

The defining moments for the Dutch Reformed Church mission policy of 1935 and 1947

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Abstract

This paper explores the Dutch Reformed Mission Policy formulated by the Federal Council of Churches in 1935. The political climate of the time and the social, economic, cultural and political interest of the white Afrikaner church played a pivotal part in shaping the policy. The paper further probes the after 50 years (1986), missionary motives that ensued from such a political agenda and whether the mission policy had changed. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) failed to see the dangers of self-interest and the tenants of God's mission. The paper attempts to lay a sound foundation for mission in a racially divided South Africa.

Keywords: Race, segregation, mission, policy, ideology, native question.

1. Formal racial segregation is introduced

South Africa became a Union after the Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902 was signed and a truce was reached between the Afrikaners and the English (Davenport 1989:22). General Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister of the Union and he introduced the policy of formal racial segregation which led to the effective exclusion of the black majority. The policy of racial segregation was influenced, in part, by the question of the poor white and white perceived superiority over black people. The white Afrikaner had to be cared for separately from the blacks and resources were indeed channelled to their benefit (Bottomley 2012:107). Government after government systematically advocated the racial policies that would erode the rights of black people and confine them to barren reserves that effectively squeezed and crowded them into an area consisting of 13% of the total country's space (The Native Land Act No. 27 of 1913). From the outset, the government of the white Union of South Africa implemented a policy of apartheid which curtailed the rights of the black majority (Ibid). White self-interest at the expense of the majority black people was maintained at all costs (Elphick 2012:297).

2. The Natives Land Act (No. 27) of 1913

The policy of segregation had far-reaching consequences for black people and their acquisition of land (Elphick 2012:298). Series of legislations, such as the Natives

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Land Act (No. 27 of 1913) which laid the foundation for other legislation which entrenched the 'dispossession of black people of their land', were enacted. The impact of the Act was that Africans were denied access to land, including land they previously owned (List of Laws on Land Dispossession and Segregation in South Africa: www.sahistory.org.za accessed 29/4/2015). The Act denied blacks the right and the opportunity to purchase land. Another consequence that was brought about by the Act was that blacks could easily be removed from white farms if they were no longer wanted there. The Act laid a firm foundation for the policy of separate development which was later introduced when black homelands were designed. Similar Acts that followed and reinforced the dispossession of land from Africans were the Urban Areas Act (1923), the Natives and Land Trust Act (1936), the Black Administration Act No. 38 (1927) and the Group Areas Act (1950). The Black Administration Act No. 38 of 1927 also gave rise to other enabling legislations dealing with the regulation of land tenure for black people. The Native Administration Act, No. 38 of 1927, was premised on the assumption that 'Europeans' had a civilising call to influence a 'primitive' and 'native' population and thus 'Europeans' were seen as guardians over minor blacks who were supposed to be gradually led to maturity (Murray & O'Regan 1986:14). In section 5(1)(b) of the Act, it was provided as follows: 'The Governor-General may, whenever he deems it expedient in the general public interest, order the removal of any tribe or portion thereof . . . from any place to any other place within the Union upon such conditions as he may determine' (Murray & O'Regan 1986:18). Faced with these brutal laws designed to curtail black aspiration and interest, liberal Afrikaner missionaries who supported the DRC mission policy had the dual task of persuading the government to implement 'constructive' apartheid in the midst of hostility (Elphick 2012:297). With the government's takeover of missionary schools and with more conservative leadership taking central stage in the DRC, the liberal missionaries were effectively sidelined and silenced. In the end, it was the DRC leadership that advised the government on how to implement the apartheid (Elphick 2012:300).

3. Inferior land tenure for blacks: Permission To Occupy (PTO)

One of the instruments used to implement the provisions of the Natives Land Acts (Act No. 27 of 1913) was the Permission to Occupy (PTO). This was an inferior and insecure land tenure right which allowed the user the occupation rights over a certain rural unsurveyed land but with no protection against the third party. This enabled the state to evict many black communities when and if it wanted to by forcefully removing them from a certain piece of land (Executive Summary in the Land Claim Court of South Africa 1998 Case No. 26/98), despite the fact that PTO cannot be registered in a Deed Registry as it does not contain real rights. The restriction

of black movement and black's right to own property can be traced back to the Squatter Law Act, No. 2 of 1895, which was first passed in the Free State in 1895 and prohibited farmers from employing more than five blacks on one farm without government permission; the law also prohibited blacks from living outside the reserves (South African History Online accessed on 3/6/2015). Native reserves were established as early as 1848 in Natal and became a feature of systematic control and the dispossession of land from African people (Ibid).

PTO was used even more effectively with the introduction of the Group Areas Act of 1950. In the terms of the Group Areas Act, black people were not allowed to own any land – not even in reserves. White people too were not allowed to own land in reserves and they had to use the PTO to occupy land there. The PTO allowed blacks to occupy land under very strict rules. However, the land could only be used for the purpose it was acquired for and for a stipulated period (usually two years on white farms). In cases where the rules for the allocation of land were uncertain, the government had to be approached for clarification.

Therefore, the PTO was less formal and there were lapses when the holder died or when the original activities for which permission was granted changed. These arrangements, however, were not economically viable as they did not offer real security. These became useful arrangements which were applied to substitute blacks' rights to own land in South Africa (Ibid). The PTO remained an effective way of controlling the land occupied by blacks and the restrictions that went with it. Through these measures such as the PTO, Africans were made accessible as labourers for whites who needed them. However, the whites who acquired them were also subjected to strict rules and were not allowed to offer them permanent residence on their farms. Africans were effectively dispossessed and segregated as well as forbidden to emigrate from one place to another in the country (SAHO accessed 4/6/2015).

Most significantly, the new Union of South Africa gained international respect with the approval of British government, despite all of the black deputations sent to England to block the recognition (The Afrikaner Rebellion www.sahistory.org.za/topic/natives-land-act accessed 29/04/2015). The new government continued relentlessly to introduce segregation between black and coloured people on the one hand and black and white people on the other. Leaders of the time such as John Dube, President of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), and Sol Plaatjies, the first secretary of SANNC, wrote an article entitled 'Wrong Policy' in the newspaper criticising the new land and condemning the policy, but their comments fell on deaf ears (Cousins & Walker 2015:27). Many protests were organised by SANNC to stop the systemic erosion of their rights, but both the Afrikaners and the English would not listen.

The black protest against unjust policies was not limited to political activism led by the leaders of SANNC and others. Many African independent churches were founded around this period, epitomising the widespread agony the African people had with the 'apartheid' policies of their time. Leaders like Mangena Mokone, Nehemiah Tile and James Dwane moved out of the white churches to form their own separate churches. There were, however, many reasons which gave rise to the schism from the white churches, but political reasons were some of the major causes for the split.

It is the view of the researcher that factors that gave rise to struggles and conflicts at the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) mission stations cannot be fully appreciated without looking at a wider picture of the country at that stage. The DRC policy was a religious document profoundly influenced and shaped by the political climate of the country. It should become clear to what extent the political circumstances of South Africa influenced the DRC's motivation for mission as the mission policy is analysed.

4. DRC mission policy of 1935 and 1947

The DRC mission policy was drafted during the period when South African native laws were being resisted by the black majority and the white dominion in South Africa was being promoted and protected at all costs (Natives Land Act No. 27 of 1913). It was during the era when Africans and coloured people experienced a series of attacks on their position in society which effectively cut them off from having access to full citizenship (Davenport 1989:228). The Milner regime rejected political equality for blacks and whites (Elphick 2012:103) and introduced the measures through which blacks were represented in Parliament. Through the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), Milner tried to find ways and means of attending to the native question. These initiatives later gave emergence to the mission policy of the DRC (Elphick 2012:103). These measures ensured that blacks had to be represented by whites who were nominated for them (Natives Land Act 1933:228). This exclusion invited open violence between blacks and whites, but the violence was crushed by those who had the guns and means (the white regime). Davenport (1989:230) lists some of those open confrontations between whites and blacks. His list includes the Zulu rebellion of 1906, the Herero and the Maji-Maji in Namibia (south-west Africa) and many others in the north such as Chief Malebocho in 1894, Makhado of the Vendas, and Makgoba and Mokopane in the current Limpopo.

It is also important to note that the politics of resistance, though peaceful, was condemned by the white churches (Farisani 1987:28–29). The method of non-violent resistance against racial oppression was adopted through defiance campaigns, peaceful protests and demonstrations, but the authorities would not listen to the

logic of equal opportunity and citizenship (Turok 2010:79). As already indicated, the plethora of African initiated churches started to fight white supremacy alongside their political counterparts. It is against this backdrop that the DRC mission policy should be analysed and understood (Davenport 1989:230).

5. The mission policy is formulated in 1935

The DRC decided to draft a mission policy at a conference held in 1931 in Kroonstad, Free State (Giliomee 2003:459) and was officially promulgated in 1935 as the official DRC mission policy. It was at this conference that the DRC expressed itself unequivocally against any form of equality (*gelykstelling*) between blacks and whites. The church affirmed that the natives had souls as white people have and that they possessed a soul of equal value in the eyes of God. However, in order to stick to this fundamental belief and at the same time to stick to their 'treasured policy of inequality and separateness', the DRC came up with a twist that proposed that blacks should develop 'on their own terrain and apart' from whites (Ibid:459). Language, customs, culture and colour became determinants and the policy was securely aligned with that of the government of the day (Ibid:459). The DRC mission policy was built on the pillars of the General Mission Committee of the Cape synod of 1921 where delegates from the then Transvaal and Orange Free State were invited. At that meeting, it was concluded as follows:

The practice of the Church follows the doctrine of the State on the relation of the white and the black races to each other. That doctrine is that the white race is and must remain the ruling race. The coloured and the black sections of the population occupy a strictly subordinate position. This is not due to, as is very generally supposed, to the accident of their colour: it is due to their lower stage of cultural development. (Van Donk 1994:32)

It was at this Federal Council of Churches (where all DRC synods from various regions gathered) where a uniform policy was adopted and realigned with the government ideology of segregation. It was decided that evangelisation should not assume the 'denationalisation' of the black people but the primary aim of 'Christianity' should be to refine black nationalism (Van Donk 1994:32). The mission policy formulated and adopted at the meeting of the Federal Council of the DRC played a crucial role in guiding both the church and government during the heyday of apartheid (Giliomee 2003:459). According to Van Donk (1994:33), it was the DRC that submitted its mission policy to the government and it was this policy that influenced and guided the government in developing apartheid, an influence the church was proud of (Ibid). This policy document determined its missionary activities for decades to come until (Ibid).

Despite its racially motivated mission policy, the DRC continued its work among black people, both inside and outside the country. The DRC also poured a lot of

money into its mission work and has done more than many other churches in South Africa when it comes to mission work (Van Donk 1994:34). The DRC had also received financial support from the government to set up social institutions such as hospitals and old-age homes. According to the policy document called 'Church and society' drafted in 1986 and adopted in the same year, the DRC's synod mission work was still a matter of church calling regardless of all the mistakes of the past (Ibid). The 1986 DRC synod could declare that '...in all circumstances, even in a situation of strained relationships, mission work must claim the highest priority in the programme of the church' (Van Donk 1994:34).

6. The church and society of the DRC

After 50 years of the adoption of the DRC mission policy of 1935 and 40 years after the revised DRC mission policy of 1947, the DRC had not changed fundamentally in terms of its ideological vision. The DRC met in October 1986 to consider what could be named the revised mission policy document of the *DRC Kerk en Samelewing* (church and society). The document had three pillars: 1) the basis of many years of intensive study concerning the task of the church in the South African society, 2) the church's programme for its activities for the future and against which it could be judged, and 3) the document served as its stance and testimony.

The new document on the DRC's understanding of its role within South African society had not changed from that of 1930 when the first mission policy was formulated. The question of black majority and equality between black and white was embedded in the document. Issues such as composition of racial groupings in South Africa, urbanisation, language and literacy, economy, socio-political and cultural issues, and religion as challenges facing the church were raised (Kerk en Samelewing 1986:1-5). The second part of the document concerned the Bible. The DRC took on itself that its pious interpretation and use of the Bible was authentic and normative (Ibid:5-12). Contextual theologies that used praxis as the starting point and were critical about inequality and exploitation of the poor by the rich were ruled out as unscriptural (Ibid:9). The document revealed some inconsistencies and unfounded pious misrepresentations of the concrete facts:

Concealed inconvenient truths from oneself and others are revealed. The South African race relations needed condemnation and radical conversion by both the state and the church. Cross equalities between black and white, and the brutality of the state at the time could no longer be ignored. Brushing these atrocities aside would disqualify the church as missional as the document tried to say (Kerk en Samelewing 1986:11). Love and diaconate services that were believed to be profound by repentance and apology within the South African racial situation cannot constitute the mission of God to the neighbour.

Social injustices in South Africa. *The Bible underlies the common origin and destiny of humankind (Ogbonnaya 1994:3) and it does not have room for social injustice. Behind the central message of the Bible is God's call to social justice as humans have a common origin and God's purpose is to fulfil in their lives. He has likewise ordained that certain responsibilities belong to humans. It was God's original intention that humans should live in harmony with the laws of God and His purposes (Kane 1978:97). Any church mission policy that ignores these principles is not part of God's mission policy.*

At the same meeting, the DRC synod redefined the objectives of mission (Van Donk 1994:34) and the demeaning phraseology of a 'mother church' and 'daughter churches' was changed to 'sister churches'. But these changes did not mean anything more fundamental. The fundamental questions of property rights, equality and restorative justice of the imbalances of the past were not addressed. It was more of a change of language than reality. The DRC benefitted from the apartheid laws and, in some cases, it was the DRC that brought harsh laws to the government to consider; these include obstacles that were created with regards to black ownership of property. To claim innocent was more of expedience than a real change of heart. Some scholars such as Van Donk argue that the change of heart shown by the DRC in the church society in 1990 was due more to the isolation imposed on it by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, than due to an actual change of principle and belief (Van Donk 1994:33-35).

7. The 1935 DRC mission policy is made up of the following sections.

- a) The preamble. Here the church expresses its deep conviction of the fact that it was God who ordained that the first European inhabitants should be the bearers of the light of the gospel to the 'heathens' of the continent (DRC mission policy 1935). The DRC thus considered itself to be privileged to proclaim the gospel to the 'heathens' of the country. This mission would be done in terms of DRC considered methods which were based on educating the natives and not 'denationalising' them (Giliomee 2003:459).
- b) Evangelisation. The church considered its evangelisation as 'the ingathering of souls for the Kingdom of God'. The ingathering is the first step followed by the founding of a congregation which must be guided to become an independent church along the lines of 'self-support, self-government and self-expansion' (DRC Mission Policy 1935). Agencies for mission included education and instruction as well as medical, agricultural, industrial and literary activities. The Mission Policy makes assumptions that as the church does mission to the blacks there would be a desire among the blacks to develop, and the desire that the church should guide them to their logical fruition. Black racial customs that do not militate against the

Christian principles should not be negated. But those practices are not tabulated which means the DRC would have chosen and picked as it pleased.

c) Fields of Labour. The 'fields of labour' start in the neighbourhood (vicinity) and extend to other parts of the country and into the rest of the continent.

d) Relations to other churches and government. The mission policy acknowledged that there were similarities and dissimilarities between the DRC and other churches. Where there were differences, the church did not indicate how that would be resolved. However, where there were similarities it was said that bonds should be promoted. When it came to the government, the church expressed delight in the fact that governments of Africa had fixed policies for the upliftment of natives under their control, policies which correspond very well with that of the DRC. In such a case, the missionaries should work well together (DRC Mission Policy 1935). Church and state cooperation would be more visible in education where the state was putting in more resources.

e) Education. Under the discussion of education, the Mission Policy painted a picture of a black 'mind' under their control to be moulded according to the predetermined wishes and expectations of white desires. Education should be aligned with black racial cultures and customs. Such education should not be 'denationalised', but should be linked up with the past in order to shape the future.

f) Social. Here the reasons for developing the mission policy as a means of control and channelling become clearer. The policy is based on the traditional fear of the Afrikaner of equal treatment between blacks and whites. The idea of racial fusion in South Africa is fundamental to the mission policy. The church declared itself unequivocally opposed to the idea of racial equality and fusion. As Afrikaners wanted to be a nation on their own with all privileges that state could accord them, blacks were to have Afrikaners decide what was best for them and if the blacks resisted the imposed treatment, the idea should not be abandoned as there were no alternative developments for them in South Africa. The logic for the imposition of a white agenda for black separate development was informed by the logic of the policy of trusteeship which would eventually lead to the complete policy of independence and self-determination. The church supported the policies because it believed that whites were the fruits of Christian civilisation and, at the same time, the blessings of the gospel (DRC Mission Policy 1935).

g) Economy. The most bizarre section of the DRC Mission Policy is the economic section. The church should have realised that something was seriously wrong in the scheme of things after they had taken 87% of the land and appropriated it for the white minority and gave only 13% to the black majority. The church declares itself as accepting all the implications of the process of evangelisation, although it did not spell out what that meant; it stated that 'it restricts its contributions to the

ministry of the gospel in building the daughter churches while cooperating with the state and the people in respect of economic justice' (Ibid). Implicit in the DRC Mission Policy was the view that identification with one's own ethnic group was not only authentic but universal (Ibid). Although there were sensitivities on both sides (from the government and the church) not to offend each other, compromises were made to have the policy implemented and maintained.

h) The 1947 Mission Policy was slightly different from the 1935 one. In the 1947 Mission Policy, the paragraphs on social matters and economic issues are expounded a bit. The addition included the idea of the trusteeship of black people which would gradually lead to a full self-standing and self-determination for the coloured and native churches. There was also a clause on Christian civilisation which could be exercised to benefit black people.

i) The Kerk en Samelewing did not change the fundamental fears and concerns of the DRC but concealed them in a pious and 'brave' language that did not show any remorse for what the church did to black people in the name of mission. There was also no indication that the church would put right its errors of the past through methods such as restorative justice, metanoia, forgiveness and a new approach.

On the economic issues, the DRC accepted the implication of the evangelisation of the blacks but it maintained that the process would involve close cooperation with the state to promote 'own nationhood' on economic ground, better housing, health and general social upliftment.

8. Observations: Isolationism

The DRC Mission Policy was an extension of the government policy of separate development with the exclusive passion to protect white interest. National boundaries defined and drawn by the ruling white politicians' cultural, ethnic, and tribal distinctiveness of people became pillars of the mission policy (Horner 2011:77). More attention was focused on protecting and preserving Afrikanerdom with tendencies of closing ranks instead of opening up towards the other.

As Worsnip (1991:39) states, the policy of apartheid did not envisage any equality, race mixing or integration or extension of rights to the natives. It stood for Afrikaans baaskap (bossism). The safety of the white race and 'Christian civilisation' meant a guardianship of the natives by white people without natives having a say in that process. For these reasons, the mission policy and apartheid policy were two sides of the same coin.

The policy was more focused on isolationism and sought converts that would be 'created' in the image of an ideology of separateness. Instead of the DRC becoming the 'salt of the earth and the light of the world' where its life is lived for the sake of others, the church built 'walls' that separated it from the other and yet claimed to be

working in the interest of the other. Isolating themselves from 'others' meant cutting themselves off from the other in such a way that their witnesses were never credible. The 'ingathering [of] souls into [an] independent self-supporting, self-governing and self-expanding [church]' produced religious communities which could never break away from dependency on the master and could never be self-sustaining churches (Modise 2013: NGTT Part 54, No. 3&4 Sep & Dec 2013). White Afrikanerdom was equated with Christianity (Giliomee 2012:224).

According to the executive Mission Board of the DRC held in 1947, the church was called to keep its own identity so that it could fulfil the calling of God (SIN 220 1939-1973). The DRC was seen as a faith community such as Israel that had the responsibility of not mixing with 'heathen nations'. If racial fusion could be allowed in South Africa, the Christendom would come to an end according to the Mission Board (Ibid). The word 'apartheid' as a concept was not wrong, as long as the church meant well in its relationship with other ethnic groups and showed tolerance towards them.

9. DRC mission policy supported the government agenda of separateness

The DRC Mission Policy was as ambiguous and ambivalent as it could be. Although many young white missionaries laid aside their lives as they sought to serve God under this questionable mission policy, this did not make the policy biblically founded. The opposition voices of black leaders were increasingly heard as they denounced the whole system of the church and state policies for the blacks (Holland 1989:73). These young DRC missionaries were aware of the death facing them in black areas, but they kept going to the areas in large numbers. Although one should temper one's judgment of their motives, one should, for the sake of the credibility of the gospel and *Missio Dei*, scrutinise them for the benefit of the analysis of the events that took place at the DRC mission station at Kranspoort and the future of constructive reflection on church mission today.

The least one could say about the abhorrent human failures is that God in his sovereign way uses feeble human efforts in spite of questionable motives. It should also be said that in the eyes of the DRC, this questionable mission policy was not misguided and inconsistent with biblical understandings of mission, but the mixture of 'religious and political milieu' of the time severely blurred the vision of the church. Motives and cultural superiority prevailed because of the 'self-preservation', the 'self-identity' as well as the 'self-interest' that superseded the 'love for the neighbour'. According to Dr Verwoed, throwing together different communities into one common society in a multiracial state would mean racial suicide for white South Africa (Johnson 1994:157). The solution to the problem, according to

him, was separate states for the Bantu and a form of separate self-government for the coloureds and Indians (Race Relations Survey 1962:1977). In line with this policy, Dr D.E. Malan was telling apartheid patriots at the Voortrekker Monument in December 1949 that it was the duty of white people to sustain 'white Christian civilisation' by acting as 'guardians over the non-whites' (Morris 1977:35). This ideal would be maintained through 'paramouncy' and 'race purity'. These statements were followed by the 1950 Group Areas Act and many others (Ibid).

The DRC Mission Policy culminated in helping the Nationalist government to ascend to power in 1948. In 1948, DRC mission theorist and think-tank Gerdener helped in drafting the Nationalist apartheid manifesto (Morris 1977:35-36). In 1949, Eiselen (the son of a missionary) was appointed to head a commission to come up with strategies to introduce Bantu Education (Saayman 2007:72). His commission report of 1951 and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 formed a solid basis of education both in South Africa and Namibia (Namibian Educational System: education.stateuniversity.com/.../Namibia-CONSTITUTIONAL-LEGAL- accessed 01/05/2015). As H. F. Verwoed, the Minister of Bantu Education at the time, declared, 'education would always be separate, unequal, and designed to let Africans develop exclusively within their own communities' (Ibid), the philosophy of apartheid was imposed on the black majority without their consent to ensure that all nations in South Africa and Namibia would be forced into a 'white designed form of development'. Education was effectively taken out of the hands of missionaries who could not be trusted to transmit the apartheid ideology correctly (Namibian Educational System: education.stateuniversity.com/.../Namibia-CONSTITUTIONAL-LEGAL- accessed 01/05/2015).

As the Bantu Education Act brought all black schools under the direct control of the government, resistance grew. Because it was determined to keep the black people in a position of perpetual inferiority, black organisations such as The African Education Movement (AEM) openly opposed the arrogant Verwoedian statement that 'by blindly producing pupils trained on a European model, the vain hope was created that they could occupy posts within the European community' (Federation of South Africa 2013). The AEM was formed to coordinate the work of all blacks that were opposed to the Bantu Education. Its first chairperson was Father Trevor Huddleston (Federation of South Africa 2013). The AEM was to help maintain private schools that were completely independent of the government and provide 'self-education material' to club members. Financial constraints and government opposition to private schools, including churches, outlawed anyone from teaching children outside the government system (Ibid).

The new policy of Bantu Education left many black parents with an agonising dilemma. Some were determined not to allow their children to be subjected to

an education system that would make them ashamed of their own nation. Other parents decided not to allow their children to attend schools that would enslave them forever (Ibid). The AEM provided a third alternative which would assist the African National Congress in introducing bodies which would run a 'cultural club'. The clubs were aimed at providing 'organised and healthy' activities to the children whose parents were objecting to Bantu Education. The system of apartheid in the area of black education, social terrain, labour and economy remained very oppressive and disregarded African aspiration. Private schools were denied permission to function on their own and teachers who did not comply with the system were removed (Ibid).

The introduction of Bantu Education in public schools was followed by the introduction of three 'non-white universities'.

As stated earlier, whites perceived themselves to be superior to blacks and thus considered themselves the trustees of blacks in all spheres of their lives (Ibid). In May 1963, at the 100th anniversary of the Kranspoort mission station, Dr Eiselen, who was serving as the Bantu Affairs Commissioner for the Northern Sothos at the time, had the following to say: 'It is appropriate for the State to express its gratitude not only towards God, but also towards the church who worked so hard in the interest of Bantu people of South Africa' (my own translation). Dr Eiselen further said: 'One cannot state it fully that each action that was undertaken to promote the interest of Bantu people was also done in the interest of the white community' (my translation). It is clear that the DRC Mission Policy was drafted to promote Afrikaner interest as well. Both the state and the DRC had a common agenda: the church had to give birth to 'daughter churches' that would become 'national churches' within their own territories, while the state was creating 'independent national states' within their own Bantustans.

10. At the conscious level of the DRC

The introduction and implementation of the ideology of apartheid did not leave the church with a clear conscience. Some DRC regional synods (there were a total of ten regional synods) did not feel completely comfortable with the philosophy. Although some, like the 1948 synod of the Transvaal, accepted a report that was based on the DRC Mission Policy of 1935 and used the Tower of Babel as justification of the report, not all were convinced of the policy (Goliomee 2003:463). Even H.F. Verwoed, who was an editor of the secular newspaper *Die Transvaler* at the time and later became the prime minister, wrote that the 'survival struggle against millions of non-whites would become more difficult' (Goliomee 2003:463). The Cape DRC synod that sat in 1949 gave a more circumspect endorsement of apartheid. The call from those who pursued apartheid's solution to the South African

native question was that 'Afrikaners would prevail if they clung to a single idea and believed that it was in accordance with God's will that different races exist separately' (Goliomee 2003:463).

Some academics within the DRC cautioned the DRC against apartheid. These academics were Ben Marais and Bennie Keet who protested against the arbitrary use of biblical texts taken out of context to justify apartheid (Goliomee 2003:463). Despite all debates for and against apartheid, the church was faced with the question: 'How can the church maintain its identity without doing damage to the cause of spreading the gospel among the non-whites?' But the answer came from the mission policy, shallow as it was. In 1947, James Oglethorpe, who was studying theology at Stellenbosch, wrote that 'even if apartheid was the last weapon in Afrikaner hands to ensure its survival, the DRC had no right to sacrifice its most precious possession, its faith' (Goliomee 2003:464). But survival fears forced the DRC to ignore logic as articulated by academics such as Marais, Keet and Oglethorpe and to rather embrace the policy that was labelled a crime against humanity in the United Nations resolution 2202 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 (legal.un.org/avl/ha/cspca/cspca.html accessed 01/05/2015). Despite all of the euphemisms the politicians and DRC missionaries tried to use to describe the ideology of apartheid, the system remained the most brutal and vicious tool in the hands of an oppressor obsessed with greed and fear (Terblanche 2012:20).

The DRC Mission Policy was premised in a cultural ideology of apartheid. This policy made assumptions and points of departure which were given, but not debated (Johnson 1994:1560). The ideology of apartheid, which undergirded the DRC Mission Policy, was based on three tenets according to Thompson (1985:69). The first was that European people were inherently superior, the second was that the 'vacant land' theory justifies white dominance over the rest of South Africa, and the third was the idea of a covenant that interprets white victory over blacks as God's endorsement of white rule in South Africa (Ibid).

Leatt, Kneifel and Nurnberger (1986:273-302) outline three contexts within which the term 'ideology' can be used. There is the critical context in which the term is used to convey the possibility and desirability of a 'value-free' science. According to this view, all people are involved in one form of ideology as determined by their assumptions, thoughts and specific norms (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986:271).

The second context in which ideology operates is the Marxist and neo-Marxist contexts. In this context the notion of ideology refers to the conditioning of ideas through material economic base (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986:274). The ideas of the ruling class are dominant and determine material relationships. In this respect, 'ideology is a false consciousness of social and economic realities and it is

a collective illusion shared by the members of a given social class' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986). This type of ideology serves a persuasive device to justify the interest of the ruling class who should accept false reality uncritically as truth, as right and just for the benefit of the dominant class (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986:275). The ideology includes a language of legitimation which is internalised into the experience of and subjectivity of ideologue (Cousins & Walker 2015:41).

The third level of ideology within which apartheid in South Africa operated is epistemological in nature and interprets reality from one specific perspective and gives no possibilities of alternative solutions (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986:281). This perspective was largely informed and shaped by Afrikaner nationalism. According to Giliomee (2012:223), Afrikaner nationalism was developed from 1875 when Afrikaner nationalists persuaded their fellow Afrikaner to unite in a party to control and promote the Dutch and later the Afrikaner language and culture, and to work for the economic well-being of Afrikaners in South Africa. Afrikaner nationalism developed largely as a reaction against British authority (Ibid) and a disdain for black culture and religion. Afrikaner nationalism was largely shaped and directed by the underground movement called the Broederbond (Serfontain 1970:231). Established in 1919, the Broederbond played a crucial role in the protection of Afrikaner interest and unity. The Broederbond was a think-tank on the implementation of the apartheid policy (Ibid:232).

Nationalism is a form of ideology that interprets reality from the point of the group (Ibid). Here ideology 'presents a specific analysis of present order, relates it to a future ideal, and provides a strategy to achieve the desired state' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nurnberger 1986:282). The ideology of apartheid in South Africa appeared, on the surface, of separating people in a horizontal fashion and yet it had a vertical dimension in which whites were above and blacks were at the bottom. Reality was interpreted in such a way that it appeared logical while hiding a cruel and subversive agenda. Leatt, Kneifel and Nurnberger (1986:302) label apartheid ideology a 'false God' which used the Christian gospel as a façade to cover the brutal system of disempowering and subjugating black people while promoting white interest.

The DRC mission work was always political and self-seeking. They allowed themselves to be dictated to by what was happening in the camp of their government and embraced their ideologies. Saayman (2007:56) explains the involvement of the DRC in mission through four waves. The first wave (1779–1834) was triggered by the involvement of other missionary societies in the country; the second wave (1867–1939) occurred when the DRC started to focus on the areas outside the Cape; the third wave (1954–1976) was triggered by the Tomlinson Report on the situation of missionary work in the country; and the fourth wave (1990 onwards) occurred when the DRC started focusing its mission on foreign countries (Saayman 2007:57-62).

In all the instances mentioned by Saayman, there were political motives behind them. The first instance was the involvement of other missionary societies doing missionary work at its doorsteps, the second was the influence of the Great Trek where large numbers of Afrikaners went to settle in the interior of the country, opening the way for the missionary to follow on their heels and the experiences of the aftermath of the defeat in the Anglo-Boer War, a defeat that led to the spiritual awakening in the church that found its expression in a dedicated mission work (Crafford 1982:144-150). Many Afrikaners made some introspection and were led to repentance in the commandos in concentration camps where they were held as prisoner of war and interpreted their imprisonment as the punishment of God (Kgatla 1988).

In all their experiences and bitterness, Afrikaners remained opposed to the idea of equality between themselves and blacks. The fact that black people were protected by the English in the Cape against the Afrikaners, and that blacks had fought on the side of the English in all the wars between the Afrikaners and the British, and further that blacks favoured the British over the Afrikaners, affected the relationship between the two to unprecedented levels (Crafford 1982:144-50). Blacks regarded Afrikaners as inferior to the British and Afrikaners viewed blacks as 'heathens' and as having inferior status in life.

The Afrikaners desire for land and labour, the need for security, and an impulse to conquer and rule over blacks partly explains the attitudes that permeated the policies that went into all the native laws which were promulgated wherever they had space to have their independent republic (The Afrikaner Response and the 1914 Rebellion: SA History Online accessed on 7/07/2015). Afrikaners who migrated into the interior had the view, which was conditioned by their experience in the Cape, that blacks were savage and heathen. They were hardened by the African resistance and would do anything in their power to subdue them. All these hardened stereotypes went into their mission policies and practices.

11. Sound foundation for mission in a racially divided South Africa

There are five propositions that are highlighted here to define a sound foundation for mission in a racially divided South Africa:

11.1 God's mission or the church's mission

The debate of who is the author of mission between God and the church has long been settled among ecumenical bodies. Mission belongs to the Triune God and the institutional church is being invited to participate in that mission. This mission of God is transformational and empowering to the extent that the church can only participate in it with humility and contrite of heart (WCC Commission of Mission

and Evangelism 2013:1). Self-awareness with bold humility is some of the requirements for the church as it participates in the movement from God to the world (Bosch 1991:300). Such awareness and humility eliminates forms of arrogance, self-interest and ideological preference (Ibid). Tutu (2005:3) calls this transformation transfiguration as something which will unlikely happen but happens out of the grace of God.

11.2 Inclusivity

In South Africa, whites have been socialised to believe that they are not equal to blacks and for them to change their attitude is near a miracle. Regardless of the difficulty of this change, the point of departure should be the tenet of Scripture. The inclusion of blacks in matters that affect them to the level that they (black) feel included is a legitimate development and is fully consistent with Scripture (Cottrel 2013:19).

11.3 Recovering true identity and vocation

Identity and vocation are discovered through relationships (Meyer 1999:189). Inequality, power and its misuse destroy relationships. In South Africa, black and white relationships are 'bleeding' from constant provocation (Tutu 2005:15). To move towards a healthy church, it is necessary to develop healthy relationships that empower and give life to both groups. A church that embarks on God's mission without these core elements is not going to succeed (Kemper 2014:190).

11.4 Focusing on the end

The church needs to determine what God's mission is in its situation and remain focussed to the point. There are many things that may distract the church's attention but measurable objectives should be set and regularly checked to ensure that they are realised (Meyer 1999:120). Mission belongs to the recipients and they should own the process and the need for change (Ibid:123). One should always guard against human greed and self-interest that prey on the weak. The missional church should check and guard against those forces that are opposed to the true transformation of *Missio Dei* (Bosch 1991:191).

11.5 The church as a servant of liberation

Human relations are often marred with sin based on the web of lies that promote self-interest and the misery of the poor (Meyers 1999:123). The deception in worldviews, cultures and how society is structured should be detected and confronted. Only when the truth is discovered, justice is done and peace is restored can one speak of the mission of God (Ibid:123). Christian integrity is the hallmark

of Christian living (Ibid:123). The church can only be a church if it is the servant of liberation announcing the dawn of the Kingdom of God (Goba 1988:95). As Boesak (1977:68) put it, the work of Christ is and his Kingdom is discernible in the secular, social relations and political battles for liberation of the time. The mission of the church should include a struggle for the liberation of the oppressed.

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