

Assimilationist Liberal Ideology in the Ecumenical Bloc

The unitary, 'colour-blind' pattern which came to dominate the churches of the Ecumenical Bloc dovetailed very neatly with, and indeed probably contributed to, an emergent strand of liberal ideology in South Africa which emerged in the 1920s. Liberal thinking, of course, was well entrenched in South before then. 'Cape liberalism' had been a feature of the politics of the Cape Colony, then under British rule – and from the outset this needs to be distinguished from late twentieth-century liberalism outside South Africa, where it is generally associated with advocacy of economic prescriptions relating to open markets, free trade and small government, and where it is mostly thought of as the hallmark of conservative business interests, political parties and governments. Economic issues were not the major issue for white South African liberals who, in Davenport's terms, were inheritors of the European liberal tradition in 'the four fundamental fields [of] access to justice in the broadest sense of the term, to freedom of speech, economic freedom, and political rights'.¹ One of the outcomes of this tradition was the institution of the 'Cape franchise' which allowed blacks limited opportunities both to vote for, and to enter, the parliament of the colony.

Cape liberalism was to form the basis of the much more systematised and disciplined ideology which, as mentioned earlier, emerged in the 1920s. Its proponents hoped it would be advanced through two institutional vehicles, these being the SAIRR, and also the CCSA. In fact, as will be argued, the driving force behind the CCSA was much more the advancement of the new liberal ideology than were the missiological concerns of the IMC.

Perhaps the clearest statement of this new liberalism was advanced in 1927 by its foremost protagonist at the time, J D Rheinallt Jones. He was a devoted churchman (a Presbyterian), but as a layman, was also very active in purely secular organisations. He was the registrar of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg during the 1920s and became a senator in the South African parliament in the 1930s. Between those two occupations, he was the first secretary of the SAIRR after that body had been formed in 1929. He had also been the moving spirit behind that organisation's precursor, the Joint Councils which began from 1921 onwards to bring blacks and whites together for discussion and action in various areas of South Africa. In 1927 he addressed the Natal Missionary Council on 'the foundation of missionary policy', putting forward five propositions:

1. That mankind [sic] is one species.
2. That all races have fundamentally similar customs and institutions.
3. That these have their roots in common principles of thought.
4. That the most advanced races have emerged from the primitive stage of life and thought.
5. That all races would eventually assimilate the standards and ideals of the most advanced.

That last proposition, he said, applied particularly to the 'Bantu' in South Africa whose culture was by no means as primitive as was generally thought; its backwardness being due to African servitude to animist beliefs. The world was rapidly approaching the

day of a common civilisation, which could be a Christian civilisation because of the 'amazing power' of Christianity to overcome racial barriers.²

Several important issues emerge from this statement. Firstly, it is focused on racial issues and hardly touches on the 'four fundamentals' of liberalism put forward by Davenport earlier. In that regard, point 5 is particularly important because it sets out the basic feature of the new liberalism: its ascription to racial, cultural and religious assimilationism. That, in turn, arose from a continuing belief in the normative nature of white, Western culture. Conversely, the assertion of the essential oneness of humankind stood in sharp contrast to the bases of the three-self formula and naturally to its extension into the ethnic theology of European continental missions and of the NGK. On this score Rheinallt Jones stated that he viewed with suspicion

every movement for confining the Bantu to their own culture, for almost invariably it has cloaked a real desire to withhold from them the wider benefits of civilisation . . . To sum up, I see nothing but to preach the essential unity of mankind, and that in the words of Cicero . . . "there is no race which cannot attain virtue". In the light of this faith we must renew our determination to Christianise and civilise the Native people; we must oppose all measures that have for their purpose the setting apart of the Natives from the common good of the country, the setting up of barriers against their full and free development as individuals and as citizens of the state.³

The idea of the ability of backward peoples to be assimilated into advanced cultures was not a new one. Marks and Rathbone in their introduction to *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa* argue that the cluster of concepts centred on optimistic Victorian ideas of 'progress' and 'improvement', with their strong implication of the individual ability to be assimilated, lay at the base of the Cape liberal tradition.⁴ While they argue that this idea 'had its roots in the practicalities of Free Trade imperialism', the

much more forcefully and explicitly stated doctrine of the cultural ability to be assimilated as set forth by Rheinallt Jones was based on 'scientific' conclusions arising out of research in fields such as anthropology, sociology and psychology.

Rheinallt Jones's commitment to formulating a systematic ideology dated back to the period immediately following World War I, when he was strongly influenced by a Ghanaian visitor, Dr Kwegyir Aggrey, who came to South Africa under the aegis of the American Phelps-Stokes Commission which was investigating race relations world-wide. Rheinallt Jones later recounted how Aggrey had approached him 'to unburden his heart about the racial situation in Johannesburg as he saw it'. Aggrey was appalled by the bitterness towards whites which he discovered among the African population. Rheinallt Jones, also deeply disturbed, listened willingly to Aggrey's suggestion that joint councils of whites and blacks on the pattern of those set up in the USA, should be established in South Africa. Later, as Aggrey was being escorted to an office in Johannesburg, a white attendant tried to prevent him from entering the lift. 'That incident confirmed for me a personal responsibility for helping to bring about happier relationships,' wrote Rheinallt Jones.⁵

That, of course, was just one incident which spurred Rheinallt Jones and others who thought like him into action to counter the rising tide of white, segregationist sentiment they saw in South Africa. Kinghorn states that it was in these years that the 'era of apartheid dawned'. This was after a racially defined ideology of nationalism had been imported from Germany, Spain, Portugal and Italy. It taught that 'humanity is genetically divided into inferior and superior groups. White superiority could be considered a fact of nature'.⁶ Kinghorn points out that this new ideology also claimed to be founded on 'scientific principles' and had the leader of the Afrikaner nationalists, General J B M Hertzog as its most formidable proponent. Long before he became prime

minister in 1924, Hertzog had been propounding the virtue of, and necessity for, segregationist policies of a much more sweeping nature than anything that had been contemplated until then. Hertzog and his followers argued for the maintenance and extension of segregation on the grounds that black culture and civilisation were permanently inferior to white, Western civilisation. 'As against the European the Native stands as an eight-year-old child next to man of greying experience,' wrote Hertzog in 1926, 'a child in religion, in moral conviction; without art and without science; with the most primitive requirements and a most rudimentary knowledge of how to supply these needs'.⁷

That a need to challenge this notion of the permanent inferiority of Africans had become uppermost in Rheinallt Jones's thinking is evident from the article quoted above, which he wrote in 1926 for the *South African Journal of Science* and which was entitled 'The Need of a Scientific Basis for South African Native Policy'. In the light of what was said earlier about the 'scientific' basis of segregationist ideology, the choice of this journal was significant. It is evident from that article that he and others had been doing a great deal of 'scientific' research into racial questions. Among those mentioned by him were the historian Macmillan and he also noted:

Our universities are now being organised to undertake a study of Native life, so that the moment seems opportune to suggest lines of research through which the Universities can contribute even more richly than they now do, to political thought and practice in South Africa.⁸

After about five years of research and planning, it seems that by then Rheinallt Jones felt confident enough about the new liberal ideological weaponry to launch his strategy for organising the liberal forces in South Africa. Thus Legassick dates the emergence of a new strain of liberalism to 1927 when the Johannesburg Joint

Council of Europeans and Non-Europeans gave evidence before the Select Committee on the Hertzog 'Native Bills' in which they insisted that the land issue had to be considered separately from the franchise and not only demanded a better land deal for Africans but rejected the abolition of the Cape African franchise as a quid pro quo.⁹ The next step was to convert the Joint Councils into the SAIRR, which happened in 1929.

To this secular organisation Rheinnalt Jones and his fellow liberals hoped, would be added a Christian Council to replace the GMC, something which had been mooted for a number of years. In 1929 he wrote to Dexter Taylor about the proposed Christian Council:

It seems to me that a great deal of the work of the Christian Council is done by the Joint Councils and the Missionary Conferences in South Africa, and I do not see any reason why one organiser could not carry on the duties of a Federation of Joint Councils and the present Missionary Conference. It might be possible to arrange that the bodies meet separately and together in the same town and at the same period. Thus, say, the next meeting of the Missionary Conference might be held at the beginning of one week, followed by a joint conference of missionary bodies, joint councils, and other bodies interested in native affairs . . . which in turn would be followed by a conference of the Federation of Joint Councils (with a view to action on the resolution passed at the combined conference).

I feel that we must have the separate organisations in order to bring in people who would not be attracted to one or to the other.¹⁰

In the same year he was co-opted to the Executive of the GMC, as happened again in 1933 when both he and Dr Edgar Brookes, another noted liberal, were co-opted as representatives of the SAIRR.¹¹ Rheinallt Jones was present at both the final conference of Mott's visit to South Africa in 1934 at which the decision to

establish the CCSA was taken, as well as at the founding conference in Bloemfontein in 1936.

That the CCSA and the SAIRR were still seen as complementary agents despite the disappointment at the former's performance during its first few years of existence, is evident from the notes of the confidential discussions between Kenneth Grubb and IMC officials in 1938, already alluded to, during which Grubb remarked:

With regard to the Institute of Race Relations and the Council there are aspects of the Institute of Race Relations' work which could be taken up by the Council if it were more adequately staffed. At the present time they would not be dealt with adequately. Mr Rheinallt Jones had hoped that the Council might relieve the Institute of certain aspects of his work.¹²

The disappointment about the record of the CCSA evident in the last sentence arose out of its paralysis caused by the conflict between the NGK participants and the liberal missionaries in its ranks described in Chapter Two.

The liberal missionaries

Elphick remarks that 'the question of Christian links to liberalism is central to understanding the liberal tradition in South Africa' and that 'in the interwar years an extraordinarily high proportion of so-called liberals were intimately related to churches and missions'.¹³ Thus it was natural that Rheinallt Jones's organisational strategy as well as his ideological formulations of the late 1920s would be welcome to a group of missionaries who, at that time, were becoming dominant in the GMC and who were later to form a key group in the CCSA. Among these was the Shepherd of Lovedale, while other important figures were the Rev John Lennox, Dr A Wilkie, principal of the Lovedale School, and Dr Alexander Kerr, principal of Fort Hare University. To the Lovedale Presbyterians may be added the missionaries of the important Methodist

school at Healdtown and those of the Anglican St Matthew's mission at Keiskammahoeck. This was the heartland of the liberal missionaries.

A mission not located in that heartland, but which played an equally important part in the GMC and the CCSA, was the American Board Mission of which the Rev James Dexter Taylor was the leading representative, while other American Board Missionaries also made important contributions to the ecumenical movement. Another mission which needs special mention in connection with the GMC and the CCSA was that of the Swiss Reformed Church working among the Tsonga-speaking people in the Northern Transvaal. One of its missionaries, Dr H P Junod, recognised as a leading anthropologist in South Africa, was also a leading figure in the CCSA during the 1930s and 1940s.

An important point as far as these missionaries were concerned, is that they did not place much emphasis on 'converting the heathen'. Instead, post-millennialism had become central to their thinking and they subscribed to a strongly contextualised theology. In the international sphere, the new trend was strongly evident at the Jerusalem conference of the IMC. That meeting, the Rev Max Yergan, the South African representative of the YMCA, told the GMC in 1928, 'was . . . clear and convinced as to the social implications of the Gospel'. Among its major findings was one on race relations which stated, among other things:

Contacts between economically more powerful and weaker races, frequently lead to exploitation, resulting in widespread injustice and suffering. It is imperative that Christians, and especially those in the immediate areas concerned, should take steps to end these conditions by creating, informing and influencing public opinion and by presenting their constructive plans before responsible administrative authorities, and should press, where necessary, for legislative action

In a situation in which races existed side by side, the Jerusalem conference agreed, churches and missions should strive to

establish the utmost practicable equality in such matters as the right to enter and follow all occupations and professions, the right to freedom of movement and other rights before civil and criminal law, and obtaining and exercise of the functions of citizenship without discrimination between men on grounds of race or colour, subject always to such general legislation as may be necessary to maintain the social and economic standards of the community as a whole.¹⁴

These points are interestingly congruent with the 'four fundamentals' of liberalism of Davenport although there is no hint of assimilationist philosophy in the Jerusalem conference statements. Still, locked in their struggle with segregationist philosophy and practice in South Africa, the liberal missionaries welcomed this sort of theological ammunition from international Christian forces. In addition, the idea of establishing a 'Christian social order' which was strongly advocated at the Jerusalem conference, provided an invaluable ideological framework to set up an alternative to the situation of racial discrimination and economic exploitation prevailing in South Africa.

Liberalism under threat

The liberal missionaries had already taken control of the GMC by 1932. The Executive elected at the last GMC meeting held in that year was headed by the Rev John Lennox of Lovedale, while its secretary and treasurer was R H W Shepherd. Dexter Taylor was the associate secretary and the Methodist missionary E W Grant was the recording secretary.¹⁵ It was to this Executive that Rheinallt Jones and Edgar Brookes were co-opted in 1933. The collusion established between Rheinallt Jones and the nascent CCSA at that time lasted for close on two decades. It is most evident in the fact that during the 1940s, CCSA Executive meetings were planned to coincide with those of the SAIRR, both as to

date and place since so many Executive members of the CCSA also served on the Executive of the SAIRR.¹⁶ This was exactly what Rheinallt Jones had recommended in 1929 and indicated that his strategy planned at that stage had worked in at least this respect.

The possibility of establishing a Christian Council was first raised by the secretary of the IMC, J H Oldham, when he visited South Africa in the early part of 1926. The idea found a ready response among missionaries of all persuasions, particularly the 'liberal missionaries' described earlier. Their feelings were set out in a letter sent with the official sanction of the Board of the Lovedale Institution by one of their number, Dr Alexander Kerr (the first principal of Fort Hare) to the IMC requesting that Oldham be allowed to return to South Africa to help with the establishment of a Christian Council. Kerr wrote to the IMC:

The missionary situation must always be peculiarly difficult in South Africa because of the relatively large European population, the majority of whom may be said to be decidedly hostile to Missionary effort. The Natives are also beginning to throw up their own leaders, some of whom are not always careful to state the case for the native people with discretion. The Government is introducing legislation which will raise discussions ranging over the whole field of race relationships.¹⁷

An analysis of the points set out by Kerr reveals how defensive the motivations he put forward for the formation of a Christian Council were and, equally important, that it was secular pressures rather than theological aspirations which formed the basis of his plea.

Kerr's letter reveals three major areas of concern. Firstly, that the majority of whites were 'decidedly hostile to Missionary effort'. That, of course, went all the way back to the events surrounding the 'Black Circuit' of 1812 and Kerr's concern on this score is

echoed by several other missionary sources. For instance, at its 1906 meeting, the Rev A E Le-Roy told the GMC:

Long before the eager watcher catches his first sight of South Africa he has been told over and over again, and always by those who profess to have the most intimate knowledge of the Native, that the missionaries are the curse of South Africa.¹⁸

The accusation had been openly made in the halls of the Natal parliament, said Le-Roy. Similar concern about attacks on missionaries was expressed almost 20 years later by the Lovedale missionary, Brownlee J Ross, who observed in the *South African Outlook* that 'instructing missionaries' was a favourite pastime in South Africa, practised by 'the ignorant farmer . . . the new come English graduate profoundly ignorant of the principles that regulate missionary life' while worst of all, 'the red kaffir who does not know X from A lifts up his sweet voice to join the chorus'.¹⁹ In 1916 *The Star* in Johannesburg had felt constrained to reprove a public prosecutor who had remarked during a forgery case in which an African was involved that 'this seems to be the results of education at Lovedale college'.²⁰ It was a typical anti-missionary jibe and the persistence of this kind of attack made the position of particularly the liberal missionaries, with their reputation as 'the friends of the Native', seem very insecure.

The second major area of missionary concern expressed by Kerr, was that the African people were 'beginning to throw up their own leaders'. In the light of their resentment of the AICs, described in Chapter Four, it is not surprising that missionaries also resented the fact that blacks were voicing their own political and economic grievances independently of their missionary 'guardians'. A report of the Commission of Survey and Occupation given to the 1912 meeting of the GMC had noted a 'disquieting increase' of educated, but unconverted, Africans and the general demand among them, 'daily growing more vocal', for political rights.²¹ The

undermining of black confidence in, and respect for, the missionaries was summed up by Professor J H du Plessis in a memorandum covering developments in the South African mission field between 1913 and 1923 sent to the IMC at its request. World War I had had a profound influence on African attitudes, he wrote, since the sight of professedly Christian powers engaged in exterminating one another had undermined ordinary moral sanctions. This, together with economic pressures, had resulted not only in the mineworkers' strike of 1919, riots in Port Elizabeth and the Bondelswarts Rebellion in the former South West Africa (although du Plessis did not mention it, the Bulhoek massacre could have been added to this catalogue of events), but most disturbingly of all for the missionaries, in a riot at Lovedale itself in April 1920, during which damage amounting to more than £2 000 had been done to buildings and stores.²² When an appeal against the sentences imposed on 200 students after this affair had been lodged in the Supreme Court, it was turned down by three presiding judges who agreed that, in fact, the sentences imposed were very lenient. Mr Justice Sampson described the outbreak as 'not a sudden frenzy caused by great provocation, but a long-nursed and premeditated act of lawlessness of the most serious character'.²³

Apart from the alarm caused by these violent actions, the missionaries were also disturbed by the militancy of those 'Native leaders' who, according to Kerr, were 'not always careful to state the case for the native people with discretion'. He probably had Clements Kadalie of the Industrial Commercial Union in mind, and in an attempt to understand the new trends in black political activity better, the Natal Missionary Conference in 1922 invited Jabavu to address it on 'Native Unrest in South Africa'. A basic cause, Kerr said, was that the people were slowly emerging from barbarism, 'or to use a more correct expression out of their African civilization'. While they had remained docile because of their trust in the essential goodness of Englishmen

a remarkable change has come over things; white men both locally and in Britain have become hardened, while on the other hand the black man himself, under the guidance of an ambitious younger generation, has developed intelligence and some feeling of independence that has made him less easy of management. The general result is that since the accomplishment of Union in 1910 there has been a steady feeling of discontent which has been fanned into active unrest during the last four years.²⁴

When, as is recounted in more detail later, the Rev Henry Dyke at the 1912 GMC meeting spoke about missionaries spending their lives in the service of 'the Natives', his words were greeted with applause. The idea that the 'Natives' were turning against 'essentially good white Englishmen' and the missionaries, could only have been viewed by the latter with resentment and apprehension.

Threatened by this rising tide of black nationalism, the missionaries were also acutely aware of the threat posed by the advent of the Nationalist-Labour pact government of 1924. Dr R H W Shepherd, editor of the *South African Outlook* for more than 30 years and also principal of the Lovedale institution, summed up the crucial nature of this development in his history of Lovedale by stating that not only did the policy of the new government emphasise segregation in both the political and economic spheres, but that the Cape liberal policy was being attacked again and again, while legislation that was its 'plain antithesis' was passed through parliament.²⁵ As early as August 1924, the *South African Outlook*, then under the editorship of Shepherd's predecessor Dr D A Hunter, published an editorial in which it stated that while it did not wish to strike a note of alarm,

we should fail in our duty if we did not express the feelings of deep anxiety and apprehension that are oppressing many hearts over what may be portended to the Native people in some recent speeches of the new Government.²⁶

Similar warnings were evident in the denominational press. In September 1924 *The Methodist Churchman* asserted that the policy of the new government would 'restrict the black man indefinitely to a sphere of national life that would deny him the privilege of making the best use of his powers and which cannot be regarded as in harmony with Christian principles'.²⁷ Although the missionary statements quoted professed alarm about the effect of the policies of the Nationalist–Labour government on the black population, it is also likely that the British missionaries who made them were uneasy about the growing strength of Afrikaner nationalism which had brought the National Party to power with the help of the South African Labour Party in 1924 and which was to raise it to even greater heights of power in the general election of 1929.

Against the background of the three factors mentioned in Kerr's letter of 1926 to the IMC, there was little to lighten the gloom of the South African scene for liberal missionaries after World War I. A pervading sense of pessimism among them struck J Merle Davis, director of the Research Department of the IMC, when he visited South Africa in 1932. 'In the Union the missionaries and friends of the Native are a discouraged group,' he stated at the end of his visit.²⁸

The uncertain beginnings of the Christian Council

As stated earlier, the threats to the political fortunes of 'colour-blind' liberalism causes were some of the important motivations for the founding of the CCSA in 1936. The missionaries hoped that that body would be a more effective instrument for defending their values than the loose and unrepresentative structures of the GMC. It took a long time to bring the Christian Council idea to fruition. The IMC secretary, Oldham, was never able to come to South Africa despite the urgent repetition of the pleas of Kerr and by the 1928 meeting of the GMC. Probably because the concept of a Christian Council was so new (the first such council in

Africa was formed in the Congo only in 1924) local churchmen in South Africa did not have the confidence to put it into practice by themselves.²⁹ It was not until the visit of the president of the IMC, John Mott, in 1934 that definite moves in this direction were launched. Mott was received with acclaim wherever he went in South Africa, presiding over a series of regional conferences and a final general conference in Bloemfontein in June 1934, which took the decision to establish the CCSA. That conference set up machinery to give effect to its decision and two years later at an even larger conference, also held in Bloemfontein, the CCSA officially came into existence.

However, there was by no means a triumphal advance to that point. It seems that the euphoria generated by Mott's visit soon evaporated. While the churches joined in the general adulation of Mott during his visit, they were nothing like as enthusiastic about the idea of a Christian Council. A correspondent 'H W G', writing about the formation of the CCSA in *The Methodist Churchman* in July 1936, reported: 'After Dr [sic] Mott's departure the vision faded somewhat, the difficulties loomed above the horizon and "the hearts of many were failing them for fear".³⁰ Several churches which had been invited to do so, failed to join the CCSA, including the Baptist Union, five synods of the NGK and most crucially, the Synod of Bishops of the CPSA. They decided that the church as a whole would not take out membership, but would leave the decision to individual dioceses. The majority on the bench of bishops, the Bishop of Pretoria wrote to the Archbishop of Cape Town in 1939, that he 'doubted the value of the Christian Council . . . and felt that they were not justified in using their scanty funds available in a cause in which they had little faith'.³¹ Only three out of fourteen dioceses decided to affiliate.³² Even the membership of the Methodist Church was not representative of that denomination as a whole, but rather of the Methodist Missionary Society.

Moreover, as related in Chapter Two, the liberal missionary strategy went awry at the founding conference of the CCSA when the 'deliberate attempt', in Grubb's words, to exclude the Lovedale group was successful. However, the liberal missionaries had no alternative but to accept the situation. NGK missionaries had been as keen on the idea of a Christian Council and as active in its formation as they had been. The NGK was closely involved in the meetings arranged during Mott's visit to discuss the formation of the CCSA. Indeed, the NGK sent the largest delegation of any church to the last general conference, while a member of the Cape Synod, Ds A F Louw, was elected convenor of the Continuation Committee set up to do the spadework necessary for the establishment of the CCSA.³³

The years of success

Although the liberated missionaries were excluded from the seats of power in the CCSA at its founding in 1936, they played a crucial role in keeping it together once the NGK had left. While that development might have been welcomed by the liberal missionaries, in the short term it seemed it would have disastrous consequences for the CCSA. The NGK withdrawal raised an even bigger problem, because it immediately prompted the participating Anglican dioceses also to withdraw on the argument that without the membership of the NGK, the CCSA could not hope to be effective. That, in turn, prompted the Methodist Church seriously to consider withdrawal and, in the meantime, it halved its financial contributions to the CCSA, which was already in a state of financial crisis because of the NGK and CPSA withdrawals. Communicating this fact to Mott in a letter of 8 November 1940, Dexter Taylor, who was then acting as the secretary/treasurer of the CCSA, wrote that 'the prospects are not good . . . the Council is still in rather a desperate state but we shall try hard to keep in alive'.³⁴

He expressed their strong motivation for doing so at an Executive meeting called on 29 January 1941 to discuss the future of the CCSA. He pointed out that the NGK was about to form its own Federal Mission Council 'which would inevitably seek to influence the policies of the Government in Native matters along the lines of its own views'. If the CCSA ceased to exist, there would be no united Christian body representative of the 'so-called liberal point of view'. According to a fuller report of the discussion appended to the minute of that meeting, he further pointed out that although weakened by the withdrawals of the NGK and the CPSA, the CCSA still had behind it a very influential section of South African missionary work centred on Lovedale and Fort Hare.³⁵ There he located what was earlier termed the *liberal missionary heartland*.

However, it was Dexter Taylor, not the Lovedale and Fort Hare missionaries, who proved to be the salvation of the CCSA. This he accomplished by persuading the Anglican primate, Archbishop John Darbyshire, to throw his weight behind the organisation. Dexter Taylor had direct contact with the archbishop through the Natal Missionary Conference and also as a result of their common participation in work among Italian prisoners of war. He directed a stream of pleas to Darbyshire to support the CCSA and Darbyshire, who was very interested in missionary work, finally responded favourably.³⁶ He turned his doubtless considerable powers of persuasion on his bench of bishops who, in December 1941 voted to reaffiliate their church to the CCSA. This time the church as a whole, and not merely individual dioceses, came in.³⁷ That, in turn, persuaded the Methodist Church to withdraw its threat of disaffiliation and, assured of the backing of these two major denominations, the missionaries behind the CCSA launched it on a vigorous and successful phase of existence.

Darbyshire's commitment to the CCSA was sealed by his being elected its president in 1943 at its biennial meeting. He proved to be a major acquisition. E W Grant, in his secretarial report given to the biennial meeting of 1943, wrote that the election of Darbyshire 'gave universal satisfaction. He has closely identified himself with the work of the Council, is in complete accord with its aims, and possesses those qualities of leadership which its growing work demands. Under his guidance a period of continued development is assured'.³⁸ Darbyshire was a forceful personality and a typical 'prince of the church'. His 'liberalism' may be judged from the following passage from an article he wrote for the *IRM* in 1944 under the title of 'The African in South Africa.' Although he began by giving a long description of the disabilities suffered by Africans, he also wrote:

The African is by no means a fool. He is naturally clever at languages; he is an apt workman, although perhaps inclined to be spasmodic in his efforts; he likes in towns to ape the smart set and is eager to follow European fashions: he wants to learn. One of the things he has learnt is nationalism and the white man has done a great deal to provoke the more intelligent and perhaps one should say, more prosperous Africans into a strong anti-white complex . . . only a small number of Africans are as yet qualified to be leaders in a general advance in civilized life.³⁹

That this evoked no comment or reaction from the missionaries ('the friends of the native') in the CCSA is indicative that they found Darbyshire's views unexceptionable. In any case, he was far too valuable an acquisition for the CCSA to be the target of criticism from within its ranks. The 1943 biennial meeting left no doubt that the organisation was once again well established. Grant reported that there were 24 churches and mission societies in its membership, together with 8 missionary associations and interdenominational bodies.⁴⁰ This meant that with the exception of the NGK and the Berlin Mission (which had virtually ceased to

function because of the war), its pre-1940 membership was intact. Over the next decades the membership was to grow steadily, coming to include such diverse elements as the Baptist Union (which joined in 1947) and the Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation; the membership of which was entirely black.

To signal the re-birth of the CCSA, a large and successful conference on Christian reconstruction was held at Fort Hare in July 1942, which attracted 135 participants and a large amount of publicity. That conference led to the CCSA launching its own journal, the *Christian Council Quarterly*, and to the establishment of a Social and Economic Research Committee in Johannesburg, as well as a Political Emergency Committee in Cape Town.⁴¹ The latter wrote to the prime minister, Smuts, drawing his attention to the findings of the Fort Hare conference. As a result, Smuts consented to see a CCSA deputation under the leadership of Darbyshire to discuss malnutrition, the recognition of black trade unions and parliamentary representation for Africans. He declined to consider the last-mentioned subject saying, 'I don't despair of malnutrition and such like things, but here you come on a rock on which so many founder', but still told the delegation that its representations were not resented and that he welcomed the co-operation of the churches very sincerely. Although, according to Darbyshire, the deputation was afterwards 'rebuked for receiving his reply so meekly,' the interview received wide publicity 'and added to the growing impression of the Council as a militant body' the Rev Stanley Pitts, later wrote to the general secretary of the CCSA.⁴² The organisation was proving itself an effective platform for united Christian action and in this way was fulfilling the best hopes of the missionaries who had taken such a large role in its formation and its preservation in 1940.

The biennial meeting held in Durban in May 1945 was well attended (38 delegates representing 25 bodies) and was marked by

a spirit of optimism.⁴³ Later that year, when Grant retired from the honorary secretaryship, the Methodist Church seconded one of its ablest young ministers, the Rev Stanley Pitts, as full-time secretary and agreed to pay his salary.⁴⁴ Pitts took up his duties in January 1946 and reports drawn up by both Darbyshire and himself over the next two-and-a-half years showed that they were well satisfied with CCSA's progress. Addressing the 1947 biennial meeting, Darbyshire stated there was no doubt that the CCSA could give a good account of its stewardship since 1945:

Our conference at Fort Hare, the regional conferences of two years later, our united presentation of evidence regarding Mission Hospitals, our attitude to Christian Education, our perhaps rather meagre protests to government on political questions, our Home Life campaign, our output of literature and our attempts to rouse youth and enlist the co-operation of women are all cases in point.⁴⁵

Pitts, writing in the *Christian Council Quarterly* in March 1948, Pitts echoed this confident spirit, stating that if 'system be a mark of maturity then the Christian Council is moving rapidly to the development of a mature organisation'.⁴⁶

The success of Dexter Taylor in persuading Archbishop Darbyshire to support the CCSA and consequently re-establishing the backing of the CPSA and the Methodist Church was a notable one, because it at last enabled the missionaries to use the CCSA as a platform for Christian liberalism in a way they had planned ever since Oldham's visit in 1926. The feelings of the liberal missionaries on this score were expressed by Grant and Shepherd in an article on the CCSA written for the *IRM* in 1944, when they stated 'the Council has passed out of the shallows of limited effectiveness and rides buoyantly on the open sea'.⁴⁷ The 'good-riddance' feeling about the departure of the NGK was even more explicitly stated by Grant in the *Christian Council Quarterly* in 1944, when he wrote that the presence of 'the school of thought which would

isolate non-Europeans and their interests from the purely European section of the Church' had faced the CCSA with 'virtual stultification'. Since the departure of the NGK and as a result of the Fort Hare conference of 1942, the influence of the CCSA had grown steadily and was finding a greater response among European lay men and women, that is, among the non-mission section of the churches.⁴⁸ In a letter to L S Albright, assistant secretary of the United States of America section of the IMC, Grant was even more optimistic. Striking changes were taking place in South African public opinion on race relations, he asserted, and claimed 'that since our own Council lost its illiberal elements it has grown markedly in power and influence'. Referring to changes in the structure and financing of African education announced by Hofmeyr just one week before, he stated that a great battle had been won and that 'our liberal forces are acquiring strength daily'.⁴⁹

The Fort Hare Christian Reconstruction Conference of 1942 gave the 'liberal forces' their first opportunity to express the ideological underpinnings of their position through the CCSA. The findings and resolutions of that conference covered a fairly wide range of issues, but it is significant that 'race relations' were given the greatest attention of all. The findings here commenced with a statement urging Christians to ponder the implications of Smuts's own observation that the population of South Africa consisted of ten, and not merely of two million people. It went on to deny that any naturalistic teaching of national or racial superiority was compatible with Christianity and a key paragraph read:

We believe that the true interests of white and black races in South Africa do not, in the long run, conflict. Trusteeship should be the spirit in which Europeans should act towards the more backward non-Europeans bearing in mind that the ward is coming of age and then trusteeship must become partnership.⁵⁰

The denial of racial superiority coupled with an affirmation of temporary racial backwardness among ‘non-European wards’ was the essence of Rheinallt Jones’s liberalism and underlining its identification with that was a resolution which gratefully commended the work of the Joint Councils of the SAIRR. Indicating the trend of the CCSA’s political thinking was a paragraph which stated that the time was ripe for Africans, coloured people and Indians to be given increased responsibilities through representation on local government bodies and in parliament.⁵¹

This line of thinking in the CCSA continued throughout the 1940s. The CCSA submitted that in its evidence to the Fagan Commission (the Native Laws Commission of Inquiry) in 1947:

We strongly support the principle expressed by one speaker at the conference held at Fort Hare in July 1942: “The ideal order of society will educate its people for a common citizenship of the State.” It will progressively share its civilisation with the uncivilised. It will welcome the advancement of individuals of any race and will accept them for what they have become, without regard to what they were originally.⁵²

Another gloss on the concept of trusteeship was given by a conference on human rights convened by the SAIRR and the CCSA in Cape Town in 1949, at which the belief was stated

that for the present, the welfare of the country and the maintenance of Western civilisation depend on the continuance of European responsibilities and initiative. [We] also look to the progressive assumption by the Non-European peoples of the standard of Western Civilisation and of the duties implicit in the acquisition of fundamental rights as the only way in which, in the long run, Western Civilisation can be preserved in South Africa.⁵³

In accepting this assimilationist liberal ideology, the liberal missionaries who dominated the CCSA were in fact diverging signifi-

cantly from thinking in the international missionary movement where concepts of superior and inferior cultures began to disappear after World War I. Indeed, the permanent validity of non-European cultures was implicit in the three-self formula, and had become explicit by the time of the Edinburgh conference of 1910, with its recognition of the superiority of the 'native church' as an agent of evangelisation. The utilitarian approach of the Edinburgh conference to indigenous churches had changed by the time of the Jerusalem conference, where the 'younger church' was seen as having validity in its own right and not merely as a tool for the furtherance of Christianity. This idea was even more strongly stated at the 1938 Tambaram conference, one of the findings of which was that

today African, Chinese, Indian, Japanese and other indigenous expressions of the Christian religion are taking shape . . . It is not wrong in principle or illegitimate that there should be, as interpretation of the Gospel, many forms of Christianity.

Often, especially in countries where there are 'younger churches', we hear Christianity and the Christian Church criticised as being importations from foreign lands or agents of Western imperialism . . . These imputations . . . are serious at all times, and not merely in days of growing nationalism.

An indigenous church . . . is a church which spontaneously uses forms of thought and modes of action natural and familiar in its own environment . . . Every younger church will seek further to bear witness to the . . . Gospel with new tongues also; that is, in direct and close relationship with the cultural and religious heritage of its own country.⁵⁴

The moves towards resolving the mission/church dichotomy in the international missionary movement was one outcome of the kind of thinking evident in the above statement, in which the validity of non-Western cultures and worship forms was explicitly recognised. The thought of 'backward' cultures progressing by

assimilating into 'advanced' cultures, basic to liberal philosophy in South Africa, was a foreign concept in the international missionary sphere where the rise of Third World nationalism made the Western notion of superiority unacceptable. The view that all cultures were equal grew apace and it is perhaps not necessary to do more than illustrate the continuity of this approach to racial differences in international ecumenical bodies than to refer to the findings of the WCC's Salvation Today Conference in Bangkok in 1973, which deplored the fact that in the history of Western missions 'the culture of those who received the Gospel was either ignored or condemned', and went on to state that 'racial and cultural identity are divine gifts and human achievements to be taken up into Christian identity'. The universality of the Christian faith did not contradict its particularity and a diversity of responses to the Christian message was seen to be essential because they were related to particular situations.⁵⁵ That approach to race and culture was not very different from Jabavu's thinking as set out in his booklet *An Indigenous Church* published in 1942. The liberal missionaries' reaction to the application of segregationist policies in South Africa made them deaf to that kind of plea.

The decline and demise of the CCSA

The history of the CCSA during the 1940s supports Legassick's view that the liberals reached their apogee during the years of World War II. Legassick dates this to the speech made by the prime minister, General Jan Smuts, to the SAIRR in 1942 when he declared that 'segregation has fallen on evil days'.⁵⁶ In the following year the meeting between Smuts and the CCSA delegation under the leadership of Archbishop Darbyshire received wide publicity, but the greatest success in CCSA eyes was the acceptance by Smuts's United Party government in 1944 of the recommendations on the control and financing of African education, suggested by the missionaries and others as far back as 1926. It was this which prompted Grant's observation to Albright quoted earlier, that 'our liberal forces are acquiring strength daily'.

This was far too optimistic an assumption. Leggasick points out that liberalism was already in decline in the face of a less-sympathetic perception by the Smuts administration after 1945, while in 1948, two events dealt a stunning blow to the fortunes of the CCSA. Firstly, there was the sudden death of Darbyshire and, secondly, and much more seriously for the CCSA, was the election of the National Party government on a platform of apartheid a month earlier.

The loss of Darbyshire deprived the CCSA of one of its most effective *entrées* to the church sector. This was to have deleterious long-term effects. Despite its successes of the early 1940s, the CCSA had never overcome the indifference of the church sector of its constituent denominations to its work. The lack of interest in the organisation was a regular theme in the speeches made by its office-bearers. In 1952, the Rev E W Grant, its president, compared the favourable situation of the British Council of Churches (BCC) with that of the CCSA. During a recent visit to Britain, he said, he had seen that the leaders of churches made a point of being present at BCC meetings and gave 'great weight' to its pronouncements. Something similar was needed in South Africa if the CCSA was to be more effective, he said, also noting that the CCSA 'was probably far better known and heeded overseas than it was in its own country'.⁵⁷

The Rev Arthur Blaxall, who succeeded Pitts as secretary of the CCSA in 1950, made the same observation after returning from a tour which included the Willingen conference.⁵⁸ That indication of different perceptions of the CCSA inside and outside of South Africa reflected the divergence between the ecumenical movement here and that in the outside world. Whereas observers overseas saw the CCSA as a typical second-phase ecumenical organisation and expected it to act as such, it was not seen in this way by churches in South Africa which tended to see the CCSA as a first-phase missionary organisation, despite its second-phase trappings.

This is not surprising; after all, the first major object of the CCSA was stated to be 'to foster fellowship, in united thinking, interceding, planning and action on the part of the Christian Missionary forces' in its constitution.⁵⁹

Still, while they were not overly enthusiastic about the CCSA, the churches continued to give it important support. When Archbishop Darbyshire died, he was replaced as president of the Methodist Church, with the Rev E W Grant who, in turn, was followed by the CPSA's Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton. He, however, was nothing like as committed to the CCSA as Darbyshire. When he retired from the CCSA presidency four years later, he frankly admitted to the 1956 biennial meeting that during his term of office 'very little had been accomplished'. He devoted his presidential address of that year to a searching analysis of the weaknesses of the CCSA which, he said, was not able to do much more than 'tick over'.⁶⁰

Clayton complained that not only had the CCSA failed to promote inter-church co-operation, but it had also allowed itself to be sidelined by other organisations, particularly the Federal Mission Council of the NGK, which had held three notable conferences on racial affairs in 1950, 1953 and 1954. Representatives of the English-language churches as well as from the WCC and IMC had been invited to the last two, as had observers from the CCSA.⁶¹ In 1954, a Continuation Committee had been formed to arrange further conferences on both regional and national levels.⁶² Clayton's observation that the CCSA had allowed other organisations to supplant its basic functions was to be given even more substance in the later 1950s, when besides the Federal Mission Council, several other bodies arranged large conferences on the racial issue. These included the Interdenominational African Ministers' Federation which, in 1956, brought 400 people together in Bloemfontein to discuss the Tomlinson report, which would lead to the creation of ethnically separate 'Bantustans'.⁶³ As a fol-

low-up to this, another large conference held to discuss the racial situation was arranged by an independent committee of church and political leaders in 1957 and drew 1 000 participants together at the University of the Witwatersrand.⁶⁴ In 1956 the WCC initiated a study on Christian Responsibility Towards Areas of Rapid Social Change among its six South African member churches and that was the theme adopted for another major conference in 1959 arranged by the Continuation Committee mentioned earlier.

At this conference the Continuation Committee was charged, among others, with the task of working towards the formation of a Council of Churches in South Africa which would bring together churches within the CCSA and those of the NGK's Federal Mission Council.⁶⁵ This constituted the best hope after nearly two decades that the breach between the NGK and the English-language churches would be healed. It was a hope without foundation; although the debates had been polite and contacts cordial at the conferences of the 1950s, they had shown that the gulf between the proponents of apartheid in the NGK and those of liberalism in the English-language churches was as wide as ever. The far more tenuous relationships established between the two sides than those which had existed in the CCSA before 1940 were as incapable of withstanding a national crisis in 1960 as they had been 20 years earlier.

The CCSA, as indicated, played a minimal role in the establishment of these later contacts and was little more than a spectator of the attempts launched by the 1959 Continuation Committee to create a wider council of churches.⁶⁶ However, nothing indicated the CCSA's decline into obscurity and ineffectiveness more than the fact that it was completely sidelined and had no part in the crucial Cottesloe conference called by the WCC to discuss the racial situation in South Africa with its member churches after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

In fact, by this time the CCSA had been completely overshadowed by the WCC as a vehicle for ecumenism in South Africa. The WCC was a vigorous and growing international organisation which embodied the excitement of the newly dawned third-phase ecumenical era and was far more impressive than the struggling CCSA. When the WCC was established in 1948, six South African denominations had been founder members. They included not only the four major English-speaking churches, but notably also the Transvaal Synod of the NGK and the NHK, which had absolutely refused to be part of the CCSA. This raised the hope that the WCC could succeed in bringing about a *rapprochement* between the Ecumenical and Dutch Reformed Blocs. At the Cottesloe Consultation a need was expressed for the establishment of a South African counterpart to the WCC, and it was obvious that delegates did not see the CCSA as the natural vehicle for that. Instead, members of the Cottesloe Continuation Committee proposed the establishment of another Council of Churches which would exist alongside the CCSA.⁶⁷ This would probably have been a death-blow to that organisation, and while it was averted, as is recounted in Chapter Five, the writing was on the wall for the CCSA.

Political failure

The CCSA's church and mission constituency might have been more interested in, and supportive of, it had it proved to be an even marginally successful political pressure group. However, for reasons that will appear shortly, the 1948 accession to power of the Nationalist government on a platform of apartheid was an ultimately fatal blow to the CCSA. The Nationalist election victory immediately set alarm bells ringing in the CCSA constituency. Particularly disturbing was a statement made by the new prime minister, D F Malan, that his party intended removing the coloured people from the common voters' role and abolishing African representation in parliament. At their conferences and synods held in the second half of 1948, The CPSA, Methodist,

Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist Churches issued statements of protest; the Roman Catholic Bishop J H Henneman issued a pastoral letter which was read in all the churches of his vicariate on 5 September, protesting against the intended move and describing apartheid as 'noxious, unchristian and destructive'.⁶⁸ In November, the Social Welfare Section of the CCSA discussed the statements and suggested that they should be laid before the prime minister 'personally by representatives of the Churches concerned'. After some prevarication, Malan refused to see any CCSA delegation. His private secretary wrote:

As the views your proposed deputation obviously hold are already sufficiently and capably represented in the field of party political discussion and further with a view to the Prime Minister's recent renewed attempt to have the Native question dealt with on a non-party basis, he does not think that the proposed interview can serve any useful purpose.⁶⁹

This was the first of many rebuffs the CCSA was to receive from the new party in power. It was not deterred; the correspondence with Malan was published in full, while a proposed conference on education scheduled for mid-1949 was converted into a conference on the racial situation under the title of 'The Christian Citizen in a Multiracial Society', which was held in Johannesburg in July 1949.⁷⁰ Among those who addressed that conference was Chief Luthuli who spoke on 'The Christian and Political Issues'. Among the findings of the conference were the following:

- God has created all men in His image. Consequently beyond all differences remains an essential unity.
- When individuals have moved from a primitive social structure to one which is more advanced, this change should be given recognition.
- At this stage in the affairs of our country, we accept the principle of trusteeship.
- We believe that the real need of South Africa is not 'Apartheid' but 'Eendrag' ['Unity'].

We consider that in principle adult persons of all races should share in the responsibility of the government of the country. This implies the exercise of the franchise. We recognise that at present many such persons are not ready for this responsibility. We therefore agree to a qualified franchise.⁷¹

It was a classic statement of that brand of assimilationist liberalism, which not only differed fundamentally from the apartheid philosophy of the Malan government, but also diverged significantly from developments in the international missionary movement which had discarded ideas of 'primitive' and 'advanced' social structures put forward earlier. Nevertheless, since the findings were so strongly anti-racist, the IMC, the Conference of British Missionary Societies and the WCC all responded favourably; something which was pointed out in an article in the *Christian Council Quarterly*.⁷²

Yet, there is no evidence that the National Party government took any notice of the conference. The NGK mouthpiece, *Die Kerkbode* ('The Church Messenger'), which interpreted the conference as an attack on the NGK, provided an insight into Afrikaner Nationalistic reaction:

In this sort of thing we learn to know the dark background from which many of the grievances against us arise; and it must become clear to all that Communism is becoming more and more the way of life for all foreign influences in our country. Its voice may be clearly recognised here too.

When the CCSA sent a letter protesting against these charges, *Die Kerkbode* refused to publish it and, instead, sent a private letter to the secretary which expressed the hope that those within the CCSA would 'ponder on the fact that your views on race relations have found so much approval in Communist circles'.⁷³

Despite that setback, the CCSA continued attempting to influence government policy, particularly on racial affairs. In line with the aim stated in its constitution of helping to create a 'Christian social order' this, as Clayton noted in his address to the biennial meeting of the CCSA in 1956, had comprised the great majority of its activities. During the 1950s, a stream of statements was issued on a wide range of government legislation, ranging from the Mixed Marriages Act to the Bantu Education Act of 1954 and the Separate Representation of Voters' Act in 1955. There were also direct representations to government. In 1955, for instance, a CCSA delegation did succeed in seeing the prime minister, J G Strydom, on the subject of migrant labour. Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, probably the most hardline proponent of apartheid in the government and then Minister of Native Affairs, was also present and did most of the talking.⁷⁴ The interview was a long one and ended with Verwoerd displaying his characteristically unbending attitude when he said that the government shared the churches' concern for a stable family life, 'but it must always be remembered that it is the first duty of the South African government to preserve white civilization'.⁷⁵ In their efforts to stem the tide of apartheid legislation, said Clayton in his presidential address, the churches and the CCSA had generally found themselves on the defensive and had done little more than 'protest against this thing and that thing which is being done and . . . state why we consider such things to be inconsistent with Christian principles'. In spite of this 'faithfully borne witness', the CCSA's influence on public policy was minimal, the Archbishop remarked.

That, in fact, meant that the CCSA had been deprived of much of its *raison d'être*, which was to defend and extend the liberal assimilationist ideology. Moreover, the power base of the liberal missionaries who espoused this ideology was very narrow. Even within the CCSA it was weak, as indicated by the failure of its leaders to persuade the non-mission sectors of the CPSA and Methodist churches fully to participate in its work, while as has

been pointed out, they were regarded with suspicion by the Lutheran missions. In addition, from the late 1920s theologically conservative missions represented in the GMC were increasingly alienated by the liberal missionaries, willing acceptance of the new 'social gospel' ideas such as those promulgated by the Jerusalem conference of the IMC.

Besides failing to extend their power base in the ecclesiastical sphere, the liberal missionaries made no attempt to extend it by linking up with political groupings of liberals. There were several probable reasons for that. For one thing, there was at this time a theological climate which, despite the trend towards greater Christian socio-political activism, still discouraged direct associations with the political process. Thus there was never the same close collusion between the CCSA and Jan Hofmeyr – recognised at that time as the chief proponent of liberal views in the South African parliament – as there had been with Rheinallt Jones, even though Hofmeyr was a practising Christian and there was much admiration for him on a personal level among the liberal missionaries.⁷⁶

Another factor in the failure of the liberal missionaries to associate more fully with the liberal political groupings around Hofmeyr was probably their physical isolation from the main urban centres which formed a crucible for political developments. In any case, it seems that rather than looking to an alliance with figure liberals overtly involved in the political process, they believed that the CCSA would be effective in its own right as an instrument for exerting political pressure. The encouragement they received from the Smuts administration after 1940 would have reinforced that view. It took the coming of the Nationalists to power to show in reality how weak and isolated the liberal missionaries were. The isolation of the CCSA from the political arena continued into the 1950s, there being no reference at all in its records to the small

Liberal Party or to the larger Progressive Party, which was formed after a split in the parliamentary opposition in 1958.

Moreover, the missionary liberals themselves were disappearing from the scene. Prominent Lovedale figures Lennox and Wilkie had died in the early 1940s; Dexter Taylor retired in 1948 after nearly 50 years of service with the American Board Mission in South Africa. Rheinallt Jones died in 1952, while E W Grant retired in 1955. While liberalism certainly did not die with them, no one took up the torch of their particular brand of assimilationist ideology. The last two influential figures of that generation were Shepherd and Blaxall. Shepherd's involvement with the CCSA was limited by his duties at the Lovedale school, 1 000 km away from the CCSA's headquarters in Johannesburg. Blaxall was hardly a torch-bearer for the ideology of the missionary liberals. He was appointed part-time secretary of the CCSA when the Methodist Church withdrew the full-time services of Pitts on the plea of a shortage of personnel in its ministry. He had little experience of the mission field or knowledge of missionary theological developments. He was near to the end of his working life in his own denomination, the CPSA, when he took over the CCSA secretaryship. Besides his parish work, his major involvement was with the Enzenzeleni school for blind African people at Roodepoort outside Johannesburg. Thus, as his autobiography indicates, the CCSA did not come at the top of his priorities.⁷⁷ That no one besides the already-overburdened Blaxall was willing to carry the burden of its secretaryship says much about the standing of the organisation in the eyes of its constituency. So, despite this, when the CCSA found itself in a position, once again, to employ a full-time secretary after 1958 as a result of a grant from the BCC and because of a lack of any other candidates, it had to ask Blaxall to take on the job once more even though he stated his utmost reluctance to do so.⁷⁸

Perhaps the most telling pointer to the failure of the brand of missionary liberalism discussed in this chapter to make any lasting impact is that the CCSA receives no mention at all in texts on South African liberalism such as Robertson's *Liberalism in South Africa* and the compendium on *Democratic Liberalism in South Africa* edited by Butler, Elphick and Welsh. That may be as much a reflection on the compilers of those works as it is on the CCSA. However inadequate an ideology and a political force it was, it none the less represented a historically noteworthy development of liberal philosophy. While its institutional embodiment died, it was bound to have an influence on later liberal thinking in the Church and ecumenical sphere. As will be indicated in Chapter Four, it needs to be taken into account in any attempt to understand liberal thinking in the SACC in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Notes

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 31. Dated 22 February 1939. SACC archive, AC 623/9/4 (e) (i).
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41. CCQ no. 1, 1 October 1942. Also CCQ no. 2, January 1943, 2.
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43. 'The Christian Council of South Africa. Biennial Meeting at Durban.' *South African Outlook*, vol 75, no. 891, 2 July 1945, 7.
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45. CCQ, no. 17, June 1947, 4–5.
46. CCQ, no. 18, March 1948, 1.
47. R H W Shepherd and E W Grant, 'The Christian Council of South Africa.' *IRM* vol. 33, July 1944, 258–66.
48. CCQ, no. 8, July 1944, 2.
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50. *Christian Reconstruction in South Africa*, 66–8.
51. *Ibid.*, 68.
52. Christian Council of South Africa. Memorandum to the Native Laws Commission of Inquiry, 1.
53. Conference on Human Rights Convened by the South African Institute of Race Relations and the Christian Council of South Africa held in Hiddingh Hall, Cape Town, on 17 and 18 of January 1949.
54. IMC. *The World Mission of the Church*, 30–1.
55. Report of Section II of the Bangkok Conference, *op. cit.*
56. M Legassick, *The Rise of Modern South African Liberalism*
57. Secretary's report for 1952, *op. cit.*
58. E Strassberger, *Ecumenism in South Africa 1936–1960*, (Johannesburg, 1974)
59. H G Kuschke, and R H W Shepherd, *The Christian Council of South Africa. To the Churches and Missionary Societies of South Africa* (Lovedale, 1935).
60. CCQ, no. 41, March 1956, 1–3.

61. Strassberger, *Ecumenism in South Africa*, 202.
62. *Ibid.*, 212.
63. T Karis and G Carter, *From Protest to Challenge. A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa; 1882–1964. vol iii. Challenge and Violence* (Stanford, 1977), 76–7.
64. *Ibid.*, 300.
65. Strassberger, *Ecumenism in South Africa*, 214–5.
66. The fact is that the CCSA had little option other than to adopt this role because of NGK objections to it. As the acting CCSA president stated in 1961: 'It was almost certain that if the Christian Council took any initiative in this matter this would be rejected by the Afrikaans-speaking churches.' SACC archive, AC 623/17.1.
67. CCSA Executive Committee Minutes, 29/11/1958, 2.
68. SACC archive.
69. SACC archive, AC 623/7.
70. CCSA. *The Christian Citizen in a Multiracial Society. A Report of the Rosettenville Conference, July 1949* (Cape Town, 1949), 7–8.
71. *Ibid.*
72. CCQ, no. 24, October 1949, 2–3.
73. CCQ, no. 25, December 1949, 3–4.
74. Writing to Blaxall on 14 September 1955, Archbishop Clayton stated that he 'almost' regretted he was not present at this interview, 'though of course the Minister makes it impossible for anyone else to say anything'. SACC archive, AC 623/6.
75. CCQ, no. 40, December 1955, 6.
76. A Paton, *Hofmeyr* (Cape Town, 1964), NR.
77. A W Blaxall, *Suspended Sentence* (London, 1965)
78. CCSA Executive Committee Minutes, 29/11/1958, 2.