report to the Protector of Indian Immigrants points out that the standard of housing varied considerably from ‘superior, brick built with neatly thatched roof, roomy, lighted and carefully ventilated to other estates where the labourers had to build their own houses, rough huts, made of dried cane stalks or mealie stalks loosely put together for both sides and roof ...badly ventilated and allowing only 100 or 200 cubic feet per person when 500 or 600 would be desirable’ (Brain, 1983:xvii). What were the reasons for so many emigrants to return to India in 1871? When they reached India on the ‘Red Riding Hood’ they complained of poor living conditions, delayed or irregular payment of wages, insufficient and neglectful medical care, rations below those promised, ill-treatment and non-payment of the promised 10 pound gratuity to those from Madras (Brain, 1983:xvi). However these indentured workers had left India because conditions there were bordering on starvation and they returned to India with more accumulated capital from Natal than the returning Indians from any of the other countries that employed indentured labour. (Brain, 1983:xvii)

The remark of the Rev Theophilus Subrahmanyam, a Brahmin converted to the Christian faith, points in a different direction. He returned to India because he

found the social and political position in Natal untenable (Brain, 1983:xvii). The situation of Indian workers in Natal was found by many of them to be totally unacceptable. They exchanged the caste system of India for a highly stratified society in Natal. However, this time, white colonists were at the top of the pyramid. The colonists would have treated them all alike without any consideration for their caste origins. This in itself would have been experienced as very painful, particularly by those from higher castes.

3.1.6 Religious Affiliation

What were the religious affiliations of the indentured labourers that came to South Africa between 1860 and 1911? This question can only be properly examined through researching the shipping lists. This research was attempted by several writers. Most did their research in view of religious affiliation. Notable is the MA thesis of L M Thompson entitled (*Indian Immigration into Natal 1860 – 1872*), written in 1938, A G Choonoo's detailed MA thesis, (*Indentured Indian Immigration into Natal 1860 – 1911*), written in 1976; and J B Brain in her well researched work, (*Christian Indians in Natal 1860 – 1911*), an historical and statistical study written in 1983.

Based on the shipping lists of 1860 – 1872, L M Thompson reports as follows:

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1872	83%	12%	5%	100%
	5,236	757	315	6,307

A G Choonoo considers three periods: 1860 – 1875, 1876 – 1890, and 1891 – 1911. He points out that the number of Christians for the first period up to 1875 was 382 and he calculates the percentage as 3.6%.

According to Brain, 4.6% of the indentured workers (295 of the 6,445 immigrants) who came to South Africa during the first six years, 1860 – 1866) were Christians; yet in the following 37 years during which immigrants arrived, only 1855 of the 145,739 or 1.27% were Christians (Brain:xix).

Authorities like Prof E Brooks, F Meer, C B Webb and M Wilson agree with L M Thompson with regard to the whole period of 1860 – 1911 (as follows):

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1911	83% 126,313	12% 18,262	5% 7,609	100% 152,184

J B Brain had the opportunity to consider all the shipping lists against the backdrop of the figures in the diagram above. Her figure for Christians is much more conservative. The method she used to come to the percentages below was to check all the shipping lists. Where there was uncertainty or no information, she made use of the names to ascertain their religious affiliation. Biblical or saints' names would be an indication that the person was most probably Christian (Brain, 1983:6). The column in shipping lists provided for Christian immigrants was marked by the term *caste* and the following alternatives appear: Christian, Syrian Christian, Native Christian, Mala Christian, Pariah Christian or more rarely Catholic or Protestant (:6).

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1860 – 1911	86.1% 131,030	12.5% 19,023	1.4% 2,131	100% 152,184

In connection with this table, Brain only refers to two percentages, i.e. 1.4% Christians and between 10% and 15% Muslims. She has taken an average figure of 12.5% for Muslims and the balance of 86.1% for Hindus (:244-5). Prof H Kuper in her book, (*Indian People in Natal*), examined the details of 3,200 indentured immigrants. She selected 8 ships at random for her study (the ships arrived between 1883 and 1900). Her conclusions are as follows:

Period	Hindus	Muslims	Christians	Total
1883 – 1911	90% 2,880	7% 128	3% 96	100% 3,200

Brain remarks that you cannot come to an accurate figure by using any number of immigrants at random. The composition of the immigrants in terms of their religious affiliation differed with respect to the place and time of departure in India. Brain found for instance that the number of Christians from Madras was 2.1% and those from Calcutta 0.04% (Brain, 1983:244). Brain's research as to the religious affiliation of the indentured immigrants, especially with reference to the Christian immigrants, is to our knowledge the best available. Refer to Table I, (*Indentured Indian Immigrants from Madras and Calcutta who identified themselves as Christians*) (1983:10 - 144). Brain writes:

I therefore determined to return to the original sources, in this case the immigration records, and to start from the beginning in an attempt to estimate as accurately as possible how many of the indentured immigrants described themselves as Christian (Brain, 1983:5).

She used the Shipping Lists of 91 volumes kept by the then Department of Indian Affairs. The information about the subsequent history of the person, where known, was obtained from the (*Indian Immigration Registers*), also kept by the Department of Indian Affairs.

Brain found among 'passenger' Indians 128 Christians registered in the 12 volumes entitled, 'Passenger Indians: Passes', also kept by the Department of Indian Affairs. It's likely that some individuals were issued with passes more than once and it is therefore not possible to estimate the percentage of Christians among the total number of 'passenger' Indians. Indeed the total number of 'passenger' Indians is itself uncertain (Brain, 1983:7, 247).

3.2 The Hindu Community in SA

Some 86.1% or 131,030 of the 152,184 indentured immigrants that came to the Colony during the period 1860 – 1911, were Hindus. Twice as many came from Madras, than from Calcutta.

Period	Hindus from Madras	Hindus from Calcutta	Total
1860 – 1911	87,364	43,666	131,030

These figures are based on an average of 86.1% Hindus. The percentage of Hindus from Madras may very well be different to that from Calcutta. Judging from the lower percentage of Christians from Calcutta the percentage of Hindus may be higher than the percentage from Madras. This fact obviously impacts on the kind of Hinduism that was practised by the indentured immigrants that embarked from India. One can safely assume that the brand of Hinduism practised in Madras and surrounding areas would also have been the Hinduism that the majority adhered to in South Africa.

3.2.1 Religion and tradition under pressure

It is difficult, well nigh impossible, to separate religion from culture and custom, especially when there is no such separation intended in the religion. This is particularly true of the Hindu religion that in no way distinguishes religion and life. As a pantheistic religion, Hinduism includes the whole of life: everything, in fact, is divine. Caste for example, is totally intertwined with the religious beliefs of the Hindu.

The recruiting techniques of the agents had a definite impact on the community that was to settle in Natal. The recruiting agents sometimes employed bad characters called *arkati* who made the preliminary 'catches'. The *arkati* relied on local knowledge and contacts to find out who was in trouble, or who was disgraced, or who was wanted by the police, and then approached them. The simple-minded were told that they could get garden work and that a short journey was necessary. Those with more intelligence were told they were needed for work overseas and of high wages and golden opportunities abroad. Having arrived at the depot and the real conditions of indenture were revealed, the recruits often refused them. They were then told that they owed the depot money for travelling expenses and that their personal possessions would be confiscated if they refused to indenture (Tinker, 1974:122).

In other cases people were kidnapped outright. This was especially the case with women. Very few emigrated voluntarily. A number of so-called 'stool-pigeons' were often placed among the recruits. Their job was to reassure the recruits of the golden future awaiting them and to stop any recruit from trying to escape (Tinker, 1974:125, 134).

What is important here to note in terms of the customs of the indentured immigrants, is that their period of indenture would break caste prohibitions. This was one of the major reasons why most could not return to India at the end of their period of indenture. Caste restrictions did not even survive the voyage from India. The high caste immigrants lost their caste by merely crossing the ocean. The Hindu Laws of Manu, traditionally dated from 200 BC, forbade Hindus of good caste to cross the seas, known as the 'Kala Pani or black waters', on pain of losing their caste status (Buijs, 1985:17).

Life on board the ships was inconsistent with caste rules. People could not rigidly be separated in the holds. Adrian Mayer refers to the account of women on their way from Calcutta to Fiji, with each caste cooking food at a separate hearth. Suddenly a wave rocked the boat, the pots fell and the food became mixed. They chose to eat the polluted food and food restrictions ended (Tinker, 1974:158). In South Africa there was little organised effort to segregate untouchables.

Two other features of the caste system were greatly affected by immigration. Firstly, traditionally, one's caste membership was inscriptive, that is, inherited by birth and could not be changed. However, indentured immigrants could, and did, change their caste names as individuals. Individuals were under no obligation to furnish more than one name. The caste system became quite flexible in Natal, and was only of importance generally when marriage was being considered (Kuper, 1960:26).

Secondly the powerful authority of the caste council or 'panchayat' in every Indian Village was unknown in Natal because there were too few men of the same caste in a given place to organize such a caste council. Caste as known in India did not exist as a system in Natal, although some elements of caste still influenced behaviour. Caste values and rules were reduced to unenforceable moral scruples. Only within the domestic circle did various beliefs and practices persist (Buijs, 1985:49 - 50).

While Hinduism remained the religion of the majority of the indentured, it lacked the Sanskritic valediction of the ancient Indian traditions and consisted mainly of those elements of village ritual remembered and fostered by the indentures. Those who arrived in Natal were forced to rebuild their lives without most of the familiar

institutions that surrounded them in India. Informants stated that anyone with the necessary inclination and training could become a priest. Teachers from all castes are today more important than priests in local affairs and the values they exemplify are not Sanskritic ones but those of modern, western education and lifestyle (Buijs, 1985:49). The development in later years supplanted most caste distinctions and one's position in the Indian society in South Africa rests largely on the values of financial success, educational prestige and political or social achievement.

3.2.2 Language Groups

Diesel offers the following percentages with regards to the linguistic groups of the Hindu Indian population (Diesel, 1993:3, 6). The total number of Indian people according to the demographic data of the 1996 census is 1,045,596 and the total Hindu Indian (Asian) population is 516,228 (South African Christian Handbook, 2001:17,37).

By 1936 the demography of the Hindu Indian population in South Africa was as follows:

DESCENT	Dravidian: Southern India 63%		Indo-Aryan: Northern India 37%		Totals
	Tamil	Telegu	Hindi	Gujerati	
Area	Tamil, Nadu Madras	Andra- Pradesh North of Madras	Bihar Uttar- Pradesh	Surat Kathiawad	
Percentage	45%	18%	30%	7%	100%
Numbers	232,303	92,921	154,868	36,136	516,228
Origin	Indentured	Indentured	Indentured	Passenger	

A final blow to caste was the apparent rapid loss of the vernacular languages. Language is the main vehicle for the transmission of oral tradition. In only three generations, most of the Indian community switched to English as their home language. Referring to the South African population records of 1936 – 1980,

Archary gives the following table of numbers of people claiming to speak Indian languages: (as being taken from the South African population records 1936 – 1980).

	1936	1951	1960	1970	1980
Tamil	83,731	120,181	141,977	153,645	24,720
Hindi	60,276	89,145	126,067	116,485	25,900
Gujerati	25,408	39,495	53,910	46,039	25,120
Telegu	25,077	30,210	34,483	30,690	4,000
Urdu	13,842	25,455	35,789	-	13,280
Other	2,737	26,090	2,053	71,070	No stats

The Tamil, Hindi and Telegu were mainly indentured immigrants. The 1980 figures show a radical reduction in the use of the vernacular. Not so with the Gujerati and Urdu who were mainly ‘passenger’ merchants that came to South Africa by their own volition and had the financial stability to maintain regular contact with their motherland and to keep socially apart from the indentured Indian.

A major division remains in the Indian community today between people of South Indian descent (Tamil and Telegu) and those from North India, especially the Gujerat state. The latter have retained their original language and religion to a much greater extent than is generally the case among Southerners (Buijs, 1983:1).

3.2.3 Hinduism in South Africa

It is not possible in terms of the subject of this thesis to examine in great detail the particular religious practices and observances of each group. What is important, though, is to briefly outline the nature of Hinduism among the immigrants in order to ascertain the challenge that this posed to the mission of the Church. Upon the centenary of the Indian emigration to South Africa in 1960, Ranji Nowbath, Sookraj Chotai and B D Lalla maintained that the Southerners came as labourers in response to the call of sanatana dharma based on the Puranas. They came with a large number of rituals, ceremonials and festivals

which are the very soul of village life in India and which, though not an essential part of philosophical Hinduism, are not contradictory to the lofty teaching of Hinduism (Nowbath, 1960:11). These Hindus were either *Saivas* (devotees of Siva) or Vaisnavas (devotees of Vishnu) but the demarcation was never exclusive. Most South African Hindus are from southern India and are of Dravidian descent. At present 45% of the Hindu people are Tamil speaking and 18% Telegu (Diesel, 1993:3, 6). They practise a type of Hinduism typical of that region: a popular ritualistic form of Hinduism predominates over the philosophical forms (De Beer, 1996:29). Ritual, image worship, magic and ecstatic festivals are distinguishing features of this form. It is less scripture orientated than other forms of Hinduism. The worship of the various divine manifestations of 'Vishnu', 'Shiva' and 'Sakti' has at the core, astrology and particularly the worship of nine planets (navagraha) integral to the whole (De Beer, 1996:45). Kavadi, the Mariammen festival and the fire-walking of the Draupadi festival are today the most popular of all. During these festivals the state of trance or ecstasy plays a vital role. The ecstatic trance would be the result of possession by the deity and gives to those so possessed the power to practise as healers and diviners (De Beer, 1996:45). Sacrifices, home worship around the household gods, and the lighting of the lamp (wilke or kamachee lamp), family ceremonies or samskaras, temple worship when the need requires, healings and miracles, and the practice of sorcery, are common cults among the Tamil and Telegu people that came from South India (De Beer, 1996:34 - 38).

The people of South India, both Tamil and Telegu, have a lot in common regarding their religion. Originally they were not really distinguished and were regarded by the rest of the Indian community as one people, Madrassis. The Tamils were drawn from the regions to the west and south of Madras, the 'Telegus' from the region to the north of Madras (Nowbath, 1960:18). The Tamils were responsible for the building of most temples dedicated to Vishnu and to Shiva. A deity that commands a great deal of reverence from Tamils and Telegus is Mariammen whose shrines spread far and wide across the country. She is the aspect of Parvathi, the consort of Shiva, in which she controls, governs, and spreads small pox, a disease that causes havoc in India every year. Mariammen is associated with death, and people seek to propitiate her with blood (Nowbath, 1960:20).

In mid-January the Tamils celebrate the 'Pongol' or harvest festival and the Telegus celebrate their festival, the Manes. This is followed by Kavady and Fire-walking by both Tamils and Telegus. In September – October both groups celebrate 'Partassi' abstaining from meat and fish for the whole month.

Tamils and Telegus marry with the broom proceeding to the home of the bride. Many traditional prohibitions in terms of marriage partners have given way to the demands of modern life (Nowbath, 1960:22 - 21). Both groups do not cremate but bury their dead.

The 'Hindi' people, in contrast to the Tamils and Telegus, are from Indo-Aryan stock. Their language is Hindustani. They were drawn largely from Bihar, North-Eastern United Provinces and further west from the regions around Lucknow and Delhi. A few have come from even further North-West. Most of the Hindis were drawn from the Gonda and Basti districts of the United Provinces and many from Benares, Allahabad and Lucknow (Nowbath, 1960:18). Today 30% of the Hindu people of South Africa are Hindi (Diesel, 1993:3, 6).

The majority of the Hindis are 'Sanatanists', i.e. people of the orthodox persuasion whose priest must always be a person of Brahmin descent. Deepavali is also celebrated by the Hindis It is sacred to 'Lakshmi', the goddess of wealth, and honours the triumphant return of Rama and 'Sita' from their circle. They have a large number of rites, ceremonies and 'pujas' or prayers in their homes which must be performed by priests. Temple and temple-worship are vital points in their religion. The 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharata' and the 'Bhagavad Gita' are sacred texts of scripture and the gods 'Rama' and 'Krishna' are particularly worshipped. Many Hindis have a private shrine for family worship. The Hindis worship Mata mai, the mother of pox. One of the most distinct pujas of the Hindis is the 'Sri Satharian Katha' and the 'Mahabir Savanni-ki-Jhanda', commonly called the 'Katha-Jhanda' prayers. This is a private puja sacred to 'Hanuman' and 'Vishnu' and is observed as a thanksgiving. Guests are invited. 'Prasad', meaning offering and food, are prepared after the formal raising of the red flag on bamboo poles in honour of 'Mahabir' or 'Hanuman' following the recital of the legend of inculcating virtues (Nowbath, 1960:20).

In September – October the Hindis observe ‘Pitar Paksh’, abstaining from meat and fish for about a fortnight. This is done in remembrance of the names of the departed who keep benevolent watch over their mortal kin and are revered in turn by the living (Nowbath, 1960:20).

Marriage, other than with Tamils and Telegus, takes place at the home of the bride. Orthodox Hindis require that the marriage be solemnised by a priest of Brahmin birth, nothing less.

Hindis insist on cremation where there are facilities and – as is the case with Tamils – will abstain from meat and fish after a death. They perform the major pacificator and conciliatory ceremonies on the tenth or thirteenth day (Nowbath, 1960:21).

Greater education, westernization and being a minority group among many other cultures and religions, are all factors that place the modern South African Indian in a constant process of acculturation. Yet, one of the most remarkable features of the Indian people of South Africa is the manner in which they retained their customs, religion and values.

The so-called ‘passenger’ or ‘free’ Indians who immigrated to South Africa, paying their own ‘passage’ and ‘free’ from any contract, came from the north-west of India from what is known today as ‘Gujerat’. The Hindu Gujeratis as well as their Muslim counterparts were known in India for their interest in business and expertise at it. This was originally no permanent immigration as many businessmen returned to their homes once or twice a year and for important events such as marriages that were arranged (Meer, 1960:16). The Hindu Gujeratis were from Indo-Aryan stock and comprised, according to Diesel, 7% of the Hindu people of South Africa (Diesel, 1993:3, 6).

The social and economic backgrounds of the ‘passenger’ Indians varied widely. Some had been involved in local government in India as magistrates, a few had inherited land, others had prosperous businesses. Most of these emigrants however, were poor peasant landowners who had suffered from the exorbitant taxes imposed in India under imperial rule (Buijs, 1985:53).

Keeping contact with home and family in India ensured that traditional and religious norms and values in daily life were retained. A huge gap existed (and still does) between these 'free' immigrants and the indentured labourers. Differences in language, culture, and living standards basically separated the two groups. Caste distinction is still an important part of life for these people. Gujeratis almost always marry within their own linguistic, cultural and religious group. Little social contact takes place between Gujeratis and other Indians.

Almost all of the 'Gujeratis' in South Africa, except some 100 families, come from the district of Surat, with its commercial and cultural heart in 'Ahmedabad'. They describe themselves as Surtees. A 'Surat Hindu Association' was established in Durban in 1910. The others came from the district of 'Kathiawad', known as 'Kathiawadis'. They have their own institutions, schools, cultural associations and religious bodies (Nowbath, 1960:19). More than any other Hindu group, the 'Gujeratis' are deeply involved with the philosophical form of Hinduism where the great doctrines of 'karma', 'samsara', 'maya', 'yoga', and 'moksha' are adhered to. Nowbath maintains that for the two days preceding 'Deepavali', the 'Gujeratis worship Luxmi' and 'Kalka Mata', a manifestation of Kali. After the joyous celebration of 'Deepavali' follows the 'Gujerati New Year'. They also recognize, as the other Hindu groups do, the mother of pox, and call her 'Sithla Mata'. The Gujeratis are the only group that celebrate New Year as 'Holi or Phagua', observing it as a day of prayer. They also perform the 'Katha-Jhanda puja' in honour of 'Mahabir' and 'Hanuman' (Nowbath, 1960:20).

'Gujeratis' require that marriage be solemnized by a priest of 'Brahmin' birth and that they marry within their own group. As to funerals they insist on cremation where there are facilities (Nowbath, 1960:21).

A small portion of the 'Gujeratis' (and Hindus) accepted the reformed teachings of 'Swami Divananda' and became followers of the 'Arya Samaj' creed. They reject the ceremonies, rituals and pujas of the orthodox. The 'Havan' ceremony is the alpha and omega of their belief. The Vedas are accepted as divinely revealed texts while the 'Puranas' are rejected both as unauthoritative and redundant, nor are the 'Ramayana', the 'Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita' sacred texts. For them there are no temples and temple worship (Nowbath, 1960:19).

3.3.1 The arrival of the Indian Muslims in South Africa

Almost all of the indentured Indian people were Hindu. The Muslims that did emigrate were by and large 'passenger' or 'free' Indians and most of them 'Urdu' speaking.

Two religious groups are clearly distinguished in South Africa. The majority by far are Sunni or orthodox Muslims, a small group belong to the Shia's who see in their leader a direct descendant of Mohammed. The history of Islam in South Africa dates far back into history, virtually coinciding with the coming of Christianity. Already in 1653 a certain Abraham, a stowaway on the Malacca, was forced to disembark at Table Bay. Three years later two Arabic slave girls, Corelia and Lysbeth from Abessinia were brought to the Cape. Others followed (Blommaert, 1938:4 - 8).

The expansion of the Muslim community at the Cape was particularly enhanced by a number of political leaders and their followers who were banished to the Cape. They were banished to the Cape on account of the clash between Muslim and Dutch powers in Batavia (Crafford, 1982:14).

Of all these exiles 'Sheik Yusuf of Macassar' is the most renowned. In 1644 Yusuf undertook a pilgrimage to Mecca. Here he studied Arabic and the traditional 'Islamic sciences such as the Qur'an and the Hadith'. Having acquired a great reputation for learning and piety he proceeded to Java which had become a centre of Islamic learning. Here he established himself in the court of Sultan Agung, who ruled from 1651 - 1683, and spent many years teaching the sultan, his courtiers, and others who came to Java, the various branches of Islamic learning.

In 1680 a revolution in Bantam took place resulting in the forced abdication of 'Sultan Agung' in favour of his son, 'Sultan Haji' who requested help from the Dutch. 'Agung' with his followers rallying around him, including 'Sheik Yusuf', actively opposed the Dutch. After some time, Agung surrendered. Yusuf and some 4,000 supporters kept up the battle roaming the woods and mountains of Java for almost a year. He surrendered in 1683 on the strength of a pardon promised by the Dutch (Greyling, 1976:11, 12), but which was never kept.

He was first sent to Batavia, then to Ceylon, and finally to the Cape where he arrived in 1694 with his family, followers and friends. The Company authorities sent him and his retinue to live on the farm, Zandvliet, at the mouth of the Eerste River, near Faure. Zandvliet became the rallying point for political exiles, slaves and ex-convicts from the East. Sheik Yusuf conducted secret religious services in slave lodges, as Muslims were forbidden by the Dutch authorities to hold religious gatherings openly (Yusuf, 1990:ii). Five years later, in 1699, he died. Little is known about his last five years in the Cape. Fact is that he is held in the highest regard by the Muslim community of South Africa. Two monuments, one in his homeland (Bantam) and the other in the land of his exile testifies to this fact. Muslims of South Africa regard Yusuf as the founder of Islam in South Africa and his grave at Faure as one of the most important holy places of the South African Muslim community (Greyling, 1976:14, 15). Together with his tomb four other Malay tombs or 'karamats' at Signal Hill, Constantia, Oude Kraal and Robben Island are regarded as the Holy Circle of tombs. Here prayers are offered and incense burnt for the intervention of the departed spirits. Water left at the tomb of Yusuf is believed to be imbued with miraculous power (Du Plessis, 1953:34, 37).

Many of the Muslim exiles were leaders and heroes and even princes in their own right, held in such high esteem, that many slaves became Muslim. The role of such efficient leaders as 'Imam Abdullah Kadi Abdusalam', Dr Abdurahman, and Abu Bakr Effendi should be taken note of. The influence of these able leaders gave the Cape Malays a significant status in the Coloured community. According to Els, this resulted in many young Christians from the Coloured community apostatising in order to marry Muslims (1971:431, 432). It is also a well-known fact that coloured children from destitute families, employed by Muslims as household servants, became estranged from their churches and eventually adopted the Muslim faith (Kriel, 1963:221, 222, 244 and Greyling, 176:17).

As their numbers increased various problems surfaced during the second half of the 19th century. Foremost, was the lack of knowledge regarding the content of their faith that led to divisions. This was especially so with regards to the Khalifa (Erasmus, 1976:2, 3 and Du Plessis, 1953:61 - 64). At this time the Sultan of Turkey sent Abu Bakr. Effendi to the Cape to teach the followers of Islam their religion and in 1877 his extensive Bayanu-din appeared, in which the religious duties of Islam were taught and explained (Erasmus, 1976:2, 3). This was one on

the first books in Afrikaans, though written in Arabic script. Abu Bakr Effendi was also the founder of the Hanafi School (Mahida, 1993:24) He also established the first Muslim school for girls (Mahida, 1993:26). In the latter part of the 19th century the centre of gravity was to shift from Indonesia to the Near-East and in particular to Mecca, and Islam was re-aligned with its birthplace. This led to a strong brand of orthodox Islam among the Malay Muslims. More than 50% of the slaves that were brought to the Cape between 1658 and 1700 were from India. Almost all of them came from the East Coast of Coromandel and Bengal which were strongholds of orthodox Islam. Adding the percentage for Indonesia and Ceylon the figure for slaves from the East rises to more than 70%. Approximately 30% came from Madagascar (Bradlow R and Cairns M 1978:92, 102 - 5).

In 1825, according to figures submitted to Cape Town - Imams, there were 1,268 Muslim slaves at the Cape. (Shell, 1994:356). In addition to the number of Muslim slaves there were free Muslims in the same period, a total of 2,167. However in 1842 there were 6,432 Muslims in Cape Town, over 33% of the town's population. The spread of Islam occurred mainly between 1770 and 1842 (:357). The growth of Islam at this time was often the result of the fact that baptised slaves could not be sold (Shell, 1994:172 - 173). Legislation linking freedom and Christianity, began to limit the marketability of slaves (Shell, 1994:359).

Eric Aspeling a later columnist, stated that the spread of Islam was directly attributable to the slave owners who, 'studying their own interest, preferred their slaves embracing the 'Mahometan faith', in which case they would remain in bondage (Aspeling, 1983:3cf and Shell, 1994:361). Bird, writing in 1822, came to the same conclusion and added that whenever one asked a slave why he had become Muslim, the reply was: 'some religion he must have, and he is not allowed to turn Christian' (1822:349). In an economy based on wine, Muslim slaves were preferable because of their sobriety (Bird:349 and Shell:362). Slaves became more important for the settlers' way of life than the Calvinist Christ (Shell, 1994:369).

The number of slaves at the Cape in 1700 was 1296, according to Bradlow (:92). According to Mahida (1993:29, 40, 48, 102, 105) the Muslim population increased as follows:

Year	Muslim Population in the Cape
1875	13,930
1891	15,099
1906	22,575
1951	78,787
1970	125,987
1980	154,300

Almost all the Indian Muslims that came to South Africa as immigrants, the so-called 'passenger Indians', paid their own way. The number of indentured Indian Muslims was negligible (Meer, 1969:10, 187). These 'passenger' Indian Muslims who arrived in 1869 were mostly Gujarati speaking Indians from Kathawa, Surat, and Porbandor, as well as Urdu and Marathi speaking Indians from Bombay (Kuper, 1960:29).

The Zanzibaris are descendents of African slaves from Zanzibar who, on their way to the East in an Arab ship, were liberated by the British and placed under the control of the Protector of Indian immigrants and technically became Indians. They were a very small group yet held in great honour because they were regarded as having magical powers. (Kuper, 1960:29).

The number of Muslims in South Africa today is, according to the National Census, 1.5% (2001 Census), slightly up from 1.4% (according to the 1996 census).

3.3.2 Islam in South Africa

The overall majority of both Coloured - and Indian Muslims adhere to orthodox or Sunni Islam whereas a very tiny minority confess to Shi'ite Islam. The latter are Urdu speaking Indians belonging to the Shafi'i law school, also known as Khojas. They have their own mosque in Pretoria. The overall world percentage of Shi'ite is about 10% (Naudé, 1996:160).

It is beyond the purpose of this thesis to deal with the Muslim religion as such. What is important though, is to briefly outline the nature of Islam among South African Muslims in order to ascertain the challenge that this posed to the mission of the Church. Greyling (1976: 24 - 65) gives a detailed account of trends in South African Islam. He classifies them as 'older orthodox, modernistic, Ahmaddiya and modern orthodox' (Greyling, 1976:25). Almost all the Coloured Muslims are Sunni Muslims and follow the Shafi'i school of law. The early Shafi'i Cape Muslims made a priceless contribution to the origin and development of the Afrikaans language (Naudé, 1996:159) which is the mother tongue of the Coloured Muslims. The knowledge of the 'Shari'a' or Muslim law based on the Qur'an and the Sunna (Hadith) or traditions is authoritatively communicated through the system of 'fiqh', which has been developed by the four Muslim law schools. Every orthodox Muslim is bound to accept it.

Formerly the sheiks received their training in Egypt; most of them at the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Lately the training shifted to the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia. The establishment of the Muslim Judicial Council and the Majlis A'shura Al'Islami strengthened the strong guidance that came from the Sheiks in the Cape (Greyling, 1976:27, 31). They provided leadership in every aspect of life and played a very influential role in the community.

The ulama can be regarded as the actual successors of the prophet Muhammad (Naudé, 1962:162). In political matters that affect the Muslim community, the Judicial Council is the mouthpiece of the Government (Greyling, 1976:28).

The 'Indian Muslims' belong by and large to the 'Hanafi' law school. The orthodox Muslims are influenced by the Islam of India and Pakistan. Their social conservatism is particularly noticeable among the women that are submitted to 'purdah' or social separation (Fatima Meer, 1969:79).

Among the orthodox Indian Muslims, Sufism is popular: one of the Sufi saints belonging to the Christiya or Naqshbandiya Sufi order would be followed (Naudé, 1996:163). Many adherents would visit the 'pirs' or leaders of their orders when in India or Pakistan (Greyling, 1976:30).

Their Maulanas or leaders, the so-called Maulvis do not share in the same leadership involvement as the Sheiks, their Coloured Muslim counterparts. This is particularly because of the Sheiks' ability to speak English or Afrikaans. Political and social issues are rather taken care of by ordinary members of the community.

Indian Islam is characterised by various streams of thought. On the one hand you have the ultra-conservative group, Tabligh Jama'a, and on the other hand the theologically rather liberal Ahmadiyya group. The Tabligh Jama'a members would annually set aside time to visit backsliding Muslims, encouraging them to hold on to the Suah of the prophet. Their preaching visits are for many Muslims an embarrassment and for the Coloured Muslims, unacceptable (Greyling, 1976:28 - 31).

There appear to be various modernistic trends within Islam. The influence upon South African Islam comes from modernistic writers from India and Pakistan affecting particularly Indian Muslims. The work of Aziz Ahmad titled 'Islamic Modernism' (1967) points to a typical example of the modernistic approach in the commentary of the Qur'an by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817 - 1898). Other Indian writers followed his approach, Ameer Ali (1849 - 1928) author of 'The Spirit of Islam' (1922), proposes a doctrine of inspiration in conflict with the traditional view of mechanical inspiration. His views found ready followers in Muslim mission organisations in South Africa. The later writings of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez also impacted on modernistic thinking among South African Muslims. Parwez argues that the Shariah was always wrong since it was based on a wrong theory of revelation. He rejects all of the Muslim past, with the exception of the life time of the Prophet and the first four Caliphs, as a period of darkness from which nothing can be learned. He further rejects the possibility of miracles as in conflict with the God-given laws of nature. A South African writer, A S K Joommal follows suit. The modernistic view rejects the possibility of a conflict between reason and revelation. The Hadith contains many irrational legends and must therefore be rejected. The Qur'an must be reinterpreted from a rational point of view (Greyling, 1976:31 - 36).

The Ahmadiyya Movement was initiated by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad who believed himself to be the mujaddid or awaited reformer of the faith in 1879. In 1889 he

declared that the return of Jesus was also fulfilled in him and that he was the expected Messiah and Mahdi (Ali, 1950:263). Later he also announced that he was an avatar of the Hindu god Krishna. He furthermore taught that Jesus died at the age of 120 years at Srinigar in Kashmir. After Ahmad's death the movement split into two groups, i.e. the Qadiani group who regarded Ahmad as prophet and the 'Tahore' group that maintained that he was Mujaddid but not prophet (Greyling, 1976:40, 41). Resistance against the Ahmadiyya Movement grew from within orthodox Islam and in 1974 Pakistan declared Ahmadiyya followers to be non-Muslims. The confession or teaching of this doctrine would be punishable by law (Greyling, 1976:43).

Greyling in his thesis *Die Invloed van Strominge in die Islam op die Jesusbeskouing van die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems* thoroughly researched the Ahmadiyya in South Africa (1976:45 - 52) as well as their influence on the translation of the Qur'an (Greyling, 1976:71 - 73), and their polemical literature aimed against the Christian faith (Greyling, 1976:74, 76 - 78). For the purposes of this study it is important to note that the teachings of the Ahmadiyya regarding Christ and the Christian faith played a major role even among Sunni Muslims in their rebuttal of the Gospel's claims in South Africa. The Qadiani Ahmadiyya Movement began mission work in South Africa in 1946 through the efforts of Dr Yusuf Sulaiman and H Ebrahim. This eventually led to the establishment of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission of South Africa in 1959 in the Cape (Ahmad, 1965:25 - 29). The Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement began mission work in South Africa in 1957 with D Sydow as their missionary claiming that mission is part of the Great Jihad or of a Jihad Bil-Qalam (holy war with the pen) (Greyling, 1976:47).

In Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, the Ahmadiyya influence came through various mission organisations, particularly through the polemical efforts of Ahmed Deedat. The latter's work continued right up into the nineties and though Deedat tried to distance himself from the Ahmadiyya movement, he was using their material to attack the Christian Faith.

Jihad (holy war) is and always has been a powerful force in Islam. Moderate Muslims are prone to emphasise that the greater Jihad refers to a spiritual warfare against sin and all that is antithetical to Allah. The lesser Jihad, which

refers to the traditional interpretation of holy war, is still a reality. Muslims are somewhat ambivalent with this concept that brought them both pride and shame (Parshall, 1994:97, 98).

In 1965 the Muslim Judicial Council resolved that Ahmadiyahs may not enter the mosque, their marriages would be null and void and they may not be buried in Muslim cemeteries (Greyling, 1976:51). Their huge influence in the fifties and early sixties was now effectively controlled. Drastic change and development was urgently required. A modernistic reinterpretation of Islam became necessary. In South Africa this development was noticeable in the publications of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. They wished to remain true to orthodox Islam, but sought a renewal of old systems and a greater involvement in the counteracting of social needs, spiritual decline and moral degradation. They wanted to be progressive without being modernistic (Greyling, 1976:52 - 58).

A number of mission organizations in the fifties and sixties were deeply influenced by the Ahmadiyya movement. After the action taken by the Muslim Judicial Council in 1965, the Universal Truth Movement and the Islamic Missionary Society folded. The Young Men's Muslim Association turned to the radical conservatism of the Tabligh Jama'a. Greyling argues that the political climate of apartheid and the frustration of Indians those years called for organizations and a leadership that would put across to both Government and Christendom the case of Islam (Greyling, 1976:59, 60). The youth wanted to do something about the situation and the Ahmadiyya method of a jihad against Christendom through mission organizations, polemical literature and debates provided a ready answer. The acceptance of the Indian Community, as a permanent part of the South African people, led to the rejection of the Jihad approach of the mission organizations. The Muslim Youth Movement and the Muslim Students Organization reflected the new approach (Greyling, 1976:62).

There had always been a lively interest among South African Muslims in the wide world of Islam. The establishment of the Islamic Council of South Africa provided proper contact with Muslims from other countries who wanted to assist Muslims of South Africa. Financial assistance from Saudi-Arabia for the building of mosques and schools followed. This went along with international visitors and the distribution of pan-Islamic literature (Greyling, 1976:64, 65).

South Africa had its fair share of Islamic fundamentalism. The violent history of slaves deported to the Cape, the regime of apartheid, and the strong Christian presence in South Africa, must share the blame for the rise of such revolutionary groups as PAGAD and MAIL in the Cape. A further result is Durban's Ahmad Deedat's fierce life-long campaign against Christianity in South Africa and worldwide through his Propagation Centre. Dr W A Bijleveldt who headed the Islam Africa Project said in an interview when visiting South Africa in the 1960's that in his experience South African Muslims are of the most fundamentalist Muslims in Africa.

There are various occultic practices of Muslims in South Africa to ward off misfortune or harm. This form of 'folk' Islam differs from that of the 'evil eye' and the invisible spirit world of the 'Jinn' which is prevalent in the Middle East and Egypt. In South Africa black magic is practiced by means of the blood of animals. There is also a form of voodoo where the name of the enemy is written on a clay doll. The purpose is to kill or destroy the enemy. Quite common is the use of 'Tawiz' (to flee for refuge). It consists of a black cord with a Qur'anic inscription on a piece of metal sown into it and worn on neck, arm, waist or breast. A tawiz can also be in the form of a square with occultic numbers worn for protection. In Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal the researcher found that Muslim witchcraft, especially that practised by the Zanzibari Muslims, is regarded by the Indian folk as the most effective medicine.

3.4 The Indian Christian Community in South Africa

The Christians who came from India were a rather small group. Joy Brain in her latest historical and statistical research concludes that the immigrant Christians (1860 – 1911) constituted 1.4% or 2,150 of the total of 152,184 immigrants (Brain, 1983:244). Thompson, writing in 1938 about the Indian immigration into Natal 1860 – 1872, places the figure for Christians at 5% (:20), which compares fairly well with Brain's 4.6% for that period (Brain, 1983:243). She concludes that when writers refer to 5% Christians, they simply use Thompson's figure without realising that he analysed only a small proportion of immigrants, i.e. 6,445 out of 152,184 (Brain, 1983:244). Most of these Christians were from Madras; only 0.04% were from Calcutta i.e. 22 Christians (Brain, 1983:244 - 5). Brain points out that some registers are in a bad condition (Brain, 1983:6) and the fifth

Calcutta register has no *caste* column, but that the 91 volumes were searched for a second time, noting biblical and saints' names. It was discovered that more entries that were not marked as Christian in the caste column amounted to 2.33% of the total number of Christians extracted (Brain, 1983:6). One of the obvious facts that should not be overlooked is that some Christians would not have recognised that their religion was required in the caste column. Some others may have felt that their previous 'caste' was required or that simply the name pariah would suffice because many came from the pariah or outcaste group. Then there were those, aware of the fact that they were regarded as outcaste (pariah) because they became Christian, who simply filled in pariah. Another group may out of fear of persecution, deliberately have refused to state their Christian affiliation. The percentage of Christians may therefore be higher. Further studies regarding the number of indentured Hindus as well as the church affiliation of indentured Christians in Natal could bring us an even closer percentage.

Against the popular view that there were no 'passenger' Christians, Brain studied the passes issued to 'passenger' Indians and was able to identify 128 Christian 'passenger' Indians from India or Mauritius. Other sources of information may very well increase this figure (Brain, 1983:245).

Among the 2,150 indentured Christians there were Catholics, Syrians and Protestants. In the 1860's a fairly large group of Roman Catholics and Syrians emigrated to Natal but not thereafter, while large numbers of Baptists arrived in the first years of the 20th century (Brain, 1983:247).

Over the years the picture has changed dramatically. According to the 1996 census the number of Christians among the Asian people had increased to 194,427. The Pentecostal/Charismatic group accounted for the largest number (59,375) with the mainline churches (39,827) and the African Independent churches (10,778). A huge number of 84,447 were grouped as *Other Churches* and could very well be grouped with 'Mainline and Pentecostal/Charismatic' but the breakdown cannot be calculated (South African Census, 1996:30, 42, 44). In the period 1911 – 1996 the Christian faith grew at the expense of the Hindu religion from 1.4% in 1911 to 18.6% of the Indian population in (South African Census, 1996:65).

The people of India are popularly known as the most religious people in the world. Those who accepted the Christian faith in India, especially first generation believers, were known for their deep devotion to Christ, a devotion that would put their western counterparts to shame. As a minority group in India, often suffering from various forms of persecution, they tended to find their strength in a total commitment to their faith. Though little is known about the early Christian immigrants, it can be assumed that they would share in the faith of their forefathers. A study of the present-day Christianity of Indians in South Africa supports this viewpoint.

CHAPTER FOUR - FIRST EFFORTS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH HINDUS AND MUSLIMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

During the period of Indian immigration to South Africa, five churches were involved in spreading the Gospel to the Indian people. They were the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Wesleyan-Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran Churches. Joy Brain comments in her studies of this period that she had not been able to find evidence that the Presbyterian, the Congregational or the Dutch Reformed Churches nor any of the Pentecostal groups were active in the Indian mission field between 1860 and 1911 (Brain, 1983:229). As to the motivation for evangelisation of the Hindu and Muslim immigrants who were generally well satisfied with their religions, we do not concur with Brain that the motivation was the “White settler's unshakable conviction of the superiority of his religious beliefs and of his intellectual and artistic heritage ... in the 19th and early 20th centuries” (Brain, 1983:193). Except for those that were deluded, the small groups of missionaries were motivated by the scriptural injunction to preach the Gospel to all nations.

There are at least two reasons why these five churches were involved. First of all there were converts from India in all of these churches. Secondly, all these churches were involved in Natal among the Zulu people.

Of the five only the Roman Catholic Church catered primarily for those Indians who were already members of that Church or were Syrian Christians of the Roman rite. The other denominations spread the Gospel to all the immigrants - Hindu, Muslim and Christian alike (Brain, 1983:193). None was prepared for the demands that the arrival of the Indian immigrants were to make. Their small numbers in the early days and the general belief that they would return to India on the expiry of their contracts must have underplayed their impact compared with the thousands of Blacks who needed to be reached.

4.1 Roman Catholic Missions to Indians in South Africa

The Roman Catholic Church was the first Christian denomination to start work among the Indian immigrants (Brain, 1983:194). Father Sabon arrived in Natal in 1852. He began to visit Port Natal whenever a ship arrived, contacting Catholic passengers and crewmen. His English was poor and he had time on his hands (Brain, 1975: 34 - 41). He found about 50 Catholics that came on the Truro. Before he left they knelt down before him, asking him for his blessing (Brain, 1983:195). On December 4th 1860 he held his first mass for them (Brain, 1975:124).

Until the arrival of Rev R Stott in 1862, Sabon was the only Christian missionary to concern himself with the needs of the Indian immigrants. Sabon found it necessary to learn Tamil (:195). In January 1861 he wrote that he had mastered the alphabet which has as many as 247 letters. (Brain, 1975:124) In 1867 he established the first Indian school in Durban, importing Tamil literature from Ceylon (Brain, 1982:23). As early as 1861 Sabon had obtained a list of all the Christian Indians. He found 150 Catholics among them. In that same year he performed the first Christian marriage among the Indians. He visited the immigrants along Natal's north and south coast and by 1862 he had as many as 300 to visit. By 1865 Sabon was rather discouraged because the people were now spread in different places in the Colony and many were household servants of the farmers. This meant that he could only reach them in the evenings. Numbers did not increase rapidly since a considerable number of his parishioners returned to India after completing their indentures.

The missionary approach of the Catholic Church emphasised the diaconal responsibility of the Church such as pastoral care, orphanages and the education of the children. Bishop Jollivet's strong views on the importance of Catholic education ensured the opening of schools for Indians. By 1886 the Catholics had schools at Durban, Clairmont (Clairwood), Pietermaritzburg and New Castle (Brain, 1982:24) and later also in Ladysmith (Brain, 1982:199). According to Brain it was never the intention of the Catholic Church in Natal to evangelise the Indian community, but only the Zulu. Currin believes that the reasons for the slow rate of conversion to Catholicism were the conservativeness and exclusiveness of Hindu and Muslim cultures. The Catholics were fortunate in

having the enthusiastic services of the catechists, Shillong and Daniel Pillay (Brain, 1982:22). The language, culture and background were so different that it is difficult to see how they could have benefited from attendance at the same services as the whites (Brain, 1982:40). Nevertheless Currin (1962:206) suggests that the separation was due in part at least to the antagonism among white Catholics towards the Indian immigrants. However, in 1902, when Emmanuel Cathedral was being constructed, a petition was sent to the Bishop. It was signed by 83 Indian Catholics of Durban, in which they specifically requested that they be allowed to continue in their own chapel (Brain, 1982:41).

During Father Sabon's lifetime he had a flourishing Indian mission. Not until 1904 was another Tamil-speaking priest found for Natal, in the person of Father Maingot, who worked from 1889 in Ceylon and who was to spend the rest of his life in Durban working at the Indian parish of St. Anthony. During his ministry missionary activity was extended to Isipingo, Mt Edgecombe, Darnall and Verulam (Brain, 1983:199 - 200).

In 1905 there were 1,040 Indian Catholics in the whole of Natal. In 1977 the figure for the archdiocese of Durban was given as 10,676. The 1970 census recorded Catholics as the largest single denomination among Christian Indians in South Africa, with 12,820 adherents; in the 1980 census they numbered 21,160 (Brain, 1983:201).

The following table plots the growth of Indian Catholics in South Africa:

Date	Circumstances	Total	Source
1860	Truror: Father Sabon	50	Brain, 1983:194
1861	List of Catholics: Sabon	151	Brain, 1983:196
1892	Durban & Pietermaritzburg	550	Brain, 1983:199, 200
1905	Jolivet	1,040	Statistical Yearbook
1970	Colony of Natal: Yearbook	12,820	Census South Africa
1980	Census Catholics	21,160	Census South Africa
1996	National Census	22,526	Christian Handbook

4.2 Protestant Missions to Indians in South Africa

The Methodist Church began in 1861 to reach out to the Indian immigrants when Rev Joseph Jackson distributed tracts among the few Indian servants working in the Verulam district (Brain, 1983:201). An experienced missionary, the Rev Ralph Stott, was brought from Ceylon in 1862 to start a mission. Fluency in Tamil, a working knowledge of the Hindi language, coupled with administrative experience, resulted in an efficient ministry. He visited intensively, house to house, presenting the claims of Christ. He endured many insults and reproaches. Churches erected by Christians were not places to which Indian people would flock. It was only about the time of his retirement in 1877 that Stott built the first Indian Methodist Church in Durban (Hunt, 1956).

Brain notes the interesting fact that Stott from the beginning considered the whole Indian community in Natal as his congregation, distributing tracts and extracts from Scripture, preaching in all the centres of population. In 1863 there were 35 preaching places. By 1886 the number of estates to be called at had risen to 80. Stott seems to have identified only five or six Protestant immigrants and was therefore much more of an evangelist than a pastor. Stott was a man of great determination, totally dedicated to the conversion of the Indian immigrants to the Christian faith. By 1873 Stott who was acutely aware of the lack of educational facilities for the children of the Indian immigrants, had four small day schools under his control. (Brain, 1983:201 - 204).

In 1880 Simon Horner Stott, succeeded his father in the ministry. He was excellently qualified through missionary experience in Ceylon and had knowledge of Tamil. Already in 1865 his father urged the British Conference to send his son to assist with the work in Natal. He arrived the next year but found the work extremely demanding and eventually moved to Verulam to work among the Zulus (Brain, 1983:206 - 208). In 1880 he began a second phase in the history of Indian Methodism in Natal. In 1927 he writes that “the Indian work in Verulam did not succeed well owing probably to the counteracting influence of heathen priests in the neighbourhood.” Someone would be baptized but was warned and never appeared. Indians described conversion as *fell in the faith* (Stott, 1927:116).

The period between 1882 and 1906 was a period of growth and expansion. S H Stott began an energetic missionary drive among the labourers on the North Coast estates. In Pietermaritzburg there was also significant growth. In 1902 John Thomas was ordained, becoming the first Indian to be ordained as a Christian Minister in South Africa. In 1956 the Pietermaritzburg mission had 800 full members and 2,600 adherents (Hunt, 1956).

During his 26 years in the Natal Indian Mission Circuit, S H Stott was responsible for the establishment of a number of day schools in the coastal centres. In 1908 a Brahmin convert to the Christian faith, the Rev Subrahmanyam, arrived in Natal to take charge of the Durban and South Coast Indian Mission. After his departure carefully trained evangelists carried on the missionary work. The Choonoo brothers, Reuben and Arthur, played a prominent part in the mission work of this time. In 1911 when immigration from India ceased, the Methodist Church had firmly rooted Indian missions in Natal. In the census of 1980 the number of Methodist Indians was given as 4,320 (Brain, 1982:209 - 212). The converts were chiefly from the Hindu religion, some from the Muslim faith and one from Buddhism.

In 1865 the Rev Joseph Barker of the Anglican Church opened a day and night school for the children and adults of all coloured labourers on the estates. He felt that a great work is open here for the church. He concluded his report with a request for a missionary with Indian experience to be sent to his district. Attempts at mission by Rev W Baugh in Umlazi and a small mission in Isipingo soon came to an end. In Pietermaritzburg the first work among Indians began as early as 1869 and in 1880 a catechist, Charles David, established a school (Brain, 1983:212 - 213).

In Durban the Rev H F Wittington opened a Day School in Field Street in 1878 and read the service in Tamil for Indian Christians while one of his parishioners conducted a Sunday school. There were only about half a dozen Christian Indian families in Natal. It was, in fact, impossible for the over-worked clergy, most of whom were ignorant of Indian languages, to stretch their resources to cover work among the new settlers from the East (Burnett, 1955:102). Rev J Fairbrother of the Sea Cow Lake parish (St James) undertook missionary work among the Indians in a very limited way because no Indian name appeared in their register.

(Beyers, 1969:401) In 1877, under the inspiration of Rev Wittington, a public meeting was called (for) to consider whether anything could be done for the spiritual and educational needs of the Indians of Durban. The result was the appointment of a standing committee for Indian Missions. Only six years later, and quite unexpectedly, the missionary they had so long sought was found not in India but in Natal when Dr Lancelot Parker Booth offered his services in 1883 (Brain, 1983:214 - 215).

Booth settled in a house situated in an Indian quarter, near the present Alice Street Bridge. From here he directed the Mission in Natal, tended the sick at his dispensary and built the St Aidan's Church nearby in 1887 (Burnett, 1955:103). He worked without a salary for the first two years. John Thomas, an Indian schoolmaster, offered his services to the Church and from these humble beginnings in 1883 the number of schools rose to 9 in the following year. The number of schools increased to 15 in 1886 (Brain, 1983:103 - 104), and in 1889 the first school in the Colony was opened for Indian girls. With money raised in Britain and America a substantial building was erected for St Aidan's School in 1887. An orphanage for boys was opened in Durban by Miss Underwood, and a home for orphaned girls by Miss Saunders (Brain, 1983:215).

In 1890 Booth visited India and recruited two Tamil speaking missionaries, Solomon Vadakan and Simon Peter Vedamuthu. The latter was of especially (of) great assistance to Booth (Brain, 1983:216).

Medical work was a feature of the Anglican Mission in Durban from its inception in 1883. Next to Dr Booth, a second medical missionary, Dr Lillian Jenkins worked in the dispensary, joined later by Dr Robinson (Brain, 1983:216). When Booth resigned in 1900 to take up a position as Dean of St John's and Rector of Umtata (Brain, 1983:218) it was a great loss to St Aidan's. His parting address was signed by Gandhi. In his capacity as secretary of the Board. Gandhi, though not a Christian, was for many years a devout and faithful member of Booth's congregation, and a personal friend as well. The address was signed by 837 Indian members (Wrinch-Shultz, 1983:7, 8).

The hospital was officially opened in 1916 by the Rev CMC Bone (Wrinch-Shultz, 1983:11). His experience in India had taught him the value of a hospital attached to the mission. Miss Cole who started a dispensary in 1915 in Overport, offered to pay the rent of a house opposite the Mission House for three months if the missionary would take it and allow her to turn it into a hospital. Furthermore she offered her services free. Rev Bone accepted with alacrity (Burnett, 1955:144 - 145).

The arrival of Mr Dravian Koilpillai, who was a trained and experienced schoolmaster, enabled the Anglicans to launch a more ambitious scheme in 1904. This was the St Aidan's College that in addition to a higher standard of education, offered a boarding school for 30 boys and a college for the training of teachers. By 1916, 66 teachers had qualified for Government appointments. The College was therefore both a direct and indirect missionary agency (Burnett, 1955:143 - 144).

The Indian Anglican community comprised of about 615 baptised members by 1911. If we consider that many of the original parishioners returned to India or moved to other parts of South Africa, the Christian influence must have been much greater than these figures suggest. In 1980 the number of Indians belonging to the Anglican Church was calculated as 8,900 (Brain, 1983:219 - 220).

The Anglican missions, then, despite the difficulties encountered, probably represented the most active Christian movement among the Indians in the early years up to 1911. They had more schools in different parts of Natal than any other denomination. They offered higher education and the only teachers' training facilities. They were also the only denomination to open a medical dispensary and clinic and probably had more teachers and evangelists brought from India than any other missionary organizations.

The diaconal missionary method was employed in the Anglican approach to the Indians. At a time when there were no schools or hospitals for the Indians, the Anglicans, more than any other denomination, used the opportunity presented. Under difficult circumstances, with very little interest from their white parishioners and little financial support, they set up more schools than any other denomination and provided the only medical facility for Indians. Rev Burnett

notes that ‘the mission to the Indians of Natal seems never to have captured the imagination of our Church people. The tale of the mission is one of great gains, and much achievement, but also of heart-breaking failure to take advantage of opportunities, which would not return, simply because our men and women did not have the means.’

There were constant calls to increase the work all over Natal, but the mission workers were helpless; they could not sally forth to undertake it. It is not surprising that in their frustration they questioned whether the Church people of Natal really believed in the evangelisation of the Indians in their midst (Burnett, 1955:142 - 143).

The work of the Lutheran Church among the Indian community began round about 1896. The Matthews family of Sea View collected a group of fellow Lutherans for services and regular meetings at a place of worship and called this The Indian Lutheran Church. It is believed that most of the 90 adherents were from Kamavaripallam in the Gunter district, where they had been converted by the Hermannsburg Lutheran missionaries. Most of the group arrived between 1900 and 1911 (Brain, 1983:220).

They had for many years occasional contacts with the missionaries of the Norwegian Missionary Society and with the Hermannsburg Missionary Society and particularly with the Röhaver brothers of Harburg who had worked in India and spoke fluent Telegu. Jacob Mathews, one of the sons of the original immigrant, C Matthews, studied at Umpumulo and at Oscarsberg Theological Seminary. In the 1920’s and 1930’s the group began to disintegrate when some left to join the Anglican Church or the Assemblies of God. Some members however remained faithful to the Lutheran Church, and they formed the nucleus of a new missionary effort that began in 1962 under Matthews’s ministry.

The Lutherans were the first denomination to open a church in Chatsworth and later started three other congregations in the Durban district, at Reservoir Hills, Asherville and Phoenix. Missionaries were sent from Norway and Germany to assist in the work. They concentrated particularly on young people (Ims, 1965:9 - 15). According to the statistics tabulated by the Lutheran Church in 1978, their membership in Chatsworth was 366 and 74 in Asherville. They had

two chapels at Chatsworth, one at Asherville, and one at Reservoir Hills and another at Phoenix which were served by five ordained ministers assisted by 43 lay workers (Evangelical Lutheran Church publication as quoted by Brain, 1983:221).

D N Nathaniel in his M.Div. Thesis on the *Origin of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, 1900 – 1978* points out that some Indian Baptists from the many British and American mission districts in India arrived in Natal between 1860 and 1900. In the absence of a minister of their own persuasion they joined one of the two Protestant churches in the Colony. It was only in 1900, however, that a large group was identified as originating in the Telegu district where American Baptist missionaries were active (Nathaniel, 1979:10, 225). Although it is not possible to come to an exact estimate of the number of Baptists who arrived in Natal between 1860 and 1889, it is known that a number were scattered throughout the Colony. The first large groups that travelled together and were allocated to the same employer arrived in 1900 and thereafter there was a steady stream of arrivals until 1911.

Year of Arrival	No of Baptist Christians
1900	106
1901	10
1902	2
1903	5
1904	40
1905	10
1906	15
1907	14
1908	88
1909	20
1910	98
1911	35
1900-1911	443

(Brain, 1983:225 - 228)

The group that arrived in 1900 settled on Sir Liege Hullett's Tea Estate at Kearsney. One of the group, D Benjamin, organised services and cared for his parishioners for 3 years (Jacob, 1953:10). Attempts to absorb them into the local Baptist Congregation were unsuccessful. When their leader died, they approached Stott of the Methodist Church for admission. Stott offered to baptise them by immersion if they were anxious to be accepted on this basis. Having obtained the consent of the Baptist Minister in Durban, he accepted them into the Methodist Church. Two years later they returned to the Baptist Church when an Indian Baptist came from India to work in Natal (Stott, 1902:11). The Rev John Rungiah and his family arrived in Natal in June 1903 (Brain, 1983:222).

Rev John Rungiah formed the first Telegu Baptist Church in Natal, consisting of 62 members, in December of that same year. Within the first six years after his arrival he constituted churches at Durban, Verulam, Stanger, Tinley Manor, Amatikulu, Dannhauser, Dundee, Hattingspruit, and at Pietermaritzburg (1964:6 - 9). The method used by the Baptist missionaries was for the ordained minister to pioneer a new church and then leave the development of the new venture in the hands of trained laymen. This was also the pattern followed by Rungiah in Natal. Some of the churches were established with only a few members. Tinley Manor and Nanatikulu had 12 members each at the time of their formation in 1908 and 1909 respectively (Brain, 1983:222 - 224).

On the South Coast a Baptist missionary, the Rev Tomlinson, established churches at Park Rynie and Port Shepstone on behalf of the South African General Mission. After John Rungiah's death in 1915, Tomlinson worked as a guest preacher among the members of the Natal Indian Baptist Association. No Baptist churches were established on the South Coast in terms of an agreement with the SAGM, until 1975. In 1965 there were about 800 church members in this region.

In 1914, after three years of internal dissension, the Indian Baptist Mission divided into two organisations and the rift has persisted to the present time. Rev John Rungiah and his followers formed the Natal Telegu Baptist Association (later known as the Natal Indian Baptist Association); the remaining members, believed to be about 200 in all, continued as the Indian Baptist Mission. A new

church was built in 1915 and became known as the Central Baptist Church. In 1979 their membership was given as 2,961 (Baptist Union Handbook, 1979:9).

The approximate number of Baptists who arrived from India during the period 1900 – 1911 was 443, including women and children. They were a closely-knit and enthusiastic group of Christians who also had the great advantage of belonging to the same linguistic group (Brain, 1983:228).

Brain concludes that no combined large-scale evangelisation of the Indian population of Natal took place between 1860 and 1911. Five denominations, as described above, were active; they were instrumental in providing education for a proportion of the Indian children of school age and the first teacher training facilities at a time when no Government or private education was available; they also provided institutional care for destitute children. The Anglicans gave medical attention and there were Roman Catholic sanatoria in Ladysmith and Estcourt. Brain states that she could find no evidence that the Presbyterian, the Congregational, the Dutch Reformed Church nor any of the Pentecostal groups, were active in the Indian mission field between 1860 and 1911 (:229).

4.3 Dutch Reformed Church's Mission to Indians

Whereas the mission fields of other churches were geographically far a field and this entailed long journeys, often followed by heroic stories and adventures, the situation of the DRC was such that a great deal of their history of missions took place close to home. The borders of the congregation often concurred with the borders of the 'mission field.'

DRC missionaries did travel to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), as was noted in Chapter Two. The Rev M C Vos was stationed there during the 18th century, and the Rev de Klerk and S F Skeen, a century later. But the question now that needs answering is: How did the DRC at its home base, in South Africa involve itself in church planting in the Hindu and Muslim Community?

Since the establishment of the DRC in the Cape (1652) the pastors and members of their congregations had to take note of the arrival of Muslims in their midst. The first arrivals were Malayans from Batavia and were brought by the Dutch to

the Cape (Mahida, 1993:1). They were followed by the Mardyckers from Amboyna (an Indonesian island) who were brought to the Cape to defend the newly established settlement against the indigenous people (Mahida, 1993:2).

Political exiles, slaves and convicts followed them to the Cape. By 1830 there were 8,268 slaves at the Cape, 4,766 of whom were Muslim (Mahida, 1993:2, 5 - 7). By 1840 Islam had 6,435 adherents at Cape Town, one-third of the total population of the Colony.

Rev F N van Niekerk refers to a letter written in 1703 on behalf of the Church Council of Drakenstein to the Presbytery of Amsterdam. In the letter the Council mentioned one person, born from Muslim parents, who confessed his faith before the congregation (1948:1, 2). He became the first known convert from Islamic persuasion in South Africa.

4.3.1. Missions among Muslims in the Cape

Helperus Ritzema van Lier, who arrived in Cape Town in 1786 (Crafford, 1982:22), was deeply devoted to God and the extension of his Kingdom (Marais, 1919:100). His inspiration and missionary zeal provided a turning point for missions in the Cape: nothing less than a revival in missions in general and missions to Muslims in particular. Van Lier learnt the Malaysian language in order to be better equipped to reach the Muslim community (Van Niekerk, 1948:4 - 6).

The first mosque or masjid was constructed in 1794 on property obtained by Coridon of Ceylon. Permission was granted by General Craig. The mosque is situated in Dorp Street, Cape Town. The only church permitted in the Colony, however, was that of the Dutch Reformed Church (Mahida, 1993:12, 13). In view of what was regarded as the planting of a Christian nation at the Cape, the South African Missionary Society “Genootskap” handed a note of protest to the Government in 1800. The British Government were of a different opinion (Van Niekerk, 1948:7, 8) and the mosque remained.

Through the efforts of the SA “Genootskap” and the recommendation of Rev A Faure and Rev J H Beck, William Elliot was appointed in 1801 as

missionary to the Muslim people. Teaching material in the form of a booklet was drawn up and printed in English and in Dutch. Priest Jozef hired out a room in his house for this work and priest Achman provided a room for Malaysian classes. To find the necessary financial support all ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church were asked to become honorary members of the SA “Genootskap.” Tracts in the Malaysian language and 12 teaching documents from the Qur’an “Leerredevoeringe” were requested. These documents appeared in print and with the cooperation of the imams, Rev Beck and Elliot delivered these teachings on the first Wednesday of every month. Elliot’s work ceased in 1828 under disappointing circumstances (Van Niekerk, 1948:912).

In the minutes of the SA “Genootskap” we read the following:

Den Eerw Broeder Elliot berigt met leedwezen te moeten erken dat zijn Eerw. ondervind dat er geene vordering gehaalt word met het onderwerp van de Mohammedanen en dat ze zeer agterhouden zijn, vooral willen ze zich niet? Uitlaten om over het inwendige Godsdienst te spreken, niet tegenstaande echter wenschte zijn Eerw. een school voor hunne kinderen opzettelijk op te rigten (Van Niekerk, 1948:12).

Having fulfilled the necessary requirements the Rev Vogelzang was appointed religious teacher on 4 April 1830 by the Church Council of Cape Town. According to van Niekerk (1948:11), he was much more successful in his ministry to Muslims. As a young man in his stepfather’s shop, he had worked with Muslims. He knew them. He did not argue the Gospel with Muslim imams, knowing full well that this method would not succeed.

Vogelgezang held open-air meetings where ever the people were. He treated Muslims and unbelievers as sinners and preached the Word of God without hesitancy. Criticism followed. On 21 September 1841 *De Zuid Afrikaan* published the following letter from Phelo Veretas: (reported on 21/9/1841 a letter from Phelo Veretas as follows:)

Om tegen Mahomet te raaskaken en hem als een bedrieger uit te krijten, is de deur sluiten tegen uwe eigene poginge ... De Zendeling moet met den Koran beginnen, dien hij zelf eerst moest bestudeeren, met eenen

ijver als of zijne eigene zaligheid daarvan afhing, dan zal hij in staat zijn de waarheden daarin vervat, uitleggen en ongevoeliglijk den weg banen om hun des licht des Evangeliums te doen aannemen (As referred to by Van Niekerk, 1948:13).

The editor of *De Verzamelaar*, 14 Febr. 1843, warned that ...”wij hebben van goeden hand vernomen dat zijn Eerw. aanspraak veel misnoegen verwekt heeft...” (Van Niekerk, 1948:13).

The Cape Town Mail reports on 27 May 1848 that 29 coloured persons were baptised by the Rev Vogelzang in his Chapel in Long Street. Among them were a Muslim family and three other Muslim children. The Chapel was crowded to capacity with many Muslims. The newspaper adds:

Mr Vogelzang, it appears, is exerting a salutary influence amongst these people, and by his kind and disinterested attention to their children, a great number of whom are in his Day and Sunday schools, he is doing much to undermine their prejudices Cape Town Mail (1848:14).

Rev Frans Lion Cachet was deeply touched by the work of Vogelzang at Ebenezer Chapel and desired to continue the work after Vogelzang’s death. The Church Council granted his wish and allowed him to continue the work together with his pastoral responsibility at the Church Cape Town Mail, 1848 (:14).

Rev Cachet’s first convert was a Muslim woman who was given the name Rachel at her baptism. Rev Cachet felt that it was almost as difficult to bring the Gospel to Muslims as to the Jews of Holland. This was partly due to the luke-warmness and carelessness of the Christians among whom they were living Cape Town Mail, 1848 (:15 - 17).

In 1913 it was decided to place the work among Muslims in the hands of the Inland Mission Committee (*Binnenlandse Zending Kommissie*) of the DRC. Three years later a well-qualified person was found in Dr G B A Gerdener. Dr Gerdener had the cooperation of a Persian brother, Gerabadien, who was working on behalf of his own church among Muslims. Dr Gerdener held

conferences for the leaders of the DR Mission Church and preached in these churches to provide information about the Muslims and to warn parishioners against the seduction of their young daughters by Muslim men. Gerabadien used the courts to return such girls to their Christian parents. At the time Cape Town received visits from Dr Daniels of Armenia and the well known Dr Samuel Zwemer who spent his life among Muslims evangelising in Africa and elsewhere (Cape Town Mail, 1848:19 - 21).

The Rev A J Liebenberg soon came from America to assist Dr Gerdener with Muslim evangelism. He was concerned for the needs of these people and made efforts to establish schools for them. According to van Niekerk, Liebenberg closely followed the methods employed by Dr Zwemer (:22 - 24).

Liebenberg also used a reading room where he met with Malay Muslims to deliberate religious and other issues (*Mohammedane Sub-Kommissie*, 1927). The committee considered obtaining their own building for this purpose (*Mohamedane Sub-Kommissie*, 1928). House visitation, and smaller meetings in homes or in the reading room were regarded as the best method to reach Muslims (*Mohamedane Sub-Kommissie*, 1927). The use of tracts and Bibles in English, Afrikaans and Arabic proved to be effective (*Mohamedane Sub-Kommissie*, 1927, 1928, 1931). Liebenberg saw his involvement with the St. Stephens DRC, as an opportunity to reach those members who came under the influence of Islam (:1930).

A C van Wyk, a candidate for the ministry, succeeded A J Liebenberg in the ministry among Muslims. According to the minutes of a meeting of the Muslim Sub-Committee in 1927. (*Mohammedane Sub-Kommissie*) A C van Wyk would make himself available as soon as he had completed his candidate's examination and taken a course of six to eight months in Cairo (*Mohamedane Sub-Kommissie*, 1927).

It was however much later, in 1940, that A C van Wyk could involve himself in the work among the Muslims.

Several others were involved in the DRC mission to Muslims in those early years. Prof J du Plessis conducted an open seminar in the Cape Town City Hall

for a Muslim audience. Van Niekerk sees in this method the influence of Dr Samuel Zwemer who had earlier conducted a meeting in Cape Town (Van Niekerk, 1948:21). Rev P S Latsky (1943) later continued the work of the DRC Muslim Sub-committee.

White congregations were also involved in this work. The Adderley Street Congregation supported the work in the person of W A v d Worm as early as the 1960's. The missionary R D Kretzen, however, was not in favour of a worker among the Muslims because this would overturn the work in his school where several Muslim children received the Christian faith and were catechised for membership in Wynberg (Van Niekerk, 1948:17, 20).

Rev P S Latsky, took over the Church's mission to Muslims on a part-time basis in 1943 (while serving as minister of the St Stephen's DRC). In 1956 the Synod of the Cape DRC took a decision that led to the appointment of Rev D J Pypers in 1960 to minister exclusively to Muslims (Pypers, 1995:1). The request of Synod was that he would give special attention to the Indian Community. In 1966 the NG Sendingkerk accepted responsibility for the ministry amongst the Coloured and Malay Muslims in the Western Cape.

4.3.2 Mission among (during) the Muslims in Transvaal

Work among Muslims in those early years was not limited to Cape Town only. Transvaal was eager to co-operate with the 'Mohammedane Sub-Kommissie' (Cape Town) in view of work among Muslims in the Transvaal (:21). The renewal of missionary interest after the turn of the century 1900 – 1902, in the concentration camps in India, Sri-Lanka, Bermuda and St Helena particularly impacted upon Transvaal. In foreign lands hearts were deeply stirred, for the salvation of the lost in India and Sri-Lanka. Many indicated their willingness to become missionaries when they returned to South Africa (Die Kerkbode, 1901:5, 34, 708).

In the early years little was done in the Transvaal to reach the Muslim people. Interest in reaching Muslims here would only surface much later when the Dutch Reformed Church could call their first missionary to the Indian people of Transvaal in the person of Prof C J A Greyling (in 1955 part-time in 1957 in

full-time capacity). His interest in the Muslims resulted in a doctoral thesis titled, (*Die invloed van strominge in die Islam op die Jesusbeskouing van die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems*), 1976. It was the experience of most missionaries to the Indian people that little attention could be given to reaching out to the Muslims as the response was by and large from Hindu, not Muslim, people. Others who had laboured as students among the Indian people since 1956, the so-called KJV 'Indiërsending', however, shared Prof. Greyling's interest in the Muslims. Prof J A Naudé wrote his doctoral thesis on *The Name Allah* (1971); several theological students wrote similar papers on Islam for the BD degree and/or candidate minister status. Prof A van Selms, well-known teacher of Semitic Languages at the University of Pretoria, played an important role in encouraging these students to reach Muslims with the Gospel. Rev P J P de Beer and Rev D Bekker, who eventually became ministers of the RCA, studied Arabic with Maulana Razack of the Queen Street Mosque in Pretoria. Both majored in Arabic under Prof van Selms.

Conferences on well-chosen subjects were arranged with Muslim leaders in Pretoria. The conferences were held in the form of a debate with two speakers: One arguing from the Christian point of view, the other from the Muslim point of view. Both Prof van Selms and Prof A H van Zyl (of the Theological Faculty at the University of Pretoria) participated. These meetings were very well attended by Muslims. The sometimes fiery debates that ensued, however, did not foster good relationships with the Muslims, nor did they offer fair opportunities to present the Gospel. They were soon abandoned.

The outreach to Muslims was difficult for various reasons. For many young Afrikaans-speaking people the English language was a problem. The impact of the Group Areas Act (1950) upon the Muslim traders was keenly felt. The young people were seen as agents of the state and their Christian faith was questioned to such an extent that it was hardly possible for them to witness for Christ. They unknowingly represented an attitude that could not be aligned with the gospel message. The first full-time missionary of the RCA to Muslims exclusively, Rev (later Prof) J N J Kritzinger, was only called in 1975 by the RCA of Lenasia to work in the main centres of Transvaal, i.e. Lenasia, Benoni and Pretoria.

4.3.3 Mission among the Muslims in Natal

There is no record of any early involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church with ministry to the Muslims in Natal. Rev J Pretorius, the first missionary of the DRC to the Indian people of Natal, started his work only in 1947. He was overwhelmed by the response of the Hindus as well as the rigours of establishing missions in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. There was hardly time to reach out to Muslims as well. At the inauguration of the first church building in Raisethorpe (Pietermaritzburg) in 1948, Rev Pretorius said that the greatest response to the gospel was among those of Hindu persuasion. They represented approximately 80% of the Indian population of Natal. The Muslim section was less susceptible (SSK Natal 1953:2/104). They required a totally different way of approach and were difficult to reach. He was not aware of any missionary working full-time among Muslims from within the 14 churches of Natal. The Christians that came from India were a relatively small group. Joy Brain in her latest historical and statistical research concludes that the immigrant Christians (1860 – 1911) constituted only 1.4% or 2,150 of the total number of 152,184 immigrants (Brain, 1983:244). Thompson, writing in 1938 about the Indian immigration into Natal 1860 – 1872, places the figure for Christians at 5% (Thompson, 1938:20), which compares fairly well with Brain's 4.6% for that period (Brain, 1983:243).

4.3.4 Mission among the Hindus in Natal

The DRC's initial outreach to Hindus in Natal was of a sporadic nature. In the early days there were those unknown men and women who came into contact with Hindus and witnessed to them about Christ. The first Hindus that came to South Africa landed in Natal in 1860. As indicated in the previous chapter, the attitude of the up-country settlers and their concern about their own rights led to a recommendation to abolish indentured Indian labour in 1887. When in 1894 the number of Indians passed that of the European settlers, the spectre of being swamped caused considerable concern. In 1896 the Indians were deprived of the franchise. In spite of Gandhi's efforts, the South African Government was only interested in Indian labour and was determined not to countenance Indians as citizens in a White man's state (Brian, 1989:333 - 334). Various acts were passed to curtail the rights of Indians. In 1950 this inevitably

led to the infamous Group Areas Act 41, being passed by the Nationalist Government that had come to power in 1948. It was the logical result of previous policies (Brookes, 1956:293).

This backdrop of political upheaval not only negated the Gospel but blocked the potential desire to share the Gospel with Hindus. The members of the Dutch Reformed Church were linked “*nolens volens*” with the so-called Afrikaner Government. Christians that went to visit Indian homes to share the Gospel were looked upon as officials of the Government, police or city councillors! Later when the first church buildings were inaugurated, Hindus (and Muslims) were of the opinion that the buildings were financed by the Government and that the ministers were paid by the Government.

From the perspective of potential outreach workers and Christian witnesses the problem was even more complicated. The fact that the British were responsible for the Anglo-Boer war and its concentration camps and were in charge of India, left the Afrikaners and the Dutch Reformed Church with a feeling of extreme dislike for the English and their language, not to mention the importation of their subjects from India. Both England and India reacted furiously to the passing of the Group Areas Act of 1950, and South Africa stood accused before the United Nations. Many Afrikaners refused to speak English or to do business with Indians. You could preach the gospel in any language, provided that it was not English.

The Dutch Reformed Church in Natal had a very small membership in the early years. The number of congregations in the Durban-Pietermaritzburg area, where approximately 80% of the Indian population resided, had grown to only a few churches and was at the time dwindling in numbers. Consequently little financial support could be rendered for this work. The exposure of the Afrikaner to the Indian was negligible. The result was that the work among the Indian people was neglected. This also explains why it took the DRC such a long time to get officially involved in this mission. Those who did get involved earlier were often frowned upon.

In 1945 Mr B L Mitchell and Mr N J S de Bruin began outreach work in the Raisethorpe area in Pietermaritzburg. They gathered a small informal

congregation. Here Rev M W Theunissen conducted regular services while still involved with mission work among the Zulus. A year later the Natal DRC accepted responsibility for this congregation (Pypers, 1995:2). The congregation comprised almost 100% former Hindus.

Mr de Bruin was a member of the DRC and served for a period with Pastor J F Rowlands of the Full Gospel Church. He did not break his ties with the DRC, and desired that his work would eventually be linked with the DRC. In 1947 his converts were baptized and confirmed as members of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (Pretorius, 1976:1). This was the beginning of the formal mission work of the DRC among the Indian people in South Africa. There was great excitement among the members of the Natal DRC Missions Committee (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal) as reported in the minutes of 8 August 1946:

Die vergadering aanvaar hierdie werk as komende van die Here...die Kerkraad van Pietermaritzburg sal die werk onderneem met die ondersteuning van die Sinodale Sendingkommissie (SSK NGK Natal, 1946-1964:2/38).

At this point in time the minutes record the desire of the Committee that, because this work is the responsibility of the mission of the Dutch Reformed Church at large, a letter should be written to all the Synodical Missions Committees in the country to obtain their support, financially and otherwise (SSK NGK Natal 1946 – 1964:2/38).

In 1947 a sub-committee was formed to co-ordinate the work among the Indian people. It was decided to build a Church in Raisethorpe (Pietermaritzburg), to provide a place of refuge for the persecuted believers; and to consider the position of Mr N J S de Bruin. The Federal Council of DR Churches decided to request £1 from every congregation for this work. The following year Rev J Pretorius, who was involved in the ministry of the NGKA, was called to pioneer the work among the Indian people of Pietermaritzburg. He became the first missionary to the Indian People on behalf of the DRC. He found the work so difficult that he was on the verge of giving up. He persevered, however, and in 1957 the first congregation of the Indian Reformed Church the IRC (as it was

then called), was established. Rev J Pretorius was elected Chairman of the Convention of the IRC in Pietermaritzburg in 1968 as well as first Moderator of the Church.

Rev D P van Zyl Laurie, missions secretary of the DRC of Natal, took a keen interest in the work and obtained a huge piece of land in Raisethorpe in October 1946 (5,9160 acres for R2,520). He enlisted the help of some young people under the leadership of Mr Fanie van der Walt (Pretorius, 1976:2). They concentrated on Sunday school work and got a number of children from Hindu homes to attend.

It was at this time (1948) that Rev J Pretorius was called as missionary to the Zulu people of Southern Natal and as part-time worker among the Indian and Coloured people. He was received in Pietermaritzburg on 30 January 1948. His area of work stretched from Harding to the Tugela River and included Durban and Pietermaritzburg.

Rev M W Theunissen laid the foundation stone of the church building in 67 Delhi Street, Raisethorpe on 26 September 1949 and shortly after the arrival of Rev J Pretorius, the church, was inaugurated. Members of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (*NG Sendingkerk*) who had moved from Harding into the area, and attended the services at Raisethorpe. At the time a few members of Mr de Bruin's group left the Church. According to Rev Pretorius, Mr de Bruin's followers had joined the DRC with ulterior motives. Some were promised a place to stay on the Church property and to cultivate (green) fresh produce. When this did not materialise, many lost interest in spite of transport provided to the Church services.



Rev Theunissen and colleagues with first converts from Hinduism in Pietermaritzburg

This was a critical moment in the mission of the Church. Some were of the opinion that it would be futile to continue with the work and that it should be left to other churches. Nevertheless, the mission secretary, Rev D P van Zyl Laurie, persevered and in 1957 Rev J Pretorius was called as full-time missionary to the Indian people. When Rev Pretorius accepted the call, Rev D P van Zyl Laurie was deeply moved (Pretorius, 1976:2 - 6).

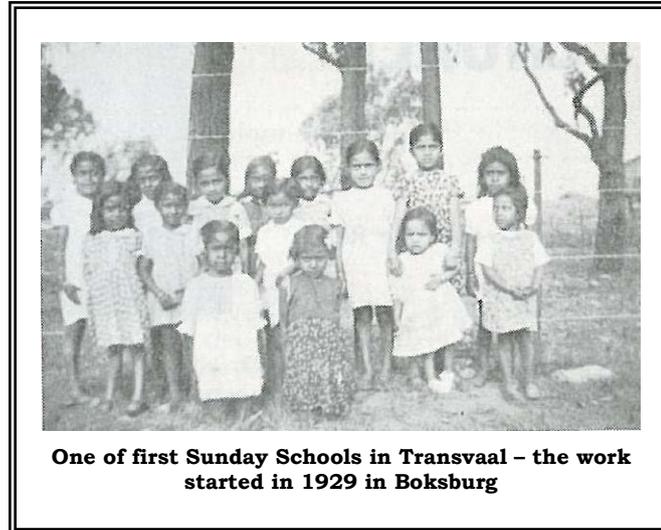
Rev Pretorius wrote that in his work he encountered almost exclusively Hindus. The Muslims were much more difficult to reach and required a totally different approach. In the early years the persecution of Hindus that turned to Christ came mostly from family connections. A lot of pressure was brought to bear upon the converts; rejection and even physical assault took place. If they became Christians for the wrong reasons, they would soon backslide and fall away (Pretorius, 1976:18).

It was in Pietermaritzburg that the importance of dealing with occultism among Hindus surfaced. Through the ministry of Evangelist Albert Murugan, first Evangelist appointed in 1951 to work among the Indians, precious lessons concerning Hindu outreach could be learnt. Upon the conversion and deliverance of Charles Rajah from the power of the spirit of *Dropathi*, a whole family came to Christ (Pretorius, 1976:7). Family members of Ev Murugan subsequently wrote to Rev Pretorius to enquire whether he would require the evangelist's services (Pretorius, 1976:15). When Pretorius acted on the suggestion, Ev Murugan accepted the call and played an important role in helping new converts. Dealing with the occult, became one of the most pressing issues that the RCA, in years to come, would have to handle (cf. Chapter Six, 6.3).

4.3.5 Mission among the Hindus in Transvaal

The beginnings of mission work among Hindus in the Transvaal go much further back than the work in Natal. Miss E Hamman (later Mrs Kelber) attended a conference of the World Student Christian Association in India in 1928 that deeply convinced her of the dire need to reach out to the Indian people of South Africa. On her return she began to conduct open-air services in the Boksburg area. She also started a regular Girls' Club and Sunday school

with the help of her mother and sister. This first Sunday school was opened early in 1931 (NG Kerk Synod Southern-Transvaal, 1957:201).



When the Hammans left, other Christians took over. Gradually these Sunday schools started spreading to other areas in the Johannesburg district.



In 1955 Rev C J A Greyling, (later Prof) was called to take care of the local Dutch Reformed Mission congregation and to give attention to reaching the Hindus and Muslims of Transvaal. On 17 June 1957 he was appointed by a combined committee of the Synods of Southern and Northern Transvaal to work as a full-time missionary among the Indian people of Transvaal. In Pretoria, Mrs H D A du Toit assisted with raising the necessary funds for the work (NGK Suid-Transvaal Sinode, 1959:108 NGK Noord-Transvaal Sinode, 1957:532).



Rev C J A Greyling concentrated his efforts in Boksburg, Germiston, Benoni and Pretoria. According to his report to the 1959 Synod of the NGK Southern Transvaal, Rev Greyling obtained a tent and held campaigns in Pretoria, Vereeniging, Springs, Johannesburg, Potchefstroom and in many towns in and around Johannesburg where small groups of believers assisted. On 13 October 1959 four new members were baptised in Boksburg, bringing the total to seven members. There were 45 converts at the time. Youth camps were a successful means of evangelism and many doors and hearts were opened to the gospel (NGK Suid Transvaal Sinode, 1959:109, 295).

One of the first missiological issues that had to be considered in these early days was the need to distinguish between the culture and character of the people on the one hand, and the idolatrous Hindu religion on the other hand. The mistake made in the past to condemn all that was Oriental should not be repeated, was the heartfelt view of Greyling and his helpers (NG Kerk Suid Transvaal Sinode, 1959:109).



In 1956, prior to the full-time appointment of Rev Greyling, the so-called “Kerkjeugvereniging (KJV) Indiërsending” (Church Youth Movement Indian Mission) was established in Pretoria. The work of the DRC among Indians in Pretoria was spear-headed by young people. The minister of the Hartbeesspruit DRC, the Rev J P W de Vries, shared with his youth movement the urgent need for Christian witnesses among the people of the Asiatic Bazaar in Boom Street, Pretoria. He was unaware of any church working among the Indian people there and challenged the youth to reach out to the Indians. In 1955, Dr Oswald J Smith of the Toronto Church in Canada was invited to minister to the members of the Dutch Reformed Church, concentrating on revival and missions. His inspired messages impacted the lives of many young people and prepared the hearts of the youth of the Hartbeesspruit congregation.



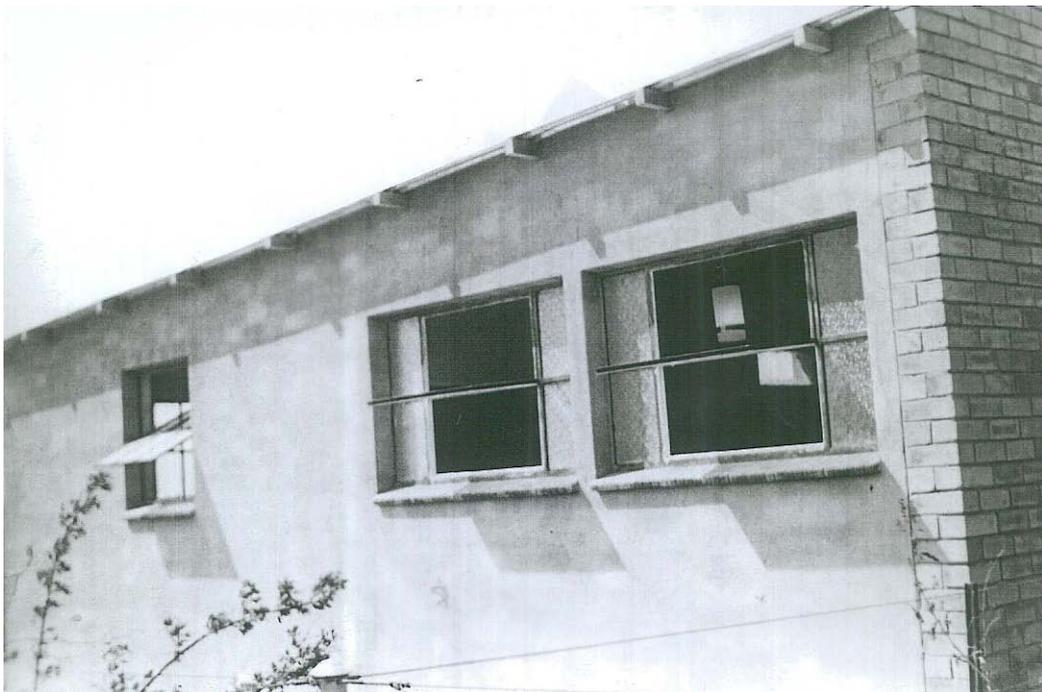
**NGK Hartbeesspruit youth raising funds for the proposed church building in Laudium
(KJV Indiërsending)**

The Chairman of the Missions Committee of the Youth Movement, Mr Gert Reinecke (later Rev) accepted the challenge and on Sunday afternoon 10 June 1956 a group of approximately 10 young people visited Prinsloo Street to reach out to the people there. Some time later they also ventured out to the Asiatic Bazaar. They were soon to be joined by young people from other congregations as well as students from the Pretoria University. The small bunch of volunteers grew eventually to a group of 30 young people that went regularly, on Sunday afternoons, to share the gospel through house visitation and wayside Sunday schools. In good time Rev C J A Greyling joined the outreach in Pretoria and opened the first Sunday school in a home in the Asiatic Bazaar. Open air campaigns were held and a regular Sunday afternoon service was established at a school in the Asiatic Bazaar. The “KJV Indiërsending”, which eventually drew young people from all over Pretoria, was brought under the auspices of the Area Executive of the KJV (later KJA).



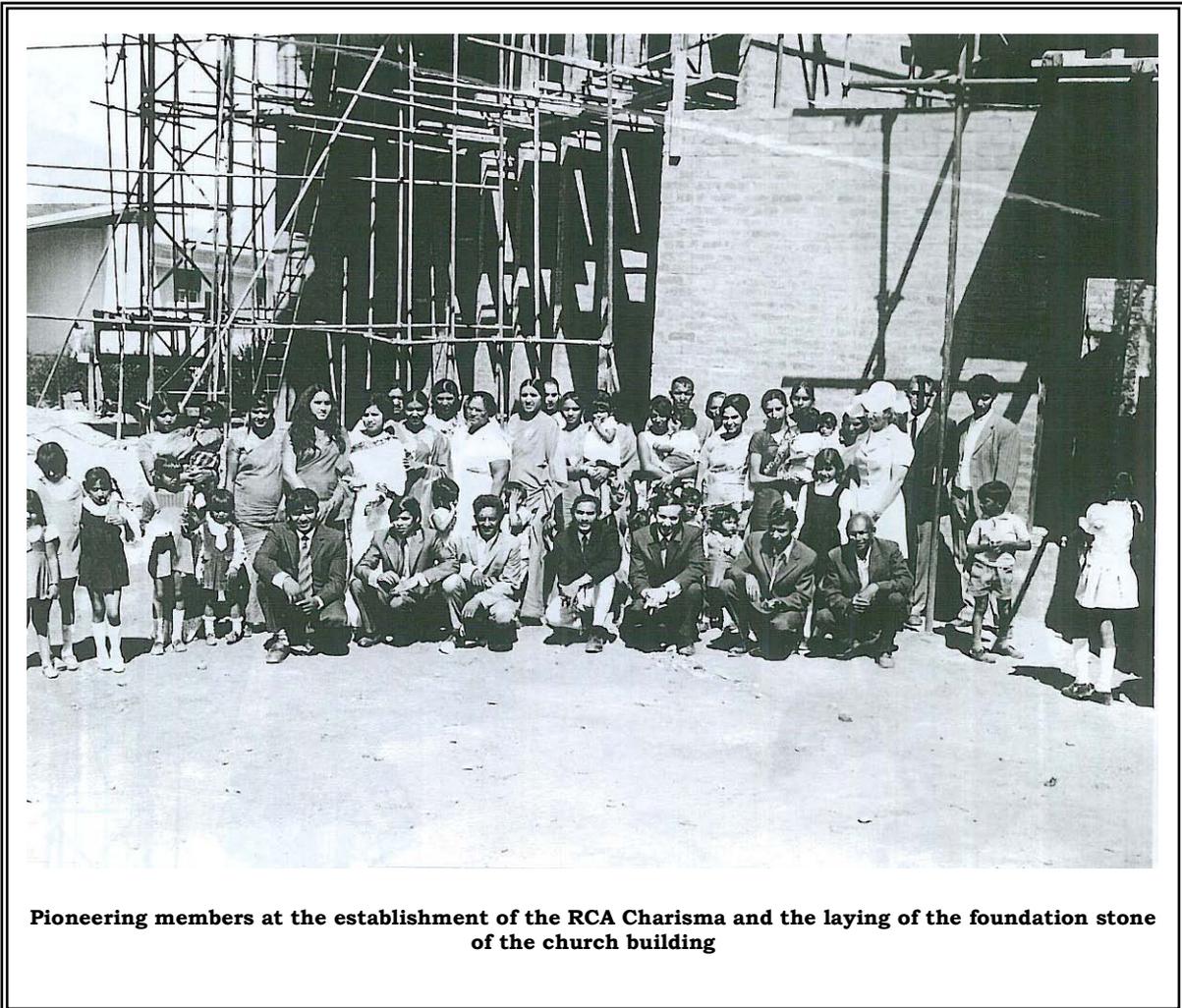
Inspecting the proposed church site In Laudium

Apart from the practical work and the development of a training programme for Hindu outreach, the young people were dreaming of the erection of a church building in the new township of Laudium in Pretoria. At the Synods of Northern and Southern Transvaal it was reported that negotiations were under way for procuring church sites in Claudius (Laudium, Pretoria) and Lenasia (Johannesburg) as early as 1959 (NGK N-Tvl, 1959:182; NGK S-Tvl, 1959:109).



The first church building in Laudium: A garage built on the Evangelist's premises

One of the young people, Mr Johan van Vuuren, came up with the ingenious plan to print and sell Christmas cards to raise funds. The income was earmarked for the work among the Indians and particularly for the building fund. Proceeds could later be used to help support the minister of the Durban - South Congregation, Rev Bunyan Peter.



4.3.6 Mission among the Hindus in other parts of the country

Up to 1960 only sporadic attention was given to the Hindu minority residing in the Cape Peninsula. Then, for the first time in the history of the Cape DRC, a missionary was officially given the task to minister to the Indian Community (Pypers, 1995:1). Rev Pypers pioneered the work with his exceptional pastoral abilities. In 1966 the Dutch Reformed Indian Church (Later Sunthosham) was

established in Rylands. Indian believers as well as members of the DRC assisted and the work spread to Cravenby, Port Elizabeth, East London and Kimberley. The dire need for Indian workers in the field was shared by missionaries countrywide. Rev Pypers was no exception. Towards the end of 1962 he obtained the services of Ev E J Manikkam who was called from Durban-North where he had worked with Rev Pretorius since 1959.

CHAPTER FIVE - A CHURCH BETWEEN THE TEMPLE AND THE MOSQUE: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AFRICA IN SOUTH AFRICA

5.1 The Church between Temple and Mosque: a small but lively community

Having discussed the establishment of the Indian community in South Africa, and having surveyed the accomplishments of a number of Christian denominations among the Indian people, we will now focus on one of the smaller churches in the Indian community; the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), or as it was initially named: the Indian Reformed Church (IRC) – a church that has had to find its place among the many Hindu temples and the Muslim mosques in South Africa.

A book by J H Bavinck carries the same title as this chapter: *The Church between the Temple and the Mosque*. This chapter, however, deals with the Reformed Church in Africa and underlines the missionary zeal of this Church. The work began in the IRC/RCA as a missionary outreach to the Indian people of South Africa, both Hindus and Muslims.

The official work among the Hindu people was initiated by ordained ministers. When the Church began to train evangelists, the minister and the evangelist worked as a team. In the initial stages of the ministry to Hindus, the evangelists fulfilled a very important task. They would open doors for the minister in so many ways. The result was further growth in the work. The remarkable hospitality offered by Hindu hosts made outreach a joyful experience. Usually the host would insist that the missionary should have a meal with them and then it was curry at its best.

The use of evangelists in the RCA at the time was an absolute necessity. The minister and evangelist team worked well. Minister cum evangelist refers to ONE person fulfilling both roles. The foreign minister and the indigenous evangelist formed a formidable team. The minister and evangelist would spend time in intercessory prayer. Then they would go out to visit the homes that the evangelist

selected. Earlier, evangelists came from other churches, such as the Full Gospel Church and the Methodist Church that laboured among the Indian people. Later, members of the RCA received training as evangelists while they worked among the people. This was true on-the-job training with lectures by the minister as arranged by the Examinations Committee.

In the initial stages of the work church councils would be free to make use of the services of evangelists admitted by the appropriate committee of the Synod. Evangelists not elected for specific offices shall only have advisory representation in meetings of church assemblies (Acta RCA Synod, 1968:36).

The following evangelists were present at the first Synod. They served as elders at the Synod.

Ev K Moodley from Pietermaritzburg (Durban-North)

Ev B Peter from Transvaal (Lenasia)

Ev G S Moodley from Transvaal (Benoni)

Ev R Govender from Transvaal (Pretoria)

Ev J K Naidoo from Durban-South (Chatsworth)

Ev E J Manikkam from Cape Province (Rylands)

Ev A Murugan from Pietermaritzburg was not delegated

Only one elder could represent the congregation
(Acta RCA Synod, 1968:74, 75)

Most of the evangelists were trained by the local ministers in terms of the practical work of outreach, but also through the study material of the Evangelist Course. A two-year certificate course for Evangelists at the University of Durban-Westville was being negotiated by the Liaison Committee of the General Synodical Missions Committee (NGK) and the IRC (Acta Indian Reformed Church Synod, 1970:304). This however became redundant in view of the fact that Synod decided in 1970 to train only ministers (Acta 1970:89): Evangelists were permanent members of Church Council as elders. The Church would only train ministers (Art 20 RCA Church Order).

As the Churches grew in strength and numbers, there were now men and women available in the local congregation to help with the task. In Laudium (Pretoria), for example, there was a team of men and women from the RCA Charisma congregation that were available for outreach. The training in Laudium focussed on Evangelism. A good number of the members of the Charisma Congregation in Laudium made themselves available for outreach, mostly to the Hindu people. The outreach group came from the Hindu world and therefore understood the Hindu people and their religion. They were eventually assisted by young people from all over Pretoria. When the Laudium Township was proclaimed, the enterprise gradually shifted to this area. Several men from this group subsequently became ministers of the Reformed Church in Africa.

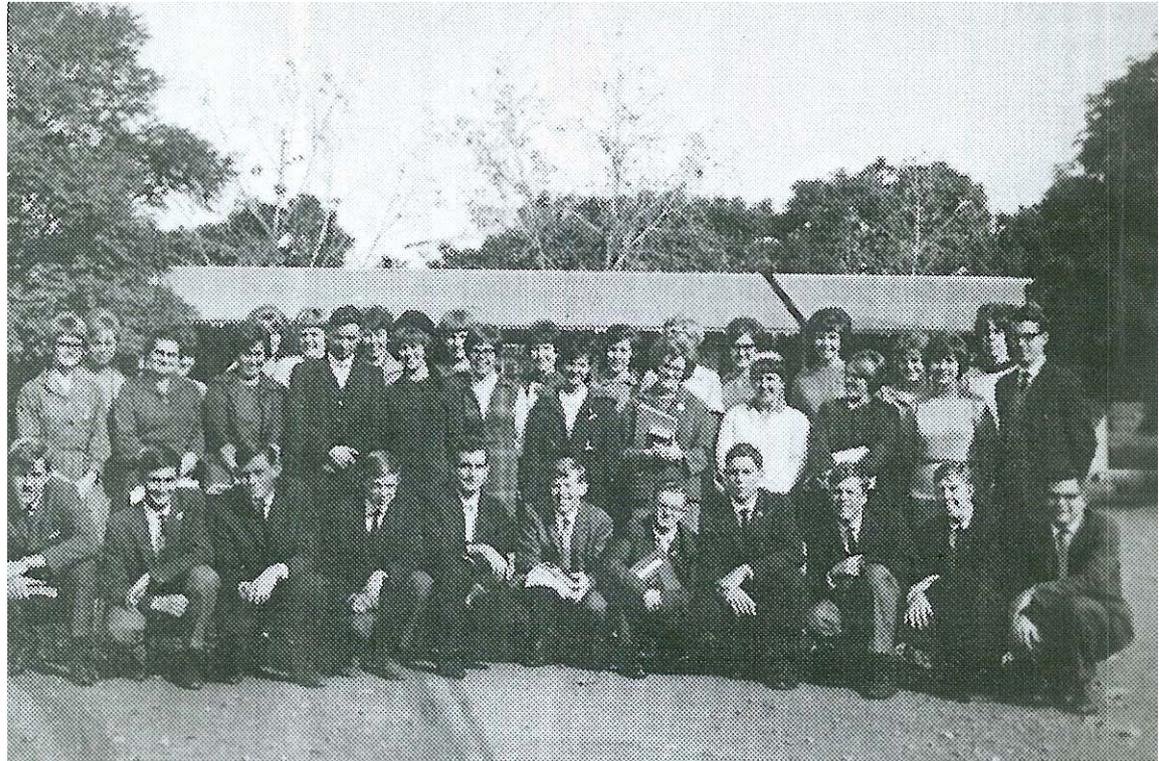
Both men and women from the Dutch Reformed Church in Natal, Transvaal and Cape Province offered their services in reaching out to the Indian people. This happened in the cities where most of the Indians resided, though there were also workers from the Dutch Reformed Church reaching out to Indian communities in smaller towns.

The training was provided by the local ministers of the RCA (then the IRC), where members of the Dutch Reformed Church made themselves available. These men and women were pioneers that reached out to the Indian people long before the Reformed Church was envisaged.

The first leaders of the KJV Indiërsending eventually became ministers and a good number of them, ministers of the Reformed Church in Africa, namely Prof J N J Kritzing, Rev D P Bekker, Dr Douwe Semmelink, Rev T van Niewenhuizen and Rev P J P de Beer. There were also older members of other Dutch Reformed congregations that reached out to Marabastad and later to Laudium. Marabastad had also the exceptional assistance of a missionary, Miss Jo Eringa from Holland, who through the efforts of Prof C J A Greyling, came to settle in Marabastad to reach out to the Indian community. She was a remarkable lady who was deeply loved by the Indians and the youth workers alike.

Right up to the time of writing of this thesis, there are still a good many young people from the DRC involved in Laudium. In other areas it was mostly older

people from the DRC who involved themselves in the work. The Reformed Church in Africa has always enjoyed the much appreciated support of the Dutch Reformed Church.



Youth outreach in Marabastad (Pretoria)

5.2 Establishment of the Indian Reformed Church

In the 1960's when the Indian Reformed Church (as it was then called) was established, the policy of indigenous churches was still in vogue. In the DRC there was an eagerness and urgency to establish churches among all population groups in South Africa. This church would become the 14th younger church in the DRC family. The word 'Indian' in the new name of the Church clearly indicated that it was a church tailor-made for a particular population group. The first ministers of the newly-established church felt keenly about the preservation of Indian culture and regarded westernization and the destruction of their congregants' values and traditions as irreconcilable with the Gospel.

Whereas some participants were eager to establish the Church, many questioned whether such action would not be premature, considering the fact

that the Church consisted only of four small congregations. To this the reply was that the DRC of Natal had also been established with only four congregations many years before.

The process of establishment in 1961 was guided by the General Synod of the DRC, and especially by the General Missions Committee of the DRC. In the early days (1961) the idea was to incorporate the mission among Indians as a separate presbytery into the existing Dutch Reformed Mission Church (Coloureds). This would be the initial step, while the ideal would still remain the establishment of a country-wide united Indian church (Govender, 1973:82).

The establishment of the IRC was not the result of the efforts of missionary organisations but of the Church. It began originally with the voluntary testimony of ordinary members of the Dutch Reformed Church who felt constrained to share the Gospel with Indians, Hindus and Moslems alike. The official Church was often lagging behind, and in certain cases even frowned upon those who were reaching out to a people that they believed should be repatriated to India. In many cases the Church simply did not take notice. In other cases, for example in Pretoria, they had to pay attention: the efforts of the young people forced the Church Youth Movement to officially recognize them as a missionary movement of the Church and to accommodate them as such. Earlier, in Pietermaritzburg in 1946 it was a member of the DRC, Mr N J S de Bruin, who requested the Mission Secretary, Rev D P van Zyl Laurie, to take responsibility for his mission, and for his flock of some fifty adults and children.

Once the Church officially recognised their obligation to reach out to the Indian people, interest in this undertaking spread to all the Provinces of South Africa, including the Orange Free State where, no Indians were allowed at the time. Eventually funds were made available by all synods and within a short period of time (1961) missionaries and evangelists were found in all provinces (excluding the OFS). Within four years (1957 – 1960) full-time missionaries were appointed in Natal, Transvaal and the Cape Province.

In the planning and organization of this venture the mission secretaries and their mission boards took a leading role. In Natal it was the

Rev D P van Zyl Laurie that took the initiative in 1946, to adopt the work of Mr de Bruin and his followers. He and his committee committed themselves to calling someone who on a part-time basis would take care of the Indian work, and being stationed in Pietermaritzburg would be closer to the heartland of the Indian people. In 1948 the choice fell upon Rev J Pretorius. Rev Pretorius knew little about the Indian people but was prepared to undertake the task. He once intimated to Rev de Beer that he had always used the church to start new ventures, first within the DRCA and DRMC and now within the fledgling IRC.

Rev D P van Zyl Laurie was a tremendous encouragement and sometimes admonishment to Rev J Pretorius. Once in 1949 he reacted to a report written by Rev Pretorius as follows:

Die toon van die verslag is nie baie hoopvol nie. Dit kom my voor of u meen dat ons die werk moet staak en op die kleurlinge konsentreer. Van 'n beproefde arbeider soos u, wat al baie harde bene in die bediening gekou het, verwag ons nie so iets nie. Teleurstelling en terugslae moet lei tot ondersoek en tot hernude volharding.

(Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1964:2/104).

Rev J Pretorius said in his reply to the mission secretary that although the facts regarding the work were discouraging and the statistics unnerving, he was not giving up (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1964:2/104).

The mission secretaries, together with their mission boards, had the huge task of finding financial support for the work among the Indians. This entailed negotiations with those in charge of the work as well as with the mission boards and synods. Problems such as the membership of ministers, the mode of baptism, the length of catechism for the older believers, the necessary regulations to guide the work, the question of the formation of a new church, and the setting up of training for evangelists and ministers surfaced and had to be resolved.

Rev J Haasbroek, Mission Secretary NGK Natal, had the difficult task of coordinating and planning the financial assistance from other synods for the work in Natal, as well as assisting the General Synod in organizing the

convention of the Indian Reformed Church in 1968 in Pietermaritzburg. In his capacity as Mission secretary of Natal where approximately 90% of the Hindu population resided, his task was indeed a major challenge. The precise and transparent way in which he kept the minutes of meetings is of great assistance to researchers.

The mission secretaries of the various DRC Synods of the Transvaal and of the Cape were all inspired by the challenge of reaching out to the Indian people and, together with their mission boards, made their own contribution towards the envisaged 'Indian Reformed Church.'

The procedure laid down by the Natal Mission Board for the establishment of new missions among the Indian people was followed in cooperation and consultation with the Indian Sub-Committee of Natal.

Werkkringe onder Indiërs kan deur plaaslike instansies begin en tot stand gebring word in samewerking en in oorleg met die Indiër-subkommissie van Natal wat tans die funksie van die Ring vervul.

(Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965).

In those early years before congregations were established the mission boards played a major role. All financial ventures had to be passed by the board. The buying of land, the funds for church buildings and the payment of workers and evangelists had to be handled by the mission boards and the synods they represented. Yet as early as 1946 the Natal Board saw their work, especially in terms of financial commitment, as a country-wide responsibility and decided to write to their counterparts in the other provinces, asking for their moral support and their permission for fundraising in their provinces.

(Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965)

Major policy decisions were taken at this level. One such issue that was brought to the Board by the Rev J Pretorius in 1956, was the question whether baptism of adults could not be done at the time of conversion with catechism following later. His motivation was the importance of baptism for the convert on account of the mystical value attached to the rite of baptism. The Board decided in favour of this request provided that each candidate should be

considered on merits (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965). Following the 1959 Conference of Missionaries this position was reversed and adults could only now be baptised after confession of faith. Eventually the matter was forwarded to the Federal Mission Board for their opinion. Now the question of the mode of baptism as including immersion came into the picture and the Mission Board warned all to treat this matter with the greatest of caution. The issue was finally referred to the General Synod (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965). Other matters, such as the drawing up of regulations for the work, the recruitment and training of workers and evangelists, the provision for needy members of the Church, the consideration of educational facilities, etc, were on the table of the Mission Boards.

The moment, however, when the work resulted in the formation of a congregation the responsibility was passed to the church council. The minutes of 15 May 1956 of the Natal Mission Board are self explanatory:

Op grond van die besluit van die Sinode sal die betrokke kerkraad in kennis gestel word dat die beheer van hierdie werk van nou af hulle verantwoordelikheid is. Hierdie beheer sluit die aanstelling van werkkragte in ... Die eiendomme vir daardie werk word kosteloos tot beskikking van genoemde kerkrade gestel ...Die betrokke Kerkrade doen verslag by die Ringe. Van) hierdie verslag word 'n kopie aan die Sendingsekretaris gestuur (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965).

Initially the work among the Indian people in Pietermaritzburg was to be incorporated in the work of the church council of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church. This however did not materialize, according to the Natal Mission Board's minutes of 7 March 1957 (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965). As early as 1949 it was decided that the work among the Coloureds was not to be to the disadvantage of the work among the Indians and that services would be arranged separately for the two groups (:1946 – 1965).

Good cooperation existed between the mission boards in the provinces of South Africa. In 1957 the Transvaal Board donated a tent to the Natal Board for

their outreach to the Indians (the Indian work) (Sinodale Sendingkommissie NGK Natal, 1946 – 1965).

Up to 1957 the DRC of Transvaal was responsible for the work among the local Indian community. The Synod of that year decided to take up the evangelising of Indians with greater seriousness and to budget for further expansion (NGK Transvaal Synod, 1957:299). £800 was made available for the work. It was decided to appoint a joint committee for the (NGK Transvaal Synod, 1957:539). When the committee met, substantial funding was made available for the work.

On account of the fact that the Transvaal mission was still in its initial stages, it was decided to combine efforts with Natal and form a liaison committee with Natal. Contact was also made with the churches in the Cape and the OFS (1959:108, 295). The Committee for Indian Mission helped financially to obtain a second missionary for the Transvaal in 1963 (Rev C du P le Roux) as well as a trainee-evangelist (Ev G Sooklingam). They also made it possible to set up a steel structure in Germiston for R2,000.00 to serve as a church building. Serving as representatives of both the Synods of the DRC Southern Transvaal and Northern Transvaal, they negotiated for a third missionary (this time in Northern Transvaal) in the person of Rev Weitz Botes They also succeeded in obtaining church building sites in Lenasia (Johannesburg) and in Claudius (Laudium, Pretoria) (1963:91, 92).

In 1959 the Synod of Northern Transvaal took note of the fact that Rev C J A Greyling was taking care of the Rand, Pretoria and Vereeniging (NGK Northern Transvaal 1959:183). In 1963 the Northern Transvaal Synod expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation to the Lord for the good number of young people that were involved in outreach (Northern Transvaal Synod, 1959:497) and for the enthusiasm of the Church Youth Movement of Pretoria (KJV) in their mission to Indians (Northern Transvaal Synod, 1959:220, 517). The Synod called this movement a 'veerkrachtige en sprankelende loot van die jeugwerk van die Kerk' (:195).

The General Synod of the DRC accepted the principle that the Indian congregations of Transvaal and the Cape be brought in touch with the Natal Congregations and requested the committee for Law and Order to point the way

towards a broader church connection between the various congregations (General Synod NGK, 1966:215). A draft Church Order for the Indian Reformed Church was agreed upon – the English translation being the official document (General Synod NGK, 1966:215, 562). The ASSK was requested to draw up a concept agreement between the DRC and the IRC (General Synod NGK, 1966:215).

The interest shown by the Gereformeerde (Reformed) Church in South Africa led to preliminary discussions with their representatives. The Broad Moderamen of the DRC was requested to draw up an agreement with the Gereformeerde Kerk regarding combined mission work (General Synod NGK, 1966:215).

On 27 August 1968 ministers and delegated elders from four Indian congregations (Pietermaritzburg/Durban North, Durban South, Transvaal and Cape Town) and representatives of the DRC met in the historic little church in Raisethorpe, Pietermaritzburg for the convention of the first Synod. A Church Order and an Agreement with the DRC were adopted (RCA Guidelines on Everyday Life:2).



5.3 The Composition and Role of the Mission Boards

The composition of the mission boards that spearheaded the enterprise, had a definite influence on the way the task was done. The initial work, in most cases, began with the efforts and zeal of members of the Dutch Reformed Church, long before the church officially entered this arena. When the church became officially involved, the necessary machinery had to be created for a much neglected field. A number of bodies on local, regional and national level, accepted responsibility for the task.

5.3.1 The Congregational and Presbytery Missions Committees

The work done by the Congregational and Presbytery Missions Committees was in some cases the first official involvement by the Dutch Reformed Church in this venture. In Pretoria it was the missions committee of the Church Youth Movement (*Kerkjeugvereniging / Kerkjeugaksie*) that initiated efforts to reach the Indian people in the Marabastad and Prinsloo Street area of the Pretoria CBD. When many other young people from neighbouring congregations joined the work, negotiations with the *Kerkjeugvereniging* Northern Transvaal, led to the establishment of the *KJV-Indiërsending*. This body functioned as a subcommittee of the *Gebiedsuniebestuur*, (Regional body) of the KJV.

Church councils found it more difficult to commit themselves to the work so that the researcher was unable to find extensive contributions of Church Council and Presbytery Missions Committees, beyond the receipt of reports regarding outreach to the Indian people. Presbyteries, however, were involved through their representatives on Synodical Missions Committees. In Durban the work was arranged through the Central Missions Board Durban (Sentrale Sending-bestuur Durban [SSBD]), consisting of representatives from church councils. In later years a similar arrangement was made in the Pretoria region.

The work was not easy - as the youth as well as church councils soon realised. There were various debilitating factors that impacted upon the mission among the Indian people with the exception of Durban/Pietermaritzburg. The Indian communities in the rest of the country were relatively small - and the culture

and religions of the Indians were quite unfamiliar to the DRC volunteers. Conversing in English, was for many young Afrikaners quite difficult.

5.3.2 Synodical Mission Committees (Sinodale Sendingkommissies) and Indian Mission Sub-Committees (Indiërsending sub-komissies)

On Synodical level the Synodical Mission Committees of the various Regional Synods of the DRC were responsible for the work. These committees or their appointed Indian Mission Sub-committees were involved with the planning, funding, calling and ordination/installation of missionaries and evangelists. The sub-committees held regular meetings with report back to their Synodical Mission Committees. Later when the missions were established into congregations the reports also went to the Indian Church Council. At that point in time the work of the Sub-Committees was chiefly related to funding, the erection of church buildings, and advising where required. The work done by these committees was not without tension as is true of any cross-cultural mission. One of the main difficulties was the demand for financial support by the Sub-Committees. In Transvaal and Durban this caused major concern. However, the splendid work done by the committees, together with their key coordinator, the Mission Secretary, cannot be over-estimated. One of the functions of the committees that became more important as the work developed was that of liaison between the DRC Mission and the Indian Mission. Accordingly these Sub-Committees were alternatively called Liaison Committees (Skakelkomitees).

5.3.3 Federal Missions Council (Federale Sendingraad)

The Federal Missions Council held its first meeting in 1942. All the Dutch Reformed Churches were represented at this meeting. The task of the Federal Missions Council included mission policy, planning and coordinating of the work (Federal Missions Council 1942:385). The Indian outreach in its very early days had close contact with this body. In Transvaal, it was the Rand Missions Council (Randse Sendingraad) and the Pretoria Missions Council (Pretoria Sendingraad) that were formed by Synod 1948 and 1954 respectively. The Rand Missions Council often discussed the Indian mission:

Vanaf die begin van die Sendingraad se werksaamhede het die kwessie van die Indiërsending telkemale op die agendas verskyn, en is kommissies van ondersoek benoem (Randse Sendingraad, SSK Natal 1/46:1957).

5.3.4 The Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches (Federale Raad van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke)

Prior to 1962, when the various Dutch Reformed Churches in the provinces of South Africa united, the Council of Dutch Reformed Churches (Raad van Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke) functioned as the link between the various Dutch Reformed Churches. With the development of the Younger Churches, through the missionary enterprise of the DRC, the need for liaison within the Dutch Reformed Church family was evident. In 1955 the Council of DR Churches decided that a unifying body between the ‘mother church’ and the ‘younger’ churches needed to be established.

In 1960 the Council of Churches of Reformed Confession in Southern Africa (Raad van Kerke van Gereformeerde Belydenis in Suidelike Afrika) was formed so as to include other churches of Reformed Confession. At the next meeting in 1964 the name was changed to the Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches to provide for effective communication and advice between the Dutch Reformed Churches.

5.3.5 Liaison Committee for Mission to the Indian People (Skakelkommissie vir Sending onder die Indiërs)

Right from the beginning of the official mission endeavour to the Indian people by the Dutch Reformed Church there were those who advocated the necessity of liaison between the Synodical Missions Committees (SSK’s) of the various Provinces. This would ensure that the fruit of this ministry would develop into one church.

A meeting of the SSKs of Natal and Transvaal was subsequently held on 27 August 1957 when the envisaged Liaison Committee was formed (refer 4.3). OFS and Cape Province joined later.

Op hierdie vergadering is besluit dat 'n "Skakelkommissie van die Sending onder die Indiërs" in lewe geroep word. Die betrokke SSK's het hulle goedkeuring hieraan geheg (SSK Natal, 2/8).

Later the committee was renamed the *Liaison Committee for Muslim and Hindu Mission* (1/42:18/2/63).

At their penultimate meeting on 30th November 1961 the committee took note of the fact that the Natal Synod of the DRC had decided on the formation of a separate Indian Church. The Liaison Committee decided as follows (Haasbroek, 1968):

- Die stigting van een uniale (of Republikeinse) selfstandige Indiërkerk, word as die ideaal in vooruitsig gestel.
- Solank daar egter net 'n paar Indiërgemeentes bestaan, sal daar aansluiting by die Kaapse Sendingkerk (Kleurlinge) gesoek word met die versoek dat die Indiërs as 'n aparte Indiërring in genoemde Kerk opgeneem word.
- Met die oog hierop, word die Natalse Kerk gevra om hulle besluit tot die stigting van 'n aparte Indiërkerk, in hersiening te neem. Dit word aan die Sendingsekretaris van Natal opgedra om hierdie saak voor die betrokke instansies te lê.
- Ook hierdie saak vereis 'n besluit deur die Algemene Sinode en die Federale Sendingraad sal versoek word om dit voor die Algemene Sinode te lê.

The proposal of the Liaison Committee was not acceptable. It lacked ecclesiastical status. The request that this matter be taken up by the Federal Missions Council failed as well. At the meeting of 8 February 1963 note was taken of the decision of the General Synod of 1962 as follows:

Die Hoogerwaarde Sinode besluit om die Sendingwerk onder die Indiërs in die hele Republiek van Suid-Afrika as deel van sy Sendingaksie te aanvaar en dra dit aan sy Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie op om weë en middele te vind om die nodige masjinerie daar te stel vir die

behoorlike nakoming van al die verpligtinge in verband met die tans bestaande werk en die uitbreiding daarvan (NGK General Synod 1962: 137, 212, 270).

This was the final meeting of the Liaison Committee in view of the fact that the General Synodical Missions Committee (Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie, ASSK) had now become the body responsible for the work.

5.3.6 Sub-Committee for Muslim and Hindu Mission (Sub-kommissie insake Moslem en Hindoe Sending)

On the very same day 18 February 1963, that the Liaison Committee dissolved the new Sub-committee with Rev J J Haasbroek in the chair and Rev C J A Greyling as Secretary, met to take over the work of the previous Liaison Committee. The training of workers remained a priority. The annual conference for workers and the annual meeting of missionaries would continue. The major task of the new committee was the planning of the budget for the work for the period 1964-1965, and the preparation of a Church Order in conceptual form (SSK Natal 1/42:18 February 1963 and Haasbroek, 1968:[sp]).

5.4 The Composition and role of the Pioneering Mission Workers

The first missionaries or trail-blazers called into the Indian work were all white ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. Most had completed their theological studies at the Pretoria University, some at Wellington and one at Stellenbosch. Some served first in a part-time capacity and later in a full-time capacity. The majority however entered the ministry in a full-time capacity. Most missionaries were called into the Indian work as their first occupation. The work was, with a few exceptions, a youthful enterprise done by young people in their twenties. This was also true of most of the lay-workers, particularly the part-time lay-workers. The full-time lay-workers were by contrast mostly older men and women.

The first evangelists, in contrast, were Indian, and mostly older workers coming from churches such as the Full Gospel Church, the Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Faith Mission and the SA General Mission. Others, especially from the Transvaal, were recent converts who received in-house training from the missionaries.

The Reformed Church in Africa is indebted to these early pioneers and to the churches that gave them to this mission. A good relationship always existed between the relatively young RCA and the other churches that had been in the field so much longer.

5.4.1 The first missionary pioneers:-

Missionary	Place	Part Time	Full Time
Rev J Pretorius	Natal	1948	1957
Rev C J A Greyling	Transvaal Johannesburg/Pretoria	1955	1960
Rev D J Pypers	Cape Rylands/Cravenby		1960

Up to 1968 when the Indian Reformed Church was established a number of other missionaries were called, often opening up new fields.

5.4.2 The later Pioneering Missionaries (1959-1983)

Missionary	Place	Full Time
Rev J J B Pretorius	Durban-South	1959 – 1975
Dr C du P le Roux	Germiston/Benoni	1960 – 1983
Rev D P Bekker	Durban-South	1965 – 1984-
Rev W L F Botes	Pretoria	1964 – 1966
Rev P J P de Beer	Pretoria / Durban	1966 – 2004

All of the above missionaries also had pastoral responsibilities in their respective congregations.

5.4.3 Pioneering Evangelists of the RCA (1957 - 1968)

- **Prof C J A Greyling**

Rev C J A Greyling (Chris) was ordained in 1955 as first full time missionary (DRC) to labour among the Indian People of Transvaal. He and his wife Grace worked among the Hindus and Muslims. His ministry of fourteen years in Transvaal centred around the East Rand and Pretoria. From 1969 he continued this ministry in the Cape where he was ordained for mission work among Muslims in Wynberg. He played an important role in the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa.

His doctoral thesis is titled: *Die invloed van strominge in die Islam op die Jesus beskouing van die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems*. (D.Th University Stellenbosch, 1976). His passion for the ministry of the Gospel to Muslims never abated and he continued to train believers to reach out to Muslims.

- **Rev D J Pypers**

Rev Danie Pypers was appointed by the NGK in 1960 to reach out to Muslims exclusively, but giving special attention to the Indian community. Rev Dawie Pypers was the first missionary to reach out to the Hindus of Cape Town.

Eventually the Dutch Reformed Indian Church of the Cape Province was founded in Rylands, called RCA Subthosham. Rev Pypers made use of open-air services and suitable film shows. House visitation played a huge role in his ministry. In 1974 as second church building was erected in Cravenby as the work expanded.

In 1976 he relocated to Durban for four blessed years in the ministry of deliverance among the Indian people. He testified to the ministry of divine healing in the power of Christ. Rev Pypers was the first Assessor of the RCA Synod.

- **Dr C du P le Roux**

Dr le Roux was the first Actuary of the RCA. He joined the ministry of Prof C J A Greyling in the East Rand. He was stationed in Germiston (Dawnview). He published a MA thesis, titled *Die Ulama. Hulle rol in die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks.* (1978). This was followed by a doctoral thesis titled *Die invloed van strominge in Islam op die Jesus beskouing van die Suid-Afrikaanse Moslems.* This was indeed a groundbreaking work.

- **Rev J Pretorius**

Rev Pretorius was the first missionary, called in 1947 to work among the Indian people of Durban and Pietermaritzburg. He established the first congregation of the RCA in Pietermaritzburg in 1957. Rev Pretorius was used by the church to open up new mission fields. He will be remembered for his role as Chairman of the Meeting when the RCA (then IRC) was officially established. Rev Pretorius was the first Moderator of the RCA (1968). He emphasized the role and value of indigenous evangelists in the ministry of the RCA.

Prior to the establishment of the Indian Reformed Church in 1968 a number of evangelists were appointed. They were all Indian people.

Evangelist	Place
Ev A Murugan	Pietermaritzburg
Ev E J Manikkam (later minister)	Rylands, Cape
Ev G Sooklingam (later minister)	Benoni
Ev K Moodley (later minister)	Sydenham, Durban
Ev G B Peter (later minister)	Benoni / Lenasia
Ev R Govender	Pretoria
Ev S Sukdaven (later minister)	Pietermaritzburg
Ev J K Naidoo (later minister)	Merebank, Durban

The evangelists proved to be a great asset to the work. As co-workers to the missionaries they opened doors to Hindu homes which may otherwise have remained shut to the foreign white missionary. In every place where they were employed growth was seen. The missionaries could teach Christian theology to the evangelists, but the latter taught the missionaries the culture, tradition and religion of the Indian. They brought with them spiritual songs in the vernacular that richly moved and blessed the hearts of those who kept their mother

tongue. The very first evangelist, A Murugan, showed the absolute importance of dealing with the occult and the necessity of the deliverance ministry in this work (Pretorius, 1976:7).

The evangelist's ability to speak at least one of the Indian languages was a great help to reach those who could not understand English. They provided advice on teaching Christian songs in the vernacular. They rendered invaluable service in problem solving in the local churches. They could read their own people and interpret their needs. Most evangelists started as trainee evangelists and then became evangelists after completing their training. Most of them in time became ministers.





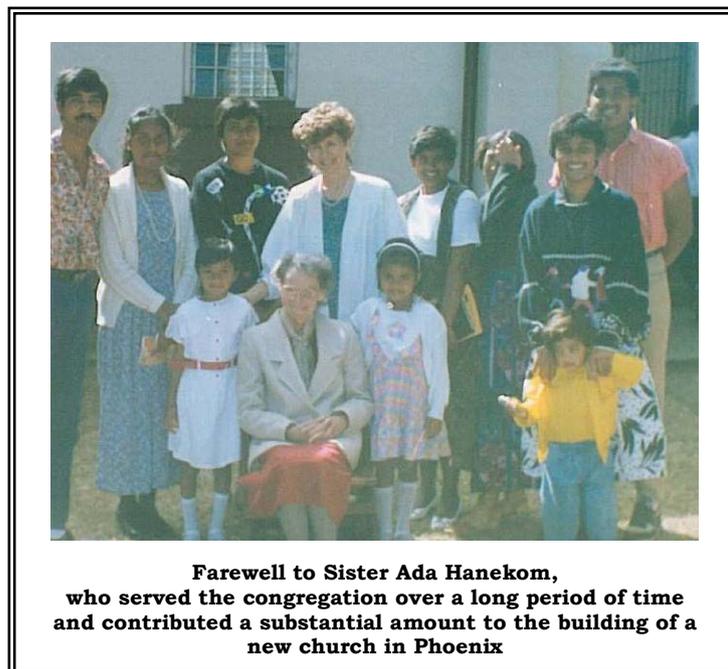
5.4.5 Pioneering Lay workers (Lay-Workers) (1946 – 1968)

Some lay-workers started out on a voluntary basis but were later supported financially on a full-time basis.

Lay-workers	Place
Mr N J S de Bruin	Pietermaritzburg Pentrick, Raisethorpe
Mr S V Ramiah	Pietermaritzburg Pentrick, Raisethorpe
Mr A J S van Zyl	Durban Jacobs
Mrs M du Preez	Port Elizabeth
Miss J O Eringa	Pretoria

5.5 Voluntary Workers

In the early years there were many voluntary workers that gave their time and strength to share the Gospel with the Indian community. In Pretoria and Cape Town they consisted mostly of students and other young people, whereas in Pietermaritzburg and in Durban they were more mature. This was also true of voluntary workers in up-country areas as well as in Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, East London and Kimberley. In Durban-South, however, there were in the early days many young people that assisted with the work.



In some areas, such as Pretoria, the work was initiated by voluntary workers long before the Church officially rose to the occasion. From the hundreds of young people that laboured temporarily in Pretoria, the following became ministers of the RCA:

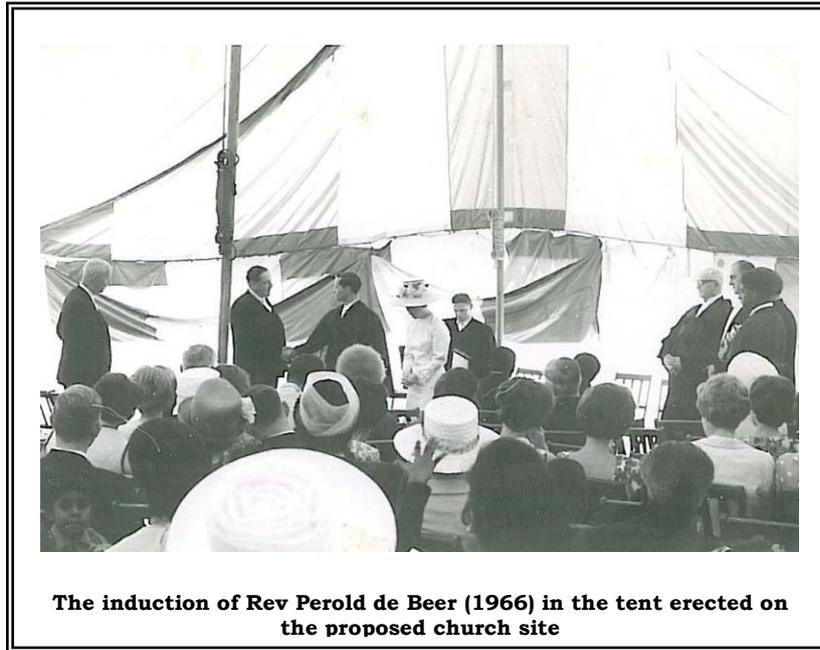
Rev D P Bekker

Rev P J P de Beer

Rev T H van Nieuwenhuizen

Rev (later Dr) L D Semmelink (now Dr)

Rev (later Prof) J N J Kritzing (now Prof)



5.5.1 Missionary Conferences

Pioneering the work in the 1950's required an understanding of the religions involved, Hinduism and Islam, as well as an understanding of the best possible way to reach the people. Right from the outset contact was made with all involved in the work. This, as we have seen, included Natal, Transvaal and the Cape. Conferences to attend to these matters were held on an annual basis during the early years.

Mission among Hindus and Muslims implied reaching out to people of very strong religious convictions. This task was of a specialised nature that required specialised training and assistance. As early as 1946 when the project officially commenced in Natal the relevant Missions Committee of the DRC Synod worked in conjunction with all the other Synods of the DRC. Initially it meant financial support.

Omdat ons voel dat die werk onder die Indiërs 'n uniale verantwoordelikheid moet wees, veral wat die geldelike las, die aankoop van 'n stukkie grond en die nodige geboue betref, sal 'n skrywe aan die Sendingkommissies van die ander Provinsies geskryf word om hul geldelike steun en toelating vir die insameling van fondse (SSK Natal 2/38:5/8/46).

In 1959, a proposal for an annual conference for missionaries and helpers was adopted. These conferences circulated between Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg/Durban and Cape Town. The conferences provided training for outreach to Hindus and Muslims in South Africa, and united the Indian mission work of the DRC in South Africa.

The SSK of Natal (2/104:6/12/1957) took note of its cordial co-operation with the mission in Transvaal.

Samewerking Tvl. en Provinsies: Die vergadering neem met groot dank en waardering kennis van die basis van hartlike samewerking wat daar veral met Tvl. bereik is t.o.v. Sendingwerk onder die Indiërs.

Proof of this good relationship was the fact that the Transvaal Sub-committee proposed to donate a church tent to their counterparts in Natal.

Earlier, on 27 August 1957, a historic meeting was held in Bloemfontein. Members of the Natal and Transvaal missions committees, together with Rev J Pretorius and C J A Greyling, met to discuss the dire need for cooperation in this mission endeavour (The Cape Province was also invited but could not attend).

It was pointed out that Natal had recently (1957) established a new church among the Indian people without any church affiliation.

Natal het reeds daartoe oorgegaan om 'n nuwe kerk te stig vir die Indiërs, maar tans staan die kerk nog heeltemal buite kerkverband wat juridies 'n onmoontlike posisie is. Om die Indiërs saam met die Kleurlinge te gaan groepeer is ook onprakties. Hier is dit veral die taal wat 'n struikelblok is (SSK Natal 2/104:27/8/1957).

One of the members, Rev G H Oosthuizen, suggested that the whole enterprise be placed under the supervision of the Federal Missions Council. The meeting resolved unanimously to propose to both the bodies, the formation of a liaison committee, consisting of the two executives and the missionaries.

In March 1963 a conference was held in Johannesburg with the well-known Islamist, Dr W A Bijleveld, as guest speaker. His visit was of great encouragement to all who heard him (SSK Natal 2/38:6/9/1962). His lectures were attended by representatives of various denominations. In a report to the Indian Missions Committee in Pretoria (SSK 1/42:21/8/63), the following points were highlighted by Rev C J A Greyling, missionary to the Indian people of Transvaal:



- Die werk onder Moslems is 'n afgeskepte werk.
- Die grootste gedeelte van die wêreld van Islam het Jesus nie verwerp nie, daar hulle Jesus nog nooit leer ken het nie.
- Die Nuwe Testament moet altyd teen die agtergrond van die Ou Testament gepreek word.

The Conference appointed a continuation committee to request official participation in the Islam-in-Africa Project. In this way, information and guidance could be provided to the churches in South Africa, in view of the work among Muslims.

5.6 Training of Ministers

The first missionaries that served in the Indian field were trained at Wellington Bible College and the Theological Faculties, at the University of Stellenbosch and Pretoria. Most of the ministers were trained at Pretoria. In 1968 the position was as follows:

Date	Wellington	Stellenbosch	Pretoria	Total
1968	2	1	3	6

The need for trained Indian ministers was keenly felt, but the opportunities for training were bleak.

During the very early years the small number of Indian ministers doing service in the South African field were trained in India or England. There was no separate institution for Indian theological students in South Africa. In 1908, for example, John Choonoo of the Methodist Church was taken along to India by the Rev Subrahmanyam (born in Madras), to be trained as minister for the South African field (Gerdener, 1958:135).

Pentecostal churches usually provided on-the-job training for their prospective pastors. Eventually they were trained in Bible School.

Ev E J Manikkam was the first Indian candidate to present himself for training for the ministry in the IRC. As he had been trained as pastor of the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) and then as evangelist of the Indian Reformed Church, he requested ordination in the IRC six months prior to the completion of his course at Unisa. The committee responsible for his training was the sub-committee for Muslim- and Hindu Mission. Both the Actuary of the IRC and the Durban-South church council appealed against the decision of the ASSK to allow Ev Manikkam to be ordained prior to completion of the stipulated course. The Church Order of the IRC, art 9, stipulates the requirement ... *for the minister of the Word a thorough training for and admittance to the ministry by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church* (Indian Reformed Church, 1968:33).

A serious discussion followed but on the grounds of art 9 the decision of the ASSK was upheld.

... Colloquium doctum, legitimasie en bevestiging, net soos die opleiding van Indiërwerkkragte rus dus op hierdie stadium, volgens Art. 9 van die Kerkorde, baie duidelik in die hande van die Moederkerk... (Haasbroek, 1970:2).

5.7 Recruitment and training of Evangelists

5.7.1 The Recruitment of Evangelists

The recruitment of evangelists was a crucial issue in the early years. The white missionaries had by and large little knowledge or understanding of the culture and religion of the Hindus and Muslims. English had become the 'lingua franca' of the Indian people. Yet to converse in the language of the heart was a different matter. The first missionaries saw the recruitment of evangelists as absolutely necessary.

The missionaries suffered another difficulty. The political antipathy against the Afrikaner and his church in particular had to be bridged. The Dutch Reformed Church was seen as the state church and had to carry all the negative baggage attached to such a position. When the work started in the late 1940's it coincided with the Afrikaner coming to power in 1948 with its policy of apartheid and all its negative connotations. Many Indian people were under the impression that the missionaries were paid by the state and the state provided the finances for church sites and church buildings. The policy of separate development and the forced removal of people made the work, especially among the intelligentsia, well-nigh impossible.

One of the first prospective candidates recruited in Pietermaritzburg left on the second day probably because of opposition from the Indian community against 'die Boerevolk in die algemeen weens staatkundige wrywing wat daar bestaan' (SSK Natal 2/38:7/9/48). Rev N W Theunissen, secretary of the Indian sub-committee, pictures a dark scenario for the mission:

Op grond van hierdie laaste staan die werk onder die Indiërs voor 'n swart en donker tydperk. Daar word egter besluit, omdat ons in die krag van die Evangelie glo, om onvermoeid met die werk voort te gaan en te soek na 'n ander evangelis (:7/9/48).

The message of the missionaries was questioned on account of the fact that they represented a people that could not offer anything better than the high moral code and religious devotion among Hindus. As some Indians were, by virtue of their birth, assumed to be Hindu, so all whites, Afrikaners and Englishmen alike were regarded as born Christian. On the beaches and in the night clubs of Durban where many ordinary Indian people had to work for a living, they saw how whites behaved and were disgusted. The only way the Gospel could be presented was to make a clear distinction between so-called Christians and born-again Christians.

The born-again evangelist (without the baggage of the white missionary) could offer an open door to the heart of the Hindu and Muslim and introduce the missionary to the people in a much better way than any self-introduction could.

It was also the evangelists that introduced the people in the early years to their beloved Christian lyrics in Tamil, Telegu and Hindi. These songs often opened the hearts of Hindus to the Gospel message.

The recruitment of evangelists in the Transvaal was approached differently. In the Johannesburg area, one of the early converts, Redji Moodley, offered himself for the ministry and was subsequently trained as evangelist. Another convert, Ramsamy Govender, was also trained as evangelist for the Pretoria region.

The third evangelist to apply for the ministry in the Indian Reformed Church, Ev Buyan Peter, was a minister of the Indian Christian Church (South Africa General Mission). His congregation decided unanimously to apply for incorporation into the Indian Reformed Church of Transvaal. The Liaison committee for Moslem and Hindu mission proposed the acceptance of the application. The minister would have to receive *colloquium doctum* and would function in the capacity of an evangelist (SSK Natal 1/42:18/2/63).

Ev G Bunyan Peter hailed from an evangelical reformed background whereas the evangelists in the Natal region were from a Pentecostal background (SSK Natal 1/42:18/2/63).

5.7.2 The Training of Evangelists

The vital issue was not the training of evangelists but the training of missionaries! It was the evangelist that held the key to that training. The annual conference of missionaries underscored the dire need for such training.

The training of evangelists was required for the following purposes:

- A proper theological training in Reformed doctrine. Many of the early evangelists came over from Pentecostal churches.
- A proper training in Presbyterian church policy and administration. The evangelists that came over from other churches were used to a church government that was by-and-large seated in the pastor.
- On-the-job training was a necessity. The work had to be established while theory would go hand in hand with practical experience.
- Appointment to a position would initially be on a temporary basis to ensure that both worker and missionary acknowledged that this was a call from God.
- A Reformed view of the *deliverance ministry*. This very important aspect of reaching Hindus and Muslims for Christ should be delivered from unbiblical practices.
- The training had to be developed on a unitary basis where all missionaries were consulted in setting up the parameters and contents of such training.

As early as 27 August 1957 a meeting was held in Bloemfontein to appraise the cooperation between the Natal and Transvaal Missions. The question of the training of evangelists was high on the agenda.

Hoewel die name van ander inrigtings genoem is, was die eenparige gevoel van die vergadering dat ons self ons evangeliste moet oplei al is dit op 'n deelydse basis in samewerking met die leraars van die Moederkerk. Die saak is na die sendelinge verwys om na verdere bespreking die vergadering van die skakelkomitee verder te lei in die verband.

(SSK Natal 2/104)

The missionaries in the field were given the task to train the prospective evangelists that they recruited to work with them. The importance of a Reformed training was stressed.

Die vergadering sal egter graag sien dat waar en hoe die opleiding ook al geskied, dit sal bydra om die kandidate Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk bewus te maak.

(SSK Natal 2/38:5/5/55)

The curriculum for the training of evangelists was spread over two years. At a meeting of the Missionaries among Muslims and Hindus (Johannesburg 11/1/62), concern was expressed that the lectures were not up to standard. To assist the students it was decided that papers would not be written at the end of the year as in the past. Examinations would be taken on a three-monthly basis preceded by 3 to 4 weeks of in-depth lectures on the subject.

The curriculum for 1962-1963 was divided into three quarters as follows (:1/42)

Quarter 1

1962: Comparative Religion	(Rev C J A Greyling)
Sects	(Rev D J Pypers)

Quarter 2

Church Policy and Administration	(Rev J Pretorius)
Pastoral Theology	(Rev C J A Greyling and (Dr C du P le Roux)

Quarter 3

Dogmatics and Ethics

(Rev C du P le Roux)

Bible History

(Rev J Pretorius)

5.8 Recruitment and Training of Lay Workers and Voluntary Workers

Right from the beginning of the Indian Mission, paid lay workers were used. Some began as voluntary workers that were subsequently recompensed. This was the case in Pietermaritzburg. In Raisethorpe the Dutch Reformed Church in the city conducted small Sunday schools for the white children living in this mainly Indian area. Mr B L Mitchell noticed the interest of the Indian children and the need for a missionary. He met with Mr N W S de Bruin who gathered a small congregation around him (De Beer 1970:4) Rev M W Theunissen was so moved by his work, that shortly afterwards the Synodical Missions Committee employed him as a part-time DRC lay worker and took responsibility for the work. This was in 1946. Mrs Dorothea Stevens was also employed as a teacher and paid by the mission board (SSK 2/38:27/5/48). Later, in 1950, Mr Stephen Ramiah was employed as a teacher (:15/2/59). Some problems were experienced in the appointment of lay workers. Rev Pretorius who was disappointed with the irregular coming and going of lay-workers, writes as follows:



Spiritual workers from Durban RCA visiting Charisma

Maar tot op daardie stadium het nog alle leke hulp van die kant van die Moederkerk in enige deel van ons kerk arbitrêr opgetree; hulle het gekom en gegaan na eie goeddunke (Pretorius 1976:11).

In Pietermaritzburg the following voluntary workers conducted services: in Greyling Street Mrs Moolman; at Sewerage Farm, at Pentrich Mr v d Walt and a number of friends, and in Durban it was Miss Kriel who offered her services (Pretorius in SSK Natal 2/104:29/6/48). Most of the voluntary workers assisted temporarily.

5.9 General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church

The establishment of the General Synod of the DRC in 1962 brought a new sense of unity among the existing Regional Synods of the DRC. This development had a direct bearing upon the life of the Indian Reformed Church. The Indian mission in Natal, Transvaal and Cape Province was never attempted in isolation. The commitment to reach Hindus and Muslims in South Africa, with all the challenges involved with such a venture, inculcated a sense of *koinonia*, togetherness, among all the missionaries. The missionaries' meetings and workers' conferences underlined this absolute need for one another's encouragement, support and advice.

The support, encouragement and financial provision given by the various Synods through their SSK's were indeed laudable, but it could never be compared with the experience of those who were spearheading the work at grassroots level.

The drive in the early years to build a truly indigenous church was shared by both missionaries and SSK's but the servant hood and humility required was seen from a different perspective. The policy of apartheid strained relationships. Some bodies saw the Indians as those people, for most missionaries they were my people.

The advent of the General Synod provided a new platform to combine the work in the various provinces and hasten the formation of one church, the Reformed Church in Africa.

The request of the Liaison Committee for Indian Mission the previous year, 1960, (Haasbroek, 1968:[n.p.]) for the incorporation of the Indian congregations into the Dutch Reformed Mission Church as a separate Indian Presbytery - a cause which was strongly endorsed by Rev J Pretorius - was now wiped from the table.

Vanaf die stigting van die Indiërkerk in Natal was ek van mening, dat die kerk te jonk is om op eie bene te staan en dat dit noodsaaklik is dat dit aansluiting moet hê by een van die bestaande sendingkerke, waarvan die NG Sendingkerk van Kaapland die verkieslikste is. Die gedagte was dat dit die Indiërkerk die geleentheid sou gee om op gesonde grondslag te ontwikkel tot 'n volwaardige kerk, voordat dit op sy eie as kerk sal bestaan.

The 1962 meeting of the General Synod of the DRC spearheaded the direction in which the Indian Mission would develop by accepting the mission among the Indians countrywide as part of its missionary responsibility (:137, 212).

5.10 Establishment of the First Four Congregations

5.10.1 Pietermaritzburg

Rev J Pretorius, first Dutch Reformed Missionary to the Indian community, recognized the value of indigenous evangelists and workers. His previous experience as missionary in the Transkei contributed to this insight. When he accepted the call (Dec. 1947) to minister part-time (attention) to the Indian and Coloured communities, he was still involved with mission to the Zulus of South Natal (Pretorius, 1976:2, 3).

One day Rev Pretorius saw a group of Indian people at the church site in Raisethorpe, walked up to them, and enquired whether they had any knowledge of an evangelist that might be available. He obtained from them the name and address of Evangelist Albert Murugan. An interview was arranged with him and Rev Fourie, Mission Secretary NGK Natal. Ev Murugan was appointed that very same month in 1951 as full-time worker on a temporary basis (Pretorius, 1976:6).

Evangelist Murugan was previously a convert and member of the Congregational Church at Harding. Later he served with the Apostolic Faith Mission. His father was a Hindu priest (Pretorius, 1976:7).

The task was never easy. There were many disappointments along the way. At one point Rev Pretorius was on the verge of giving up. In a letter (dated 27/8/1949), Rev D P Laurie, then Mission Secretary, referred to a gloomy report by Rev Pretorius:

Die toon van u verslag is nie baie hoopvol nie. Dit kom my voor of u meen dat ons die werk moet staak, en op die kleurlinge moet konsentreer. Van 'n beproefde arbeider, soos u, wat al baie harde bene in die bediening gekou het, verwag ons nie so iets nie. Teleurstelling en terugslae moet lei tot ondersoek en tot hernude volharding (D P Laurie, 1949).

In his reply Pretorius included some very disconcerting statistics:

Of a membership of 14, 10 had left.

The attendance figure had dropped from 47 to 7.

The appointment of Ev Murugan, however, changed the situation.

Toe ek op die punt gestaan het om by die kommissie aan te bevel dat ons maar voorlopig eers die werk onder die Indiërs moet beëindig; want selfs vorige navrae onder die Indiërs in die soektog na 'n evangelis, het niks opgelewer nie, was ek op 'n dag in Januarie 1951 weer op die perseel Delhiweg 67... Die aanstelling van evangelis Murugan het 'n nuwe era in ons sending onder die Indiërs ingelei. Van die begin af het hy die werk baie ernstig opgeneem en gou blyke gegee dat hy 'n ervare werker is (Pretorius, 1949:6).

Albert Murugan was taught doctrine, liturgy and church administration by Rev Pretorius. Six years later, in May 1957, upon the establishment of the Indian Reformed Church, the Synod of the NGK of Natal accorded him the status of Evangelist (:7). Rev Pretorius admitted that he had learned a great

deal about the Hindu religion from Ev Murugan. In 1952 he witnessed the conversion of a large Hindu family who, they were delivered from evil spirits and healed (:7).

The Church continued to grow and Rev Pretorius writes regarding this period as follows (:7):

Van die staanspoor af was die werk van evangelis Murugan op Pietermaritzburg baie geseënd. Die aantal bekeerlinge het aangegroei, sodat binne die eerste ses jaar, 46 lidmate voorgestel en 79 groot en klein gedoop is.

Murugan preached in Tamil and English. He was an experienced worker and within a short time brought 11 converts to the Lord. In his report of 17 August 1951 (SSK Natal 2/104) Rev J Pretorius writes:

Ons voel dat daar 'n nuwe stadium in hierdie werk gekom het en is seker daarvan dat dit die wil van die Heer is dat ons kerk onder die Indiërs van Suid Afrika sendingwerk moet doen, en dat baie seker met hierdie werk voortgegaan moet word, en daar is baie geleentheid om dit te doen. Ons gaan in die geloof voort daarmee, en weet: Hy wat ons geroep het, is getrou om dit te doen.

5.10.2 Transvaal

In 1955 the Rev C J A Greyling was selected as the first missionary of the DRC to the Indian People of Transvaal. He was stationed at Johannesburg. Three years later (1960:65) he reported to a Mission congress in Kroonstad that there already were some small groups of Christians in nine different locations on the Rand; 7 communicant members, 220 children in the Sunday schools and 100 attending services. A campaign in Germiston was attended by 160 to 200 adults. The number of children attending children's services was up to 300. At youth camps about 50% of participants were Muslims.

In 1959 Dr C du P le Roux joined Rev Greyling as the second missionary to Transvaal, and was inducted in the pre-fabricated building in Germiston. His area of work was the East Rand and he was stationed in Germiston (SSK 2/8: 1968). In 1964 Rev W Botes was received in Pretoria as the third missionary (SSK 2/8:1968).

On 16 April 1965, the congregation of Transvaal was established and in February 1966 the three missionaries, Rev C J A Greyling, Dr C du P le Roux and Rev W Botes, were inducted as the first ministers of the Indian congregation of Transvaal (:1968).

They were accompanied by two evangelists in Transvaal, Ev B. Peter, assisting Rev Greyling; and Ev G S Moodley, assisting Dr le Roux. Botes in Pretoria was assisted by trainee-evangelist, R L Govender.

The congregation in Transvaal became the second congregation of the Indian Reformed Church. At the time mission work was done in the following areas:

Southern Transvaal	Johannesburg Vereeniging Lenasia Krugersdorp East Rand Germiston Benoni Klerksdorp
Northern Transvaal	Pretoria Marabastad Laudium Lady Selbourne Witbank Middelburg

The statistical position of the congregation Transvaal prior to the establishment of the Synod was as follows:

Year	1964/5	1965/6	1966/7
Baptismal Members	571	613	721
Communicant Members	47	-	90
Sunday Schools	22	-	19
Sunday School Pupils	370	-	520
Teachers	30	-	35
Church Council Members	1	2	19
Church Council Properties	-	2	2
Income DRC S/Transvaal	-	R 7,581.91	R 9,646.53
Income DRC N/Transvaal	R 2,958.65	R 8,603.00	R 9,646.00
Expend DRC S/Transvaal	-	R 10,847.72	R 8,318.34
Expend DRC N/Transvaal	-	R 5,240.72	R 8,318.00

(SSK 2/8 1968)

5.10.3 Durban South (Est. 1965)

The work of the first congregation of the Indian Reformed Church of Natal, Durban South (established in 1957) was spread over a vast area. It included Durban-South, Pietermaritzburg and Durban-North. As early as 1954 the Presbytery of the DRC Natal decided to call a missionary for the Black people in Durban. This person would also be responsible for part-time work among the Indian community. Rev R J J van Vuuren accepted the call in 1955 (Pretorius, 1976:10).

At that stage Mr I van Zyl had a number of converts in his care. Rev van Vuuren catechized them and they were baptised and confirmed some time later. Mr van Zyl was appointed clerk of the first Church Council of the IRC of Natal that was established in 1957.



RCA Church - Durban-South

Rev J Pretorius asked Mr van Zyl in 1954 to assist with the work in Durban. However, in 1957, having consulted with the Indian sub-committee, he informed Mr van Zyl in writing, that on account of the policy of the Church to use indigenous workers, his services would no longer be required. This caused an uproar from the majority of the Church Council as well as the Indian sub-committee (:11). Taking into account, that as early as 1948, Rev Pretorius felt that an evangelist should be appointed for the Jacobs and Wentworth area, one can understand his concern (SSK Natal 2/104: 14/8/48). Rev Pretorius pointed out that his experience with lay-workers in the field proved that they acted arbitrarily but admitted that his own action was a tactical error and that he owed Mr van Zyl much appreciation for the good work done in the early days. Mr van Zyl left the congregation, taking a third of the members with him.

A troubled time followed, resulting in the demand of the Central Missions Council of Durban 'Sentrale Sendingbestuur van Durban' (SSBD) for its own missionary in Durban.



Jeshurun Church Building in Avoca (Durban)
Erected in 1902, from where several missionaries were sent out locally and abroad

An important development was the appointment of Trainee-Evangelist James K Naidoo for Durban. He had heard of the need, and with the permission of the Full Gospel Church (a requirement of the IRC) and some training in the doctrine of the IRC, he started work in November 1958 (:12). When the Church council met on 22 November 1958, Evangelist J K Naidoo was appointed Clerk of Council.

The following year Mission Candidate J J B Pretorius accepted a call to Durban and on 16 May 1959, in the church building in Jacobs Road, he was inducted a co-minister of the Indian Reformed Church of Natal. He left two years later for Molteno 'for health reasons.' (Minutes, RCA 2:20/5/61) after a difficult ministry in what Rev J Pretorius called a two-headed congregation 'tweekoppige gemeente' (Pretorius, 1976:14). A year before his departure, Rev J Pretorius moved that the possibility of forming another congregation be investigated (RCA Minutes, RCA 2:27/8/60). Taking note of the unpleasantness and discord

and the lack of co-operation between the two branches of the congregation, and the absence of any prospect that they would ever work together, the Church Council resolved that at the next meeting they would investigate the possibility of dividing the congregation into two.

The Council of Elders (investigating committee) suggested that the Missions Committee appoint a missionary-supervisor to have oversight of the work and act as liaison (RCA 2:5/11/60). Their recommendation not to divide the congregation into two served on the following grounds: 'numerically insufficient' ... 'low financial strength...' 'lack of spiritual integrity' (RCA 2:5/11/60). The vote for or against the establishment of a new congregation was equally divided between the council members of the two areas: Durban-South 5 for: and Pietermaritzburg/Durban-North 5 against (:20/11/60).

The converts in the Clairwood area, met in a little shop in Jacobs Road which was leased from a Muslim shop owner. This was the area where many of the 1860 contract labourers had settled (Pretorius, 1976:14). A very good site (188 Jacobs Road was bought from the Durban Corporation and here the first proper church building for the Durban-South area was completed in 1959. A home for the Evangelist was built on the site as well (Pretorius, 1960:2, 3).

The Indian Reformed Church in Natal realised that the calling of a minister in the place of Rev J J B Pretorius, would have to wait for the right time, when a new congregation could be established in Durban-South (Pretorius, 1976:16).

In the meantime the Clairwood Jacobs area had become increasingly industrialised while the centre of Indian housing moved to the sprawling Chatsworth city. The Natal Synodical Missions Committee suggested on October 7, 1964 that the property in 188 Jacobs Road, be sold in aid of a church to be built as a first priority on the church site at 46 Warangal Road (Minutes SSK 2/4:8). A loan of R18,000.00 was to be negotiated with the General Missions Committee. Financial assistance was to be made available for the vacant missionary/minister's post in Durban-South (:4).

Prop D P Bekker was appointed in April 1965 as a part-time worker in the Durban-South area while funds were still awaited for the post.

Subsequently, on 24 April 1965, the second Indian congregation was established for the Southern part of Durban, and the South Coast, and named Durban South.

At the SSK meeting the two church councils met to discuss the church visitation and Christian life of the congregations. Historically this could be regarded as the first Presbytery meeting of the Indian Reformed Church (Report SSK 2:Nov 1966).

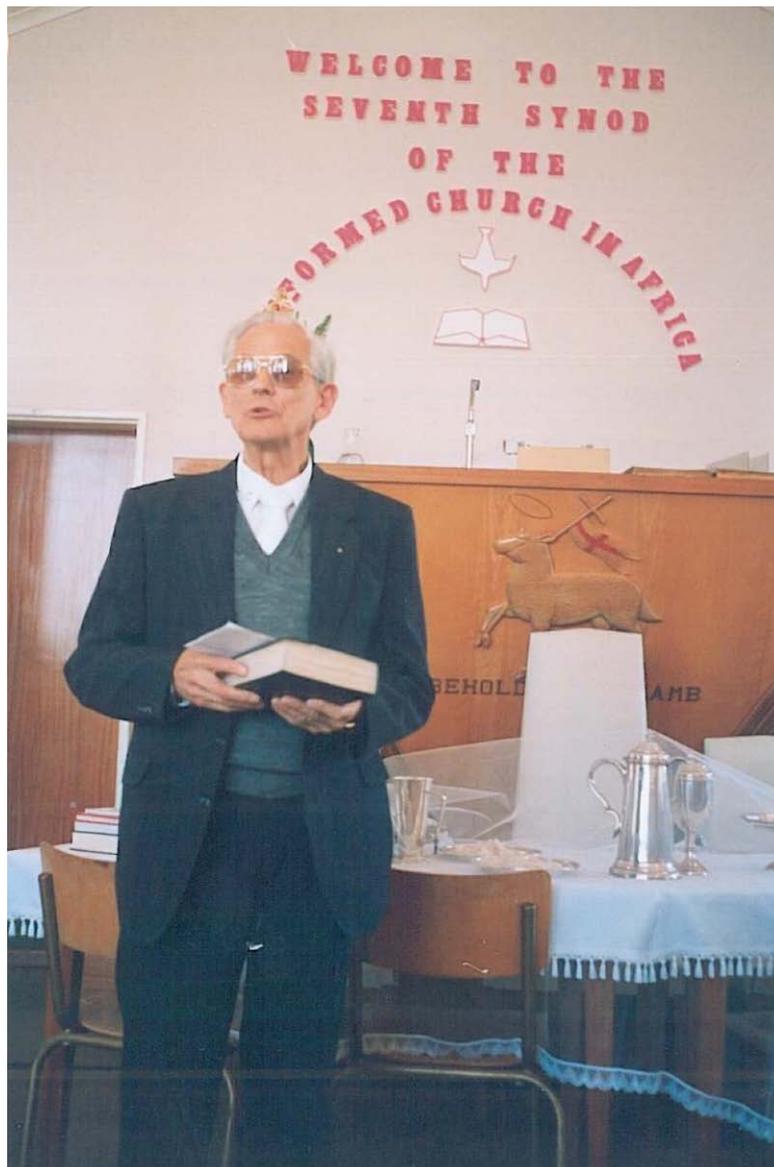
On 12 May 1965, the SSK of Natal called Prop D P Bekker as missionary for Durban South. He was ordained and inducted on 20 June. (:Nov 1966).

5.10.4 Cape Province (1966)

Way back in 1916 the DRC of the Cape Province appointed Dr G B A Gerdener to minister to the Muslim Community of Cape Town. He was succeeded by Rev A C van Wyk in 1940. In 1943 Rev P S Latsky of the St Stephen's DRC took over this work as part-time minister but after a decision of the 1956 DRC Cape Province Synod, Rev D J Pypers was appointed in 1960 to minister to Muslims exclusively. He was specifically requested to give special attention to the Indian community (Pypers [sa]:1).

In 1966 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (*NG Sendingkerk*) accepted responsibility for the Coloured and Malay Muslims in the Western Cape, leaving the DRC responsible for the ministry to Indian Muslims (:1).

Initially a number of voluntary workers of the DRC joined the outreach to Muslim Malays in Rylands. A report from Mrs I Erasmus and Miss A van Niekerk and J van Zyl in 1965 mentions children's Christian clubs in Cape Town and Phillippe where especially Muslim children were reached (RCA 47:1975). They were also involved with the work begun in Rylands where they conducted the Sunday school. At that time the membership of this mission was only 12.



**Rev Dawie Pypers at the RCA – Cape Province.
He had a passion for reaching the Muslims and accepted a challenge
from the Muslims to a debate with Achmad Deedat regarding
Christian Faith versus Islam.**

The voluntary workers believed that children presented a good point of contact to reach the Muslim parents, though the children were often penalised by their elders for attending what was called the 'Children's Circle' (*Kinderkring*). They used this name instead of *Sunday school*, to avoid persecution from the parents (RCA 47:1964 Report J van Zyl). Other voluntary workers were Miss R Olivier, Q du Toit and I Gilfillan.

On 2 October 1965 the first Church building of the Indian Reformed Church in the Cape was inaugurated. On this occasion the first 12 members of the fledgling congregation were confirmed (RCA 47:1965 Report). A year later, in 1966, a congregation was established in Rylands, to become the fourth congregation of the Indian Reformed Church.

The need for Indian workers was felt by all the missionaries and by the end of 1962 Rev Pypers obtained the services of Evangelist E J Manikkam who was called from Durban North where he had worked with Rev Pretorius since 1959. In addition to Rylands, the mission also spread to Cravenby. In 1965 work amongst Cape Muslims expanded when a group of young people started a ministry to Muslims in Port Elizabeth. Later Mrs Magda du Preez was to work full time in this ministry (Pypers, 1995:1).

5.11. Mission Endeavour and Church Policy in a Challenging Environment

The political environment was not at all conducive to mission endeavour, especially while the carriers of the Gospel were white and linked with the policy of the Government at the time. The integrity of the white missionaries was obviously questioned. The fact that the DRC was so closely aligned with the policy of separate development closed many doors to the missionaries. The forced removal of Indians affected the work adversely. The writer recalls how he, as a student reaching out to the Indian people in Prinsloo Street, Pretoria, was overwhelmed with searching political questions that made the preaching well-nigh impossible. This could very well be the reason why younger voluntary workers preferred to work with children.

The difficult situation challenged all involved to rethink their political viewpoints and theological position. How do you respond to a simple question, such as, 'Sir, can I come to church with you next Sunday while you know that people of colour will not be allowed in your white church.'

5.11.1 Mission Policy

The early missionaries were driven by a desire to present the Gospel clearly and forcefully to the *neglected* section of the population of South Africa. The challenges that they faced were enormous. Their church at the time, the DRC, became to a large extent, the church of the Afrikaner nation, instead of what Alan Paton calls the 'Church-of-Christ' (De Gruchy:ix). Their appearance on the Indian scene was looked upon as an intrusion. There were even those that hid when the missionary came to visit, thinking that it might be the police (sic!). For the average Indian, the Afrikaner missionary represented a political reality that was both hurtful and painful. The whole scenario of apartheid in all its ramifications glared at them: not welcome in South Africa; go back to India; not welcome in so-called white suburbs; business opportunities curtailed; forced removals, etc.

The mission policy employed initially by the average missionary followed closely the policy of the Dutch Reformed Church regarding the formation of an indigenous church. The link between this theological policy and the political aspirations of separate development, were never clearly defined or acknowledged. The tension between being the Church-of-Christ and the Church-of-the-nation was keenly felt by most; others unfortunately ignored it or asserted that it did not exist. For the missionary in the Indian field this tension could never be totally ignored. The true missionary saw the Indian people as 'his people' and often felt rejected by the people of his own nation. He realised that the supreme loyalty must be to Christ, not to the nation.

The policy of indigenous churches, however, already had serious ramifications for the church. The churches, that developed, before mission work began among the Indians, while facilitating the growth of indigenous congregations, had 'divided' the church along *racial* lines (De Gruchy:9).

The strong influence of the Scottish ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church with their pietistic and evangelical theology continued in the DRC. Andrew Murray, the amazing revivals experienced during his ministry and particularly his mission strategy, infused many with the zeal to become missionaries. They would not allow political issues to eclipse their calling to preach the Gospel.

They would not exchange the pulpit for the platform; neither would they fail to prophetically denounce injustice and racial prejudice as counteracting the Gospel. The writer agrees with De Grunchy's view:

In our discussion of the Church in SA we have seen both the need for and the danger of this relationship between Christian faith and culture. The Church exists under God for people. It cannot exist for people if it refuses to speak their language or relate to their existential situation, their fears and their aspirations. At the same time, the Church does not exist to serve culture, it exists for people, and its primary loyalty is to Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. (De Grunchy, 1986:209)

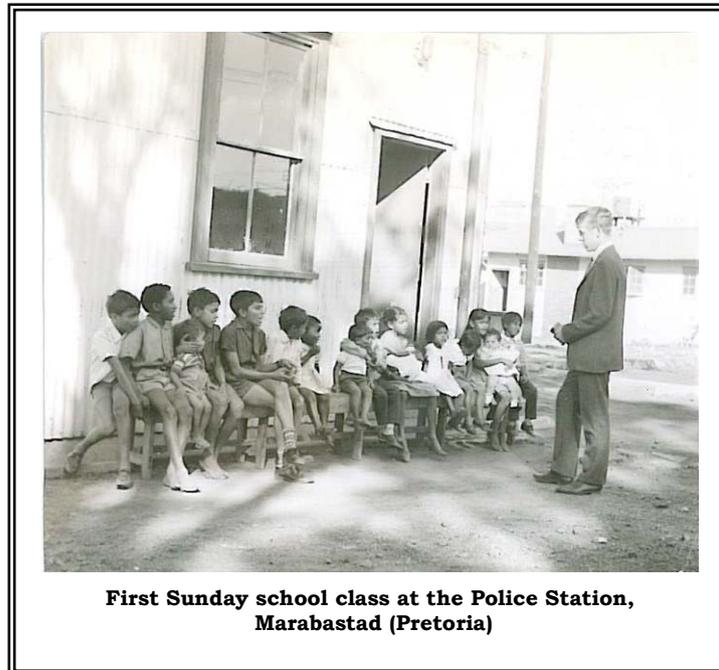
When the mission of the DRC to the Indian began in earnest in the 1950's apartheid legislation was being introduced and implemented at full speed, as bill after bill was adopted, followed by an array of security laws. The Native Laws Amendment Bill of 1957, which made it very difficult for Blacks to attend worship in churches in white areas, brought strong reaction from all the churches (including the DRC). The uprising at Sharpeville (March 1960) where 69 Blacks were killed, ushered in a new era of racial discord and protest. The position of the DRC in terms of human relations was spelt out in the policy document, *Human Relations in South Africa (1966)* and *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture (1974)*, both adopted by the General Synod (1966 and 1974).

Though there is much in these documents that most churches will agree with, the bottom-line is a scriptural justification of the policy of separate development provided that racial discrimination and injustice are rejected in principle. The role of the DRC in this matter was to insist that the policy be implemented in a just manner.

5.11.2 Outreach

Various methods of evangelisation were employed by the missionaries and the evangelists. The first step was to find a proper venue. In the early days an old shop was used in the Transvaal ministry; a police station in the Pretoria region. In most cases gatherings were initially organized in a home or a yard between

some houses or in a school classroom, usually without any cost involved. In Avoca the work started in a small derelict warehouse belonging to the South African Railways.



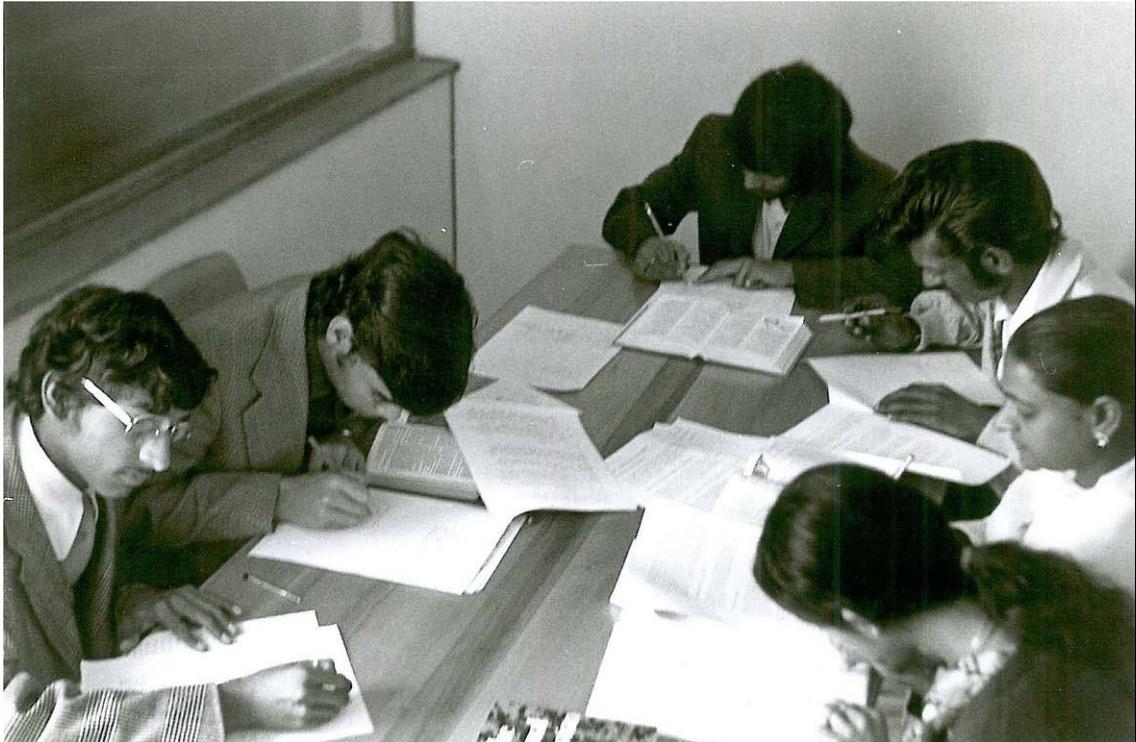


The first wedding held in the Andrew Anthony School in Laudium used for church services

The first meetings were evangelistic open-air meetings with spirited singing and a preacher who called people to conversion. Rev C J A Greyling obtained a tent to conduct campaigns in Boksburg, Pretoria, and other areas. The tent was later donated to the mission in Durban. The campaigns were well attended and there were usually a number of decisions for Christ. Mostly Hindu people attended with a few interested Muslims. Even after regular Sunday church services commenced, the campaign continued as an effective tool for evangelism.

Tract distribution was given high priority. For Muslims, especially, tracts supplied by the Scripture Gift Missions (SGM) containing only verses from Scripture were used.

The missionaries, evangelists, and helpers concentrated on personal evangelism. Teams of two or three would visit contacts established during campaigns or knock on doors. Voluntary part-time workers visited on one evening of the week or on Sunday afternoons.



Training of members for their ministry in RCA Charisma

On-the-job training was done by the missionaries. In Pretoria an adapted version of the Evangelism Explosion III the (EEIII) approach was used. A good knowledge of the Hindu and Muslim religion was a *sine qua non*.

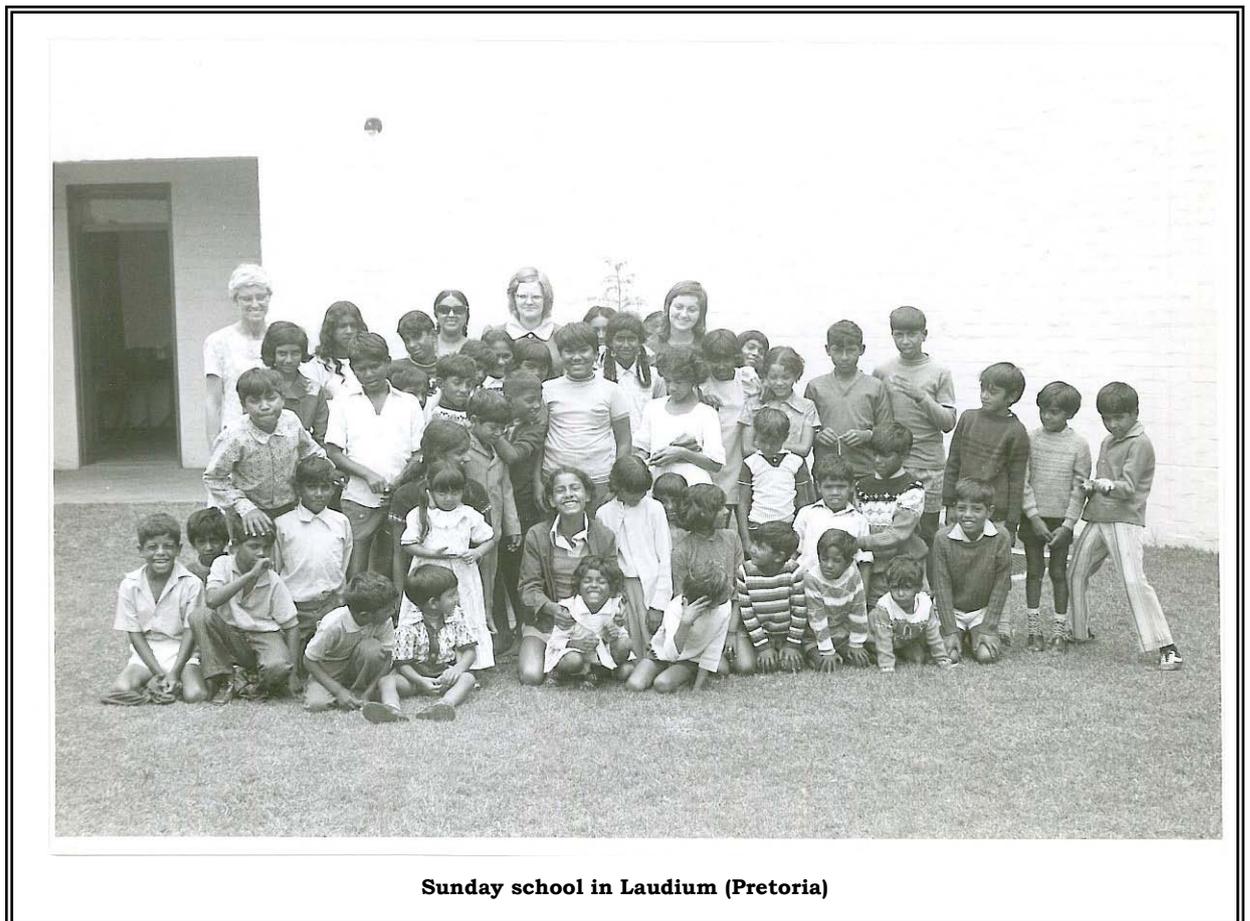


**New outreach workers inducted by the Church Council
after training in RCA Charisma**

5.11.3 Preaching

The preaching was in English except in the case of certain evangelists, such as Ev A Murugan who spoke Tamil well. Sunday services would be conducted entirely in English. The danger of using the vernacular was that it could cause disruption especially where the converts were both Hindi and Telegu speaking.

The preaching of the Word, whether at a campaign or at a Sunday service was always challenging. No church among the Indian people can grow unless the Word in all its fullness, through the power of the Holy Spirit makes a definite appeal upon the hearer. The early preachers realised that unless people had an encounter with the Lord Jesus, there would be no church the next day.



Priority was given to the pure Word as well as the Word-become-flesh. The missionary, evangelist and voluntary worker had to portray Christ through their lives. A preacher with a doubtful reputation would not survive in this work.



5.11.4 Teaching

Sunday schools were the main foundation stones upon which the church was built. Quite apart from the usual Sunday school at the church building, several so-called wayside Sunday schools were organized. With the help of a number of part-time voluntary youth workers - there were up to fifteen in Pretoria such wayside Sunday schools were held all over Laudium, reaching up to 200 children in various homes or under trees in the suburb on Sunday afternoons. Most of the children were Hindus or Muslims.

A major problem was to find applicable textbooks for the teachers. Buying books was initially beyond the means of the churches. Later a schedule for lessons was prepared and copies made available to all the different churches.

Sunday school teachers were trained through the South African National Sunday School Association, (SANSSA) or by the Sunday school superintendent. The teaching in the catechism classes was based on the Heidelberg Catechism.

Some ministers wrote their own textbooks. The duration of catechetical training for adult converts varied and caused some debate that eventually surfaced at the General Synod of the DRC.

5.11.5 Discipline and Church Policy

In a Hindu and Muslim environment Christians are watched critically. In fact, new converts that do not live up to what they preach are scrutinized through a magnifying glass. Indeed, the measure of persecution and ostracism that the new believer may suffer from the community has often been the seed of the church. Those suffering were drawn to Christ in a way that enhanced their testimony and life.

From the onset, maintaining church discipline was a very delicate aspect of the work. Being in the very eye of the community, the Church had to exercise discipline, painful though it was for both parties, in order that the name of Christ would not be put to shame. In the early days disciplinary action would be publicly mentioned at the church service, calling for prayer and support.

5.11.6 Policy of the Dutch Reformed Church

Some very difficult issues in terms of Church policy had to be dealt with in the early years. How do you deal with a request from a Christian father requiring marriageable Christian young men for his daughters? The Council of Pietermaritzburg decided that ‘they cannot undertake such a responsibility as of a marriage bureau. It involves risks, if matrimonial trouble rises afterwards’ (RCA 2:11/5/63).

Dealing with complaints, the policy was *that all complaints against anyone must be addressed to the church council in the first place.* (RCA 2:13/2/65).

When there was penitence after a transgression, the person was restored to the fellowship (RCA 2:11/5/63). In cases of a serious nature the person had to appear before the council, at other times the minister or a committee would be given the task of interviewing the person involved. In

one case we read of ‘permanent discipline’ where a Christian sister accepted the Muslim faith. (RCA 2:21/7/1962).

An unhappy brother who threatened to return to Hinduism and tell the Hindu priests ‘that Christians were all wrong, withdrew’ his letter of complaint after extensive brotherly counselling. (RCA 2:23/3/1965).

Discipline exercised by another church was respected when the person involved applied for a position in the IRC. (RCA 2:21/7/62).

Initially, in Natal, the Church Order of the Dutch Reformed Church’s mission to the Zulus as compiled by Rev J Pretorius was used, as the work among the Indians was at that time part of the mission to the Zulus (Pretorius, 1976:18, 9). The Church Order of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (*NG Sendingkerk*) was used in the Cape Province. In Transvaal the Church Order of the Dutch Reformed Church (NGK) was used in addition to that of the NG Sendingkerk. In the minutes of the Indian Reformed congregation, Pietermaritzburg, it is recorded that the Mother Church, was drafting a new constitution for the ‘Indian Reformed Church. This was as early as 1958 (RCA 2:22/11/58).

When the idea of a separate Indian church was mooted, some felt that the mission should be incorporated into the NG Sendingkerk (Haasbroek, 1968:2). In 1956 the Synodical Missions Committee of Natal (SSK NGK) noted ‘dat vir die huidige altans en moontlik vir onafsiembare tyd nog, die Sendingkerk die aangewese tuiste vir die Indiërgemeente kan wees’ (2/38:25/5/1956). Once the stage was set for the formation of the Indian Reformed Church the General Synod’s Mission Committee appointed the Sub-Committee for Indian Mission in 1963 to draw up the necessary Draft Constitution or Church Order (Minutes ASSK: 13/2/1963).

The church policy of the DRMC and DRC gave substance to the life and work of the fledgling Indian Reformed Church. In a Pentecostal environment, the church government provided the good order required in the congregations. The

evangelists that came from Pentecostal churches experienced it as a blessing that prevented the church from splitting.

5.11.7 Commitment, Charity and Christian Service

A reading of the reports of church councils and mission boards reveals a high level of commitment of members to their new-found faith. Along with the commitment, especially in the case of new converts, a willingness to do the Lord's work is apparent.

Their service was, apart from outreach work, primarily linked to the local congregations - for understandable reasons. The awareness that Christian service is not limited to the household of the believers was slow in developing. They were keen to participate in fundraising projects but slow in providing for the poor and the destitute. The mission boards and the missionaries, however, did respond to the needs of the Indian community.

In Pietermaritzburg the Mission Board obtained a huge piece of land at Raisethorpe with the express purpose of providing for destitute families. (A section was set apart for the envisaged church building). However, the idea of settling families there only materialized in the initial stages of the work.

The policy of an all encompassing approach that was so popular in mission circles at the time did not seem to take root in the early stages. Rev Pretorius investigated the possibility of starting a mission school for Indian children. The Director of Education in Natal however advised him that mission schools in Indian communities were unlikely to succeed, because the Hindu and Muslim parents would not be willing to have their children taught in a Christian school (1976:5). Churches such as the Anglican and Roman Catholic, however, were very successful in providing mission schools in the early days.

However, in all the missions and congregations teaching was offered to those who could not read or write. In Durban-North, Ev K Moodley attempted a Tamil school (RCA 2:11/5/63).

Some congregations however, did organize soup kitchens to help the poor in the community. Caring for other groups such as the coloured and the black communities did not appear on the agenda in the early days.

The fight for survival, where so many odds were against the fledgling church in a Hindu and Muslim environment, caused the church to be focused on expansion by bringing in converts through the proclamation of the Word.

5.11.8 Fellowship and Ecumenical Awareness

The Indian Reformed Church and the mission that preceded it, did not function oblivious of other churches. Concerning the IRC in Natal in 1960 Rev J Pretorius writes as follows:

Dit is ook jammer dat met die toename van die verskillende kerke in so 'n beperkte digbevolkte Indiëgebied, soos in Natal, daar geen beplanning van enige aard is nie en dat oorvleueling vryelik plaasvind. Met al die vyandige gevoelens onderling tussen die verskillende genootskappe, het dit 'n baie nadelige uitwerking gehad op die Christelike saak as 'n geheel onder die Indiërs. Dit is baie wenslik dat die kerke hierdie aangeleentheid so gou moontlik onder die oë sal sien en nouer samewerking sal soek, soos dit in die geval is in Indië.

Meer as enige ander bevolkingsgroep staan hulle baie gevoelig teenoor enige vorm van verdeeldheid en versplintering, en as die kerke die bande van simpatieke benadering en samewerking nouer kon saamtrek sal dit die Christelike saak in die geheel baie bevoordeel onder die Indiërs (1960:[s]).

Right from the start invitations were received to join one or other ministers' fraternal. In a report of the Indian Reformed Congregation, Pietermaritzburg-Durban, that served on 12 September 1963 before the Synodical Missions Committee, DRC Natal, it appears that the congregation was one of the founding members of the Interdenominational Fellowship of Indian Christian Churches. The following churches were represented at this remarkable meeting on 4 June 1963 (SSK Natal:2/2).

1. Assemblies of God, Bethesda Tabernacle
2. Full Gospel Church, Bethesda Temple
3. Dutch Reformed Church (NGK)
4. Apostolic Faith Mission
5. Methodist Church of South Africa
6. Indian Baptist Mission
7. Lutheran Church
8. Evangelical Alliance Mission
9. South Africa General Mission
10. Presbyterian Church
11. Church of the Nazarene
12. Reformed Church in Africa

The meeting was opened by the Rev J F Rowlands, the renowned pastor and founder of Bethesda Temple (Full Gospel Church). He formulated the purpose of the fellowship as follows:

Our aim must be in the practical field, and not doctrinal, for doctrinal differences are not our concern. We must formulate our purpose, to enable the different churches to do more co-operative work in the interest of the whole Christian church, but not to interfere with the teachings of the different churches. A union was not being sought but rather a unity, so that a system of discipline and church structure could be formed (:2/2).

In the constitution it was clearly stated that they would work for the common good of the whole Christian church and that the member churches of the Fellowship would recognise each other's work and interest, proselytizing would be strongly discouraged, and the overlapping of evangelistic campaigns would be avoided as far as possible.

In Pretoria, fellowship with the pastors of other churches working in the field was sought; only much later did a ministers' fraternal develop where co-operation was sought in prayer and in combined campaigns.

Combined church services with the Dutch Reformed Church Mission were held sporadically in Natal and in the Cape Province. Fellowship with members of the DRC and the DRMC was encouraged by way of invitation or involvement in the mission. There was admittedly little fellowship between the IRC and the other churches of the Dutch Reformed family.

5.11.9 Worship

The joy of the new-found faith was particularly expressed through Gospel singing. The first hymns sung in Pietermaritzburg were those composed in the revivals of Sankey, Wesley and Moody, namely *Redemption Songs*. Later the church would use the *Psalter Hymnal* (RCA 2:12/12/70) and eventually develop their own hymn book.

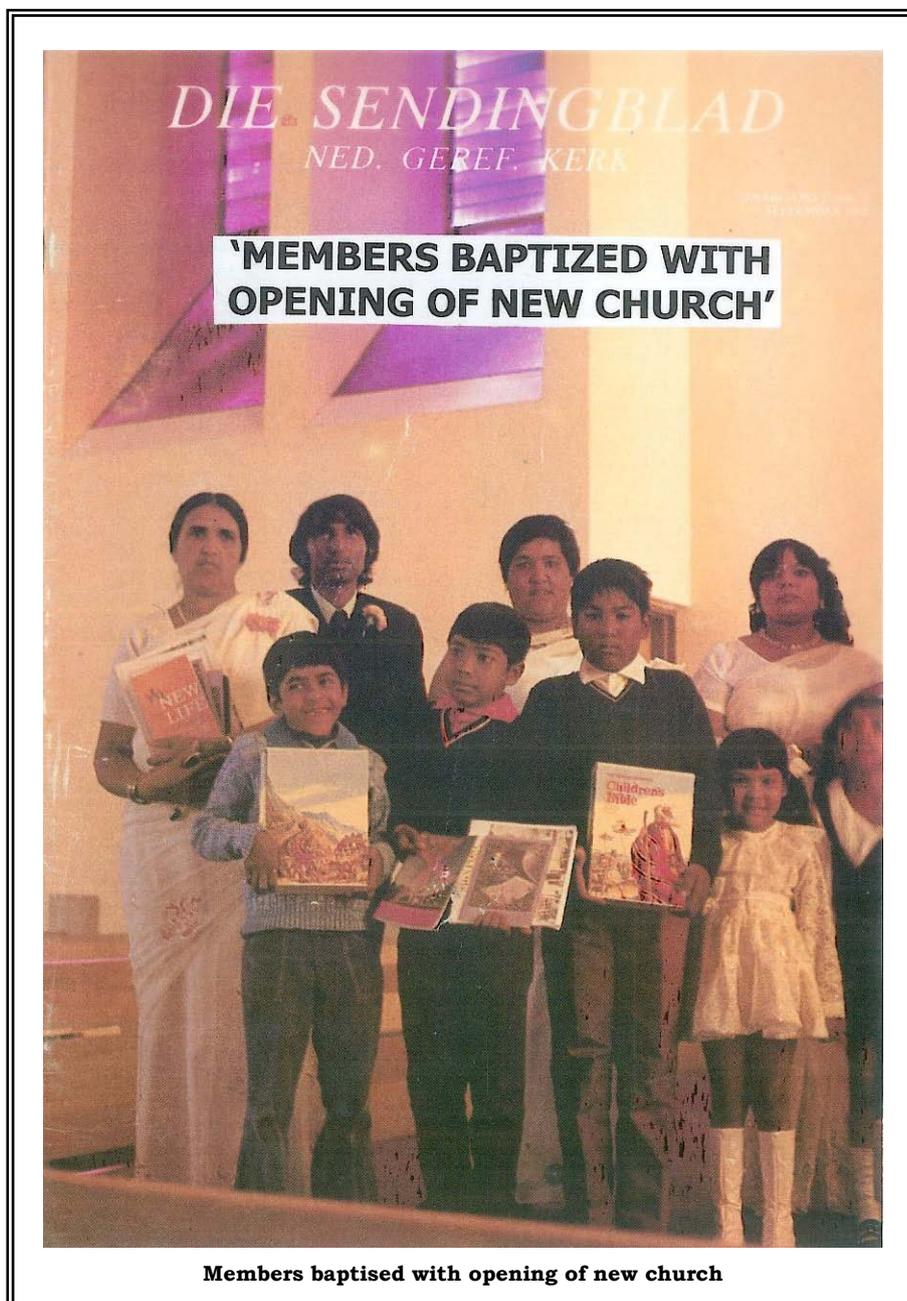
Initially the liturgy of the service was basically the same as was customary in the DRC. This would change dramatically in later years, especially in the area of worship in song. The singing of carols by candlelight in the church during advent became a common feature in the RCA (RCA 2:1/12/62). In the early days Rev J J B Pretorius reported that a lantern service preceded by testimonies of new converts was well attended, the church overflowing (SSK Natal 2/50:1959). Carols by candlelight were also sung in the community and became an annual outreach event during Christmas.

5.11.10 Baptism

Two very important doctrinal issues had to be resolved concerning the two sacraments: how to reconcile two totally different backgrounds – Western and Oriental. The first issue was that of baptism. The SSK (Synodical Missions Committee) of Natal reasoned that consideration should be given to the mystical nature of the Indian people's background, and that the merits of baptism directly following conversion should be carefully considered. The confirmation could then possibly follow after catechism (SSK Natal 2/38: 25/5/56).

In August 1959 the SSK reported as follows regarding the explanation given by Rev J Pretorius:

Dit blyk uit wat Eerw Pretorius gesê het dat die doop vir Indiërs baie meer inhou as net die teken van die verbond. Dit is terselfdertyd die finale breuk met sy ou godsdiens. Daarom moet die doop nie te lank uitgestel word nie – al moet die katkisasie en voorstelling as lidmate dan eers later geskied. Ook hierdie saak word vir verdere deeglike bespreking na die sendelinge verwys (:27/8/57).



In a report dated 16 August 1959, Rev J Pretorius expresses the opinion that 'we are losing members because we do not immerse them at baptism'. Ev Murugan disclosed that they had already lost 13 adult believers in this way (SSK Natal 2/50). This time, when the SSK discussed the issue of immersion, the committee pleaded for the most careful consideration in view of the precedent that had already been created by baptism immediately after conversion. The committee decided to refer this whole issue to the Federal Missions Council (Federale Sendingraad) (:6/12/57).

In 1962 when the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (DRC) met in Pretoria for their first General Synod, a detailed study report 'Die Doop van bekeerlinge onder die Indiërs' was tabled (:108 - 114). The Synod decided that adult baptism was to follow catechism.

Die Sinode besluit dat wat die doop van volwasse bekeerlinge uit die Indiërdeel van ons bevolking betref daar gehou moet word aan die Skrifgegronde gebruik wat dwars deur ons Kerk in swang is naamlik dat die doop eers bedien sal word na deeglike kategetiese onderrig en hartlike belydenis van geloof en dan wel op die gewone wyse (1962:249).



Baptismal group: Laudium (Pretoria)

The question of no catechism prior to baptism of believers was gradually laid to rest in the fledgling IRC, but the mode of baptism by ‘immersion’ in addition to ‘sprinkling or pouring of water’ was later accepted by the Reformed Church in Africa.

The request of the missionaries was based on the following arguments. Passages in Acts that account for immediate baptism; the Hindu background; baptism as a final break with the old life; the influence of Pentecostal churches ‘Doperse sektes’ [sic] (:108, 9).

The Synod pointed out clearly that you could not separate confirmation (confession of faith) from baptism. Baptism of believers always followed the confession of faith and not the other way round. Neither might the table of the Lord be barred from the baptised believer in view of further catechism (:112, 3).

To sum up: A preliminary confession of faith followed later by a major confession in view of the communion was a practice not found anywhere in Reformed Church history or law, and would invalidate the meaning of baptism. The report insisted that the Young Church should lay the foundations properly but also admitted that such catechism might be shorter than one year in view of the long process of preaching and teaching that was required to win converts from Hinduism. Their desire to be baptised immediately, left the impression that their understanding of baptism might not be sound. The practice of immersion, though mentioned in the Formulary of Baptism, left the same impression. It furthermore seemed as if they attached greater significance to the element of water than just that of a sign (:113, 114).

Following the decision of General Synod, the SSK of Natal decided to appoint a committee (excluding members of the local Indian congregation) to study the report and decision of the General Synod with ‘gravamen’ and refer it to the SSK and if required to the General Missions Committee for appeal to General Synod (2/39:19/9/63). The matter did not go any further.

5.11.11 The Lord's Supper

A second debate was on the proper way of celebrating communion. The issue that had to be dealt with was whether pure grape juice could be used instead of wine. This matter was never studied in detail.

At a meeting of the Pietermaritzburg Church Council of 16 May 1964 the Ev J Naidoo informed the meeting that some members of the Durban South branch were appealing to him to recommend to Council the use of pure grape juice.

Being converts from Hinduism in which religion the deities are appeased with offerings of strong drink they felt after conversion it was not right to partake of alcoholic wine (RCA 2).



Holy Communion at the establishment of Charisma:
From left to right:-Dr C du P le Roux , (Minister of RCA Transvaal) Prof H D A du Toit, (Theological Faculty)
Rev Perold de Beer, (Minister of Charisma)
Dr J P Theron (Mission Secretary)



A motion to this effect was moved by S Pillay and Ev K Naidoo and passed by the Council.

A decision to this effect was never taken on Synodical level by the IRC or later by the RCA, but the use of grape juice instead of alcoholic wine became common practice in the church.

5.12 Missiological Perspectives (1946-1968)

In the latter half of the 20th century much attention had been given to the scope and the content of the Church's missionary task. Reacting against the one-sidedness of both the American Social Gospel as well as the traditional evangelical view that mission primarily consisted of *preaching* the gospel, of concentrating mainly on the conversion of non-believers, one theologian after the other called for a more comprehensive definition of our missionary task. J C Hoekendijk, Herndrik Kraemer, Visser Hooft, Max Warren, and many others

called for a comprehensive approach, combining the threefold mandate of mission to include *kerugma*, *konoinia* and *diakonia*. At the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council (1952) there was consensus that the Church's witness should be "given by proclamation, fellowship and service" (Meiring, 1986:105). In South Africa there was general agreement on this, and in his writings David Bosch often referred to the comprehensive task of the church, using these subdivisions (1991:409ff). Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman (1994:36ff) also used the categories of *kerugma*, *diakonia*, and *koinonia* in their treatise on the missionary task of the church, adding a fourth rubric: *leitourgia* (worshipping God).

The Greek word *kerugma* denotes the proclamation of the Gospel through preaching, teaching, witnessing, literature, theological education, etc. The content of the *kerugma* is the good news is that "God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Lord of history, Savior and Liberator" (Bosch 1991:412).

The Greek word *diakonia* may be translated as service or ministry. The diaconal dimension of mission therefore refers to the various forms of ministry that Jesus calls us, following his example, crossing the many frontiers in the world in the form of a servant. The total need of the world, of all its' people, must be confronted with the gospel of love (Kritzinger, et al, 1994:37).

The Greek word *koinonia* (fellowship) refers to the missionary task of establishing the community of believers, to the planting and nurturing of the church across the globe, as well as to ecumenical relations between different denominations and Christian communities worldwide.

The Greek word *leitourgia* denotes the Church's responsibility to worship God and to glorify his Name by our obedience and by our faithful witnessing. In the final instance we are not called to witness only for the benefit of men and women who have to hear the good news of Christ, but to honor God (cf Rom 1:5;12:1). Mission becomes is nothing less than our hymn of praise!

5.12.1 *Kerugma* Dimension

In the early years the preaching of the Word took centre stage. The missionary with the help of evangelists and lay workers would go into the community doing personal evangelism. Campaigns and tract distribution were part of the drive to make the Gospel known. Right from the outset a venue was found to begin services not only for when 'two or three are gathered in my Name' (Mt 18:20) but for unbelievers that were seekers. The preaching was, as a rule, making a clear appeal to those present to turn to Jesus as the only answer to their spiritual needs. Tract distribution was used to underline this call to conversion. Concurrent with the preaching of the Word, teaching was provided through catechism, Christian book and tract distribution and Bible study.

Conversion implied also the deliverance from bondage and here the evangelists were of great help to assist in the setting free of those that were bound or possessed by evil spirits. For the missionary, this was by and large foreign territory and a learning experience. The missionaries that theologically denied the reality of this scriptural phenomenon made very little impact in this part of the ministry. A 'conversion' that was superficial caused disruption because men and women who had not been set free were brought into the church. The Church learnt to live by the conviction: 'If the Son has set you free you will be free indeed'. (Jn 8:36)

The impact of the IRC was, in terms of the work done by the Protestant mainline churches, significant, yet given the tremendous input of money and effort in this ministry one would have expected a greater response. Rev Pretorius (1960) refers to the situation in a report in 1960, comparing the IRC with the Methodist Church who after a 100 years of mission work had not yet gained 1,000 members, whereas the Full Gospel Church with its Bethesda mission (since 1931), a totally indigenous undertaking, counted more than 13,000 members.

The Indian Reformed Church began in 1946 in an almost 'post-Christian climate' in Pietermaritzburg-Durban where Pentecostal churches were extremely successful. Many of the first members of the DR mission were 'backslidden' members of other churches (mostly Pentecostal). This in itself was

not a healthy situation (1960). Many came for the wrong reasons and the Indian Reformed Church had to learn the hard way not to build on foundations laid by others. In the Cape Province and in Transvaal, where the Indian population was smaller, the response was equally slow. Spade work had to be done from day one.

In Natal and Transvaal a very high premium was placed on campaigns alternated with individuals who came of their own volition to seek a new life. Many contacts that could be followed up later were made in this way. Most of the people attending those campaigns were of Hindu and Muslim persuasion. The Hindus often responded to the invitation to accept 'Jesus Christ as Saviour' but without intending to leave their Hindu faith at all. They were only adding Christ to their Hindu pantheon.

Missionaries quickly learnt to preach the message in such a way that people would respond to the Word through the work of the Holy Spirit – the message being as sharp as 'a two-edged sword' and clear as a 'trumpet call'. The sacrifice that their response might lead to was clearly spelt out.

Rev J Pretorius mentions some ways to ascertain whether a conversion was genuine: a willingness to suffer persecution; a willingness to break with the Hindu gods, images and pictures; a strong desire for baptism (1960:5). It goes without saying that there should be real repentance and a turning away from a life of sin, addiction and demonic oppression and possession.

Though the work of the Indian Reformed Church was concentrated in the cities, efforts were made to spread the Word to the outlying districts. Rev Pretorius (SSK 2/104:16/8/59) visited the following areas: Colenso, Ladysmith, New Castle, Howick, Nels-rust, Wartburg and Windy Hill. In the Transvaal the church often followed the movement of the congregants: from Boksburg to Springs, Germiston, Benoni and other areas. In Pretoria activities moved from Prinsloo Street to Marabastad and Laudium as well as outlying districts such as Witbank and Middelburg where regular outreaches were conducted.

One of the most successful ways to preach and teach the Word proved to be the cottage meetings. These meetings were used as an opportunity to reach out as the believers shared their faith in the home of someone interested in the Gospel. As the new family experienced the 'Word become flesh', their hearts were strangely warmed and many could testify that such a cottage meeting was the beginning of their life with Christ.

The Sunday schools were equally effective in reaching children. In addition to the members' children, a number of children from unattached Hindu families always attended. The so-called Wayside Sunday Schools, attended by Hindu- and Muslim children became an effective tool for evangelism.

The *kerugma* dimension of mission was right from the start the primary dimension of the outreach to the Indian community. The first missionaries attached a very high premium to the power of the Word. At times, however, the very important emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit was neglected, as was evident in the lack of discernment in terms of the deliverance of the demon-possessed or the healing of the sick.

The congregations that developed were vacillating between what Hendriks (2004:45, 46) calls the 'institute' and the 'proclamation' church model. This is also understandable in a situation where the missionary became a father-figure to the first converts. His word became law and in the absence of elders no one could really or effectively question him (except the Mission Board that for all practical purposes stood outside the situation). The attitude of the first converts was that of submission to his leadership. The communication of the Gospel was a one-directional affair from 'above'. This strong institutional model where church law played an important role helped the mission to weather the storm. At the same time the proclamation model, typical of the Dutch Reformed Church, developed a tremendous respect and awe for the Word of God as the norm for the life of the believer and the fledgling congregation. The beginnings of the Indian Reformed Church were strongly evangelical. The *kerugma* dimension was at the heart of the mission. In some cases this one-sided emphasis led to a neglect of the social needs of the members.

5.12.2 *Diakonia* Dimension

The second dimension of mission is *diakonia*, demonstrating the love of Christ to others, serving the needs of the community.

The first converts of the Indian Reformed Church came mostly from the poorer communities, even from the poorest of the poor. No missionary could shut his eyes to the glaring need of the people. Some missionaries were so overwhelmed by the need that they assisted people from their own pockets. A picture of this perilous situation and the way some responded to it is reflected in what Rev J Pretorius reports in 1955 (SSK Natal 2/104:15/2/55):

Op Sewerage Farm het veral Mev Moolman werksaam gewees... Mev Moolman het haar veral toegelê op huisbesoek, en op wat sy vir die armstes gedoen het... Soms is eetware uitgedeel, maar veral stukkies klere aan die behoeftigste Sondagskoolkindertjies... Hulle het 'n ouerige sinkgeboutjie van die korporasie te leen gekry ... en Mnr van der Walt het 'n klompie leë kassies aan ons gegee vir sitplekkies (SSK Natal 2/104:15/2/55).

Many of these children were so poor that they could not attend Sunday school. A great percentage of these people were living below the bread line. Many were jobless. In a report on the situation in Durban South, Rev D P Bekker (SSK 2/104:1965) describes the attitude among the people in the church as one of caring and love. Rev J J B Pretorius (SSK Natal 2/50:Aug 1959) mentions that his first funeral was of a baby that died of malnutrition.

The Pietermaritzburg Church Council resolved to negotiate lower premiums for burial policies and to set up a fund to help cover funeral expenses (RCA 2:15/8/59). Most missions and congregations in the early days established funds for charitable assistance. Rev J Pretorius (SSK Natal 2/104:19/8/50) reports that the missions committee approved the division of a section of the huge site in Raisethorpe into blocks for Indian families. Three-roomed cottages of wood and clay would also be provided would also provide three room cottages of wood and clay at £15. Attempts were made to provide for schooling on the Raisethorpe site but these were met with so many difficulties,

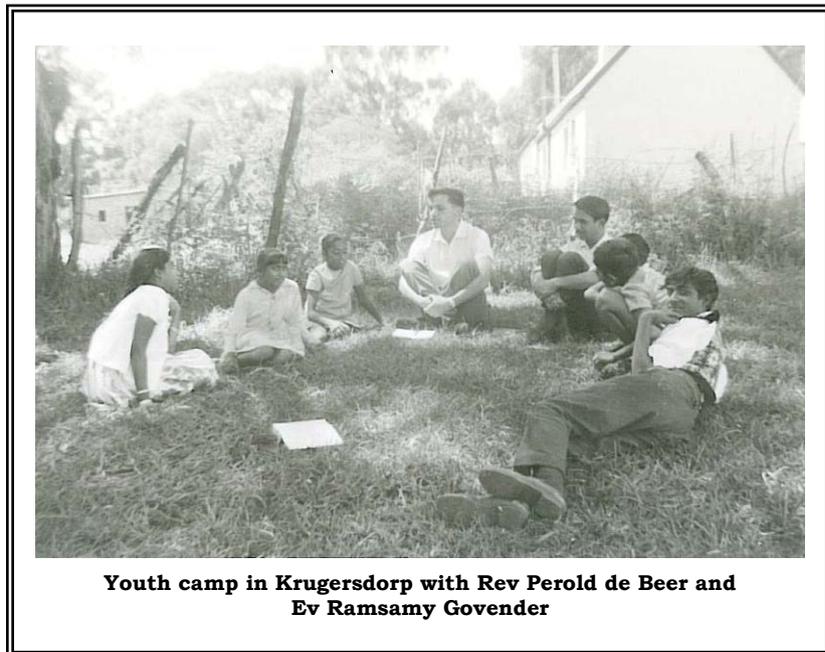
in terms of funding, the proper teachers, and the support of the education department, that little was achieved (:14/8/48). Apart from an attempt by Ev K Moodley (RCA 2:11/5/63) to start a Tamil School in Durban-North, the researcher found no mention of schools being established. However there were in several areas reading classes for the illiterate. In 1954 Ev Manikkam was appointed to the post of prison chaplain on behalf of the IRC, a position for which Ev Murugan had also applied (SSK Natal, 2/38:19/5/54). Assistance in many other forms was given by the missionaries and the first church councils: loans, charitable assistance, assistance to find work for the jobless, filling out required forms for the Department of Interior, taking people to hospital, and assistance with the drawing up of wills.

A critical assessment of the *diakonia* dimension of missions to the Indian people reveals a willingness on the part of the missionaries to meet the needs of the people. However the usual methods of service evangelism such as the provision of schools and hospitals were simply not functional. Those churches that entered the field much earlier were much more successful. The Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church provided schools and hospital facilities for a substantial number of Indian people. The Roman Catholics established the first Indian school in 1867 and many others followed. Rev Stott of the Methodist Church had several day-schools under his care but it was the Anglicans that provided apart from schools, the St Aidan's Teachers Training College and the only medical facility at the time: St Aidan's Hospital (Refer section 3.1, 2.3.2 of this Chapter). By the time the Dutch Reformed Church entered this field, governmental plans were already underway to nationalise the schools.

It is difficult to assess the quality or quantity of the ministry of caring for one another in the local missions or congregations. Most of the caring was done by the missionaries, evangelists, pastors and the council, but there were those individuals who gave themselves fully in the ministry. In times of bereavement and sickness the number of church members who provided care was exceptionally high. The more significant question here is: 'How deep did the Gospel go?'

5.12.3 *Koinonia* Dimension

The third dimension of mission concerns *koinonia*, the building of the fellowship of believers. Caring for one another became an immediate concern in the IRC.



The Indian community, especially in the early days, was without a doubt the most close-knit community in South Africa. In those days divorces were unknown and family life, also the extended family unit, was held in great esteem. Obviously religious differences dictated the limits of community and in a lesser degree, those of the family.

The Hindu that became a believer and suffered expulsion from his family looked to the Church to provide the 'family of God'. This opened up a whole new life for the convert: the members of the church became his real family. The first generation believers had *koinonia* as a given.

Often the fruit of the Gospel was that whole families eventually became believers. The result of this would as a rule be that *koinonia* was replaced by the family unit and other converts would find themselves shunned by the family. This often happened when a church consisted of just one or two families.



RCA Charisma on camp

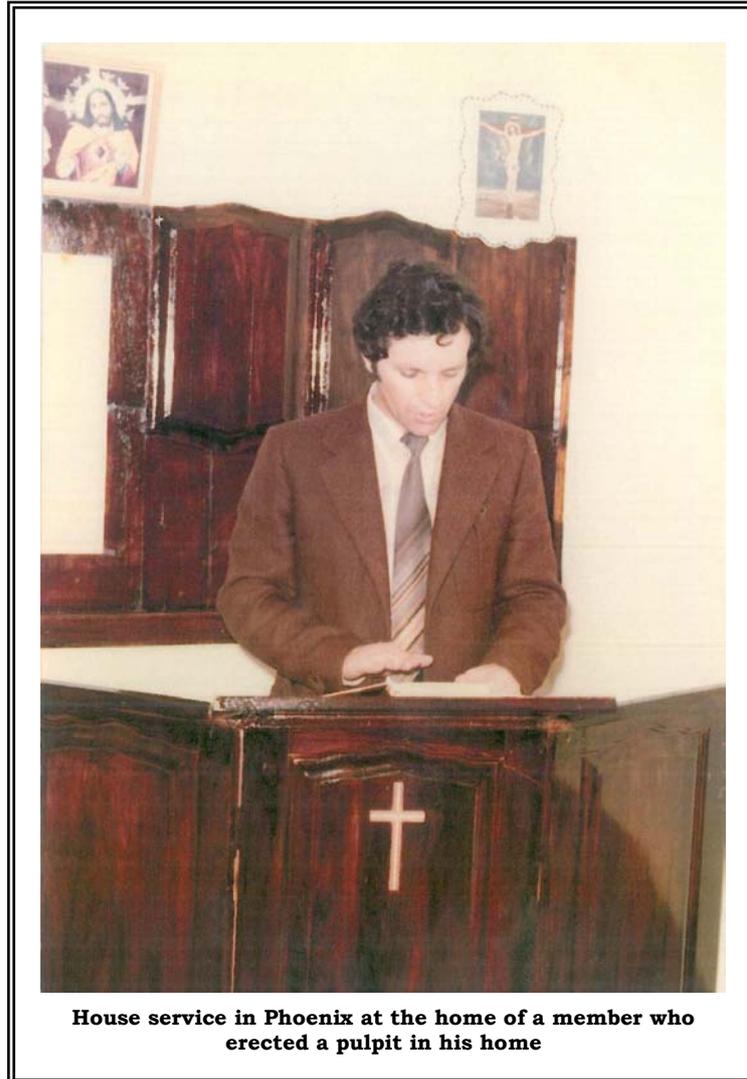
The final difficulty that arose in terms of *koinonia* was the role of the missionary/pastor. In the fledgling IRC the expectation of the new converts soon overwhelmed the missionary to such an extent that he was forced to focus on his pastoral responsibilities. As the evangelist spearheaded the outreach, the missionary's role rather rapidly changed to that of a pastor. This meant that the church quickly developed into a 'pastor's church', the so-called 'shepherd-flock-model'.

One of the more positive aspects of the Indian Reformed Church was the small group gatherings, the cottage meetings or house fellowships. Here the opportunity presented itself to interact, to share and to care for one another.



Ladies closing function of the Congregation Jeshurun

In most places some form of ecumenical fraternity existed. The RCA congregations usually participated in these bodies. The activities of the churches were shared and opportunities to work together realised in a number of cases. In the Pietermaritzburg-Durban area Rev J Pretorius and the leadership were part of the Interdenominational Fellowship of Indian Christian Churches from its inception in 1963.

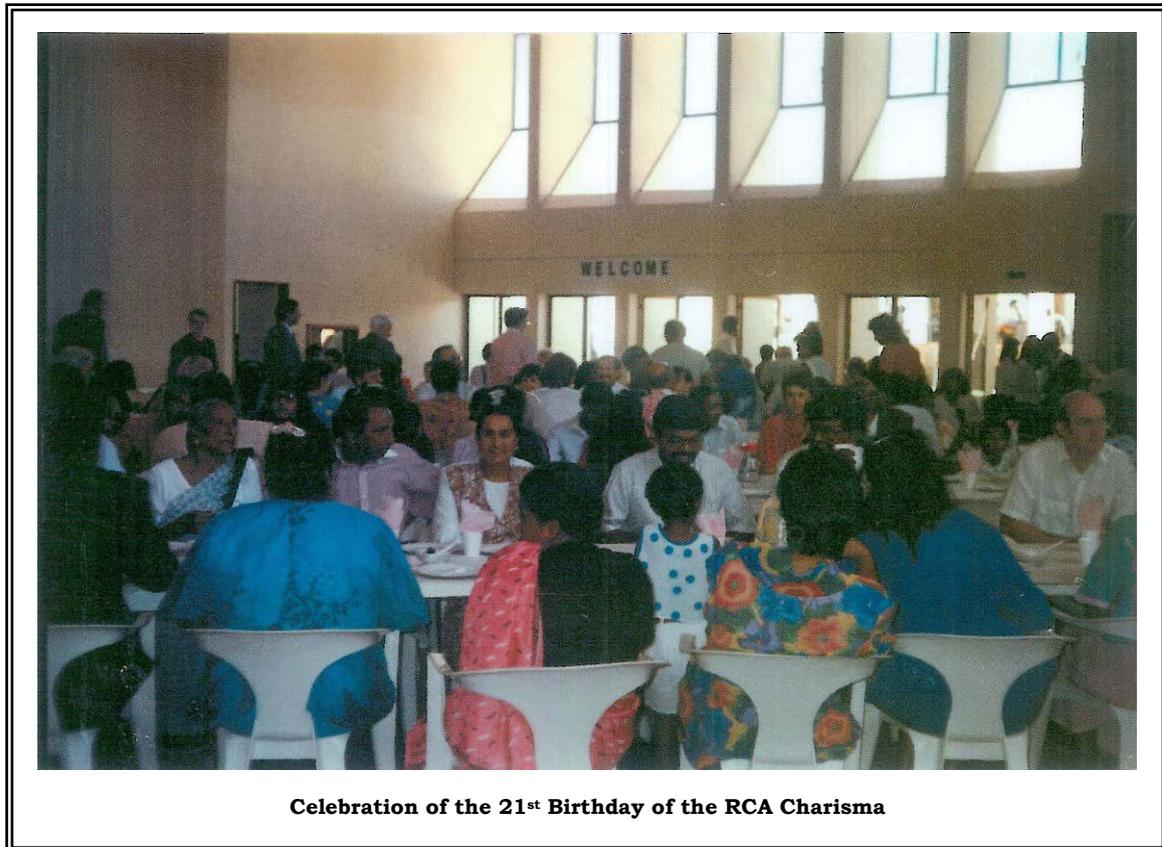


Such cooperation was necessary to curtail the danger of churches working in opposition to one another.

....Dat nouere samewerking tussen die verskillende kerke wat sendingwerk onder die Indiërs doen moet wees t.o.v. die praktiese kant van die werk, ten einde te voorkom dat die kerke met oorvleuelde belange in die stedelike gebiede teen mekaar werk (SSK Natal, SSK 2/3: 12/9/63).

It is noteworthy that the renowned Pastor J F Rowlands opened the door of his Fellowship of Indian Christian Churches to other denominations. There was always an amicable relationship between the Bethesda Full Gospel Church and the Indian Reformed Church. The fact that a few workers from Bethesda

became evangelists in the IRC did not harm this relationship. Neither did the difference in doctrine affect the ecumenical relationship.



For the Indian people the existence of many churches have always been an enigma. Coming from the Hindu world with its inclusive character, they find the exclusiveness of churches quite unacceptable.

The divisions in the South African society and the policy of apartheid were not officially addressed in the early years, but petty apartheid, especially when practised by members of the Dutch Reformed Church, caused much pain and upheaval in the Christian community. Missionaries and evangelists in the IRC did not defend such behaviour but clearly condemned it as contrary to God's Word and as a flagrant disregard for the mission to which God called his church.

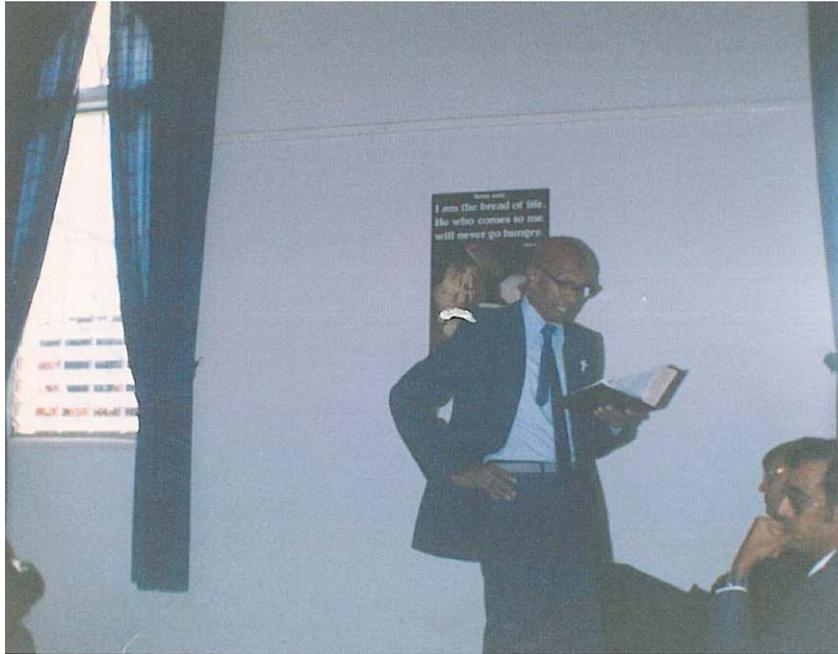


RCA Members on tour in Israel



Cottage Meeting in Charisma (Pretoria)

The first hymn book used was 'Redemption Songs'. This book included among all the favourite hymns of Wesley, Sankey, Moody and others, also choruses that allowed for a much more uninhibited form of worship. Songs in the vernacular, Tamil and Telugu lyrics were very popular in the early days.



Ev Sunker, leading a prayer meeting at RCA church in Avoca (Durban-North)

5.12.4 *Leitourgia* Dimension

The final dimension of mission, is *leitourgia* – leading the Church in the worship of God.

Membership of the first IRC congregations was rather small. This opened up the opportunity for a less structured church model. When the church grew the small group continued in the form of house fellowships or cottage meetings. At these smaller meetings the guitar and clarinet were used, whereas the Sunday service was accompanied by piano or organ.

Ev James Naidoo was a popular Gospel singer when he joined the IRC and Ev K Moodley, an excellent accordion player. The missionaries realised the importance of allowing indigenous forms of worship. Spontaneous forms of praise, worship, confession, testimony and prayer developed. The joy of the Lord, the exuberance of worship, permeated many of these early meetings. This was especially true of the campaigns and the Pentecost services. The Sunday service was more structured, depending on the position taken by the missionary or pastor.

Speaking in tongues took place and missionaries would encourage members rather to practise their gift at home. Ev K Moodley, during times of prayer, would utter agreement to the prayer. The missionary would react negatively by knocking on the table for order!

(Interview Ev K Moodley:1990).

The researcher had the opportunity to attend a service of the IRC at Jacobs Road Church in Durban in 1959. The Church was packed to capacity and the devotion and worship of the congregation was unbelievably moving.

The importance of worship and the need for a proper liturgy, and hymnbook, were regarded as critical. At the first Synod of the IRC that met in 1968 (:102) the issue of a new hymnbook was high on the agenda – as was the need for a common liturgy for worship for the congregations of the IRC (:101).

The background of these proposals was the unwritten fact that the congregations came into contact with the Pentecostal world, especially in Pietermaritzburg-Durban, and that the Reformed doctrine had to be spelt out in terms of worship and liturgy.

On a deeper level, the *Leitourgia* dimension of mission also refers to the total mission of the churches – everything done by the missionaries, clergy and laity to proclaim and to demonstrate the love of God to a world in need, to build his church among the nations is offered as the church's worship of God, its living sacrifice to its Lord and Saviour. In a small but significant way the IRC did contribute to the final aim of mission, namely the glorification of God's Name.

CHAPTER SIX - CRUCIAL ISSUES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND LIFE OF THE RCA

Prior to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa, the mission of the DRC among the Indian People of South Africa was called 'Indiërsending or Indian Mission'. The first congregation formed on 6 April, 1957 in Pietermaritzburg was called the *Indian Reformed Church* in South Africa (*Dutch Reformed Church Connection*) or simply *Indian Reformed Church*. The latter name for the Church was used up to the formal establishment of the RCA in 1968 in Pietermaritzburg.

The change of the name from Indian Reformed Church to Reformed Church of Africa was a unanimous decision taken by the Synod of 27 August 1968 in Pietermaritzburg. It was argued that the connotation 'Indian' would turn the church into a church only for Indians. Such a racial connotation would be unacceptable and damaging to the work of the RCA. With the change of the name, a new dispensation had arrived, and the RCA found its own place within the family of Dutch Reformed Churches – indeed in the wider church community in South Africa and abroad.

In the relatively brief history of its existence, the RCA had to contend with many issues that related to its own membership, as well as its relationship with the 'mother church,' the DRC, as well as fellow churches in the DRC family. Being a small church with limited resources, wanting to be true to its missionary calling in a very complex community, raised many challenges. The following crucial issues surfaced time and again:

6.1 The relationship between the 'mother' and the 'daughter'

The relationship between the DRC and the RCA (the mother and daughter church) was arranged according to the mission policy of the DRC. In accordance with this policy the work among the Indian people would eventually develop into a 'daughter' church in her own right.



Indian guests with their hosts of the Hendrina NGK yesterday. The Indians are from the Reformed Church, Durban, an NGK sister church.

NGK carries a little goodwill

Staff Reporter

CURRY and rice was served for lunch in Hendrina yesterday — in honour of the Indian guests of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk congregation.

Residents of the small Eastern Transvaal town, which has been "Indian free" for more than 60 years, had threatened a boycott of church services if the Indians took part.

But the 10am service yesterday was packed, and the group took communion with the rest of the congregation. They sang two hymns and the benediction from the choir gallery.

The group of Indians, led by Ds Perold de Beer, were invited by Ds Dawie Pypers of the NGK in Hendrina. They are from the Reformed Church in Durban, a sister church of the NGK.

Ds De Beer preached the sermon yesterday. The congregation sat quiet and attentive in the cool church during the two-hour service.

Ds Pypers did mission work in Durban, converting Indians of

Islamic and Hindu faiths to Christianity, for several years before coming to Hendrina.

The women of his congregation became interested in mission work earlier this year, and he approached his Church Council about inviting a group from Durban.

Ds De Beer said as far as he knew the council had agreed without hesitation. He said he had brought only a small group of nine Indians with him, because "we had to leave on Friday, and it isn't easy for Indians to get off work without being fired".

After the service yesterday morning, the Indians and members of the Hendrina congregation mingled freely at an informal luncheon served in the courtyard of a farmhouse near Hendrina.

The Durban group were accommodated in another farmhouse for the weekend, and Ds De Beer said they had shared facilities with a white family living on the neighbouring farm.

Ds Pypers said: "Here we are all children of God — there is no difference between us in His eyes."

22 August 1980

The DRC provided financial assistance for the missionaries sent out to spread the Gospel among the Indian people. The first evangelists were also supported. The later option of a tent-making ministry was seen by some as the only way the DRC could achieve independence to become part and parcel of the RCA. The downside of this option, however, was that the full-time ministry had to make way for a part-time ministry. The motive for entering the tent-making ministry was to avoid the connotation with apartheid and apartheid money received from the DRC. For others this argument did not add up as government contributions from the University could be seen in the same light. This action furthermore brought serious tension among the white ministers. If they opposed financial independence they would be regarded as racist. The Indian Ministers and Evangelists were placed in the same dilemma. They were also supported by the DRC and having given their lives in this sacrificial ministry they must now hear that they too were racist! Furthermore they were not trained to obtain a chair at the University as some of their white brothers did enjoy.

6.2 Growing from a receiver to a spreader of the gospel

Efforts to encourage RCA congregations to become missionary minded and spreaders of the Gospel were met with limited success. On the positive side of the situation, there were those who gave themselves to the ministry on account of the great work of salvation experienced in their own lives. Some believers would spend all their time in reaching out and sharing their new found faith. The converts were the backbone of the outreach to their people. The new converts could not keep quiet about their faith and would spontaneously share it with family and friends – even if persecution followed.

6.2.1 A comprehensive view of mission

As was the case with evaluating the mission of the IRC in the previous chapter, the missionary work of the RCA in the past decades needs to be tested in the light of a comprehensive mission definition. The RCA had to learn the implications of both the *missio dei* and *missiones ecclesiae* for the church. That the mission was primarily in God's hands was readily accepted. But the church needed to join Him, as ambassador of His Kingdom.

Care was taken during the past decades to assist members to move away from the narrow view of mission, focusing exclusively on the salvation of the sinner, to the more comprehensive view of mission as encompassing the whole reality of human life. For the RCA, being a *mission* church, the leading of Hindus and Muslims to a saving relationship in Christ was, however, first and foremost. In later years the church understood more clearly that the vertical and the horizontal aspects of mission cannot be separated. The heart of the approach must be the love of Christ that constrains us. (11 Cor 5:14). An example of this horizontal approach was when some of the members began to offer garden services free of charge in Laudium; others assisted the sick or provided in the many needs of the bereaved.

Harry Boer (1961:175) advocates this view when he writes. In 'considering the place of the Church in and her message for the world, of course it will, be folly not to take seriously the social, political, economical, cultural and religious milieu in which the Church in a given situation or with a given missionary task

find herself.' To these men and women the Church must proclaim the Gospel in such a manner that she would help them to be the salt of the earth at that time and place in which they found themselves.

According to Voetius, the immediate aim of missions is the conversion of the 'Gentiles,' subordinate to a second goal, the planting of the church; and the ultimate goal, to which both these are subordinate, the glory and manifestation of God's divine grace. This formulation of the goal of mission is, according to Bosch (1991:256), unparalleled. Recognizing the glory and manifestation of God's grace as our deepest missionary commitment and our highest missionary goal therefore has had specific consequences for our involvement in the world (:2).

We in the RCA agree that true missionary involvement should not only be born from a desire to *win* souls for the Lamb, or from a grim sense of legalistic obedience, but in the discovery of the glory and grace of God. (:2, 3) Such graceful involvement will complement the Gospel we preach.

Recognizing the glory and manifestation of God's grace as our deepest missionary commitment and our highest missionary goal therefore has very specific consequences for our involvement in the world (:2). The followers of Jesus Christ, who live out of this magnificent grace, can never satisfy themselves with passive justice, acceptance of injustice and oppression, or be satisfied merely to provide charity to the victims (:3). From time to time prophetic witness is needed.

Looking back over the development of the RCA it may be said that the preaching of the salvation in Christ Jesus took centre stage. Those who met Christ became new persons. Their lives were strangely warmed by the presence of Christ. They began spontaneously to share their new-found faith in Christ. Many were impassioned to assist the poor, the sick and those in distress.

Yet many were also adamant about their condemnation of the policy of apartheid. However, they regarded the eternal salvation of those around them as of utmost importance. How else could you face life with all its challenges and

heartache other than through a saving knowledge of Christ Jesus? To know Jesus was first prize – second prize was to see justice flowing through our land.

A comprehensive definition of missions, as many missiologists have come to agree upon in the latter half of the 20th century, rests upon four pillars: *kerugma* (the proclamation of the Gospel), *koinonia* (planting and nurturing churches and the communion of believers), *diakonia* (charitable service, demonstrating the love of Christ in various ways) and *leitourgia* (praising and worshipping the Lord through our missionary endeavours). Therefore, as was the case in Chapter Five, the mission of the RCA needs to be seen, through the fourfold lens of *kerugma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*.

6.2.2 *Kerugma* in the ministry of the RCA

The Reformed Church in Africa regards the *kerugma* or proclamation of God's Word as the most important dimension in mission and church planting.

The Reformed Church in Africa on the whole did not lose her missionary drive. The involvement of the membership in mission and evangelism is a given for all congregations. Living in a non-Christian environment makes it absolutely vital for churches and their membership to reach out in the area where they are placed.

In the RCA this mission is perceived as the proclamation of the Gospel *kerugma* to a people's group, the Indian people, yet not excluding black, coloured or white people living in the area. Apart from the preaching in homes and in the outdoors evangelistic campaigns, supplemented with the use of colour slides and Christian films, the eventual building of churches provided for a more disciplined church gathering. The Church architecture reflected the proclamation of the Word with the pulpit in the centre.

Tent campaigns were all along, but especially in the early days, the heart of the ministry. Preaching and evangelism went hand in hand. These meetings were followed with visitation and a call to attend the Church meetings. We referred earlier to the debates with Muslims. These meetings opened doors to their homes but were in our opinion of little value as a tool for evangelism. Dialogue

at homes was more fruitful. Few Muslims turned to the Lord. Those who did suffered life-threatening.

6.2.3 *Koinonia* in the ministry of the RCA

The *koinonia* or ministry of fellowship, especially in the small groups, known in the RCA as cottage meetings or house fellowships, is possibly the most rewarding ministry in the RCA. Living and working in a non-Christian environment, the *koinonia* of prayer groups provided a huge stimulus for Christian nurture. The life of the church is in the beauty of the small groups where their lively worship and genuine prayers touched the hearts of those who were not yet believers. Often unbelievers stood outside, listening and sometimes joining the fellowship.

Those meetings were of the most important building blocks of the local congregations. Those who feared persecution if they attended services at the Church, could now in the privacy of their homes hear the Gospel. When the church was later established the small groups continued as part of the church and of her outreach. These meetings were so meaningful that a family in Phoenix built a beautiful pulpit in their lounge for the use of the minister whenever a cottage meeting was held in their home!

Most of the congregations had regular prayer meetings in the church building. Some congregations would however opt for either a prayer meeting or a cottage meeting. Most believers would participate in prayer at both these meetings.

The message at cottage meetings usually had an evangelistic content and a call for a response at the end of the meeting. On other occasions when no unbelievers attended, it would take the form of another prayer meeting.

These small meetings were indeed the seed of the Church. At such congenial gatherings people opened themselves up to the Gospel. It also enabled those who could not go freely to a Church Building for fear of persecution, to hear the Word of God.

These meetings built lasting relationships that opened the way for the Gospel to reach the homes of unbelievers.

The meetings coupled with intensive house visitation were the seed of the Church. They prepared the way for the planting of the Church in a given area.

The conversion of new believers was at all times a heart-moving experience for the whole church and a moment of celebration.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was the high point for every member of the church, after which the congregants would be sent out into the world to minister to the lost.

Some congregations supplied invitation cards to the hosts to enable them to invite family and friends to these cottage meetings.

Ministers' fraternal meetings were held in all areas. The renowned Pastor J F Rowlands of the Full Gospel Church sought to bring Protestant churches labouring among the Indian people together in a ministers' fraternal. Most of the RCA congregations participated in similar gatherings for the purpose of fellowship.

6.2.4 *Diakonia* in the ministry of the RCA

The *diakonia* ministry in the RCA developed around the specific needs of those interested in the Gospel, as well as people living in the wider community and who were victims of poverty, social upheaval and injustice.

As is common to most missionary situations, the plight of the poorest of the poor had to be addressed. Dealing with these situations called for much wisdom. Many were the lessons learnt. Borrowing money from the Church Council or from the members seemed to cause more difficulties than solutions. Loans were often regarded as gifts, causing disruption in the borrower's relationship with the Church Council. The wise Church Council, therefore, would give where the need warranted it, and not lend. A Church Council which played the role of a bank without the rules of a bank, was bound to lose not

only the money, but also the respect of the membership. The golden rule learnt was 'give, don't lend'. Many congregations had to deal with the problem of poverty and they learned to attend wisely and support where support was warranted.

The Church had another formidable duty and that was to genuinely care for the suffering and hurt of her people. A person, who truly cared, would give without expecting anything in return. The ministry of giving must function without any strings attached, knowing that God would reward those giving freely.

With reference to the wider area of projects and the ministry of love and care for those who suffered, the church and her membership had the privilege to care not only for one another but also for those outside the church. The Church must embody compassion. The Church could not remain quiet or act blind amidst the suffering of people in the church and outside. This required helping people to help themselves. It also called for a stand against any form of injustice, a call to align ourselves with those suffering in many different ways. No congregation could close their eyes to the suffering of their people. For the poor provision would be made; for those without work attempts were made to find work; food would be available at the church for the hungry. Invitations for members to attend white churches and *visa versa* were wonderful opportunities to build relationships between Indian and White and in some small way contribute towards a just dispensation. Few if any of the ministers supported the policy of apartheid.

The following incident illustrates the support offered by the clergy: A husband and his wife had a quarrel because she was unfaithful to him. One eventful night when she returned from her lover, her husband waited for her and killed her. During the court case that followed, I was called upon to testify. I explained to the court that he was driven to this act because of her unfaithfulness over a long period of time. The court accepted the testimony and he was set free.

In the congregations great care was taken of the poor, the sick and the bereaved. Some of the most moving experiences were typical Christian funerals.

The loving care shown to the bereaved was beyond anything I've experienced in the white community.

The RCA clearly voiced her indignation with apartheid and worked towards the dismantling of apartheid. The emphasis of the RCA on evangelization was never allowed to blind her to the need of those suffering and calling for justice. Any political structure that deprived men and women of justice, it was believed, had to be addressed - yet the way in which it was done might never go against the spirit of Christ. This is stated clearly in the Laudium Declaration (see 7.5).

6.2.5 *Leitourgia* in the ministry of the RCA

In the RCA, we praise God by obeying his Missionary Command, and participate in the *Missio Dei*.

Mission in itself is an act of worship. By our obedience to Jesus' command, by participating in the *missio dei*, we glorify His Name.

All of this however needs to be reflected in the *leitourgia*, in the congregation, when believers meet to worship, to listen to the word, to pray, and to partake in the sacraments of the Lord. In order to do so, the liturgy of the congregation should be contextual – it needs to reflect the context and the culture, as well as the deepest beliefs, of the congregation.

In the RCA special attention was given to the singing of hymns and spiritual songs as well as to the celebrating of the sacraments. Concerning the sacraments, the RCA followed the rulings of the IRC (5.11.10/5.11.11).

Prior to the establishment of the Reformed Church in Africa and before missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church began to reach out to the Hindus and Moslems of South Africa, there were those individuals who felt a calling to reach out to the Indian people of South Africa. (See Chapter 5, par 5.11.9) The form of their outreach varied from house visitation, Sunday school classes, youth meetings, Bible studies, prayer meetings and cottage meetings. Singing and praying formed an important part of these meetings. The very first hymn books were either hymn sheets or choruses from 'Redemption Songs'. In some of the

smaller towns of South Africa, where Indian people could speak and understand Afrikaans, such as Middelburg (Transvaal), Afrikaans songs could also be used. Songs in the vernacular were often sung, mostly in Tamil, but also in Telegu, Hindi and Gujerati. English, however, was the language most often used.

Initially there was little contact between the Dutch Reformed ministries in the various provinces of the country. Each group (of the Dutch Reformed Church), whether young or old, sang the songs that they felt comfortable with.

The first Indian evangelists played a major role in promoting the use of songs in the vernacular. The Tamil, Hindi and Gujerati songs were enjoyed thoroughly. Those who knew the language would first translate the words for the benefit of those who did not understand the language - quite a learning experience for the Whites! But also for the Indians who had lost their mother tongue.

The joy of the new-found faith was particularly expressed through gospel singing. The first hymns sung in Pietermaritzburg were those composed during the revivals by Sankey, Wesley, Moody and others. During the Christmas season carols by candlelight became an annual outreach event.

The first meetings were evangelistic open-air meetings with lively singing and a style of preaching that called people to conversion. At that time the so-called Wayside Sunday Schools held in homes were popular. Tent campaigns were often held and the experience of seeing people coming to the Lord inspired congregations to sing with escalating enthusiasm.

The struggle for survival, with so many odds facing the fledgeling church in a Hindu and Muslim environment, caused the church to focus. One of the songs that were sung during those early days expressed this victorious attitude:

He is Lord! He is Lord!
He has risen from the dead
And He is Lord!
Every knee shall bow
Every tongue confess
That Jesus Christ is Lord!

The first hymn-book used in the young church was 'Redemption Songs' (Pickering and Inglis). Bethesda Full Gospel Church, the largest Christian Church among Indian people in South Africa, also used this hymn-book officially. The opening page calls it 'a choice collection of one thousand hymns and choruses for evangelistic meetings, soloists, choirs and the home'.

This book was loved by the Indian Reformed Church and played an important role in maintaining a strong spiritual and evangelical church. In later years when the Reformed Church in Africa faced her own theological crisis, she went back to her evangelical roots as formulated in the Laudium Declaration (Acts Synod 1990: 59 - 61). The first hymn book of the RCA reflected her evangelical character.

As early as 1959 the *Psalter Hymnal* (of the Christian Reformed Church Michigan) was used. This choice expressed the desire of the church to remain Reformed, but Evangelical as well. For the ministers the *Psalter Hymnal* provided the required documents for Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt, the Ecumenical Creeds, discipline, ordination, etc.

During the first meeting of the Synod of the Indian Reformed Church in August 1968, it was resolved that Synod should compile its own Hymnal. This task together with the study material from the different congregations was referred to a permanent committee of Synod. This was indeed a watershed resolution.

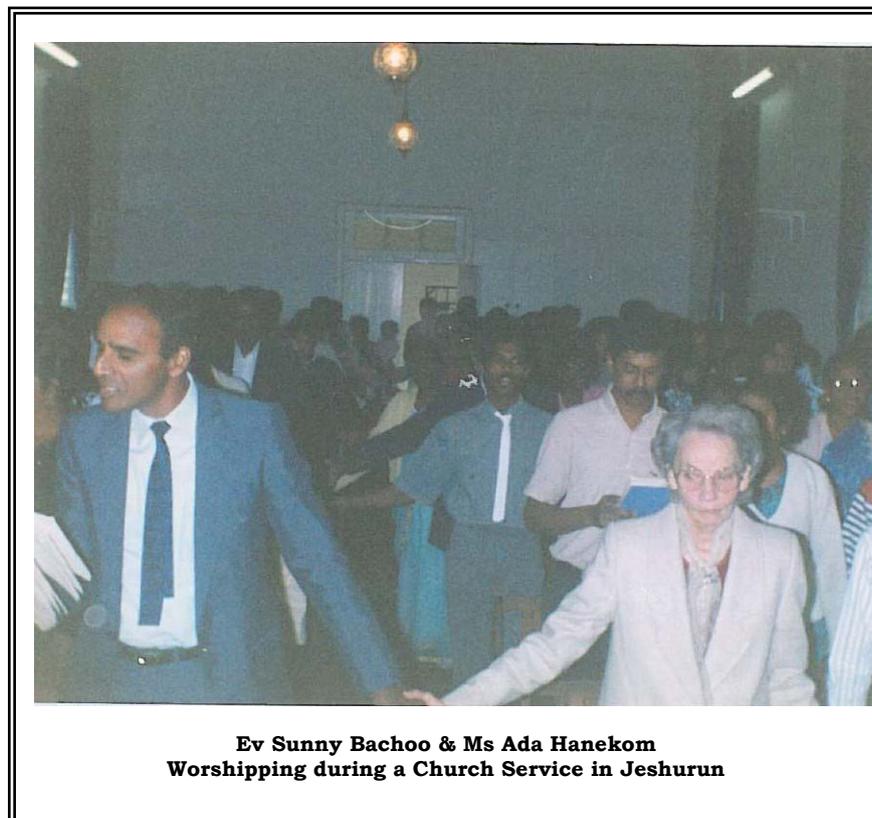
Furthermore, it was decided that the congregation be encouraged, where possible, to test the draft Hymnal presented to Synod by the Church Council of Transvaal and to send criticisms and suggestions to the committee concerned.

It was agreed to use typical reformed hymns as well as other hymns which were to the honour of God, according to scripture and Christ centred. The possibility of using hymns and lyrics in the vernacular was emphasised.

The committee concerned had to report on the need of including hymns in Afrikaans; to consult with the English congregations of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk; and to investigate the necessity of procuring copyright for all hymns to be included in the final approved Hymnal (Acta: First Synod of the Indian Reformed Church; 1968:102).

The RCA Hymnal contains 200 psalms and hymns, 293 spiritual songs and choruses and 55 various songs. To this was added a section with additional songs and choruses in different languages. The following languages other than English are included: Tamil (23), Hindi (6), Zulu (4), Sotho (10), Northern Sotho (1), Tshwane (2) and Afrikaans (13). The hymn book includes a detailed topical index.

This Hymn book is still used in a limited way in the RCA. However with the advent of the Charismatic Movement in South Africa, some of the congregations opted for the inclusion of charismatic songs. In most of the congregations the organ or piano made way for the guitar. Eventually some of the congregations developed a music team that worked and planned in conjunction with the minister. In others the music team took charge of the worship. The introduction of drums in the church was met with some resistance. Rev K Moodley, previously RCA Moderator and Minister of the Congregation of Emmanuel in Durban, took strong exception to the use of drums in the church. In Emmanuel, drums were taboo.



In the RCA the composing of original hymns developed rather slowly. Elder Sunny Bachoo of the RCA Jeshurun in Durban composed many songs with guitar accompaniment in English and in the vernacular. These songs are of a deep devotional nature and were particularly popular at the local house fellowships and prayer meetings.

In 1998 at the meeting of the 8th Synod of the RCA in Durban, the matter of worship was discussed in depth (Acts 8th Synod 1998). Congregations were requested to scrutinise the songs and hymns and if any errors were found these had to be referred to the Committee for Creed and Doctrine (:99).

The meeting took note of a selection of scriptural verses to accompany the hymns and songs of the present hymn book that was provided by the committee of RCA Calvary (:131 - 134) but decided that by the end of March 1999 (target date) congregations could provide scripture references to the Committee of Creed and Doctrine (:99). This included the provision of chords for 700 songs (:87, 88).

The target for completion of the revised hymn book was set for 28 February 1999 (:203). The finalising of the printing, the number of copies to be ordered and the encouragement of congregations to acquire copies of the Hymnal, was referred to the Temporary Committee for Current Affairs (Ninth Synod Minutes, 2002:33). The cost per hymn book would be between R22.50 to R25.00 (Agenda 2002 Synod: 41).

The Committee, having scrutinised the sample copy of the Hymnal found the quality of the product unsuitable. It was therefore agreed that the Christian Literature Fund be approached for the publishing of the Hymnal. The time frame for the finished product was extended to September 2003. The Committee would also investigate the matter of copyright (Synod Minutes 2002:89). A Hymnal Committee with Rev Bennett Shunmugan as convenor was appointed in the interim (:115). The problem regarding copyright was amicably solved when the Synod agreed to pay R1,873.00 per annum as the annual license fee (:73), to Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) with which the RCA was now fully registered.



Rev Bennett Shunmugan: Current Moderator of RCA

At the Tenth Synod Meeting at Malabar (Port Elizabeth) in 2006, the convenor of the Hymnal Committee, Rev B Shunmugan reported that due to financial constraints, the Hymnal Committee could not meet during the interim. In his report he proposed that in view of the cost of production and the constant upgrading of new songs, it would be more practical for each congregation to produce little booklets which could be easily updated for use in cell meetings. Reformed standards were to be taken into account when songs were selected. (Agenda Synod 2006:51).

Synod decided at this meeting to make the hymnal available in electronic form.

The author of this thesis, however, is of the opinion that the electronic mode alone will not answer the needs of the church. All along the members of most congregations kept their hymn books as a treasure in their homes. In *Laudium*, I was always moved by the singing from these hymn books during home prayer

meetings, and especially as part of their private worship at home. The personal Bible and hymn book belong together. Imagine having a Bible only in an electronic medium.

6.3 The Ministry of Deliverance

6.3.1 The reality of the occult in the RCA's ministry

Initially in the ministry of the white ministers the issue of the occult was de-emphasized. Though aware of strange phenomena when Hindus were prayed for, most of the white ministers could not explain them, and simply ignored such occurrences.

It was the Indian workers, such as Ev E Murugan from Pietermaritzburg and Rev Kisten Moodley from Durban North who made the white ministers aware of the phenomenon. It was in Pietermaritzburg that the importance of dealing with occultism among Hindus surfaced. Through the ministry of evangelist Albert Murugan, first Evangelist appointed in 1951 to work among the Indians, precious lessons concerning Hindu outreach were learnt. Upon the conversion and deliverance of Charles Rajah from the power of the spirit of *Dropathi*, a whole family came to Christ. This resulted in family members of evangelist Murugan writing to Rev Pretorius to enquire whether he would require the evangelist's services (Pretorius, 1976:7, 15). Evangelist Murugan was duly called. He accepted and subsequently played an important role in helping new converts.

The missionaries and evangelists eventually became aware of the important role of the occult and that to ignore the existence of Hindu spirits and gods would be tantamount to adding Christ to the Hindu pantheon. They came to recognize the fierce reaction of the spirits to the Word of God and the prayer of the believers.

During services in Phoenix (Durban) we often experienced the reaction of these spirits, trying to disrupt the preaching of the Word. The elders understood what was happening and quietly took the suffering person outside so that the service could continue without disruption and the person might be set free.



Church leaders of the Jeshurun Congregation

On one occasion, during the Pentecost week, I was conducting a service at the church in Avoca. A white lady in a sari belonging to the Hare Krishna movement, attended. I experienced the service as one of the most difficult meetings. I felt that I was preaching against a wall. After the service we prayed for her and took her back to the Hare Krishna Centre. Later we received a letter from her, thanking us for the hospitality and sharing with us that she had found Christ!

In the ministry of the RCA we never used the term ‘*exorcism*’, but rather the positive expression ‘*deliverance*’.

I agree with Deneyschen in his Diploma Theology (Pretoria University) thesis, *Bearbeiding van Hindoes in Suid-Afrika* (1979) that it was only when we dealt with this phenomenon in a positive way that we made a breakthrough which enabled us to reach the hearts of the Hindus. In my personal ministry I have witnessed phenomenal growth in the Church in terms of both quantity and quality.

Deneyschen writes as follows regarding deliverance from demons: demonism.

Dit was slegs nadat ons as Christene, nie alleen kennis geneem het van hierdie fenomeen nie, maar ook daadwerklik daarmee rekening gehou het, dat die ware deurbraak tot die Hindoe gemaak is. Na afloop van my navorsing het die volgende aan die lig gekom: (i) Die trae verloop van die evangelie het dit te danke aan die kru en direkte teenstand van die duiwel en sy engele. (ii) Die snel en spoedige deurbreek van die koninkryk van God word bewerkstellig wanneer die Kerk van Christus aggressief en triomfantelik opstaan teen die demoniese owerhede en magte wat die heidene bind (1979: Voorwoord).

As stated above, one of the first evangelists of the RCA, Albert Murugan of Pietermaritzburg, was aware of the influence of evil powers and demons and did not only deal with this phenomenon but also inspired positive growth in that congregation (1979: 87). Rev D J Pypers worked day and night to help people find Christ and be delivered. His work in Avoca (Durban) and in Rylands (Cape) was blessed and many were delivered.

Rev Kisten Moodley's work in Durban also saw many delivered and set free. In fact, most of the Indian ministers were aware of the need for a deliverance ministry, and assisted the white ministers in becoming more effective in their ministry.

I saw the positive results of this ministry in Durban and subsequently in Pretoria. I realized that this ministry requires not only a close walk with Christ but also the desire to pray through for those in bondage.

6.3.2 Dealing with the occult: a Reformed perspective

Dealing with the occult is a problem that has to be faced by all churches ministering to the Hindu community. In the Roman Catholic Church special prayers are said for people who are in need of deliverance. According to Rev (Prof) Barney Pityana from the Anglican Church - one of the denominations that have many Indian members - the same approach is followed by the Anglicans (interview, October 11, 2009).

In Reformed Theology (and Missiology) some attention has been given to the problem of dealing with the occult as well. Huisamen, in his thesis '*Magte van die Duisternis*' wrote extensively on demonism and Satanism in the Bible. Professor H C van Zyl (from the Faculty of Theology, Bloemfontein offered a good concise explanation.

In the time of the Reformation, dealing with the occult was an important issue. Calvin was acutely aware of witchcraft, sorcery, magic, etc. In his *Institute* (1.14.19) Calvin accepts the existence of demons and the punishment that the devils will face especially at the resurrection. He maintains that God provides the weapons to stand against Satan (cf. Ouweneel 1990:252). In their studies on the subject, Ouweneel and C F C Coetzee follow closely in the footsteps of Calvin.

In South Africa, in recent years, the issues of the occult and of deliverance from evil powers have been brought to the fore – also because it has become evident that not only in Indian communities, but also in white, black and coloured communities satanism and demonism have become a major concern.

The last word on the subject has not been spoken. The discussions will continue. Not only Biblical scholars, but also practical theologians and missionaries will have to involve themselves in the process. Systematic theologians have a role to play as well. Moller summarizes the debate as follows:

One cannot speak of Christ and his work of salvation or of man and his struggle against evil and sin without paying attention to the devil and his angels. In any case, if the Bible says a lot about evil angels, these pronouncements must also be dealt with in dogmatics (Moller 1995: 102, 3).

6.4 Developing a Church Order

One of the most important issues to be tackled was the development of a Church Order. The RCA needed to establish its own identity and its standing within the DRC family. The relationship between the ‘mother church’, the DRC and ‘the daughter church’, the RCA, required much attention.

The resolution of the first General Synod of the DRC (1962) to take the responsibility for the work among the Indian People countrywide required careful consideration.

Die Hoogerwaarde Sinode besluit om die Sendingwerk onder die Indiërs in die hele Republiek van Suid-Afrika as deel van sy Sendingaksie te aanvaar en dra dit aan sy Algemene Sinodale Sendingkommissie op om weë en middele te vind om die nodige masjinerie daar te stel vir die behoorlike nakoming van al die verpligtinge in verband met die tans bestaande werk en die uitbreiding daarvan.

(Minutes 1962: 137, 212, 270).

In 1966 when the General Synod met again it was decided to review the 1962 decision. In future the ASSK (General Synodical Missions Committee) would, on behalf of the General Synod, take responsibility for the general supervision and policy of the Indian Mission. Synods were requested to support the work, annually, with a fixed amount.

The General Synod also adopted the ‘Draft Church Order’ as proposed by the sub-committee for Indian Missions ‘in principle’ and approved of the Indian congregations of Transvaal and the Cape Province being connected with the Indian congregations of Natal.

The advice of the Standing Committee for Law and Order of the General Synod was obtained concerning the following issues: the express desire of the church councils to be united; the credentials of delegates to constitute as a Synod; provisional acceptance of the Church Order as basis of constitution and obtaining the approval of the relevant institutions of the Mother Church. On 27 August 1968, at Raisethorpe

delegates from the four congregations (Pietermaritzburg, Transvaal, Durban South and Cape Province) convened to formalise the establishment of the Indian Reformed Church, with a total of 391 communicant members, 68 Sunday schools (served by 140 teachers, attended by 1,758 children), with 6 missionaries, 7 evangelists and 2 trainee evangelists. Rev J Pretorius was elected the first chair of the convention.

The process of developing a Church Order for the IRC – later to be renamed the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) – took place over many years. The Church Order which initially was, in many respects, a mirror image of that of the DRC, had to be developed and adapted to suit the needs of the younger church. The final Church Order was adopted in 1976, and dealt with many issues: the membership of DRC members who served in the ministry of the RCA, the delegation of elders and deacons to presbyteries and synod, the possibility of electing elders to chair church council meetings, relations with other churches within the DRC Family, et cetera. From time to time the Church Order was amended. In 1980 Synod opened the door for a tent-makers' ministry, enabling ministers to take up another occupation as a means of maintenance.

6.5 A self-sustaining Church? Financial dependence in the RCA

The beginnings of the RCA were the missionary endeavour of NGK members. All the early missionaries and evangelists were financially supported by the NGK. The disappearance of the evangelists lessened the dependence on financial support from the NGK. Contributions towards the salaries of ministers however remained. Some Indian congregations paid a growing percentage of their own ministers' salaries. Most of the congregations were financially unable to fully support their minister.

Where the relationship with the NG Kerk (the DRC) became strained - usually on account of the N G Kerk's support of apartheid - some ministers, the then Rev J N J Kritzinger and G J A Lubbe felt obligated as a matter of principle, not to accept financial support from the NG Kerk. The solution was to enter into a tent-makers' ministry. It was hard on their congregations who had to be satisfied with a part-time ministry. The positive consequence of this situation,

however, was that the local elders were encouraged and empowered to take more responsibility for the ministry in the different churches.

The full-time ministry, on the other hand, had the potential for greater expansion and consequently better remuneration for the minister.

CHAPTER SEVEN - CRISES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LIFE OF A YOUNG CHURCH

In the previous chapters the story of the Reformed Church in Africa is told against the background of the life and experience of the Indian Christian community in South Africa. It is the story of a small church that had to grapple with the realities of the country she lived in: 'apartheid South Africa'. As in the case of other denominations, the socio-practical context made an imprint on the life of the church, forcing the RCA to once again define its theological identity.

7.1 Living in Apartheid South Africa

When Ev James Naidoo was called to Port Elizabeth his residential permit was initially refused. (Minutes Synodical Committee: p6). This matter was taken care of by the Synodical Committee. The Department of Indian Affairs replied through Mr H A Prinsloo that a Temporary Residential Permit was granted to Evangelist J K Naidoo to proceed and reside temporarily in Port Elizabeth. The Synodical Committee was informed that 'before submitting such applications the body concerned should satisfy itself that having regarded for the law of the land, inter-provincial movement of the person concerned is necessary.' (Minutes IRC Synodical Committee 5.2.1970). Mr Bean from the Department indicated that Ev Naidoo's permit had been refused because of objections laid by members of the church who were not lay members. It was resolved that an earnest appeal be made to Mr H A Prinsloo and the Department of Indian Affairs to humbly forward to the Synodical Committee the names of the persons who objected. Dr C du P le Roux asked that it be recorded that he was not in favour of such a request.



The emblem of the RCA was developed by Rev J C van der Spuy, from an original design by Gregory Kahn of Durban. The RCA emblem proclaims and acknowledges that God leads his Church by his Spirit and through his Word.



In 1972 at the 9th Meeting of the Indian Reformed Church it was noted that the Synodical Committee's request that residential permits for Indian Workers be extended for a period of three years, could not be acceded to by the Secretary of Indian Affairs.

The Synodical Committee discussed various problems and hardships that the Indian Community was facing. The Liaison Committee was notified regarding:

- (i) The carrying of permits for travelling.
- (ii) Treatment by government officials.

7.1.1 Barred from entering a Public Area

All the ministers of the DRC, also those coming from the white community, were forced to face the realities of apartheid South Africa on a continual basis. I would like to quote from my own experience:

On a hot summer's day I happened to be at an airport in Durban with an Indian friend of mine. Whilst there, I asked this friend to accompany me to the Aero-club restaurant for a cold drink – to which he replied, 'Do you think they will allow me in here?' The reality of the situation struck me like a bolt of lightning. My friend, who had become a brother to me, was not allowed to enter certain places which were familiar territory to me. He later remarked that he found it strange that he was considered good enough to prepare food for white people (he was a chef), but that he was not allowed to enjoy a meal in a restaurant with Whites. He was however encouraged by the fact that as he had met the Lord his Saviour, he was certain that one day he would be with the Lord, in spite of the colour of his skin.

7.1.2 Fear to enter a white church

Entering a white church was for many Indian Christians an uncomfortable experience:

Recently I met a man who grew up as a Hindu. His parents did everything a Hindu was required Hindu to do. The whole family took part in all kinds of Hindu festivals, prayers, offerings etc. In 1989 a friend of his father's, who was a Christian, invited the whole family to the Billy Graham Crusade in Durban. At the crusade the whole family was deeply touched by the message of Billy Graham and realized that they were lost without Christ. That day they met Christ. What a wonderful day it was! He told me that he

worked in Durban but was later transferred to Pretoria. He found a home in Pretoria East where there were many Afrikaans Churches. He felt a desire to attend church to enable him to grow spiritually, but the churches in the area were mostly Afrikaans speaking. He wondered whether he would be accepted in a white church.

Then one day somebody at work told him that he would find Indian churches in Laudium. One Sunday morning early he decided to take a drive to Laudium (about 40 kilometres away). In the poorer part of Laudium he found a church which, he was told, only started at nine. He decided to familiarize himself with the area and soon saw another church. The name on the board was Reformed Church Charisma and the starting time was 9 am. He decided that since he now knew that this church started at 9, he would stay and attend the service. He was deeply touched by the message and since that day he would return for worship almost every Sunday.

I had the privilege to have a conversation with him recently. He told me personally that he was scared to enter a white church because of the race issue. He didn't know what to expect and therefore he would rather travel a distance to go to a church where he would feel welcome.

This same person recently met a white woman at work and they fell in love. Even before he declared his love, she knew that she, too, had lost her heart. He eventually dated her, and their relationship developed into an engagement. They are planning to get married early next year.

As the couple are from different races, the parents from both sides have obviously raised questions. The woman's mother and the grandparents who have raised her are still very upset. In their opinion God did not intend people from different races to marry.

His parents approach the relationship differently. His father said, 'Son, I don't want to interfere with your life, you must decide who you want to marry, but you must promise me only one thing, and that is, that you will

marry a woman who loves the Lord Jesus Christ. If you do that, you will be blessed! Go in peace.'

They recently attended the annual camp organized by the Church and were deeply touched by the message on spiritual warfare. Both came forward to commit their lives anew to Christ.

7.2 Strained relations within the DRC family

On 20 May 1976 representatives of the four NGK Churches met in Pretoria and agreed that the present unity structure of the churches, the so-called Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches was not effective in carrying out the aims of the four different NGK Churches and no longer embodied any structural unity. What was needed was an overarching Synod, constituted in such a way as to give a fair representation to all the constituent churches. With the possible representation of two delegates from each Presbytery the Synod would be constituted as follows:

DRC (NGK)	-	256	delegates
DRCA (NGKA)	-	122	delegates
DRMC (NGSK)	-	58	delegates
RCA	-	6	delegates
Total Numbers	-	442	delegates

(IRC Synodical Committee: 95)

Earlier, in 1970, the Synod of the RCA decided to request Federal Council to consider becoming one Synod, thus implying that the RCA had already indicated its desire for church union in 1970 and sought the modus for such union via the Federal Council (RCA Synodical Committee Minutes: 118). In May 1977 all church councils of the RCA expressed themselves in favour of church union (:118). The Synodical Committee of the RCA went a step further in pursuance of the search for unity by inviting the other three members of the DRC family to meet. The RCA and the NG Sendingkerk were represented by their Synodical Committees whereas the NGKA sent observers. The NGK did not attend. (:118).

The 1978 the recommendation of the Federal Council for the formation of an overarching Synod to replace the current Federal Council was rejected in the following statement by the NGK 'Breë Moderatuur : Any attempt to create a super-structure from above and to dictate a policy apart from the Synods, which is not the policy of the church, must be rejected as not substantiated by Reformed Church polity.' (:119)

The way forward was now to work towards the union of the NGKA, NGSK and RCA.

Three commissions were proposed:

1. Commission of Finance, Property, Administration.
2. Commission of Ecumenical Relations, Government and Society.
3. Commission of Theological Education. (:134)

At the meeting of the Synodical Committee of 28 November 1979 the view was expressed that consideration be given to the cessation of Synod, because of the serious financial and other burdens which the present Synodical structure had brought about. Further discussion ensued and pointed to general dissatisfaction with the present structure, the necessity to modify it, as well as the fact that it reinforced and perpetuated the separateness of the RCA. It was felt that the following were alternatives to the present structure:

1. To dismantle Synod and revert to the pre - 1968 situation.
2. To limit synodical activities to one single steering committee with church union as its priority.
3. To approach another church within the DRC family to absorb the RCA. (:131)

From the writer's point of view it seems as if the failure to relieve the RCA of her separate existence eventually led to a negative attitude towards her continuing existence.

Various attempts through the years towards church union failed. The result was a feeling of disillusionment. The RCA Synod of 1990 affirmed their desire for one Reformed Church of Southern Africa. Synod was however saddened by the fact that only two members of the DRC family of churches (the DRCA and DRMC) had bilaterally decided to form the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa. Synod resolved to continue with multi-lateral talks on Church Union (RCA Acts of Sixth Synod 1990) with the new Uniting Reformed Church and the NG Kerk.

7.3 Appealing to government

On 30 April 1979 the Synodical Committee of the RCA had an interview with the Prime Minister of South Africa, Mr P W Botha, during which a memorandum was tabled containing the church's view concerning the Law on Mixed Marriages and the Immorality Act, the Group Areas Act, the New Constitutional Proposals, Detention without Trial and Indian Housing (Minutes Synodical Committee 25.06.1980:4). Mr Botha pointed out to the committee that the Government was not set on a rigid policy, but that changes were and would be made from time to time. The committee was assured of a sympathetic hearing if the FRC family approached the Government with one voice on these issues.

The outcome of this initiative was a meeting, comprising the Moderamen of the DRC in Africa, the Moderamen of the DR Mission Church, the Synodical Committee of the RCA and the Moderamen of the Dutch Reformed Church, to draft a joint memorandum to government. The meeting took place on 11 March 1980 under the chairmanship of Dr E P J Kleynhans (Moderator of the General Synod of the NGK). It was a difficult meeting. The delegates from the different churches did not see eye to eye. The meeting agreed that a press statement be drafted by Dr Geldenhuys, the DRC's Director for Ecumenical Relations and that no additional statements would be made to the media. This however was ignored by Dr Kleynhans, who did make a statement to the press, much to the chagrin of the rest of the delegates. Relations between the families of churches became quite strained. Subsequently the RCA Synodical Committee received an invitation to attend a new round of talks on 11 September 1980.

The Synodical Committee of the RCA reiterated their standpoint that all further meetings would be fruitless until the Broad Moderamen of the DRC repudiated Dr Kleynhans and once again subscribed to the original statement. The Swiss Federation of Protestant Churches offered assistance to mediate between the Churches, but was informed that it was the conviction of the RCA that the South African Churches themselves should attempt to reach reconciliation within the church and that no need for mediation from churches outside the country was envisaged in the immediate future. (Minutes Synodical Committee 12.9.1981: 20, 21).

The RCA continued to appeal to government on matters such as the position of ministers in the RCA, as well as the issue of detention without trial. The decision adopted by Synod in 1980 was conveyed to the respective State Departments. The following response was received, concerning the position of ministers.

1. White ministers would be allowed to reside in an Indian area: however it was not possible to grant a general concession and individual applications would be considered on merit (:22).
2. Restrictions on the appointment of non-white Marriage Officers in terms of which they were authorized to solemnize marriages of non-white persons only, were lifted. Marriage Officers with such restrictions would be furnished with fresh letters of appointment (:23).

On the government's actions to detain opponents of apartheid without trial, the RCA made a strong statement referring to the fact that 768 South Africans were in detention. The RCA endorsed the standpoint of the Pretoria Consultation of Churches stating that justice is a gift of God in which His glory and the liberated wholeness of all people are central.

The standpoint of the Pretoria Consultation of Churches (March 1979) was accepted and endorsed by Synod in 1980: 'Justice is a gift of God in which his glory and the liberated wholeness of all people are central'.

The standpoint of the RCA regarding detention without trial, which was submitted to the Prime Minister in 1979 and endorsed by Synod 1980, reads as follows:

1. We acknowledge the right of the State, as an institution of God, to promulgate such legislation as is necessary for the maintenance of law and order within its borders.
2. We are furthermore convinced that no country or state, especially in our day, can be without efficient security legislation in order to maintain law and order and to safeguard the country from outside threats.
3. We do however also submit that the state, being in the end answerable to God from whom it received its authority, must protect and uphold the dignity and rights of its people.
4. We therefore believe that to detain people, and at the same time deny them a first and fair trial, is a drastic inroad into the accepted principle that a person should lose his freedom only through the administration of justice.
5. Restrictive laws such as those providing for detentions, banning and imprisonments without trial are in our opinion forms of violence against the freedom of the individual and upon the dignity of man, and leads to counter-violence against the State imposing such laws.

The submission ended with a strong appeal:

1. That the internal security amendment bill of 1971 be amended or repealed insofar as it is offensive to the dignity of all persons in our country.
2. That all people who are detained under this law should be brought to trial by a Court of Law and convicted if found guilty, or be released immediately.

(Acta Fourth Synod RCA Durban: 128 - 9)

7.4 Ottawa: *Status Confessionis*

The differences in the DRC family spilled over into the international ecumenical arena.

The World Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting at Ottawa (1982) declared a ‘*status confessionis*’ in respect of apartheid. For the members of the DRC Family attending the meeting, it constituted a crisis. The *mother church* was in the dock – how would the *younger churches* react? The delegates from the DRCA and the DRMC agreed with the decision, to the point of refusing to celebrate communion with the *heretical* DRC. Rev Manikkam, who led the RCA delegation, joined ranks with them, much to the chagrin of his DRC colleagues. At home, the press had a field day: the DRC Family was being torn apart! Some RCA delegates to Ottawa returned home with the perception that the DRC was indeed a heretical church, guilty of classical heresy. They took the matter to its logical conclusion by severing ties with the DRC - without taking this serious, painful matter to Synod before they acted. The RCA acknowledged that the WARC *suspended* the membership of the DRC, but did not ‘excommunicate’ the DRC from the Alliance. They argued that the DRC did not stand accused of classical heresy; the action of the meeting was merely a ‘disciplinary measure’ to force the DRC to abstain from justifying apartheid theologically.

The RCA refrained from calling apartheid a ‘heresy’ (because of their understanding of heresy as the rejection or denial of the central and essential doctrines of the Bible e.g the inspiration of scriptures and the divinity of Christ, etc) but supported, Ottawa’s strong rejection of the theological justification and moral defence of apartheid.

Because it was fundamental to the recognition of a “*status confessionis*’ that apartheid was to be declared a heresy, the RCA Synod, meeting in Cape Town (1994) did not align itself with the Ottawa decision (RCA, Seventh Synod Cape Town 1994:200, 201).

7.5 Defining the Church’s theological identity: the Laudium Declaration

During these difficult times, the RCA was forced to re-evaluate its own theological identity.

Initially, long before the RCA was established, the missionary involvement among the Indians came from various sources. There were devoted believers from the

NGK – both old and young - who were called to reach out to the Indian people in South Africa, in their neighbourhood. They had a passion for missions. History tells us that it took them some time to realize that they had a mission field right upon their doorstep. Racial attitudes and the stumbling block of the English language and its negative connotations with the Anglo-Boer War were impediments. Negative political attitudes in connection with repatriation to India completed the picture.

In Natal the situation was even more negative. The sugar cane farmers needed the Indians' labour but nothing more. They were regarded as a labour force, not as a people of South Africa. Sharing the Gospel was by and large not in their thoughts.

Those that God stirred to care for them were deeply moved by their plight. Sharing the Gospel is not only the preaching of the Word but a deep and loving involvement with those less privileged. Out of this crucible God raised men and women who were prepared to give themselves for this ministry. The Reformed history of missions to the Indian people of South Africa was therefore not only a history of sharing the Gospel but also a willingness to share life with them.

This required great sacrifice. The story of the RCA is the story of steering between the Scylla of the sharing of the Gospel and the Charybdis of sharing a life. And this story was indeed a walk on a tight rope between the preaching of the Gospel and living the life, between sharing the faith and offering the life.

Looking back over the history of this church it becomes evident that the battle for the hearts of the Indian folk of South Africa was nothing less than an all-encompassing commitment to Christ and his love for the people He gave his life for. One could not share the Gospel without coming to grips with the need and the plight of the people. Apartheid in all its ramifications had to be addressed without losing the passion for the uppermost need of salvation in Christ Jesus. Here Mother Theresa and her involvement in India remains a shining example in our time of what God can do through a life totally committed to Christ and the people He died for. Some would argue that such commitment in South Africa and its political realities would hardly be feasible. It may just be that she relates to our situation in South Africa in an unprecedented manner. 'It is not by might nor by power but by my spirit saith the Lord' (Zach 4:6).

This battle, this crisis, was continuously experienced in the life of the RCA. There were those who, as the saying goes, were ‘so heavenly minded that they were of little earthly use, and others so earthly minded that they were of little heavenly use.’

The crisis in the church precipitated the birth of the Laudium Declaration that was tabled in October 1990 during the meeting of the 6th Synod in Laudium, Pretoria. The declaration was born from the resolution of the RCA in 1986 to maintain her stand as an Evangelical Reformed Church.

The initiative came from Rev Perold de Beer. Prior to the Synod he became aware of the importance of finding the proper niche and ministry of the RCA. He considered the fact that the RCA was a young church but also an evangelical church. People of other religions would not simply leave their religion for another religion. They had to discover who Christ was. This would entail not only preaching the Word but also living the life. De Beer spent some time reading the documents of the evangelical movement, such as the Manila Manifesto with its 21 affirmations, the Berlin Declaration of 1974 on ‘Freedom and fellowship in Christ’ and several other papers of the Evangelical Movement.

De Beer became aware that, on account of her missionary nature, the RCA was in essence evangelical, yet on account of church politics it had moved towards a more activist position and was gradually losing the fervour of those initial years when preaching the Word and living the life had pride of place. The unhappy political situation in South Africa had admittedly shifted the goal posts. During the Sixth Synod of the RCA that was held at Charisma, Laudium, the writer drafted the text of a declaration, and brought it to the meeting. Synod unanimously adopted the document, later to be known as the Laudium Declaration, for consideration by the congregations of the RCA and finalization by the Synodical Committee of the RCA. The Declaration was subsequently finalized, unchanged, by the Synodical Committee and adopted by Synod in 1994. The Laudium Declaration became the hallmark of the Reformed Church in Africa.

The Laudium Declaration pronounces the character of the RCA. It not only establishes the RCA as an evangelical church, but it also expresses the strong missionary character of this church. (Sukdaven, 1996:40).

It was during the early 1980's that the RCA came under tremendous pressure by what was seen by many to be political interference in church polity. Allegations of a liberal theology harboured by some from within its ranks were seen as an attack on the evangelical nature and ministry of the RCA. The intention of this declaration was to restate its position as a Reformed Evangelical church. (1996:35). It clearly defines the character of the RCA. It not only establishes the RCA as an Evangelical church, but it also expresses the strong missionary character of this church.

The text of the Laudium Declaration.

We affirm that the biblical Gospel is God's enduring message to our world, and we determine to defend, proclaim and embody it.

We affirm our commitment to the primacy of Evangelism, of the preaching of the Gospel to every creature. We affirm that Evangelism is not an option but an imperative.

We affirm that religions and ideologies are not alternative paths to God, and there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus.

We reject as derogatory to Christ and the Gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through other religions and ideologies. To proclaim Jesus as Saviour of the world is not to affirm that all men are either automatically or ultimately saved.

We affirm that the Holy Spirit's witness is indispensable to Evangelism and that without his supernatural work new birth and new life is not possible and all our endeavours fruitless.

We affirm that we who proclaim the Gospel must exemplify it in a life of holiness and love; otherwise our testimony loses its credibility.

We affirm the constant need for revival and determine to seek God's face constantly for revival in our own lives, in the life of the RCA, and in the church of South Africa at large.

We affirm that nothing commends the Gospel more eloquently than a transformed life and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We determine to live worthy of the Gospel of life.

We affirm that the congregation of believers should turn itself outward to its community in evangelistic witness and compassionate service.

We affirm that God has committed the whole Gospel to the whole world and to every member the task of making Christ known throughout the world. We long to see all lay and ordained persons mobilised and trained for the task. We determine to proclaim the Gospel faithfully, urgently, passionately and sacrificially, until He comes.

We affirm that we must demonstrate God's love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter. 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.

We affirm our God-given unity at the deepest level with all born-again blood-washed believers. We determine to foster such unity across all denominational barriers. In the immediate circle of our church we will foster structural unity with those who share the same confession provided that such structural unity will not stifle the evangelical witness of the Reformed Church in Africa.

We affirm that we who claim to be members of the Body of Christ must transcend within the church the barriers of race, gender and class. We affirm that racism within the church constitutes a denial of the Gospel and deterrent to evangelistic witness.

We affirm that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice, peace and holiness demands the denunciation of all injustice, oppression and immorality. We will not shrink from this prophetic witness.

We affirm the freedom in Christ of the church of Jesus Christ and refuse the alignment of the church to any ideology or current political trend, power or movement.

We affirm our solidarity with those who suffer for the Gospel and will seek to prepare ourselves for the same possibility.

We affirm the right of the believer to conscientious objection. In our demonstration and witness against evil we determine not to use carnal weapons but to act in the spirit of Christ and through spiritual warfare and constant prayer to enter into Christ's victory over the principalities and powers of evil.

7.6 Discontent in the ranks of the Church

According to Maniraj Sukdaven, the intention of the Laudium Declaration was to restate the RCA's position as a Reformed Evangelical Church. There was a reason for this. Over a period of time a crisis developed in the RCA, not only about its stance on socio-political matters but on the theology behind it. Paging through the minutes of the Synodical Committee covering the time prior to the adoption of the Laudium Declaration, one senses the deep tensions caused by these matters.

The differences of opinion came to a head in the debates on subsidies from the DRC and on dual membership of both the RCA and DRC, as well as on the ever present issue of racism. Gerrie Lubbe and Klippies Kritzinger, both senior ministers in the RCA, recounted their experiences of the time:

Prof Gerrie Lubbe in an article in *Missionalia*, argued that a real credibility crisis was facing his congregation. The haunting question was how long they could remain credible while accepting the Dutch Reformed Church's money, while severely criticizing the church in public. In November 1980 Lubbe's congregation decided to enter into a tent-making ministry (*Missionalia* Vol 14, 1986:37).

When questions were raised at the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1982 regarding the status of ministers serving in the two churches, Rev de Beer and two of his colleagues decided to relinquish their status in the Dutch Reformed Church. It became evident to them that it was untenable to hold the status of minister in both the DRC and the RCA (:39). The DRC, according to Lubbe, subsequently advised the RCA that since the DRC ministers had forfeited their status in the DRC they had also lost their status in the RCA since in the DRC's opinion the former served as foundation for the latter (:39).

According to Acta 1961 of the Dutch Reformed Church of Transvaal, the historic situation of the status of ministers in mission was as follows:

Histories het die Moederkerk deur sy geordende leraars eers plaaslik sendingwerk gedoen, en toe sendelinge opgelei en uitgestuur om binne en buite die grense van die Kerk die heidene te evangeliseer. Sulke sendingleraars is onderhou deur die Moederkerk en het altoos lidmate van die Moederkerk gebly en onder sy tug gestaan! Hierdie sendelinge is verbind aan die Dogterkerk deur beroeping, oefen regeermagte uit in daardie Kerk maar behou nogtans hulle lidmaatskap in die Moederkerk en staan onder die tug van die Moederkerk. Dit moet beskou word as 'n tydelike maatreël gebore uit die behoeftes van 'n oorgangstyd en bestem om weg te val wanneer die inheemse Kerk sy inheemse leraars ten volle kan voorsien, volkome self onderhoudend is en die leraars van die Moederkerk slegs nog in adviserende hoedanigheid benodig is, of glad nie! (DRC Acta 1961: 312).

It became practice in the RCA that ministers from the DRC who became ministers of the RCA enjoyed membership privileges in their former congregations. In fact it was unthinkable not to do so. The unfortunate tensions that developed in relation with the NGK in Transvaal resulted however from the unhappy political situation in the country. In this connection Lubbe writes as follows:

During 1980 with its school boycotts and related events we began to realize that in terms of socio-political understanding we were on a collision course with the Dutch Reformed Church. At the same time we became aware of a real credibility crisis facing us. The haunting question was for how long we

could remain credible while accepting the Dutch Reformed Church's money and yet severely criticizing them in public. The Dutch Reformed Church was informed that their money was no longer required (Missionalia: vol 14, 1986:37).

Prof Klippies Kritzinger writes in his paper *Becoming Aware of Racism in the Church: the story of a personal journey* (Annexure A: 439 - 483) that his soft racism did not have a hard religious superstructure to legitimize it (:237). He started teaching Sunday school in a poor part of Laudium (Pretoria) (:238). He states that it was the maligned narrow Pietist Theology of Missionary Christianity that got him there (:258). In 1974 he received a call to the Transvaal congregation of the Indian Reformed Church (:242). From 1979 to 1986 he was minister of the Charisma Congregation of the IRC in Laudium (:244). He writes how he became aware of the church as a racist institution (:250). In 1981 he decided to become a tentmaker minister to challenge the congregation to take more responsibility for its own affairs (:253). The events preceding and following the elections for the tri-cameral parliament in 1983 - 84 precipitated a serious crisis and were the direct cause of a schism in the RCA. The pastoral letter of the Transvaal Presbytery called on RCA members not to vote in the elections. To vote in these elections would be tantamount to supporting racism (:258). The RCA Synodical Committee then confronted the ministers with the following ultimatum: since the DRC did have funds available for full-time ministry they were compelled to be full-time ministers of their congregations (compare:258).

The motivation of the Synodical Committee at the time was to grant the local congregation full-time ministers in order that the work would expand. The earlier emphasis of missions to the un-evangelized that existed in the initial years of the IRC and later of the RCA was being revived. For this reason the Synodical Committee insisted that full-time ministry and commitment to missions should again have pride of place. Accepting funds from the DRC for missions was in line with the evangelical drive to reach Hindus and Muslims for Christ. The writer is quite positive that no minister in the RCA supported apartheid; however the missionary drive to reach Indian people for Christ was the heart of the ministry of the RCA. It is also significant that the evangelical drive in the RCA grew significantly in these later years. The Laudium Declaration clearly attests to this fact. I fully understand the views of Kritzinger, Lubbe and others that to conduct

missions via a separate or 'apartheid' Church is unacceptable. However I am of the opinion that we had – in spite of political problems - to use whatever opportunity was available to preach the Gospel to reach the Indian community with the message of Christ.

One should not forget the days of small beginnings, and must continue to fulfil our calling to reach Hindus and Muslims for Christ. The missionaries' calling should still take pride of place. To set the political order straight is critical, but the process could not be at the expense of the RCA's call to missions. This is true of missions in many countries of the world. In many instances mission is a forbidden practice because of the politics of those countries. This however has not stopped the church to continue mission against all odds. The position in South Africa with its apartheid policy, should never have been allowed to stifle the spreading of the Gospel. The establishment of the RCA is a token of the power of the Gospel in spite of 'apartheid'. We obviously agree with Kritzinger, Lubbe and others that the apartheid policy in all its ramifications is, from the Christian point of view, totally unacceptable and that the Church should in no way have aligned herself with such practices. But we also maintain that the mission had to continue in spite of all of these odds. The RCA did not want to allow herself to be drawn so deeply into the unacceptable political policies of South Africa that she lost sight of her real task – to bring people bound to sin into the glorious freedom of the Gospel.

Having said this we cannot underestimate the suffering of those who felt called to change the political situation to work for a more humane and just society. This is surely part of the law of God as Christ summarized it. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And a second is like it. And love your neighbour as yourself' (Mt 22:37, 38). I agree with Kritzinger that our relationship with people of other races should be reflecting the love of Christ; however, you may not compromise the Gospel by over-emphasizing the social needs of people.

What was disconcerting, however, was that Kritzinger seemed to be of the opinion that the socio-political situation in South Africa left little room for the evangelical emphasis. The evangelical character of the message was thus compromised by the socio-political issues of the time. The Laudium Declaration states clearly that

the heart of the matter is the evangelical understanding of the Gospel. The rejection of the apartheid position of the government should therefore not be used to stifle the evangelical message of the church. We had to continue to preach the Gospel, in spite of the socio-political situation in the country.

I further agree with Kritzinger that neutrality is tantamount to taking sides with the aggressor, but I understand a lack of love to be equal to the opposite of love. It can turn into resentment, and exaggeration, it can even become hatred. The work of the church often suffered because of this. When I returned to the RCA Charisma in Laudium after several years of ministry in Durban, I was dismayed to find the walls of the Sunday Schools classrooms cluttered with slogans levelled at the apartheid government, with many cuttings showing trigger happy people. In one of the RCA congregations in Chatsworth Durban, the buildings were used for political purposes. The result was that there were hardly any people left in the Church, and the Presbytery was called upon to restore order. This is not the love of Christ.

The Synodical Committee of the RCA had in the meantime to try and resolve the issue of the status of the ministers serving in the church. A major problem was that the ministers who relinquished their status did not officially inform the appropriate committee of the RCA of their intention to relinquish their status and forfeit all privileges in the NGK and consequently no arrangements were made by any committee of the RCA for their re-legitimation. They lost their status in the RCA by virtue of the withdrawal of the Certificate of Legitimation by the Ned. Geref. Kerk. This became effective from 15 June 1983.

In view of the fact that the RCA Church Order (By-laws and Regulations, 1.14.1) does provide for a person who has lost his status as minister of the Word, to request restoration from Synod, Gerrie Lubbe applied on 16 July 1986 for restoration of status – as tent-making minister. As in the case of Rev J N J Kritzinger, he was informed that because funds for a full-time minister were available, it would be in the interests of the congregation and in agreement with Synod's view on the tent-making ministry, that he should be involved in a full-time capacity in the congregation Lenasia.

Lubbe and Kritzinger, together with Rev Charles Roux however decided not to return to the full-time ministry, and informed the RCA of this. The three ministers published a statement to confirm their decision:

In view of the above, the Presbytery of Transvaal under whose jurisdiction we fall, discussed the matter at its recent meeting, and together with ourselves, resolved that, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, the NG Kerk should be informed that we the undersigned, no longer regard ourselves as ministers of the Word in the NG Kerk, since we are enjoying such status in the Reformed Church in Africa. We therefore now wish to inform you that we herewith resign our status as ministers in the NG Kerk, forfeit all privileges which may accompany same, and regard the matter as closed.

Yours sincerely,

C du P le Roux

2 Krantz Road, Dawnview, Germiston

G J A Lubbe

8 Piet Meyer Street, Mindalore, Krugersdorp

J N J Kritzinger

89 Karee Avenue, Proclamation Hill, Pretoria

Rev G Sooklingam, also from the Transvaal, applied at the time for retention of status. It was granted. The actions of these ministers left Rev Sooklingam in the lurch. According to Rev Moodley it was reported that he wanted to be part of the RCA. He was requested to apply to CTAM for restoration of status. The Synodical Committee arranged for the establishment of the new congregation of Transvaal in 1988, to be named RCA Shanti, with Rev S Sukdaven as minister (Minutes Synodical Committee 13/06/1987).

A further complication arose when, without any arrangement made with the RCA, Gerrie Lubbe approached the DRCA Presbytery for the incorporation of his RCA Congregation in Lenasia, now called Via Christi Community, into the DRCA. He requested status as minister of the DRCA. The Synodical Committee took note with dismay, that the brother was licensed by the DRCA without concern for the RCA's legitimate objections regarding procedure. The NGSK furthermore did not take the trouble to reply to the various points raised in a letter from the RCA (05/11/1993), in spite of the fact that the RCA warned that an insensitive

handling of the matter could lead to the straining of relationships and unity endeavour. The RCA Synodical Committee decided accordingly to suspend all unity talks with the NGSK, and the future URCSA, until the matter had been rectified and to inform the other participating churches accordingly. (Minutes RCA Synodical Committee 11/12/1993:181 - 6)

At a meeting at Belhar between the RCA Moderamen and the URCSA Executive on 8 November 1994, Rev Appollis explained that they had requested Dr G J A Lubbe to sort out his differences with the RCA. The RCA expressed their dismay that they 'never heard a word from him.' Rev Sam Buti of the URCSA remarked that the RCA were using this as an obstacle to avoid unity: 'You're waiting for big mama,' he said. (:183:8). Rev Moodley took serious exception to the remark. Buti explained that he did not intend to insult, but that church unity was the primary issue, and should not be jeopardised. URCSA suggested that the problem could be solved through working towards church unity. The RCA pointed out that one of the main ingredients of unity was love - and mutual respect. URCSA promised to consult with the former clerk in order to redress the situation in terms of Lubbe's reconciliation with the RCA. The issue of the RCA property in Lenasia would be taken up with the local URCSA Presbytery.

As for the position of Rev J N J (Klippiess) Kritzinger, the Synodical Committee on 13 December 1986 pleaded with Rev Kritzinger to return to the full-time ministry as originally requested by the RCA Jeshurun Church Council and later by Synod itself. The meeting pointed out that Rev Kritzinger was at no time given the mandate to arrange the calling of any other minister.

Rev Kritzinger explained that it was his desire to bring the congregation back to normal by providing a full-time minister on the one hand, and by staying on in the tent-making capacity on the other hand. His whole intention was to keep the church together. He could not enter into the full-time ministry, because his conscience would not allow him to take NGK money. The recent decisions of the General Synod did not impress him. He felt that the DRC was still practising apartheid, and he would stand by the decisions of Ottawa until he saw the fruit of repentance on the part of the NGK. He maintained that some members of Charisma knew that he would not be able to choose the full-time ministry, and

therefore insisted upon it in order to oust him from the congregation and thus put the blame upon him. (Minutes Synodical Committee 13.12.1986:143:1, 2)

Kritzinger felt he was willing to compromise in allowing the congregation to accept NGK money for another minister. He was not prepared to enter the full-time ministry himself. The Committee suggested that they issue the deed of ordination to him and then give him six months to arrange to come into full-time work. He insisted that no further time allowed would change his determination not to enter full-time service. In conclusion, it was pointed out to Rev Kritzinger that he had lost his status and should he intend to return to the service of the church, he would have to apply to CTAM. At this point he should tell Charisma that his calling was teaching in the Faculty of Theology at UNISA.

CHAPTER EIGHT - THE RCA ON ITS WAY TO THE FUTURE

On its way into the future, the RCA will have to face many challenges and opportunities. Among the many issues the RCA will have to contend with, the following take pride of place. The following information are from official documents of the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein (2006).

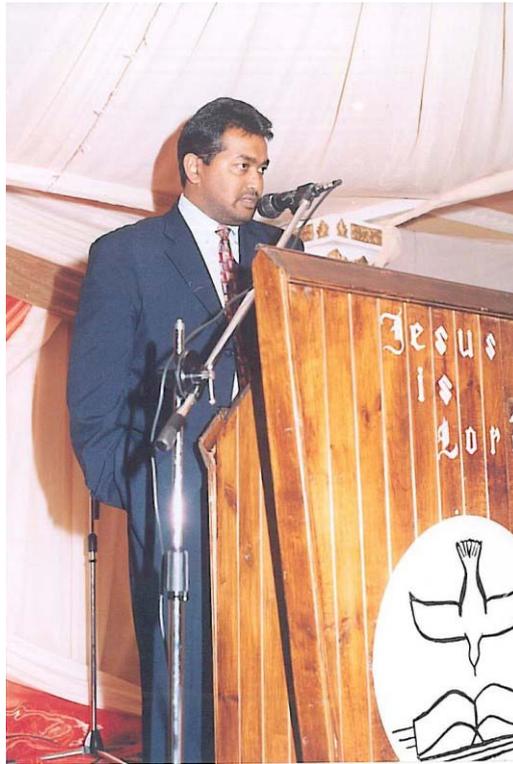
8.1 Empowering the Local Churches: Training Clergy and Laity

The official work among the Indian People began through the missionary outreach of ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. In some of the areas the work was begun by lay members who felt a burden to share the Gospel with their Indian neighbours.

The leaders soon realized that the efforts of white ministers would not succeed without the involvement and testimony of Indian workers. Both white and Indian ministers and evangelists required special training. Quite apart from the basic theological training a further requirement had to be met as far as the white ministers were concerned. They had to understand the culture and religion of the Indians - Hindus as well as Muslims. They had to learn what Paul meant when he wrote: 'I became all things to all men that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible' (1 Cor 9:22b).

The training of Indian ministers was originally provided by the University of Durban Westville. This training, however, had to be aborted on account of a policy of integrated training which included Hindus, Muslims as well as followers of other religions.

Finding another theological faculty was the only way forward for the training of RCA students. The University of Bloemfontein, situated in the centre of the country, became the obvious choice. Here students of the DRC family were already receiving their theological training. The RCA also obtained a chair to which Rev Maniraj Sukdaven was appointed.



Rev Maniraj Sukdaven, current lecturer of the RCA at the Theological Seminary in Bloemfontein (OFS)

8.1.1. The relationship between the faculty and the RCA

- The Faculty of Theology of the Free State University is an institution of higher learning, focusing on research and training in theology and striving to serve the community. A core function of the Faculty of Theology is to train theological students for the ministry in different churches. Although the faculty is open for the training of students of different denominations and strives to enhance this ecumenical character, there are close historical ties with the Dutch Reformed Family of Churches. The Faculty aims at maintaining and even deepening its reformed and evangelical character.
- The Reformed Church in Africa is a reformed and evangelical church. The confessional basis of the Reformed Church in Africa consists of the three ecumenical creeds (Apostolic Creed, and the creeds of Nicea and Athanasius) and the Formularies of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the

Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt). The identity of the Reformed Church in Africa as an evangelical and mission church is expressed in the Laudium Declaration (1990).

- The Reformed Church in Africa and the Faculty of Theology recognise each other's independence and unique calling.
- Within the framework of the regulations and abilities of the Faculty of Theology and in close co-operation with the Reformed Church in Africa, the Faculty of Theology provides academic training to theological students of the Reformed Church in Africa, with the aim of preparing them for the ministry in and of the Reformed Church in Africa. The Reformed Church in Africa utilizes the Faculty of Theology of the Free State University as preferred institute of training of their theological students preparing for the ministry.
- As partnering church, participating in theological students' training, the Reformed Church in Africa would like to participate in and have access to the process of the development of modules and programmes regarding the training of its students.

8.1.2 The requirements for entering the ministry in the RCA

The RCA Synod of 2006 took the following resolutions:-

- The RCA requires a BTh degree (four years) or a similar qualification (for instance a five-year part-time BTh) plus one year of practical training. The four years of academic training must include Greek, (one year) Hebrew (one year) and all six majors in theology on a third-year level. The Faculty takes note of the fact that the RCA has a specific ministry among the Indian People of South Africa.

Historically the RCA grew out of a ministry focusing mainly on Indian societies. The RCA gratefully accepts and cherishes this historical reality of an Indian cultural origin and identity, but it also seeks to reach out to people of other cultures and races. A multicultural and multiracial

identity – reconciled in Christ – is a growing reality and enthusiastically embraced by the RCA. The RCA is uniquely positioned to reach out, with integrity and authority to Muslim and Hindu communities. The RCA however accepts the challenge to reach out to people of all other Southern African faiths.

The RCA is reformed but also has an evangelical character in style of worship. The RCA is however not a typically charismatic church.

The RCA is a mission church, consistently striving to witness to the salvation in Christ and His Lordship. This is done through proclamation, service, communion and worship.

- The Faculty endorses the unique identity of the RCA as expressed in the Laudium Declaration which emphasises the following:
 - The Biblical Gospel about Jesus Christ as the only Saviour
 - The Holy Spirit's witness in the church, bringing revival and new life.
 - The church's evangelistic call to witness and compassionate service.
 - The God-given unity of the church as the one body of Christ transcending all barriers of race, gender and class.
 - The call to prophetic witness, proclaiming God's Kingdom of justice, peace and holiness.

8.1.3 Profile of an RCA minister:

- RCA ministers must know the Lord, be spiritually mature and steadfast in prayer and in obedience to scripture.
- RCA ministers must have a clear calling to the ministry.
- RCA ministers must be able to proclaim the gospel and serve others with humility, adaptability, joy, perseverance, self sacrifice, diligence and in a professional way.
- RCA ministers must be able to maintain very good relationships with people.
- RCA ministers should live exemplary lives in all facets of their personal, family and public life.

- RCA ministers must have teachable spirits, be able to listen and to discern God's will.
- RCA ministers must continuously equip themselves for their calling.

8.1.4. Further training

The theological faculty brings students and RCA ministers together from time to time for discussions relating to further training. These meetings are designed not only to support the students in their ministry to the laity, but also to discuss the continued training of pastors in the RCA – as well as the in-service training of lay leaders in the congregations. In recent years meetings have been held in Durban for all ministers of the RCA, each minister being accompanied by an elder. It is clear that much thought needs to be given to this issue – especially the need for lay training - in years to come.

8.2 Retaining the RCA's missionary élan

The RCA was born of the missionary enthusiasm of members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Living in a world where the RCA is daily confronted with Hinduism and Islam the church's very existence is under severe pressure. The negative side of this reality is that believers are confronted daily with family and friends who do not share their faith. The positive side is that suffering is indeed the seed of the church.

Born-again believers would seldom consider turning back. However, second and third generation believers are faced with the challenge of remaining faithful, often without their parents' commitment. Most of the RCA congregations attend to their young believers, strengthening their faith through teaching, admonishing and encouraging them to be faithful witnesses of the Gospel in their own right. The Sunday school and Youth Movement play a critical role in this respect. Regular youth camps are arranged in most of the congregations.

Opportunities to reach out into the Hindu and Muslim community strengthen the faith of the believers. Most congregations are involved with outreach and provide training for this purpose. Participation in outreach campaigns

enhances their spiritual growth. Many young people have found Christ at these meetings.

In some congregations members of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church as well as the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa assisted the Reformed Church in Africa in escaping from her Indian mould and serve the wider community. Members of the RCA are beginning to play an important role in the ecumenical field.

Sukdaven in his thesis titled 'Inclusive of Exclusive?' 'A Missiological Analysis of Congregations of the Reformed Church in Africa,' makes an earnest plea to the RCA to adopt a more comprehensive vision of their task, reaching out to people from other population groups. The RCA has a unique opportunity, Sukdaven maintains, to minister to one of the most marginalized communities in South Africa, the people living in informal settlements and in squatter camps in the country. Several congregations are already doing this. In recent interviews with ministers and members of the RCA, all pleaded for official involvement with outreach to non-Indian people living in the vicinity.

8.3 Developing the RCA's theological basis

The RCA inherited the theological basis of the Dutch Reformed Church when she was founded on 27 August 1968 in Pietermaritzburg, as the fourteenth younger church within the DRC family (Pypers: 2). The adoption of the Laudium Declaration placed her irrevocably on the road of Evangelical Reformed Theology.

Being a committed Evangelical Reformed church, the RCA has a definite contribution to make within the DRC family. In the unity discussions, where the URCSA strongly advocates the acceptance of the Belhar Confession – a confession which underlines the deepest convictions of the URCSA on the Biblical imperatives of unity, justice and reconciliation - the RCA in turn is called to uphold the evangelical truths encapsulated in the Laudium declaration.

The RCA finds herself in a world of many religions, particularly, Hinduism and Islam. In future witnessing among African traditionalists will hopefully also be on the agenda. To share the good news with them from a deep Christian conviction but also with a profound understanding of the world where these people come from, as well as a deep respect for their religious convictions, the RCA needs her clearest minds and most committed hearts. From her dialogue with people from other faiths, her own theological basis needs to be informed and strengthened.

Not only theologians and ministers are called to play their part. Ordinary members of the RCA have a great deal to contribute. Some of them have suffered persecution and ostracism in many ways, and have come to discover the true meaning of 'marturia,' of explaining and demonstrating their faith in everyday life, among the many peoples of South Africa.

8.4 Serving the unification process in the DRC Family

The RCA, being the smallest member of the DRC family has been in a position to move relatively fast towards church union. At the different unity talks held over the past 10 years, (2000 – 2010) the RCA took her place at the table. There were some concerns in this regard. Some feared that, as a result of such union, the RCA would simply disappear into the large future church. Others were concerned that the RCA would lose her reformed evangelical basis, or that the church's missionary zeal might be dampened. Fortunately, however, there were also those who felt that church union was long overdue and that union with any willing partner or partners of the family should be sought.

The process of reuniting the four churches, the DRC, RCA, URCSA and the DRCA, is a long and quite arduous one. At one stage, in 2009, the URCSA called upon the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to mediate in the process. Many obstacles – not only of a theological but especially of a non-theological nature – still have to be addressed. The RCA is however committed to the process, and is willing to contribute as much as she can in bringing the churches together.

8.5 Strengthening ecumenical ties locally and internationally

8.5.1. Local ties

In every area where the RCA laboured ties existed between the various churches. Most of the ministers of the RCA congregations became participants in the existing ecumenical gatherings, usually once a month. The well-known Pastor J F Rowlands of the Bethesda Full Gospel Church became a role model to many. He encouraged churches among the Indians to put aside their differences and work together for the expansion of God's Kingdom. He taught his congregation to take hands with other Christians who laboured among the Indian people in the same field. His Bethesda Church is the largest Protestant denomination among the Indian people of South Africa. He taught his people to bless other churches and never to be guilty of 'sheep stealing'. In many areas the Roman Catholic churches also participated in these ecumenical prayer meetings.

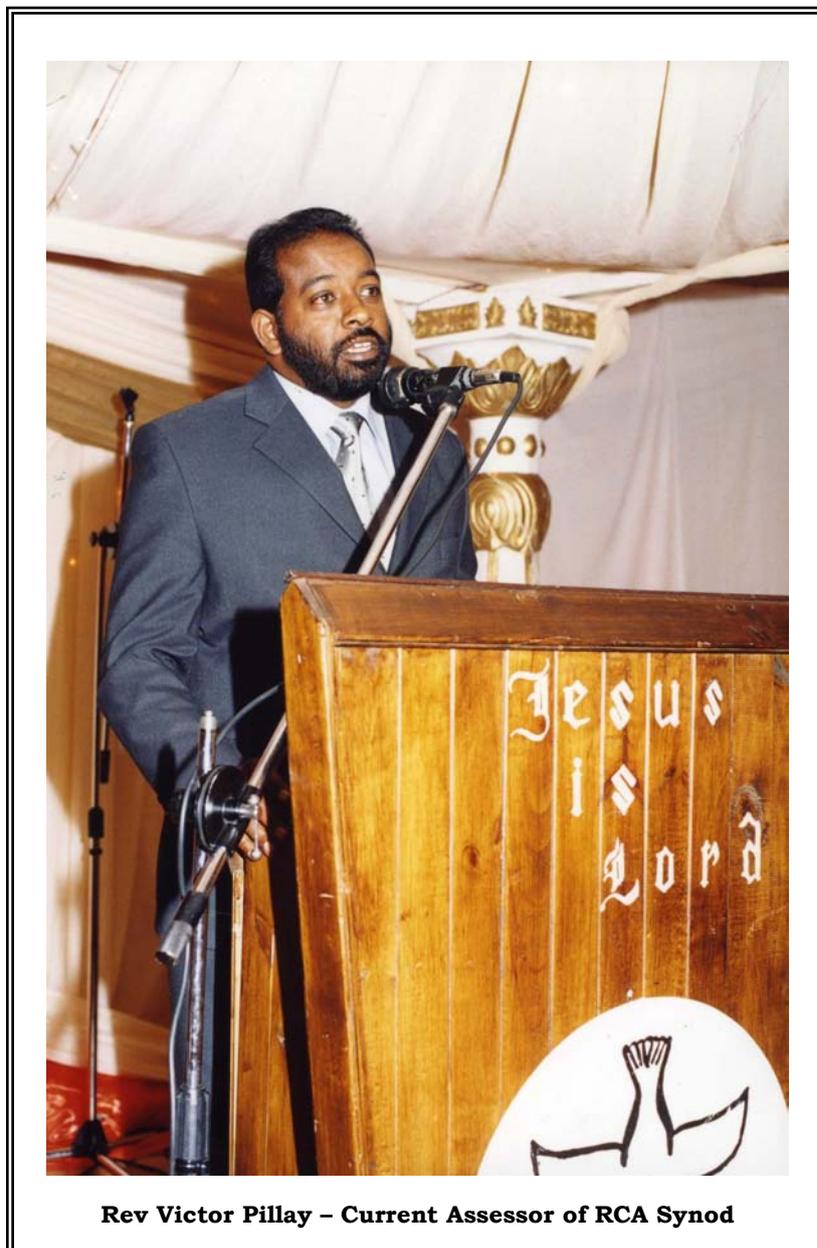
These ecumenical ties resulted in a relationship of love, respect and support of one another. In some areas, when an outreach campaign was arranged all participating churches and ministers would work together. New converts were referred to the various churches. In the Indian field we learnt that intolerance of other churches or missions cancelled the message of God's grace and love. To merely tolerate others would, however, still be a rather negative attitude towards them (Newman, :6). Tolerance means accepting, enduring, putting up with. Genuine *agape* love is required. The RCA will have to continue on this road, the way of *koinonia*, with vigour and enthusiasm.

8.5.2. Ecumenical contacts with the Reformed Church Family worldwide. (The following sentiments reflect the stand point of the RCA at present).

The RCA enjoys an official ecumenical relationship with the Reformed Church of Japan. The writer was privileged to chair the Mission Japan Board over a period of several years. At present Rev Victor Pillay is the chairman. Rev Tobie de Wet, formerly minister of the Port Elizabeth RCA congregation, has recently accepted a call as a missionary to Japan. Official ties have existed

between the Reformed Church of Japan, the RCA and the NGK since October 1998 when the Synod of the RCA decided to enter into a partnership with the RCJ. Upon the occasion of our visit to Japan we had the privilege to present the Church in Japan with a framed copy of the Laudium Declaration.

The RCA, furthermore, maintains strong ties with the two world bodies that represent Reformed Christians across six continents, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Being part of these bodies has enriched the RCA in a myriad of ways – and the hope must be expressed that once the WARC and the REC merge in June 2010, the process will continue.



Being one of the smallest member churches of both bodies, the RCSA was invited to play an important role in the WARC as well as the REC. In an interview on 17 August 2009, Rev Victor Pillay the present assessor of the RCA and minister in Laudium, Pretoria, commented on the involvement of the RCA. Because of his deep involvement over many years, proper note needs to be taken of his experiences.

Rev Pillay's first taste of the ecumenical life of the church came when he was attending a Youth Conference of the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC) on behalf of the Reformed Church in Africa in Botswana. At this meeting in 1994 with Rev Jim Lont of the Youth Desk REC, Rev Victor Pillay and Dr Nobin Shunmugam representing the RCA, all the REC members from the Reformed Churches in Southern Africa were present. The discussions centred on Africa being marginalized by the world regarding its needs and problems. This conference was taking place even while faction fighting and civil war were being waged between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi. A leader from within one of these countries commented that there were no more devils in hell, because they were all in Rwanda and Burundi. At this conference it was clear that the focus of the world would rather be Singapore, Hongkong, Jakarta, Delhi, Korea, China and other countries of the Far East that were of economic benefit to the first world, and the wealthy countries of the world. The only people coming to Africa were khaki-clad social workers. Yet Africans were desperate for assistance with development, education, the economy, job creation, poverty alleviation, agricultural training and political leadership. Conditions that caused Africa to remain a DARK continent needed to be addressed.

This conference endeavoured from a deep sense of soul searching to find answers to these questions. There was a special emphasis on what the church could do. The conclusion was that Africa could no longer depend on aid and assistance from abroad but had to look to its own leaders and the resources of the church to build its own infra-structure for development. Many of us in Africa were convinced that this was the way forward after much discussion and deliberation on these pertinent issues. Many of the young leaders were inspired to go back to their countries and make that difference.

In 2000 Rev Pillay was joined by his colleague Rev Bennett Shunmugam, also from the RCA, to participate in the meeting of the REC General Assembly at Yogyakarta in Indonesia. The assembly was arranged in this city and away from the capital city of Jakarta due to the tensions that existed between the Muslims and Christians. The theme of the assembly was *'Making All Things New'*. This assembly aimed at addressing the question of how churches could develop this theme in spiritual and practical renewals in the countries and people they served. The delegates found the papers presented and the discussions extremely stimulating, encouraging and thought provoking; and a great source of information. The interaction with Reformed Christians from throughout the world was an enlightening experience. Rev Pillay joined a group of youth delegates to spend one day in one of the rural mountainous regions to join in building an irrigation system. Working with and among the farmers was a rewarding experience.

An interesting exposure was to hear at first hand from students of the Molluccan Islands of their persecution as Christians at the hands of Muslims. Many of the delegates could identify with their suffering, pain, loss of lives, poverty and the extremely difficult lives they had to live every day. The assembly prayed for the students and assured them of their support in endeavouring to take up these issues with the Local Reformed churches and the authorities concerned. The Reformed Churches in Indonesia also assured them of their support in practical ways. The assembly provided a platform for people to articulate how *'Making All Things New'* could be achieved through the church. The RCA delegates left the meeting challenged.

During the assembly a special meeting was called to discuss the dissolving of the Federal Council of Churches of the DRC family in Africa, as had been proposed by the South African churches. This could not be done because the meeting was not a duly constituted Federal Council meeting. There was also an appeal to continue with the Federal Council from churches outside South Africa. Dr Willie Botha, the Ecumenical Officer of the DRC, was tasked with pursuing this matter subsequent to the Assembly. However not much could be done due to costs and logistical difficulties.

The next General Assembly of the REC took place in Utrecht, in the Netherlands. The theme here was 'I Will Be With You Always'. Rev Victor Pillay was elected to the Executive Committee of the REC as the First Clerk. Rev Maniraj Sukdaven attended as the RCA's youth delegate. At this assembly the churches of the DRC African family again met to discuss the status of the Federal Council. It was decided to reconstitute this body in a form that would be acceptable to all the churches in the DRC family in Africa. Dr Kobus Gerber was tasked to drive this process.

Rev Pillay's position on the Executive Committee exposed him to the views and activities of many churches in the Reformed family in many parts of the world. In 2006 Rev Pillay and the General Secretary Dr Richard van Houten hosted a conference in Nigeria for all the Nigerian Reformed churches that were members of the REC. This was done to accommodate the many Nigerian church leaders who could not acquire a visa for entry into the Netherlands for the General Assembly. At this conference, the proceedings of the General Assembly were discussed over some days.

In 2007 the Executive Committee of the REC met in South Africa. Rev Pillay together with Dr Winston Kawale visited the Reformed Church in Botswana. This visit not only brought wonderful opportunities to meet the many leaders of this church, but also extended to community and church projects. Both REC members preached at different churches. The delegation was well received. Our challenge was to understand the financial predicament that this church suffered after gaining virtual independence from the DRC in South Africa.

In 2008 the Executive Committee met in Jakarta, Indonesia. Rev Pillay was privileged to preach in a large church in Jakarta and to visit the two Reformed Churches in Toraja Mamasa and Toraja Rantepau on the Island of Sulawesi. These Toraja churches were in the remote mountainous regions. The opportunity to travel, to visit congregations and experience many church projects was interesting and encouraging. It was a blessing to see the extent of the Lord's work and ministry in these regions despite the extreme poverty and limited resources. Rev Pillay's exposure to these situations certainly enhanced his ability to relate to these churches from his RCA experience.

In 2008 the REC Executive met in Utrecht. Rev Pillay was tasked to visit the Evangelical Church in France. It was wonderful to experience the church in a European context. Most of these congregations are in the South of France. The visit entailed meeting with leaders and church ministers. The evangelical ethos of the RCA enabled Rev Pillay to identify with and relate to this church.

At the General Assembly in Utrecht, a decision was taken for the REC to unite with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). The decision was that the REC would request to be an entity within the WARC, so as to maintain its identity, close fellowship and somewhat evangelical ethos. Two committees of four representatives from each of the REC and WARC met in Grand Rapids to discuss this matter. It was proposed that both these Reformed ecumenical bodies dissolve and form a new entity. There were many meetings and discussions between both organisations on this process. Eventually the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) was chosen as the appropriate name for the new Reformed world ecumenical body.

Rev Pillay was invited to serve on this committee for unity, where he experienced great co-operation, understanding, mutuality and a willingness to be led by the Holy Spirit. The dissolution of the present bodies and the forming of the WCRC will take place in June 2010 in Grand Rapids Michigan, USA. The Theme for this Uniting General Council will be 'The Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace'.

Rev Pillay found it difficult to believe that he, being from a relatively small church, could be elected into office in the REC. However, the contributions of Rev Pillay at these World Reformed meetings and organisations were certainly informed by his evangelical experience and life in the RCA. His familiarity with the problems of his church was always evident in his contribution to these ecumenical interactions. He insisted that the evangelical ethos of the RCA as articulated in the Laudium declaration was the guiding principle for all its ecumenical engagements. The RCA is grateful that Rev Pillay is still serving in this capacity, and as a son of the RCA, may continue to represent the church at the World Reformed Ecumenical meetings and conferences.

The involvement of the RCA in these bodies has been one of learning and of contributing. The RCA benefits from these ecumenical bodies and has always been enriched by the contributions of members. Although the RCA is one of the smaller churches in South Africa her contribution at the meetings has always been respected. We often hear the comment that our voice, though small, is heard clearly and received positively. The RCA values this relationship.

8.6 Who is equal to such a task?

In the course of the thesis we have journeyed with the RCA on her way over the years, through the past and the present – trying to understand the challenges on the road ahead. Paul’s famous message to the congregation in Corinth, two thousand years ago, may serve as an encouragement and a guide to us, on our journey into the future:

Thanks be to God who always leads us in a triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death, to the other, the fragrance of life. And who are equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God... For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake... We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Cor 2:14ff, 4: 5ff).



**Demission of Rev Perold and Marietha de Beer (April 2004)
Together with the Church Council of Charisma and their wives**

CHAPTER NINE - CONCLUSION

9.1. Introduction: Who despises the day of small things?

This, then, is the story of the Reformed Church in Africa, a small church and a relatively newcomer on the ecumenical scene in South Africa. In comparison to the other churches in the country, the main line churches with their long and proud histories, and the huge African Indigenous Churches with their following of millions, the contribution of the RCA may seem to be humble and rather insignificant. But then, in the words of the prophet Zechariah at the consecration of the new temple in Jerusalem, when many of the older Jews were disheartened when they realized that the new building would never match the size and the splendor of the previous temple built during King Solomon's reign, "Who despises the day of small things?" (Zech 4:10).

It indeed behoves us, looking back at the history of the RCA, and in evaluating the ministry of the church over the past decades, to thank the Lord for his grace and mercy to the faithful in the church - the pioneers, the pastors and evangelists, and above all the lay members of the RCA - by calling them, guiding them, and sustaining them through the years. Errors were made. Serious challenges still await the church. But the Lord God in his grace did not despise this day of small things.

9.2. Hypothesis and research aims

The *hypothesis* of the research, as described in the Introduction to the thesis, seems to be proven correct:

A small and relatively young church, like the Reformed Church in Africa, can play a significant role in the wider community by witnessing to the love of Christ in word and deed, in every context and in every community that the church is sent to. In order to do this the church needs to know and understand its own history and needs to be willing to learn from its own experience.

The *threefold research goals*, (1) to record the history of the RCA in South Africa, (2) to evaluate the missionary contribution of the church, and (3) to draw lessons from the past, to guide the church into the future, were achieved.

9.3. Recording the history of the RCA

In recording the history of the RCA the thesis reached back, far into history, to record the bringing of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Indian subcontinent, from where, in the late 19th century Indian immigrants travelled to South Africa (*Chapter Two*). Pandita Nehru once said that “the history of the Christian Church in India is as old as Christianity itself” (Potts, 1967:3), therefore mention is made of the traditional mission of the apostle Thomas in the first century A D, and the coming of the Syrian Christians (4th century) as well as the Nestorians (7th to 9th centuries) to India. After Vasco da Gama’s discovery of the sea route to India (end of the 15th century), a new missionary chapter came to be written by Roman Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries. South African, and Dutch Reformed, interest in India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) reaches back for more than two hundred years, from the arrival of M C Vos as missionary to Ceylon (1804), to the revival of South African missionary interest in India and Ceylon during the Anglo-Boer War (1899 – 1902) which lead to a continuous relationship between the DRC and the Dutch Reformed Church in Ceylon over the past century.

Chapter Three was devoted to the arrival of the Indian immigrants in South Africa, from 1860 - 1911, with particular reference to their religious affiliations and customs.

The experiences of the two groups of Indians, the contract laborers as well as the ‘passenger Indians’, were described, taking due note of the socio-political problems that they faced. With the help of statistics gleaned from many sources, the religious affiliation of the Indian community was discussed, together with information about the challenges that both the Hindu and the Muslim communities had to contend with.

In *Chapter Four* the story of the first efforts to share the Gospel of Christ with Hindus and Muslims in South Africa was told. The Roman Catholic Church was first to arrive on the scene (1852), followed by Methodists (1861), Anglicans (1865), Lutherans (1896), and Baptists (1900). The DRC's involvement with mission among Muslims, from the time of the early Dutch settlers in the Cape to present times, as well as the fledgling DRC mission among the Hindus in South Africa was described at some length.

Chapter Five had to do with the planting of the Indian Reformed Church – later to be called the Reformed Church in Africa – in South Africa, a church that was founded 'between the Hindu Temple and the Muslim Mosque'. The efforts of the first pioneers were researched, of men and women coming from the ranks of the DRC who had reached out to the Indian community, confident that the Lord had called them to be his witnesses. The IRC was the youngest of the so-called daughter churches within the DRC Family, and the relationship between the 'mother' and 'daughter' was not always easy to define. The first decisions that the IRC had to take in terms of its ministry, the training of pastors and evangelists, the outreach programs, preaching and teaching, etcetera, are discussed.

9.4. Evaluating the missionary contribution of the IRC/RCA

At this stage of the thesis, alongside with the historical narrative, the question needed to be asked: How should the events be evaluated in terms of their missionary contributions? Missiologically speaking, as a church planting exercise, did the young church rise to the expectations? Half way through *Chapter Five* a preliminary answer was formulated. Accepting the widely accepted definition of mission in terms of *kerugma*, *diakonia*, *koinonia* and *leitourgia*, the work done in the IRC, the varied ministries, were discussed and weighed.

In *Chapter Six* a new, more adult, phase in the life of the church is described. The IRC had grown into the Reformed Church in Africa. Keeping pace with new historical developments, the missiological focus is clear. A number of crucial issues in the life of the RCA appeared on the scene: The relationship between the 'mother church' and the 'daughter' became more

complex. The RCA had to grow from a receiver to a spreader of the gospel. Again, the manifold ministries of the RCA needed to be evaluated in terms of *kerugma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*. Other issues that were discussed included the ministry of deliverance, the development of a Church Order, as well as the often vexing problem of financial dependence.

9.5 Lessons from the past, for the present and for the future

In the final section of the thesis the lessons from the past that may be drawn for today and tomorrow were analyzed (*Chapter Seven*). Firstly, the difficulties of having had to live in Apartheid South Africa, and the impact that this had for present and future relationships were on the table. From the crucible of strained relations in the DRC Family the RCA rediscovered its theological identity, as an *evangelical* church with a passion for the spreading of the gospel. The acceptance of the RCA's Laudium Declaration (1990) confirmed its theological position, but, sadly, also caused some discontent within the ranks of the RCA.

In the final chapter (*Chapter Eight*) the many challenges and opportunities awaiting the RCA on its way into the future were highlighted: The local churches need to be empowered by the training of both clergy and laity. The invitation of the DRC's Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State (Bloemfontein) opened new possibilities in this regard. The missionary élan of the RCA must be retained, albeit that the RCA urgently needs to break out of its narrow 'Indian' mould, reaching out to the wider South African community. The theological basis of the RCA needs to be strengthened. In the past years the RCA has developed and maintained ecumenical relationship within South Africa as well as in the wider Reformed family. In spite of being a very junior member within the ecumenical family, the RCA has been invited to fulfill a leadership role in the coming merger between the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (2010). These ties, in future, will have to be carefully nurtured and maintained.

The RCA is still a relatively small community, with a chequered history of success as well as failure, of leaps of faith as well as errors committed in the

past. But the RCA is willing to continue to accept its Master's command, to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you". The RCA reaches forward not in its own power or strength or wisdom, but with the promise of the Lord written in its heart: "And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt 28:19f, NIV).

9.6 Recommendations

Flowing from the research, the researcher, humbly, offers a number of recommendations to the South African theological and ecumenical community.

9.6.1 To the address of the RCA

- The RCA should at all costs remain true to its evangelical credo, as embodied in the Laudium Declaration. In the discussions with the DRC Family on church unity, the RCA should put the Laudium Declaration forward with joy, as a gift to the family of churches, taking care that in the process of reunification the principles of the Laudium Declaration are not compromised or eroded.
- Radical conversion to Christ and his Word should continue to take centre stage in the life of the RCA. The RCA, placed among Hindus, Muslims, ancestral believers and secularists, should exemplify a life of radical commitment to Christ, of holy living, failing which, its testimony would be of no value.
- The RCA needs to do everything in its power to motivate and guide its members on their way of accepting financial responsibility for the work of the church. A culture of sacrificial giving needs to be developed in the church.

9.6.2 To the address of the DRC family

- The RCA is fully committed to the reunification process, and more than willing to play its part in this regard. Nevertheless the RCA appeals to its partners in the process for due consideration of the RCA's theological convictions.
- In order to accommodate the RCA's evangelical credo as well as its unique spirituality, born and developed in the life of the church within the context of the Indian community, it may be necessary to create an entity such as a presbytery or a regional synod, within the uniting church.

9.6.3 On the issue of theological training in South Africa

- Theological training touches the heart of the church, and has a direct impact on the everyday life and ministry of the church. The RCA is very grateful to the Faculty of Theology at the University of the Free State, for the invitation to join the Faculty, and to appoint a lecturer from the ranks of the RCA, to teach at the Faculty. Strengthening its relations with the two other DRC faculties, at Pretoria and Stellenbosch, especially with regard to post graduate training, should receive careful consideration.
- The theological curriculum needs constant review to ensure that students receive the best possible preparation for their ministries, as well as to serve the wider church in understanding and executing its role in South Africa. In the curriculum special courses or modules need to be developed to cover, *inter alia*, the following subjects:

Demonology, which is an important systematic theological as well as pastoral concern, not only in Indian congregations, but in a growing number of other churches from European as well as African origins.

Ancestral veneration, which is an ever-present concern within the African Christian community. The more the RCA reaches out to the Black communities in the country, the more its' students and pastors will need guidance in this regard.

African Theology, to counter-balance the strong emphasis on Western theological traditions, which in the past and the present left its imprint on theological training. A concerted effort to train theological students within the African context must be made, to develop a dynamic Reformed Theology for Africa, responding to the needs and the issues of churches on our continent.

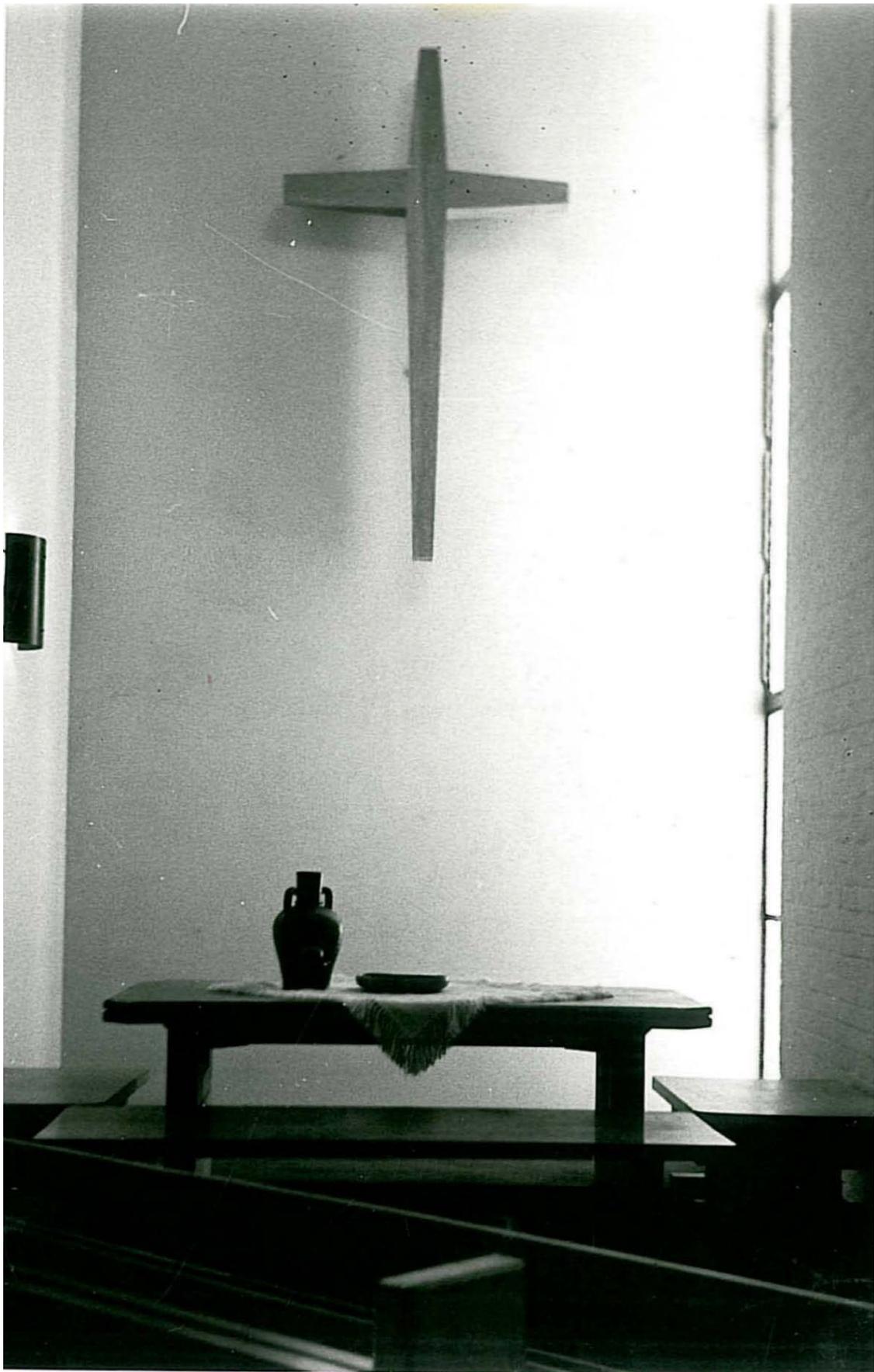
The *Confession of Belhar* needs careful study and consideration. Students from the RCA, the DRC and the DRCA should join their colleagues in the URCSA, in analyzing and evaluating this important document. The same applies to the *Laudium Declaration*, which offers valuable evangelical guidelines for the church and its ministers. Both documents, flowing from the heart of the two churches, merit careful attention within the theological curricula of all *three* Faculties of Theology of the DRC in South Africa.

Then Jesus came to them and said;

“All Authority in heaven and on earth
has been given to me.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything
I have commanded you
And surely I will be with you always,
to the very end of the age.”

(Math 28:18 NIV)



Communion Table, Charisma, Laudium

ANNEXURE A - BECOMING AWARE OF RACISM IN THE CHURCH

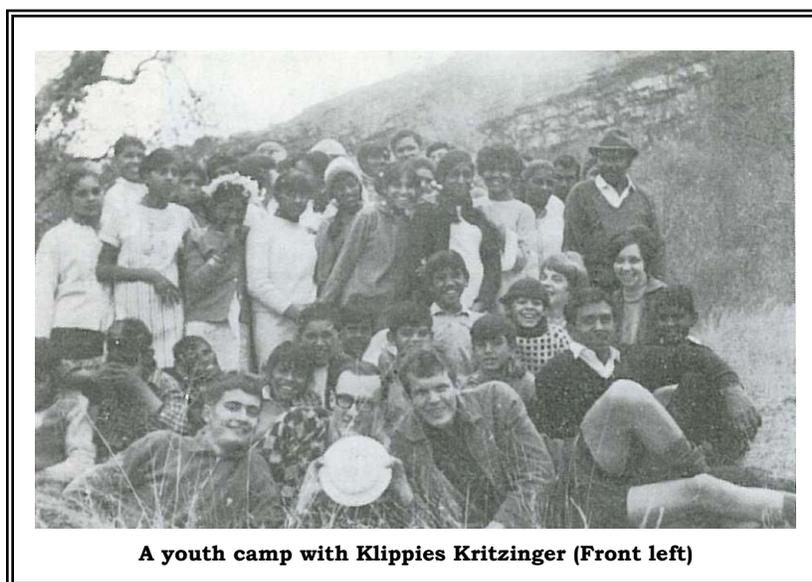
The Story of a Personal Journey

J N J (Klippiess) Kritzinger

In: Speckman McGlory T and Kaufman, Larry T:

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 Gruncky & 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, 1960 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 SHI'ITIESE 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 blydskap 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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