

**THE RELEVANCE OF KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGY OF CHURCH
AND STATE FOR SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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(i)

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my parents, RAMARISANE NGOAMOREI and MARUNGWANE MOGOSADI DOLAMO, and my parents-in-law, MANDULI, ETHEL and LEONARD KHWELA.

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- (g) GOD, the father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who gave me time, health and strength to start and finish the study.

(iii)

"I declare that THE RELEVANCE OF KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGY OF CHURCH AND STATE FOR SOUTH AFRICA is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references".

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. P. M. O." or similar, written in a cursive style.

(iv)

TRINITARIAN BASIS

"FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD DOES NOT MEAN FOOD AND DRINK BUT
RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT; HE WHO
THUS SERVES CHRIST IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND APPROVED BY MEN".

ROMANS 14:17 & 18 (RSV)

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AZANLA	Azanian Liberation Army
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BPC	Black People's Convention
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland
COSATU	Congress of the South African Trade Unions
CT	Christian Institute of Southern Africa
DDP	Deutsche Demokratische Partei
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DET	Department of Education and Training
DNVP	Deutschnationale Volkspartei
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GESTAPO	Geheime Staatspolizei
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
INKATHA	Zulu Cultural Liberation Movement
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschland
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NHK	Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk
NIR	National Initiative for Reconciliation
NP	National Party
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PAM	Pan Africanist Movement

PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
SA	Sturmabteilungen
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADF	South African Defence Force
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SS	Schutzstaffeln
UCM	University Christian Movement
UDF	United Democratic Front
WCC	World Council of Churches
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches

SUMMARY

The thesis is a study of the political relevance of the views of Karl Barth on Church and State as they relate to the apartheid State in South Africa. In other words, the thesis deals with the part that should be played by the Church in opposing the demonic power of apartheid. Barth's all-embracing theology could be used as a catalyst to expose the evil of apartheid and the way in which this evil could be eradicated, in preparation for a democratic order.

In Chapter 1, the investigator argues in favour of the use of a methodology which takes praxis as its focus. This suggests that praxis develops theory and the latter informs praxis. Praxis and theory affect each other, thus creating a circular movement wherein both theory and praxis are both individually necessary (or the development of the other).

In Chapter 2, the investigator again describes Barth's early theology. A predominant characteristic of Barth's early theology is its concern about the Word of God as incarnated in Jesus Christ, and the attempt to focus its attention on the plight of workers in the employ of the capitalistic system.

As the thesis develops in chapter 3, the researcher further shows Barth's contributions to the struggle between the Church and National Socialism and between the Church and communism, more especially in the countries falling within the communistic bloc.

In Chapter 4, the investigator focuses strongly on the struggle of the Church against the tenets of apartheid ideology, using Barth's theology as a mediating voice.

At the end of the thesis in chapter 5, the investigator deems it necessary to make suggestions and recommendations to round off the argument begun in the first chapter. The suggestions and recommendations are subjected to what obtains in Barth's theological ethics on the relations between the Church and State. By so doing, the investigator suggests ways and means by which South Africans can successfully work out a constitution which will enable all people in South Africa to prepare themselves for a new dispensation.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM IDENTIFIED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Church in South Africa has been involved in a critique of the South African racist State for a long time. In doing so, it has attempted to use theological resources derived from different theological traditions. Some churches and theologians have resorted to Karl Barth's theology in their dealings with the State. Among those who resort to Barth, there is disagreement as to his political relevance. Some contend that Barth is not politically relevant while others affirm that he is. Among those who say Barth is politically relevant, there is also a difference of opinion whether Barth supports a progressive course of action or a conservative course of action, especially as these would relate to the State. This is the debate one wishes to enter and one's thesis is that Barth's theology implies a relevant critique of the racist apartheid State.

When attempting to understand and interpret Karl Barth's views on Church and State, one needs to carefully choose an appropriate methodology that can be applied consistently throughout.

Although much has been written already in this area of Church and State, scholars as individuals, and schools of thought still disagree and the controversy continues. The debate is being studied in this chapter as well as the methodology of understanding Barth.

1.2 INTERPRETATIONS OF BARTH

There are basically two polarised interpretations of Barth's thinking : there are those who assert that Barth is not sociopolitically relevant (transcendental) and these who assert that Barth is directly relevant (immanental).

1.2.1 Transcendental Theology

1.2.1.1 Position

The theology of Barth does not have any relation whatsoever with ethics. Barth's early theology emphasises the "transcendence" of God above the "immanence" of people. According to this position, Barth's God is so far removed from reality and is so "wholly other" that there is no way God could be of any assistance to people and the whole creation. This position is represented by some American theologians who believe that Barth's political activities were incidental to his thought. They assert that his

theology has no direct political content. People such as Reinhold Niebuhr and Emil Brunner say that, at best, Barth's social ethics is an absolutistic and transcendental one. It is necessarily eschatological in the sense that it has no use or relevance for the present. Even his socialism is said to be rooted elsewhere rather than in his theology. His struggle against National Socialism was prompted much more by the fact that Barth was a politician first and only, secondly, a theologian. His call for a sympathetic understanding of communism is cited as a stark example of the nature of the paralysis of Barth's theology. It has been asked how Barth, as a theologian, could condemn National Socialism while tolerating communism when they are substantially similar in praxis. This argument is very strong, especially in the United States of America. Its chief representative is Reinhold Niebuhr (West, 1958). In Switzerland, Brunner became Barth's fierce opponent and the two theological giants, "the whale and the elephant" (Busch, 1976:420), were on each other's throat until God intervened and Barth died in December 1968.

1.2.1.2 Assessment

In response to the arguments stated above, one needs to point out Barth's doctrine of the Incarnation (CD III:4). This act of God sharing our humanity in Jesus Christ, connects the

transcendence of God with the immanence of humanity. God came down to suffer with and for us in Jesus Christ according to Mofokeng (1983). He therefore regards the crucifixion as the most profound act of God's involvement in the struggles of the human race.

In the light of the resurrection, Mofokeng continues, those who bear their crosses are given hope for victory over this bedevilled creation. The concept of God's transcendence can therefore be according to one's point of view, a very powerful political tool. As the transcendence of God and the immanence of humanity meet in Jesus Christ, praxis and theory become interlocked and that is what happens in the theology of Barth. The Church has its own praxis and theory and so does the State, but both, as Barth states in several places, especially in (1968), are under the Lordship of Christ.

It was on the basis of his theology that Barth became concerned with the plight of the workers at Safenwil in the Aargau in 1911. In one of the first lectures he gave on his arrival at Safenwil, just before Christmas day of 1911, a lecture entitled "Jesus Christ and the Movement for Social Justice", Barth indicated that Jesus Christ, if correctly understood, should be associated with the movement for social justice. In the paper, he argues that socialism is the Kingdom of God and vice versa. According to him, Jesus

Christ was a socialist, even more socialist than socialists: (Hunsinger, 1976). Barth's interest and involvement in sociopolitical issues and the question of the Church's involvement in such issues reached its climax during the rule of Adolf Hitler (1933-1945).

The period approximately between 1921 and 1930 is often regarded as one of Barth's quietest as far as his political activism was concerned. One might suggest, on the contrary, that Barth's main preoccupation during that period was to find a theological basis for his socialist convictions. On the basis of this fact one might argue that Barth remained, against all odds, probably the only member of the banned German Socialist Party. It was also in the light of this quest that Barth sustained a fierce battle against National Socialism for a much longer time than many who considered themselves Germans "from boot to bonnet" (Busch, 1976:217). National Socialism was a policy that defined Germans as a superior race. It discriminated viciously against the German Jews. It was National Socialism that plunged the world into the second world war. National Socialism is discussed in detail in chapter 3. Barth's (allegedly) disappointing opinions about the relationship between Church and State and about communism in general, and Czechoslovakian and Hungarian communism in particular, were, one believes, designed to be guidelines to Christians and to the Church in those

countries. Barth was trying to exhort these people to come to grips with communism. We should bear in mind, firstly, that Barth became increasingly pragmatic after the Second World War. Secondly, socialism was for Barth, by then, no longer the only politically correct and viable political system. Communism was also regarded by him as being valid within the framework of certain parameters.

All in all, there is enough evidence to show that a conceptual link does exist between Barth's theology and his politics. It is really unjust and an unsustainable view to accuse Barth of political complacency.

1.2.2 Immanent Theology

1.2.2.1 Position

There are two main groups among those who say Barth is socio-politically relevant. These groups are nevertheless at loggerheads with each other. One group believes that Barth had been unnecessarily over-politicised while another argues that scholars have made an abstraction out of Barth's theological ethics.

1.2.2.1.1 Over-politicised Barth

This group not only emphasises the inner connection between theory and praxis in the theology of Barth; it also contends that Barth was more radical than other socialists including Lenin. F.W. Marquardt is the chief exponent of this school of thought, and it includes scholars such as Helmut Gollwitzer and Joseph Bettis (Hunsinger, 1976).

It is Marquardt (1972) in his Berlin doctoral thesis entitled, "Theologie und Sozialismus: Das Beispiel Karl Barths" that the position of this group is made clearer.

Every theological turn that Barth made or took is interpreted in terms of his socialist convictions. To them, Barth was a socialist to the marrow and they attempt to prove Barth's deep commitment to socialism by reminding us that he had been a member of socialist parties in Switzerland and Germany in 1915 and 1932 respectively. They claim that even Barth's re-reading and consequent rediscovery of "the new world of the Bible" (Busch, 1976:92) was not prompted so much by homiletical considerations as it was by a concern about socialism and unionism. It is pointed out further that his expulsion from Germany was not due to his refusal to take the compulsory Führer oath; Barth's type of socialism had been unacceptable to Hitler.

Barth is said to have been impressed by the Marxist revolutionary spirit which was expected to transform the world. According to Marquardt, the second edition of Barth's commentary on Romans is anarchist because in it Barth expresses pessimism about the present order, whether it be in the form of Lenin's dictatorship of the proletariat or as western capitalism. Marquardt asserts that even Barth's essay of 1946 entitled "The Christian Community and Civil Community" is not to be regarded as a justification of the State. (This booklet appears in *Community, State and Church*, 1968:149ff). He insists that Barth's starting point has always been "anarchism without remainder" (Hunsinger, 1976:57).

According to these scholars, the movement of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection became, for Barth, the deepest actual ground of political unrest. It is argued in Hunsinger (1976:65) that the new concept of God that Barth devised was,

... above all, the experience of transcendence that Barth gained and depicted in solidarity with workers ... It was ... the transcendence of the real revolutionary situation where human beings were oppressed by the class struggle of the capitalist society. And also if God were not grasped in relation to this social reality then nothing of "God" was grasped at all.

Even the task of Church Dogmatics is alleged to be squarely predicated on a social and political context. Convinced that Barth was a revolutionary, Gollwitzer in Hunsinger (1976:96) says,

By the word of grace, man is called to be a co-fighter with God; what the Creator fights against, the creature in his struggle also fights against.

1.2.2.1.2 Abstraction of Barth

Representatives of this group do not deny that Barth was a socialist and that his socialism was theologically founded, but their argument is that Barth's theology has been inappropriately politicised. Representatives of this group include among others, Hermann Diem and Dieter Schellong (Hunsinger, 1976).

Diem argues that the Barth of Marquardt is not the Barth of yesterday and today, that is, the Barth we know. It is the Barth of tomorrow of which we as yet know nothing. He accuses Marquardt and Gollwitzer of pursuing the task of the Church and theology in the political sphere without the necessary dogmatic ground work. Schellong does agree that Barth's early theology (1911-1919) was influenced drastically by sociopolitical events but contends that Barth's later theology concerned itself strictly with the subject matter and Biblical witness. To emphasise his point, Schellong

points out the fact that Barth rejected all influences from outside theology, whether they were cultural or philosophical.

He considers it to be an illegitimate exercise to politicise Barth's concepts in the dogmatic areas of his thought. He cannot understand how Barth's Trinitarian theology could be socialistic, or how the Incarnation and the Resurrection could be understood in socialist-revolutionary terms.

1.2.2.2 Assessment

Although Marquardt, Gollwitzer, Hunsinger and others are correct in emphasising the important role socialism played in Barth's theology, they seem nevertheless wrong in seeing everything in terms of Barth's sociopolitical convictions. It is true that the Barth of, say, 1911-1922 was rather categorical in identifying the Kingdom of God with socialism and vice versa (Hunsinger 1976). But it is also importantly true that the Barth of, say, 1927 onwards, moved from that sort of identification to that of analogy and correspondence (Barth 1937, 1957). Again, one gets the impression that Barth's socialism influenced, in an uncritical manner, the way in which he carried out his exegesis. But one does certainly not believe that Barth was a situation ethicist of Joseph Fletcher's mould (1966). That is, he did not read the

Bible with an obsessive socialist bias. As Villa-Vicencio (1988b:46) says,

... to subordinate Barth's theology to his politics would be a form of reductionism.

Barth did, indeed, look for answers to questions that perplexed him as a pastor in his parish. But he was not, as Marquardt suggests, a socialist posing as a theologian. Barth was, first and foremost, a student of the Bible, and believed that God's love in Jesus Christ is lived out by the Church as an agent of revolutionary change in society in general and the State in particular.

One's assertion is that Diem, Schellong and others should know that, although Barth was influenced by Kutter and Christoph Blumhardt, his view of eschatology was not mystical or quietistic. In his persistent search for an alternative theology, he strove to combine Kutter and Ragaz. It should be noted that Barth broke ties with religious socialism and, later, with socialism precisely because socialists then were not truly socialists according to the Biblical understanding of the term (Busch 1976). Barth complains in Hunsinger (1976:26) that

the church has preached, instructed, and consoled but she has not helped ... She has (instead) accepted social misery as an accomplished fact in order to talk

about the Spirit, to cultivate the inner life, and to prepare candidates for the Kingdom of heaven.

Barth argues further in the same lecture, that there is one thing that hinders God's kingdom from being manifested on earth, and that is the existence of capitalism and private property as means of production. He, in Hunsinger (1976:25), recommends that private capitalism be converted into social capitalism, for, in that way,

"No more shall idle bellies squander,
What industrious hands have earned".

Having critically considered the views of these two groups, one might safely conclude that the real Barth lies somewhere between these two positions.

1.3 BARTH AND SOUTH AFRICA

There are mainly two Barthian positions in South Africa. The one position asserts that Barth is not relevant to the apartheid State and the other asserts that Barth is immediately relevant.

1.3.1 Barth's Irrelevance

1.3.1.1 Position

There are those theologians in South Africa who are interested mainly in the Barth of **Church Dogmatics**. Barth's relevance is restricted mostly to sound doctrine, spiritual enrichment and personal edification. They are interested in seeing how, for example, Barth grapples with the doctrine of God, how he disentangles the mystery of the Trinity, and how eschatological his theology is. No wonder, that among the representatives of this position, one finds some theologians who do not think that Barth is ethically relevant at all. This position in South Africa is represented by a tradition rather than by specific individuals. Afrikaner Calvinism is such a tradition. The taproot of Afrikaner Calvinists is the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), according to Villa-Vicencio (1977:8-12). At that Synod, Calvin was distorted and his doctrine of predestination was radicalised by scholars such as Abraham Kuyper. In South Africa neo-Kuyperianism stresses Afrikaner nationalism to the exclusion of other people. This is, according to Villa-Vicencio (1977:12),

... a definite shift away from Kuyper's concern for the protection of the sovereignty of each particular sphere and individual within the nation, to a preoccupation with what the Afrikaner nationalist regards as the inner law and

divine purpose of his own nation and as a result, the laws and administration of the State are there to protect this God-given heritage.

In the Reformed faith in general and in the Dutch Reformed Church, particularly here in South Africa, Barth, according to Jaap Durand in (Villa-Vicencio, 1988b), became known and popularised only in the 1950s. A handful of scholars such as David Bosch, and Hennie van der Merwe studied in Basel. Fewer, such as the late Alex Van Wyk studied personally under Barth. Such scholars have made a significant contribution in popularising Barth. Calvin is also now in South Africa being better understood as he is interpreted from a Barthian point of view. Barth's relevance for Church and State in South Africa is being realized and recognised among those who initially refused to accept his relevance for South Africa. Parallels between National Socialism and apartheid have been identified and the Dutch Reformed Church and individual Afrikaner theologians are re-reading Barth in the hope that his insights may help us to solve the problems facing South Africans and also to create a nonracial democratic society.

1.3.1.2 Assessment

People who read only Barth's Church Dogmatics without also reading his occasional papers, end up with a caricature of

Barth. One's assertion is that Barth's Systematic Theology is full of ethical implications.

The separation of Church and State as taught by Kuyper was abandoned by the Afrikaner Reformed Theology. The two institutions were collapsed into each other and not for theological reasons. This was due to Afrikaner's sense of "volk" and community. The overt sociopolitical involvement of the Dutch Reformed Church in the life of the Afrikaners could be attributed more to these ideological underpinnings than anything else. A most recent and exhaustive study was undertaken by J.C. Marais (1985) in his doctoral thesis entitled, "Die Sosio-Politieke Selfbeeld van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk: 'n Sistematies-Teologiese Beoordeling" (The Sociopolitical Self-Image of the Dutch Reformed Church : A Systematic-Theological Evaluation). Marais points out that the Dutch Reformed Church did not only fight for the cause of the poor Afrikaners but also contributed substantially to the construction of the apartheid State.

Since the mid-seventies, the same Church leaned back to Kuyper's separation of Church and State when opponents of the apartheid State started to make their voices heard. The Afrikaners are now in power and most of them are very wealthy and suddenly it is wrong for the Church in South Africa to be involved in the plight of the oppressed and exploited black

masses. In fact, the Afrikaners' charge that the South African Council of Churches mix religion with politics is still an attempt on their part to maintain the status quo. The argument will be taken further in chapter 4, where the struggle of the Church in South Africa against the apartheid State will be intensively discussed.

1.3.2 Barth's Relevance

1.3.2.1 Position

This trend is found mainly in the "English-speaking churches". This is a term that was initially used by theologians such as John de Gruchy (1979) and was popularised by people such as Charles Villa-Vicencio in his various publications, notably in 1988. It refers to Methodists, Anglicans, United Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and others. These theologians are interested in the revolutionary Barth. For them the "comrade pastor" of Safenwil and, above all, the anti-Nazi Barth is the Barth who should be taken seriously when it comes to the South African Church struggle against the apartheid State. Barth's views on Church and State during Hitler's rule of Germany have been applied to the apartheid State virtually without adaptation. Parallels have been stressed and even invented at the expense

of fundamental differences that obviously exist between National Socialism and apartheid.

It is not wise to categorise scholars but seemingly it is a risk that one has to take. Churchmen such as Allan Boesak and Beyers Naudé could be included in this category. Among theologians one thinks of people such as John de Gruchy, Charles Villa-Vicencio and Nico Horn. They differ only in some respects. For example, de Gruchy (1984:34) recognises that, in spite of the similarities that exist between National Socialism and apartheid, there are nevertheless fundamental differences that cannot be ignored. All in all, resemblances or similarities were very sharply pronounced, so much so that, according to Nico Horn, Eberhard Bethge appealed for caution, when he visited South Africa in 1973 (Villa-Vicencio, 1986). To quote but one example, Buti Tlhagale says in Tlhagale and Mosala (1986:265) that

... the horrors of the apartheid system, its pathological tendencies and its callous disregard for moral norms, compel one to see apartheid in the light of the politically criminal systems of Hitler and Stalin.

There are yet other theologians such as Mzimela (1983) apartheid is worse than National Socialism. It is covert and subtle in its operations and does, therefore, more damage to blacks than National Socialism did to the Jews. The cover of

Mzimela's book has two almost identical photographs. One is allegedly a secret mass grave in which Jews and invalids were buried by the Gestapo, and the other a secret mass grave in which pupils, students and residents of Soweto were buried after the massacre of 1976. Mzimela (1984:188) argues that, in as much as Hitler's concentration camps and gas chambers were a "final solution" to the "Jewish Problem", so it is the case with the homelands in South Africa which were meant to be the "final solution" to "Black Danger", where blacks would die of poverty, starvation and disease. He (1984:189) concludes that:

No one should underestimate or doubt the willingness, desire, and capability of the Nats to commit atrocities against the blacks, atrocities that could be far worse than Nazis committed against the Jews (sic).

1.3.2.2 Assessment

This position's weakness is also that of concentrating chiefly on one aspect of Barth, namely, the Church's socialist commitment to society. It seems that Barth's theoretical framework, his theological basis as well as his method are not given their rightful place. Praxis and theory in Barth are held in a creative tension. Praxis benefits from theory and vice versa. The freedom and sovereignty of God plays an important role in Barth's theological ethics.

God is free to act differently in situations that seem alike. As will be shown in the main study, Barth was not dogmatic about socialism. All that interested him was a system that would measure up to the ideals of social justice. The dialectic method of praxis and theory, which Barth employed, and which we shall discuss below, should be carefully analysed if Barth's relations between Church and State are to be properly understood. Barth viewed worldviews with an open mind. He was therefore able to treat them objectively. His tolerance of communism is a case in point.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

Insights that will be gleaned from Karl Barth's theological ethics on Church and State would call upon the Church in South Africa to help demolish the apartheid State and not merely to reform it. A new democratic State for South Africa cannot be build on apartheid foundations. At the same time Barth's insights will warn South Africans in their legitimate struggle against the apartheid State not to take human lives indiscriminately nor to damage existing socio-economic structures. Again, Barth's insights will encourage the Church in South Africa to tirelessly work for a more just State. Important elements that should constitute such an alternative State would include a sound democracy that would be free of racism and sexism. It would be a State in which

workers' rights would be constitutionally protected and welfare guaranteed. Further, Barth's insights will help us to define new Church and State relations in a post-apartheid South Africa. This study makes an attempt at proving this hypothesis.

1.5 SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

A methodology for understanding Barth's ethical thought is outlined below.

1.5.1 Chronological Order

One suggests that an appropriate methodology would be that of studying Barth in his entirety. This means that events in their chronological order have to be taken into consideration, taking into account, at the same time, the importance of circumstances surrounding those events as well as other operative factors. One thinks that, had this method been employed some time ago, the seemingly insurmountable problems that have bedevilled the relationship between Church and State during the last five decades of studying Barth could have been avoided.

Barth became a theologian in the technical sense of the word in 1909 (Hunsinger, 1976:202). This gives us a total of forty-

nine years until his death in December 1968. Marquardt (1972) suggests 1916 as the date of inception of his theological activity. Yet one should not discount the influence Barth's own positivist-liberal father, Johann Friedrich Barth and also of Robert Aeschbacher, who prepared Karl for confirmation in the Reformed Church. It should also be noted that it was during the confirmation class in 1902 that Karl resolved to study theology (Busch, 1976).

Each step in the development of Barth's theological thought should be given equal weight. It would not be fruitful for example, to study only the Barth of the **Church Dogmatics**. It would not help either, to study only that Barth who was "the comrade" of Safenwil (Busch, 1976:68). Again, the anti-Nazi Barth alone would not make sense if one were to compare him with Barth, the academic of Göttingen and Münster. Further, how does one understand Barth's supposedly sympathetic attitude towards communism if one ignores Barth's affiliation to Lenin's party in Switzerland?

As alluded to above, Barth's formulations on Church and State and his activities in the socialist movement were strongly influenced by circumstances prevalent at a specific time. Barth's early theology at about 1909 culminated in the publication of the two great commentaries on Romans, in 1919 and 1922 respectively. The commentaries are a response to

the 19th century idealism, rationalism and romanticism of scholars such as Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) and Friedrich Georg W. Hegel (1770-1831). This mentality used the insights of theologians such as Friedrich Ernst D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Albrecht Benjamin Ritschl (1822-1889). The outbreak of the First World War and the hope that the Weimar Republic would be successful were reference points in the writing of the first edition commentary on Romans. One would also not fully appreciate the second-edition commentary on Romans if one were to ignore the Russian revolution of 1917 and the Swiss general strike of 1918. Again, how would one understand Barth's uncompromising stance against Hitler if one were to forget the deification of Hitler when compared to the absence of such a factor in communism?

Barth is at his best when he is writing about matters relating to Church and State in his occasional papers and speeches such as "Community, State, and Church" (1968), "How to Serve God in a Marxist Land" (1959) and "Trouble and Promise in the Struggle of the Church in Germany" (1938). In *Church Dogmatics*, Barth follows an acceptable formal pattern that robs *Church Dogmatics* of the dynamism underlying his papers and speeches. For example, in *Church Dogmatics* III, 4, Barth is merely interested in discussing the State without that forceful plea for the State to be the State. The plea,

however, comes across very clearly and forcefully in his occasional papers such as "The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day" (1939). Again, in Church Dogmatics II, 2, Barth speaks in general terms about the responsibility of the Church towards the State though he is not specific and categorical as he is in "Against the Stream" (1954). In "Against the Stream", Barth demarcates the spheres of the Church and the State and limits the responsibilities of each. It is imperative therefore that one should always consider Church Dogmatics in conjunction with the occasional papers and vice versa, if one is to be serious about understanding Barth's sociopolitical pronouncements and actions. Since 1932, volumes of Church Dogmatics, interspersed with occasional papers, followed one after the other for about three decades.

1.5.2 Barth and the Dialectical Thinking

1.5.2.1 Theological Methods

1.5.2.1.1 Definitions

Theology basically employs two methods that are also applicable to other disciplines such as philosophy and sociology, namely, the deductive and the inductive methods. The former is interested in ideas, principles and doctrines

that are then applied to the world around us. The latter focuses its attention on experience of the world around us and then confronts the praxis with theory. According to Nolan and Broderick (1987;20-22), both methods were employed until the time of Descartes. But, since Descartes, there has been a fundamental mistrust of experience. Ideas were regarded as far more reliable and objective than experience. According to the deductive method, as Nolan and Broderick (1987:23) say, the movement could only go one way:

from theory to practice, from right thinking to right living, from orthodoxy to ortho praxis.

According to the deductive method, truth is absolute but there are more or less imperfect applications of that truth. According to Bonino (1975:88), for the deductive method,

Truth is ... pre-existent to and independent of its historical effectiveness. Its legitimacy has to be tested in relation to their abstract "heaven of truth", quite apart from its historicization.

1.5.2.1.2 Assessment

Liberal theology of the 19th century used the deductive method because it has been fashionable since Descartes. It was in this tradition that Barth was born, brought up and educated. It was the deductive method, one presumes, that had frustrated Barth as he entered a parish ministry in 1909

in Geneva. This frustration reached an intolerable level at Safenwil. Barth (1937, 1957, 1959) decided to discover for himself a new approach to the reading of the Bible and the doing of theology.

The Biblical method is decidedly inductive. It is an experience of faith extrapolated into action. The Biblical God is an acting God and not a abstract Being removed from his creation. God created the universe. God called Abraham. God liberated the Hebrew slaves. God became a human being in Jesus Christ. God through Jesus Christ becomes the liberator of the oppressed and the marginalised of society. In a dialectical manner, the Bible recognises the supremacy of praxis over theory, with theory serving praxis. Praxis, which is human action, is inherently dialectical in the sense that it involves both theory and action. Bonino (1983:39) puts it so aptly when he says,

Action overflows and challenges the theory that has informed it, and though, projecting the shape and future of reality, pushes action to new ventures. Reality is transformed through human action, and action is corrected and reoriented by reality.

In other words, the two classical methods are not mutually exclusive. They affect and influence each other in a dialectical manner, with a predominance being given to the inductive method.

Barth was faced with the plight of the Safenwil workers and he did not have a message for them until he discovered that conceptual understanding of truth has no biblical foundation, nor does the distinction between a theoretical knowledge of truth and a practical application of it.

1.5.2.2 Views on Society

1.5.2.2.1 Definitions

There are two radically different understandings of society namely, the functionalist and the dialectical (Horton & Hunt 1972; Marx 1974). According to Bonino (1983:46),

... functionalist sociologies conceive of society as an organism, with social groups, classes, and functions being constitutive parts of that organism which should function harmoniously; conflicts are therefore understood as maladjustment and directly or indirectly, social analysis serves the end of conflict solving", and the "Dialectical sociologies ... have a conflictual understanding of society, viewing society as a complex phenomenon full of contradictions and conflicts, they undertake to understand the structural basis and dynamics of such conflicts.

Functionalists are often those people who possess political or economic power or both. They resist change and would like to preserve things as they are. To them "harmony" and "stability" are of paramount importance because they benefit

from the status quo. They dictate decisions from the top and the underdogs simply have to accept and act. Dialecticians are often the proletariat and their empathisers who are bent on the transformation of society. They fight for a grass-roots democracy. They rule from below. This is what Barth discovered at just about the time he started writing his commentary on Romans in the context of his experience of his Safenwil congregation and workers. Barth became convinced that no real revolution could come from the top, but that it would rather come from below.

1.5.2.2.2 Assessment

Barth had been equipped with functionalist bourgeois theological tools when he entered his parish ministry. It became difficult for him to preserve the values of his society. He learned about a God of order who hates chaos. He learned also about a God who supports State rulers in their wielding of the "sword". Yet Barth realised that, in the practical world, the emphasis on a functionalist understanding of society was very far from the truth. Even charity could not ameliorate the misery of his worker parishioners. He therefore decided to challenge the workers to be subjects of their own liberation by organising them into trade unions. He had to recognise the two cardinal sins of capitalism, namely, the oppression of the poor and the

exploitation of the workers. He went further by challenging the Hüsey family to share their profits with their workers. According to Barth, workers are as important as employers. Employers possess the means of production and employees possess the labour (Busch, 1976; Hunsinger, 1976; Smart, 1964).

The only really harmonious State of affairs was enjoyed before the Fall of human beings, although we are looking forward to another one with the Parousia. Since the Fall, conflict has become an unavoidable part of society. Cain killed his brother. Sin increased in dimension and intensity. This does not mean, however, that there is no longer a measure or degree of harmony and stability. The image of God in us is not completely eradicated by sin. Some godliness still remains in us and we are able to normalise and harmonise our environment. But we should not underestimate the power of the devil, and we should therefore view society basically and always as being in a state of conflict, a state in which persons and groups oppose one another in the scramble for scarce resources and the acquisition of sociopolitical power. The priestly peace of harmony and the prophetic peace of conflict, according to Bonino (1975:115), should be held in a creative tension. He (1975:116) impresses upon us that the prophetic peace is dominant in the Bible and is viewed as

a dynamic process through which justice is established amid the tensions of history.

It is often erroneously assumed by some Christians that any sociohistorical analysis of society will always be Marxist or communist. If Marx could be associated with the prophetic mission of peace proclaimed by prophets such as Amos and Micah, then Marx's position in the Kingdom of God would be more entrenched than would be position of many Christians who pay lip service to their responsibility towards the proletariat and their struggle against sociopolitical oppression. Barth was a socialist. Jesus Christ, in his first public sermon in his native village, Nazareth, (Luke 4:16-19), quoted Isaiah 61:1-2. His manifesto made it clear that the afflicted of the world were Jesus's point of departure. At that time, Marx had not been born. Therefore, if Marx made the exploited workers his point of departure, then Marx could be regarded as a follower and imitator of Jesus Christ. Being a Christian, Barth embraced socialism and became a subscribed member of the socialist party and movement until his death (Busch, 1976:262).

1.6 SUMMARY

In order to understand Barth correctly, one needs to study the whole of Barth's works, from his occasional papers, lectures, and conversations, to the volumes of Church

Dogmatics. Barth's conflictual analysis of society helped him to deal with issues pertaining to his work as a Safenwil pastor. It also helped him to take his praxis more seriously. Barth's insights, which will be fully developed in chapters 2 and 3, will be applied to South Africa prior to 2 February 1990 in chapters 4 and 5 to test their relevance for the Church's struggle against the apartheid State.

CHAPTER 2

PRAXIS AND THEOLOGY DIALECTIC IN BARTH'S EARLY SOCIOPOLITICAL
THOUGHT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is not concerned with Barth's systematic theology per se. It is concerned rather with his political and socio-economic thought and action in the light of his theological principles and insights. Employing the methodology of the dialectic between praxis and theory suggested in chapter 1, one hopes to understand Barth's views on Church and State in particular, and society in general.

Barth's interest in matters concerning Church and State did not emerge suddenly when Hitler was voted into power. Barth's awareness and interest in socio-economic matters were sharpened when he became a pastor, especially in Safenwil. These experiences laid the foundation for his understanding of society and the State. The same applies to his theology on Church and State. It did not suddenly emerge. It was a theology arising out of his context. The Church and State are interlinked and they affect and influence each other in the theology of Barth. Barth's social praxis and theological

praxis relate to and stimulate each other. As Will Herberg says in Barth (1968:13):

No one can make any real sense of Barth's pronouncements on social and political questions without some understanding of his basic theological orientation.

This is precisely what will be done in this chapter, namely, an attempt to show how Barth's early theology helped him to grapple with societal matters in the Aargau. In chapter 3 it will be shown how his theology on Church and State enabled him to confront National Socialism and lead the German Church in its struggle against Hitler.

2.2 BARTH'S THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL ORIENTATION

By the time Barth had finished his theological studies in 1908, he was a product of the liberal tradition. There was optimism about a future that would be free from superstition, ignorance, prejudice and hypocrisy. Human beings considered themselves to be in the centre of the universe. They considered themselves to be in a position to shape and direct their destiny. Political absolutism was introduced through princes and aristocracies. People were deprived of their rights and peasants were terribly exploited. But the proletariat did not accept the yoke their oppressors imposed on them. The French Revolution could be cited as a good

classical example of peasants who rejected oppression (Barth, 1959a, Readon, 1966; Heron, 1980).

The turn of the 19th century, according to Heron (1980:22) was characterised therefore by the rise of

New philosophies, new scientific theories about man and the natural world, new interpretations of history, economics and politics, and a deepening interest in non-Christian religions ...

Theologically, the Church was faced with the task of addressing itself to the cultural milieu of the time, such as the triumph of people over nature, and the relativisation of Christianity. Barth (1959a) complains about scholars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher who participated in the philosophies of the time instead of transcending them. They saw God's self-revelation in nature and through reason. That was the kind of theology which Barth would reject and oppose later in his career.

The understanding of society and State was also a liberal one. As indicated in chapter 1, the ruling classes subscribed to a functionalist view of society. The status quo was preserved at all costs and they rejected all forms of change because such changes would entail loss of political and economic power and a concomitant loss of privileges.

This view of society and the State was ultimately also rejected and opposed by Barth.

2.3 BARTH'S SOCIOPOLITICAL PRAXIS

2.3.1 Barth's Early Socialism

In the middle of 1909, Barth became an assistant pastor in Geneva under the pastor-in-charge, Adolf Keller. In his sermons Barth always spoke of being still and quiet before the Lord, and of developing values of the inner life. That was one side of Barth's theology. The other side was his insistence that concern for the disadvantaged and the underprivileged was a Christian duty. He was not happy, therefore, about Hermann Kutter's exclusive concern with quietism.

After serving in Geneva for about one year, Barth accepted a post as pastor at Safenwil in the Aargau.

At Safenwil, over ninety per cent of the population worked in the fields and in industries. The owners of the means of production, such as the Hochuli and Hüssy families, exploited the workers. Barth lectured the workers on socialism and organised them into trade unions (Busch, 1976:68-72). Writing to Eduard Thurneysen - his life-long friend - Barth reported

that fifty-five women at the knitting mill had gone on strike and that they had been threatened with dismissal. When Barth tried to intervene, the management branded him as their worst enemy ever (Smart, 1964: the letter is 9.9.1917). Yet Barth's struggle was relatively successful as another letter quoted by Smart (1964:43) shows:

The movement to organize the workers here progresses, the membership having more than doubled. The manufacturer resists frantically, now with individual notices of dismissal, now with individual increases of pay [letter dated 27.9.1917].

Barth became very critical of the functionalist view of society and the liberal understanding of the State. As a pastor he realised that society is characterised by conflict and tension among its members. Thus it was that he embraced the dialectical view of society and of the State. That he had read a lot of Marx is evident from the lectures which he gave on socialism.

In his early writings on socialism Barth is convinced that there is no other system that could be more Christian than socialism. According to him, the core of socialism is the philosophy of equitable sharing of social product and profits of labour. Socialism takes care of the socially disadvantaged and it empowers the weak and the dispossessed. In

fact, Barth contends at least initially, that socialism is the Kingdom of God and vice-versa. Capitalism is categorically rejected because, according to him, it is responsible for most of the socio-economic ills of society. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. Liberation of the exploited workers is getting more and more remote. States even so-called democratic ones, are on the side of the capitalists as opposed to the proletariat. There are four essays, in particular, that articulate Barth's position on this matter. They are, "Jesus Christus und die soziale Bewegung (1911), "Krieg, Sozialismus and Christentum" (1914), "Die Innere Zukunft der Sozialdemokratie (1915) and "Was Heisst Sozialist sein" (1915).

Barth's embracing of socialism was a deliberate effort. He says that after preaching about the last things for a long time, he decided to join the Socialist Democratic Party. This Party did not only concern itself with matters of the end-times but also with mundane things which in their own right are a mirror of the Kingdom of God. Eschatology includes the present that will be consummated with the Parousia. This idea comes out forcefully in his 1919 Tambach Lecture to which one shall shortly refer. By 1922 Barth (1963b) had, however, abandoned the identification of socialism with the Kingdom of God. However, good a socio-political system socialism can be, it still cannot simply be

equated with God's Kingdom. It remains, nonetheless, a human attempt at making this world a better place to live in. It is regarded as but one of the systems that exudes some of the manifestations of God's will for humanity. Barth says that he joined the Party for another reason, namely that he had hoped that his decision would convince socialists in his congregation about their follies, especially religious socialists of Ragaz's mould [Smart 1964: Letter is dated 5.2.1915].

2.3.2 Barth Against Natural Theology

Barth's preoccupation with socialism and the plight of workers led him to seek theological foundations for those convictions. The 19th century liberal theology in which Barth was steeped, did not help him. Liberal theology was based on natural theology that, according to Barth, had put people rather than God in the middle of creation.

During his time as a pastor, Barth still held the view that God also revealed himself outside the Bible. It is no surprise that he regarded even Michelangelo and Beethoven as sources of revelation in addition to the Bible. Barth realised that the liberal theology which he had inherited and in which he had immersed himself was not directly relevant to the problems that he had to address. According to him, this

theology was very impressive in lecture halls and theological journals but had fewer practical implications. He and Thurneysen decided to go back to the Scriptures (Busch, 1976).

According to Torrance (1962:35),

It was here that Barth saw clearly that the preacher and theologian must be something quite different from a man trained in philosophy or history or psychology, imbued with a spiritual outlook and capable of imparting spiritual insights.

Another important circumstance which strengthened Barth in his new-found resolve to discard his theological heritage, was the paralysis of his professors in 1914. With the outbreak of the First World War on 1 August 1914, 93 German intellectuals, including Barth's theological mentors, signed a manifesto supporting the war policies of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg. Barth seriously questioned his theological foundations and he vowed to discover for himself a new world of exegesis, dogmatics and preaching (Busch, 1976:81-83).

According to Barth (1959a:68),

Here was a faith which had not ... any basis, object or content other than itself...

Because they base their theology on worldviews and particular philosophical presuppositions, Barth (1959a) insisted that these liberal theologians had become primarily philosophers, and, only secondarily, theologians. The world determined and conditioned their thinking.

According to Barth there was definitely something unsatisfactory and inadequate about the theology of the 19th century. He argued that a mere rearrangement of furniture could not suffice. What was needed was a complete change of direction. A "new starting point" became essential and Barth looked again at the Bible (Busch, 1976:98). Barth and Thurneysen studied the Bible together. According to Busch (1976:92-109) the study group became the cradle of the commentary of Barth on Romans. Writing to Thurneysen, Barth in Smart (1964:45) says,

If only we had been converted to the Bible earlier so that we could now have solid ground under our feet (letter dated 11.11.1918).

2.3.3 Barth Confronts the State

As Barth started to grapple with the problem of poverty and the general plight of the proletariat, he realised that unionisation of the workers and the advocacy of socialism, necessary as they were at the time, were not sufficient. He

identified the State as the real cause of the problem. Society is organised around the State. This democratic political institution which he confronted, also directly and consciously influences the socio-economical life of society. It is society that democratically votes a government into power and those in power exercise that power on behalf of society. It is unfortunate that the State, in the exercise of its power, seems to be partial to the economically powerful, namely the capitalists. It became clear to Barth that the State was responsible for the poverty of the masses through its policies that are designed to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer. In fact, the whole State machinery, democratic or otherwise, is more often than not geared to repress and suppress the dissatisfied majority (Barth 1963b; 1980 and "Die Innere Zukunft der Sozialdemokratie":1915).

The outbreak of the First World War made Barth sceptical about society, culture and the Church. He doubted the capacity of these institutions to influence and direct the State in its activities. The outbreak of the war devastated society and culture and the whole of Europe was shattered and in disarray. People asked questions for which there were no convincing answers. The Church was divided within itself. Many theologians including Barth's professors supported the war effort and many Christians were spiritually paralysed.

Barth's critique of the situation is offered in his first edition commentary of Romans. Barth's critique is very anarchistic, as Marquardt (1972) says. According to Barth, the State is not necessary and in fact is counter productive. Barth envisages therefore a Stateless society where the State would be redundant and will simply disappear. People should be able to live in a society where there will be no conflict of interests and domination of one person by another. Barth's critique is so severe that Marquardt (1972:132) concludes that Barth is more radical than Lenin when he says, "Die Kritik des Staates, die Barth vollzieht, ist grundsätzlich radikaler als die Lenins..." The Marxist-Leninist understanding of the proletariat revolution was for Barth not revolutionary enough as Marquardt (1972:133) says, "Diese Revolution war für Barth nicht radikal genug". Marxist-Leninism simply wanted to replace capitalism with socialism and the bourgeoisie State with proletariat State whereas Barth believed that one can do away with the State altogether.

In spite of Barth's utter distrust of the State's capacity to serve society effectively and impartially he did not become altogether anarchistic because, after the First World War, he softened his position to some extent. His positive view of society and the State is explicit in the Tambach Lecture he

gave in 1919 and also in the second edition of his commentary on Romans.

The revision of first edition of the commentary was necessitated largely by political considerations. Chapter 13 was, in particular, written towards the end of 1918 during the General Strikes in Switzerland. The Russian Revolution of October, 1917 also disappointed Barth. He at first welcomed events such as these as signs of the Kingdom of God in its revolutionary fervour. But after the excesses of the revolution, Barth became more dialectical in approach. The second edition of the commentary on Romans is a dialectical recasting of his radical theology. The failure of socialist revolutions implied a deficiency in the theological basis of religious socialism. This crisis demanded a dialectical approach to both praxis and theory, hence the thesis/anti-thesis method. Hunsinger (1976:212) aptly paraphrases Barth thus:

Every affirmation about God in theological thought must be counteracted by an equal and opposite negation. Every positive effort to approximate God's Kingdom through socialist action must be counteracted by an equal and opposite recognition of the complete sinfulness of that action.

According to Barth (1980:475-492) the State claims for itself some pseudotranscendence although it is worldly. Barth doubts whether Calvin's idea of a theocracy could remedy this inherent weakness of the State. There is no exception. Regimes in power, whether as individuals or as groups, use this type of transcendental authority to prescribe to society what it should do. In this way, the legality that the State boasts is transformed into illegality. Authority that the State claims for itself is basically tyrannical. The revolutionary wants to overthrow the existing order and replace it with an equally evil one. "Subjection" called for is necessarily always relative. "Powers that be" are of God, but not in the metaphysical sense. They are of God because God stands behind them as they relate themselves to God. Barth insists that their beginning and end, their justification and condemnation, depend on their relationship to God. According to Barth, the "sword" symbolises God's punishment, not only against the revolutionary but also against the evil State. A State that becomes something other than being the State will be overthrown. Barth's main concern is to restore the severed umbilical cord between the State and God. The fall of the human being has done irreparable damage to his or her relation to God. Only God can restore the State to its former glory, namely, as an institution for social justice. By bringing the State under the lordship of Christ, Barth has suggested a means whereby the State can be essentially

renewed and revitalized. In such a plan, the State might realise that it is also, like the Church, an instrument of salvation, although on a different plane.

2.3.4 God's Kingdom and the State

The State is eschatological, according to Barth (1980:475-492) In other words, the State is not an end in itself. It performs its function to the glory of God. It is the goal to which it is moving. The State is a lively and dynamic institution that is on the move towards a just society that will be accomplished with the consummation of the Kingdom of God. It follows that all values and systems have to be transformed in accordance with God's revolution. Barth warns that the Kingdom cannot be regarded as a continuation of people's attempts. We cannot simply claim God's sanction for our programmes and action. God's Kingdom is a radically new possibility. We should fashion our systems and values in the light of God's Kingdom. Hope in the future for humankind lies in God's consummated Kingdom.

Barth's eschatological dimension of the State and creation at large became much clearer at Tambach where he delivered a lecture in September 1919.

This lecture is published in Marquardt (1978). In the conference, Barth analysed the Kingdoms of creation, of grace, and of glory. The order in which the kingdoms were enumerated is important. The kingdom of creation is relativised by the kingdoms of grace and of glory. Creation finds its completeness only in the light of grace and glory. Barth indicated that the power of grace and glory is also present in creation and in the Law. The Church that lives under grace should contribute to the ethical conscience of society by proclaiming the Kingdom of God's peace, justice and love.

Barth specifically emphasized that the Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of God. Human actions, whether conservative or revolutionary, are not the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the revolution that precedes all revolutions. It is something which is radically new and which rejects all other revolutions. The Kingdom of God relativises human actions and in this manner the "no" pronounced by God's Kingdom registers protest against any prevailing order of things which claims to be the Kingdom of God. Christ should not be secularised or made the patron of any prevailing or current ideologies such as democracy or pacifism.

Barth also pointed out that the Church should be able to stand apart from culture. The Church in its mission should

preach the incompleteness and imperfection of culture by proclaiming the consummation and fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. The Resurrection and Pentecost give us hope in and for the created world and in the future. According to Barth, this is God's "Yes" to human effort. It seems that the objections raised by Paul Tillich and Carl Mennecke in the conference hall, namely that Barth had separated God from history cannot be sustained but must be discounted.

With this lecture, firstly, Barth publicly bade farewell to liberal theology and religious socialism in general, and to Ragaz in particular, and secondly, he introduced a completely new direction and programme for theology.

With the Tambach Lecture Barth positioned himself between Leonhard Ragaz and Hermann Kutter. Both Ragaz and Kutter were regarded as fathers of religious socialism. This lecture placed Barth in the middle of the debate on eschatology. Ragaz on the one hand believed in the earthly manifestation of God's kingdom and he preoccupied himself with interpreting the signs of times instead of working in concrete terms for the oppressed and economically exploited proletariat. Kutter on the other hand believed that people had to undergo inner change and then God's kingdom would be manifest on earth (Kutter, 1910; Ragaz, 1985).

Barth left Safenwil parish for professorships in Germany. He started at Göttingen in 1921 and ended in Bonn in 1935. He made use of the opportunity to ground his socialist convictions theologically. Some believe that he was politically inactive. On the contrary, it is probable that Barth's professorships were politically motivated. He did not abandon his socialist commitment. For example, in 1928 he voted for the socialist party that amalgamated with the Communist to take control of the German parliament, and, in 1932, he formally joined the socialist party as an act of political witness (Busch, 1976; Hunsinger, 1976).

2.4 SUMMARY

Having been disappointed by the theological and socio-political heritage he received from his professors and society, Barth sought a christological basis and centre for his theological conception of society and State. Taking the Incarnation very seriously, he was able to develop a theology that was an improvement on the 19th century liberal theology. This theology enabled him to address the problems his people had. His sermons and lectures were aimed at meeting the needs of the people. For example, the first edition of Barth's commentary on Romans was addressed to the Weimar Republic and the second edition was addressed to the Soviet State.

CHAPTER 3

BARTH'S THEOLOGY OF CHURCH AND STATE AS APPLICABLE TO
NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The social context within which Barth's early theology and praxis were formulated has been extensively described in chapter 2. Barth addressed himself to factory owners and business communities who economically exploited workers. He proposed socialism as a solution to the problem of capitalism. Barth challenged both the Church and the State to embrace socialism which, according to him, is a reflection of the Kingdom of God. Barth was then speaking to the Swiss State, the Weimar Republic and the Leninist State in the Soviet Union.

Yet one would argue that the most testing and relevant period for Barth's views about Church and State was during the period of the Third Reich. Jews were, by State decree, economically exploited and discriminated against because of their race. Many people, including many Germans were intimidated and terrorised by Hitler and by his secret police, the Gestapo. Barth also addressed the question of communism as propounded by Josef Stalin. In this chapter,

sociopolitical events in their chronological order are briefly described in an attempt to make one to fully understand and appreciate the contributions of Barth and the Church in Germany. Barth had immersed himself in the German Church struggle against Hitler and he wrote extensively, during this time. Barth was also active after the end of the Second World War when the East and the West declared a Cold War against each other.

3.2 DURING THE THIRD REICH

3.2.1 Hitler Ascends to Power (1933)

According to a psychoanalytical study undertaken by Langer (1974) on the life of Hitler, Hitler had already in his early childhood believed that he had been set aside to liberate Germany from Jews and Communists. This sense of mission, according to Langer (1974:28),

... has carried him over many untravelled roads that finally led him unerringly to a pinnacle of success and power never reached before. And still it lured him on until today he stands on the brink of disaster. He will go down in history as the most worshipped and the most despised man the world has ever known.

In November 1932, every third German voted for Hitler and, in January 1933, Hitler became chancellor (Grünberger, 1971).

This demonstrated the people's faith in National Socialism. His main theme was the unification of Germany and, to an extent, the restoration of German dignity and pride - "Volkwerdung". Without going into details, a few of the many factors that contributed to Hitler's success were as follows:

- (a) The Weimar Republic was regarded as a Jewish Republic. Jews had been dominant in spheres of banking, business, real estate, brokerage, money-lending, and cattle-trading. According to Grünberger (1971:15):

The Jews became the embodiment, on a scale unprecedented in history, of every ill besetting state and society in the final stage of the Weimar Republic.

- (b) Germany had just lost a war and was forced into a treaty (the Treaty of Versailles) that had demoralised the Germans and had left them worse off than ever. Lands such as the Rhineland and Austria had been excised from them. The Weimar Republic was therefore regarded as a interim phase. As Mau & Krausnick (1963:17) put it:

The change of government was represented as a decisive break with the ... almost proverbial 'fourteen years' of shameful past, leading to the 'reconstruction' and 'rise' of the German nation.

- (c) The myth of a stab-at-the-back was still very fresh in the minds of most Germans. Hitler had promised them that the "traitors" would be dealt with. Those "traitors" were identified as Communists and Jews.
- (d) To secure the vote of Christians, Hitler also preached a Christian awakening, promising the people that he would lead them on the Christian path. In a Nazi Party paper, as it appears in Mau & Krausnick (1963:19), there appeared a leading article entitled, "Christianity : the Basis of Adolf Hitler's Government".

Barth's critical stance against societal structures, such as Church and State, as exemplified in his Tambach lecture and in the second edition of the commentary on Romans, implied the positive evaluation of creation and society. This idea is further emphasized in his lecture entitled "Gospel and Law", written at the end of 1935, after his expulsion from Germany. To ensure that the State does not wander into the sphere of the Church, the State must be drawn under the lordship of Christ. The christological basis of the State is the main thrust of the lecture. The Christological basis of the State as understood by Barth and his positive affirmation of the State to which one has alluded in the discussion of Barth's Tambach lecture are treated in detail below. What the State does in order to maintain law and order and thus

to keep chaos at bay, it does as a manifestation of divine grace.

In line with Barth's positive affirmation of the State, he did not, at the beginning, question the legitimacy nor the authority of the National Socialist State. It should be mentioned though, that he was apprehensive about Hitler, especially after reading *Mein Kampf*. He concluded that, with Hitler in power, the Church's position would be endangered (Busch, 1976; Barth, 1938). As we have seen, Hitler won elections with a comfortable majority and therefore the National Socialist State had to be recognised. In "Gospel and Law", the civil use of the law, that is, "the sword", is aimed at a restoration and transformation of the State rather than its annihilation. For Barth, the Law is a necessary form of the Gospel whose content is grace. Accordingly, Barth reverses the traditional law-gospel dialectic. He maintains that God's first word to us is not Law but grace. Only when Law is understood as a necessary form of the Gospel, may we, according to Barth, legitimately speak of Law and Gospel. In this regard, Barth (1959c:26) believed the following:

Then the law no longer speaks as an instrument of the deception of sin and as organ of the wrath of God, but in its proper original sense as witness, as revelation of Him who has done all things well, and who wants nothing of us except

that we believe that He will indeed make all things well.

Through preaching Law and Gospel, the Church assumes a tremendous responsibility towards the State. The Church should help the State to transcend the dialectical nature of the fallen creation. The State, in other words, must rise above societal conflicts, be they political, economic or otherwise.

In his subsequent writings such as *Church Dogmatics*, (II, 2; II, 2; III, 4; IV, 2) *Against the Stream, Community, State, and Church and How to Serve God in a Marxist Land*, Barth adapted the views he had held since he had started to grapple with issues concerning Church and State, as expressed in his early theological ethics in general and the second edition of the commentary on Romans in particular, as was discussed in chapter 2.

In the later publications mentioned above, Barth points out the fact that in the New Testament, spiritual and invisible powers are discussed. These powers are prominent in the writings of Paul. Paul says in Ephesians 6:12,

... we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (RSV).

These powers perform certain functions in the lives of individuals and nations. These powers can be benevolent or demonic. They manifest themselves in creation through the actions of individuals or groups. It is the understanding of the New Testament that these powers possess people and act through them. Powers that are of God, prompt people to do good and those who stray and wander from God's sphere of activity prompt people to do evil. Having understood these powers, Barth connects the authority of political rulers with the powers. The rulers who uphold God's law whilst in power, govern well but those who deify themselves become demonic and rule unjustly. The angelic powers of Romans 13 are the obverse of the demonic powers of Revelation 13 (CD III, 4:32-46). As the State is an eschatological entity, Barth (1968:25) exhorts us to remember that even the demonic State will not be destroyed. With the return of Christ, these powers will be won over for God's Kingdom and will serve God (1 Cor 5:24; Phil 2:9ff, 1 Pet 3:22).

Although these powers are independent (Barth 1968:25) and separate from God (CD III, 4:32-46), they are bound to Christ and His work. He contends that the State has its origin in Christ. That is why an ideal State is able to administer justice and protect the law. He goes so far to say that, even Pontius Pilate, by deflecting justice and sending Jesus away to be hanged on the Cross, became an involuntary agent

of redemption. He maintains therefore, that Pilate does not only belong to the Creed in general but to its second article in particular (1968). He (1968:120) clarifies this statement by saying further:

When the New Testament speaks of the State, we are fundamentally, in the christological sphere; we are on a lower level than when it speaks of the Church, yet, in true accordance with its statements on the Church, we are in the same unique christological sphere.

The Christian obeys the State according to Romans 13. By so doing, he or she submits himself or herself indirectly to the authority of Jesus Christ. Barth discusses Church and State in terms of two concentric circles. Christ is in the middle. This is to show that the two institutions have Christ as their centre. The two institutions should therefore not wander away from their centre. The Church forms the inner circle and the State, the outer one. The Church is closest to the centre because it is the instrument of justification of the sinner. The Church has been set aside to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God. Fruition of the Kingdom comes at the end of times. Barth argues that the State, in its peculiar way, is also God's instrument of salvation. He says, in fact, that the State belongs to the second article of the Creed. But he qualifies this statement by saying that the State cannot proclaim a justification of the sinner through faith. This is the function of the Church. The

function of the State is to dispense justice and to take care of the security and safety of its citizens. It cannot prepare candidates for heaven.

The State needs the Church and vice versa, and both are accountable to God through Jesus Christ. Both the Church and State are eschatological and each in its peculiar way should contribute towards the coming and realisation of God's Kingdom here on earth (Barth, 1968; 1963b).

After his expulsion from Germany on 22 June 1935, Barth continued to make a valuable contribution to the Church struggle in Germany against National Socialism. The Church in Germany was divided. The majority, including members of the Confessing Church, at least initially, supported Hitler's war effort. The invasion of Rhineland in 1936 was welcomed by most Germans. By 1938, Hitler had annexed Austria and his appetite for more land had become insatiable (Broszat, 1983; Rothfels, 1962). Barth at that time was writing articles and also busy on the second volume of his Church Dogmatics I. He wrote profusely against Hitler and National Socialism and, as far as he was concerned, Hitler was a madman and he had to be stopped. In this regard he wrote particularly to the United States of America and Britain (1937, 1938, 1939, 1954).

Although there is much tyranny and human error in the State, Barth disagreed with those who regarded it as a product of sin. According to him, the State is one of the constants of the divine Providence. It shares both a "common origin" and a "common centre" with the Church (1968:156). Accordingly, Barth maintained that the Church cannot be against the State, but has to be for it. The Church in its mission cannot deny the mission of the State, but must recognise it, include it and transcend it. The wrath of God as practised by the State issues His burning love for humankind (CD II, 2:205-233).

Suggesting a more direct political responsibility for the Church, Barth (CD II, 2:721) said:

For this reason the special duty of the Church extends to recognising this political authority and its special mission includes sharing the responsibility for the execution of this authority.

Political power is God's way of being patient with the world by ensuring that the world receives grace and the Church gets time and opportunity to proclaim this grace. The Church, Barth insisted, cannot be antipolitical or apolitical if it truly realises God's intention for the State. Political conceptions may change, States may rise and fall, but according to Barth, one factor did not change. It is the Church. It is the basis of all States.

In spite of this close connection between the Church and State, Barth (1968:195) cautions Christians to be mindful of the fact that they are strangers and pilgrims on this earth. Christians are citizens of heaven. This future city is described in Revelation 21. In the coming age, we are concerned with the real State. The only thing that separates the Church and State is the hope of the new age. But this hope also unites the two realms for we discern the will of God in the ordering of the present age. And, moreover, the coming age is a political one because this Kingdom of God or of heaven has a political ruler, a king. It is also interesting, as Barth remarks, that the real city, and not the real Church, will be revealed, according to Revelation 21. The Parousia will, in other words, usher in the end of the Church.

In the meantime, the earthly Church cannot assume the predicates of the heavenly State by playing a State within the State or a State above the State. The earthly State and the Church are both temporary institutions. Whilst in waiting, the Church proclaims justification which is the eternal Law of Jesus Christ according to the book of Revelation. This mission is directed to all people and in particular to earthly rulers so that we, under their rule, may lead a quiet and peaceful life.

Neither can do the work of the other, because the Church and State have specific and separately defined functions. The State, emphasises Barth, uses force and the Church uses persuasion. Barth (1968:135) explained the mutual relationship in the following manner:

The light which falls from heavenly polis upon the earthly ecclesia is reflected in the light which illuminates the earthly polis from the earthly ecclesia, through their mutual relation.

That is why, on several occasions, Barth discouraged the formation of Christian political parties and rejected the idea of a Christian State. Although he appreciated the Swiss State for its Christian character, Barth was still not prepared to call it a Christian State. The Church must show that, although it goes its own peculiar way, it is not against anybody. The Church is for all people (Busch, 1976,; Barth, 1968). According to Barth, the Church has no theory of a just State for there cannot be a duplicate of the Church in the political arena. The Church has no idea, system or a programme for such an enterprise. The Church cannot be specific in the political arena. However, it can offer guidelines for creating a just society. The Church's task is to monitor the dispensing of social justice (Barth, 1959b; 1968). This means that, in a constitutional arrangement, an entrenchment of rights, duties, privileges and obligations of

individuals has to be provided. This would be, according to Barth, an appropriate mechanism for the realization of a just State.

In its witness, the Church cannot expect the State to become the Kingdom of God because the State functions in an unredeemed world where sin must be reproached and chaos prevented. What the Church should do is to see to it that the State is analogous to God's Kingdom. The legitimate goal of the State is righteousness. The Church should support State decisions which point towards, and clarify, the Kingdom of God. The Church must oppose those decisions which contradict and obscure God's Kingdom. Barth warned that Christians should not refer to the gospel directly in political matters, but should try to remain as anonymous as possible whilst witnessing to Christian truths in political deliberations. The nearest to political participation to which the Church can come is to provide political parties and the State with Christians who influence the running of the State from the Christian viewpoint without necessarily overtly declaring their faith.

To recapitulate, one would say that, according to Barth, the Church as an organ of divine justification and the State as an organ of human law are inextricably linked to each other, with Christ as a common centre. The task of the Church is to

witness to State authorities. The Church must intercede for rulers regardless of whether they are good or bad. As God's grace abounds in sin, so the Church cannot decrease, but should always increase its mission to the State. Similarly, the State's mission is to maintain law and order so that chaos is averted and a climate is created in which the Church can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

3.2.2 Hitler Consolidates his Power

In spite of the clear victory which he won, Hitler used undemocratic and unethical means to consolidate his power and became the dictator of Germany.

On 27 February 1933, a fire was started at the Reichstag by an unknown person. Communists were blamed for it. Many communists were rounded up the same night. The communists and the Social Democratic Press was banned, and the communists were excluded from the impending election campaign scheduled for 5 March (Mau & Krausnick, 1963). According to Broszat (1983), this unknown person was later identified as a Dutch communist, Marinus van der Lubbe. Whatever the truth of the matter, Hitler had grounds he needed to act harshly against his opponents.

The day after the Reichstag fire, a special edict for "Protection of State and People" was promulgated. This gave Hitler powers to eliminate his enemies and coerce his coalition partners into submission. According to Mau & Krausnick (1963:24),

The police were now able to make arrests without warrant or judicial control, to detain persons for an unlimited period, to search houses, open private letters, ban or censor newspapers, dissolve parties and associations, forbid meetings, and confiscate private property.

The "Enabling Bill" that was officially known as the "National Emergency Termination Bill" and was passed by Parliament on 23 March 1933, placed Hitler above the law and the constitution (Mau & Krausnick, 1963; Broszat, 1983).

Hitler's next move was to dissolve political parties. Having disposed of the communists (KPD) and social democrats (DDP), Hitler dissolved the German National People's Party (DNVP). The Roman Catholic Centre Party was pressured into dissolving itself on 5 July 1933. On 14 July a law which prohibited the formation of new political parties was enacted. As a result, the Nazi Party (NSDAP) was declared the only legal political party in Germany. This position, enabled Hitler to become the absolute leader of Germany - the Führer. "Heil Hitler"

became the official German salute and form of greeting on 20 July.

The death of President Paul von Hindenburg on the 2 August 1934 availed Hitler of yet another opportunity to consolidate his power. He assumed the presidency and consequently became the Head of the State and Supreme Commander of the "Reichswehr" (Mau & Krausnick, 1963; Broszat, 1983).

Having thus become the Führer, Hitler unleashed terror and propaganda to subdue Germans into submission (Rothfels, 1962). Germany was thus "nazified" and this was the process by means of which Germans were forced to fashion and conduct their lives in accordance with the ideals, aims, and objectives of the ideology propounded by the Nazi Party. As Mau & Krausnick (1963:36) write:

The pattern of party organisation embracing political, social and cultural life down to its smallest branches, became a model for the uniform pattern which was now imposed upon the whole German life. With the hierarchy of its functionaries, from Gauleiter down to street block leader, the Party aimed at nothing less than omnipresence, the penetration of every cell and organ of influence, in an attempt to impose 'co-ordination' even on the thoughts of the individual.

As Hitler's intentions of dominating not only Germany, but also the whole of Europe, became apparent, so also the vehemence of Barth's attack on National Socialism increased. He (1938) points out that National Socialism was also directed at the contemporary world and the Church. Reviewing National Socialism after six years, that is, from 1933 onwards, Barth (1939) points out that his worse fears have been confirmed, and he feared for the worst if Hitler were not stopped. He says that National Socialism has, during the period under review, penetrated every movement in Germany and made resistance and disagreement impossible. Hitler had apparently diverted Germany's attention from National Socialism to communism while Barth continued to insist that National Socialism, not communism, was the real political problem of Germany. National Socialism as an absurd political experiment and religious institution of salvation as Barth understood it, made Barth resolve by 1938 to be forthright in his battle against it.

He (1939:38) says that as a political experiment, National Socialism

... is a dictatorship which is totalitarian and radical, which not only surrounds and determines mankind and men in utter totality, in body and soul, but abolishes their human nature, and does not merely limit human freedom, but annihilates it.

National Socialism, according to Barth (1939:50-57), is fundamentally a dissolution of the just State as a concept. It is as far as it could possibly be from Romans 13. The damage that National Socialism caused made Barth disregard and ignore the good it had achieved, namely the elimination of unemployment, the raising of the standard of living and the successful Winter Relief Project which helped indigent Germans. He started to question the legitimacy of Hitler's government. He points out that the National Socialists came to power by suspicious means. To him the burning of the Reichstag was the work of the Nazis. According to Barth, the suppression of the press and political opposition were contrary to the characteristics of a just State. He further points out that the 1933 elections were won by violence and treachery. National Socialists were a comparatively small clique and, by means of their press policy, had falsified elections and terrorised every German.

National Socialism, as far as Barth (1939:50-57) was concerned, was not the beginning of the Kingdom of God: it was its demonic counterpart. It crushed and killed with the might and right that only belongs to Divinity. It had become a secular Church. Theologically, the National Socialist State had moved away from the ideal State as portrayed in Romans 13 to the diabolical State as portrayed in Revelations 13. It recognised no authority other than itself. Democratic forces

were regarded as the enemies of the State. Hitler regarded Christ as his competitor and he styled himself as the new revelation of salvation for Germany. This proved clearly to Barth that the National Socialist State was confronting the Church with a choice between Hitler and God. As indicated above, it would not have been necessary to make a choice, had the National Socialist State remained the State and allowed the Church to be the Church. He was disappointed by the Thuringian German Christians who said "yes" to National Socialism. The true Church must say "no". The evil that Barth (1939:58) saw in National Socialism made him conclude that

the Church and National Socialism stand over against each other and between them there is this (wide) unbridgeable gulf.

Whilst some Germans called for the boycott of Hitler Sunday, Barth appealed for its observance. But instead of praying for the expansion of National Socialism, he suggested that Christians should pray for its downfall. Hitler was to be deposed by prayer. The prayer for the downfall of Hitler was regarded as a positive contribution by the Church for, in fact, the Church would be praying for its own preservation in the face of its persecution by the State, and also for the creation of a just State as an alternative to the National Socialist State (Barth, 1939).

The "nazification" of Germany not only affected the civil service, press and radio, but also Christianity. Everything that was done was calculated to promote the deification of the Führer and the State (Grünberger, 1971). Hitler's deification manifested itself in various ways and forms, and Langer (1974:56) points to the following instances: (a) A large picture of Hitler was displayed, surrounded by little paintings of Christ in one of Berlin's large art shops on the Unter den Linden. (b) In Odenwald, the following words were painted on the hill side, "We believe in Holy Germany, Holy Germany is Hitler, We believe in Holy Hitler". (c) At the 1937 Nuremberg Nazi Party rally, a large portrait of Hitler was displayed, on which the following words were written, "In the beginning was the Word ...". (d) Many families had corners in their homes reserved for Hitler and as they prayed for him, candles would be lit.

Closely related to the deification of Hitler was the reintroduction of paganism and distortions of the Bible. After barely five years in power, according to Jacobsen (1969:84),

Paganism was publicly commended by the Nazis, and publicly practiced. Nazi-sponsored pagan 'cults' revived the pre-Christian shrine to Wotan at the Heiliger Berg near Heidelberg and the pre-Christian temple of the Sachsenhain near Verder. The old stone gods of the

Germanic race had been taken out of storage, dusted down and revitalized.

Barth blamed the indiscriminate use of natural theology for this paganism. Natural theology as such was acceptable to Barth as long as the Word of God remained a primary source for Christian theology.

From the time of the second edition of the commentary on Romans, Barth intensified his attack against everything which would later be associated with Hitler and National Socialism. He parted company with Bultmann's "pre-understanding", Gogarten's "orders of creation" and Brunner's "point of contact" (CD II:1:635). At that time, Hitler as a manifestation of a new revelation was becoming popular. Germans regarded Hitler as a super-human messiah. He was regarded as the creative word through which a new Germany had been born. Hitler's understanding of what he called Positive Christianity clearly showed that the Confessional Church was in danger of being eliminated. According to Langer (1974: 149-150), Jesus Christ was regarded as Hitler's competitor and Hitler would not brook any challenge to his power.

It was on the basis of such concepts as "orders of creation" and the misuse of Luther's two Kingdoms' doctrine that theologians such as Gogarten, Paul Althaus and Werner Elert formulated a theology that helped deify Hitler and the

National Socialist State. Barth replied with an emphatic and resounding "No!". According to Barth, Jesus did not come to sanction the fallen creation but to bring about a new one. It is by grace that ordinances of creation such as the State could be restored to a healthy and normal relationship with God. It is not an initiative on the part of humans.

Yet Barth did not reject natural theology altogether. His main worry was that propagating natural theology vehemently at the time would make things easier for Hitler's programme of self-deification. Besides, Barth wanted to restore God's position in its rightful place, namely, in the centre of theology. He wanted to make sure that theology no longer looked around for guarantees and approval from culture and science. Any guarantee should come from the Word.

A letter which Barth wrote to Thurneysen from Göttingen clearly shows Barth's attitude towards natural theology and philosophy. He confides in Thurneysen in Smart (1964:161-162).

There is a natural theology; even the proofs of God are not to be wholly despised; especially from the standpoint of revelation one must postulate a relative and naturally imperfect knowledge of God on the part of the intellect. But tell that to no one; I must first sleep over it for a while until it becomes ripe for promulgation [letter dated 20.12.1923].

Berkouwer (1956) makes the categorical statement that Barth did not reject the use of philosophical presuppositions. He continues by saying that Barth became worried only when a certain philosophy became a foundation of theology, especially in matters salvific. Will Herberg in Barth, (1968:21), agrees with the sentiments of this study when he says that Barth

... is able to speak of a positive, even ontological theology, in which knowledge of God by analogy becomes possible ..., in which the movement is downward from God to man through Christ.

Referring to the light of Jesus Christ and other lights, Barth (CD IV, 3) says that Jesus Christ is not one of the lights in the cosmos, nor is he the best. He is the one and the only Light. He is the only Light of life, and as such he is a complete total declaration of God about Himself and us. Yet, acknowledging the existence of other truths outside the Bible, Barth says that they have a positive role to play. The basis of such truths is due to God's reconciling the world unto himself through Jesus Christ. This he called the cosmic dimension of revelation because Jesus Christ also rules "extra muros ecclesiae". These truths, continues Barth, have no ultimate power in, and of, themselves. Jesus Christ makes use of them to bear witness to him. And the State is also such a power that bears witness to God's forbearance with the world.

Having understood Barth in this way, one is not surprised to find that Barth has come up with a doctrine of the Grenzfall. This concept is not a contradiction of Barth's theology as some theologians such as Yoder (1970), say, and is not a modification of his theology as others, such as Williams (1981), say. One sees this idea as a logical unfolding of Barth's theological ethics. Barth (CD II, 2:509-543) refers to borderline cases or extreme cases where one has to choose between two evils, and ends up obviously choosing the lesser evil. This is a form of a special ethics because it is a departure from the general rule. But it is not, one believes, a contradiction of Barth's general method.

Grenzfall, firstly, helped Barth to avoid the casuistry or legalism which he deeply resented and, secondly, and most importantly, it protects the freedom and the sovereignty of God. It frees God to speak anew in a new situation, and it includes the freedom of God to command the transgression of one of the Ten Commandments. Thirdly, it gives human beings the freedom under God's freedom to be free moral agents.

With the Grenzfall stage set, Barth (CD III, 4:3-32) was able to tackle issues involving respect for, and protection of, life, issues such as suicide, abortion, euthanasia, self-defence, the death penalty and war. Grenzfall is not a concept derived from natural theology, but a concept that is

faithful first and foremost to the Bible and God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. He cautions therefore that Grenzfall should not be merely regarded as a special ethics but should be appropriately regarded as what he calls "crisis ethics". Grenzfall is not situation ethics in disguise. It is not responsible to the situation or simply the principle of love. It is responsible to the Scriptures and accountable to God.

The kind of natural theology that was taught by some theologians who were supporters of Hitler was unacceptable to Barth. Christianity was falsified and Hitler came to be regarded as a new revelation for Germany. Barth (1938) pointed to the temptation with which the Church was faced. The National Socialist State promised the Church a favourable position on condition that the Church was prepared to recognise the new regime as the new divine revelation, and put itself at the service of the new regime without reservation. This was a temptation to transgress the First Commandment. Anti-Catholic propaganda was unleashed and those Protestants with whom the State wanted to make friends, through the "German Christians", were divided and the result was the formation of the Confessional Church (Mau & Krausnick, 1963; Helmreich, 1979).

The Confessional Church consistently and concertedly opposed National Socialism. This was made possible by the theology of Barth. He argued that the Church is founded on the Word of God and everything it does must be justified from the Word. If the Church ever departs from this source, it will lose the very justification for its existence. Martin Niemöller, Gerhard Jacobie and Eitel Friedrich von Rabenau called a Pastors' Emergency League on the 21 September 1933. By January 1934, over seven thousand pastors had joined the Confessional Church. Niemöller, as general secretary, became the leader of the Church (Mau & Kraunsnick, 1963; Helmreich, 1979).

The first Synod of the Confessing Church was convened at the Barmen-Gemarke Reformed Church between 29 and 31 May 1934. Barth's "Barmen Declaration" was accepted and adopted at the Synod. It was a rejection of all that the German Christians stood for and of everything that had to do with Bishop Ludwig Müller's Church. It stressed the freedom of the Word and the Church's freedom under the Word incarnated in Jesus Christ. It rejected the State's totalitarianism because totalitarianism abrogated to itself the powers and functions of the Church. It again rejected the Church's notion of becoming an organ of the State (Barth, 1984; Helmreich, 1979).

The second Synod was held in Dahlem between 4 and 5 March 1935. This Synod did not please Barth because, according to him, the insights that were formulated at Barmen were not translated into actions at Dahlem. But another declaration was made. It affirmed the First Commandment and went on to denounce those who worship gods of blood, race, folk, honour and freedom. This statement was clearly directed against Alfred Rosenberg's paganism and the "German Christ". In defiance of the State's decree, this statement was read in pulpits on 17 March. As a result of this disobedience, 715 pastors were arrested but were released immediately thereafter. Barth consoled them by pointing out to them that the Church in Germany had been offered an opportunity to experience what it means to serve God as a Suffering Church. He in fact encouraged them never to back off, because the Church was the only voice when every institution in Germany had lost its freedom and hope. The Church still stood under the freedom of the Word (Barth, 1938).

One of the most powerful devices for inculcating and infusing religious veneration for Germany and Hitler, was the Hitler Oath. It reads as follows: in Helmreich (1979: 178).

I swear: I will be true and obedient to the Führer of the German Reich and Adolf Hitler, observe the laws, and conscientiously fulfil my official duties, so help me God.

With Barth deported back to Switzerland, Confessional Christians agreed to take the Hitler oath but with the explicit declaration that allegiance to Hitler was relative to allegiance and loyalty to God.

Anti-Semitic measures were the order of the day. These measures were legalised with the enactment of the so-called "Nuremberg Laws" of September 1935. Mau & Krausnick (1963: 124) report:

As early as January 30th 1939 Hitler had prophesied that one result of a new world war ... would be the extermination of the Jewish race in Europe.

During the War, things became truly atrocious for Jews. According to Helmreich (1979:327-328), Jews were not only discriminated against but also brutally maltreated. To make sure that only Jews were affected, every Jew had to have a yellow Star of David displayed on his or her chest wherever he or she went. Their houses were also marked with this yellow star.

While many Germans interpreted the Jewish plight as God's curse and punishment, Barth advanced his own arguments. His basic argument was that they cannot hold the Jews in contempt, especially as Christians, because Jesus Christ was a Jew and anti-Semitism is a sin against the Holy Spirit

(Barth, 1939:51). He maintains that any Church that becomes anti-Semitic or even asemitic would lose its object of faith. Israel's special importance despite its disobedience and the fact that it crucified Christ, can never be displaced. In fact, it requires to be perpetually acknowledged if the Church is to survive (CD II, 2:195-205; CD III, 3:177-182).

Barth was puzzled about the origins of anti-Semitism. He traced this attitude from the Middle Ages. Jews were especially hated from about the 12th century A.D., and he observes that almost every non-Jew suffers from the disease of anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism did not start with Hitler. Barth was really surprised because, as he said, Jews are no worse than other people (CD III, 3:217-220). Before advancing arguments to explain anti-Semitism theologically, Barth (1954:198) began by admitting that

Anti-Semitism seems to be just as inexplicable as the very existence and character of the Jews, and there are grounds for the supposition that there is some connection between the two.

Barth (1954; CD III, 3) gives us the following reasons:

- (a) In the Jew God confronts us with our own image as a sinful people, and we hate that. As he writes in (CD III, 3:221):

In the Jew we have revealed and shown to us in a mirror who and what we all are, and how bad we all are ... In this respect the Jew pays for the fact that he is the elect of God

Thus Barth affirms that the Jews are a source of annoyance and irritation. By turning the mirror against the wall or even by smashing it, we think that we shall succeed in hiding our nakedness. But we shall not succeed, no matter how hard we try, because Jews, unlike other nations, can exist anonymously.

- (b) We are jealous and envious of the Jews. The mere fact that they are a chosen race makes us angry because their status gives them an important, if not a crucial, place in world history. Barth (1954:200) continues by saying,

They have the promise of God; and if we Christians from among the Gentiles have it too, then it is only as those chosen with them, as guests in their house, as new wood grafted on their old tree.

- (c) We are also jealous of the Jews because their mere survival is an extraordinary phenomenon. A Jew remains a Jew everywhere and anywhere. They are not easily assimilated. An American Jew for example, will always be a Jew, first and American second. This sense of identity and the notion of international Jewry is a source of wonderment.

(d) Even though world history has dealt harshly with the Jews, they are not extinct. The hardships they endured are beyond comprehension. They left Palestine for Egypt, Egypt for the Wilderness, the Wilderness for a return to Palestine, Palestine for Captivity, Captivity for Dispersion. Even today, with the founding of the State of Israel, Jews still appear almost in every country. Their presence in all these cities of the world, Barth (1954) argues, it is God's way to remind us that salvation is possible only through the Great Jew, Jesus Christ.

The "nazification" of Germany and the brutal treatment of the Jews were coupled with Hitler's need for more land, a need that plunged Germany and the world into the Second World War.

3.2.3 The Outbreak of the Second World War

It became very obvious that Hitler's dream of a "Greater Germany" meant acquiring more land for Germans. As a result, in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler moved his army into the demilitarised Rhineland in 1936. On 13 March 1938 he announced the complete annexation of Austria to the German Reich. Under the pretext of going to the aid of the Sudeten Germans, Hitler marched into Czechoslovakia. But instead of confining his conquest to the German areas, Hitler

pressured the Slovaks into demanding independence from the Czech government. As confusion reigned, Czechoslovakia's President Hacha went to Berlin where he surrendered. Consequently, Hitler announced on 16 March 1939 that the Czech's State was part of the envisaged "Greater German Reich". On 1 September Hitler invaded Poland without giving any excuse. Britain and France then declared war on Germany. Hitler rushed to Stalin and concluded a non-aggression treaty with him in order to keep the mighty Russia out of the war. As a result, Russia concentrated its imperial designs elsewhere, on countries such as Finland.

Hitler attacked Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940. Denmark succumbed almost immediately, with Norway following after very few weeks of resistance. On 10 May Hitler crossed the Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg frontiers. By 22 June, the whole of Northern and Central France including the Atlantic coast as far as the Spanish frontier, were declared occupied territory. Hitler successfully invaded Yugoslavia and Greece on the 6 April 1941.

In spite of the treaty concluded with Russia, and in spite of the overtaxed army's strength, Hitler attacked Russia on the 22 June 1941. After losing almost 300 000 men, the Commander of the German Sixth Army, Friedrich von Paulus surrendered at Stalingrad on the 31 January 1943. At the same time, German

and Italian forces were performing very badly against the Anglo-American forces which had landed in Morocco and Algiers on 8 November 1942. The Nazi-Fascist forces capitulated in May 1943.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of the United States of America, and Sir Winston Spencer Churchill, Prime Minister of Britain, combined forces with President Joseph Stalin against Hitler. And as Mau & Krausnick (1963:119) say,

When the British and Americans with their superior forces began landing in Normandy in the early hours of June 6th 1944, Germany's position was already hopeless.

For all intents and purposes, Hitler had lost the war by the 29 July 1944. Yet Hitler would not surrender. Hitler committed suicide on 30 April 1945. On 22 May Berlin surrendered and, five days later, the entire "Wehrmacht" capitulated (Helmreich, 1979; Grünberger, 1971; Langer, 1974; Mau & Krausnick, 1963).

The Church did not have problems with Hitler when he made his intentions clear about the creation of a "Greater Germany". In fact, Confessional Christians such as Martin Niemöller supported Hitler when he decided to withdraw Germany from the League of Nations. Hitler also got a nod in 1938 when he

annexed Austria. Many concerned Christians called for caution by the time Hitler interfered with the Dutch and Belgian neutrality in 1940. Most agreed that he had to be stopped (Helmreich, 1979).

There were basically two methods by which Hitler could have been halted, namely, through elections and referendums or by assassination. The problem with the former alternative was that elections or any other democratic measures were out of the question. The problem with the latter was that Hitler's omnipresence and omniscience through the Gestapo, the Storm Troopers (SA) and the Protection Squads (SS) made this move suicidal. Although many Germans would have preferred a democratic method, they were forced to opt for active resistance including the assassination of the Führer (Jacobsen, 1969; Broszat, 1983).

Several attempts on Hitler's life were made without success, including the famous one of 20 July 1944 by the chief conspirator, Count Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg. Among the chief conspirators within the clergy was Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He regarded Hitler as an anti-Christ and, in 1935, through the insistence of Barth, Bonhoeffer returned from England where he had been pastor. His aim was to confront Hitler (Busch, 1976; Jacobsen, 1969).

Bonhoeffer made contacts with the outside world and pleaded for assistance to the German resistance movement. He went to Sweden to talk to Bishop George Bell, through whom he had hoped to reach the Allied Governments, but in this he was not successful. It does seem that the West believed that Hitler had the support of most Germans and that the revolutionaries were therefore just an isolated group of malcontents. Bonhoeffer fervently prayed for the defeat of Germany in the war, for he was convinced that it was only through defeat that Germany would be saved and be able to atone for its sins committed against the world. He was arrested in 1943. During his imprisonment he wrote poems, essays and letters. Some of these were published. He was executed in April 1945, just before the Allied Forces liberated Germany (Rothfels, 1962; Jacobsen, 1969; Broszat, 1983).

As a result of the terror that was unleashed on the Confessional Christians and other opponents of National Socialism, Barth became more militant in his approach to the problem facing the resistance movement. Karl Barth was neither a pacifist nor a non-pacifist. He argued that one cannot, in principle, become a pacifist or vice versa. In this instance, Barth concluded that Hitler had to be forcefully removed. In general Barth did differentiate between a just and an unjust war. Because of this distinction, Barth agreed that in an unjust war a Christian

may refuse to serve in the army. But he added that a conscientious objector must be prepared to accept the consequences of his or her refusal to be enlisted. Such a person will be in peace with his or her conscience and with God (CD III, 4:24-48). Tyrannicide similarly, was not rejected out of hand (CD III, 4:468). When attempts were made on Hitler's life, Barth, as far as one could ascertain, said nothing to discourage the resistance movement. One is of the opinion that Barth did not mourn Hitler's death. According to Busch (1976), Barth regarded the outbreak of the war as the beginning of the end of National Socialism. Barth was at least included among those who prayed for the end, not only of National Socialism, but also of Hitler (Busch 1976; Barth, 1939).

On the basis of what is portrayed above, it should not come as a surprise that Barth was sympathetic to First World War soldiers. He joined the home guard and spent several nights on duty. For soldiers stationed in his parish, he set up a reading room. When the Czechs were faced with Hitler's attack, Barth advised them, in a letter addressed to Josef Hromadka, to resist militarily, because their fight was for Europe and the Christian Church. That is why, when France and England sanctioned Hitler's move, he foresaw catastrophe for European freedom. Barth's advice was made public and, as

a result, he was disowned by even the Confessional Church (Busch, 1976; Helmreich, 1979).

During the Second World War, Barth wrote passionately against Hitler. He said a concerted effort against Hitler was necessary, both militarily and theologically. Barth was therefore accused of militarism and anarchism. By summoning Switzerland to fight for its democracy and freedom, Barth had in fact suggested that Switzerland should break from its state of neutrality. According to him, neutrality need not mean failure to see the difference between Churchill and Hitler. In April 1940, Barth reported for armed military service. While on active service, he also preached to fellow soldiers. At that time, Barth became a member of a secret organisation whose aim was to defend Switzerland against any invasion. He was in fact a co-founder of a secret resistance movement whose membership was by invitation only and whose members were inducted by an oath (Busch, 1976; Barth, 1966).

Barth's interest in and concern for Germany did not end with the termination of the War. His involvement with Germany in fact increased, and it became more direct since his deportation order had been nullified by the fall of the National Socialist State.

3.3 AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Three issues will be examined in this section. They are the concept of collective guilt coupled with denazification, reconstruction programmes, and Barth's understanding and tackling of communism especially in relation to the communism of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

3.3.1 Collective Guilt

When the war ended, there was a feeling in the Protestant churches that, whatever had happened prior to and during the War, the whole of Germany was accountable. Langer (1974:139) succinctly catches the mood of the time when he says:

It was not only Hitler, the madman, who created German madness, but German madness that created Hitler.

Hitler expressed, therefore, the state of mind existing in 70 000 000 Germans and, to some extent, in all civilized countries.

Barth, together with others such as Bonhoeffer, urged that every German should feel responsible for what had happened, instead of blaming Hitler alone. Barth (1939:58-67) propagated this concept of collective guilt within the first six

years of National Socialism. He argued that the Church shared the guilt of National Socialism and, before it could call Germans to repentance, it had first to confess. The Roman Catholic Church refuted this idea and indicated that sin or guilt is a personal matter (Spotts, 1973). The belief that corporate guilt excludes personal involvement results in pharisaism. Corporate responsibility underlines personal responsibility; it includes personal guilt.

The great architects of the collective guilt mentality, namely, Barth, Bonhoeffer and Niemöller, were not unmindful of the efforts made by individuals and groups in the struggle against National Socialism. Many Germans sacrificed themselves for the freedom of Germany. Perhaps Barth did not suffer much physically and financially, but he was deported from Germany. Niemöller was incarcerated several times in the concentration camps. Bonhoeffer did not survive the war; he was executed. Barth (1938, 1954) went so far as to accuse non-Germans of hypocrisy and pharisaism. Barth argued that the non-Germans could not have performed better under similar circumstances. These accusing outsiders asked where the Church was when Hitler came to power. They specifically demanded to know why the Church did not stop the persecution of the Jews. Barth argued that the weak position of the Church after the First World War did not enable the Church to see the Bolshevistic nature of National Socialism. Instead,

he praised the Church's performance. According to Barth, the Church was consistent in its adherence to the First Commandment. The only freedom in Germany was embodied in the Church. Barth was obviously referring to the Confessional Christians.

One is glad that an extensive history of the resistance against National Socialism, and the motives of those who resisted, has already been published. But the idea that some Germans were innocent, as was asserted by Paul Berben (Rothfels, 1962), should not be an attempt to morally exonerate some Germans for what happened during the Third Reich. All have sinned and are in need of absolution. That is why, to a great extent, the programme of "denazification", about which more shall be said below, is to be regretted.

Many Germans, through the Protestant Church, accepted the concept of collective guilt. According to Spotts (1973:93),

Only such an acknowledgment would make it possible to overcome the past, to face the future with self-respect, to salvage the dignity of Germany and to reconcile Germans with other nations.

This conviction led to what became known as the "Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt". It was made during a conference held in Stuttgart between 18 and 19 October 1945. It read, according to Helmreich (1979:421), in part as follows:

With great anguish we state : Through us inestimable suffering was inflicted on many peoples and lands ... we charge ourselves for not having borne testimony with greater courage, prayed more conscientiously, believed more joyously, and loved more ardently.

Against this backdrop, the programme of "denazification" became, by and large, pharisaic. Barth was completely against the programme. Most Protestants agreed with the programme but the Roman Catholic Church rejected it. The Roman Catholic Church argued that judgment belongs to God and that people who were not "nazified" were the communists and social democrats. In practical terms, this would have meant that the positions in civil government, industry and education would be occupied by them. The Roman Catholic Church suggested that only people who had committed criminal acts during the Third Reich could be punished; a clear distinction, on moral grounds, should be made between political criminals and political conformists.

Another flaw was that "denazification" was not uniformly and evenly applied in the four zones. By the end of 1946, 100 000 persons were in detention and more than 120 000 had lost their jobs. This displeased the churches, and pastors sabotaged the programme by issuing statements of good conduct to the victims of "denazification". Bishop Wurm even said that there was something Bolshevistic about the programme.

This programme became so unpopular that it was officially discontinued in September 1948 (Spotts, 1973:93-100).

One wonders whether "denazification" has been completely stopped. A hunt for Nazis is still going on around the world, especially in the ghettos of South America. In 1988 the world's most respected politician and now statesman, Dr Kurt Waldheim, was investigated with the view to pressing charges against him for crimes against humanity, namely his alleged involvement in the torture and murder of the German Jews. Rudolf Hess died a lone prisoner recently in Spandau Prison, at the age of more or less 90 years. The West could have used its influence to release him, but it did not.

It has been implied that the West, to an extent, shares in the atrocities perpetrated by Hitler. Far fetched as this proposition may seem, it is nevertheless true, as one shall now attempt to prove. According to Barth (1954), the whole of Europe is guilty of the atrocities carried out by the Third Reich.

As early as 1938, Britain was already aware of the plight of the German resistance. This was followed by Barth's letter in April 1941, exposing Hitler's expansionist intentions. Barth also wrote to the Americans in December 1942, naming Hitler as the enemy of Germany. Churchill was always and

consistently informed about developments in Germany. He was even made aware of the pact which Hitler had signed with Stalin. Yet Churchill's admiration of Hitler was not weakened. Bonhoeffer's international contacts and connections enabled him to convey to the United States of America the feelings and attitudes of the underground movement. Bonhoeffer went to Sweden to talk to Bishop George Bell and, through him, he hoped to reach the Allied Governments. But instead of assisting Germany, the West went out of its way to sabotage the efforts of the resistance movement. For example, the visit to Munich by Neville Chamberlain, broke the psychological nerve of the resistance. The "Casablanca proposal" of unconditional surrender of 1943 demanded by America, only complicated the already delicate negotiations. It really looked like another Versailles and the conspirators would not accept that (Rothfels, 1962; Jacobsen, 1969; Barth, 1954).

Morally speaking, the West cannot exonerate itself. It cannot argue that it was insufficiently informed. Admittedly, the conspirators were few, but they were brave men and women who nonetheless expressed the sentiments and will of the fearful and frightened majority who wanted Hitler removed. Bonhoeffer and other conspirators were not looking for an easier way out for Germany. Long before things got worse, Bonhoeffer indicated that they were willing to

withdraw to the 1919 frontiers. Before Hitler's defeat in war, it was Bonhoeffer who sincerely believed that Germany's salvation would come through its defeat. He promised the Western community that Germany would pay the world for all the inconveniences and hardships which National Socialism had caused. What more did the West want from these serious-minded Germans?

3.3.2 Reconstruction

Bishop Theophil Wurm took it upon himself to unify the churches, a project in which many cooperated. During the Second World War, Wurm kept in touch with the ecumenical community with the aim of securing aid for the Church once the war had ended. After the war, the churches were faced with problems of reorganisation - with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, whose hierarchy was still intact. Barth was also faced with two alternatives namely, to go back to Germany and become directly involved in the work of reconstruction, or to remain at the University of Basle to finish his **Church Dogmatics**. He chose the latter alternative. His choice did not, however, mean that he would no longer be interested in events in Germany (Busch, 1976; Helmreich 1979; Spotts, 1973).

Protestants had to form some sort of a regional Church organisation with the view to forming a national Church body. Through this body, they would re-establish contacts with the ecumenical community, and would soon be reaccepted in the World Council of Churches (WCC).

Bishop Wurm, representing the Church Leaders' Conference, and Niemöller, representing the Reich Brotherhood Council - with Barth in attendance - played a crucial role in the negotiations for unification. In a meeting held in Treysa on 27 August 1945, it was decided to forge a new bond of Land churches and brotherhood councils which would work together to draft a new constitution. The name "German Evangelical Church" was changed to the "Evangelical Christians of Germany". In that conference, a centralised relief committee was constituted. Eugen Gerstenmaier, one of the conspirators against Hitler, was elected as head of the committee. All kinds of help, such as clothes, food, Bibles, and song books, were received from USA, Switzerland and Sweden.

The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (DDR) were finally established in 1949. Although religious liberty was not as guaranteed or entrenched in the East as it was in the West, there was no outright and deliberate persecution of the Church there. The Church in the Democratic Republic nevertheless had to adapt

herself to the Soviet-dominated political, social, and economic order. By means of the Church tax that was levied from practising Christians by the State, the Church in the BRD became wealthy and affluent. The money was partly used to undertake many social services which until then were undertaken by the State. Even today, the churches run orphanages, old age homes, sanatoriums, and so on. For example, 80% of creches and pre-schools in Bavaria are run by the churches.

The Church wanted no political power. It nonetheless pledged itself to be more active in public and political life. Christian principles were to be inculcated into all spheres of life without necessarily favouring one party line over the other. There was no question of forming a Christian political party. Barth advocated active, direct and concrete political involvement, although he was also not in favour of a Christian party. How he intended to implement his proposal it is not clear, but Niemöller advised Christians in 1950 to vote for the Social Democratic Party. Again in 1960, he discouraged people from going to the polls because according to him, none of the contesting parties deserved their votes.

Barth, who was really a Swiss first and a German secondly, should have taken a back seat and only advised the Germans when he was requested. As the trio - Barth, Niemöller and

Gustav Heinemann - became more and more political, they became estranged from the Church. To demonstrate their disapproval of their actions, Christians did not re-elect Heinemann as president of the Synod in 1955, and Niemöller lost his seat on the Church Council. As Spotts (1973:128) aptly writes:

The repudiation of the two leaders, in effect, marked the formal rejection of any attempt to transform German Protestantism into active, partisan political force ... The Church would speak out on political and social issues. It would even intervene to influence government policy. But it would appeal, not threaten.

In spite of convincing theological arguments Barth (1954) gave, the Church remained unconvinced. Ultimately, Heinemann and Niemöller entered active politics. In January 1951, Niemöller founded the Emergency League, a pacifist movement, for the Peace of Europe. The following year, Heinemann established the All-German Peoples' Party whose main objective was to establish the neutrality of Germany and to oust the "warmonger", Konrad Adenauer, in the following elections. Heinemann got only six per cent of the votes. In the meantime, Barth's influence diminished, a clear signal to him, one supposes, that he should have left Germany to the Germans. His efforts to declare rearmament a "status confessionis", and to form a new Confessing Church in that direction, fell on deaf ears, even though many Germans were

against rearmament (Spotts, 1973; Helmreich, 1979).

Barth's popularity continued to deteriorate because he was suspected of being a communist agent, the matter to which we now turn.

3.3.3 Barth's Attitude Towards Communism

Barth's critics such as Brunner (Barth, 1954) and Niebuhr (West, 1958) believed that Barth had changed his views on the Church and State with regard to communism. Even some of his sympathetic students such as Will Herberg in (Barth, 1968) and West (1958) felt the same. His Hungarian lectures to Christians and churchmen left many Westerners, especially the Americans, speechless. Barth's statements on the relations between Church and State were diametrically opposed, according to critics, to statements he issued during the hegemony of the Third Reich. Above all, he had many communist friends such as Professor Hromadka of Prague. For some time Barth was put under surveillance by the American intelligence.

3.3.3.1 Objections to Barth

Three basic objections to Barth's evaluation of communism are as follows:

- (a) Communism is just as totalitarian as National Socialism was. Brunner was very emphatic on this point. As if to rub salt into the wound, West (1958:324) says Barth

... forgets that from the perspective of Christians in East Germany, communism is a more refined, more thorough, and more heartless version of Nazism precisely because of the inexorable force of its ideology, so that here also any constructive witness to the Communists must be based on a "No" to their attempts to involve one in their form of 'social activity' Party membership and the like.

In other words, according to the critics, communism is worse than National Socialism.

- (b) The philosophical assumption that ends justify the means in communism is another moot point. Communist methods of suppression are more brutal than those of National Socialism. Russian atrocities committed in the suppression of the Hungarian revolution of 1956 were cited as a stark example of what communism is capable of.
- (c) Communism is just as religious as National Socialism. According to Niebuhr, communism is not a mere scientific philosophy. It is a religion. It strives for an utopian future, a classless society whose source of revelation is the Communist Party. Gollwitzer (1953:

65-67) says that communism is a religion of salvation and it claims the allegiance of the whole person.

3.3.3.2 Barth's Reply

One of the strongest positions adopted by Barth in the early years of writing and doing theology was his insistence on the transcendence and sovereignty of God, vis-a-vis the anthropocentrism of 19th century liberal theology. God is free to act in whatever way he sees fit, according to Barth. In other words, the Church cannot act in principle and build absolutes in its ethical thought. It should rather weigh each situation afresh. Similar cases may occur under different circumstances and for different reasons. Similarly, the Church under the Word is not bound to act in the same way every time it meets a similar situation or case. This trend is emphasised in *Church Dogmatics* III:4 where Barth discusses his "Special Ethics". For example, the State has to wield the "sword", that is, it may wage war or hang offenders but that should not be part of the normal way in which the State deals with aggressors and offenders. That type of sword-wielding should be reserved only for emergencies, or put more accurately, for extreme cases (*ultima ratio*). Barth became convinced that the "Grenzfall" or "extreme case ethics" does indeed play a role in theological ethics. For example, it became necessary for the

Church in Germany to get involved in the attempt to assassinate Hitler because other democratic avenues were completely closed. Yet the Church was not encouraged to assassinate Stalin. In fact, Barth (1954:86) called upon the Church in the East to support the regime and give it time to show what its true colours were. He says that the Church was called upon to become active against Hitler, but it may be called upon to be inactive under Stalin.

Yet if one is fully to appreciate Barth's positive attitude towards communism, one should bear in mind that for Barth communism would be a product of the process of socialism. It is in this sense an eschatology. Barth (CD III, 2:388) says it is

... a prediction concerning the future course of the history of mankind.

And because communism would be a state of affairs where the class struggle would be absent, Barth preferred socialism to capitalism. In this regard, Barth's criticism of capitalism and appraisal of socialism should be noted.

As Barth started to tackle problems of poverty in Safenwil from 1911 onwards, he came to the conclusion that socialism is the Kingdom of God. He outlined this point of view in his essay published in Hunsinger (1976). Of course, as Barth's

theological ethics on society, State and Church matured, he dropped this identification and merely indicated that socialism is the one socio-economic system which is closest to the Kingdom of God. In the Tambach Lecture discussed in chapter 2, this position is clearly spelled out. It was during the conference that he broke ties with the religious socialists, especially Ragaz and Kutter. In spite of the favourable estimation which Barth accords to socialism in his sociopolitical thinking, Barth contends, in the second edition of his commentary on Romans, that not even socialism can claim God's sanction. State socialism cannot start the revolution that God requires to dethrone the oppressive powers and to destroy their exploitative structures.

A more seasoned discussion of capitalism and socialism is found in (CD III, 4:543-547). The task of the Church and theology are also discussed.

Materialism, on which Karl Marx's (1974) socio-economic philosophy is based, is monistic, according to Barth (CD III, 2:382-390). The anthropology of this materialism, according to Barth (CD III, 2:382) depends on the fact that

... the real is only what is corporeal,
spatial, physical and material.

Barth complains that materialism denies the existence of a soul in human beings and denies everything spiritual. Its methodology does not rest primarily on scientific considerations. This atheistic aspect of Marxism is rejected by Barth. According to him, a person is both wholly soul and body. The same attack is directed against the traditional Greek Christian view which asserts that an individual's real substance consists in his or her soul. Having embraced this monistic spiritualism, the Church and theology, especially that of Schleiermacher, always, Barth claims, supported the ruling classes. He complains that the Church has sanctioned the superiority of the economically strong and lulled the restless proletariat with its doctrine of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead. As a result, the Church has been regarded as a "relic of capitalism" (CD III, 2:389) and has become impotent in the face of the materialism. Barth (CD III, 2:393) indicates the complexity of this interconnection of soul and body when he says:

We are, in fact, caught in an endless spiral, so long as the idea of the two substances is not wholly abandoned, and the concrete reality of the one man set up definitely at the start in the middle and at the end of all consideration, soul and body being understood, not as two parts, but as two moments of the indivisibly one human nature, the soul as that which quickens and the body as that which is quickened and lives.

Karl Barth (CD III, 4:382-390) applauds Karl Marx for having started the movement which has awakened workers to a consciousness of their power to rid themselves of oppression and exploitation. All what the workers lose in the process is their chains. For Barth, communism, is an eschatology moving towards a classless society through socialism, and this places communism on a higher moral plane than capitalism. Capitalism, with its inherent profit motif, leads towards a proletarianisation of the masses. According to Barth, communism is a corrective of the capitalism practised by the West. Barth (CD III, 2:388) observes with relish that socialism

... expropriates these who have so far expropriated. It erects the economic and welfare social State in which there are no more exploiters and there are no more exploited ...

Nonetheless, Barth (CD III, 4:382-390) is not naïve in his appraisal of whether or not of Marxism and socialism can establish a new classless community: communism. From an empirical point of view, he doubts whether the socialist States of Eastern Europe have managed to end exploitation and put an end to private ownership of the means of production. On the contrary, the opposite seems to be the case, according to him. There are many features that indicate that even State socialism is like capitalism: it is directed by a "ruling and benefit deriving" élite (CD III, 4:544).

Barth warns the Church in the West not to reject socialism out of hand because of its failures in the East. Capitalism is worse. Instead, the Church should always be on the side of the victims of both capitalism and socialism. The tendency of one human being to oppress and to exploit another "lies deeper, namely in a human aberration" (CD III, 4:545), regardless of the socio-economic system which one embraces. The human being is always rebellious against God and he or she does not like to be restrained by God's commandments. Barth says that if God had not intervened in history, overruling our selfish decisions and forgiving us, the human race would be in a worse situation than it now finds itself.

Barth believes that the Kingdom of God is the answer to the ills of both capitalism and socialism. Without God's Kingdom, Barth insists that there can be no hope for the human race, in this life or in the life to come. God's proclamation of the Kingdom does not consist of social progress or socialism. According to Barth (CD III, 4:545) it consists

... in the proclamation of the revolution of God against "all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man" (Rom 1:18) i.e. in the proclamation of His kingdom as it has already come and comes.

At any rate, Barth was not really convinced that National Socialism and communism were exactly the same, or that communism was worse than National Socialism. He did recognise some similarities but, according to him, there are also some fundamental differences. According to Barth, for example, communism is not totalitarian. What communism aims at is the welfare of the total person. It is inclined towards socialism. Again, Barth maintains that communism is not anti-Semitic. It is not guilty of racism. The Church and the world are enlisted in God's plan of salvation via Judaism. If one treats Jews badly, one cannot hope to be saved because Jahweh has chosen to save the world through a Jew, namely, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, communism, according to Barth, does not falsify Christianity. The Hitler State evolved its own type of Christianity that excluded Jews from German churches and Germany's socio-economic life. He maintains that it is wrong to use Christianity in that way because it discredits the integrity of the Church and frustrates its mission to the world. Communism is simply a godless ideology; it does not use the name of God in vain. Barth does admit, though, that communism does have some objections to the Church since the Church, in its freedom and independence under the Word, was regarded as an opposition to be reckoned with (Spotts, 1973; West, 1958; Barth, 1954). Barth's socialism was influenced and determined by workers and labourers. It could be argued that he was an intellec-

tual socialist in that he never was a worker himself. But his empathy with the exploited workers was amazing. In communism he saw positive elements which make communism more a mirror of God's Kingdom than capitalism. Capitalism, especially the American version of it, makes the poor poorer and the rich richer. Workers are cogs in factory machines and do not participate in management. They are depersonalised and dehumanised because they are not allowed to be subjects of their own destiny. From a pragmatic point of view, communism becomes a necessary corrective of those evils built into the capitalist system. Communism aims at making the proletariat part of management and economic government. According to Barth, the Church has failed to address the evils of capitalism since its cooption by Constantine in the running of the State (Barth, 1959c; West, 1958).

Concerning relations between East and West, Barth advised the Church not to be coopted by the West against the East. The two blocs, he maintains, were involved in a power conflict, and the Church should not be caught on either side. The West is anti-communist and the West is as guilty as National Socialism for having been anti-Semitic. God is anti-nobody. God is anti-sin. God is for everybody. Even his wrath directed at individuals or groups or even nations is aimed at restoring relations rather than at punishment or vengeance.

God's first Word to us is not "anti-ism" but "for-ism", to paraphrase Barth. His "No" is an outside cover of his "Yes" to us. This trend, as has been indicated, was very strong since Safenwil. The Church likewise, cannot be anti-communist. God loves the communists also. The role the Church should play is to encourage tolerance between the East and West. It should facilitate, as a mediator, an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance. As a reconciler, it should strive to end the Cold War (Busch, 1976; West, 1958; Barth, 1954).

During his tour of Hungary, Barth (1959c; West, 1958) appealed to the Church under the communist State to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. They should not hasten to condemn the communist State. Barth harked back to his positive evaluation of the State by pointing out the fact that political systems, though God-ordained, are provisional and imperfect manifestations of the coming Kingdom of God.

Political systems create space for the fulfilment of the purpose of world history and that of the mission of the Church. According to Barth (1954:181),

... something of God's wisdom and patience will be revealed by even the worst political system.

No State, according to Barth could be completely diabolical. In general, States move between the just State of Roman 13 and the unjust one of Revelation 13. Christians must show gratitude to God by supporting ideologies and political parties which work for the advancement of a just political order and the just State. During the tour, Christians were encouraged to make the East their home, quoting Jeremiah 29:5-7. They should endure suffering under the communist State because such suffering is expected of them. Christ suffered and was crucified under the Roman State, quoting for them 1 Peter 5:8-9. Having exhorted them to make the East their home, he allowed the Christians to sign a prescribed oath of allegiance to the regime. He advised Christians to vote even for a pro-communist pastor, Berescky, as bishop. Pastors were urged to stay on even under persecution, and Barth suggested that fugitive pastors who had fled to the West, should be relieved of their posts and stripped of their status (Barth, 1959c; West, 1958).

3.4 SUMMARY

By way of a summary, what follows here is an assessment of Barth's most fundamental theological tenets of his socio-political thought raised in chapter 1 to a lesser extent and chapters 2 and 3 to a greater extent. The main purpose here is to use these insights in chapters 4 and 5, especially in

chapter 5 when an attempt will be made to constrict a democratic and apartheid-free society.

3.4.1 Socialism and the Kingdom of God

Having been disillusioned by capitalism, Barth initially accepted socialism, not only as the best system on the face of the earth but also as one which is identical with the Kingdom of God. But this was a fundamental flaw. Eventually, as he grappled with theology and sociopolitical systems, he dropped the identification. This was a wise move because people throughout history, especially people in the West, have habitually invoked divine sanctions for their own decisions and actions. Western capitalism, as practised by liberal States has also been blessed and validated by capitalists, the theology of Schleiermacher and others, and by the Church. Besides, religious socialism had already disappointed Barth since, according to him, it was not socialist enough. Only God, according to Barth, is able to bring about true revolution. God must intervene directly and decisively in human history to make his Kingdom a reality. According to Barth this Kingdom has already been established by God when He became human through and in Jesus Christ. Barth made this perception clearer and clearer as he taught and researched. In his first and second editions of his commentary on Romans, his lectures at Göttingen, Münster and

Bonn Universities, and his **Church Dogmatics**, Barth makes it clear that, although socialism mirrors the Kingdom of God better than other systems such as capitalism, socialism is still a fallible human attempt at making the Kingdom real on earth.

Such a judgement would also apply to communism. Jesus Christ relativises all earthly systems including socialism and ideologies. The Church* may critically support political ideologies without equating them with the will of God. This will help the Church in its handling of social philosophies.

3.4.2 The Word of God as Basis for Theological Praxis

According to Barth, the theology he had studied at seminaries was based more on nature, reason and common sense than on the Word of God who is Jesus Christ. It did not help him to understand the exploitation of the workers by the capitalists, when he became pastor at Safenwil. It did not help people during and after the First World War. When the world was shattered and people were confused and liberal theology could not give guidelines in decision-making and answers to questions asked. It was then that Barth turned to Scriptures, especially to Romans. His discovery was that people's spiritual, political and socio-economic problems are adequately addressed only on the basis of the Word of God.

His rejection of natural theology is very strong in his second edition commentary on Romans. However, Barth's fundamental distrust of natural theology was not total. He did acknowledge its importance but seriously questioned the status given it by theology and the Church. According to him, liberal theology put natural theology in its centre and God's Word at the periphery. Barth wanted to reverse the order. The Word of God should be primary to theology and extra-biblical sources secondary. The biblical witness does acknowledge that God reveals himself in a less perfect manner in creation and in the Church and that he reveals himself perfectly in the Person of Jesus Christ. One should therefore only make sure that God speaks first through his Son and second and, if necessary, through his creation. As Satan is also active in creation, the Church should allow the Holy Spirit to guide it in listening to the other voices so that it can be able to distinguish God's voice from that of Beelzebul. Theological praxis should bear this in mind.

3.4.3 Transgression of the First Commandment

By relativising all sociopolitical systems in relation to the absoluteness of God's Kingdom; by his insistence on making Jesus Christ the foundation of theological praxis, and by emphasising the Christocentric founding of the State, Barth has in fact given us guidelines as to how the First

Commandment could be understood and concretised in the political and socio-economic spheres. During the time of Hitler, Germans were faced with National Socialism as a divine revelation when they regarded Hitler as the messiah. Hitler silenced all opposition and partly succeeded in silencing the Church and partly failed due to efforts of Barth and other church leaders such as Niemöller and Bonhoeffer: hence the founding of the Confessional Church. God reveals himself in creation, culture, history, society and so on, but these revelations should take their rightful place, namely, as vehicles in enriching God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Once a revelation tries to dethrone Jesus Christ, that revelation becomes an idol and should be resisted. The Church and theology should guide Christians in the identification of such idols especially in the secular sphere. The Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt is an admission by the Church of its complicity in allowing Hitler to style himself as a new revelation for Germany and for not having done enough to warn its members and Germany at large against National Socialism.

3.4.4 Pastor Barth and Party Politics

Barth's involvement with the workers in Safenwil led him to join the Socialist Party in Switzerland. Again in Germany in 1932 he joined the Socialist Party. His justification was

that his joining was a political witness. He had hope to reach religious socialists at Safenwil in order to criticise and enrich socialism within the party. In Germany he had hoped to rally socialists and communists against Hitler and National Socialism. One considers this move as Barth's weakest sociopolitical performance ever. As a parish pastor or recognised ecumenical theologian, one cannot become a card-carrying member of a political party. Congregations and church organisations are composed of members belonging to different and sometimes warring political parties. A pastor or a theologian with an ecumenical influence should rather make himself or herself available for all people by charting a nonaligned course. One would even suggest that a pastor should forego his or her constitutional right to vote for a particular political party. It was enough for Barth to have espoused the course of the poor, the marginalised and the exploited working class as he did in Safenwil. He would have been more objective in dealing with the workers and the capitalists such as the Hüsey and Hochuli families. It was enough for Barth to have rallied Germany against National Socialism, to have fought for religious and political freedom, and to have been against Jewish discrimination and the subsequent torture and death of the Jews. Pastors are supposed to be mediators and reconcilers of political interest groups. The basic calling of a pastor in a sociopolitical situation is to be theologically on the side

of truth, justice and righteousness for, as Barth himself says, there are no perfect sociopolitical systems, including socialism.

CHAPTER 4

BARTH'S RELEVANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICA PRIOR TO 1990

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The discussion of the significance of Barth's theology and sociopolitical insights for the apartheid South Africa is limited to the period before 1990 for the following reasons:

First, the apartheid which was practised in South Africa up to the time of P W Botha was harsher than the one under F W de Klerk. F W de Klerk's process of political change is more drastic than that of P W Botha although it is not yet fundamental. Therefore the approach and nature of the process of the two people are qualitatively different. Secondly, Botha's era is now history but that of de Klerk is still history in the making. The critique of Botha's apartheid State would therefore rest on firmer ground than de Klerk's apartheid State which is still unfolding.

4.2 THE NATURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN STATE

4.2.1 Development of the Apartheid State

Racism seems to be a universal phenomenon. Racial segregation has been evident in most, if not all, British colonies. In Africa, Australia and Asia, stories of white racism against the indigenous peoples abound. Of course, other colonial powers such as Portugal also practised the segregation policy, as Mzimela (1983:192) says:

Everywhere where people have been colonized, they have been economically exploited, politically oppressed, and racially discriminated against.

Racial segregation was not merely a separation of the colonisers and the colonised, but a policy aimed at ensuring white supremacy and survival. Davenport (1987:315-338) points out that, as early as 1905, Sir Godfrey Lagden, who was given a task of working out a policy for Natives, recommended a complete and permanent separation of blacks and whites, politically and territorially. When apartheid was legalised in 1948, racism had already taken root as Nolan (1988:72) aptly puts it,

Racial differences were very conveniently exploited and when the National Party came to power in 1948 it simply perfected, streamlined and institutionalised

the system and gave it the name 'apartheid'.

Motsoko (1984) indicates that blacks had lost practically everything by 1881. That includes land, wealth, political power, national sovereignty and even human dignity. Well before the establishment of the apartheid State in South Africa, many laws against blacks had been promulgated. The foundation was provided by the British Parliament which promulgated the Union of South Africa Act of 1909, an act which excluded blacks from the envisaged Union of South Africa. Blacks were handed over by Britain to the white minority government, along with black land and back-owned mineral resources. Against this backdrop, Motsoko (1984:75) concludes:

The Union of South Africa was therefore an apartheid settler union established on racial discrimination.

Certain jobs, especially in the mines, were reserved for whites and, by 1912, it had become illegal for blacks to strike. Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 regarded blacks as migratory workers in the cities, because racial intermingling had been regarded as undesirable. Following upon the Act, the Immorality Act of 1927 prohibited sex between black and white races. The Natives Act of 1927 was taken further in 1937 by controlling the influx of blacks into the cities, and by making provision for unrequired black labour to be removed

to the homelands. The Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 completed the dispossession of black owned land by whites. It is estimated that 87% of South Africa is in white control, and whites make up only 20% of the total population of South Africa. Most of the 13% of the land given to blacks is arid and rocky (Davenport, 1987; Lodge 1983; Brotz, 1977).

Between 1948 and 1960, overtly discriminatory and harsher repressive laws were promulgated. Davenport (1987:361) calls this period, "The Age of the Social Engineers". Population groups were categorised into biological sections, and residential areas were located in accordance with segregation policies. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 prohibited marriages between the black and white races. This was followed by Population Registration Act of 1950, which made provision for race classification. The Immorality Act of 1927 was tightened by closing all other loopholes and making prosecution of offenders easier by accepting unsubstantiated evidence. Group Areas Bills were passed by Parliament in 1950. This was supported by the Separate Amenities Act, Act 49 of 1953. An attempt was made to prohibit even interracial church services through Clause 29(c) of the Natives Laws Amendment Bill of 1957. Mission education was discouraged and undermined through The Bantu Education Act, Act 47 of 1953. To put blacks at an economic disadvantage, the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act,

Act 48 of 1953 as amended in 1973 and 1976, prohibited black trade unions. The Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 was promulgated, by which ethnic groups would be allotted some land on which to govern themselves; it was the birth of homelands or Bantustans. In 1957 "Die Stem van Suid-Afrika" was declared the only national anthem for the Union (Mzimela, 1983; Davenport, 1987; Lodge, 1983; Government Gazettes).

One may call the next stage that started about 1960 the age of social implementation. Laws that had been formulated until 1960, were to enforced and strictly administered. Loopholes that manifested themselves during the application and administration of the laws were closed and the screws tightened even more. As protests increased in number and intensity - an issue we shall return to later - the government outlawed the ANC and the PAC in 1960 and declared the first state of emergency in the land. The SACP had already dissolved itself in 1950 when communism was declared public enemy number one. The state of emergency gave the police draconian powers. Communists, a term that referred to all those who were critical of apartheid, were hunted down. It became common to speak of South Africa as a police State. For example, in 1962, police detained suspects for up to twelve days without charging them. In 1965, suspects were detained for up to hundred-and-eighty days, and, by 1976,

such suspects could be detained indefinitely. Police were also called "political" police. They assisted the army in the crushing of demonstrators. In 1960, sixty-nine people were shot dead (many from behind), and thousands were injured in Sharpeville. In June 1976, Soweto pupils marched in protest against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and against the whole Bantu Education system. The police killed hundreds of students. Thousands were injured and many more are still unaccounted for. Four successive states of emergency were declared until the beginning of 1990.

Territorial separation was implemented with the view to denying blacks their South African citizenship. Transkei became the first homeland to obtain self-government status from Pretoria, and others followed. The Bantu Homeland Citizenship Act of 1970 sought to attach every black person to a specific homeland. This meant that, upon a particular homeland becoming "independent" from South Africa, all blacks who might be identified with that homeland, would automatically lose their South African citizenship. A Coloured Persons' Representative Council was legislated in 1968 to take care of the so-called Coloureds' political needs. To ensure that interracial political organisations also followed the policy of apartheid, the Prohibition of Political Interference Act of 1968 was passed, with the result that the Liberal Party soon dissolved. The Affected

Organisations Bill of 1974 declared certain organisations to be illegal and foreign funding was stopped. The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa (CI) were declared illegal. Many black consciousness-orientated organisations including the newspaper "World" were banned on 19 October 1977. More than 5 980 people were detained between 16 June 1976 and 28 February 1977. Some, like Steve Biko, were not very lucky because he died in detention on 12 September 1977 as a result of police brutality. In spite of the crackdown on government critics, the 1980s were turbulent to such an extent that in July 1985, a state of emergency was declared in thirty-six magisterial districts of South Africa. It was partially lifted, only to be reimposed countrywide in June 1986 until early 1990. (Davenport, 1983; Government Gazettes).

Many people, especially whites in South Africa and tourists speak enthusiastically about changes in the country. It is true that many acts of parliament have been amended and repealed. However, fundamental issues have not yet been addressed. There are those among the oppressed who consider these changes as cosmetic: such changes are meant to make oppression bearable. The white government has yet to face issues relating to land dispossession and black impoverishment. The Job Reservation Act has been repealed, that is, regardless of race, people are appointed and promoted on

merit. But because of the inferior education to which blacks have been subjected, few of them merit jobs requiring skills in management. Even where such blacks are available, they are not appointed to such positions. For example, at present the Department of Education and Training (DET) which administers black education, still has a white person as Director-General, and so his deputies are also white. Yet we have many blacks who are educationists with more than one doctorate who can administer the department successfully.

South Africa needs to be democratically transformed. However, Robert (1985:41f) indicates the difficulty that one faces at arriving at a real theory of the just State. He suggests certain basic features that would constitute such a State. Such features, one believes, could be appropriated in South Africa in the search of an acceptable constitutional arrangement. The features include among others,

freedom of opinion, expression, press, and organisation; institutions whereby the people decide who decides for them, limited terms of political office; an independent court system and a respected legal system; minimal violence in political life; a more or less nonpolitical bureaucracy, police, and armed forces; and civil rights including fair courts and respect for individual property ... free trade unions, lack of any clearly or officially imposed ideology, relative openness of the state, freedom to travel within the country and to depart from it and a lack of a well-defined aristocracy.

In spite of the historico-political context given above, the white minority government in South Africa, contrary to popular belief (Tutu, Beyers Naudé, Allan Boesak, Siphon Mzimela), is not totalitarian. The apartheid State cannot simply be equated with the National Socialist State. Political taxonomy, according to Michael (1979), is a complicated matter. National Socialist Germany, fascist Italy the post-Stalin communism have been identified as totalitarian, but they were not totalitarian to the same extent. Michael (1979:5) says such countries and ideologies,

... have been termed 'totalitarian' in the light of their claim that no interest falls outside the embrace of the state or the wielders of power, that the purposes of individuals, groups, and society are subordinate to those of the state, that the state or ruling group monopolizes decision-making, that all opposition is prohibited, that there are no independent expressions of public opinion, that there is no constitutional form of self-government, and that there are few or no limits on the rulers. The only goals are those defined by the state to which all social organs were subject. Law as a constraint on government, or, on the amount of suffering the rulers are prepared to inflict, or, as the protection of individual rights against official action virtually disappeared. Political activity is viewed in terms of ultimate objectives rather than as the empirical attempt to solve problems. The official creed replaces that orthodox religion and is transformed into a secular faith claiming absolute loyalty and brooking no challenge to the principles of its liturgy.

A totalitarian State is therefore "all pervasive" (Unger 1974:1). It aims at total control over the lives and actions of its subjects.

One would argue that the apartheid State is authoritarian. This is a position midway between totalitarianism and democracy. An authoritarian State differs from a totalitarian State because according to Michael (1979:107),

... is based on the diminution of arbitrary terror as a means of obtaining compliance, the ability of nonparty groups to make their voice heard in decision-making, and the logical prerequisites of an industrial society that has experienced the growth of a managerial group and consumer interests as well as educational advancement and scientific accomplishment.

Michael, nevertheless, points out the following fundamental problems concerning the authoritarian State: Firstly, political power is concentrated in the hands of a clique, and, in South Africa we have political power concentrated in white hands. Secondly, intimidation is a weapon against State opponents and that applies to South Africa where the security police can torture and even kill opponents and critics of apartheid. Thirdly, coercion and ostracism are some of milder mechanisms used to force compliance with State ideology, while in South Africa many whites who made friends with blacks have been shunned upon and ostracised. Fourthly,

secret police penetrate every sphere of human life in South Africa; bugging devices and zoom lenses are used for tracking down suspects. Some advanced democracies of the West on occasions display tendencies towards totalitarianism. Sometimes wishes of the people are ignored. For example, the United States of America fought a war in Vietnam against the wishes of many Americans. Nature conservationists are still being ignored and are dismissed as fanatics by western democracies. Barth (1954:181) speaks of States as moving between the State of Romans 13, which was authoritarian, and the State of Revelation 13, which was totalitarian. South Africa needs to move from authoritarianism to democracy.

4.2.2 Legitimacy and Legality of the Apartheid State

The present political dispensation excludes South Africa's indigenous inhabitants. According to Theal (1894), the Khoisan people, derogatively known as Bushmen and Hottentots, are South Africa's ancient inhabitants, who lived in the country about one-and-half million years ago. According to Davenport (1987), the so called "Bantu" speaking peoples settled in South Africa long before the arrival of the first Europeans, at least by 300 AD. We thus have in South Africa a situation where a minority government consisting of whites, who arrived in South Africa only about three-hundred-and-fifty years ago, rule over the indigenous majority. The

falsified history of South Africa by white historians, which states that blacks arrived in South Africa simultaneously with whites, should be refuted once and for all. According to Motsoko (1984), even communists of South Africa like Brian Bunting and his wife advocated this false history. They argued against "The Independent Black Republic Thesis of 1928" maintaining that both Africans and whites had together chased the Khoisan people from their land, that is, South Africa.

According to these scholars, the present National Party government is illegal. It has no mandate to exercise political authority in South Africa. In addition, as it will be shown below, the government is also illegitimate. It caters for white interests at the expense of black interests. According to Robert (1985), the modern view is that the will of the people is the source of political authority. South Africa's blacks refused, to no avail, the imposition of white rule upon themselves, from the very first day Europeans set foot on the South African soil (Lodge, 1983; Brotz, 1977; Odendaal, 1984).

This intransigence of whites led to the formation of liberation movements. There are mainly two liberation movements in South Africa. There is, firstly, the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party and

the United Democratic Front alliance (ANC-SACP-UDF). This alliance gives the white minority government some status, probably as an interim or caretaker government. The alliance is prepared to talk to the government about power sharing. Since its inception in 1912, the ANC had pressed for concessions and reforms instead of bare and naked political power. The ANC-SACP alliance and others adopted a Freedom Charter in June 1955 at Kliptown near Johannesburg, in which guidelines for a democratic Constitution are outlined. Whites are also regarded as South Africans along with blacks. Secondly, there is the Pan Africanist Congress, the Azanian People's Organisation and the Pan Africanist Movement alliance (PAC-AZAPO-PAM) which maintains that the white regime is a usurper, and any negotiations with it would be tantamount to according it a status of legitimacy. As far as this alliance is concerned, whites should return the land and surrender political power. Consequently, the Charter is rejected as a document of surrender to white domination. AZAPO rejected the Charter in April 1978 (Lodge, 1983; Motsoko, 1984; Nolan, 1988). These two alliances, nevertheless, share the thesis of Robert (1985:16) when he says:

Legality is a prerequisite for rationality in the social order and a major factor of legitimacy.

According to Barth, the State is an institution without which we cannot do as humans. Barth's basic understanding of the State, whether as totalitarian, despotic or democratic, is that God through the institution of the State, keeps total chaos at bay. One would suggest that Barth would give the white regime in South Africa the status of caretaker. It should take care of the situation until a legal and, hopefully, legitimate government is formed, in which the interests of all South Africans would be catered for. As we know, Barth was a fervent supporter of socialism and a protagonist of a democratic State. He was involved in the German Church struggle against the legal but illegitimate Hitler State. According to Marquardt (1972), Robin Petersen and C A Wanamaker writing in Villa-Vicencio (1988b), Barth preached anarchism. On the contrary, Barth was not an anarchist in the negative sense of the term, but positive. Positive anarchism was first advocated by Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865). The original Greek understanding of the term means, "without a ruler". This was, according to Leatt and Kneifel, et al (1986:243),

... to designate a new and non-authoritarian order of society, with laws that are not imposed from above but emerge freely from below.

This kind of anarchism is a form of socialism. It is therefore a form of socialism. The bottom line is that

positive anarchism is an annulment of State authority and an annunciation of a future non-authoritarian libertarian society. Anarchism advocated by Barth serves as a witness to modern States which fashion themselves in the likeness of the Kingdom of God, where there is political service and not political domination. Barth's anarchism should therefore be understood in eschatological terms, namely, that at the end of times with the Parousia, we shall have no need for the State.

The anarchism advocated by Barth, could be fruitfully used in South Africa. Inside the country we have, for example, structures such as homelands which provide some form of political cohesion. These apartheid structures have cooperated with the government to offer infrastructure, services such as serviced plots, water and electricity. Even law enforcement agencies created by the government did and do keep chaos at bay.

4.3 PROTEST AND RESISTANCE AGAINST THE APARTHEID STATE

The struggle against the apartheid State is not a struggle for civil rights as was the case with black Americans. It is a struggle for survival. As Mzimela (1983:200) succinctly puts it:

It is a struggle to regain our humanity,
and our land - a rehumanization struggle;
a struggle for nationhood.

4.3.1 Secular Forces of Liberation

The fact that blacks did not accept white domination has already been referred to briefly above. The pursuit of this social history of the black struggle for liberation could be efficiently and adequately done by historians, anthropologists and political scientists. Let it suffice in this study to limit ourselves to the main developments as they would have direct bearings on the task of the Church in South Africa in the liberation struggle.

Odendaal (1984) has constructed the history of the black struggle until 1912 when the ANC was formed. As important as Odendaal's work is the fresh and new portrayal of pre-Union South African history written by Motsoko (1984). Memoranda and letters he got from abroad, especially the Netherlands, made it possible for Motsoko to correct the falsified history of South Africa. Land grabbing started on 6 April 1652 when the first white settlers found the Khoi at Table Mountain. In spite of their resistance, the Khoi were subjugated and their fertile land was taken away from them. The subjugated Khoi were made slaves. With their help, Europeans were able to launch successful attacks on the San and the few who fled escaped into the Kalahari Desert. Most of these San are

living in Namibia and Botswana (Odendaal, 1984; Motsoko, 1984).

Major defensive wars were fought by blacks against the Voortrekkers. One group of trekkers under Retief and Maritz went into Natal while the other, under Trichardt penetrated into the Transvaal through the Orange Free State. In the Orange Free State they destabilised the Batlokoa under Chief Sekonyela and the Barolong under Chief Moroka. King Moshoeshe lost most of his land around Winburg and Harrismith. Three Basotho wars of resistance were fought in 1858, 1865 and 1867 respectively. Lesotho, a mountainous kingdom, as we know it today, was shaped and formed. The meeting of the trekkers with Amazulu was bloodier, as was evidenced by the Battle of Blood River in 1838. Earlier on King Shaka had made an attempt at establishing diplomatic relations with King George of Britain, but King George would not enter into any brotherhood relations with the black king. Trichardt for his part fought tribes such as the Bapedi and Vhavenda. By 1881 blacks had lost practically everything to Europeans (Motsoko, 1984; Lodge, 1983; Davenport, 1987).

Since the Battle of Isandhlwana of 1879, the political struggle of the dispossessed blacks became less and less military until 1960. The military struggle was replaced by political organisation. For example, when the Draft of the

Union of South Africa was adopted by Britain, the ANC sent a delegation to Britain to protest against clauses that contained colour bars. The delegation led by W P Schreiner, included men such as the Rev J Dube, Jengo Jabavu and Dr Rabusana. But the British parliament was unsympathetic and so was the press in general. Eventually, the British parliament passed the Union Act in the form of South Africa Act of 1909 that saw, on 31 May 1910, the birth of the Union of South Africa, with Louis Botha as the first prime minister.

When black protests were ignored, a non-collaboration policy was adopted by the All-African Convention in 1935. But later the ANC and the SACP pulled out of the agreement and served on government-created structures. As a result, communists such as Sam Khan and Brian Bunting were elected as native representatives. Young people were not at all impressed. Consequently, a Youth League within the ANC was formed in 1944. This became a pressure group that soon indulged in defiance campaigns and civil disobedience in the 1950s. The government repressed many of these protests by force. For example, a religious group under Enock Mgijima was crushed and 130 people were killed. Scores of striking miners in Johannesburg were killed in 1946. With the introduction of tribal authorities in the 1950s many protesting villagers were killed in Witzieshoek, Sekhukhuneland, Mbizana and

elsewhere. Sharpeville in 1960 became the turning point in the liberation struggle for three main reasons, namely, the uprising was countrywide; its ultimate goal was the seizure of political power; and lastly, it resulted in the formation of two liberation armies namely, the Umkhonto we-Sizwe and Poqo (later renamed APLA. Azanian People's Liberation Army) by the ANC and the PAC respectively (Motsoko, 1984; Lodge, 1983; Magubane, 1986).

From the mid 1960s, the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and indirectly the University Christian Movement (UCM) stoked the fires with the formation of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), the Black People's Convention (BPC) and the launching of the Black Theology project. The main idea was to reactivate a sense of dignity and human worth in the oppressed masses and also to challenge the oppressed to start all over again with the liberation struggle. A countrywide conscientisation was launched. Soweto pupils took the challenge seriously and in June 1976 they took to the streets to protest against Bantu education and Afrikaans as a compulsory medium of instruction in the schools. Since then, South Africa had known no peace and the 1980s were particularly bad. The armed struggle, intensification of sanctions, and cultural isolation, will go on until a democratic government is elected. (Motsoko, 1984; Lodge, 1983; Davenport, 1987; Duignan & Jackson, 1986; Magubane, 1986).

4.3.2 The South African Church Struggle

The Church in South Africa is unfortunately more of a mirror of South African society rather than its corrective. Many churches are divided along racial, ethnic, and ideological lines. Theological and confessional differences have played very little role in the way the churches have been categorised. There are some authors such as Villa-Vicencio who divide the Church into Afrikaans and English churches. Others such as De Gruchy and Strassberger (1974) include, and correctly so, the African Independent Churches. De Gruchy (1979) enumerates few reasons for the rise of African Independent Churches, namely the rejection of white control, white culture, racial discrimination and paternalism. Other reasons enumerated by De Gruchy, such as desire for personal power and prestige played a role only much later. Other reasons were economic, with soaring unemployment in the black townships. Many of these churches became less and less political in the sense that white domination was no longer the reason for their creation. It is not surprising that churches of which Bishops Msilikazi Masiya and Isaac Mokoena are leaders, have actively worked against the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The Afrikaans-speaking churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk (NHK) supported and still support the government on many issues. The English-speaking churches

such as the Methodist, Presbyterian and the Anglican churches support the government although they pretend to be champions of the black struggle against apartheid. Many of the English-speaking churches are members of the SACC while churches from the Afrikaners are not. The Roman Catholic Church is not an SACC member either, but it is engaged in the struggle in its own way.

There are parallels between the situation of the situation of the Church in South Africa today and the Church in the then National Socialist Germany. "German Christians" supported National Socialism and in South Africa there are "Afrikaner Christians" who support apartheid. In Germany, Confessional Christians opposed National Socialism and in South Africa SACC member churches oppose apartheid. The history of the relations of the Church in South Africa to the apartheid State is well documented (Strassberger (1974); De Gruchy (1979); Villa-Vicencio (1988a)). For that reason, one would avoid unnecessary repetitions and concentrate more on the theological debates and the actions arising therefrom. One shall confine oneself to the SACC as an ecumenical body, as a more or less representative voice of the Church in South Africa. Again, documents of an ecumenical nature such as the Cottesloe Statement, Program to Combat Racism (PCR) as well as the Kairos and Road to Damascus Documents will also be studied.

In general, the testimony of the churches in the South African struggle through the SACC against oppression, domination and liberation, has been that of prophecy-to-protest-to-resistance. The prophetic function of the Church is basic to all the other functions and it includes all of them. Barth and the Confessional Church emphasized the prophetic ministry and later protested against some aspects of National Socialism, especially the Aryan Clause. Realising that Hitler was not listening to the prophecy, some of the Confessional Christians such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer cooperated with the "Wehrmacht" in an attempt to remove Hitler from power by trying to assassinate him. A project of reconstruction and reconciliation by all Germans was launched and resulted in the famous Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt Statement.

4.3.2.1 The Prophetic Message

Prophecy has been traditionally understood in terms of a person being visited by God through dreams and visions. That God has liberty in his own freedom to choose such methods is not questioned or doubted here. It is endorsed. The kind of prophecy that one suggests here concretises the kind of prophecy described above. It is therefore also biblical. It was also practised by Old Testament prophets and Christians during the period of the early Church. This type of prophecy

is the ability to read a situation correctly, that is, doing and by social analysis, and by offering solutions to the problems of a particular situation. To use a metaphor from the medical world, "prophecy" would mean an ability for a physician to make correct diagnosis of the disease and to prescribe the correct medicine in correct dosages. Theologians such as Bonino (1975) and Nolan (1988) speak of the correct way of reading the signs of times. As there are many signs which impose themselves on the Church of God, the Bible insists that we need also to be equipped with the Holy Spirit which enables us to differentiate among the spirits, that is, between God's prophets and false prophets.

The kind of prophecy outlined above was basic to the prophets of Jahweh such as Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Amos and Malachi. This kind of prophecy was also handed over to the Church during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Elijah preached against Baal because the Scriptures forbid the transgression of the First Commandment. God would annul his covenant with Israel, if Israel persisted in its apostasy. Isaiah discouraged kings of Israel to trust in themselves or to amalgamate with other nations such as Egypt and Syria and insisted that they put their ultimate trust in Jahweh as He is Israel's sole provider and protector. Amos preached against social injustice when orphans and widows were sold for a pair of sandals. There

have been court prophets who worked against Jahweh's prophets. They would prophesy about prosperity when the majority of the people were living in abject poverty and slavery. Prophets such as Jeremiah warned Israel against the impending Babylonian captivity, and court prophets promised peace. The early Christians such as the Apostles taught about a purity of heart which would lead to sound living with God and neighbour, but antinomians - mostly converted gentiles - misinterpreted Paul's redundancy of the Law and God's abundant grace. Judaisers - mainly Jewish Christians - misrepresented Paul's concept of salvation by emphasising that the Jewish rituals such as circumcision were part and parcel of salvation.

The German Church under Hitler had such prophets, true and false ones. It will be remembered that it was Barth who, after reading Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, long before Hitler ascended to power, feared for the Church under his rule. Barth warned that the Church would be persecuted if it did not accept National Socialism. Hitler's policies hit the Church at its centre, namely, the transgression of the First Commandment. Hitler's Positive Christianity, referred to in Chapter 3, advocated a "German race god" which discriminated against the Jews. The use of the Old Testament from German pulpits was banned. In 1941, a New Testament translation that excluded Jewish words such as Jahweh, Israel, Zion and

Jerusalem was issued. The Barmen Declaration was a direct response to this Aryan god preached by the "German Christians".

It is considered as unfortunate by some people such as De Gruchy in Villa-Vicencio (1988b) that Barth did not write much, if anything, about apartheid in South Africa, both as a politico-ideological and a theological heresy. But one need not lament this since we know enough about Barth's teaching on anti-Semitism (Barth 1938; 1939). There are unfortunately some people who still do not regard anti-Semitism as racism. In South Africa there are those who do not regard apartheid as racism. As anti-Semitism has been dealt with in chapter 3, the matter will not be raised here again. This chapter tackles the issue of apartheid as racism and heresy. Racism is racism regardless of who practises it and on whom and from where it is being practised. It violates people's humanity and their godliness. Racism is sinful and apartheid as a form of racism would be contrary to Barth's theological ethics. Apartheid should be condemned on ethical grounds because in South Africa we have a situation where a colonial minority government rules the indigenous majority people against their will. Prophets of Barth's mould have appeared in South Africa over the years. These prophets warned of a chaotic revolution if apartheid was not changed. This message was issued also by DRC theologians such as B Keet, B

Marais and F C Beyers Naudé. But the message went unheeded by both the churches and the government. However, many English-speaking churches in 1957 united in their opposition to Clause 29(c) of the Native Laws Amendment Bill which would make it virtually impossible for blacks to attend church services in white areas. The Right Reverend Geoffrey Clayton, on behalf of the Church of the Province of South Africa, wrote a letter of protest to the government, dated 6 March 1957, saying that the Church regards the

"... clause as an infringement of religious freedom in that it makes conditional on the permission of the Minister of Native Affairs

- (a) The continuance in existence of any Church or parish constituted after January 1st 1938 in an urban area except in a location which does not exclude Native Africans from public worship;
- (b) the holding of any service in any Church in an urban area except in a location to which a Native African would be admitted if he presented himself;
- (c) the attendance of any Native African at any synod or Church assembly held in an urban area outside a location" [(Letter reprinted by Villa-Vicencio (1986:207)].

De Gruchy (1979:69-85) says that the clause was rejected by even the Federal Council of DRC. It was the strong conviction held by many churches that the State had wandered in a sphere that belongs exclusively to the Church.

The most crucial ecumenical confrontation of the Church and the apartheid State came about in December 1960 when a World

Council of Churches (WCC) sponsored a conference held at Cottesloe and, for the first time, took the race issue with the seriousness that it deserved. This conference was prompted by the aftermath of Sharpeville. Taking into consideration the denominational and racial composition of the conference, one is not surprised that in its resolutions and proposals, the conference became cautious and careful in the formulation of its resolutions and proposals. Extreme care was taken not to offend any of the delegates. The statement takes as its point of departure the fact that South Africa belongs to all South Africans, echoing probably the 1955 Freedom Charter. From there the statement questions the policy of apartheid which favours whites and discriminates against blacks. Topics such as the prohibition of mixed marriages, compulsory migratory labour system, job reservation were taken up by the delegates, with their concomitant social implications. Above all, denial of franchise to blacks was questioned. The conference, according to Villa-Vicencio (1986:213), concluded thus:

... a policy which permanently denies to non-white people the right to collaboration in the government of the country of which they are citizens cannot be justified.

It was noted that apartheid as bolstered by white and particularly Afrikaner nationalism had completely ignored the interests of blacks. Apartheid was condemned because it

takes the place of God. The conference decided to confront the government in this regard.

The resolutions were toned down. But that could still not stop the NHK from rejecting them in their entirety. Only later did the DRC dissociate itself from the Cottesloe Statement. Bowing to pressure from Hendrik Verwoerd, the then prime minister, Dominees Koot Vorster and Andries Treurnicht and others led the DRC out of the WCC. Following the DRC's rejection of Cottesloe statement, Beyers Naudé launched an alternative South African fellowship organisation for all churches in August 1963: the Christian Institute of Southern Africa (CI). Nevertheless, the Cottesloe Statement became the beginning of a more forceful and firm prophecy against the apartheid State. It could be regarded as South Africa's Barmen Declaration. One cannot agree more with Villa-Vicencio (1985:114) when he says:

The cautious and hesitant resolutions of that consultation heralded the beginning of a major theological confrontation with apartheid.

Churches which remained in the Christian Council of South Africa changed the name to the South African Council of Churches (SACC), under the leadership of Bishop Bill Burnett. Joining hands with the CI, the SACC addressed questions related to the Church's participation in the struggles of the

Third World, with special reference to the liberation struggle of the black people in South Africa.

Following on the Cottesloe Statement, a more forceful prophetic message - perhaps the Dahlem parallel - was issued in 1968 by the SACC entitled, "A Message to the People of South Africa". This message offers a more theological and bold rejection of apartheid and racism. In a summary form, the message reads in Villa-Vicencio's (1986:214) as follows:

The doctrine of racial separation is being seen by many not merely as a temporary political policy but as a necessary and permanent expression of the will of God and as the genuine form of Christian obedience for this country.

For that reason, apartheid is condemned as a false faith and a heresy that works against the teaching of Christ on love and against the Holy Spirit's work of reconciliation. The people of South Africa are urged to reject apartheid and to follow Jesus Christ. The SACC sees its task, according to Villa-Vicencio (1986:216), as

... to enable people to see the power of God at work changing hostility into love of the brethren, and to express God's reconciliation here and now.

As could be expected, the prime minister, B J Vorster, denounced the document and warned the Church that ministers

of religion who used Christianity to disrupt law and order would not be left unpunished. But God's prophecy always achieves the purpose for which it is intended. The message came out loud and clear that the Church was not prepared to surrender its responsibility and task to the State. It was not prepared to become the State's ally in its practice of apartheid. The Church in the message told the government that it was opposed, in no uncertain terms, to the policy of Separate Development.

In an open letter to Mr B J Vorster dated 6 May 1976, (reprinted in Villa-Vicencio, 1986), Desmond Tutu, then Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, made a true pastoral and, prophetic utterance. Tutu addressed the question of migratory labour and the consequences which such a system has on family life. The idea of homelands as a solution to South Africa's political problems is rejected. Tutu suggests that the government should introduce and restore black franchise with the introduction of a free apartheid South Africa. Tutu told the government that blacks are so determined to regain their inalienable right to do things for themselves, in cooperation with their fellow South Africans of all races", that neither the military strength of the government nor the security police would be able to stop them. Tutu emphasised the point that whites in this land will not be free until all sections of our community are genuinely free. "Woe unto

South Africans", Tutu seems to say in his essay written in Villa-Vicencio (1986:229):

... because I have a growing nightmarish fear that unless something drastic is done very soon then bloodshed and violence are going to happen in South Africa....

For the time being, in order to avert the Armageddon, Tutu suggests and, in fact, strongly recommends that the apartheid rulers, as a sine qua non, writing in Villa-Vicencio (1986: 230) should

... call a National Convention made up of the genuine leaders ... to try to work out an orderly evolution of South Africa into a nonracial, open and just society.

Within six weeks of the writing of the letter, Soweto went up in flame on 16 June 1976. More and harsh repressive measures from the government were met with more determination and a stronger resolve from the oppressed blacks in their quest for liberation.

The struggle for freedom intensified and successive states of emergency since 1984 until 1990 were not able to undermine it. In September 1985, a group of concerned theologians in South Africa, known as Kairos Theologians, meditated on the escalating confrontation between the government and the oppressed. Townships and institutions such as schools and

hospitals were occupied by the political police and the apartheid army. The whole of South Africa was virtually a militarised zone. Nolan and Broderick (1987) say that the document is a township theology because it emanates from the harsh realities caused by apartheid in the black townships. It is true that this is a township theology because the violence in the townships is addressed. But it goes beyond Soweto, Gugulethu, Langa and other townships. It has a potent significance for South Africa as a whole, including the "independent" homelands. In an almost apocalyptic manner, the Theologians (1985:1) say:

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 become even more threatening in the months to come. It is the KAIROS or moment of truth not only for apartheid but also for the Church.

Through lessons learned from history and a probing social analysis of the South African situation, these theologians' prophetic message is twofold, namely, that genuine change cannot come from the top, in other words, from the apartheid rulers. It must be something that evolves from below, a kind of grassroots democracy. The other message is that the oppressed must realise that history has never not offered an example of people in power voluntarily surrendering power.

The oppressed must become subjects of their own liberation, for, according to the Kairos Theologians (1985:11),

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.

In short, already in 1985, for the Kairos Theologians, time for talking was over and the time to act on our faith had arrived.

In some respects, "The Road to Damascus" document (1989) is the revision and the intensification of the Kairos prophecy. The Damascus Document insists that repentance which is not prepared to make restitution cannot be accepted because it is not a genuine repentance. For a real reconciliation to be effected among all South Africans, we need Paul's Damascus experience, that is, a complete 180⁰ turn about. In South Africa, we do not only need to repent, but also to be converted. "Metanoia" is what we need. All of us whites, blacks and the government are to blame. Endorsing the Kairos Document that the time for action has arrived, Damascus (1989:6) declares:

The Church itself has become a site of struggle ... Neutrality is an indirect way of supporting the status quo.

Over the last four decades, one prophecy after the other came true and still South Africa and its people do not seem to listen and learn. South Africa has had many prophets, including some from the DRC. We continue to live in this human-made hell and the answer we seem to get from heaven is that we have our Moseses and prophets. These prophets have been ignored (Tutu, Boesak, Hurley, and others). They have been detained without trial (Chikane, Mkhathshwa, Tsele, and others). They have been ostracised and banned (Naudé, Kotze etc.). They were stateless and wander beyond South Africa's borders (Kotze, Farisane, Mzimela and others). It seems that Nolan and Broderick (1987:74) share this frustration when they say that the Church

... had criticised, it had blamed, it had been cautious and careful but it had not preached the bold and prophetic Christian message of hope.

Nolan, writing in Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1985:), expresses the same sentiments when he says that injustice was denounced but there has not been a corresponding annunciation of hope for a future liberated society. One would like to suggest three reasons why our prophecy had not achieved the success we so much desire.

Firstly, there is a constant and consistent reluctance on the part of churches in South Africa to distinguish apartheid as

practised by them from apartheid as practised by the government. One would like to maintain that such a differentiation is necessary and important. If that is not done, we would be unconsciously equating the Church with the State. Barth correctly insisted that the Church must be Church and the State must be State. Each institution, he warned, must remain within its own sphere, performing its peculiar function under the cosmic lordship of Christ. Each should serve the interests of the Kingdom of God in such a manner that each does what it has been designed to do. Unfortunately in South Africa, the Church insists that the government should become a replica of the Kingdom. That is not right and it cannot be possible. The Church must address the State as a State, that is, as a secular institution which at its best, can, respond to the Church's prophetic message, live as close as possible to the requirements of the Kingdom of God. Apartheid as a political ideology and the policy of the present government should not be condemned as a false faith, a religious heresy or be regarded as an anti-Christ but as a bad sociopolitical policy. This exercise is tantamount to bestowing upon the apartheid State religious honours to which no government or State as such is entitled. We should indeed appeal to the rulers, especially Christians, to work for an equitable society, but we should be careful that these Christian rulers do not try to form a "Christian" government, as the existence of such a government is a myth.

Let the Church continue to prophesy that political apartheid is against the will of God - without necessarily being a false faith - unworkable and disastrous. The Church should challenge the government to abandon its dangerous policy, failing which the Church should work towards replacing it by a more just, equitable, workable and peaceful political system. For Barth, National Socialism had to be replaced and Hitler had to be removed from power because he had not listened to the prophecy of the Confessing Church. Second, it is one's opinion that most of the prophetic ammunitions have been wasted on a target of secondary importance, that is, the apartheid State. Barth was convinced that National Socialism would not have succeeded, had the "German Christians" not cooperated with the National Socialist State. The primary target of the Church's prophecy, one would maintain, is the churches in South Africa. Many white congregants especially the Afrikaners, teach and practise religious apartheid in their homes, schools and cultural institutions. In many Afrikaans-speaking churches in the NHC congregations, blacks are still refused membership. From a political point of view, congregants of these churches are voters and they are the ones who have put the apartheid government in power since 1948. The National Party did not at any stage need a coalition with any party to govern this country. More than that, the NP survived two splits in 1969 and 1982, initiated by Jaap Marais and Andries Treurnicht

respectively. The apartheid State is not an Afrikaner government; it is a white government. How else did the NP continue with its landslide victories, election after election without the votes from the English and German speaking communities, for example?

Many of the churches discussed above, and not the government, are guilty of preaching a false faith. The government is guilty of propagating and practising an immoral and racist sociopolitical and economic policy. In this regard, the Church, alone, can preach apartheid as a heresy. The Church teaches on the basis of the Bible that apartheid is the way of salvation and is the will of God. This is a confessional statement and therefore requires a confessional response. The DRC was rightly threatened with complete rejection by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) if it did not desist from preaching the heresy of apartheid. The NHK is served rightly when it was excluded from this ecumenical reformed family for insisting on preaching apartheid. The DRC and the NHK have not been faithful partners in the carving and shaping of God's Kingdom in South Africa, as it will be substantiated below. The apartheid State has to be challenged but the people who vote the government into power are in our church pews. The Church (one cannot overemphasise this point) should sustain and intensify its prophecy in that area. For example, the Barmen prophecy was first and

foremost directed at the "German Christians" and not at Hitler and National Socialism. When the prophecy was accepted by some "German Christians", the result was the formation of a confessing movement and members were collectively known as "confessing Christians". These confessing Christians challenged the "German Christians" to abandon the "German god of race" in favour of the Christian God of the Bible.

The third reason flows from the second one. The German Church wanted to become an official Church. Nevertheless, the German Church, as pointed out in chapter 3, enthusiastically embraced National Socialism. Positive Christianity that included, among other things, the ban of the Old Testament from its pulpits, was vigorously propagated by the "German Christians". Even the Confessional Christians were not categorical in their rejection of National Socialism. For example, they hurriedly signed the Hitler Oath even before a theological response had been formulated, and many of them did not translate the Barmen Declaration into deeds.

According to Strassberger (1974), De Gruchy (1979) and Marais (1985), apartheid as a political policy did not really start in the political arena. It was cradled in the Church. According to these theologians, the DRC Synod of 1857 passed

a resolution to separate its congregants in accordance with their race, and, as a result, in 1881, a church for Coloureds, the NG Sendingkerk was established. This was followed later by the NGK in Afrika for Africans and the Reformed Church in Africa for Asians. The NHK which was born during the Great Trek and became the State Church in the Transvaal has, through its missionary work, instituted a black church with which it does not intend to unite because its constitution excludes such a possibility purely on racial grounds. The English-speaking churches are not an exception and Villa-Vicencio (1988a) offers a detailed analysis of these churches. The Presbyterian Church for example, has black churches such as the Reformed Presbyterian Church, formerly known as Bantu Presbyterian Church and Tsonga Presbyterian Church for Tsonga/Shangaan tribe. The Presbyterian Church remained predominantly white. In spite of the fact that in 1975 an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) was established to unite all Lutheran churches, the German speaking congregations have not joined. This is exactly what happened in National Socialist Germany when the German Church decided to establish Jewish congregations and Jewish pastors were not allowed to preach in German congregations. The Confessing Church did not oppose the idea sufficiently enough. It was not surprising, that in the synodical conferences held at Barmen and Dahlem, Jewish Christians had not been represented.

What becomes clear is that the Church preaches the message it is not prepared to live by. Faith without works, to confirm it, is not only ineffective but also counterproductive. God's name cannot be sufficiently and properly hallowed and glorified through the Church in South Africa because it does not live according to its own prophetic message. The government has rightly always complained that it does not know what to do since there are so many voices from the Church that are different and conflicting. The DRC has its own voice, the SACC its own and so are the Independent Churches of Bishops such as Msilikazi Masiya and Isaac Mokoena. Although the German Confessional Church was not without its problems, those members who were really dedicated to the struggle against National Socialism acted on their witness. They not only preached against anti-Semitism but they helped the Jews by protecting and helping them to emigrate at own personal risk. People such as Bonhoeffer went abroad to seek help from governments and churches. More than anything else, the failure of the prophetic message of the Church in South Africa should be attributed to the Church's unwillingness to be a living example of the demands by the gospel.

4.3.2.2 Politics of Protest

Barth (1938; 1939; 1968) regarded protest as a legitimate tool in his theology on Church and State. It was indicated in chapter 3 how he organised the Church in Germany against Hitler, the climax being the adoption of the Barmen Declaration. Hitler was becoming more and more vicious in the treatment of his opponents. Many members of the resistance movement including the clergy were tortured, and some were even murdered in the concentration camps and prisons.

The purpose of the prophecy of the Church in South Africa was basically and mainly to expose the evil of apartheid and spell out its consequences if appropriate action and steps would not taken to eradicate it. In the interim, the Church has put certain minimum requirements such as the scrapping of pass laws, the Separate Amenities Act and the Mixed Marriages Act towards meeting the maximum requirement, namely, the granting of the vote to blacks in a unitary country. But instead of addressing the situation thus analysed, the government backed mostly by the DRC, turned the apartheid screws even tighter between 1960 and 1986. But as Villa-Vicencio (writing in Villa-Vicencio & De Gruchy 1985:124) says:

What may appear to the ruling group to be impossible and non-negotiable is precisely what the politically and economically deprived majority are demanding.

The State theology and Church theology that the Kairos Theologians (1985) condemn, and the white theology that Maimela (1987) rejects have one basic aim. They serve the interests of whites at the expense of those of blacks. Their aim is to maintain the status quo on the basis of the Bible. Since most whites are politically and socio-economically comfortable, these theologies privatise the Christian faith by spiritualising and allegorising poverty and social injustice. The Voortrekkers considered themselves as Israel's counterparts in South Africa, leaving their Egypt, that is, the Cape Colony, moving into the Promised Land, the Orange Free State, Natal and the Transvaal (Loubser, 1987; Mosala, 1989; Sundermeier, 1975). Like the Israelites who ruthlessly killed inhabitants of Palestine, they also did the same to blacks in their territories. The DRC took the problem of the poor whites seriously in the 1930s and worked hard at it. Relief work and charity became the concern of the DRC. The Anglo-Boer Wars which were also supported by the DRC show how concretely and literally the sociopolitical situation of the Afrikaner was regarded (Strassberger, 1974; Marais, 1985). This tendency is strongly evident in the Steyn's and Eloff's Commissions. The Commissions

investigated the forces which disrupted the administration of the South African government.

The media and the SACC were singled out for investigation by the Steyn's and Eloff's Commissions respectively. Villa-Vicencio, in Villa-Vicencio & De Gruchy (1985:115), correctly interprets the findings of the two Commissions as follows:

The Steyn Commission allows for theological legitimation of the state, whereas the Eloff Commission promotes an overtly apolitical theology. Common to both reports is their rejection of theologically based dissent and resistance.

In other words, the Steyn Commission advocates State theology and the Eloff Commission advocates white theology. Their insistence on law and order, the two theologies, including Church theology, reject force and violence in principle as a means of changing the status quo in the country.

Theology in South Africa is therefore becoming intensely patriotic for whites. The Church and the State as a consequence started to move in opposite directions. The Church resolved to protest against apartheid because the government and the white voters refused to listen to the prophecy of the Church against the ideology. There are aspects of the government policy that the Church cannot accept or tolerate. Central to the politics of protest is

the question of civil disobedience. In some respects the Church should still obey and pray for the evil apartheid State in accordance with Scriptures (Rom 13:1; 1 Tim 2:2; 1 Pet 2:7). But in other respects, the Church must obey God rather than earthly rulers.

A bold protest message came during the 1974 SACC annual conference held at Hammanskraal. The SACC's basic policy on violence is that violence cannot be condoned whether it is offensive or defensive. The SACC condemns apartheid violence as much as it condemns the guerrilla violence. The conference also condemned apartheid as fundamentally unjust and discriminatory. On this basis, serving in the South African Defence Force (SADF) was considered to be ethically wrong.

Consequently, South African Christians were called upon to refuse to serve in the SADF. Churches were also urged to review the basis on which they appoint chaplains to the SADF. In fact, it is said that one of the delegates asked why churches were sending chaplains to the SADF and not to Umkhonto we-Sizwe and Pogo. As Law, Lund and Winkler say in Villa-Vicencio (1987:283):

The SACC resolution was a dramatic departure from previous Church statements. It located the question of individual moral decision in the context

of the justice of the cause being fought for. The context of apartheid, and not war in itself was questioned.

It should be borne in mind that in South Africa, conscription, first introduced in 1912, suspended during the two World Wars but reintroduced in 1967, is compulsory for white males. The conscientious objection debate touched on the question of patriotism, and, as a result, it was rejected by 81% of white South Africans (from a survey conducted by *The Argus*, one of South Africa's largest newspapers based in Cape Town). The government reacted to the call by introducing a Defence Further Amendment Bill, section 121(c) of the 1957 Act to curb activities of the advocates of conscientious objection. But as many churches started to understand the ideological-theological premise of the call and endorsed it, the government was pressured to reconsider. As a result, a 1983 Defence Amendment Act was passed. The Act allows conscientious objection only on religious grounds. The objectors can do alternative national service or serve in noncombatant areas. But those who object on political, philosophical and moral grounds do not qualify and they face a maximum of six years in a civilian prison (Villa-Vicencio, 1986; 1987; Government Gazettes).

As indicated in chapter 3, Barth accepts conscientious objection to military service but warns objectors to accept consequences for their action. They must not expect to be

treated differently by the State. According to Barth, one must rather live at peace with his conscience rather than in conflict with it. As if to attack the hypocrisy and pharisaism of the conscientious objectors, Barth indicates that, once war is declared, everyone is involved in it and therefore all become tainted with blood.

The resolution as quoted by Villa-Vicencio (1986:226) ends by saying that the conference,

prays for the Government and people of our land and urgently calls on them to make rapid strides towards radical and peaceful change in our society so that the violence and war to which our social, economic and political policies are leading us may be avoided.

On the other hand, the DRC rejected conscientious objection and its strongest statement ever was issued during the 1982 General Synod of the Church. According to Durand and Smit, (Villa-Vicencio, 1987:44-45), the Synod decided thus:

The state has the right to defend itself and to this purpose it can call upon its citizens, The citizens for their part are bound to obey and no differences of opinion concerning the way in which the government of the day exercises its duties can relieve them of that obedience. From this viewpoint, civil disobedience in the form of conscientious objection is not directed against a political system but against the existence and orderly function of the

state. Neither political arguments nor objections on ethical grounds are regarded as valid and therefore cannot be used as an excuse for granting an alternative form of national service.

What one learns from the above-mentioned quotation is that the DRC cannot be trusted on matters concerning national welfare. The DRC is not prepared to support conscientious objection to the apartheid State. The DRC conveniently forgets that it neither condemned nor exonerated the perpetrators of the rebellion of 1914-1915. Durand and Smith, in Villa-Vicencio (1987), argue therefore that by taking a neutral stand, Revs D F Malan, Kestell and the church had condoned a violent insurrection against a legitimate government. The same could be said of the unwillingness and resistance of the Afrikaners to fight against Hitler and National Socialism. Afrikaners such as B J Vorster supported Hitler's war effort.

Since the 1980s it is an offense punishable by law to advocate economic sanctions against South Africa. Only churches and churchpersons who were for investment were allowed to speak on the issue. Bishops Msilikazi Masiya and Isaac Mokoena and others have been anonymously sponsored to travel abroad to encourage economic investment. The gazetted law virtually closed the sanctions issue in South Africa. Yet, lone voices such as those of Desmond Tutu defied the directive and made it plain that for him sanctions was the

last resort in the area of nonviolent strategy. He was therefore prepared to bear the consequences that might follow his sanctions campaign both inside and outside the country. He made his stand clear during his consecration as bishop of Johannesburg and later as archbishop of Cape Town. No charges have been preferred against him.

It became difficult to ascertain whether the Church in South Africa was against economic disinvestment because it really believed that disinvestment was ethically wrong or was simply afraid of the government. According to Villa-Vicencio (1988a:152-156), the English-speaking churches did not approve of sanctions with the notable exception of the United Congregational Church which unconditionally accepted disinvestment and comprehensive sanctions.

The State had tolerated the Church when it simply opposed apartheid. But the decision of the Church to undermine some of the apartheid laws and to question their legitimacy, became the last straw. Kairos Theologians (1985) called upon the Church not to collaborate with the racist government. Churches were challenged to educate their congregants on civil disobedience as a necessary means to make South Africa ungovernable, and to bring the government to its knees. The Church, along with other political organisations, such as the

disbanded UDF was condemned by the government. The Kairos Theologians (1982:24) say in no uncertain terms:

A Church that takes its responsibilities seriously in these circumstances will sometimes have to confront and disobey the State in order to obey God.

The Church under Hitler was also forced to protest. It was, for example, an offense to preach in favour of the Jews, but many confessing pastors defied the directive. They were, as a result, arrested, banned and sent to concentration camps where many died. Barth, (Busch 1976:61-62) refused, at least initially, to take an oath of allegiance to Hitler because, as he understood it, it required not only obedience and loyalty befitting a statesperson, but also a surrender of body, soul and conscience to Hitler. Complete obedience and total loyalty belongs, according Barth, only to God. Barth was consequently relieved of his teaching responsibilities. Later he had his citizenship withdrawn and was consequently deported to his native Switzerland.

Tutu was very adamant that protest, civil disobedience and sanctions were the last nonviolent means of forcing the government to abandon apartheid. Writing in Villa-Vicencio (1987:75), he says:

If sanctions fail there is no other way but to fight ... When that happens, heaven help us all. The Armageddon will have come.

4.3.2.3 Politics of Resistance

At the centre of the politics of resistance is the removal of a tyrannical government or a despot. When all forms of protest have yielded no desired results, citizens become obliged to use whatever means at their disposal to change the government. The prophetic ministry, that is, the pointing out of the evils of apartheid and its consequences, and the ministry of protest which included civil disobedience to some of the most repugnant apartheid laws, did not produce the desired results. The aim was to force the government to a negotiation table to hammer out an acceptable constitutional arrangement. As the Church intensified its opposition to apartheid, the government responded by passing many draconian laws. Police officers from the rank of constable were seemingly allowed to kill without express orders from their seniors because the government had issued a general immunity to all police officers against prosecution. Three successive states of emergency effectively suspended South Africa's Constitution. The Church moved its stance from disobedience to a more central issue, namely, the legitimacy and the authority of the apartheid State. The Kairos Theologians decided by 1985 that the apartheid State was tyrannical and

had therefore lost the moral legitimacy to govern, if it ever had such a legitimacy. The Church resolved since the end of the 1970s to pray and work for the downfall of the apartheid government.

A WCC document of 1969, which almost wrecked the SACC, was the Program to Combat Racism (PCR) (Mbali, 1987). This world body shifted its mission from the centre of the Church to the centre of sociopolitical justice. As De Gruchy (1979:127-138) says, the WCC wanted to engage itself head on, specifically at the political, economic and social spheres as its contribution toward the liberation of racially oppressed peoples in the Third World. As we know, the adoption of this document by the WCC meant that large sums of money would be granted to liberation movements in Southern Africa, on humanitarian grounds. The money was supposedly to be used to buy food and medicine, but not weapons. Freedom fighters of countries such as Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa benefited from the programme. Villa-Vicencio (1988a:109) puts it poignantly:

In effect it was a decision to shift the focus of the ecumenical church from protest and benevolence to resistance and support for those engaged in a liberation struggle.

Unfortunately, the SACC rejected the document because it implied and encouraged violence. As a result, all churches in South Africa withheld WCC membership fees and other funds

with the exception of the United Congregational Church. The United Congregational Church saved the donations in a separate savings account until the government would make it possible for the funds to be transferred. The government stopped short of instructing the SACC to withdraw from the WCC (De Gruchy, 1979; Villa-Vicencio, 1988a). Durand and Smit, writing in Villa-Vicencio (1987), maintain that the DRC's response to the PCR document was that Christ teaches one to endure injustice and therefore it was not the Church's business to give what it called "terrorists" financial support.

But as far as one understands the document, it does not call for an offensive violence against illegal and oppressive regimes in the Third World countries. The Church and the liberation movements are in the same boat. They both resist the evil of oppression and exploitation. They differ only in methods, strategies and means. Why was it difficult for the SACC to offer noncombatant commodities such as material help, moral support and prayers? One cannot really consider nonviolent means such as sanctions and humanitarian aid to freedom fighters as incompatible with the mission of the Church.

The SACC issued a call on 16 June 1985 to its member churches to pray, on that day, for the end to unjust rule in South

Africa. The Call outlines a short history of the black struggle, including the efforts made by the liberation movements and the Church. On that account, the SACC in this document reprinted in Villa-Vicencio (1986:247) says:

We have prayed for our rulers, as is demanded of us in the Scriptures. We have entered into consultation with them as is required by our faith. We have taken the reluctant and drastic step of declaring apartheid to be contrary to the declared will of God, and some churches have declared its theological justification to be a heresy. We now pray that God will replace the present structures of oppression with ones that are just, and remove from power those who persist in defying his laws, installing in their place leaders who will govern with justice and mercy.

These sentiments are expressed also by the Kairos Theologians (1985:19) when they say that a regime that is an enemy of the people such as apartheid "... can only be replaced by another government", elected by the majority of the people.

The weakness of the Call is that it does not indicate which methods are feasible and appropriate to overthrow the apartheid State. The SACC rejects the use of violence and force to bring about political change in South Africa. It has rejected even the humanitarian aid suggested by the PCR document as the least which the Church can do to bring about a new political dispensation in our country. The Church has refused sanctions against the country as its last resort

within the area of non-violence. Unfortunately, the NP cannot be democratically removed from office within the foreseeable future by any political party under the apartheid Constitution. The NP needs no alliances or coalitions to command the necessary majority to govern this country. Did the SACC believe in God's miraculous intervention in our affairs as God did with Elijah and the prophets of Baal? Did the Church believe that the freedom fighters would succeed without financial assistance? Or did the Church believe that the government would be toppled by Tutu's continued and relentless call for intensified economic strangulation of the country? Whatever was in the minds of the drafters of the Call, the SACC has issued a powerful message of hope to the churches. The imminent victory in South Africa over apartheid is made possible by the Church's prayers and a determined effort to work for God's kingdom in South Africa.

Unfortunately, again, this Call was not heeded and the day was not adequately observed. The English-speaking churches showed on whose side they stood. According to Villa-Vicencio (1988a), while agreeing with the Call, Archbishop Philip Russel was not in the position to individually or publicly call upon his congregants to heed the Call. The Methodist Church did not pray for the overthrow of the government but for the end to unjust laws. The Presbyterian Church did likewise. Even the heroes of the black struggle, that is,

the United Congregational Church did not observe the Call in accordance with its letter and spirit. Villa-Vicencio (1988a:156) concludes his lamentation by saying:

Suffice it to say that none of the English-speaking churches organised official prayers for the end to unjust rule on June 16, and they made no attempt to mobilize support for this particular 'Call to Prayer'.

The 1986 General Synod of the DRC adopted in its Church and Society document, the view that church leaders must not join those who encourage anarchy, violence and revolutionary disobedience to the legitimate authority of the State.

Malusi Mpumlwana, in Villa-Vicencio (1987:92-93), concludes his treatment and analysis of the churches' attitude towards the Call:

The controversy over the prayer to end unjust rule revealed that the church is ideologically committed to the long life of this government, however unconsciously.

The SACC needs to make a distinction between offensive and defensive violence, especially in countries where people are politically oppressed and economically exploited. It cannot condemn all violence. The Kairos Theologians (1985:17) condemn such a stance when they say:

... there are those who preach absolute nonviolence, but while they condemn the armed struggle of the people, they seldom question the use of arms against the people. They recognise the right of self-defense when the state invokes it, but not when the people exercise it. In the case of military forces, they uphold the legitimate use of violence and criticise only its abuse; but when it comes to the people's use of arms, they do not make the same distinction.

The SACC's official stance does not fit in with the above quotation but its white member churches do. The SACC has an understanding of the armed struggle although it does not condone it. There are some people in the SACC leadership who have a theological rationale for it. A contribution of Boesak and Brews in Villa-Vicencio (1987) entitled, "The Black Struggle for Liberation : A Reluctant Road to Revolution" is an example of such an attitude within the SACC. Yet what the liberation movements need is not only the Church's understanding and its solidarity. They need the Church's empathy, that is, material as well as moral support. Freedom fighters are not terrorists. They are warriors for justice. The Church accepts the concept of a just war. There is no reason why the Church finds it difficult to regard guerrilla warfare as a legitimate form of self-defence. It is a defensive war against Europeans who dispossessed them of virtually everything since 1652. The liberation movements, especially the ANC, rightly speaks of a cease-fire and amnesty between themselves and the apartheid

State instead of what the government demands, namely, that the ANC and the PAC should unilaterally lay down arms and renounce violence without conditions. One could even suggest that political prisoners should accordingly be elevated to the status of prisoners of war. Indemnity for the exile soldiers should be total and unconditional.

As we know, Barth was not in principle a pacifist. When the Church is called by God to overthrow the tyrants of this world, it should not hesitate. When a "Grenzfall" situation in National Socialist Germany had arisen, the Church cooperated with the generals to try to assassinate Hitler. Dietrich Bonhoeffer prayed for the defeat of Germany in the war. He was convinced that it was through such a defeat that Hitler would be stopped. Defeat in war would make Germany pay for the hardships it had caused, and injuries inflicted on the subjugated territories and countries. While others discouraged the observance of Hitler Sunday, people such as Barth called upon the Church to observe it. According to Barth, the Church is called upon by its Lord to pray and to intercede for political rulers. But instead of praying for the success of National Socialism, the Church was instructed to pray for its downfall and overthrow.

It is perhaps true that in South Africa we have not reached a "Grenzfall" situation where the Church is called upon to

organise or help organise an insurrection against the apartheid State. One is nonetheless convinced that had the churches, through the SACC, supported the PCR effort, economic sanctions drive and the most subversive of all the calls, namely, the Call to Prayer to topple apartheid rulers, South Africa would be much nearer to its democratic destination than it is the case now. What the PCR called for was that churches should minister also to the freedom fighters in a more visible and physical manner. The solidarity with the freedom fighters called for by the PCR aimed at instilling a fresh attitude towards the liberation movements.

The Church is urged to support them morally and to offer intercessions on their behalf. Like the Hebrew slaves who prayed to God for deliverance, so also the Call to Prayer scheduled for 16 June 1985, was a confessional statement which shows trust in God's deliverance. Many Christians failed to pray to God to replace the apartheid rulers with those who would govern in truth and justice.

4.3.2.4 Reconciliation

For most blacks, since the banning of political organisations in 1960, the concept of reconciliation has become a source of irritation while for whites it has become a source of

consolation. White theology insisted on spiritual unity and not structural unity, whereas black theology pressed for spiritual unity in Christ that would yield fruits for socio-political justice. As Villa-Vicencio (1985:124) says:

What may appear to the ruling group to be impossible and non-negotiable is precisely what the politically and economically deprived majority are demanding.

It has been an argument of many black theologians such as Tutu, Boesak and Stanley Ntwasa that it is pointless to speak of reconciliation when the sinner is unrepentant and prepared to cheat even more. White theology still preaches a message that denies the crux of the gospel namely, reconciliation. The Kairos theologians in their criticism of what they call church theology - synonymous with white theology - reject reconciliation and peace advocated by this theology. They say that it compromises the truth of the gospel, because it perpetrates oppression and injustice. The Kairos Theologians (1985:9) say:

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

Mofokeng, writing in De Gruchy (1986:172), emphasises the need for genuine repentance,

I strongly believe in the existence of the possibility for reconciliation in our country. There is no possibility of reconciliation between black and white people in this country until the oppressive structures and institutions, be they black or white, are transformed and put into service for the benefit of the underprivileged majority of this beautiful land.

Karl Barth deals with reconciliation in Vol IV of his Church Dogmatics which is a corrective of reconciliation as propagated by some churches and theologians in South Africa, that is, reconciliation without repentance and the unwillingness to pay the price exacted. According to him reconciliation means God-with-us. God concerns himself with human beings. God ignores the powerful and the wealthy and is on the side of the weak and the poor. God seeks company with sinners and disregards the righteous. Jesus' ministry puts a question mark on world orders, both secular and spiritual. Jesus stands with the poor and the revolutionary, but does not necessarily stand against the rulers and the rich. God's last word to human beings through Jesus is his "Yes". God's "No" is meant to effect genuine repentance, the only way to receive God's "Yes". Reconciliation without repentance is a sham. Mofokeng (1983) makes a penetrating study of Church Dogmatics IV/2:59 & 64 and he has the following to say: The Cross is not an accident but a culmination of Jesus' humanity in solidarity with human beings. The Cross is the triumph of human beings and not a

symbol of despair. This truth became clear and possible through the message of Easter Sunday, the miracle of an empty tomb. Through the resurrection of Christ, God transforms people and makes them agents in his service of liberation of the poor and the oppressed.

What becomes clear from the above, is that true reconciliation does not come cheaply. Reconciliation does not compromise truth or tolerate evil. Reconciliation does not mean ignoring or explaining away contradictions. It seeks for their effective removal. According to Bonino (1975:121),

Reconciliation is not achieved by some sort of compromise between the new and the old but through the defeat of the old and the victory of the new age.

Reconciliation, according to Nolan (1988) and Tutu, writing in Villa-Vicencio (1988), means restoration and restitution. Its practical implications for the South African society is taken up in detail in chapter 5 (Practice of the Sabbatical Year). Suffice it now to say that the The Road to Damascus (1989) in South Africa would mean a complete transformation of our society.

The churches should speak of genuine reconciliation, and the starting point, one would suggest, should be that all of us accept blame for the situation in our country. One would not

like to catalogue the sins that the various sectors of the South African population have committed. Firstly, they have already been interspersely mentioned in this study, especially in this chapter and, secondly, people such as Marais (1985), Villa-Vicencio (1988a) and De Gruchy (1979) have written extensively on the subject. Obviously whites are ethically more responsible for the chaos in the country than blacks. Whites are culprits of the situation and blacks are victims. The problem with blacks and the Church in South Africa is that they did very little when blacks were oppressed and exploited. In that sense blacks are guilty of the sin of omission. Before the judgment seat of God all in South Africa have sinned, and are in need of forgiveness. No one should be exonerated. Blacks, whites, freedom fighters, liberals, communists and "neutrals" are guilty.

The world, especially western Europe and the United States of America is also guilty of creating and sustaining apartheid. These countries have invested in the country against the best advice of the oppressed blacks. They took advantage of cheap labour and the availability of raw material in South Africa. It was Great Britain and the United States of America, for example, which came to South Africa's rescue in March 1960 when, as a result of the Sharpeville uprisings, surrender and the transfer of political power to blacks was inevitable (Motsoko, 1984). This may seem an oversimplification of an

otherwise complicated matter. But the truth of the matter is that, without financial assistance from the United States of America and Western Europe, the white minority government would have been forced, already in the early 1960s, to work towards some kind of agreement with the black people. Nelson Mandela's arrest near Durban on 5 August 1962 is attributed in the media to the Central Intelligence Agency's cooperation with the South African government (Sunday Times, 17 June 1990:1). Again here, one should not dwell on the role the West and the multinational corporations played in the oppression and exploitation of the blacks. People such as Mzimela (1983) and Motsoko (1984) have compiled such a catalogue.

This attitude proved very fruitful in Germany after Second World War. The architects of the collective guilt, Barth and Bonhoeffer, even before the end of the war, insisted that all Germans should shoulder the guilt. That is why the Church in Germany was vehemently opposed to apportioning blame to some Germans whilst absolving others, and to the Nuremberg trials. This understanding of complicity in the German fiasco resulted, as we have seen, in the signing of the famous Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt. It is encouraging that, from press reports, it is evident that the ANC leadership in the persons of Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki and even Chris Hani will not be holding trials of those accused of apartheid

crimes, if the ANC becomes the future government of South Africa.

The Kairos Theologians (1985:23) also propagate this message of repentance when they say:

It is repentance for our share of the guilt for the suffering and oppression in our country.

The call issued by the Road to Damascus is stronger. It does not call for repentance but for conversion. One agrees with the document because many whites do not need repentance as such. They need to be converted. Preaching repentance to them would be putting the cart before the horse.

4.4 SUMMARY

The legality and the legitimacy of the apartheid white minority State in South Africa have been weighed and found wanting. The black struggle and the Church struggle against it has been frustrated and very little has been achieved. To summarise, one may enumerate some of the most important and fundamental aspects of Barth's contribution raised in the study as they will be used in the next and final chapter that makes an attempt at suggesting how a more just and democratic society for South Africa may be achieved. There are, however, some aspects that have only been implied by Barth

and that are very important and should be taken into consideration if a new political design for South Africa is to be comprehensive. The theological implications and the implementation of these insights will be extensively analysed in the next chapter, which is the construction chapter.

The following are Barth's explicit insights:

- (a) **Reconciliation:** God has reconciled the world with himself through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. This fact should be manifested not only among Christians but also among political interest groups.

- (b) **Non-racialism:** Barth was a fervent opponent of anti-Semitism. Hitler's ill treatment, torture and murder of the Jews were condemned in the strongest possible terms.

- (c) **Democracy:** Barth was against dictatorship and totalitarianism; that is why he criticised for example, fascism, National Socialism and Stalinism. He advocated a democracy in which there would be free political activity and citizens in general would enjoy freedom.

- (d) **Workers:** The economic exploitation of workers by employers angered Barth very much. As a result, the rights of workers became central to Barth's socio-economic action. Trade unions were established so that workers could become vocal in their demands and be meaningfully represented in decision-making processes. Those who are not employed, the aged, the sick and others who cannot take care of themselves, should be provided for by the State.
- (e) **Theology and Church:** It was Barth's belief that theology and the Church could assist through prayers and active involvement in sociopolitical matters. The Church was active in Germany, fighting Hitler and after the Second World War in the reconstruction of Germany and the founding of the new German State through people such as Barth and Niemöller.

Barth was implicit on the following:

- (a) **Restitution:** During the time of Hitler, Jews and those considered to be the enemies of the State, had their properties confiscated, such as businesses, houses and land including money. However, the dispossessed were not compensated for their loss. Much was done was through establishment of charity organisations and

relief projects. In South Africa, restitution is going to be central to the discussions when a post-apartheid Constitution is being written.

(b) **Feminism:** The idea of feminism as advocated nowadays was not very topical during Barth's active life. As a result, Barth has not written enough on women's inferior position in the sociopolitical sphere. Women have since increasingly exerted pressure on the male dominated society to be taken seriously and have become assertive in domains that were previously the reserve of men. A writing of a democratic Constitution for South Africa cannot be genuinely democratic without women participation.

(c) **Religious Pluralism:** In Germany during the time of Barth, Christianity was divided mainly into Catholics and Protestants. Judaism, for example, was not represented in either Barmen or Dahlem nor was it represented after the war in Stuttgart. In South Africa, Christians have to rub shoulders with adherents of other major faiths such as Moslems, Jews and Hindus. The Church in South Africa will have to recognise the role other religions can play in the struggle for justice and in the evolution of a democratic society.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARDS A MORE JUST STATE IN SOUTH AFRICA : A CONSTRUCTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Many important theological formulations of Barth that have been discussed in the entire study are employed in this chapter in the attempt to construct an alternative State for South Africa. In the light of Barth's insights, the following issues are discussed, namely, ecumenism, redefinition of communism, reconciliation of political interest groups, and the practice of the sabbatical year. These issues are treated in such a way that work of construction will be made easier. The actual construction is proposed by examining theological concepts from Barth's theology in the area of Church and State. The following concepts are discussed: the need for an antiracist and antisexist State; the need for a democratic State; the introduction of worker-oriented and welfare State. Finally, new Church and State relations are defined in terms of the Church's task towards the State and vice-versa.

5.2 REORIENTATION

In the period under review, that is, South Africa before 1990, apartheid rulers tried their utmost best to cling to power in the face of mounting resistance by both the SACC member churches, the Roman Catholic Church and many political organisations such as the ANC, PAC and AZAPO. The successive states of emergency during the decade could not contain the discontent of the largely black masses. The collapse of the apartheid State and the overthrow of the white minority government became imminent. The hope of South Africa's oppressed people lies in the defeat of the racist government and the transformation of the apartheid State.

As it happened in Germany, the hope of the Germans was predicated on the defeat of Germany in the Second World War. Church Dogmatics IV, 1 and IV, 2 are post-Second World War publications. Their historical background and context was therefore the period which saw the rise of Hitler and his eventual catastrophic fall. Church Dogmatics IV, 1 and IV 2 deal with reconciliation, and are concerned with the restructuring of the post-war German State. Germany was faced with numerous problems such as resentment from the rest of the world, especially the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Russia; the desire for revenge; guilt; a shattered economic infrastructure; a political vacuum; the

Cold War, and a disgraced Church with a heretical theology. Barth addressed these problems in his post-war writings, and *Church Dogmatics* IV, 1 and IV, 2 was extremely apposite for Germany in general and the Church in particular. For Barth, the solution to those problems did not lie in reconstructing Germany on the old foundations or on reformed ones. Germany had to break radically with the past, both theologically and sociopolitically, and find new builders who would build on totally new foundations.

The Marxist theory of the State is well documented. The *Communist Manifesto* in Marx and Engels (1967; 1970) and Marx (1974) expressed the opinion that the State came about as the result of class conflicts and antagonisms. They believed that, if classes disappeared, the State would wither away. According to this theory, it is a waste of time to construct one form of State after another, because any State is corruptible and history has shown that all States serve the interests of the petty-bourgeoisie at the expense of the proletariat. People should work for a classless society that will ultimately lead to communism. In the interim, en route to communism, people should practise rigorous socialism, outside the bourgeois State, through a workers' State. In other words, a workers' State is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Cabanga, for example, writing in *The Azanian Labour Journal*, Vol 1; No 2 (1988:2) puts it thus:

... The path to socialism cannot be through taking control of the bourgeois State and then introducing socialism gradually from above, and therefore, following Marx, Engels and Lenin on this point, those who argue for this route to socialism are not consistent with the Marxist tradition and cannot claim to be Marxists.

Communism according to one's assessment, is not a possibility in this life. To use a term from the political arena, communism and a classless society are utopian. Put theologically, a classless society is eschatological. It means that it is the will of God that antagonisms of classes should cease. Human beings are challenged to work now for the realisation of just such a society that will be consummated with the Parousia. In theology, such a state of affairs is referred to as the Kingdom of God. Barth made this point clear at Tambach when he discouraged the religious socialists to equate human effort with the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is a revolution that precedes all other revolutions (Busch, 1976; Hunsinger, 1976).

For Cabanga, the struggle in South Africa is not only against apartheid, but against capitalism as well. In the same breath, the charterist movements such as the ANC, and the UDF, and trade unions such as COSATU and NUM are slammed, not to mention government created structures such as the homelands, the tricameral parliament and the Regional Services Councils (RSCs). For strategic and tactical reasons, Cabanga

suggests total boycott of this apartheid parliament because negotiations will be conducted on the terms dictated to by the government. His suggestion (1988:15) is clear and unambiguous: "Stay OUTSIDE parliament." Cabanga points out that the government speaks about one-person-one-vote, one nationality, proportional representation, freedom of association, movement and expression, the bill of rights, and so on, but this whole agenda is subject to qualification by the apartheid and capitalist State. Cabanga states clearly that reconstruction of any kind of State in South Africa, other than a workers' State, is an exercise in futility. He (1988:15) emphasises that there is no middle road:

Either one joins the working class struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat or one begins to negotiate with a capitalist power steeped in racism

....

A workers' State advocated by Marxist-Leninism has not been realised anywhere in the world, including the Soviet Union. What has been witnessed so far is that the ruling elite such as the politburo in the Soviet Union has been engaged in command politics, telling everyone what to do and eliminating those who dissented. A point that is noted in this regard is that the workers' plight in South Africa should be seriously addressed by the political parties when a new Constitution is written. A party or parties voted into power should take practical steps to translate the Constitution into deeds.

Workers have, over the centuries, been oppressed and exploited. Karl Barth was faced with this problem, especially in Safenwil. And yet workers are the economic backbone of every country. When workers go on strike, the economy may collapse and the government of the day, more often than not, is replaced.

The intensification of the struggle against the apartheid State and the insistence on a new constitution is a national project facing all religions, including Christianity, political parties and their subsidiaries such as the trade unions and cultural movements. Unlike in Germany, there is no sociopolitical vacuum in South Africa, because there is a white minority government and, the infrastructure is still intact, although inadequate. The economy is fairly strong in spite of economic sanctions against the country and stayaways and strikes by the workers. What faces South Africa is a writing of a new Constitution, election of a majority government, revitalisation of the economy and the establishing of a process by which sociohistorical imbalances can be corrected. This reorientation excursus should enable us to tackle theologically the issues of reconciliation in South Africa and the reconstruction of a society free of racism.

5.3 THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

There are theological reasons for engaging in a reconstruction project of an antiracist State in South Africa. One's arguments would obviously take their cue from Karl Barth.

When Germany was defeated in 1945, Barth wrote, spoke and travelled widely and his message was simple: Germany had paid for its sins and was therefore entitled to be reconciled with the international community. Germany needed assistance both spiritually and physically. It is no surprise that Church Dogmatics IV, 1 and IV, 2 deal with the situation of Germany at that time. For Germany, the time of grace had come. The basis of hope for the project facing Germany, Barth pointed out, was the Resurrection of the crucified Jesus. In this instance according to Barth, the downtrodden of Germany, specifically the Jews and the fighters of National Socialism were the people qualified to rebuild a new German State.

Mofokeng (1983) has made a penetrating study of Barth on this topic, as already indicated in chapter 4. According to Mofokeng, the crossbearers, who are the oppressed and exploited people, are enabled by the event of the Resurrection to be assertive and become agents of their own liberation. The Church and the world find themselves between

the Ascension and the Parousia. It is the time during which people search for structures that would promote justice and freedom. Concretely speaking, sociopolitical and economic models of the bourgeoisie are substituted by the models that are created from below, namely, the downtrodden of God. This is the time of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit propels the downtrodden to shake off their oppressors.

Barth emphasises that the struggle benefits not only the oppressed but the perpetrators of injustice as well. The oppressors are justified in an event that manifests itself as forgiveness of their deeds. The Church must be involved in the movement for social justice. It must become an agent of change. In this change, the proletariat should be the starting point. It is the proletariat, more than anybody else, who should be involved in the searching for solutions to their problems and in the actual process of constructing a more just society for them and for others (Hunsinger, 1976).

Maimela (1984) along these lines, makes an interesting contribution from a Christian anthropological viewpoint. Maimela believes that God makes use of human beings through his Law in the unfinished and continuing work of creation. His critique of Barth and Elert is that they negatively interpret the Law. For Barth the Law is God's "no" and, for Elert, it is retribution. Maimela points out that both give

the impression that the Law is static. The divine command (Law) is dynamic. This divine command is still engaged in the unfinished and ongoing creation through human agents, without whose participation the world may not become what God wants it to be. Maimela (1984:191) continues to say,

This appreciation enables us to maintain continuities between divine and human creative activities in this ongoing, unfinished creation of the world because history, or the creation of the world (not to be confused with heaven and earth), is not the sole monopoly of a jealous God but is also the creation of human work; for humans are co-agents, co-workers and co-creators with, in the presence of and through the help of God.

Maimela admits that humans have not been faithful in this task. Our record is not impressive, to say the least. But, as trustees of God, human beings must always strive to improve this untrustworthiness. Maimela (1984) gives several guidelines that can help people in their task.

- (a) We are accountable before God whom we deputise and represent in our lordship over the natural and social environment.
- (b) We must embody God's own way of acting in relation to the finite reality which came into being through divine creative commanding.

- (c) God's creation should not be idolised because it is a finite creation. We should not attribute divinity to culture and ideologies which are only centres of human creative responsibility.
- (d) Our responsibility before God as deputies, stewards, trustees and messengers in the dynamics of God's creation means that our freedom to rule over creation is highly qualified. Our participation is not absolute.

These guidelines are given as a safeguard against the proletariat becoming as undemocratic and self-idealising as the bourgeoisie. One regards guidelines (b) and (c) above as the most crucial and pertinent for South Africans, when we work for an alternative State. Since a new Constitution would be a contribution in realising God's Kingdom in South Africa, we should embody God's own way of doing things, namely, to maintain our independence and freedom from the works of creation. Again, South Africans should avoid worshipping the State and its ideologies. Apartheid has enjoyed the status of divinity and that should not be allowed to happen with regard to any other ideology, including the Freedom Charter.

Maimela (1984) has made a clear and provocative contribution to the debate on Law and Gospel. He receives a special attention here because he is a corrective of Barth on the

issue but, more than that, he complements Barth. In other words, Maimela says that human agency does not begin after the Resurrection but with creation. Human agency is one manifestation of God's grace and one asserts that Barth would not disagree because for Barth, (CD III, 1, 2, 3; 1968) creation itself is grace. To reconcile Maimela and Barth, who are more in agreement than Maimela realises or is prepared to concede, one would like to see the Resurrection as the confirmation and intensification of the human agency that was graciously granted to humanity through the divine command, since the creation of the world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the Ascension should be understood as a continuation of the process of the Law. The Holy Spirit strengthens rather than enables humanity to become a more faithful agent of creative change. As indicated in chapter 2, Barth said in his Tambach address that creation finds its completeness only in the light of grace and glory, and that the power of grace and glory is also present in creation and in the Law.

We should be left in no doubt whatsoever that South Africans, both black and white, have a creative role to play in the construction of a post-apartheid society. Political parties and related movements should put their cards on the table. Principles, including those that are said to be non-negotiable, must be negotiated in the light of the history of

the people of this country. Everything in the State is secular and should not be given a religious mantle. This insight comes out strongly in the writings of Barth (1938, 1939, 1954, 1968). All that the Church in South Africa requires is that, at the end of the day, justice, righteousness and love should reign supreme.

Now that we have theologically justified the reconstruction of a new South Africa, one shall focus one's attention in what follows to some recommendations that, one believes, are necessary components for a democratic South Africa, in the light of Barth's theological thinking on Church and State.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Ecumenical Endeavour

By "ecumenism" one refers to a mutual respect and cooperation, not only among churches, but also between the Church and other religions in South Africa.

A common witness to congregants, South Africans and the government is a necessity that is going to be indispensable in the near future. We may have a government whose composition will probably include members of other faiths and ideologies. It will probably also consist of people from

other religions people, such as Atheists, Moslems, Hindus, African traditionalist Christians and Jews. As alluded in the summary to the previous chapter, Barth did not treat religious pluralism as a specific problem especially at the height of the German Church struggle against National Socialism. Jews were neither present at Barmen where their issue had been central nor at Dahlem. Even more strange, was the fact that at Stuttgart only the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches deliberated on the most crucial issue facing Germany as a whole namely, the confession by the whole nation (Grünberger, 1971; Helmreich, 1979). As indicated in the study, the Roman Catholic Church officially dissociated itself from the Stuttgart declaration. Nonetheless, Barth has written something on religion that may help us to determine what his attitude might have been in South Africa that is a home for many major religions. Of course, his discussion of religion should be coupled with his discussion of natural theology, a topic that has already been rather exhaustively discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

According to Barth (CD I, 2:281), religion is a

specific area of human competence,
experience and activity.

He says people feel that there is something ultimate and decisive that is more powerful than them and Barth maintains

that the feeling is universal. Just as he rejected natural theology that became a source of primary revelation for the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, as indicated in the main study, so also for Barth religion becomes troublesome when it absolutises itself. Christianity also, should not regard itself as a true religion. Religion is abolished in the sense that it is relativised by God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ. Barth emphasises that the Church should become the guardian of true religion only in so far as, through grace, it lives by grace. Barth (CD I, 2:297) is therefore convinced that if God's revelation and human religion is treated in this order,

we do not need to delete or retract anything from the admission that in His revelation God is present in the world of human religion.

Barth (CD I, 2:299) concludes by saying that;

... religions must be treated with a tolerance which is informed by the forbearance of Christ which derives therefore from the knowledge that by grace God has reconciled to Himself godless man and his religion.

These two basic insights learned from Barth namely, the relativisation of religions and natural theology by Jesus Christ and the tolerance of other religions would help us tremendously in the quest for a democratic society in South Africa. The Church would cooperate with other religions

without losing its identity as a trustee of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Religion in general and Christianity in particular have a crucial role to play in the construction of a new State in South Africa. Religion should be engaged in the construction project as a prophet and conscience of the builders. It must, though indirectly, supervise the construction process. The task of religion will not be finished when a new government is elected on the basis of a new Constitution. Religion will have to see to it that the democratic government follows the spirit and the letter of the written Constitution. For example, minority rights that are free of racism, be they religious, cultural and political should not be overridden by the rights of the majority.

Religious pluralism is a matter of fact in South Africa. This means that the Church must re-examine its old conceptions of other religions as demonic agents that work against the Kingdom of God. There is no self-respecting religion, in its normal functioning, that encourages chaos and anarchy. Religion is a social product and it forms the basis of a society's survival, both spiritually and physically. Mol (1976) says that religion sacrilises identity. Cultural, economic, social, political norms and values are sanctioned and cemented together by religion. If

all religions are functional in the way just described, religions in South Africa should have one common agenda concerning matters that affect social justice. This is not a question of the Church merely tolerating other religions, but rather of recognising the intrinsic value of other religions. G A Lubbe writing in Vorster (1986) contends that a lot can be learned and appreciated in other religions. He (1986:125) says:

... the popular idea that Buddhism is "pagan" because it does not pay attention to a doctrine of God, will have to be broken down, and the value and beauty of Buddhist meditation will have to be emphasised. Hinduism, which is often dismissed as idol worship and superstition, will have to be presented in its fullness with an undistorted exposition of Yoga. Islam, which has been looked upon as a rival for such a long time, will have to be given credit for its particular understanding of community and prayer. In the same way the dignity and beauty of the African world view will have to be presented as the force that makes African religion still viable today.

Frazier (1975) makes an in depth study of religion and refutes the thesis of people such as Karl Marx and Ludwig Feuerbach that religion will disappear as the primitive person becomes more and more sophisticated. Greeley (1969), a theologian and a practising sociologist, undertook a study on the future of religion and Christianity. Greeley's conclusion is that instead of religion disappearing from the

face of the earth, it will rather become more and more sophisticated. He continues to say that, among other things, religion will not lose its adherents, nor will it lose its influence and that the sacred will not be replaced by the secular.

This religious ecumenism places a tremendous responsibility on the Church as a united organism. One would therefore call upon the churches in South Africa, especially the Afrikaans speaking churches such as the DRC and NHK to take their places in the SACC. These Reformed Churches are again urged to work towards their reincorporation in the WARC. Similarly, the Roman Catholic Church can enrich itself by considering joining hands with the Protestant churches in this kind of ecumenical endeavour within the SACC.

For this kind of ecumenical attitude to be adopted, churches in South Africa need to accept complicity in the propagation and practice of apartheid, as Germans did at Stuttgart after the Second World War. One believes that all the churches have soiled themselves with the sin of apartheid, whether by commission or omission. As it has been indicated in chapter 4, some churches in South Africa support the apartheid State such as the DRC and NHK and others, especially SACC member churches are not doing enough to fight the apartheid State and still others within the African Independent Churches such

as the Zion Christian Church have decided not to confront the State and are indirectly supporting the State.

Many churches in western Europe and the United States of America, including Canada, collaborated with the apartheid regime against the few prophetic voices among the anti-apartheid movements and churches in the West. Mzimela (1983) has a catalogue of wrongs that have militated against the South African Church struggle. When blacks called for economic sanctions, those churches abroad continued to invest and exploit the black worker. Those churches benefited from the apartheid system because they underpaid their workers and gave them a raw deal in general.

Karl Barth's acceptance of natural theology was conditional. If it accepted its relativised position under the Word of God, it was embraced but if it sought to replace God it was vehemently opposed. For example, he rejected the natural theology of the German Christians because Hitler came to be regarded as a new messiah and a new revelation against Jesus Christ, as indicated in chapters 2 and 3. Seeing that in South Africa we are probably going to have a government consisting of non-Christians as well, one would plead for, in addition to evangelical theology, a theology that one may, for lack of an appropriate word, call a theology of the conscience. This theology will tackle issues such as the

dignity of human beings, and a person's inalienable rights and humanity. It exploits the goodness inherent in human beings (Jer 31:31-34). We are simply challenged to become better human beings in our dealings with and treatment of, other members of the human race and by implication, also our treatment of God's creation. Joel the prophet says that the Spirit of God shall be poured on all flesh (Joel 2:28ff) and it was poured out at Pentecost on Christians and non-Christians alike (Acts 2:1ff). This Spirit enables sons and daughters and their parents to prophesy, see visions and dream dreams. This Spirit appeals to our consciences to work for the good of our country. This theology is not inherently and intrinsically salvific. This Theology is aimed at working for justice, whether one is a Christian or not. It is relativised by God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

5.4.2 Redefining Communism

What we have learned in chapter 3 (3.3.3.1) is that communism is regarded as a materialist religion whose aim is to destroy other religions, but Barth contended (3.3.3.2) that communism is a sociopolitical policy. Consequently, Barth refused to elevate communism to the status of religion. The battle, he maintained, was not between communism and Christianity but between communism and capitalism. As a result, he distanced himself from theologians such as Niebuhr and Brunner, and the

Church in the West. As far as he was concerned, the conflict was really between the two power blocs, the East and the West. Barth exhorted the Church to be nonpartisan, for it was in that capacity that the Church could help thaw the Cold War. Therefore, not all communists and Marxists are necessarily atheists and not all atheists are necessarily against religion (Barth, 1938, 1939, 1954, 1959c).

If, in a future South Africa, we should have communists in positions of political influence, the Church should not regard them as enemies of Christianity, let alone as antichrists. That churches in the Eastern bloc have been persecuted and perhaps are still being persecuted, is not altogether true. There is another side of the story. It is indeed true that Christians have been persecuted in Bulgaria and Romania before Mikhael Gorbachev's reform initiatives that saw, since the middle of 1989, the crumbling of Socialist States. But it is also true that in other Socialist States such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary, Christians have met regularly for divine services. In Hungary, the bishop is even a member of parliament, as in Britain where the archbishop of Canterbury is a member of the House of Lords. A Lutheran World Federation Conference was held in Budapest, Hungary, between 22 July and 5 August 1984. It became clear from delegates from the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries, that the churches in those

countries enjoy some measure of religious freedom. It was reported that very few churches were still experiencing problems, and as a result, those churches were regarded as exile churches. Among them the following should be included, namely, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church and Lithuanian Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mau, 1984). But as we are aware, dramatic things have happened since 1984, notably during 1989. The position of religion and Church has improved remarkably since then. There are signs which indicate that the Church, be it Roman Catholic or Greek Orthodox would flourish, because the power base of the Communist Party is being eroded in the Soviet Union. The Baltic States such as Lithuania and Latvia have rebelled against Moscow (The Sunday Star, p. 16: April 17 1988).

As a sociopolitical policy, socialism seems to be but failing since 1989 especially in the Soviet Union, but with the exception of countries such as Cuba, China and North Yemen. The Church should therefore guard against this Soviet socialism from being introduced in our country. We need our own brand of socialism. Africans had their own brand of socialism which they called communalism. In many respects, it looks like the kind of socialism which was practised by the early Christians (Acts 5, 6). How it will look like, is for the politicians to decide. Whether, and how far it will

succeed, time will tell. Capitalism does not have a good track-record. Wherever it was practised, the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. The same applies to us in South Africa. Capitalism practised by the apartheid State has widened the wealth gap between blacks and whites in favour of the white people. This was Barth's basic problem that he encountered at Safenwil.

When Christendom and other faiths in South Africa come to share, more or less, some perceptions of the liberation struggle and vision of the future, and are agreed on a common agenda and *modus operandi*, the way will be cleared for them to play a mediating role which probably they alone can effectively undertake. However, they must be nonaligned if they are to succeed as mediators and facilitators of reconciliation. This task is discussed below.

5.4.3 Reconciliation of Political Interest Groups

Reconciliation, like eschatology, permeates the theology of Karl Barth, reaching its climax in CD IV, 2. The theological praxis of the doctrine of reconciliation helped Barth a lot just after the Second World War when Germany was shunned by the international community and divided from within. Barth worked relentlessly to reconcile Germans among themselves and to discourage the "denazification" process referred to in

chapter 3. After the Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt, Barth continued to work for Germany to be accepted by the international community and by the World Council of Churches (Busch, 1976; Helmreich, 1979). Barth's doctrine of reconciliation should be able to help us in South Africa if we make it central to our life. For Barth, Jesus Christ became a substitute for us and, as a result, restitution has been made and ties between us and God have been restored.

Barth (CD II, 1:397) says that reconciliation should become central to our lives because

... the whole of the New Testament is concerned with this matter.

He maintains that divine revelation is God revealing himself as a God reconciling the world to himself. By the same token, and in gratitude, people should be reconciled to one another.

Among whites, there are on the one hand those who say there cannot be any share of power with blacks and therefore apartheid should be rigidly applied. These whites, as indicated in chapter 4 claim that the bigger portion of this land than belongs to them, for when they arrived here the portion in question was unoccupied. Political parties such as the Herstigte Nasionale Party, Boerestaat Party and the

Konserwatiewe Party are the political homes of such people. So are the movements such as Blanke Bevrydingsbeweging and Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging. On the other hand, there are those in the National Party and the Democratic Party who accept the view that South Africa belongs to all South Africans, black and white. Their concern is how political power would be shared by both blacks and whites without one race dominating the other, and how the land could be utilised to the benefit of all.

Black oriented political organisations hold different views about the Constitutional future of South Africa. On the one hand, there are organisations such as the PAC, AZAPO, which are bent on overthrowing the racist government. The ANC, SACP, and UDF seems to be changing their position on overthrowing the government in favour of some kind of a political settlement with the white minority government. They do however, insist on an election of a Constituent assembly that would write a new constitution for a post-apartheid State. They argue that the land was stolen from blacks. The right and sensible thing for whites to do is to transfer political power and return the land to blacks. The ugly and brutal past perpetrated by whites, is not necessarily brushed aside but would play an important role when the matter of redress and compensation is discussed. The permanence of whites, especially the Afrikaner, is taken

for a fact. Three-and-half centuries of sojourn in this country, for most whites, seems to have severed familial ties with countries such as Holland and France. Whites have, during these many years, contributed a lot to the building up of the country. Furthermore, a future democratically elected government will still need their know-how and expertise, in the quest for good government and an economically strong administration.

The Church and other faiths should enter the debate without taking sides with any of the political parties. Perhaps, for strategic reasons, as an initial step, the white component of the Church should reconcile the warring white political parties. The black component of the Church must do likewise. The Church must impress upon all parties that political differences need not result in enmity. Major religions in South Africa such as Islam and Judaism, as liberation faiths, should also be engaged in the reconciliation process. In fact, differences of opinion are a good ingredient of democracy. South Africa, like many countries in the West, will need critical and creative opposition. Religion in general and the Church in particular may offer this opposition.

The initial success of reconciliation in South Africa will come with the installation of a legitimate government. It is that government that should seriously look into the whole question of redress of past wrongs and injustices in the manner that is equitable and acceptable to all South Africans. Such an exercise would include fulfilment of the requirements of the Sabbatical Year as prescribed by Leviticus 25. The requirements and their concretisation for South Africa are outlined below.

5.4.4 Practice of the Sabbatical Year

The requirements of the Sabbatical Year are prescribed in Leviticus 25. The aristocracy of Israel and the wealthy did not accept this practice and according to Yoder (1970) all kinds of Mechanisms were devised in order to undermine the impact intended by the Sabbatical Year. In the spirit of the Sabbatical Year the Servant of Jahweh says in Isaiah 61:1-2 that he has been set aside to liberate the oppressed, release the prisoners and declare the Sabbatical Year, among many other functions. He would be able to do these things because the Spirit of the Lord God is upon him. Jesus Christ says in his first sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19), that in him the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-2 has been fulfilled. Jesus attributes his capability also to the Spirit of God. It has been noted also that Joel 2 prophesied about the outpouring

of the Spirit of God on all flesh, the Spirit that would enable people to see visions of the future and have constructive dreams that would give them hope for, and in, the future. According to the Apostle Peter (Acts 2:17-21), the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was the fulfilment of Joel 2.

Although Karl Barth did not write much on the practice of the Sabbatical Year and although the matter does not seem to have been discussed when a postwar Germany was being constructed in respect of the dispossessed Jews and opponents of National Socialism we have something to go by when we make demands for restitution and restoration in the apartheid State. The aim of the Sabbatical Year, according to Barth, is the correction of imbalances. For example, Israelites are forbidden to till the soil every seventh year, so as to give it time to revitalise itself. Again, creditors are obliged to write off debts against their debtors every seventh year; even slaves are supposed to be set free and by so doing regain their humanity. Furthermore - the most painful of the requirements to the rich - the seventh year demands the redistribution of material goods and resources (CD III, 2:456-457). Many whites have come to accept that blacks have to be politically accommodated in South Africa. They are even prepared to tithe towards welfare and charity. But heads are shaken in disbelief when one confronts them with the concept of

redistribution of wealth and natural resources. In South Africa, the question of land and resources looms large when we speak of redistribution. More than any other of the requirements of the Sabbatical Year, this one will definitely cause problems for the Church and the South African population at large. Political empowerment should go hand-in-hand with economic empowerment. Whites have to settle with the idea of wealth redistribution as a means of returning what is not theirs and giving all South African opportunity for starting afresh on equal footing. As Barth (CD III, 2:456) says, the aim of the Sabbatical Year was "a general liberation and restitution".

According to the ANC Constitutional Guidelines adopted in Harare at the beginning of 1990, issued by the Transvaal Indian Congress,

Under the conditions of contemporary South Africa, 87% of the land and 95% of the instruments of production are in the hands of the ruling class, which is drawn solely from the white community.

The ANC speaks of socialism and nationalisation and almost all whites and many black capitalists become really worried. This redistribution of wealth is regarded by the affected rich people as a "confiscatory economic" policy. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is not even retributory. It is compensatory. It is aimed at rectifying the imbalances

created since 1652. Socialism according to Barth is aimed at removing the workers from the periphery of decision-making where capitalism has placed them, to the centre of the stage with management (Hunsinger, 1976). This means basically that the workers are entitled to have a say in the production of goods and products which they manufacture, by participating in decision-making process and control of the means of production. The Freedom Charter, as reprinted in Nolan (1988:222) is unambiguous when it says,

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people.

Churches should take up their debate at grassroots levels - congregations, parishes, synods and dioceses. Forms of nationalisation, an aspect of socialism, are aimed at the empowerment of the economically powerless, and the upliftment of the socially undertrodden. For example, many blacks in South Africa are not poor because they are workshy. Farmers, mining magnates and industrialists could not have accumulated so much wealth by themselves. Poverty in South Africa is politically caused and the solution lies in the political arena. Economic and financial institutions must be opened to all South Africans. A future democratically elected government should impose a minimum living wage scale on all categories of the work force, including job securities and pension benefits. Any worker, from a kitchen maid and a

garden worker, to the mine and factory worker, must be well catered for. A broad-based form of taxation that would unfortunately hurt the upper income group people will definitely soothe, and, with the passage of time, heal the socio-economic wounds inflicted by apartheid over the years. Capitalism, that is euphemistically called "free enterprise" as Itumeleng Mosala remarks in his essay written in Tlhagale & Mosala (1986:120-128), wherever and whenever it was practised, has produced beggars and objects of charity. We should search for a socio-economic system that would see to it that,

No more shall idle bellies squander
 What industrious hands have earned.
 [Poem by Heinrich Heine, quoted by Barth
 in Hunsinger (1976:25)]

It is just a pity that the Nationalist government is busy privatising people's institutions such as Education, Health, Telecommunications and Transport. One can assure this government that in as much as there is a privatisation minister, in future there would be a nationalisation minister. People who buy stocks and shares and accept proxy in such institutions should be warned.

South Africans must demand now the writing of a new Constitution. But they must be given the opportunity and right to choose those who would write the Constitution.

Should the ANC be given the mandate to write a new Constitution? If "yes", who should say that, if it does not come as a mandate from the people? Should the HNP be denied the right to write a new Constitution? If the answer is "no", who should deny the HNP the opportunity, other than the people? To use the popular cliché, without popular elections, how are we going to "separate men from the boys"?

Reconciliation, understood largely in terms of the Sabbatical Year, is genuine. There are nevertheless other important elements that should be taken into account. Reconciliation means not only to forgive but also to forget. Reconciliation bears no grudge. It does not refer one to one's sins, if they have been forgiven. In the South African context, that would mean stopping calling each other names such as "kaffirs" and "coolies". South Africa will have to get a new African name and a new flag. The PAC and AZAPO call South Africa "Azania" a name whose acceptability or unacceptability would be subject to discussion by South Africans. Names of places and symbols that remind of our shameful colonial past have to be changed, such as Piet Retief and Louis Trichardt. Events such as Blood River Battle should be assigned new content in the spirit of reconciliation. Jan van Riebeeck's head on our currency and of other apartheid rulers should be replaced by other symbols such as South Africa's popular totems, for example, an elephant, a lion, a crocodile, a

springbok, a reed, and protea. There are certain black localities whose names have been changed by the colonial rulers and these have to revert to their traditional names. In Natal, for example, Pietermaritzburg should revert to Mgungundlovu, Durban to Thekwini, Stanger to Dukuza. In the Cape, Table Mountain and Cape Town should be renamed after the Khoi and Kimberly and Uppington should be renamed after the San and so on. Khoisan people should be given an option to regroup within the borders of South Africa. Citizens of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC) are dissatisfied about their being stripped of the South African citizenship.

A future government should not forget the rights of the former British Protectorates. This exercise will necessarily entail a review of post-colonial boundaries. One is not convinced that these countries, through the customs union and other economic arrangements, are receiving what is due to them. For example, that Lesotho today is a mountainous kingdom is the result of colonial imperialism and aggression as indicated in chapter 4. The Basotho kingdom included, before the arrival of the British rule and the beginning of the Great Trek, places such as Harrismith, Winburg, Bloemfontein and indeed, the whole of the so-called Qwaqwa homeland (Lodge, 1983; Motsoko, 1984; Davenport, 1987; Loubser, 1987). Namibians must surely have Walvis Bay

returned to them as soon as possible. The practice of the Sabbatical Year must be extended to the people of these neighbouring countries as well. We must, as Barth (CD III, 2:457) says when describing the aim of the Sabbatical Year,

... issue in a year of welcome festivity,
liberation and restitution,

even to the people of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. However this programme is to be handled, one would leave it to the politicians as experts in political discourse. These issues are to be tackled by a future government. However, churches have to be informed so as to enlighten and prepare their congregants for a new dispensation. The Church as indicated in chapter 4 should not, as in the past, waste its prophetic utterances on the government. People who matter most are the congregants. Some advice could be directed at the political rulers; the rest should be targeted at the white voters.

5.4.5 Construction of a New South African State

One has repeatedly argued for an alternative State for South Africa without spelling out the specifics. The time has now come for one to discuss some of the most important and crucial components of the envisaged State for our country. One turns now to this task, which is the penultimate task of

the study. Most people would agree that the envisaged State for South Africa should comprise, at least, universal suffrage, regular elections, a multiparty system, a justiciable bill of rights (although a Constitution may be democratic without a bill of rights) and an independent judiciary. This aspect of the construction of a new State belongs to political scientists and political participants. Nonetheless, one would like to address this issue theologically from the viewpoint of Barth.

5.4.5.1 An Antiracist and Antisexist State

Apartheid like National Socialism is a racist ideology that cannot be allowed in the construction of a new State in South Africa in the light of Barth's rejection of anti-Semitism discussed in chapter 3. Blacks are not treated as human beings in whom the image of God is also embedded. Chapter 3 describes many laws that were enacted and practised by National Socialists against the Jews. Jews were excluded from public facilities, just as blacks are. Barth did not attack anti-Semitism because he wanted to ignore the fact that Jews are genetically and culturally different from Germans so also, racial and tribal differences of South Africa's people cannot simply be ignored. Barth appealed to the developing of one German nationalism that would comprise all people who regarded themselves as Germans without

considerations of race (Barth, 1938, 1939). A new State that should be constructed, must not take race as a point of departure because racism perpetuates racialistic and tribalistic conflicts. We need a common patriotism in a new South Africa.

Barth did not actually address the issue of sexism, and this is one of Barth's serious flaws. Women were just as oppressed and exploited by the male-dominated society as workers were by employers. Barth (CD III, 4:153-154) nonetheless admits that the demands raised by the feminist movement are pressing. He moves from the premise that men and women complement one another and are all created in the likeness of God. His worry is only when women wish to live as men and others changing even their sexes by being operated on. Barth (CD III, 4:155) exhorts us as follows:

The question what specific activity woman will claim and make her even as a woman ought certainly to be posed in each particular case as it arises, not in the light of traditional preconceptions, but honestly in relation to what is aimed at in the future.

Women also stand under the freedom of the Word and are therefore, free creative agents in God's creation as men are. In South Africa, the position has been that whites dominated blacks. Men, both black and white, dominated women. Women are still being dominated by men. Women of both races are

still denied certain jobs, paid lower salaries and wages than their male counterparts when doing similar jobs, and so on. As race should not become a factor in the construction of a new South Africa, so also, sex should not become one. Women have largely been excluded from spheres of power and executive authority in the male-dominated society. Women have since come up against this tendency and they demand meaningful participation in society and they demand that past injustices be redressed through the process of affirmative action. Men should take this seriously in the writing of a post-apartheid Constitution.

5.4.5.2 A Democratic State

Politically, a multiparty system is preferable to a one-party system. Many one-party States tend to breed dictators, despots and totalitarian governments. An official opposition and other political parties as well as extra-parliamentary pressure groups, are good components of a sound democracy. The government of the day would be kept on its toes. Regular elections and opinion polls gauge the legitimacy of a government.

In chapter 3, Barth was faced with many Germans who venerated Hitler. The National Socialist State was totalitarian in the sense that Hitler ruled Germans and the Jews with the might

of divinity. Hitler brooked no opposition from any quarter. South Africa is a multiparty State that is not democratic because blacks are excluded from political power. Whites have monopoly over political and economic power. Among the white voters, the National Party has been in power since 1948. The National Party has a comfortable majority and at present does not need a coalition with any party to rule South Africa. Virtually all the Bills that were read in parliament were passed as Acts. South Africa has been practically a one-party State since 1948. But as one argued in chapter 4, South Africa is not a totalitarian State but an autocratic one. Barth does not come out clearly for a one-party State or multiparty State. But considering his experiences with National Socialism and communism one would assume that he would be in favour of a multiparty State. For example, after the Second World War, Barth called for discussions among political rivals because as far as he was concerned, Germany needed a system to avoid a party or a leader becoming an object of worship. Surely a multiparty democracy would ensure that the First Commandment is not transgressed, as there would be regular elections.

The same should apply here in South Africa. Apartheid was venerated to the point of being worshipped by whites. In the construction of a democratic South Africa, even if a particular party has popular support, all political parties

should be allowed to operate freely. No single party, even as government of the day, should consider itself as a messiah of the people and therefore indispensable. Perhaps one should mention that the multiparty drive in South Africa is very strong. South Africa has no history of democracy and as a result, education in multiparty democracy is considered a top priority. In the short term, the aim is to tutor political organisations to tolerate one another and appreciate one another's viewpoints and ideological emphases.

Oscar Dhlomo, INKATHA's former General Secretary, is heading an Institute for Multiparty Democracy in South Africa. F. van Zyl Slabbert before him, has been busy through his Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa (IDASA) to educate South Africans in democracy. Such efforts need the support of all South Africans. Raising the level of political literacy in South Africa, is a pressing priority.

5.4.5.3 A Workers' State

In a workers' State, the workers' indispensability in the economy of a country should be acknowledged by protecting the rights of workers. Thus is qualitatively different from the dictatorship of the proletariat. As indicated in chapter 2, Barth became worried about the plight of workers, when he entered into the parish ministry. In Geneva, Barth became

concerned about the socio-economic conditions of workers but was utterly frustrated by their condition when he went to Safenwil. The Hochuli and Hüsey families were exploiting workers in their employ (Busch, 1976; Smart, 1964). For him charity was not sufficient. Barth argues in Hunsinger (1976) that capitalism has to be replaced by socialism. At that stage Barth regarded socialism as the Kingdom of God. But later he regarded socialism as the closest thing to the Kingdom of God. The analogy was later dropped. He did not only lecture on socialism, but also helped to form trade unions (Smart, 1964). Workers and peasants have had tough times since time immemorial. Chapter 4 discusses the plight of blacks as workers. A systematic approach to exclude blacks from decision-making in the State and economy was adopted. Certain jobs, especially in the mines, were reserved for whites and, by 1912, it had become illegal for blacks to strike. Nonracial trade unions were outlawed and formation of black trade unions was prohibited. Black trade unions were legalised only in 1979. The economy of the country still depends on black labour. A new South Africa must take this into consideration. It should also remember that workers in the apartheid South Africa have suffered a lot and that compensation in one form or another would be appropriate.

Sufficient attention must be given to workers such as encouraging formation of trade unions that are independent of the government and employers, improving working conditions and paying living wages and salaries. This task may not be left to individual employers. It must be entrenched in a democratic Constitution. The economy of the country cannot be efficiently run if the workers are not happy and content. We can approximate God's Kingdom in South Africa by taking care of God's downtrodden (Barth) and the crossbearers (Mofokeng, 1983). One would not really call for socialism as Barth did in Safenwil because today we have several options, and a combination of options, that work for a fair distribution of wealth. But the apartheid option cannot work; it has failed dismally.

5.4.5.4 A Welfare State

As was indicated in chapters 2 and 3, Barth's early theology on the State was concerned with socialism and capitalism, and the position of workers therein. Yet the idea of a welfare State came to the fore after the Second World War. He was involved, in cooperation with the Church in Germany, in the reconstruction of the new State. People had been left homeless and they had to be resettled. People had been impoverished and they had to be fed and clothed. People had gone missing and they had to be traced. There were many more

projects of a socio-economic nature that had to be undertaken (Busch 1976). Barth's postwar engagements and writings such as CD IV, 1 and IV, 2 are activities of compassion with the victims of the war and solidarity with Germany. God's compassion for and solidarity with the world manifested itself through the Incarnation, and the death of Jesus Christ. The Resurrection became a source of hope that Germany, founded on a new foundation, would be raised to new life. We saw in the second half of 1989 the fall of the Berlin wall and today Germany is "tatsächlich wieder DEUTSCHLAND".

Barth would argue that the poor who are poor because of apartheid should be compensated and the poor who are poor because of misfortune of some kind or another, such as the physically handicapped, senior citizens and orphans, should be provided for by a welfare State. Old age homes, child-care centres have to be upgraded and increased. Pensioners should be treated with more dignity than is the case now. They should be given for example, living pensions and more privileges and concessions. A future South Africa should take care of and assist work seekers. Every person is entitled to a roof over his or her head. Housing backlog should be addressed. The list is inexhaustible. In order to fulfil this mission, a new State should create and generate wealth. This wealth must be distributed as it is being

created. One does not subscribe to the view that wealth must first be accumulated before it can be distributed. There is no sense in becoming politically free without being also economically strong. One of the placards waved in former East Germany, when the Berlin wall was being demolished, expresses one's conviction namely, "Freiheit und Wohlstand". Freedom and prosperity are two sides of the same coin. A welfare State should become a State in which compassion, righteousness and love abound.

5.5. The Task of the Church

The final task of this study is to determine, as far as it is possible, the role the Church can play to ensure and sustain good government in our country.

This whole study is about Barth's understanding of the role of the Church in society. To recapitulate, Barth's understanding is that the Church and State have a christological basis. In terms of Church and State relations, the two institutions should find a way of coexistence because they both share a common centre, Jesus Christ. The State was not instituted as the result of sin. It is part and parcel of God's grace in the ordering of his creation and building of structures. As we have indicated, Barth says emphatically that the State belongs to the second article of the Apostles'

Creed. The Apostolic tradition implores the Church to pray for all State rulers, pay its taxes to the State, assist the State through its prophetic and priestly ministry and so on. The State is entitled to such things from the Church and the State will receive the same as long as the State does not trample on the rights and privileges of the Church. The State's functions are exclusively temporal and finite. The spiritual sphere belongs to God and to him alone. Barth cannot overemphasise the point that the Church cannot become the State and vice versa. The Church should contribute to the functioning of the State by releasing Christians to serve in it (Barth, 1937, 1938, 1954, 1963b, 1968). In a post-apartheid South Africa, the Church will have to continue guarding against excesses that may be perpetrated by a democratically elected government. The State should accept the bona fides of the Church and should enable the Church to perform its tasks. The Church should continue praying for rulers as demanded by the Apostolic teaching. Both institutions will need each other.

In our context, the Church should take note of the following, among many other things:

- (a) The Church as an institution, should not become an interested party in the writing of a new Constitution. This approach will discourage, along Barth's line of

thinking, the formation of a Christian political party (Busch, 1976; Smart, 1964). What the Church in South Africa should do is to influence the direction of the construction process. Barth became, later, more and more politically involved in direct party politics, a move that made him unpopular in Germany. As indicated in chapter 3, the Church in Germany was dissatisfied with this stance and to demonstrate their disapproval, Christians did not re-elect Gustav Heinemann as president of the Synod in 1955; and Martin Niemöller lost his seat on the Church Council (Spotts, 1973). The impression that the SACC is pro-ANC for example, should be corrected and be seen to have been corrected. The Church should be in the forefront of the struggle against apartheid and nevertheless should remain nonaligned in order for it to play the reconciliatory role for which it was called.

- (b) A new State that would be constructed would need the services of the Church. The Church should, at the outset, sound a prophetic warning to the new State. In spite of the popularity and legitimacy that it may have, it should not put on the mantle of a messiah. The Church should see to it that the Constitution is not just a document, but should ensure that it will be implemented. It must become the champion of minorities,

they be, cultural, religious, political or ideological. The Church should guard against a democratically elected government in South Africa sacralising itself and forcing, covertly or overtly its citizens to worship it. Barth would rise against such a government.

- (c) One has remarked about the issues of poverty, displacement and so on. The Church in the new Germany engaged itself in relief work thanks to Barth and others such as Niemöller. Even today the Church in Germany owns and manages welfare organisations such as orphanages and old age homes as well kindergartens. Christians in South Africa and indeed, the whole population should help a new State with financial and material resources to improve the conditions of the poor and the marginalised. Barth made use of many forums such as the WCC to put Germany's plight under the international spotlight apart from writing letters to heads of governments. Barth (1968:169-172) believes that it is only the Church as an institution that is capable of becoming the hub of compassion, justice and love.

5.6 CONCLUSION

One believes that in South Africa, we are at a threshold of a new and liberated future. God has seen our affliction and

oppression, and has heard our cry for liberation (Exodus 3:7). We are going to be free indeed. One assumes that Myataza (1990) prays on behalf of all South Africans in his song when he says:

"May'buye iAfrika
May'buye ngothando
May'buye iAfrika
May'buye ngoxolo"
(mine emphases)

The message and spirit of the song is that Africans in general, and all South Africans in particular, should cooperate in working for a more just dispensation in love (ngothando) and peace (ngoxolo).

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