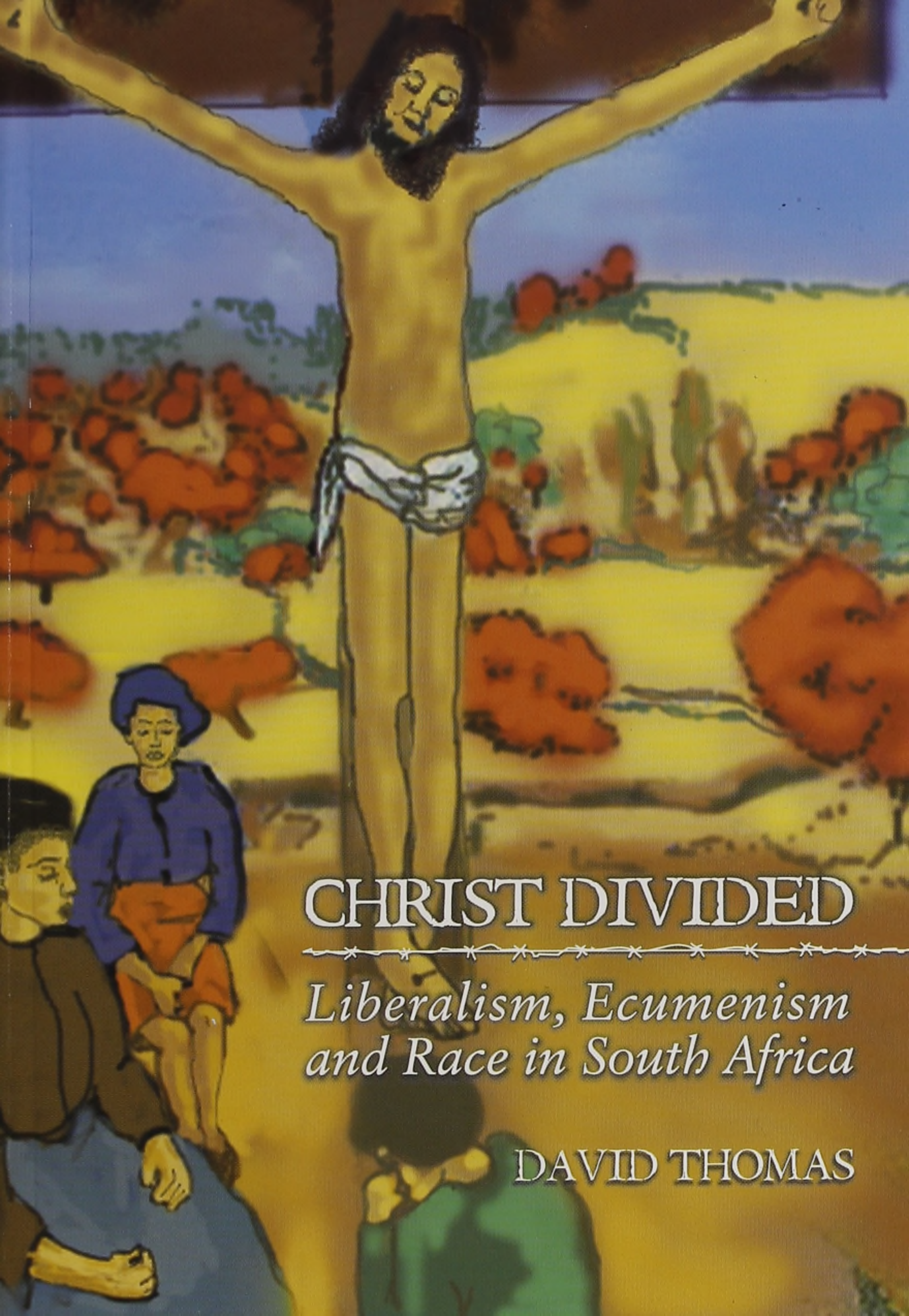

CHRIST DIVIDED

Liberalism, Ecumenism and Race in South Africa

DAVID THOMAS

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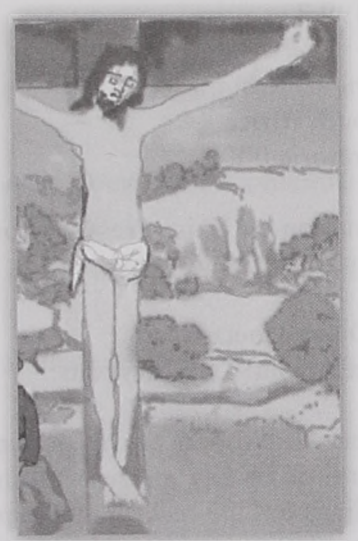

DAVID THOMAS

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRETORIA

To my parents Garrett and Evelyn, good and faithful servants of their Christ, and also to Professor David Bosch, outstanding Christian and pre-eminent scholar.

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First edition, first impression

ISBN 1 86888 199 7

Published by Unisa Press
University of South Africa
P O Box 392, Pretoria 0003

Electronic origination by Unisa Press, Pretoria
Printed by Interpak Books

House editor: Diana Coetzee
Cover design and layout: Lien Strydom

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Photograph
Back cover: Margery Hystek

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ultimate reason for this book being published is the lifework of Nelson Mandela. The epoch-making changes in South Africa during the 1990s – due above all to his courage and vision, among other things – set off a chain of events in the academic world which led to the manuscript being placed before, and finally being accepted by, the Publications Committee of the University of South Africa (Unisa). In that process, Professor Greg Cuthbertson of the History Department of Unisa played a crucial role and profound thanks are due to him and his wife, Mary-Lynne Suttie, for their kindly help, support and encouragement. That so fine a scholar as Gregor Cuthbertson thought my work worth publishing gave me the confidence to believe that it could add something of significance to the literature in the field which it covers. Professor Klippies Kritizinger of the Theology Faculty was also enormously kind and helpful. My admiration for him and his work is unbounded. I need to say a word of thanks to my brother Edward, currently living in Luxembourg, with whom I disagree strongly on just about every question of philosophy and politics. He has always been willing to overlook what in his eyes are my ideological miscreancies and it was due to him that contacts were initially set up between myself and Professor

Cuthbertson. Thanks also to my partner, Barbara Peters, one of the fairest dinkum Australians, who has always not only patiently tolerated my lifelong devotion to South Africa, but also some fairly long absences from Sydney necessitated by the publication process. She proved of enormous practical help when in the midst of a crisis situation, she sent the entire manuscript from Sydney on an unfamiliar e-mail system, to Unisa in Pretoria. Appreciation and thanks also go to the staff of the Publications Section of Unisa who have always gone out of their way cheerfully to meet the demands to the strange stranger, both when he blew in and out of their offices and also when he was plaguing them with e-mails from Sydney. I trust that those who consult this work will find as much challenge and stimulus in the reading of it as I did in the writing.

David Thomas
Sydney, Australia
June 2002.

ABBREVIATIONS

AACC	All-Africa Conference of Churches
AIC	Africa Initiated Church
AICA	African Independent Churches Association
ANC	African National Congress
Azapo	Azanian People's Organisation
BCC	British Council of Churches
BPC	Bantu Presbyterian Church
CCQ	Christian Council Quarterly
CCSA	Christian Council of South Africa
CI	Christian Institute
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CPSA	Church of the Province of South Africa
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Envangelism
FELCSA	Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in South Africa
GMC	General Missionary Council
ICT	Institute for Contextual Theology
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union
IMC	International Missionary Council
IRM	*International Review of Missions*
LMS	London Missionary Society
NG	Nederduitse Gereformeerde
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGKA	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika
NHK	Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk
NGSK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
PCSA	Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
PFP	Progressive Federal Party
RCA	Reformed Church in Africa
SABRA	South African Bureau of Racial Affairs
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations

SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SAP	South African Party
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SCA	Students' Christian Association
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
SPROCAS	Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society
UCM	University Christian Movement
USPG	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC	World Council of Churches
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

Christian Conquest, Christian Division in South Africa

In 1820, the Methodist missionary William Shaw wrote to his London committee that there was only one mission station between his place of residence and the northern extremity of the Red Sea. There were 'no people professedly Christian, with the exception of those in Abyssinia'.[1] At that time Shaw was living about 40 km south of Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, and as his words indicated, Christianity was then a very minor religion in sub-Saharan Africa, practised mainly by white settlers on the southern margins of the continent.

Had he been able to enter a time capsule and travel into the future, Shaw would no doubt have been gratified by the progress of Christianity in Southern Africa, even during his lifetime. By 1850 12 mission societies were active in the region; by 1900 the number had risen to 30.[2] Thereafter, their numbers grew at such a pace that some missionaries began to see this as too much of a good thing. 'When I came here in 1905 I was happy to get acquainted with every new society, thinking the more of these there are the better,' the Rev J Sandstrom told the General Missionary Conference in 1921. 'Today, having suffered more severely every new year from rivalry, overlapping and false competition . . .

I wish that God would put half of us in a big aeroplane and drive us to Central Africa.'[3] However much people like Sandstrom deplored the exploding number of mission societies, Christian profession expanded enormously among the African population in the mid-twentieth century.

The 1946 census showed that the Christian proportion of the population had passed 50 per cent and the growth continued unabated until 1970 as the figures set out in Table 1 show:

TABLE 1: Christian population 1946 to 1970

Year	Christian percentage of African population	Christian percentage of white population	Christian percentage of total population
1946	52	94	63
1960	67	97	74
1970	71	93	75

Thus, 150 years after Shaw had penned his letter, the advance of Christianity in South Africa had been spectacular, particularly when compared with Asian mission fields such as India, China and Japan where it made much less headway against the ancient and entrenched religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. However, perhaps even more significant than this numerical advance was that after 150 years, black[4] Christians, whose forebears had been the object of missionary work, had finally broken free of that chrysalis, and were throwing off white tutelage and dominance. They were moving into leadership positions in the churches, and taking control of their direction and destiny. Their quest for black ecclesiastical selfhood would also have an important effect on the quest to challenge, and eventually defeat, the political system of apartheid (Afrikaans for 'segregation').

This movement can best be appreciated by looking at the way the membership of the leading ecumenical organisation at that time, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), was changing. Developments in South Africa, in which autonomous black churches were emerging to replace the work of mission societies, were far advanced by 1970. It was over the next five years, however, that those developments came to their full fruition. As is detailed later in this work, the significance of the early 1970s in this regard was most clearly encapsulated by the move into full membership of the council by the black Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA) ('Dutch Reformed Church in Africa') in 1975. That signalled that not only had the composition of the Council altered radically, but that it was also ready to move in bold new ideological directions. It is for this reason that 1975 has been chosen as the 'cut-off date' for this work, although the momentous developments in the last 25 years of the twentieth century are touched on in the last chapter.

How would one account to William Shaw for the spread of Christianity in South Africa? No doubt he, along with many modern scholars, would attribute it to the work of missionaries. By the end of the nineteenth century, South Africa had become one of the most intensively worked mission fields anywhere in the world.[5] However, it was not the plethora of missions which made the major contribution to the expansion of Christianity evident in the figures as cited in Table 1. This is indicated by the fact that the greatest advance of Christianity did not happen during the 'great century of missions' which very roughly coincided with the nineteenth century. During that era, Christianity grew relatively slowly; the 1921 census showed that only about a third of the black population had become Christians by that date. It was over the next 50 years when missions had lost their drive for converting the 'heathen' and were in decline, that the Christian proportion of the black population leapt from 33 to 75 per cent.

Much more important to the growth of Christianity than the missions were the activities of locally based churches; both those of the 'mainline' variety and also the enormous number of 'African Independent' or 'Africa Initiated Churches' (AICs) which emerged as breakaway offshoots of mission societies and major denominations from the late nineteenth century onwards. The mainline denominations, particularly the Anglican and Methodist Churches, as well as the Roman Catholic Church and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), had two major advantages over the mission societies. Firstly, as is detailed in Chapter Two, they were able to deploy much larger resources of personnel and finance. Secondly, they worked on a countrywide basis. Crucially, this enabled them to be active in the burgeoning urban centres, which grew rapidly after the discovery of diamonds and gold, and as a result of concomitant industrialisation. Another major factor accounting for the success of these churches was their dominance of education, which lasted for over a century and which was only brought to an end when the State took it over in 1954. Schools were an extremely effective tool for expanding church membership, and working out of this and a multiplicity of other bases, the churches were able to set in motion a 'snowball effect' of conversion, in which local indigenous people themselves played a major role. An anecdote from the early twentieth century serves to illustrate the point. Canon E Farmer of the Church of the Province of South Africa (CPSA) reported that when he set about organising theological training for Africans in the Transvaal, he found some 60 African men who had been converted to Christianity while working as migrant labourers in urban areas. On returning to their homes, 'instead of falling away, as might have been expected, without a thought of pay . . . they set to work to preach the Gospel to their fellow creatures'.[6]

With nothing like as large resources or as many schools, the mission societies tended to work on a more limited geographical basis, and to focus on rural areas. The AICs, of course, had even fewer financial resources, but they benefited from the spread of the mainline churches, which prepared a seedbed of Christian belief and organisation, particularly in urban areas. This enabled the AICs to sprout and flourish widely, particularly after industralisation began to erode the social cohesion provided by tribal structures. Those who found the mainline churches and missions unsatisfying and stultifying could find in the AICs a sense of belonging they had lost as older traditional societies crumbled both in urban and rural areas. The number of AICs proliferated enormously across the country, so that what these churches lacked in financial resources, they more than made up for in their sheer numbers. Thus this movement too was operating from a multiplicity of bases.

That churches rather than missions dominated the South African mission field is a point of major importance. Had this not been the case, the advance of Christianity would probably have been much slower. The domination of the churches set the country apart from mission fields in most other parts of the world and, as will be pointed out, from the missionary movement as a whole. Moreover, it is further argued in this study that the dominance of churches in the South African situation was to have profound consequences for patterns of race relations, not only in the churches, but also in the broader political sphere.

Christ divided

While Shaw might have been gratified that efforts to bring Christ to South Africa had been so successful, he might have been unsettled to find that by the mid-twentieth century Christ was deeply and bitterly divided between opposing blocs of Christians. Those divisions were not based on the old theological and doctrinal divisions of Europe and North America (although they certainly were present). Here the issue centred on the differing responses of missions and churches to a simple yet fundamental question: What is the best, the most 'Christian', way of dealing with racial and cultural differences among believers? The answer of one group of Christians was that while these differences were real, none the less they needed to be subordinated to the broader unity proclaimed by St Paul when he said: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free, for all are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:11). This theology was realised in unitary church structures which, in theory, were colour-blind and did not take account of racial difference. This may be described as the integrationist or assimilationist position. In contrast, those who held the opposite position believed that ethnic difference had been ordained by God and should therefore be hallowed not only on theological grounds, but also needed to be given concrete, structural expression. In terms of this theology, churches were segregated on racial and ethnic lines and, it is argued by some scholars such as Kinghorn, white politicians took a lead from this model when they created the apartheid State. Thus this can be described as the *segregationist* or as the *apartheid* position.

These are very broad categorisations and each contains within itself many permutations and qualifications. For instance, a major mission theology, which went under the name of the 'three-self formula' and which originated in Britain and the United States of America (USA) during the nineteenth century, promoted the planting of separate ethnic churches not for theological but for purely pragmatic reasons. That approach could not in fairness be described as supporting an ideologically segregationist position, although it did give comfort to more overt supporters of apartheid during the twentieth century. Then there is the difficulty of slotting the AICs into either of the two positions as discussed later. These were exclusively black churches, but again, they could hardly be described as supporters of segregation, let alone apartheid.

In theory, neither the adherents to the integrationist/assimilationist nor the segregationist/apartheid theologies would have claimed their positions to be absolute. Those of the integrationist persuasion would not have denied either the existence or the importance of cultural and ethnic difference, and those in the segregationist camp would not deny the need for an overarching unity among Christians. None the less, the seemingly life-and-death nature of the struggle which developed between them tended to make the partisans of both sides absolutise their positions and to accuse each other not only of theological error, but, in time, of actual heresy.

This study, it needs to be said at the outset, does not attempt to be a comprehensive history of Christianity in South Africa. Instead, it focuses on that group of churches which adopted the integrationist/assimilationist position and which came to be comprehended in the term *liberalism*. As is explained in Chapter Three, liberalism in this sense applied to issues concerning race relations and was seen to be the opposite pole to racial segregation or as it later became known, as apartheid. However, the liberalism of these churches was also strongly associated with a philosophy favouring racial assimilation which held up white, Western culture as an ideal type of 'civilisation' to which people of all other cultures were expected to aspire and attain. The investigation and dissection of this brand of liberalism is, as its title suggests, a major objective of this book.

That issue is dealt with mostly on an institutional level. Little attempt is made to delve into personal and individual histories or even the collective history of people at the grass-roots level of the churches and it must be frankly admitted this constitutes a lack. It can only be pointed out to future scholars that an investigation of the thinking and theologies of ordinary members of churches constitutes a rich and colourful tapestry waiting to be woven. This has already been done to some extent for the members of the AICs and the fascination of their stories has already produced a vast corpus of literature. However, although seemingly less 'romantic', the stories of members of the mainline churches should be no less fascinating because here can be tested whether the meta-Christian narrative propounded by these churches has indeed fundamentally changed the age-old spiritualities of Africa or whether it has been merely a 'berg wind', forcing the grasses of the plains to bow before it, only for them to spring back again once its energy is expended.

The Ecumenical Bloc and liberalism

Table 2 sets out the names of the churches which came to be identified with the liberal position. They are also often comprehended under the collective title of the *English-speaking churches,* since the most prominent among them sprang from the English-speaking, Protestant British Isles. The largest of these were the Methodist and the Anglican CPSA, while the much smaller Presbyterian Church and the Congregational Union of Southern Africa were also of British origin. However, to describe all churches in this grouping as English-speaking would be a misnomer, because a good number of them originated in Continental European mission societies. The earliest of these was that of the Moravians whose activities began in the eighteenth century and who, in time, founded two local Moravian churches, those of the Eastern and Western Cape. Other Continental missions included the Rhenish Mission which established itself in South Africa in 1829, the Berlin Mission (1834) and the Hermannsburg Mission (1854). Between them they founded the four Lutheran churches specified in Table 2, while the Tsonga Presbyterian Church was founded by the Swiss Reformed Mission. None of these missions and churches had any white membership apart from German and French-speaking missionaries. Moreover, while English was the official language and lingua franca of those churches that originated in Britain, it was not the home language of the great majority of their members, who were black.

Rather than language, it is suggested, a more important distinguishing characteristic of these churches is that they subscribed

TABLE 2: *Membership of the South African Council of Churches, 1975*

Black churches founded by mission societies	African independent churches	Multiracial with a black majority	Multiracial with a white majority	White churches	Mission societies
Bantu Presbyterian Church	National Baptist Church	Church of the Province of South Africa	Presbyterian Church of South Afica	Baptist Union*	Paris Evangelical Mission
Evangelical Lutheran Church Cape/Orange	African Baptist Church	Methodist Church of South Afica	Salvation Army	Evangelical Lutheran (Transvaal)*	
Evangelical Lutheran Church South Eastern Region	African Methodist Episcopal Church	United Congregational Church of South Afica	Society of Friends (Quakers)		
Evangelical Lutheran Church Transvaal		Roman Catholic*			
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tswana Region					
Moravian Church Eastern Cape					
Moravian Church Western Cape					
Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika					
Tsonga Presbyterian					
United Methodist					
United Evangelical Lutheran Church of South West Afica*					

Key: * These were observer member churches which while having full rights of participation and speech in the organisation, did not have voting rights on its committees or national conference

to, and were officially associated with, the ecumenical movements, both on a local level and in the international sphere. Thus the collective term I have chosen to apply to these churches is the *Ecumenical Bloc*. It was these churches that were among the core members of the first national ecumenical body – the General Missionary Council (GMC) founded in 1904 – as they were of its successor bodies the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) founded in 1936 and the SACC, established in 1968. They also had strong links to international ecumenical bodies such as the International Missionary Council (IMC), the Faith and Order movement, the Life and Work movement, which emerged in the period between the world wars and, of course, after 1948, with the World Council of Churches (WCC). These ecumenical links have had a continuous and profound effect on the churches of this bloc, but their liberal philosophy and theology also affected the nature of ecumenism in South Africa which tended to run on a parallel, yet distinct, track to that of the international ecumenical movement for most of the twentieth century. This led to a rising clash between the two, which was resolved in the fateful years of the early 1970s as a result of the takeover of the Ecumenical Bloc by black South African churchmen.

What is evident from Table 2 is that by far the majority of the member churches of the SACC had their origins in mission societies, which might seem to contradict what was said before about the dominance of churches in the mission field. However, statistics would show that the membership of the Anglican CPSA and the Methodist Church had always dwarfed that of other missions and churches in the Ecumenical Bloc. It was the theology and mission policy of these two churches that dominated the thinking of that bloc, although the much smaller missions and churches based on Congregationalism and Scots Presbyterianism were also to make a significant contribution to the liberal ideology which emerged in this bloc.

The Ecumenical Bloc, as mentioned earlier, comprised for most of the period under review Protestant denominations and mission societies, and it was these which both on a local and on the international level constituted the driving force of the ecumenical movement. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church hardly figures at all in this study. Although it had done very powerful missionary work in South Africa – which, by 1970, had gained it 1.3 million African members and therefore had to deal with the questions of ethnicity and culture as much as any other denomination – it was perhaps the most assimilationist of any in the positions it adopted on this score. However, for over a century it did not take any significant part in the debate over racial issues which raged between Ecumenical Bloc churches and those which supported the segregation/apartheid position.[7] The Catholic Church remained aloof from the ecumenical movement as a whole and also the institutional expressions of that movement until after the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s. Only in 1967 did the Catholic Church begin to associate itself more closely with the Ecumenical Bloc, and then only as an observer member of the CCSA. It did take a much more prominent role in the struggle against apartheid after 1975, but that it falls outside of the timeframe of this book is another reason for the Catholic Church not receiving any major attention in this work.

The Ecumenical Bloc, comprising 40 per cent of all Christians in South Africa, was larger than any of the other three major groupings of churches. These I have chosen to call the *Dutch Reformed Bloc*, the *AIC Bloc* and the *Pentecostal Bloc*. Because the major focus of this study is on the Ecumenical Bloc, none of the other blocs are dealt with in the same historical detail and they are considered only insofar as they impacted on the Ecumenical Bloc itself. However, some basic facts and figures about these blocs need to be set out here.

The Dutch Reformed Bloc and apartheid

This comprised the 'Afrikaans-speaking' churches, directly descended from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands brought to South Africa by Dutch settlers and colonists from the mid seventeenth century onwards. It was much smaller than the Ecumenical Bloc, with only around ten per cent of the total number of those who professed Christianity in South Africa. However, in terms of wealth and power it easily matched the resources of even the largest churches of the Ecumenical Bloc, particularly because after 1948 the members of successive apartheid-supporting Nationalist governments, practically without exception, were members of these churches. The close collusion between Church and State was reinforced by the fact that the leading members of both the Nationalist government and the Dutch Reformed churches belonged to the secret society known as the *Afrikaner Broederbond*, or the 'Band of Afrikaner Brothers'. That body was widely and popularly believed to be the *éminence grise* guiding the policies and particularly the apartheid policies of the Nationalist government.

There were, and are, both black and white churches in the Dutch Reformed Bloc. These were:

The NGK, with two-and-a-half million white members, was the largest of the three. This was, in fact, the oldest, autonomous denomination in South Africa, having become independent of its 'mother church' in the Netherlands in 1824. It commenced mission work among the indigenous peoples of South Africa in 1826, as a result of which the three black churches of this bloc were created. They were:

- The Nederduits Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (NGSK) (the 'Mission Church') which comprised people of mixed race, known both officially and popularly as *coloureds*, founded in 1881, and with a membership of 573 400 in 1970.
- The NGKA for African people, founded in 1963 as an offshoot of the NGSK with a membership of 924 000. In 1994 it should be said, these two churches attempted, once more, to join together in the Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa.
- The Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) for Indian people, founded in 1968. Its membership totalled only a few thousand.

From 1959 onwards, these churches were linked in a 'Federal Council of Dutch Reformed Churches', the member churches of which met for consultation every four years. In 1982 this body was transformed into a General Synod with some limited jurisdiction and which, from then on, met every two years.[8] As will be seen, its member churches were separated on ethnic lines. This, of course, was very much in line with the doctrines of apartheid, although these ethnic divisions were also in line with that strand of thinking in the international missionary movement which favoured the creation of 'three-self' churches. Still, while they were born of apartheid thinking, in time, the black Dutch Reformed churches were to reject it decisively. This was expressed in the 1994 formation of the Uniting Reformed Church which attempted to bring the NGSK and the NGKA together in one body. However, earlier than this, these churches had made clear their rejection of apartheid by moving into membership with the SACC. They were to play a crucial role in forcing the abandonment of apartheid in both Church and State in the last two decades of the twentieth century.

The two other white churches in the Dutch Reformed Bloc were both offshoots of the NGK. They were the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK), founded in 1855, the membership of which originally comprised those Boers who had trekked away from the Cape Colony in 1838 and the Gereformeerde Kerk ('Dutch Reformed') (NG) which, in turn, broke away from the NHK in 1857, because it deemed that church to be too theologically liberal. One of its most famous members was President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal, while the last white president of South Africa, F W de Klerk, was also a member of this church.

These churches will receive minimal attention, since they were much smaller than the NGK and their mission work was negligible. The main differences between the three churches were on points of organisation and theology. One issue on which they did agree was in their support of both segregation and apartheid. That put them at odds, not only with the churches and organisations of the Ecumenical Bloc, but also with international ecumenical organisations in which they held membership. These included the WCC, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) (a grouping of churches with a Calvinist base) and the much smaller, more conservative, Reformed Ecumenical Synod. In time, they were either suspended or felt themselves obliged to withdraw from these bodies.

The AIC Bloc and the search for black selfhood

The AICs began to emerge in the 1880s and a century later comprised almost half of all blacks who professed Christianity in South Africa.[9] However, while numerically powerful, they were fissiparated among 4 000 and 6 000 different bodies – some, like the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) numbering their adherents in millions, but a very large number having no more than 20 to 30 members. Their history, beliefs and practices have been documented extensively elsewhere and therefore need not be covered here.[10] What is important from the viewpoint of this study is their *raison d'etre* and where they fit into the two broad categorisations relating to ethnic and cultural identity discussed earlier.

This immediately indicates the difficulties posed by those categorisations, because as already stated, using them in a simple sense would place the AICs in the segregationist camp, since these churches overwhelmingly saw themselves as exclusively African expressions of Christianity and seldom tried to include any ethnic groups apart from Africans in their membership. However, it could be said that their segregationist approaches were not due to any racist consciousness; rather, they arose from a search for, and as expression of, African selfhood. This did not involve notions of racial superiority or rejection of other races or of churches containing, and even dominated by, members of other racial groups. As will be demonstrated, practically from the outset many AICs sought to associate themselves with ecumenical organisations such as the GMC and in the later part of the twentieth century, with bodies such as the Christian Institute (CI) and the SACC, even when they were white dominated.

The AICs do not figure largely in this study because, for one thing, they never actively concerned themselves with the great and bitter debates over race and culture which raged between the other two blocs. While especially the 'Ethiopian' sector of these churches did have an impact on the politics of South Africa, their political concerns waned after the 1930s, according to Pretorius and Jafta. Today, they write, the attitude of one of the largest of the AICs, the ZCC, 'of urging its adherents to be obedient citizens represents much political opinion among the AICs'.[11] None the less, as will be seen from the following pages, the AICs played an important part as a touchstone which measured changes in thinking of churches in the other two blocs with relation not only to questions of cultural difference, but also to black nationalism, since again, to quote Pretorius and Jafta, 'indigenous church leaders themselves and researchers have demonstrated the influence of millions of AIC members on socio-political developments'.[12]

The Pentecostal Bloc and the quest to be 'apolitical'

Of increasing numerical importance towards the end of the period under study were the Pentecostal and charismatic churches, such as the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Pentecostal Protestant Church. These were white dominated, both numerically and in terms of leadership. While they did develop a significant black following with the passage of time, their teaching and theology were very individualistic, and officially they claimed to be apolitical.[13] Anderson, however, shows that the Apostolic Faith Mission was strongly racist and that whites retained tight control over it for most of its existence. That meant that this, the largest of the Pentecostal churches, was inevitably giving moral support to apartheid. Their black memberships often stepped out of line on this score; a pastor in the Apostolic Faith Mission, the Rev Frank Chikane, became a leading anti-apartheid campaigner, the first director of the radical Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) and then General Secretary of the SACC. That the apartheid government arrested and tortured him, and later targeted him for assassination was just one indication that he had by no means interpreted his Christian profession in the same way as the white leadership of his church.

Still, these churches were mostly silent in the great debates over race and culture between the three major blocs described earlier,[14] which means that they receive no attention in this study.

****

Whatever the consequences in the form of the divisions described, the advance of Christian profession in South Africa in the 150-odd years after William Shaw was writing to his London Committee, constitutes a notable historical development. Being a man of his time, Shaw might not have been very perturbed to learn that Christianity made its most rapid strides among the black population in that era in which whites exercised dominant political control, something which he would probably have equated with the spread of 'civilisation'. In contrast, many late twentieth-century scholars, particularly those of the neo-Marxist revisionist school, took a much less positive view. They argued that mission work had prepared the ground for white conquest and helped consolidate white control.[15] Mills, for instance, asserts: 'The three Cs (Christianity, civilisation and commerce) were closely interlinked and reinforced each other' and that 'by the end of the [nineteenth] century, Christians were much more inclined to see empire and Christianity as complementary entities than they had been at the beginning.'[16]

While it is difficult to deny this point, there is another dimension to this history, because it is also true that the products of missions and missionary work, particularly those of the Dutch Reformed Bloc, were at the forefront of the struggle which wrested political control from the whites in the late twentieth century. This would have surprised Shaw, while Dutch Reformed missionaries would have found it even more disconcerting; it was certainly not something they had anticipated when they set out to 'convert the heathen to Christ'. However, that endeavour was to produce all kinds of unintended consequences all over the world – perhaps nowhere more so than in South Africa.

Notes

1. G B A Gerdener, 'The Missionary Situation in South Africa. Paper read before the Christian Council at Johannesburg on 21 January 1937.' *South African Outlook,* vol 67, no. 816, 1 April 1937, 78–81.
2. J H du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London, 1911).
3. J Sandstrom, 'Evangelism as the Primary Duty of Missions.' Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Missionary Conference held at Durban, 18 to 22 July 1921 (Johannesburg, 1921), 96–9.
4. The term *black* is used to refer to all people who are not white.
5. Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions*, 404
6. O Victor, *The Thin Black Line* (Johannesburg, n.d). The pattern of Africans proving to be the most effective missionaries of all was repeated in many areas of Africa. See also R Gray, *Black Christians and White Missionaries (*London, 1990).
7. While as Walshe shows, pastoral letters of the Roman Catholic Church condemned apartheid from the 1950s onwards and put forward alternatives relating to a wide range of issue, it 'had a staggeringly long way to go in living up to these ideals'. P Walshe, *Church Versus State in South Africa: The Case of the Christian Institute* (London, 1983).

8. J R Cronjé, *Born to Witness. A Concise History of the Churches Born out of the Mission Work of the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) of South Africa* (Pretoria, 1982).
9. H Pretorius and L Jafta, ' "A branch springs out": African Initiated Churches', in R Elphick and R Davenport, eds. *Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1997), 211–226. In order to avoid the disputes over the best terminology which should be applied to these churches, I have chosen simply to refer to them with the abbreviation 'AICs'.
10. The stream of publications on the AICs, one of the best known of which is C B M Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Oxford, 1961) continues unabated to this day, one of the latest being Allan Anderson's *Zion and Pentecost. The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Pretoria, 2000). Sundkler and C A Steed point out that a bibliography on AICs in Africa as a whole by Harold B Turner published in 1977 'holds 1,906 titles and since then no doubt some thousands more have been added to this bounty'. *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge, 2000), 1 032–3.
11. B Sundkler and C Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa,* 224. Kiernan states that both the Ethiopian and Zionist strains of the AICs have, by and large, eschewed direct political involvement. The Zionists in particular 'are not only politically neutral but intensely anti-political'. 'The African Independent Churches', in M Prozesky, and J de Gruchy eds. *Living Faiths in South Africa* (London, Hurst and Company, 1995), 116–128.
12. Pretorius and Jafta, *Christianity in South Africa,* 224.
13. A Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost. The Spirituality and Experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic Churches in South Africa* (Pretoria, 2000).
14. While there were attempts in the 1980s to change this situation by a small, but influential sector of the Pentecostal movement 'they did not elicit any widespread support', says Anderson. *Zion and Pentecost*, 96.
15. For that reason, they tend to be hostile to the missions and as Etherington notes: 'These days, most hostility to missions comes from within the

clergy and departments of religious studies.' In particular, he mentions the work of Villa-Vicencio, Saayman and Drohan. He might have added Cochrane. See N Etherington, 'Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol 22, no. 2, June 1996.

16. W G Mills, 'Millenial Christianity, British Imperialism and African Nationalism', in Elphick and Davenport, eds. *Christianity in South Africa*, 337–346.