

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>The Kairos Document – A Challenge to the Church</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter One: Introduction</b>	<b>32</b>
1.1 Relevance	32
1.2 The aim	33
1.3 Rationale	34
1.4 The research question	34
1.5 Hypothesis	35
1.6 Research methodology	36
1.7 Quantitative research (literary)	36
1.8 Qualitative research (empirical)	37
1.9 Researcher as participant-observer	37
1.10 Terminology	38
1.11 Study outline	42
1.11.1 Chapter One: Introduction	42
1.11.2 Chapter Two: Church-State relations under the spotlight again	42
1.11.3 Chapter Three: The Kairos Document: Yesterday and Today	44
1.11.4 Chapter Four: The Kairos Document: A theological analysis	44
1.11.5 Chapter Five: From the old to a new Kairos?	44
1.11.6 Chapter Six: Conclusion	45
<b>Chapter Two: Church-State relations under the spotlight again</b>	<b>46</b>
2.1 Introduction	46
2.2 Church–State relations in the 1950s and 1960s	47
2.2.1 The role of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)	47
2.2.2 The role of the English-speaking churches	49
2.3 A series of initiatives	51
2.3.1 Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre (1948)	53
2.3.2 The Cottesloe Consultation (1960)	54
2.3.3 The Christian Institute (1963)	56
2.3.4 Message to the people of South Africa (1968)	58
2.3.5 The Institute for Contextual Theology (1981)	59
2.3.6 The Belhar Confession (1982)	59
2.3.7 The Road to Damascus (1989)	61
2.3.8 The Rustenburg Declaration (1990)	61
2.4 Faith-Based Organisations and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission	64
2.5 Church and state relations with reference to power	65
2.5.1 The Church’s position	65
2.5.2 The State’s position	68
2.5.3 The Church falters as it aligns itself with the State	71
<b>Chapter Three: The Kairos Document - Yesterday and Today</b>	<b>76</b>
3.1 Introduction	76
3.2 The context of the KD publication	76



3.2.1	Soweto students' uprising (1976)	77
3.2.2	Mounting pressure during the 1980s	78
3.2.2.1	A brief report of the SACC concerning the situation	79
3.2.2.2	The effect of the state of emergency and rent boycotts	81
3.2.2.3	The rise of trade unions and impact of industrial action	82
3.2.2.4	Inter-cine fighting: Another contributor to the Kairos moment	83
3.2.2.5	SACC's call for a day of prayer for the end of unjust rule	84
3.2.2.6	Khotso House bombing (1988)	85
3.3	The publication of the Kairos Document (1985)	87
3.3.1	Rightwing attack on the KD	91
3.3.1.1	Signposts	91
3.3.1.2	Gospel Defence League (GDL)	94
3.3.1.3	Letter from the Confessing Fellowship of Germany	97
3.3.1.4	Further condemnation of the KD	98
3.3.1.5	Scepticism over the KD manifested by some church leaders	100
3.3.2	Bias of the critics of the KD	101
3.3.3	Impact of the Kairos Document	103
3.3.4	Some media coverage of the reaction to the publication of the KD	106
3.3.5	Current comments on the KD by some Christian activists	110
3.4	The KD's position on reconciliation	112
<b>Chapter Four: The Kairos Document - A theological analysis</b>		<b>114</b>
4.1	A general view of the Kairos Document in brief	114
4.1.1	Introduction	114
4.1.2	Core theological content of the Kairos Document	115
4.1.3	A critique of State Theology	117
4.1.3.1	Apartheid and the misuse of theological concepts	118
4.1.3.2	The state's abuse of the law and order concept	120
4.1.3.3	The use of communism as a scape-goat for "Total Strategy"	121
4.1.3.4	Critique of State Theology is not time-bound	123
4.1.4	A critique of Church Theology – Influences that shaped the Church's ambivalent stance towards apartheid and justice	124
4.1.4.1	The Church's compromise on issues of justice devalued true peace and reconciliation	125
4.1.4.2	The Church's ambiguity on apartheid militated against its calling	128
4.1.4.3	The Church's inclination towards the status quo delayed change	129
4.1.4.4	The Church and political engagement	131
4.1.4.5	Debilitating effects of the divisions within the Church	133
4.1.4.6	Doctrinal differences, traditions and practices distort the Church's message to the world	135
4.1.4.7	The Church's colonial history, its use of violence and the influence of money militated against its fight for justice	138
4.1.4.8	The Church paradoxically incubates political leaders and societal transformers	142
4.1.4.9	The Church's position concerning the poor and oppressed	145
4.1.4.10	The Church's position on the sacredness of people's liberation	149
4.1.5	A critique of Prophetic Theology in the KD	152
4.1.5.1	Introduction	152
4.1.5.2	The nature of Prophetic Theology in the KD	153
4.1.5.3	The significance of Prophetic Theology according to the KD	155
4.1.5.4	The KD as a people's theology centred on the Bible	158
4.1.5.5	Prophetic Theology also targets the Church	159
4.1.5.6	Prophetic Theology also as manifestation of a holistic God	161
4.1.5.7	Some limitations of Prophetic Theology in the KD	163



4.1.5.7.1	Prophetic Theology in the KD was confined to the oppressor	162
4.1.5.7.2	The exclusion of women during the production and signing of the KD	166
4.1.5.8	Prophetic Theology manifested through individuals within the Church	166
4.1.5.9	The position of prophets against apartheid joining the democratic government	171
4.1.5.10	Prophetic Theology is discerned from social analysis	174
4.1.5.11	Prophetic Theology and tyranny	177
4.1.5.12	Liberation and hope in the KD	178
<b>Chapter Five: From the old to a new Kairos?</b>		<b>180</b>
5.1	Introduction	180
5.2	A reminder: The rationale for the publication of the KD	180
5.3	The legacy of apartheid that created the old Kairos	183
5.4	The death of Apartheid	185
5.5	The building of democracy begins	188
5.6	The KD and the new government	190
5.7	South Africa today	192
5.7.1	The escalation of militant protests despite a new democratic government	192
5.7.1.1	The cancer of widespread corruption continues: Manifestations of the legacy of a colonial mentality	192
5.7.1.2	Sloth in service delivery	196
5.7.1.3	The humiliation of unemployment and destitution of job losses	197
5.7.1.4	Recession exacerbated by excessive and often misplaced government spending	197
5.7.1.5	Lack of appropriate skills: One of the residues of Bantu education and job reservation	199
5.7.1.6	Political patronage: A form of manipulation and oppression	202
5.7.1.7	Persistent racism	203
5.7.1.8	Inequalities	205
5.7.1.9	Different race groups operating from different perceptions about each other	206
5.7.1.10	Could active political disengagement be caused by “struggle fatigue” for some?	207
5.7.1.11	Globalisation and the negative effects of multinationals and market forces	209
5.8	The promotion of transformation in South Africa	212
5.8.1	Democracy creates space for the continuous struggle towards full humanity	212
5.8.2	Detoxification of the apartheid mentality: A necessity for transformation	217
5.8.3	The need for constant vigilance to safeguard liberation	218
5.8.4	The importance of faith and personal transformation in contributing towards social change in communities	222
5.8.5	The revival of Ubuntu as a way of life for South Africa’s transformation	225
5.9	The KD and economic justice	227
5.10	The KD and liberation	228
5.10.1	The search for liberation: A continuous process	230
5.10.2	The indivisibility of freedom	232
5.10.3	Liberation: Space for reconstruction	235
5.11	The meaning of moral and political victory over Apartheid	236
5.11.1	Resisting the temptation to dwell on bitterness and blame	236
5.11.2	Eschewing self-pity arising from a mentality of victimhood	237
5.12	The long route of the South African Kairos	238
5.13	The position of the Church in the new South Africa	241
5.14	Views and attitudes of some former church activists to the KD	246
5.15	The position of Christian activists within governing structures	247
5.16	People’s expectations on democratic governance	249
5.16.1	Leadership and service	249
5.16.2	Leadership and power	252
5.16.3	Leadership and the poor	253
5.16.4	Leadership and justice	255



5.17	Is there justification for a second KD	257
5.18	South Africa experiencing a paradigm-shift	258
5.19	Some perspectives on xenophobia in South Africa	261
5.19.1	Xenophobia as a global phenomenon	262
5.19.2	Xenophobia as self-hatred	264
5.19.3	Xenophobia as part of frustration which causes scape-goating	265
5.20	Conclusion	266
<b>Chapter Six: Conclusion</b>		<b>268</b>
6.1	Introduction	268
6.2	Hypothesis and research question	268
6.3	Summary of the chapters	269
6.3.1	Chapter One: Introduction	269
6.3.2	Chapter Two: Church-State relations under the spotlight again	269
6.3.3	Chapter Three: The Kairos Document: Yesterday and Today	270
6.3.4	Chapter Four: The KD: A challenge to the churches	271
6.3.5	Chapter Five: From the old to a new Kairos?	273
7	Recommendations for further research	274
<b>Bibliography</b>		<b>276</b>
<i>Appendix</i>	<i>Names of Interviewees</i>	<b>283</b>

# The Kairos Document – A Challenge to the Church

## A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa

### **PREFACE:**

*The KAIROS document is a Christian, biblical and theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa today. It is an attempt by concerned Christians in South Africa to reflect on the situation of death in our country. It is a critique of the current theological models that determine the type of activities the Church engages in to try to resolve the problems of the country. It is an attempt to develop, out of this perplexing situation, an alternative biblical and theological model that will in turn lead to forms of activity that will make a real difference to the future of our country.*

*Of particular interest is the way the theological material was produced. In June 1985 as the crisis was intensifying in the country, as more and more people were killed, maimed and imprisoned, as one black township after another revolted against the apartheid regime, as the people refused to be oppressed or to co-operate with oppressors, facing death by the day, and as the apartheid army moved into the townships to rule by the barrel of the gun, a number of theologians who were concerned about the situation expressed the need to reflect on this situation to determine what response by the Church and by all Christians in South Africa would be most appropriate.*

*A first discussion group met at the beginning of July in the heart of Soweto. Participants spoke freely about the situation and the various responses of the Church, Church leaders and, Christians. A critique of these responses was made and the theology from which these responses flowed was also subjected to a critical analysis. Individual members of the group were assigned to put together material on specific themes which were raised during the discussion and to present the material to the next session of the group.*

*At the second meeting the material itself was subjected to a critique and various people were commissioned to do more investigations on specific problematic areas. The latest findings with the rest of the material were collated and presented to the third meeting where more than thirty people, consisting of theologians, ordinary Christians (lay theologians) and some Church leaders.*

*After a very extensive discussion some adjustments and additions were made especially in regard to the section entitled 'Challenge to Action.' The group then appointed a committee to subject the document to further critique by various other Christian groupings throughout the country. Everybody was told that "this was a people's document which you can also own even by demolishing it if your position can stand the test of biblical faith and Christian experience in South Africa." They were told that this was an open-ended document which will never be said to be final.*

*The 'working Committee,' as it was called, was inundated with comments, suggestions and enthusiastic appreciation from various groups and individuals in the country. By the 13th of September 1985 when the document was submitted for publication there were still comments and recommendations flowing in. The first publication therefore must be taken as a beginning, a basis for further discussion by all Christians in the country. Further editions will be published later.*

*25 September 1985 Johannesburg*

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Moment of Truth*

*The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived. South Africa has been plunged into a crisis that is shaking the foundations and there is every indication that the crisis has only just begun and that it will deepen and*



*the same Church. They are both baptized in the same baptism and participate together in the breaking of the same bread, the same body and blood of Christ. There we sit in the same Church while outside Christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing Christian children or torturing Christian prisoners to death while yet other Christians stand by and weakly plead for peace.*

*The Church is divided and its Day of Judgment has come*

*The moment of truth has compelled us to analyze more carefully the different theologies in our Churches and to speak out more clearly and boldly about the real significance of these theologies. We have been able to isolate three theologies and we have chosen to call them 'State Theology,' 'Church Theology' and 'Prophetic Theology.' In our thoroughgoing criticism of the first and second theologies we do not wish to mince our words. The situation is too critical for that.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Critique of State Theology*

*The South African apartheid State has a theology of its own and we have chosen to call it 'State Theology.' 'State Theology' is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism. It blesses injustice, canonizes the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy.*

*How does 'State Theology' do this? It does it by misusing theological concepts and biblical texts for its own political purposes. In this document we would like to draw your attention to four key examples of how this is done in South Africa. The first would be the use of Romans 13:1-7 to give an absolute and 'divine' authority to the State. The second would be the use of the idea of 'Law and Order' to determine and control what the people may be permitted to regard as just and unjust. The third would be the use of the word 'communist'*



*to brand anyone who rejects 'State Theology.' And finally there is the use that is made of the name of God.*

## *2.1 Romans 13:1-7*

*The misuse of this famous text is not confined to the present government in South Africa. Throughout the history of Christianity totalitarian regimes have tried to legitimize an attitude of blind obedience and absolute servility towards the state by quoting this text. The well-known theologian Oscar Cullman, pointed this out thirty years ago:*

*As soon as Christians, out of loyalty to the gospel of Jesus, offer resistance to a State's totalitarian claim, the representatives of the State or their collaborationist theological advisers are accustomed to appeal to this saying of Paul, as if Christians are here commended to endorse and thus to abet all the crimes of a totalitarian State. (The State in the New Testament, SCM 1957 p 56.)*

*But what then is the meaning of Rom 13:1-7 and why is the use made of it by 'State Theology' unjustifiable from a biblical point of view?*

*'State Theology' assumes that in this text Paul is presenting us with the absolute and definitive Christian doctrine about the State, in other words an absolute and universal principle that is equally valid for all times and in all circumstances. The falseness of this assumption has been pointed out by numerous biblical scholars (see, for example, E Kasemann, Commentary on Romans, SCM, p 354-7; O Cullman, The State in the New Testament, SCM, p 55-7).*

*What has been overlooked here is one of the most fundamental of all principles of biblical interpretation: every text must be interpreted in its context. To abstract a text from its context and to interpret it in the abstract is to distort the meaning of God's Word. Moreover the context here is not only the chapters and verses that precede and succeed this particular text nor is it even limited to the total context of the Bible. The context includes also the*

*circumstances in which Paul's statement was made. Paul was writing to a particular Christian community in Rome, a community that had its own particular problems in relation to the State at that time and in those circumstances. That is part of the context of our text.*

*Many authors have drawn attention to the fact that in the rest of the Bible God does not demand obedience to oppressive rulers. Examples can be given ranging from Pharaoh to Pilate and through into Apostolic times. The Jews and later the Christians did not believe that their imperial overlords, the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Greeks or the Romans, had some kind of divine right to rule them and oppress them. These empires were the beasts described in the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelations. God allowed them to rule for a while but he did not approve of what they did. It was not God's will. His will was the freedom and liberation of Israel. Rom 13:1-7 cannot be contradicting all of this.*

*But most revealing of all is the circumstances of the Roman Christians to whom Paul was writing. They were not revolutionaries. They were not trying to overthrow the State. They were not calling for a change of government. They were, what has been called, 'antinomians' or 'enthusiasts' and their belief was that Christians, and only Christians, were exonerated from obeying any State at all, any government or political authority at all, because Jesus alone was their Lord and King. This is of course heretical and Paul is compelled to point out to these Christians that before the second coming of Christ there will always be some kind of State, some kind of secular government and that Christians are not exonerated from subjection to some kind of political authority.*

*Paul is simply not addressing the issue of a just or unjust State or the need to change one government for another. He is simply establishing the fact that there will be some kind of secular authority and that Christians as such are not exonerated from subjection to secular laws and authorities. He does not say anything at all about what they should do when the State becomes unjust and oppressive. That is another question.*

*Consequently those who try to find answers to the very different questions and problems of our time in the text of Rom 13:1-7 are doing a great disservice to Paul. The use that 'State Theology' makes of this text tells us more about the political options of 'those who construct this theology than it does about the meaning of God's Word in this text. As one biblical scholar puts it: "The primary concern is to justify the interests of the State and the text is pressed into its service without respect for the context and the intention of Paul."*

*If we wish to search the Bible for guidance in a situation where the State that is supposed to be "the servant of God" (Romans 13:16) betrays that calling and begins to serve Satan instead, then we can study chapter 13 of the Book of Revelations. Here the Roman State becomes the servant of the dragon (the devil) and takes on the appearance of a horrible beast. Its days are numbered because God will not permit his unfaithful servant to reign forever.*

## *2.2 Law and Order*

*The State makes use of the concept of law and order to maintain the status quo which it depicts as 'normal.' But this law is the unjust and discriminatory laws of apartheid and this order is the organized and institutionalized disorder of oppression. Anyone who wishes to change this law and this order is made to feel that they are lawless and disorderly. In other words they are made to feel guilty of sin.*

*It is indeed the duty of the State to maintain law and order, but it has not divine mandate to maintain any kind of law and order. Something does not become moral and just simply because the State has declared it to be a law and the organization of a society is not a just and right order simply because it has been instituted by the State. We cannot accept any kind of law and any kind of order. The concern of Christians is that we should have in our country a just law and a right order.*

*In the present crisis and especially during the State of Emergency, 'State Theology' has tried to re-establish the status quo of orderly discrimination,*

*exploitation and oppression by appealing to the consciences of its citizens in the name of law and order. It tries to make those who reject this law and this order feel that they are ungodly. The State here is not only usurping the right of the Church to make judgments about what would be right and just in our circumstances; it is going even further than that and demanding of us, in the name of law and order, an obedience that must be reserved for God alone. The South African State recognizes no authority beyond itself and therefore it will not allow anyone to question what it has chosen to define as 'law and order.' However, there are millions of Christians in South Africa today who are saying with Peter: "We must obey God rather than man (human beings)" (Acts 5:29).*

### *2.3 The Threat of Communism*

*We all know how the South African State makes use of the label 'communist.' Anything that threatens the status quo is labeled 'communist.' Anyone who opposes the State and especially anyone who rejects its theology is simply dismissed as a 'communist.' No account is taken of what communism really means. No thought is given to Why some people have indeed opted for communism or for some form of socialism. Even people who have not rejected capitalism are called 'communists' when they reject 'State Theology.' The State uses the label 'communist' in an uncritical and unexamined way as its symbol of evil.*

*'State Theology' like every other theology needs to have its own concrete symbol of evil. It must be able to symbolize what it regards as godless behavior and what ideas must be regarded as atheistic. It must have its own version of hell. And so it has invented, or rather taken over, the myth of communism. All evil is communistic and all communist or socialist ideas are atheistic and godless. Threats about hell-fire and eternal damnation are replaced by threats and warnings about the horrors of a tyrannical, totalitarian, atheistic and terrorist communist regime--a kind of hell-on-earth. This is a very convenient way of frightening some people into accepting any kind of domination and exploitation by a capitalist minority.*

*The South African State has its own heretical theology and according to that theology millions of Christians in South Africa (not to mention the rest of the world) are to be regarded as 'atheists.' It is significant that in earlier times when Christians rejected the gods of the Roman Empire they were branded as 'atheists'--by the State.*

#### *2.4 The God of the State*

*The State in its oppression of the people makes use again and again of the name of God. Military chaplains use it to encourage the South African Defence Force, police chaplains use it to strengthen policemen and cabinet ministers use it in their propaganda speeches. But perhaps the most revealing of all is the blasphemous use of God's holy name in the preamble to the new apartheid constitution.*

*In humble submission to Almighty God, who controls the destinies of nations and the history of peoples; who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them this their own; who has guided them from generation to generation; who has wondrously delivered them from the dangers that beset them.*

*This god is an idol. It is as mischievous, sinister and evil as any of the idols that the prophets of Israel had to contend with. Here we have a god who is historically on the side of the white settlers, who dispossesses black people of their land and who gives the major part of the land to his "chosen people."*

*It is the god of superior weapons who conquered those who were armed with nothing but spears. It is the god of the casspirs and hippos, the god of teargas, rubber bullets, sjamboks, prison cells and death sentences. Here is a god who exalts the proud and humbles the poor--the very opposite of the God of the Bible who "scatters the proud of heart, pulls down the mighty from their thrones and exalts the humble" (Lk 1:51-52). From a theological point of view the opposite of the God of the Bible is the devil, Satan. The god of the South African State is not merely an idol or false god, it is the devil disguised as Almighty God--the antichrist.*

*The oppressive South African regime will always be particularly abhorrent to Christians precisely because it makes use of Christianity to justify its evil ways. As Christians we simply cannot tolerate this blasphemous use of God's name and God's Word. 'State Theology' is not only heretical, it is blasphemous. Christians who are trying to remain faithful to the God of the Bible are even more horrified when they see that there are Churches, like the White Dutch Reformed Churches and other groups of Christians, who actually subscribe to this heretical theology. 'State Theology' needs its own prophets and it manages to find them from the ranks of those who profess to be ministers of God's Word in some of our Churches. What is particularly tragic for a Christian is to see the number of people who are fooled and confused by these false prophets and their heretical theology.*

### CHAPTER THREE

#### *Critique of 'Church Theology'*

*We have analyzed the statements that are made from time-to-time by the so-called 'English-speaking' Churches. We have looked at what Church leaders tend to say in their speeches and press statements about the apartheid regime and the present crisis. What we found running through all these pronouncements is a series of inter-related theological assumptions. These we have chosen to call 'Church Theology.' We are well aware of the fact that this theology does not express the faith of the majority of Christians in South Africa today who form the greater part of most of our Churches. Nevertheless the opinions expressed by Church leaders are regarded in the media and generally in our society as the official opinions of the Churches. We have therefore chosen to call these opinions 'Church Theology.' The crisis in which we find ourselves today compels us to question this theology, to question its assumptions, its implications and its practicality.*

*In a limited, guarded and cautious way this theology is critical of apartheid. Its criticism, however, is superficial and counter-productive because instead of*

*engaging in an in-depth analysis of the signs of our times, it relies upon a few stock ideas derived from Christian tradition and then uncritically and repeatedly applies them to our situation. The stock ideas used by almost all these Church leaders that we would like to examine here are: reconciliation (or peace), justice and non-violence.*

### *3.1 Reconciliation*

*'Church Theology' takes 'reconciliation' as the key to problem resolution. It talks about the need for reconciliation between white and black, or between all South Africans. 'Church Theology' often describes the Christian stance in the following way: "We must be fair. We must listen to both sides of the story. If the two sides can only meet to talk and negotiate they will sort out their differences and misunderstandings, and the conflict will be resolved." On the face of it this may sound very Christian. But is it?*

*The fallacy here is that 'Reconciliation' has been made into an absolute principle that must be applied in all cases of conflict or dissension. But not all cases of conflict are the same. We can imagine a private quarrel between two people or two groups whose differences are based upon misunderstandings. In such cases it would be appropriate to talk and negotiate to sort out the misunderstandings and to reconcile the two sides. But there are other conflicts in which one side is right and the other wrong. There are conflicts where one side is a fully armed and violent oppressor while the other side is defenseless and oppressed. There are conflicts that can only be described as the struggle between justice and injustice, good and evil, God and the devil. To speak of reconciling these two is not only a mistaken application of the Christian idea of reconciliation, it is a total betrayal of all that Christian faith has ever meant. Nowhere in the Bible or in Christian tradition has it ever been suggested that we ought to try to reconcile good and evil, God and the devil. We are supposed to do away with evil, injustice, oppression and sin--not come to terms with it. We are supposed to oppose, confront and reject the devil and not try to sup with the devil.*

*In our situation in South Africa today it would be totally unChristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed. Any such plea plays into the hands of the oppressor by trying to persuade those of us who are oppressed to accept our oppression and to become reconciled to the intolerable crimes that are committed against us. That is not Christian reconciliation, it is sin. It is asking us to become accomplices in our own oppression, to become servants of the devil. No reconciliation is possible in South Africa without justice.*

*What this means in practice is that no reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible without repentance. The Biblical teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness makes it quite clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless he or she repents of their sins. Nor are we expected to forgive the unrepentant sinner. When he or she repents we must be willing to forgive seventy times seven times but before that, we are expected to preach repentance to those who sin against us or against anyone. Reconciliation, forgiveness and negotiations will become our Christian duty in South Africa only when the apartheid regime shows signs of genuine repentance. The recent speech of PW Botha in Durban, the continued military repression of the people in the townships and the jailing of all its opponents is clear proof of the total lack of repentance on the part of the present regime.*

*There is nothing that we want more than true reconciliation and genuine peace--the peace that God wants and not the peace the world wants (Jn 14:27). The peace that God wants is based upon truth, repentance, justice and love. The peace that the world offers us is a unity that compromises the truth, covers over injustice and oppression and is totally motivated by selfishness. At this stage, like Jesus, we must expose this false peace, confront our oppressors and sow dissension. As Christians we must say with Jesus: "Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth. No, I tell you, but rather dissension" (Lk 12:51). There can be no real peace without justice and repentance.*





*not worked and it never will work. The present crisis with all its cruelty, brutality and callousness is ample proof of the ineffectiveness of years and years of Christian 'moralizing' about the need for love. The problem that we are dealing with here in South Africa is not merely a problem of personal guilt, it is a problem of structural injustice. People are suffering, people are being maimed and killed and tortured every day. We cannot just sit back and wait for the oppressor to see the light so that the oppressed can put out their hands and beg for the crumbs of some small reforms. That in itself would be degrading and oppressive.*

*There have been reforms and, no doubt, there will be further reforms in the near future. And it may well be that the Church's appeal to the consciences of whites has contributed marginally to the introduction of some of these reforms. But can such reforms ever be regarded as real change, as the introduction of a true and lasting justice. Reforms that come from the top are never satisfactory. They seldom do more than make the oppression more effective and more acceptable. If the oppressor does ever introduce reforms that might lead to real change this will come about because of strong pressure from those who are oppressed. True justice, God's justice, demands a radical change of structures. This can only come from below, from the oppressed themselves. God will bring about change through the oppressed as he did through the oppressed Hebrew slaves in Egypt. God does not bring his justice through reforms introduced by the Pharaoh's of this world.*

*Why then does 'Church Theology' appeal to the top rather than to the people who are suffering? Why does this theology not demand that the oppressed stand up for their rights and wage a struggle against their oppressors? Why does it not tell them that it is their duty to work for justice and to change the unjust structures? Perhaps the answer to these questions is that appeals from the 'top' in the Church tend very easily to be appeals to the 'top' in society. An appeal to the conscience of those who perpetuate the system of injustice must be made. But real change and true justice can only come from below, from the people--most of whom are Christians.*

### 3.3 Non-Violence

*The stance of 'Church Theology' on non-violence, expressed as a blanket condemnation of all that is called violence, has not only been unable to curb the violence of our situation, it has actually, although unwittingly, been a major contributing factor in the recent escalation of State violence. Here again non-violence has been made into an absolute principle that applies to anything anyone calls violence without regard for who is using it, which side they are on or what purpose they may have in mind. In our situation, this is simply counter-productive.*

*The problem for the Church here is the way the word violence is being used in the propaganda of the State. The State and the media have chosen to call violence what some people do in the townships as they struggle for their liberation i.e. throwing stones, burning cars and buildings and sometimes killing collaborators. But this excludes the structural, institutional and unrepentant violence of the State and especially the oppressive and naked violence of the police and the army. These things are not counted as violence. And even when they are acknowledged to be 'excessive,' they are called 'misconduct' or even 'atrocities' but never violence. Thus the phrase 'Violence in the townships' comes to mean what the young people are doing and not what the police are doing or what apartheid in general is doing to people. If one calls for nonviolence in such circumstances one appears to be criticizing the resistance of the people while justifying or at least overlooking the violence of the police and the State. That is how it is understood not only by the State and its supporters but also by the people who are struggling for their freedom. Violence, especially in our circumstances, is a loaded word.*

*It is true that Church statements and pronouncements do also condemn the violence of the police. They do say that they condemn all violence. But is it legitimate, especially in our circumstances, to use the same word violence in a blanket condemnation to cover the ruthless and repressive activities of the State and the desperate attempts of the people to defend themselves? Do such abstractions and generalizations not confuse the issue? How can acts of oppression, injustice and domination be equated with acts of resistance and*

*self-defense? Would it be legitimate to describe both the physical force used by a rapist and the physical force used by a woman trying to resist the rapist as violence?*

*Moreover there is nothing in the Bible or in our Christian tradition that would permit us to make such generalizations. Throughout the Bible the word violence is used to describe everything that is done by a wicked oppressor (e.g. Ps 72:12-14; Is 59:1-8; Jer 22:13-17; Amos 3:9-10; 6: 3; Mic 2:2; 3:1-3; 6:12). It is never used to describe the activities of Israel's armies in attempting to liberate themselves or to resist aggression. When Jesus says that we should turn the other cheek he is telling us that we must not take revenge; he is not saying that we should never defend ourselves or others. There is a long and consistent Christian tradition about the use of physical force to defend oneself against aggressors and tyrants. In other words there are circumstances when physical force may be used. They are very restrictive circumstances, only as the very last resort and only as the lesser of two evils, or, as Bonhoeffer put it, "the lesser of two evils." But it is simply not true to say that every possible use of physical force is violence and that no matter what the circumstances may be it is never permissible.*

*This is not to say that any use of force at any time by people who are oppressed is permissible simply because they are struggling for their liberation. There have been cases of killing and maiming that no Christian would want to approve of. But then our disapproval is based upon a concern for genuine liberation and a conviction that such acts are unnecessary, counter-productive and unjustifiable and not because they fall under a blanket condemnation of any use of physical force in any circumstance.*

*And finally what makes the professed non-violence of 'Church Theology' extremely suspect in the eyes of very many people, including ourselves, is the tacit support that many-Church leaders give to the growing militarisation of the South African State. How can one condemn all violence and then appoint chaplains to a very violent and oppressive army? How can one condemn all violence and then allow young white males to accept their conscription into the armed forces? Is it because the activities of the armed forces and the*

*police are counted as defensive? That raises very serious questions about whose side such Church leaders might be on. Why are the activities of young blacks in the townships not regarded as defensive?*

*In practice what one calls 'violence' and what one calls 'self-defense' seems to depend upon which side one is on. To call all physical force 'violence' is to try to be neutral and to refuse to make a judgment about who is right and who is wrong. The attempt to remain neutral in this kind of conflict is futile. Neutrality enables the status quo of oppression (and therefore violence) to continue. It is a way of giving tacit support to the oppressor.*

### *3.4 The Fundamental Problem*

*It is not enough to criticize 'Church Theology' we must also try to account for it. What is behind the mistakes and misunderstandings and inadequacies of this theology?*

*In the first place we can point to a lack of social analysis. We have seen how 'Church Theology' tends to make use of absolute principles like reconciliation, negotiation non-violence and peaceful solutions and applies them indiscriminately and uncritically to all situations. Very little attempt is made to analyze what is actually happening in our society and why it is happening. It is not possible to make valid moral judgment: about a society without first understanding that society. The analysis of apartheid that underpins 'Church Theology' is simply inadequate. The present crisis has now made it very clear that the efforts of Church leaders to promote effective and practical ways of changing our society have failed. This failure is due in no small measure to the fact that 'Church Theology' has not developed a social analysis that would enable it to understand the mechanics of injustice and oppression.*

*Closely linked to this, is the lack in 'Church Theology' of an adequate understanding of politics and political strategy. Changing the structures of a society is fundamentally a matter of politics. It requires a political strategy based upon a clear social or political analysis. The Church has to address itself to these strategies and to the analysis upon which they are based. It is*

*into this political situation that the Church has to bring the gospel. Not as an alternative solution to our problems as if the gospel provided us with a non-political solution to political problems. There is no specifically Christian solution. There will be a Christian way of approaching the political solutions, a Christian spirit and motivation and attitude. But there is no way of bypassing politics and political strategies.*

*But we have still not pinpointed the fundamental problem. Why has 'Church Theology' not developed a social analysis? Why does it have an inadequate understanding of the need for political strategies? And why does it make a virtue of neutrality and sitting on the sidelines?*

*The answer must be sought in the type of faith and spirituality that has dominated Church life for centuries. As we all know, spirituality has tended to be another-worldly affair that has very little, if anything at all, to do with the affairs of this world. Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the Church. Moreover, spirituality has also been understood to be purely private and individualistic. Public affairs and social problems were thought to be beyond the sphere of spirituality. And finally the spirituality we inherit tends to rely upon God to intervene in his own good time to put right what is wrong in the world. That leaves very little for human beings to do except to pray for God's intervention.*

*It is precisely this kind of spirituality that, when faced with the present crisis in South Africa, leaves so many Christians and Church leaders in a state of near paralysis.*

*It hardly needs saying that this kind of faith and this type of spirituality has no biblical foundation. The Bible does not separate the human person from the world in which he or she lives; it does not separate the individual from the social or one's private life from one's public life. God redeems the whole person as part of his whole creation (Rom 8:18-24). A truly biblical spirituality would penetrate into every 'aspect of human existence and would exclude nothing from God's redemptive will. Biblical faith is prophetically relevant to everything that happens in the world.*

## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Towards a Prophetic Theology*

*Our present KAIROS calls for a response from Christians that is biblical, spiritual, pastoral and, above all, prophetic. It is not enough in these circumstances to repeat generalized Christian principles. We need a bold and incisive response that is prophetic because it speaks to the particular circumstances of this crisis, a response that does not give the impression of sitting on the fence but is clearly and unambiguously taking a stand.*

- *Social Analysis*

*The first task of a prophetic theology for our times would be an attempt at social analysis or what Jesus would call "reading the signs of the times" (Mt 16:3) or "interpreting this KAIROS" (Lk 12:56). It is not possible to do this in any detail in the document but we must start with at least the broad outlines of an analysis of the conflict in which we find ourselves.*

*It would be quite wrong to see the present conflict as simply a racial war. The racial component is there but we are not dealing with two equal races or nations each with their own selfish group interests. The situation we are dealing with here is one of oppression. The conflict is between an oppressor and the oppressed. The conflict between two irreconcilable causes or interests in which the one is just and the other is unjust.*

*On the one hand we have the interests of those who benefit from the status quo and who are determined to maintain it at any cost, even at the cost of millions of lives. It is in their interests to introduce a number of reforms in order to ensure that the system is not radically changed and that they can continue to benefit from the system because it favors them and enables them to accumulate a great deal of wealth and to maintain an exceptionally high standard of living. And they want to make sure that it stays that way even if some adjustments are needed.*

*On the other hand we have those who do not benefit in any way from the system the way it is now. They are treated as mere labor units, paid starvation wages, separated from their families by migratory labor, moved about like cattle and dumped in homelands to starve--and all for the benefit of a privileged minority. They have no say in the system and are supposed to be grateful for the concessions that are offered to them like crumbs. It is not in their interests to allow this system to continue even in some 'reformed' or 'revised' form. They are determined to change the system radically so that it no longer benefits only the privileged few. And they are willing to do this even at the cost of their own lives. What they want is justice for all.*

*This is our situation of civil war or revolution. The one side is committed to maintaining the system at all costs and the other side is committed to changing it at all costs. There are two conflicting projects here and no compromise is possible. Either we have full and equal justice for all or we don't.*

*The Bible has a great deal to say about this kind of conflict, about a world that is divided into oppressors and oppressed.*

- *Oppression in the Bible*

*When we search the Bible for a message about oppression we discover, as others throughout the world are discovering, that oppression is a central theme that runs right through the Old and New Testaments. The biblical scholars who have taken the trouble to study the theme of oppression in the Bible have discovered that there are no less than twenty different root words in Hebrew to describe oppression. As one author says, oppression is "a basic structural category of biblical theology" (TD Hanks, God So Loved the Third World, Orbis 1983 p 4).*

*Moreover the description of oppression in the Bible is concrete and vivid. The Bible describes oppression as the experience of being crushed, degraded, humiliated, exploited, impoverished, defrauded, deceived and enslaved. And the oppressors are described as cruel, ruthless, arrogant, greedy, violent and*



*tyrannical and as the enemy. Such descriptions could only have been written originally by people who had had a long and painful experience of what it means to be oppressed. And indeed nearly 90 percent of the history of the Jewish and later the Christian people whose story is told in the Bible, is a history of domestic or international oppression. Israel as a nation was built upon the painful experience of oppression and repression as slaves in Egypt. But what made all the difference for this particular group of oppressed people was the revelation of Yahweh. God revealed himself as Yahweh, the one who has compassion on those who suffer and who liberates them from their oppressors.*

*"I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians.... The cry of the sons of Israel has come to me, and I have witnessed the way in which the Egyptians oppress them." (Ex 3:7-9)*

*Throughout the Bible God appears as the liberator of the oppressed. He is not neutral. He does not attempt to reconcile Moses and Pharaoh, to reconcile the Hebrew slaves with their Egyptian oppressors or to reconcile the Jewish people with any of their late oppressors. Oppression is sin and it cannot be compromised with, it must be done away with. God takes sides with the oppressed. As we read in Psalm 103:6 (JB) "God who does what is right, is always on the side of the oppressed."*

*Nor is this identification with the oppressed confined to the Old Testament. When Jesus stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth to announce his mission he made use of the words of Isaiah.*

*"The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour." (Lk 4:18-19)*

*There can be no doubt that Jesus is here taking up the cause of the poor and the oppressed. He has identified himself with their interests. Not that he is*

*unconcerned about the rich and the oppressor. These he calls to repentance. The oppressed Christians of South Africa have known for a long time that they are united to Christ in their sufferings. By his own sufferings and his death on the cross he became a victim of oppression and violence. He is with us in our oppression.*

- *Tyranny in the Christian Tradition*

*There is a long Christian tradition relating to oppression, but the word that has been used most frequently to describe this particular form of sinfulness is the word 'tyranny'. According to this tradition once it is established beyond doubt that a particular ruler is a tyrant or that a particular regime is tyrannical, it forfeits the moral right to govern and the people acquire the right to resist and to find the means to protect their own interests against injustice and oppression. In other words a tyrannical regime has no moral legitimacy . It may be the de facto government and it may even be recognized by other governments and therefore be the de iure or legal government. But if it is a tyrannical regime, it is, from a moral and theological point of view, illegitimate. There are indeed some differences of opinion in the Christian tradition about the means that might be used to replace a tyrant but there has not been any doubt about our Christian duty to refuse to co-operate with tyranny and to do whatever we can to remove it.*

*There are indeed some differences of opinion in the Christian tradition about the means that might be used to replace a tyrant but there has not been any doubt about our Christian duty to refuse to co-operate with tyranny and to do whatever we can to remove it.*

*Of course everything hinges on the definition of a tyrant. At what point does a government become a tyrannical regime?*

*The traditional Latin definition of a tyrant is hostis boni communis - an enemy of the common good. The purpose of all government is the promotion of what is called the common good of the people governed. To promote the common good is to govern in the interests of, and for the benefit of, all the people.*



*Apartheid is a system whereby a minority regime elected by one small section of the population is given an explicit mandate to govern in the interests of, and for the benefit of, the white community. Such a mandate or policy is by definition hostile to the common good of all the people. In fact because it tries to rule in the exclusive interests of whites and not in the interests of all, it ends up ruling in a way that is not even in the interests of those same whites. It becomes an enemy of all the people. A totalitarian regime. A reign of terror.*

*This also means that the apartheid minority regime is irreformable (sic). We cannot expect the apartheid regime to experience a conversion or change of heart and totally abandon the policy of apartheid. It has no mandate from its electorate to do so. Any reforms or adjustments it might make would have to be done in the interests of who elected it. Individual members of the government could experience a real conversion and repent but, if they did, they would simply have to follow this through by leaving a regime that was elected and put into power precisely because of its policy of apartheid.*

*And that is why we have reached the present impasse. As the oppressed majority becomes more insistent and puts more and more pressure on the tyrant by means of boycotts, strikes, uprisings, burnings and even armed struggle, the more tyrannical will regime become. On the one hand it will use repressive measures: detentions, trials, killings, torture, bannings, propaganda, states of emergency and other desperate and tyrannical methods. And on the other hand it will introduce reforms that will always be unacceptable to the majority because all its reforms must ensure that the minority remains on top.*

*A regime that is in principle the enemy of the people cannot suddenly begin to rule in the interests of all the people. It can only be replaced by another government--one that has been elected by the majority of the people with an explicit mandate to govern in the interests of all the people.*

*A regime that has made itself the enemy of the people has thereby also made itself the enemy of God. People are made in the image and likeness of God and whatever to the least of them we do to God (Mt 25:49, 45).*

*To say that the State or the regime is the enemy of God is not to say that all those who support the system are aware of this. On the whole they simply do not know what they are doing. Many people have been blinded by the regime's propaganda. They are frequently quite ignorant of the consequences of their stance. However, such blindness does not make the State any less tyrannical or any less of an enemy of the people and an enemy of God.*

*On the other hand the fact that the State is tyrannical and an enemy of God is no excuse for hatred. As Christians we are called upon to love our enemies (Mt 5:44). It is not said that we should not or will not have enemies or that we should not identify tyrannical regimes as indeed our enemies. But once we have identified our enemies, we must endeavor to love them. That is not always easy. But then we must also remember that the most loving thing we can do for both the oppressed and for our enemies who are oppressors is to eliminate the oppression, remove the tyrants from power and establish a just government for the common good of all the people .*

- *A Message of Hope*

*At the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ and at the very center of all true prophecy is a message of hope. Nothing could be more relevant and more necessary at this moment of crisis in South Africa than the Christian message of hope.*

*Jesus has taught us to speak of this hope as the coming of God's kingdom. We believe that God is at work in our world turning hopeless and evil situations to good so that his "Kingdom may come" and his "Will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." We believe that goodness and justice and love will triumph in the end and that tyranny and that tyranny and oppression cannot last forever. One day "all tears will be wiped away" (Rev 7:17; 21:4) and "the lamb will he down with the lion" (Is 11:6). True peace and true reconciliation are not only desirable, they are assured and guaranteed. This is our faith and our hope.*

*Why is it that this powerful message of hope has not been highlighted in 'Church Theology,' in the statements and pronouncements of Church leaders? Is it because they have been addressing themselves to the oppressor rather than to the oppressed? Is it because they do not want to encourage the oppressed to be too hopeful for too much?*

*As the crisis deepens day-by-day, what both the oppressor and the oppressed can legitimately demand of the Churches is a message of hope. Most of the oppressed people in South Africa today and especially the youth do have hope. They are acting courageously and fearlessly because they have a sure hope that liberation will come. Often enough their bodies are broken but nothing can now break their spirit. But hope needs to be confirmed. Hope needs to be maintained and strengthened. Hope needs to be spread. The people need to hear it said again and again that God is with them.*

*On the other hand the oppressor and those who believe the propaganda of the oppressor are desperately fearful. They must be made aware of the diabolical evils of the present system and they must be called to repentance but they must also be given something to hope for. At present they have false hopes. They hope to maintain the status quo and their special privileges with perhaps some adjustments and they fear any real alternative. But there is much more than that to hope for and nothing to fear. Can the Christian message of hope not help them in this matter?*

*There is hope. There is hope for all of us. But the road to that hope is going to be very hard and very painful. The conflict and the struggle will have to intensify in the months and years ahead because there is no other way to remove the injustice and oppression. But God is with us. We can only learn to become the instruments of his peace even unto death. We must participate in the cross of Christ if we are to have the hope of participating in his resurrection.*

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *Challenge to Action*

#### *5.1 God Sides with the Oppressed*

*To say that the Church must now take sides unequivocally and consistently with the poor and the oppressed is to overlook the fact that the majority of Christians in South Africa have already done so. By far the greater part of the Church in South Africa is poor and oppressed. Of course it cannot be taken for granted that everyone who is oppressed has taken up their own cause and is struggling for their own liberation. Nor can it be assumed that all oppressed Christians are fully aware of the fact that their cause is God's cause. Nevertheless it remains true that the Church is already on the side of the oppressed because that is where the majority of its members are to be found. This fact needs to be appropriated and confirmed by the Church as a whole.*

*At the beginning of this document it was pointed out that the present crisis has highlighted the divisions in the Church. We are a divided Church precisely because not all the members of our Churches have taken sides against oppression. In other words not all Christians have united themselves with God "who is always on the side of the oppressed" (Ps 103:6). As far as the present crisis is concerned, there is only one way forward to Church unity and that is for those Christians who find themselves on the side of the oppressor or sitting on the fence, to cross over to the other side to be united in faith and action with those who are oppressed. Unity and reconciliation within the Church itself is only possible around God and Jesus Christ who are to be found on the side of the poor and the oppressed.*

*If this is what the Church must become, if this is what the Church as a whole must have as its project, how then are we to translate it into concrete and effective action?*

## 5.2 Participation in the Struggle

*Christians, if they are not doing so already, must quite simply participate in the struggle for liberation and for a just society. The campaigns of the people, from consumer boycotts to stayaways, need to be supported and encouraged by the Church. Criticism will sometimes be necessary but encouragement and support will also be necessary. In other words the present crisis challenges the whole Church to move beyond a mere 'ambulance ministry' to a ministry of involvement and participation.*

## 5.3 Transforming Church Activities

*The Church has its own specific activities: Sunday services, communion services, baptisms, Sunday school, funerals and so forth. It also has its specific way of expressing its faith and its commitment i.e. in the form of confessions of faith. All of these activities must be re-shaped to be more fully consistent with a prophetic faith related to the KAIROS that God is offering us today. The evil forces we speak of in baptism must be named. We know what these evil forces are in South Africa today. The unity and sharing we profess in our communion services or Masses must be named. It is the solidarity of the people inviting all to join in the struggle for God's peace in South Africa. The repentance we preach must be named. It is repentance for our share of the guilt for the suffering and oppression in our country.*

*Much of what we do in our Church services has lost its relevance to the poor and the oppressed. Our services and sacraments have been appropriated to serve the need of the individual for comfort and security. Now these same Church activities must be reappropriated to serve the real religious needs of all the people and to further the liberating mission of God and the Church in the world.*

## 5.4 Special Campaigns

*Over and above its regular activities the Church would need to have special programmes, projects and campaigns because of the special needs of the*



*struggle for liberation in South Africa today. But there is a very important caution here. The Church must avoid becoming a 'Third Force,' a force between the oppressor and the oppressed. The Church's programmes and campaigns must not duplicate what the people's organizations are already doing and, even more seriously, the Church must not confuse the issue by having programmes that run counter to the struggles of those political organizations that truly represent the grievances and demands of the people. Consultation, co-ordination and co-operation will be needed. We all have the same goals even when we differ about the final significance of what we are struggling for.*

### *5.5 Civil Disobedience*

*Once it is established that the present regime has no moral legitimacy and is in fact a tyrannical regime certain things follow for the Church and its activities. In the first place the Church cannot collaborate with tyranny. It cannot or should not do any thing that appears to give legitimacy to a morally illegitimate regime. Secondly, that Church should not only pray for a change of government, it should also mobilize its members in every parish to begin to think and work and plan for a change of government in South Africa. We must begin to look ahead and begin working now with firm hope and faith for a better future. And finally the moral illegitimacy of the apartheid regime means that the Church will have to be involved at times in civil disobedience. A Church that takes its responsibilities seriously in these circumstances will sometimes have to confront and to disobey the State in order to obey God.*

### *5.6 Moral Guidance*

*The people look to the Church, especially in the midst of our present crisis, for moral guidance. In order to provide this the Church must first make its stand absolutely clear and never tire of explaining and dialoguing about it. It must then help people to understand their rights and their duties. There must be no misunderstanding about the moral duty of all who are oppressed to resist oppression and to struggle for liberation and justice. The Church will also find*

*that at times it does need to curb excesses and to appeal to the consciences of those who act thoughtlessly and wildly.*

*But the Church of Jesus Christ is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation. The Church should challenge, inspire and motivate people. It has a message of the cross that inspires us to make sacrifices for justice and liberation. It has a message of hope that challenges us to wake up and to act with hope and confidence. The Church must preach this message not only in words and sermons and statements but also through its actions, programmes, campaigns and divine services.*

### *Conclusion*

*As we said in the beginning, there is nothing final about this document. Our hope is that it will stimulate discussion, debate, reflection and prayer, but, above all, that it will lead to action. We invite all committed Christians to take this matter further, to do more research, to develop the themes we have presented here or to criticize them and to return to the Bible, as we have tried to do, with the question raised by the crisis of our times.*

*Although the document suggests various modes of involvement it does not prescribe the particular actions anyone should take. We call upon all those who are committed to this prophetic form of theology to use the document for discussion in groups, small and big, to determine an appropriate form of action, depending on their particular situation, and to take up the action with other related groups and organizations.*

*The challenge to renewal and action that we have set out here is addressed to the Church. But that does not mean that it is intended only for Church leaders. The challenge of the faith and of our present KAIROS is addressed to all who bear the name Christian. None of us can simply sit back and wait to be told what to do by our Church leaders or anyone else. We must all accept responsibility for acting and living out our Christian faith in these circumstances. We pray that God will help all of us to translate the challenge of our times into action.*

*We as theologians (both lay and professional), have been greatly challenged by our own reflections, our exchange of ideas and our discoveries as we met together in smaller and larger groups to prepare this document or to suggest amendments to it. We are convinced that this challenge comes from God and that it is addressed to all of us. We see the present crisis or KAIROS as indeed a divine visitation.*

*And finally we also like to call upon our Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world to give us the necessary support in this regard so that the daily loss of so many young lives may be brought to a speedy end.*

*We, the undersigned, take joint responsibility for what is presented in this document, not as a final statement of the truth but as the direction in which God is leading us at this moment or our history.*

## Chapter One: Introduction

### 1.1 Relevance

The Kairos Document (KD) analysed in an unprecedented way the stances the Church could take as part of the greater community of South Africa and as part of civil society in the latter part of the 1980s, challenging the churches to accept their prophetic role in apartheid South Africa. It created quite a stir and led to numerous initiatives taken by the ecumenical community. However, since the institution of a democratic dispensation in 1994, the churches often appear paralysed and ominously silent when confronted by the challenges of the new South Africa.

The problem appears both on a theological and a practical level. When in 1990 when then state president FW de Klerk made his groundbreaking announcement about the imminent release of all political prisoners including Nelson Mandela in particular, the Church, which was in a relatively better position to challenge the then status quo, appeared to have been caught on the wrong foot. Since then there has been no visible cohesive response to the new dispensation. It is a debatable question whether the inclusion of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), the South African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) and The Evangelical Association of South Africa (TEASA) within the political negotiations would have made a difference in securing leverage for the Church as a whole.

Attempts have been made by the SACC to realign themselves in the new South Africa but little is heard of these endeavours. Does the Church in South Africa not think that the existing disunity constitutes a crisis? How much of the entrapments of power, status-seeking and one-upmanship is hindering the Church from being the Church in South Africa? Situations still exist where Christians still can not receive Holy Communion together as in the case of Roman Catholics, for example. With the Orthodox Church, members first have bread and wine during Holy Communion, after which non-members are



### **1.3 Rationale**

The researcher visited Canada for just a little over a year (from June 2003 to July 2004) at the invitation of the United Church of Canada. The impression gained by him was that South Africans do not appear to appreciate what a beautiful country they live in, and how in spite of all the differences, South Africans managed to build a very progressive society, even though it is a mixture of both developed and developing communities. South Africans tend to spend their time on stressing their differences rather than on what unites them. This thesis aims to contribute towards the reconciliation theme as set out by the aim of the new Constitution in which democratic South Africa is now governed.

One of the strong points and suggestions of the KD is that theology should be done in conjunction with social analysis. The challenges facing South Africa today are still clearly inequalities that are a legacy of the past.

The thesis also examines how the Church relates to power and status. And it shows that the preferential option for the poor is still a valid approach for the church in a democrat dispensation.

### **1.4 The research question**

The challenge for the Church today is how to be constructively involved in the transformation of society, from the past period of oppression to the present era of liberation and reconstruction. Could issues raised by the KD be relevant to the Church today? The Church seems to be continuing to produce what Father Leo Booth calls religious addicts:

I define religious addiction as using God, a church, or a belief system as an escape from reality, in an attempt to find or elevate a sense of self-worth or well-being. It is using God or religion as a fix...

These religious addicts never experience God first hand, never truly get to know God. They only know what somebody has told them about

God. If what they are told about God is dysfunctional, then their relationship with God becomes dysfunctional. (1991:38ff)

The main question that this thesis addresses is whether the Kairos Document could still be relevant for the Church in South Africa today and whether its concerns could once again enable the Church to rise to the challenges stated in the KD, and whether, mindful of the KD's challenges to the Church, it can offer responses and play a meaningful role towards true reconciliation and the reconstruction in the country.

Is the Church gearing up its membership to meet the challenges of today in South Africa?

## 1.5 Hypothesis

The Kairos Document was produced by, in the researcher's view, the church within the Church; that is, a few prophetic individuals who were church activists, as an offering that was meant to shake the Church from its slumbers. It succeeded in galvanising many people through the *Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT)* to begin questioning their own stance within the Church and against injustice. Whilst there are some who feel that the Kairos Document is outdated today, the researcher strongly believes that the KD's theological analysis, critique and method still remain relevant, and will continue to guide the Church in its relations within a democratically-elected Government, to challenge both the State and the wider community to address the many needs of the country in a responsible manner. The time to do that is now, while the relations between State and Church are still, generally speaking, harmonious and the integrity of both entities remains unquestionable.

Even if there are some significant, laudable, and radical changes present in the new South African context, a re-examination of the KD still challenges the churches to:



- support the present government in an informed manner
- speak out against those actions which not only offend justice but bring disharmony within the community of South Africa
- give guidance to the country while empowering their followers to take more seriously responsibility for their own lives, not always wait for the government “to do things for them”
- take issues of governance as part of a believer’s responsibility, to inculcate the values that match the rights entrenched in the South African Constitution among its members.

## **1.6 Research methodology**

The research methodology is devised to assist the researcher to determine the extent to which Church-State relations are conducted within South Africa today. It embraces the latest strategies that came in to play during the period of transition. The research focuses on one of the strongest organs of civil society, the Church, and how it interacts with government as well as the governed, in order to deepen a sustained democracy in the country. The research challenges the Church to re-evaluate its role, vis-à-vis the government, and hopefully discover new ways in which to answer to its prophetic calling.

The thesis contains both a qualitative and a quantitative approach. There are notes on the theory behind the methodology as well as the practicalities involved in the exercise, as portrayed in the introductory chapter.

## **1.7 Quantitative research (literary)**

This involved a literature study of writers such as Albert Nolan, Frank Chikane, and many others who had a bearing on the production of the Kairos Document - which is the primary source of the research. There is also a reference to other material produced during the very turbulent eighties in South Africa – and even before - in which churches such as the SACBC, the



SACC, the Afrikaans churches as well as the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches, voiced their opinions. The South African context that produced the KD needs to be thoroughly understood.

### **1.8 Qualitative research (empirical)**

The researcher contacted a number of theologians and practitioners at UNISA, University of Pretoria, University of Natal – as well as other church activists – to capture their views on the significance of the KD for the new South Africa. For this purpose a questionnaire was prepared with the relevant questions.

### **1.9 Researcher as participant-observer**

As someone who has lived through apartheid and now lives in the new dispensation in South Africa, the writer cannot be detached from what is happening in the country. The researcher was ordained into the ministry of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in 1970. He became chairperson of Diakonia (now Diakonia Council of Churches) in Durban from 1981 to 1983, during the turbulent years of the Church's involvement in the struggle for liberation in Durban. He was Director of Mission and Evangelism of the *S A Council of Churches*, from 1987 to 1991. From 1994 to 2000 he was the Director of the Institute for Contextual Theology. He was, for thirteen years, refused a passport by the SA Government to go abroad. (See Knighton-Fit J, 2003:331)

The researcher therefore must be regarded as a participant observer. Although a proper scientific distance between the researcher and the subject matter will be of importance, it is also evident that his own experience and thinking is reflected in the thesis.

The researcher agrees with Eckhard Tolle's averment:

One of the greatest insights that has come out of modern physics is that of the unity between the observer and the observed; the person conducting the experiment – the observing consciousness – cannot be separated from the observed phenomena... (1997:167)

## **1.10 Terminology**

### **Afrikaners**

“Afrikaners’ is a term commonly used to refer to Dutch descendents of settlers who came to South Africa in 1652 brought by the Dutch East Indian Company as its servants”. (Ngcokovane, 1989:23)

### **Apartheid**

Ngcokovane describes apartheid as follows:

Apartheid simply means ‘separation’ or ‘apartness’. In South Africa it is a system of complete separation of the races from birth to death. It is also the total control of human beings through the legal structure of the state. (1989:23)

### **Black Christmas**

This was an escalation of the fight against apartheid that was started by Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) to force business to pressurise the government towards change. Christmas is the most commercial time when businesses make a lot of money. Black Christmas meant that there could be no celebrations as long as people were being tortured and killed by apartheid forces and as long as their rights as citizens of the country were denied. It was therefore a boycott from buying goods from town especially during Christmas. It was then called black Christmas.

## **Black Consciousness**

This is a philosophy that was adapted for South Africa from the African-Americans in America by Stephen Bantu Biko who started the South African Students Organisation (SASO) (Speckman, 2001:87) Maimela states that SASO propounded a philosophy of Black Consciousness with the aim to liberate Blacks first from their self-incurred mental and psychological bondage, to make Blacks aware who they are as a people and what their position is in society. (1987:66)

## **Blacks**

The term came about in its positive form as a result of the Black Consciousness Movement of the late sixties and early seventies in South Africa. It introduced a sense of solidarity and pride among the three oppressed South African groups... (Ngcokovane, 1989:xi)

In South Africa Blacks also include what those who are of a fairer skin who are regarded as so-called Coloureds, and those of Indian descent called Indians. Liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan African Congress (PAC), Azanian People's Organisation usually include all three black groups under the terms Blacks. The National Party, which was the governing party and custodians of statutory apartheid, strategically divided the three groups so as to follow the "divide and rule" method.

## **Distinction between a democratically-elected government and a democratic government**

A democratically-elected government does not necessarily become a democratic government. Democracy depends a lot on what kind of governance prevails in the country, and whether such an elected government is to a large extent doing the will of the people in a true sense of a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

## **Dutch Reformed Church/ Dutch Reformed Family**

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) refers to the first church to be founded by the Dutch colonists and settlers who found their way to the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. For a century and a half the DRC was the only church allowed to operate in the country. The DRC initially counted believers from all racial groups among its membership, but in 1857 Synod decided that separate communion services may be allowed for different racial groups, which eventually resulted in the foundation of four churches within the DRC family: a church for Whites (the DRC), for Coloureds (DRC Mission Church), for Blacks (DRC in Africa) and for Indians (the Reformed Church in Africa)). A process to reunite the churches again has proved to be arduous. Apart from the DRC two smaller Afrikaans churches were also established in South Africa, the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk and the Gereformeerde Kerk (Doppers).

## **The Kairos Document (KD)**

This was a document produced by the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT), which was started by a concerned group of Christians as a response to State pressure (see below under *A Series of Initiatives*). ICT is the producer and custodian of the Kairos Document (KD). Kairos is a Greek word meaning the moment of truth, a given opportunity. The KD was written by a few theologians, notably, Frank Chikane, Albert Nolan forming the main committee. This happened at the height of apartheid in 1985. This document was circulated to most ministers of religion who were regarded as Christian activists. If they agreed with the contents they signed the document. The KD particularly identified three types of theology: State, Church and Prophetic theology.

## **South African Council of Churches (SACC)**

This is a gathering of traditionally mostly English-speaking churches that had many confrontations with the apartheid government. It switched from a

Council of Christians to a Council of Churches in 1968. SACC is aligned to the World Council of Churches (WCC). SACC boasts previous General Secretaries such as then Bishop Desmond Tutu and Beyers Naude. Since the 1990s the SACC opened its ranks to, inter alia, the Afrikaans churches.

### **South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC)**

All the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church belong to this organization and act as the equivalent of the SACC within the Catholic Church. They exclude all other denominations. The SACBC does work closely with the SACC and from time to time issues statements pertaining to ethical positions and the situation in the country.

### **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

In order to understand the “truth” behind the apartheid past in South Africa, to endeavour to heal the pain and the many injustices of the apartheid past, to facilitate amnesty to perpetrators, to address the various needs of the victims of apartheid, as well as to initiate initiatives to foster nation building and reconciliation, the S A Truth and Reconciliation Commission was appointed by Parliament in 1995. From January 1996 the TRC criss-crossed the country, holding numerous hearings and workshops, before producing its final report (29 October 1998). The researcher presented the ICT’s submission to the TRC in East London (November 1997).

### **The use of “Church” and “church”**

Where the researcher uses Church it is meant the whole Church. Where lower case is used it is meant a denomination. Where the quotation uses lower case, the researcher has not interfered with the way it is written.

## **1.11 Study outline**

### **1.11.1 Chapter One: Introduction**

The relevance of the subject, the research aims, the hypothesis, the methodology, as well as the most important definitions used in the research is discussed.

### **1.11.2 Chapter Two: Church-State relations under the spotlight again**

From 1948 when the National Party took over until about 1985 when the Kairos Document was published, the Church had been in the spotlight. A brief overview of the relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and the then apartheid government is included in this chapter. By 2009 there has been fifteen years of a government that has been elected democratically. These were early days for South Africa. Life is beginning to unfold in a very special and unusual way. No one could have foreseen that South Africa would have changed so radically within such a few years. Consider the following points:

1. Almost all the people who are governing today are people who had directly been involved in the struggle for the liberation of the country. Many of them are people of one faith or another, with the majority being Christian. The SACC could find it easy to speak of a “critical solidarity” with the State because some of her own former employees have had something to do with the State (for example, the Rev Frank Chikane and Brigalia Bam, to name just a few). There is thus a certain loyalty and comradeship shared between a majority of government members and church officials. The SACC is familiar with most government members. SACC can vouch for them. The ruling party has the Freedom Charter as its point of departure.
2. It is the first time that South Africans have had to deal with a democratically-elected government.



The DRC man responded, “That is true. But you can still cross a different river the same wrong way”. It is this kind of challenge that calls for vigilance so that South Africa will never regress to the same level as it did during the days of apartheid.

### **1.11.3 Chapter Three: The Kairos Document: Yesterday and Today**

This chapter looks at the history and content of the KD, spelling out the compelling reasons that brought about the production of the document. There were other documents such as *The Message to the People of South Africa* in which the Church played a meaningful role to bring about changes within the country.

The chapter examines why it became necessary to produce these documents. It will be seen that there were other statements during that same period which emanated from the churches as they were struggling to fulfil their role as the voice of the voiceless. The text and history of the KD and the reaction to it have been included in this chapter.

### **1.11.4 Chapter Four: The Kairos Document: A theological analysis**

The Kairos Document has been printed in full at the start of this thesis. An examination of the theological content of the KD is in this manner: there is an analysis and evaluation of the pronouncements of the KD on what was called *Church* Theology, *State* Theology and *Prophetic* Theology in this chapter and the implications of the three theological positions is discussed as well as the implications for South Africa today.

### **1.11.5 Chapter Five: From the old to a new Kairos?**

The argument for the possibility of a New Kairos has been presented in this chapter. Some issues discussed, are:



- How does the TRC impact the new kairos in South Africa? Did the TRC help or hinder reconciliation? Was the TRC able to be an antidote to the toxicity of apartheid?
- An examination of the role of faith-based communities in recreating new values for South Africa within the new dispensation
- What is the imperative towards the abuse of power? What safeguards need to be in place towards this? What can the Church do to make sure that people are so empowered that they themselves can make sure that the democratic gains made politically are translated into similar gains in the Church and in the economic field?
- Political liberation is turning out differently from what was expected because there is no commensurate economic justice. The case for economic justice therefore becomes part of the new kairos as much as the issue of poverty continues to plague the country. It has also been necessary to look at how new found power can be used or abused to affirm or negate respectively the new found freedom.

#### **1.11.6 Chapter Six: Conclusion**

While the Church has a clear role in dealing with the contradictions existing within South African society it also has to put its house in order. This is a summary of the arguments which show certain aspects of the KD are still relevant not just to the Church itself but also in its dealings with the State. The way forward would be for the Church, while engaged in reconstruction, to continue to protect and secure the new found freedom in South Africa. There will also be a few recommendations that would need further research.

## Chapter Two: Church-State relations under the spotlight again

### 2.1 Introduction

In his response to the debate on the State of the Nation address, the President Thabo Mbeki felt constrained to quote Pieter Mulder (Afrikaans-speaking leader of the opposition Freedom Front Party) who had stated the following:

We do not know each other and do not debate with each other. Two minutes on the podium are not debates...

Responding, Mbeki said:

We are emerging but only emerging slowly and painfully, out of a deeply fractured society. This is a society which continues to be characterized by deep fissures which separate the black people from the white, the hungry from the prosperous, the urban from the rural, the male from the female, the disabled from the rest...

It is therefore not an idle thing to imagine that out of this amalgam of inequity, where some have everything and others have nothing, where some instinctively behave as superiors and others know it as a matter of fact that they are seen as inferior, where some must experience change otherwise they perish, and others fear they will perish as a result of change – is it not an idle thing to imagine that out of all this there can emerge a national consensus? (Response of the then President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, to the debate on the State of the Nation, [www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0216](http://www.dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/2007/mbek0216))

In the light of the above the researcher briefly examines how the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) assisted the

country to move towards reconciliation. The thesis also examines whether the Church did or did not take it forward. As this is also the space to debate Church-State relations when there is still harmony and rapport between Church and State, a critique of the KD assists to give the Church some leverage to deal with the new context. In the preface to the Revised Edition, the writers of the KD state:

We hope that it will serve as a never-ending stimulus to keep the cycle of action-reflection-action moving forward. (KD Preface, September 1986)

As already stated in Chapter One, the present time in which South Africa exists is unique because at the time of writing (2009), it is only fifteen years after the first democratic elections were held in South Africa.

The title of this chapter mentions that Church-State relations are in the spotlight again because it was not the first time that that had been so. The one most notable struggle between Church and State stemmed from what became known as the Cottesloe Consultation of December, 1960. The Sharpeville massacre had necessitated the need for a rethink among serious-minded Church leaders. The World Council of Churches had got involved in the South African struggle for justice and a Rev Bilheimer of the WCC visited South Africa and started having talks with Church leaders such as Dr JB Webb, Bishop Reeves and others.

## **2.2 Church–State relations in the 1950s and 1960s**

### **2.2.1 The role of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)**

While the Dutch Reformed Church was overtly for segregation, English-speaking churches also followed silently and at times not so silently behind in their own discriminating way. This was acknowledged by the confession made in the Rustenburg Declaration (1991, see below). The assembled churches made the following confession regarding complicity in apartheid:

As representatives of the Christian Church in South Africa, we recognise that the South African situation owes much to the context of western colonialism, to the stifling of conscience by inherited social attitudes which blind communities to the wrong they inflict and to a weakness common to the worldwide Church in dealing with social evil. Now, however, we confess our own sin and acknowledge our part in the heretical policy of apartheid which has led to such extreme suffering for so many in our land... (Alberts and Chikane, 1991:277, 2.2)

We therefore confess that we have in different ways practised, supported, permitted or refused to resist apartheid... (2.5)

Strong criticism was directed quite correctly at the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) for having failed to guide and challenge the previous government headed by the then Nationalist Party. English speaking churches often hid behind the DRC without checking their own stances towards racial and economic discrimination. Granted, many individuals spoke out against injustices within all these churches, including the DRC. Beyers Naude and Roelf Meyer are but two gleaming examples within the DRC of those who stood up against injustice (Ryan: 100, 2005). Few of these individuals could actually testify to general Church support for their actions. There are many examples of individuals who had been ostracized by their churches for standing up against injustice.

The danger is real today that the Church could lie back and hope for the best with regard to issues of justice within the country, while constantly looking back over its shoulder for political correctness and Governmental approval. But Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu, delivering the Steve Biko Memorial Lecture at the University of Cape Town asked the question:

What has happened to us? It seems as if we have perverted our freedom, our rights into licence, into being irresponsible. Rights go hand in hand with responsibility, with dignity, with respect for oneself and for the other. (BBC News, 27 September, 2006)

According to Wilfram Kistner, the Dutch Reformed Church's theology was definitely influenced by a misreading of Calvinistic thought (Brandt 1988:144f). Thus the DRC developed a theology which had not just supported apartheid but had actually promoted it:

The final influence which swayed the church into accepting apartheid was the current of romantic nationalism from Nazi Germany. Prominent Afrikaner nationalists...who studied in Germany and sympathised with the Nazis because they were the enemies of the hated British, were profoundly influenced by the Nazi idea of racial purity...

In 1926, for example, The Native Commission of the NGK's Federal Council held a conference with English-speaking churches to consider the 'native question'. At the conference the NGK managed to gain acceptance for a resolution that declared that it was not necessarily unchristian to seek the progress of the native people separately from the whites. (Colleen Ryan, 2005:226)

### **2.2.2 The role of the English-speaking churches**

The researcher has no intention of further rehashing the well-documented part played by the DRC in supporting segregation (see Ngcokovane C, 1989:85ff). From the above therefore, the researcher submits that it was not just the DRC which had supported apartheid, there were other missionary-instituted churches, apart from the DRC, which either covertly supported segregation or did nothing to fight it. For example, Kistner observes:

On the whole racial separation has not been justified by the English speaking Churches or Churches of English tradition explicitly, but these Churches are also to be blamed for adapting to political trends in society. It was only during the last thirty years that these Churches started to abolish racial separation within the Churches and to fight apartheid as the policy of the state.

We should not forget that the integrated Churches have often found it hard to elect Black clergy for leading positions...

The churches (sic) of English tradition and in particular the member churches of the SACC together with the Roman Catholic Church have in the past 20 years condemned apartheid as being in conflict with the word of God. However, *the life-style and the socio-political values of the SACC member churches and of members of these churches in many instances were not so different from the values prevailing in the Afrikaans churches of Dutch Reformed background. (My emphasis)* (Brandt, 1988:144)

Bishop Ambrose Reeves also made the following point:

As early as 1954 the passing of the Bantu Education Act might have led to an open Church-State conflict. This was avoided because most of the churches agreed, either willingly or grudgingly, to hand over their school buildings to the Government. At that time six-sevenths of all education of African children was in the hands of the churches and missionary societies in South Africa. It was possible that if the churches had stood together in opposing the Government, the implementation of the Bantu Education Act might at least have been halted for a time. But this did not happen. (Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves in the article: State and Church in South Africa, From Notes and Documents, No. 9/72, Google)

From the above it can be seen already that the Church in general had been lukewarm, if not indifferent, at the inception of apartheid. Beyers Naude also discovered this when he attended a Consultation on Race Relations in Mindolo, Kitwe, in 1964. Ryan captures this discovery when she writes:

What Beyers learnt at Mindolo was that the English as well as the Afrikaans churches bore a major responsibility for the race problem in South Africa. (2005:99)

There were also quite a number of apologists for apartheid. For example Neame who wrote in 1952 was another person to rationalise the existence of apartheid. He compares South Africa with other countries and talks of "non-Whites" living in a White Community. The following words attest to this:

The basic principle of differentiation on the ground of colour is accepted by Britishers and Afrikaners alike. It is inscribed in the programme of every political party - with the exception of the Communists. At heart all South Africans are Apartheidists... (sic)  
Differentiation is not a South African invention designed to conceal race selfishness. In other parts of the world some form of separate development has long been advocated as the only practicable way of enabling the non-whites living in a White community to advance to a full extent of their capacity. (1952:54)

### **2.3 A series of initiatives**

The English-speaking churches always claimed the moral high ground, and had indeed produced some of their greatest sons and daughters who had spoken out against injustice and particularly against apartheid. For example, Ngcokovane, citing from an article of Dr JB Webb, mentions that:

Theologians from the English-speaking churches presented theological positions that emphasised unity, restoration and reconciliation as opposed to racial differences. They argued that separation in the Church was wrong; they [the Afrikaans-speaking churches] therefore stood condemned according to Scripture... (1989:154)

This strong statement from the English-speaking Theologians contributed to the failure of an effort that had been made to bring the two, English and Afrikaans-speaking churches to co-operate. The talks merely produced an agreement to disagree. (ibid.)

It needs to be noted though, that even within the DRC, there were prophets who spoke out against apartheid, at a far more heavy cost to themselves.

It would be a mistake, however, for any analyst to give the impression that there had been no dissenting views within the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk with regard to racial segregation. A number of Synod statements reflect the fact that there were still leading churchmen in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk who question certain aspects of apartheid... (Ngcokovane, 1989:50)

There were strong opponents of apartheid such as Professor BB Keet who argued in articles in *Die Kerkbode* that:

...it is correct to draw from Holy Scripture that different nations and races exist but it is incorrect to draw from this conclusion that Scripture teaches segregation... There is only one *Apartheid* (his emphasis) known to Scripture and that is separation from sin... (Ngcokovane, 1989:51)

For people like Professor Keet, the price of differing with the “volk” (the nation) earned him the title of a traitor. It was far more dangerous for Afrikaans theologians to oppose apartheid and the DRC stance. Little is known or heard of people like these. Even formidable opponents of apartheid like Bishop Ambrose Reeves made use of statements made by people like Professor Keet. In his own argument Ambrose Reeves also quotes the following forthright statement by Keet:

In our South African situation we have all the injustice of group thinking aggravated by the absurd group formation according to the colour of one’s skin. For this difference in pigmentation the individual is held responsible together with his group, as if he had chosen his ancestors. As a consequence we have developed a caste system that surpasses all of its kind; because in others it may be possible to advance to a higher caste, but here there is no possibility for change – the Coloured





were targeted because they sided with blacks but whites had the privilege of choice. (Interview)

In 1973 WFC had caught the attention of the Schlebusch Commission which released its report:

Expressing disgust at the centre's sensitivity training programme, the government deported Eoin O'Leary, who headed the centre's Personal Responsibility and Organisational Development (PROD) project...The Commission's allegations were subsequently rejected by the trustees, and the PROD programme, without the controversial sensitivity training, was resumed. (Ryan, 2005:153,154)

### **2.3.2 The Cottesloe Consultation (1960)**

The Cottesloe consultation was held at the behest of the World Council of Churches immediately after the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. At the time of the massacre even people like Beyers Naude had not yet fully appreciated the anger and suffering black people were undergoing. That was Ryan's observation as she wrote:

Beyers, in his public utterances on Sharpeville at the time, did not show an appreciation for the real issues at stake, and merely looked at black unrest as a threat to the mission of his church. (2005:55)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) became so concerned about the situation in South Africa that they sent a representative, Bob Bilheimer, to come to South Africa to assist the churches to heal rifts among them that had arisen because of the toxic relations emanating from the bedevilled race relations in South Africa (ibid). Much as the Cottesloe Consultation was regarded as a "compromise that failed" there developed something within the people that had met, and reconciliation took place between the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) and the DRC. It is at Cottesloe that Beyers began to see the light:

































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































