

## The Marginalisation of the Mission Societies

The growth of indigenous churches in numbers, strength and influence was, as remarked in the previous chapter, one of the most noteworthy developments in bodies such as the IMC and the WCC in the decades following World War II. In South Africa this was also a period characterised by the replacement of mission societies with new and vigorous indigenous churches. Here, however, this development – surely one of the most important in ecclesiastical history – evoked a minimum amount of interest or attention. Typical of that was the almost farcical event surrounding the application for membership in the CCSA, of the Moravian Church, Western Cape, in 1955. This was the first indigenous church to come into membership for more than three decades, which in itself constituted a significant development. It had even greater importance in that the new church represented the fruits of the earliest missionary endeavour in South Africa. As already mentioned, it was the Moravian Georg Schmidt who founded the first mission station in South Africa in 1737, long before the modern missionary era had begun. When the Moravians re-established it as *Genadendal* in 1792, they were, once again, the first mission agency to enter South Africa as that era commenced in earnest.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when the Moravian Church

applied for membership of the CCSA, it was a historic occasion. The secretary of the CCSA, the Rev Arthur Blaxall, marked it by losing the application papers, which meant that formal acceptance by the Executive had to be delayed until the president, the Anglican Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton, had an opportunity hastily to scrutinise its constitution. Other than that, the event passed without comment.<sup>2</sup>

That stood in sharp contrast to the special steps taken by the CCSA in 1937 to mark the bicentennial of the arrival of Schmidt in South Africa. Then the CCSA was still dominated by missionaries, who were very aware of the significance of the anniversary. In 1955 an earlier generation of missionaries had passed into history and the CCSA was dominated by the Anglican and Methodist churchmen for whom the history of missionary societies was of no great consequence. Their failure to recognise the dimensions of the change which the membership of the new Moravian church betokened, graphically illustrates the way missions had been marginalised in church life in South Africa. This had wider implications, because it also meant that the focus on indigenous churches, which was central to much of the international missionary and ecumenical movement, had also been marginalised in South Africa. Of the best pointers to that phenomenon were developments in South African first, second and third-phase ecumenical bodies, that is, the GMC, the CCSA and the SACC.

### *Anglican/Methodist dominance*

The process by which missions were steadily pushed to the margins of ecclesiastical life, particularly within the Ecumenical Bloc, was well established by the end of the nineteenth century, even though the representation in the GMC of 21 mission societies compared with only 5 churches, might have given a different impression. According to du Plessis's statistics, by 1900, 2 churches – the Anglican CPSA and the Methodist – between them con-



tained 51 per cent of all African Christians.<sup>3</sup> If census figures are accepted at their face value, that share increased in the first two decades of the twentieth century; the 1921 census showing that the proportion of the total number of African converts in the two churches in question had risen to 59 per cent. That figure must be treated with caution, because the African independent churches were not enumerated in that census and when they were, the percentage share of the CPSA and Methodist Church decreased sharply. Another reason was the rapid growth from the 1920s onwards, of the number of converts of both the NGK missions and those of the Roman Catholic Church, the latter actually surpassing the CPSA as the denomination with the largest African membership after the Methodist Church by 1950. Still, both the NGK and the Catholic Church played a minimal role in the Ecumenical Bloc, where the fact that the CPSA had the largest white membership (294 000 adherents in 1921) and the Methodist Church the second largest (102 000 adherents) gave them an unchallengeable numerical supremacy.

This, it will be argued, is a very important point which had far-reaching consequences not only in the ecclesiastical sphere, but also for thinking race relations. It might be remarked in passing that the way in which most scholars and commentators refer to the 'English-speaking churches' might give the impression that all such churches were of equal size and standing, and therefore exercised equal influence. However, the two other major English-speaking churches which are usually included under this appellation, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Congregational Church, never came anywhere near to matching the power and influence of the CPSA and Methodist churches. Not only was their white membership much smaller, but their black membership was minute compared to that of the two 'giants'. Du Plessis's statistical table of 1910 gave the number of African adherents of the Presbyterian Church as 1 750. While, according to his figures, the numbers of Africans in the LMS – the chief in-

strument of Congregational mission work in Southern Africa – was much larger, standing at 75 344, most of whom were located in Botswana (then known as Bechuanaland).

That South Africa was following a different course from that taken by the rest of the missionary movement was apparent to the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. One of its documents described South Africa as a 'home mission field' – by which was meant that 'though European and American Missionary Societies still carry on extensive operations, there is a great and increasing work done by the Colonial Churches'.<sup>4</sup> Since neither the Presbyterian nor the Congregational Church had any significant work at that stage, the 'Colonial Churches' could only be the CPSA and Methodist Church. Both were churches in which blacks and whites were incorporated in overarching unitary structures. In this lies one explanation for the lack of attention to the emergence of autonomous black churches already mentioned; these would have seemed small and insignificant compared with the CPSA and Methodist Church. Nor was it only the comparatively small size of the younger 'mission churches' that determined attitudes towards them. Another factor of crucial importance was the mission methodology and theology of these two churches, which never experienced the reactions from the mission fields which were to have such an important effect on the mission societies. As noted earlier, it was the difficulties and dangers encountered in the mission fields that encouraged the idea of comity and first-phase ecumenism, among other things.

While the problems were not any less severe for the CPSA and the Methodist Church, as an outgrowth of overseas denominations, they were better able to cope on their own since they were backed by extensive administrative infrastructure in their home bases and were able to command large resources of money and personnel, which the mission societies lacked. The CPSA could draw not only on the resources of its regular clergy to staff its



mission stations and minister to Africans in urban areas (an important advantage as urbanisation advanced during the twentieth century), but also on the services of several orders within the church, particularly the Community of the Resurrection and the Society of the Sacred Mission.<sup>5</sup> The Methodist Church had very nearly equal numbers of clergy in England to staff its missions and, in addition, was equipped with a highly effective structure of lay leadership which had been designed in the eighteenth century for a largely illiterate membership, and could therefore easily be transplanted to a situation such as that of the South African mission field. In Methodist statistics, the number of full-time clergy was always dwarfed by that of lay preachers, evangelists and ‘class leaders’, that is, local leaders who were given pastoral charge over a group of about a dozen converts. These leaders not only held congregations together, but also carried out missionary work on their own account. The report of the Methodist Missionary Society for 1906, for instance, showed that while there were 97 ordained African ministers in the church, there were over 4 000 African local preachers and 5 000 class leaders, some of whom had ‘formed themselves into mission bands and gone forth carrying the Gospel to the heathen around. In this way, many of the “Reds” had been brought into the Kingdom of Christ’.<sup>6</sup> [‘Reds’ being Pondo people who traditionally wore blankets stained with red mud].

The home bases of the two denominations were also responsible for pouring large amounts of money into the work in South Africa. This was especially true of the CPSA, whose founder bishop, Robert Gray, took full advantage of his close association with the long-established and wealthy SPG – of which he had acted as a local secretary while serving as a parish priest in England – to channel monies to the work of the church and its missions in South Africa.<sup>7</sup> In fact, South Africa, along with India, became the chief recipient of SPG contributions to missions,<sup>8</sup> and the scale of the funds that came into South Africa was indicated by the

Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of the bicentenary of the SPG in 1901, when he stated that it had given over £820 000 (probably over R1 000 million in today's terms) to South Africa to that date; to which was added another £30 000 from the biennial offerings.<sup>10</sup> If £1 in 1901 can be surmised to be worth £100 in 2001, this would amount to over R9 000 million in today's values.

Thereafter the inflow of money from the SPG continued at a high rate. In 1931 one of the leading missionary authorities in the CPSA, Father Osmund Victor of the Community of the Resurrection, stated that of the £40 000 spent annually by that church on missions, £20 000 came from the SPG.<sup>10</sup> Besides such regular grants, the SPG also made lump-sum payments for specific purposes. In 1963, for instance, it gave £460 000, its largest-ever grant, to alleviate the effects of the Group Areas Act on the CPSA.<sup>11</sup>

The pattern in the Methodist Church was somewhat different, since the emphasis was on local financial self-support. Up to 1882, the Missionary Committee of the church in England had been making grants of around £14 000 a year. As the church moved towards the attainment of autonomy in 1883, it was agreed to reduce this amount progressively and by 1902 the grants had ceased.<sup>12</sup> That had no effect on the rate of growth of Methodist African membership. As the Methodist historian Whiteside observed: 'It is not a little surprising that as the grant decreased missions increasingly prospered.'<sup>13</sup> Thus, while by 1902, the amount raised for mission work from local sources, £10 951, was well below the amount of the 1882 grant, the membership among Africans had more than trebled, rising from 20 742 in 1882 to 66 436 in 1902.<sup>14</sup> Growing membership was naturally also a source of growing income and by 1916, the missionary section of the Methodist Church had become wholly self-supporting.<sup>15</sup>



### *The role of education*

The CPSA's and Methodist Church's far greater infrastructural resources gave them an advantage, not only in straightforward mission work, but also in the vital field of African education, which was probably the best recruiting area of all for converts. The dominant role played by the churches and mission in African education up to the passing of the Bantu Education Act hardly needs stating. They had built and run 4 961 (85%) of the 5 870 African schools in existence in 1954.<sup>16</sup> What is significant is that the CPSA and Methodist Church dominated this sphere in the same way they dominated the ecclesiastical sphere. In 1939 they controlled 63 per cent of all African schools, which numbered 2 747 at the time. With 1 110 schools under its control (40%) the Methodist Church was far and away the leader, the CPSA with 627 schools (22%) coming next.<sup>17</sup> A study on African schooling published not long after showed that the CPSA and Methodist schools between them contained 33 per cent of all scholars in the missionary schools at that time,<sup>18</sup> which compares with the 37 per cent of all African Christians contained in those two churches according to the census of 1946. The close affinity between the two figures seems to be more than coincidental. It is also notable that after the government takeover of African education in 1954, the growth of the Methodist Church declined considerably, according to its records. Whereas in the decade 1950 to 1960 its African membership grew by 26 per cent, between 1961 and 1970 the growth rate dropped to 4 per cent.<sup>19</sup>

The CPSA, with its much more devolved diocesan structure, did not keep anything like the reliable statistics of its national membership as did the Methodist Church, and thus it is difficult to tell whether this church experienced the same decline. Census figures after 1954 indicate that there was no decline in its rate of growth. However, they also show no decline in the growth rate of the Methodist Church, which stands in sharp contrast to the declining trend indicated by the Methodist Church's own records

which, owing to the tight organisational structure of that church, are probably the most trustworthy of all denominations. It is not unreasonable to assume that the CPSA rate of growth also declined after it had been deprived of its schools as a recruiting ground for members in 1954.

To summarise: the three ingredients of abundant money, personnel and schools conferred enormous success on the CPSA and Methodist Church in terms of converts. It might be noted that the NGK and the Roman Catholic Church, which also had great success in gaining converts, similarly had large resources, personnel and finance they could pour into the mission fields. Mission societies in South Africa, in contrast, were never able to match the churches in these respects and therefore never garnered converts on the scale of the churches, as will be demonstrated shortly.

### *The divided Christ of Anglicanism*

References to the three-self formula and indigenous church planting which ranked so highly in the nineteenth century in the international missionary movement are largely lacking in Methodist and Anglican documents. Indeed, that theology was specifically rejected by the CPSA – the position of which demands closer attention in this regard. A crucial fact about the CPSA is that it was completely dominated by Anglo-Catholic theology. Its very name – the *Church of the Province* – betokens that. This was Catholic rather than Anglican terminology and is a pointer to the deep division between its ‘high-church’ and ‘low-church’ wings which developed within Anglicanism in the nineteenth century. Those on the ‘high’ or Anglo-Catholic side of the divide had their origins in the Tractarian movement which emerged in Oxford under the influence of Bishop John Newman in the 1830s. The basic premise of Anglo-Catholics was that the Anglican break with Rome during the Reformation had been a mistake which needed to be reversed. Anglo-Catholics therefore moved to adapt their worship and prac-



tice as closely as possible to that of the Catholic Church. Newman himself moved into the Catholic Church where he became much more famous as Cardinal Newman than he had ever been as Bishop Newman in the Anglican Church.

Anglo-Catholic theology was to have important consequences for ecumenism. They believed that all Christians should reunite under the Pope in the Roman Catholic Church. They therefore deprecated and opposed any moves towards church unity which did not include the church of Rome. Moreover, they refused to contemplate structural union with churches which they claimed, lacked the historic legitimacy of Apostolic Succession, that is, a clergy tracing its sacred commission back to the Apostles who, in turn, it was believed, had received their commission from Jesus Christ himself.

However, Anglo-Catholics were unable to realise their aims of unity with Rome because this was implacably opposed by 'low' Anglicans, otherwise known as *Evangelicals*. Their following more than balanced that of the Anglo-Catholics in the Anglican Communion. They remained strongly Protestant and opposed to Catholicism, and their worship and practice were much closer to that of Protestant non-conformist churches and the divisions between the two wings of the church remain sharp, even to this day. One of the most powerful 'low-church' Anglican dioceses in the world is that of Sydney, Australia, where its Archbishop caused a storm of controversy in 1984 when he refused to see even Bishop Desmond Tutu during a visit to Australia because he was seen as an Anglo-Catholic.<sup>20</sup>

Both wings of the Anglican Church became deeply involved in mission work in the later nineteenth century, although open clashes between them were avoided on the mission fields by an unwritten understanding which divided different areas of the world into 'high-church' and 'low-church' spheres. High-church mission work was

carried out by the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG) and due to the fact that the first Anglican primate in the country, Bishop John Gray, was a committed Anglo-Catholic, South Africa became a USPG field of work. The name was later shortened to SPG.

The mission work of the low church was in the hands of the CMS. As was pointed out earlier, the Rev Henry Venn, one of the initiators of the three-self formula, was a leading figure in the CMS, and that society naturally became a 'torch-bearer' for the establishment of indigenous three-self churches in the mission fields. However, the high-church wing, with its doctrine of 'one, holy Catholic Church', totally rejected the three-self formula, 'since this suggested a distinction between Christians of the same Faith living together, which destroyed the idea of the word "Church"'.<sup>21</sup> The strong feelings on this score among high-church Anglicans can be gauged by the rejection of a suggestion, put forward at a synod during the early years of the twentieth century, that assistant bishops be appointed specifically to look after African members of the church. That, pronounced Bishop Alan Gibson of Cape Town in 1908,

certainly does seem, on the face of it, to be uncatholic and utterly at variance with the unity of the Church. We are told that "the function of the Episcopate is the safeguarding for the faith, and the preservation of the unity of the Church". To establish an Episcopate based solely on race or colour would appear to be as much as if one were at the same time to arm it with a knife, and bid it to kill the very thing which it existed to maintain.<sup>22</sup>

The Anglo-Catholic tradition in the CPSA laid down by Gray was to continue for almost a century, reinforced by the fact that the church relied for so much of its financial support on the SPG.<sup>23</sup> While their concern for missionary work moved the Anglo-Catholics closer to other churches and mission societies, and they were



prepared to co-operate with other Christian bodies in pragmatic first-phase and second-phase ecumenism, they rejected its third-phase aspect. This lay behind the already-mentioned refusal of the CPSA to participate in the GMC until its constitution acknowledged that its scope was confined to the most elementary kind of co-operation. The same kind of pressure, albeit latent at that stage, would have ensured the insertion of clause four into the CCSA constitution of 1936 which forbade discussions on faith and order. There was no more adamant upholder of that clause than the head of the CPSA, Archbishop John Darbyshire, who was also president of the CCSA between 1943 and 1948. He not only declared himself to be 'stubbornly and deliberately opposed to any talk of church union', but stated he would withdraw from the CCSA 'if the Council were to conceive of its function as either sponsoring a scheme of reunion or trying to become a Pan-Protestant Vatican'.<sup>24</sup> This phrase was the Anglo-Catholic equivalent of the *Roomse gevaar* (Afrikaans for 'Roman danger') in the NGK and was constantly used by Darbyshire, who displayed typical Anglo-Catholic suspicion of the international missionary and ecumenical movements. For instance, in response to a suggestion on regional groupings of churches in Africa made by the IMC office in New York in 1943, he wrote:

The difficulty is that I am just floored and don't know what it is all about. The truth is that I have never been properly "received" in the Pan-Protestant-Vatican-in-America and don't understand being instructed as to my duty by somebody or Some Body in America.<sup>25</sup>

Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton, his successor in the see of Cape Town and the presidency of the CCSA, was also a strong Anglo-Catholic.<sup>26</sup> That Anglo-Catholic attitudes were still widely prevalent in the CPSA was evident in a remark made by Bishop Bill Burnett, himself later to be general secretary of the SACC and Archbishop of Cape Town, when he first joined the bench of bishops in 1957; 'ecumenism was a dirty word'.<sup>27</sup>

A lack of understanding of international missionary developments by Anglo-Catholics was reflected by the Rev Arthur Blaxall who, as secretary of the CCSA, helped to hold it together during its most difficult years in the 1950s. Although he never professed rigid Anglo-Catholicism and, in fact, tended to have a Quaker-like tolerance of other churches and other religions, nevertheless had come into the Anglican ministry through the SPG<sup>28</sup> and spent most of his working life in the Anglo-Catholic ethos of the CPSA. Although he attended the International Missionary Conference's Willingen conference, he seems to have felt out of his depth there, while he also showed little understanding of developments relating to the emergence of younger churches when he wrote to the Bishop of Zululand in 1959:

We notice that in a recent issue of the DRC paper 'Kerkbode' Dr Gerdener, a leading missionary professor of the DRC stated that it is becoming more and more clear that white missionaries must hand over the control of their churches to African leaders . . . What concerns some people is how to bring home to the authorities that not all branches of the Christian church accept the same method of organisation as that followed by the DRC.<sup>29</sup>

The article to which Blaxall was apparently referring was a report by Gerdener on the 1959 meeting of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Brazil, in which he noted that one of the themes was that 'the sending churches and their representatives must be prepared to diminish and take on a servant role for the sake of the increasingly autonomous young churches'.<sup>30</sup> Although a strong supporter of apartheid, Gerdener was not in this case laying down policy guidelines, but was merely reporting on trends in the missionary movement. As someone who had attended the 1910 Edinburgh conference, served on the Central Committee of the WCC for six years and who had recently published an important work on missions in South Africa, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field*, he was well qualified to assess those



trends.<sup>31</sup> Still, Blaxall was correct in drawing attention to Gerdener's notions, given the crucial role that Kinghorn attributes to him in the formulation of the doctrines of separate development outlined in the next chapter. This underlines the paradox that the NGK was much nearer to the thinking of the IMC than was Blaxall, the representative voice of the Christian Council which was supposed to be the IMC's local embodiment in South Africa.

It should be clear that the theology of the CPSA placed it squarely in the integrationist/assimilationist category when it came to dealing with differences of race and culture. It is interesting to speculate what might have been the effect if the 'three-self' CMS and not the SPG had dominated Anglican missionary effort in South Africa. Certainly, the CMS would have had more in common with Gerdener than did Blaxall, and that leads to the conclusion that the application of CMS theology would very likely have resulted in a different approach to race relations than that of the 'colour-blind' multiracialism which characterised the CPSA and, by extension, the CCSA in which it played such a dominant role in the mid-years of the twentieth century. This theme will be pursued at greater length later in this study.

### *Methodist non-theology*

Unlike the CPSA, the Methodists had no strong theology of the Church. In the eighteenth-century 'evangelical awakening', the emphasis had been on individual conversion rather than on ecclesiology, and while the Methodist Church developed perhaps the most elaborate and tightly controlled structure of any Protestant denomination, it was not based on theological or Biblical models, but rather on pragmatic considerations forced on John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, by the exigencies of establishing a church among a largely illiterate membership in the face of hostility of both the established church and the State. In conformity with this pattern of low priority being given to theological formu-

lations, there was little that could be called an 'ecclesiology of mission' among Methodists, despite their very extensive missionary work. There is as little reference to the Venn/Anderson/Warneck theologies of church planting in Methodist literature as there is in Anglo-Catholic, all converts being simply incorporated into the Methodist Church itself. On the rare occasions when something resembling a mission theology was stated in Methodist circles, it reflected a belief that the three-self formula had been achieved within the structures of the Methodist Church. In 1933 the president of the Methodist Conference, the Rev Fred Homes, in a major address on 'The Church and the Bantu' referred to an article in the *IRM* in which a writer 'ably set forth three lines of development to be aimed at in Native work':

1. The training of leaders according to their capacity.
2. Sharing the administration and church discipline.
3. Making the work self-supporting.<sup>32</sup>

All that and more had already been accomplished in the Methodist Church, said Homes. Reflecting Methodism's penchant for acting on a pragmatic rather than theological basis, he added that this had happened 'not indeed, as the result of a carefully thought-out plan, but rather as a wise adaptation to circumstances'.

Black leaders in the church tended to take a less sanguine view. In a letter to its newspaper, *The Methodist Churchman*, in 1925, the Rev A Mtinkulu pointed out that Africans had no direct representation on its Finance Committee, no direct representation on the Stationing Committee (which controlled where ministers were placed) and were 'hopelessly in the minority in the Conference' (the church's supreme body which met annually).<sup>33</sup> It was at the Conference of 1925 that another outstanding black Methodist, D D T Jabavu, raised the issue of creating an autonomous black church under the aegis of the conference, a proposal which was very much in line with the ideas of Venn and Anderson. After a



day-long debate, the proposal was turned down.<sup>34</sup> Jabavu was one of the South African representatives at the Jerusalem conference three years later, where ideas on the development of younger indigenous churches similar to his were accepted as the norm. He raised the concept once more in a pamphlet entitled 'An African Indigenous Church' published in 1942. Its aim was stated in the sub-title: 'A Plea for Its Establishment in South Africa'. He pointed out that in Jerusalem in 1928 'there were frequent references during the discussions as to the desirability of establishing more indigenous churches elsewhere in the world' and that discussions were illuminating 'to those of us who had never thought to the subject' – a surprising remark in the light of his advocacy of autonomous churches in 1925, although perhaps he was using the word 'us' in a charitable sense to avoid giving offence. He went on to advocate the formation of a united African church, which had also been suggested by the African National Congress (ANC), and pointed out that 'independence does not mean separation'.<sup>35</sup>

Although widely accepted in the outside world, this was a fairly subtle point which was even less likely to be accepted by the church in 1942 than in 1925. Paradoxically, this was because the church had been involved since the 1920s, in an increasingly bitter struggle against racial segregation in South African political and social life, and the indigenous church of the kind being pleaded for by Jabavu would have appeared to be conforming to the segregationist pattern. Ten years later, when he was president of the CCSA, another leading Methodist, E W Grant, expressed this viewpoint in a booklet entitled *South Africa: What of the Church?* Under the heading of 'A True Indigenous Church', Grant wrote:

The Missionary ideal of an "indigenous" church is accepted. But in multi-racial South Africa that church must include within its fellowship all the races of the country, for scarcely is any one of them more indigenous than others.<sup>36</sup>

Thus although it approached the issue of an indigenous church from a very different theological standpoint to that of the CPSA, the Methodist Church took the same deprecatory attitude towards the concept.

### *Dichotomy in CPSA/Methodist unity*

Despite their theoretical and theological objections to separate, ethnically based churches, neither church tried to accommodate blacks and whites in a single structure. Both reproduced the mission/church dichotomy by separating their 'church' work for whites from the 'mission' work among blacks. The Methodist Church actually gave the name of the *Methodist Missionary Society* to that sector dealing with blacks, even though this was simply a department of the church.<sup>37</sup> The racial segregation of 'circuits' or local groupings of churches compounded the segregation of blacks in the 'mission' sector. While the annual synods of the 'Districts', the regional groupings of churches, as well as the annual Conference were integrated, as Mtimkulu pointed out in his letter of 1925, blacks were very much in a minority in these bodies and it was not until 1946 that the 'Laws and Discipline' of the church were changed to make parity of black and white representation mandatory.<sup>38</sup>

The CPSA pattern was also one of church/mission segregation running along racial lines. This was formally incorporated in the structures of the church in 1892 when a Provincial Missionary Conference was established, while in 1898 a Provincial Board of Missions was established to provide co-ordination and co-operation between the various diocesan missionary efforts.<sup>39</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, the Provincial Missionary Conference recommended the appointment of assistant bishops in each diocese specifically to deal with African affairs. The debate on this issue at the Provincial Missionary Conference of 1906 indicates that feelings among the African sector in the church were



not very different from those voiced two and three decades later by Jabavu. At that conference

two parties, one in favour and one opposed to distinct organisation of Native and European work soon appeared. Let no one imagine separation was aimed at. It was disclaimed even when special bishops for Native work were asked for, as it was predicated that they were to be under the diocesan bishop. Fr Bull, S S J E, read a weighty paper on the need of maintaining of the unity of the whole Catholic Church, white and black, yet native after native called for specialisation. One said: "How can we think we are welcome in the white man's synods when we are unwelcome in their railway carriages?" . . . The bishops were sympathetic with the idea of assistant bishops where necessary for Native work only, but the Bishop of Pretoria (Carter) was cheered when he said that diocesan bishops had no desire to cease to be Fathers in God of all Christians, black and white.<sup>40</sup>

Although the resistance of figures such as Bishop Carter and Bishop Gibson quoted earlier ensured that no assistant bishops were ever appointed, another recommendation of the Provincial Missionary Conference that diocesan missionary conferences be established, was accepted. As Victor explained in his book on the missionary work of the CPSA, *The Salient of South Africa*, these were additional assemblies to the diocesan synods 'in which purely African questions can be discussed in more leisurely fashion and by those whom they immediately concern'. A diocesan missionary conference was deliberative and not legislative, and 'if it has recommendations to make it is to the diocesan synod that it will send them'. That was where the power lay; in synods – whether provincial or diocesan – 'the self-government of the Church finds expression; for synod is a legislative body'. Victor set out the mission policy of the CPSA as follows:

In dealing with the missionary work of the Church of the Province, it is important to distinguish between its *fundamental principle* and

its practical *working policy*. A fundamental principle is the unity of all mankind in Christ; while its practical policy is one of partial segregation. In other words, there is a differentiation which finds its expression in separate churches and congregations for black and white in separate mission districts and in separate administration, especially where finance is concerned [original emphases].<sup>41</sup>

As in the Methodist Church, the concept of supra-racial unity found expression in diocesan and provincial synods; but also, as in the Methodist Church, they were dominated by white majorities.

However, it could also be said that in adopting this pragmatic structure which separated blacks and whites, the CPSA and Methodist Churches were, in fact, conforming to at least some of the tenets of the three-self formula which they either ignored or rejected on a purely theological level. Although whites dominated the controlling bodies of Ecumenical Bloc churches, the mission/church dichotomy enabled blacks to adapt the structures and circumstances within those churches to their own cultural/religious patterns to a considerable extent. As was pointed out by the Rev Mmutlanyane Mogoba, who became the first general secretary to the Methodist Church in 1982, internal women's and youth groups as well as men's associations in that church were entirely black run and managed from their inception. That indicates that a powerful black leadership developed in these organisations although, as remarked earlier, it was never very visible because it was largely confined to the missionary wing of the churches, which had the status of a 'poor relative' and therefore never attracted much attention.

The church/mission dichotomy also provided a good framework in which African manifestations and interpretations of Christianity could evolve. Mogoba points out that in an organisation such as the Methodist women's *manyano*, one of the largest women's



groups of any kind in South Africa, 'meetings are conducted in a way that is very different to what happens in a white Methodist Women's Auxiliary'.<sup>42</sup> In 1973 *Ecunews* – bulletin of the SACC – reported a black Presbyterian minister, the Rev Luther Mateza, making the same point about youth groups. Explaining why black youth in his church were holding a congress at the same time as a multiracial youth gathering, he said 'this was only logical'. Entirely separate black and white women's associations and men's groups in the church acted independently of each other. *Ecunews*, describing the black Presbyterian youth gathering in July 1973, reported that 'although the activities included conventional Bible quizzes and a communion service, there were items on the programme which would certainly be foreign to most white youth groups, such as the staging of a beauty competition and holding of all-night prayer services'.<sup>43</sup> Their willingness to adapt Christian practice and liturgy to local cultures was undoubtedly one reason why, as argued earlier, blacks were probably the most successful missionaries of all. In this regard, while neither the CPSA nor the Methodist Church officially subscribed to the three-self formula, their black memberships effectively showed how perceptive was the idea of the 'self-propagating' church. It might be remarked that while the AICs have generated a huge literature, very little similar attention has been done on the equally remarkable spread of Christianity among blacks in the mainline denominations.

The 'downside' of the mission/church dichotomy, as suggested earlier, was that the missions were considered to be the poor relatives of the churches and black members as 'second-class citizens'. Most aspects of their church life, ranging from the buildings they used to the salaries of their full-time staff, were invariably much inferior to those of the whites. Despite their enormous and growing numerical superiority, the mission wings were considered far less important than the church wings. This explains the paradox that while Methodist and Anglican missionaries played a leading role in the GMC and CCSA, the whites who dominated

denominational power structures remained largely indifferent to those two bodies because they were seen as mission organisations. The weakness of the mission wings was particularly evident in the CCSA's crisis of 1940, described in Chapter Three, when the Methodist and Anglican missionaries were unable to prevent the withdrawal of their churches' support from the CCSA. When that decision was reversed, the two churches quickly moved into a dominant position in the CCSA because leading figures of their 'church wing' entered the life of the CCSA. The strategic position these two churches commanded in the CCSA is evident in the fact that the post of president was held uninterruptedly by either an Anglican or Methodist incumbent between 1941 and 1956, while the even more vital post of secretary was also held by Methodists and Anglicans between 1941 and 1961.<sup>44</sup>

### *The stunting of three-self missions*

That success on the mission field in terms of numbers of converts was very much dependent on the investment of money and personnel by missions or churches, emerges from a comparison between the growth of the CPSA and Methodist Church, and that of mission societies in the Ecumenical Bloc. One of these, the Berlin Mission, was the largest mission agency working in South Africa. Another was the American Board Mission, while much smaller and less successful ones played an important role in the GMC and the CCSA, something also true of the United Free Church of Scotland mission. That none of them were ever able to match the resources of the CPSA and Methodist churches, meant that they remained comparatively small, one result of which was that they lacked much influence when it came to advancing the three-self formula of church planting in the GMC and CCSA. The one major mission effort which did match that of the two 'giants' was that of the NGK. However, for reasons given later, its actions and attitudes, if anything, strengthened resistance in the CCSA to the idea of autonomous, indigenous churches.



### *The self-marginalisation of Lutheran missions*

After its commencement in 1834, the work of the Berlin Mission was the most successful of any mission society in South Africa (as distinct from churches), according to du Plessis's statistics. That it was ploughing significant resources into South Africa is evident from the fact, as du Plessis showed, that it had slightly more white workers in the field than the CPSA.<sup>45</sup> From 1914 onwards, however, the operations of this mission were severely restricted by both money and personnel shortages. World War I cut it off from financial help from its home base in Germany, while post-war inflation in that country, the Great Depression and the accession of the Nazis to power in 1933 – after which it was practically impossible to send money out of Germany – kept it in a state of chronic financial crisis.<sup>46</sup> From 1914 onwards too, there was an acute shortage of personnel, which was worsened during both world wars by the restriction or internment of missionaries. The effects of these factors can be seen by comparing the growth of the Berlin Mission with that of another German Lutheran agency, the Hermannsburg Mission, which relied on sources outside Germany for both personnel and money.<sup>47</sup> Whereas in 1904, according to du Plessis, the mission had 22 760 converts compared with the 48 360 of the Berlin Mission, by 1938, according to the *Christian Handbook on South Africa* published under the auspices of the CCSA in that year, the numbers in the two mission were: Berlin – 44 640 and Hermannsburg – 44 692. In other words, the deprecation of its resources as a result of World War I, meant that the Berlin Mission had actually shrunk in size.<sup>48</sup>

Still, although dwarfed by those of the CPSA and Methodist Churches, these were not inconsiderable membership figures, and they continued to grow at a very fast pace. The 907 000 black Lutherans in South Africa at the time of the 1970 census were the products of Lutheran missions. These black converts, as noted in Chapter One, were organised into a number of different churches based on ethnic groupings, both because of geographi-

cal factors relating to where the missionaries started their work but also in line with the 'missiology' propounded by Graul and Warneck.<sup>49</sup> The success of this strategy might have been expected to give Lutherans and their theology a fair degree of influence in ecumenical bodies. Yet while they were members of both the GMC and the CCSA, they chose to keep their distance particularly from the latter. They felt ill at ease in the CPSA/Methodist-dominated CCSA in which the emphasis was on 'colour-blind' multiracialism and took very little account of ethnicity. Writing on the subject of 'indigenous churches' during the preparations for the Tambaram conference in 1938, H J Grosskopf of the Berlin Mission stated in the *South African Outlook* that he was surprised that 'so many people . . . simply take it for granted that we have only to bring our form of Church and doctrine to the peoples of the mission lands'. He argued that it was imperative to study the racial characteristics and religious life of the people who were being missionised, and quoted Warneck's 'programme for the formation of national – indigenous – Churches (*Volkskirchen*)', which needed to be 'rooted in the *national order of life* of a particular people.'<sup>50</sup>

In fact, this 'ethnic' approach meant that the Lutheran missions had much more in common with the proponents of segregation/apartheid than with those of multiracialism. It is no accident that one of the leading architects of apartheid in the 1950s was Dr W W M Eiselen, whose father was a German missionary. Eiselen's sympathy for 'ethnic theology' of the German mission societies was clearly set out by him in an article entitled 'Duitse Sendingwerk in Suider-Afrika en die Bantoevolksei' ('German Missionary Work in Southern Africa and the Bantu National Identity'), which appeared in the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) magazine, *Journal of Racial Affairs* in April, 1957. The article was defensive in tone, arguing against the new trends in Lutheran theology which ignored racial and ethnic divisions.<sup>51</sup> There can be no doubt that the 'ethnic theology' of the Lutheran



missions played a significant role in the formulation of apartheid ideology, along with the theology of the NGK.

Another factor tempering the Lutheran relationships with the CCSA was their theology, which laid down a strict separation between Church and State. Thus they had little sympathy for the CCSA's emphasis on socio-political affairs which arose from its aim of establishing a 'Christian social order' in terms of the postmillennial theology which, as Mills points out, had become dominant in missionary circles.<sup>52</sup>

A typical example of the German Lutheran rejection of Christian social activism is found in a letter sent by the superintendent general of the Hermannsburg Mission on the instructions of his Board in response to a statement issued by the Biennial Meeting of the CCSA following the Sharpeville shootings in 1960. The statement had called, among other things, for the reinstatement of the rule of law and for the appointment of a judicial commission 'representative of our multiracial society' to investigate the causes of the unrest.<sup>53</sup> The Hermannsburg Mission stated it felt unable to 'confirm' this statement. The Mission had joined the CCSA to have 'contact with the church of the other Christian churches in this country. We are however, unable to subscribe to any steps dealing with the political life'. Nor did the Mission want to create an impression that it participated in actions which were known to be directed against the government.<sup>54</sup>

Even had they wanted to, the German missions would have been precluded from exercising any great influence on the CCSA as a result of the world wars which, as noted earlier, seriously affected their work. World War II not only damaged their administration and infrastructure, but also devastated their ethnic theology because of its apparent resemblances to Nazi racial ideology.<sup>55</sup> In the years following the war, local German missionaries found themselves at odds not only with the CCSA but also with their own

headquarters in Germany, which had been taken over by a new and fiercely anti-racist group of administrators.<sup>56</sup> Their reaction was to withdraw from public affairs to an even greater extent than beforehand. When Dr Hans Florin wrote his study on *Lutherans in South Africa* in the early 1970s, he found that despite their numerical strength it was 'somewhat difficult to sketch a portrait of the Lutheran image in South Africa because in proportion to the general Christian image in the country, there is embarrassingly little to report'.<sup>57</sup>

As will be made clear later, the new generation of German missionary administrators who began moving into South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s were to play a much larger role in the SACC. They also strongly urged the local Lutherans to abolish their ethnically differentiated structures. They found a willing audience among blacks, who had produced leading thinkers on black theology such as Dr Manas Buthelezi. They rejected ethnic approaches because they so nearly resembled those of apartheid philosophy<sup>58</sup> and when they took control of the churches, blacks acted to eliminate the ethnic divisions between them. In December 1975 the four separate Lutheran churches united to form one 'Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa', which signalled the eclipse of the theology of Graul and Warneck in this country.

### *The American Board Mission*

The Lutherans were not the only standard bearers of the three-self formula within the Ecumenical Bloc. Another, was the American Board Mission which, under the leadership of Anderson, as noted earlier, had taken a lead in the creation of that formula. In terms of that theory, the American Board Mission founded the Bantu Congregational Church early in the twentieth century. However, although it produced some outstanding individual figures such as John Dube and Chief Albert Luthuli, who headed the ANC and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, it was never very successful as an organisation. By 1935, after a century



of mission work, it had a mere 8 000 members and the number had barely passed the 10 000 mark 30 years later. While it became a member of the CCSA in 1961, its exact status and even its name remained uncertain right up to the time when it was absorbed into the United Congregational Church in 1968 along with the LMS and the Congregational Union.<sup>59</sup>

One of the reasons for its lack of success was that, unlike the CPSA and Methodist Church, the founding mission suffered from an ongoing lack of personnel and financial resources. Thus, in 1850, 15 years after the mission had commenced work in South Africa, there were only 13 missionary families in the field, and that number decreased progressively. In 1885 there were 10 ordained missionaries and only 8 in 1910. Financial resources forthcoming from the United States of America to support the mission were correspondingly meagre, rising from around \$US7 000 in 1885 to \$US13 000 in 1910. So desperate was the financial position that in 1897 missionaries had to accept a cut in salary and 'respectfully refused' a request for another from the mission authorities in 1899. The reason for the shortage of funds was simply that the initial resistance of the Zulu to conversion made it not seem worthwhile to sink more money into the work in Natal. Other, more productive fields in terms of converts, such as Turkey and India, enjoyed far greater financial support.<sup>60</sup> Inevitably, the small investment by the American Board in South Africa was reflected in equally poor membership returns. It was not a shining example of the success of the three-self formula.

However, one of its missionaries, James Dexter Taylor, played a crucial role in the CCSA, but there his priorities were focused on using the organisation as vehicle for the propagation of liberal multiracialism, not indigenous selfhood among black Christians. Apart from his remarks about the lack of black participation in the CCSA made after the Tambaram conference, he said little or nothing in its counsels on this issue.

### *The Scots Presbyterian mission*

The mission of the United Free Church of Scotland also deserves attention in the context of the three self-formula because it produced an indigenous church at an early stage. Its mission centre was in Tembuland in the then Transkei, but it is better known for its famous school in Lovedale in the Eastern Cape. Many of its leaders too, played a vital role in the CCSA. Among them was R H W Shepherd ('Shepherd of Lovedale'), who was moved to Lovedale after serving in Tembuland for seven years.<sup>61</sup> Another important figure was the Rev John Lennox; he pleaded for the establishment of separate 'native churches' at the GMC meeting of 1909. Dr A Wilkie, principal of the Lovedale School and Dr Alexander Kerr, principal of Fort Hare University, founded in 1915, were also well-known members of this group.

All strongly supported the establishment of the first 'young church' to emerge from mission work in South Africa, the Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC).<sup>62</sup> The early emergence of this church was due to developments in the various Presbyterian churches in Scotland during the nineteenth century. In 1900 two of these churches, the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church, merged. Both churches had undertaken missionary work in South Africa and had mission stations in the Eastern Cape. In 1920 the United Church sent representatives to this country to attempt to effect unity between these missions. One of the options they canvassed was a merger of both missions in the local Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA). That was strongly resisted by the group mentioned earlier, who, on the basis of the pattern in other white-dominated churches, thought that black mission converts would become 'second-class citizens' in the white-dominated PCSA.<sup>63</sup> They argued in favour of an autonomous church being established and won the day. Thus, instead of receiving a large influx of new black members, the PCSA actually handed over one of its regional 'presbyteries', that of Kaffraria, to the BPC.<sup>64</sup>



Another aspect of the solution finally decided on was that the mission organisation of the United Free Church of Scotland (the product of the 1900 merger) would continue as a separate entity, not to carry on mission work, but to provide the administrative and financial support for the large 'plant' – the school, the hospital, the Bible school and the teacher training college at Lovedale, as well as the young Fort Hare University.<sup>65</sup> The mission was moreover, responsible for several hospitals and institutions in other parts of South Africa. It was for this reason that the mission was still in existence in the membership of the SACC in 1972, long after most other mission societies had undergone their 'euthanasia'.

The BPC proved to be a disappointment; it grew very slowly in numbers and in financial self-support, and after a few years its ruling bodies were so racked with dissension that Shepherd, who had been its moderator at one stage, resigned and joined the PCSA, as did Wilkie and an African minister, the Rev J J R Jolobe,<sup>66</sup> who was destined to become the first African moderator of the PCSA in 1972. Shepherd, in his history of Lovedale, published in 1943, admitted that over the previous 20 years the BPC had had 'a chequered history and did not always retain the confidence of the African rank and file'.<sup>67</sup> As will be made clear in the next chapter, the Lovedale missionaries, standing at the centre of the liberal missionary tradition, had very different priorities from those of encouraging the establishment of 'younger churches' when they worked so hard both to bring the CCSA into being and to keep it in existence. Even if they had been strong proponents of the idea of church planting, the record of the BPC would scarcely have given them credibility.

### *The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk opts out*

The NGK, as a member church of the CCSA between 1936 and 1940, was another body which was in a position to focus attention on younger, indigenous churches. Unlike its English-language

counterparts, it was involved in the classical missionary activity of church-planting, not only inside South Africa, but also beyond its borders. It had established foreign missions in Malawi (1888), Zambia (1899), Mozambique (1908), Zimbabwe and Nigeria (1911). In South Africa it had, of course, already established the NGSK for 'coloured' people, (i.e. those of mixed race) in 1881, although its motives in that case were not the same as those of the mission societies involved in church planting, but were rather to entrench racial segregation. The NGK saw the Sendingkerk not so much as a church moving towards autonomy, but rather as a 'coloured department' of the mother church.<sup>68</sup> In this it reflected the church/mission dichotomy of the Methodist Church and the CPSA. Although the NGK established its Federal Council in the 1940s, it had no single, multiracial body to express the unity of the church. While the motives for establishing 'daughter churches' were initially based on racial considerations, they were later justified in terms of the three-self formula which, of course, was also applied to the indigenous churches founded by the NGK outside South Africa. References to the work of Venn and Anderson abound in its missionary and theological publications, while Warneck's prescriptions had the missionary historian J H du Plessis as one of their leading proponents.<sup>69</sup> Still, these were not seen as a model for church planting by the NGK, which placed the emphasis on the salvation of individuals rather than on the salvation of whole peoples, as laid down by Warneck.

Despite the NGK's segregationist approaches it was not seen, either by itself or by other Christian bodies, as standing outside the mainstream of the missionary and ecumenical movement. Its interest in, and acceptance of, both first-phase and second-phase ecumenical bodies were reflected in its large representation at meetings of the GMC; on the international scene it was not only well represented at the 1910 Edinburgh conference but a member of its delegation, Professor J I Marais of Stellenbosch, was appointed to the Continuation Committee.<sup>70</sup> The missionary sector



of the NGK also played a leading role in the formation of the CCSA, although its motives for doing so were very different from those of the English-speaking liberal missionaries. Those motives were set out by the missionary secretary of the NGK in the Cape, the Rev A Murray when, as is recounted in Chapter Three, he joined the Lovedale Presbyterians in pleading with the IMC for Oldham to be sent on a second visit to South Africa in order to establish a Christian Council.

To point out some of the reasons why mission in South Africa has, to some extent, been a failure, and why it is that at the present time there are still 3 million heathen in South Africa who are being evangelised very slowly.<sup>71</sup>

These were traditional missionary concerns of the kind which had prevailed in the international missionary movement before World War I and contrasted with the much greater drive towards socio-political activism evident at the Jerusalem conference of the IMC in 1928 and in the postmillennial approaches of the liberal missionaries in the GMC during the 1920s. Although the direction of the GMC fell increasingly under the control of those missionaries in its later phases,<sup>72</sup> the 'missionary wing' of the NGK was closely involved in the meetings arranged during Mott's visit in 1934 to discuss the establishment of the CCSA. The fact that the Cape synod never joined the CCSA although invited to do so, indicates that as in Ecumenical Bloc churches, the missionaries of the NGK in the Cape did not have a great deal of influence. The position was different in the Transvaal, where the moderator of the synod, Dr William Nicol, was vitally interested in missions. His influence ensured that both the white and the African synods in that province became members of the CCSA, although no other NGK synod did so.

The clash of Afrikaner and British nationalism, which had led to the bitter and destructive South African War of 1899 to 1902,

was a cause of deep underlying tension between the Afrikaner NGK and the English-language churches. The question of black/white relationships constituted another area of deep discord since, as noted earlier, the NGK was committed to racial segregation, the English-language churches to multiracialism. While its racial approaches did not exclude the NGK from the missionary mainstream, there were few illusions about the difficulties their differences over the racial question would cause between the NGK and the other churches in the CCSA. However, the British and American missionaries who were eager to establish the CCSA had no option but to accept the presence of the NGK in its ranks because without it, the new body would not have had enough credibility to persuade the church wings of the CPSA and the Methodist Church to join. For this reason too, the NGK was accorded a prime role in the CCSA, Nicol being elected as its first president and one of its young ministers, the Rev Murray du Toit, as its secretary. That there were grave misgivings about this appears from a confidential memorandum submitted to the IMC by Kenneth Grubb, a representative of the World Dominion Press, a leading British church publication house. Grubb, a respected commentator on missionary affairs, attended the founding conference of the CCSA and commented: 'Some think . . . that too high a price has been paid for Dutch co-operation . . . there was evident effort at Bloemfontein as far as possible to limit the influence of the Lovedale group; indeed, Shepherd did not get a fair deal.'<sup>73</sup> Shepherd was certainly more deserving of the post of general secretary of the CCSA than Murray du Toit, having been the organiser-in-chief of Mott's tour in 1934, which led to the formation of the CCSA. He had taken over the secretaryship of the Continuation Committee when the original secretary, Dr H G F Kuschke of the Berlin Mission, found it impossible to continue.<sup>74</sup> However, Shepherd and the 'Lovedale group' referred to by Grubb were too liberal to be acceptable to the NGK; Mott's own preference for the secretaryship of the Continuation Committee, Edgar Brookes, had been set aside for the same reason. Kuschke was accepted as a



compromise.<sup>75</sup> Instead of becoming general secretary of the CCSA, Shepherd was merely made literature secretary, although the *South African Outlook*, which he edited, was adopted as the official journal of the CCSA together with the NG journal *Die Koningsbode* ('King's Messenger'). Grubb believed that the appointment of Murray du Toit had a near disastrous effect on the CCSA. He was, wrote Grubb, 'a young man with practically no experience of the ministry and none of mission work' and he described him as 'an intelligent and tactless man, and quite inefficient at business'.<sup>76</sup> In a later discussion on the CCSA with IMC officials, recorded in a private and confidential minute, Grubb repeated his charge of incompetence against du Toit, complaining that 'he does not seem to have the capacity to draft far-seeing policies nor has he the authority to place things before either the Dutch Church or the Government'.<sup>77</sup>

That the alliance between the NGK and the English-speaking liberal missionaries in the CCSA was bound to be difficult was frankly recognised by Nicol in his first presidential address to the CCSA in 1936. He pointed to the lack of bilingualism in the English-language-dominated CCSA as a fundamental difficulty, but even more serious were differences on 'almost all questions that affected the natives'. This applied, for instance, to education, where the 'new view' represented by the English-language missionaries advocated providing equal education for Africans and whites, while the 'old view' in the NGK 'used to be unfavourable [towards] all education for natives beyond the minimum requirements of Evangelism and would not have originated secondary and university education for them.' There was no sign of any drawing together on social contact ('the older view is determined to maintain complete social segregation') or on political matters, a sphere in which the 'older view' had been gaining ground, having been formulated and entrenched in legislation. Despite these 'painful admissions', said Nicol, he still thought it necessary for the two schools of thought to get together in the CCSA for the sake of Christian unity.<sup>78</sup>

Moreover, Nicol appears to have had a long-term strategy designed to counter the influence of the liberal missionaries in the CCSA. That strategy was based on an assumption that seven NGK synods would enter the CCSA where they would be able to combine their influence with that of the conservative, anti-liberal German mission societies.<sup>79</sup> This plan had been frustrated by the failure of any of the NGK synods outside the Transvaal to take up the offer of membership in the CCSA, while the Lutheran missions refused to take any kind of activist role.<sup>80</sup> Nicol thus found himself isolated in the CCSA. For their part, the English-language missionaries were becoming increasingly impatient of having to compromise their views in order to accommodate those of the NGK. In a letter of April, 1939, the principal of the Lovedale School, A W Wilkie, complained to Rheinnalt Jones, founder of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) and by then a 'Natives Representative' in the Senate of the South African parliament:

I wish to say quite frankly that I am distressed at our impotence to express as a "Christian Council", the views which are held so strongly by all the Churches other than the Dutch Reformed Church . . . Our pronouncements to be "unanimous" have to be so watered down as to be practically useless. We are continually compromising to attain unanimity.<sup>81</sup>

Further evidence of increasing tension appears from a private and confidential letter to an IMC official, Miss J H Gibson, from Shepherd dated 7 May 1939. The CCSA, wrote Shepherd, had come near to 'a mishap of no ordinary kind' when the secretary du Toit 'turned up' in Cape Town a month before the biennial meeting of that year and tried to arrange a meeting of local members of the 'committee' [probably Executive] at short notice to set up a report-back meeting for South African delegates who had attended the IMC's Tambaram conference the previous year. When this proved impossible, he proceeded with some of his friends



[‘mostly Dutch and without connection to the Council’] to arrange segregated report-back meetings. ‘For weeks Cape Town has been seething with racial feeling owing to the segregation proposals,’ wrote Shepherd. ‘If we had held such meetings, I think the Council would have been doomed.’ Du Toit’s plan was frustrated both by the refusal of the Moravian Church to allow a segregated meeting on its premises and by protests from different parts of the country, reported Shepherd.<sup>82</sup>

When eventually the Tambaram report-back meeting was held, the NGK participants refused to speak anything but Afrikaans, despite a plea that they give the gist of their speeches in English for the benefit of missionaries from outside South Africa who could not understand Afrikaans. Tensions on this point came to the surface when, after a request that the speech by Professor Ben Marais ‘be made known in English’, the chairman remarked ‘that bilingualism is the cross of South Africa,’ adding that while ‘he could not bring pressure to bear on speakers, anyone who wished to repeat himself in another language might do so.’<sup>83</sup> The invitation appears not have been taken up by anyone.

Nicol’s term of office as president in the CCSA ended in 1939, although he remained on as vice-president. By then it was clear that the attempt to ignore the divide between the integrationist/assimilationist and the segregation/apartheid positions in the CCSA had not only failed, but was exacerbating the divisions. The English/Afrikaner split and party-political tensions caused by South Africa’s entry into World War II was probably the final straw which prompted Nicol officially to withdraw NGK participation in the CCSA in May 1940, although he gave the familiar reasons relating to the lack of bilingualism, differences on the colour issue and the imminent formation of a new body, the NGK Federal Mission Council, for doing so.<sup>84</sup>

It is significant, none the less, that during the period when the NGK played a major role in the CCSA that that body experienced its closest involvement in an international missionary conference; that of Tambaram in 1938. The CCSA gave careful attention to the composition of the South African delegation which, numbering 13, was the largest ever sent to an IMC conference from the country. It included four 'nationals', that is, blacks, at the request of the IMC president, John Mott. One of them was Chief Albert Luthuli, who attended as a representative of the Natal Missionary Conference.<sup>85</sup> The CCSA further prepared the ground by arranging two conferences – one for missionaries and churchmen at the Adams Mission in Natal, which was attended by over 100 participants and aroused much enthusiasm.<sup>86</sup> An earlier conference on the theme of 'The Younger Church in South Africa' was held at Lovedale specifically for African ministers. Perhaps because it took place almost a full year before the Tambaram meeting itself, it attracted only 16 participants. Another reason for the lack of black interest in this conference may be that the arrangements were largely in the hands of white missionaries, and the documents they drew up were both paternalistic and prescriptive in tone, laying what the missionaries thought would be good for the 'younger churches' and containing little or no reflection of the thinking of blacks themselves.<sup>87</sup>

Both the preparations for, and reports from, Tambaram were extensively covered in the *South African Outlook*, and besides the report-back meeting in Cape Town in 1939 referred to earlier, there were also direct report-backs by delegates to the CCSA Executive. It was the Tambaram conference, as has also been noted, which was a revelation to Dexter Taylor at least, of the way the CCSA was falling behind as far as black participation in its councils was concerned. Had this kind of 'input' from the international missionary movement continued, as it would very likely have done if the NGK had continued to play a major role in the CCSA, the emphasis on younger, indigenous churches might have been greater.



In the final analysis, however, the presence of the NGK in the CCSA probably had the opposite effect. The NGK-imposed 'impotence', to use Wilkie's term, would inevitably have been coupled in the minds of the English-language participants in the CCSA with the mission theology favoured by the NGK. Here would be another reason for their rejecting any theology or organisation such as that prescribed by the three-self formula, which seemed to smack of segregationist approaches.

### *Conclusion*

The marginalisation of the mission societies and of three-self indigenous churches was due to three factors. Firstly, there was the dominance of the mission field by the CPSA and Methodist Church, both of which stood outside the missionary mainstream. Secondly, there was the deliberate 'self-marginalisation' of the largest mission societies, the Berlin and Hermannsburg missions, which were closer to that mainstream. Thirdly, the experience of Ecumenical Bloc churches in working with the NGK in the CCSA could only have caused a negative reaction against the theology of indigenous church-planting theology, which the lack of success among the early black, independent 'younger churches' would have done nothing to counter. A fourth and even more decisive factor, the dominance of the CCSA by the proponents of liberalism, deserves a chapter to itself.

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38. *A Manual of the Laws and Discipline of the Methodist Church of South Africa* (Cape Town, 1946), 52–3.
39. CPSA archive, AD 785, Board of Missions.
40. Lewis and Edwards, *Historical Records of the Church of the Province of South Africa*, 214.
41. O Victor, *The Salient of South Africa*. Revised ed (London, 1948), 64.
42. Interview with the author, 1983.
43. *Ecunews* 20/73, 13/7/73, 2.
44. The occupants of the presidency were: 1941–33: the Rev Arthur Wellington, Methodist; 1943–1948: Archbishop Darbyshire, CPSA; 1948–1950: the Rev A T Whalley, Methodist; 1950–1952: the Rev E W Grant, Methodist; 1952–1956: Archbishop Clayton, CPSA; the next incumbent, Dr R H W Shepherd, who served between 1956 and 1960, was a Presbyterian, but was very much in the missionary tradition of his predecessors. The final break with the tradition of CPSA/Methodist leadership was the election of the Rev Brown, a Congregationalist, to the presidency in 1960.  
The occupants of the secretary's post were: 1941–1945: the Rev E W Grant, Methodist; 1946–1950: the Rev S G Pitts, Methodist; 1951–1961: the Rev A W Blaxall, CPSA.
45. Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Mission in South Africa*, 464.
46. D N van der Merwe, *Van Paternalisme tot Selfbeskikking: Die Berlynsse Sendinggenootskap en Kerkrigting in Transvaal, 1904–1962*. (DLitt et Phil thesis, University of South Africa, 1980), 280.
47. G B A Gerdener, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field* (Pretoria, 1958), 82.
48. These two missions contained 73 per cent of all black Lutherans in South Africa in 1936, according to the *Christian Handbook of South Africa*. This was the last detailed breakdown of mission membership statistics ever published.



49. G Scriba with G Lislrud, 'Lutheran Missions and Churches in South Africa,' in *Christianity in South Africa*, ed. R Elphick and R Davenport, 173–194.
50. H J Grosskopf, 'Indigenous Churches. (Reflections Suggested by the Adams Conference).' *South African Outlook*, vol 68, no. 811, October 1938, 225–7.
51. W W M Eiselen, 'Duitse Sendingwerk in Suid-Afrika en die Bantoevolksei.' *Journal of Racial Affairs*, no. 3, April 1957, 113–20.
52. W G Mills, 'Millennial Christianity, British Imperialism and African Nationalism', in *Christianity in South Africa*, ed. R Elphick and R Davenport, 347–369.
53. CCQ no. 58, Second and Third Quarters, 1960, 2.
54. SACC Archive, AC 623/6. Letter from Dr W von Krause, Superintendent General and T F R Otto, General Manager of the Hermannsburg Mission, to Dr A W Blaxall, Secretary/Treasurer, CCSA. 3 August 1960.
55. Van der Merwe, *Van Paternalisme tot Selfbeskikking: Die Berlyne Sendinggenootskap*, 265.
56. Eiselen, *Duitse Sendingwerk in Suid-Afrika* remarked apropos this development: 'Veral vir objektief denkende sendeling . . . nl. die Duitse sendeling in Suid-Afrika het 'n moeilike tyd aangebreek. Sy hoofbestuur oorsee eis dat hy hom skik na die eise van die tyd maar dit kan hy nie met sy eie ervaring . . . versoen nie . . . Ons simpatie gaan uit na hierdie sendelinge . . . Hulle pad is vandag donker.'
57. H Florin, *Lutherans in South Africa* (Durban, 1967), 67.
58. *Ecunews*, 32/73, 10/10/1973; 5, 6/74, 4/3/1974, 3.
59. A F Christofersen, *Adventuring with God: The Story of the American Board Mission in South Africa*, ed. R W Sales (Durban, 1967), 104.
60. L E Switzer, *The Problem of an African Mission in a White-dominated Multi-racial Society: The American Zulu Mission in South Africa*. (DPhil thesis University of Natal, 1971), 47–50.
61. G C Oosthuizen, *Shepherd of Lovedale* (Johannesburg, 1970), 101–2.

62. R H W Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa. The Story of a Century, 1841–1941* (Lovedale, 1940), 340–45.
63. This and several facts in this paragraph were supplied by Professor Calvin Cook, now emeritus professor of the Theology Faculty at Rhodes University, Grahamstown.
64. Gerdener, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field*, 66.
65. Interview with Professor Cook.
66. Professor Cook supplied the information on the Rev Jolobe. It might be mentioned that, in time, Shepherd rejoined the BPC and after being elected its moderator, was also elected moderator of the Church of Scotland in 1958.
67. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, 344–5.
68. N J Smith, *Die Planting van Afsonderlike Kerke vir Nie-blanke Bevolkingsgroepe deur die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika*. (Cape Town, 1974), 206.
69. *Ibid.*, 208.
70. Joint . . . archives. Folder – the Rev J du Plessis (Stellenbosch), Box 1227, m–f [hereafter referred to as ‘mf’] 134.
71. Joint . . . archives. File – visit by J H Oldham, 1925/6. Box 1127, mf. 134. Letter dated 12 March 1926.
72. Refer to Chapter Three.
73. The Joint International Missionary Council/Conference of British Missionary Societies Archives. Africa and India: 1910–1945. [hereafter referred to as the ‘Joint . . . archives’] Box 1226; South Africa, Mission General File. File – visit by Kenneth G Grubb, 1936. A report of a visit to South Africa, June/August 1936, 52. Box 1226, mf 130–1.
74. CCSA. Minutes of the Meeting of the Continuation Committee, 4/9/35/ SACC archive, AC 623/17.4 (c).
75. R C Mackie, *Layman Extraordinary* (London 1965), 88.
76. Joint . . . archives, 1936 Box 1226, 52.



77. Notes on the discussion with Mr Kenneth Grubb on the South African Christian Council. Joint . . . archives, loc. cit.
78. *The Star*, 19 January 1937, 16.
79. This strategy was set out by Nicol in an address to the missionary study circle of the Student Christian Association (SCA) of the University of Pretoria in October 1943. See R H W Shepherd and E W Grant 'The Christian Council of South Africa.' *IRM*, vol. 33, July 1944, 258–266.
80. Strassberger, *Ecumenism in South Africa*, 186.
81. SAIRR archive, AD 843 70.1.7.
82. Joint . . . archives. File – Rev J M du Toit; Christian Council Secretary. Box 1225, mf. 117.
83. *South African Outlook*, vol 68, 112.
84. Gerdener, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field*, 175.
85. CCSA. Executive Minute no. 117, 5/7/1938.
86. *Et Alias* [CCSA newsletter]. Year 2, September 1938, 12.
87. *The Younger Church in South Africa. A Contribution to Missionary Work in South Africa and to the International Missionary Council at Madras, December 1938*. Joint . . . archives (printed material) Box 1225, mf. 127.