Chapter 1

Alternative relationships for church and state through the ages

1.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to discuss alternative relationships between the church and state over the years. The church has found itself to be relating to the state in at least three different ways: as an opponent of the state, an ally, and sometimes adopting a neutral position and not taking sides. Where the church was an opponent of the state, the focus will be on the Early Church, the church under Muslim rule, the church under the Marxist state as well as the anti-apartheid churches in South Africa. This will be followed by a subsection on allies, which will consider the church in the Roman Empire, the national state churches after the Reformation, the church in colonialism, the civil religion and the apartheid churches in South Africa. Lastly, a subsection will discuss the neutrality of the church, in which attention will be paid to the Anabaptist churches in post-Reformation Europe, secular states and present-day South Africa.

1.2 Opponents

1.2.1 The Early Church (until Theodosius)

The history of church and state relationship has been problematic from the beginning. Villa-Vicencio (1986: 3) makes a clear reference to the martyrdom of Christians, which both the state and church regarded as a secular and sacred duty. This influenced the relationship between church and state during the medieval and the reformation period and has continued to have decisive and sometimes contradictory implications for the two institutions (i.e. the church and state) even to the present context. For the early church the interpretation was simply that the sacred authority had an impact on the political realm. In other words the kingdom of Christ was not of this world, but as expressed by Villa Vicencio

(1986: 4), it occurred to the Christians that an emperor like Caesar Augustus (27 BCE-14 CE) might become a Christian. The non-involvement of Christians in politics did not imply an indifferent society. Civil authority was seen as given by God to govern justly and it therefore deserved the Christian's honour and respect. This was also seen as in accordance with the will of God. At that time the uncertainty on the part of Christians towards the state was due to the fact that in the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world, religion and civil functions were perceived to be inseparable, while in the Roman Empire, the government was understood to be supreme in both religious and secular realms.

The real test of the relationship of the Roman Authorities with the early church came as a result of the introduction of the policy of religious tolerance and the introduction of emperor veneration, which did not stop people from practising their individual or private religions. The policy of religious tolerance was extended towards the religion of the conquered people, while the subjects and citizens of the empire were required to participate in the public worship as well as to acknowledge the deities of the state (Rusch 1982: 2). The notion of civil inseparability was at the same time characterising the Jewish concept of the state. In later years this concept was destroyed by Jesus with his inauguration of a new era in the history of church and state relations through his response to the Pharisees and Herodians: 'Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's' (Mark 12:17; Matthew 22: 21). Despite the cult of the emperor worship, not all of them imposed it upon their subjects except at the point of death, when they were to be added to the list of the gods. Emperor worship was first introduced by Caligula (37-41 CE), who was followed by others like Nero (54-68 CE) and Domitian (81-96 CE). The conflict between the Christians and the Roman state came about as a result of Christian refusal to render to the emperor a worship due to God alone (Rusch 1982: 2). Nero and Domitian were very suspicious of the Christian religion: they viewed it as superstitious and dangerous to the state (simply because the church was organised and powerful). In spite of the Christians' efforts to be loyal citizens of the empire, they were guilty of one of the most serious forms of treason: sacrilege and nonconformity in public worship. The authority's doubts and suspicions were based on rumours that they (Christians) were practising immoral acts such as atheism,

incest, adultery and cannibalism (Villa-Vincencio 1986: 4). On the other side the Jews, who were monotheists, were exempted from persecution, to which the Christians were subjected. According to Villa-Vicencio (1986: 5) Jews were influential in Roman politics and economic stability, as opposed to the Christians who basically were poor. As a result of this, conflict between state and church in the Roman Empire was constituted by various concepts of good obedience and citizenship. The persecution of the Christians began with the stoning of Stephen, which is recorded in the Acts of the Apostles 6: 1-8. The stoning of Stephen led to the separation of Christianity from Judaism, which later attracted the attention of the imperial magistrates. Soon Rome came to understand that Christianity was an independent religion with a following of noteworthy strength and the imperial administration took action against it (Rusch 1982: 3).

Christianity came to be known as a religion and the church as a society during the times of Emperor Nero (CE. 54-68) and Trajan (CE. 98-117). Before the Constantinian era, the Christian persecution differed in methods of violence and duration. Throughout the empire, the harassment, imprisonment and condemnation to death of those who professed Christianity depended upon the humanitarianism or the cruelty of the emperors and the interpretation of official attitudes by secondary provincial rulers (Rusch 1982: 3). Persecution during the era of Decius (CE 249-251) was intended to totally destroy Christianity throughout the empire. After a short period of relative tranquillity, the Great Persecution came through Diocletian in 303 CE, which was accompanied by the hope of restoring internal unity to the empire through the establishment of religious uniformity. This saw Christian documents being confiscated and places of worship destroyed, while at the same time clergy and laity were imprisoned, tortured and killed. This type of persecution continued even after the era of Diocletian ended in 305 CE, which was followed by the era of Constantine in 312 CE with the Edict of Milan.

The conversion of Constantine in 312 CE marked a new lease of life for the church. This new lease of life has been disputed in a number of ways by some historians in the past and to a certain extent by contemporary history scholars as well (Rusch 1982: 12). The argument concerns the church and state relationship during the Constantinian era, which

became possible when the church envisioned the previously undreamed-of opportunity of spreading the gospel to all the nations. The thoughts and influence of Christianity were welcomed and accepted as a law, education and art. The day of the house-church gave way to the period of the basilica. The negative side saw Constantine extending friendship to the church, which came at the price of dependency and subserviency, which adopted the political, rather than spiritual, values in the church. The new opportunities were now quickly and easily taken by the Christians and persecution was coming to an end, many of them were showing less enthusiasm in their commitment and less heroism in their witness (Rusch 1982: 12).

In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux complained that the acclaim of the papal court had gone to Constantine and not to Peter. According to Rusch (1982: 12) the church or Christian situation was not transformed immediately during the Constantinian era. It was only during the emperorship of Theodosius in 390-395 CE that Christianity became an official religion of the empire. However, the conversion of Constantine was questionable as he had shown loyalty to Christianity but also did the same with the Arians and the Nicene Christians, especially if it was to serve his purpose and the needs of the empire (Rusch 1982: 12,13). In his calling the first ecumenical council it appeared that Constantine was demonstrating his superiority to all the bishops in church matters. He was at the same time not interested to act as an arbiter in conflicts which involved the bishops, as he believed that he was a simple human being who might be guilty before God if he was to assume that position (being an arbiter). Under Constantine the church was faced with two problems: firstly there was the threat of admitting to its membership disguised pagans and heretics who wanted to stay and win the favour of the emperor. The second problem was the exploitation of the church by the emperor's passion for unity and tranquillity in the empire (Rusch 1982: 13). As a result of this, during the Constantinian era there were two theories of the church-state relationship which existed and developed. These theories existed in both the East and the West: in the West the emphasis was on the existence of two societies, one ecclesiastical and the other civil. This meant that the rights and privileges of each were quite noticeable and unique. However, in the East the issue involved a Christian society developing because the empire was becoming fully Christian

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and the two distinct societies were to be merged into one, with the emperor as its head. This could also be seen in the creation of a Christian city in Constantinople as the 'New Rome'. Christianity became a free religion during Constantine but was officially legalised only by Theodosius.

A new chapter for the church and state was written in A.D 380 when Theodosius declared Christianity an official religion and prohibited the practice of pagan cults. His defence of the Christian religion led to the destruction of the pagan shrines and he used their wealth to construct the 'Church of the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rusch 1982: 18). After the efforts to convert the leaders of the heretical groups to the faith of Nicea and Arian teaching of the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD, Theodosius implemented laws against all the heretics. He was no different from his predecessors and his successors as he believed that the state had jurisdiction over the church matters; however, Theodosius was challenged by Ambrose, who was the bishop of Milan, regarding the application of his theory of the church-state relationship. Both Theodosius and Ambrose featured in the deliberate massacre of 7000 people by a direct order from the emperor at Thessalonica in A.D 390. As a result of the massacre Ambrose admonished the emperor, imposing public penance on him. The emperor obeyed the bishop, recognising in this instance what he came to admit on several other occasions: that the emperor's political actions were the subject of the moral judgement of the church. On the death of the emperor, it was the bishop who delivered the funeral oration in memory of the great man whom he admired and loved. Both were courageous in the proclamation and the protection of their deepest interest and convictions in pursuit of the unity of the state and the liberty of the church (Rusch: 1982; 19).

The Christian apologists, who in this case included Tertullian (CE 150-220), emerged as a result of the conflict between Christianity and the state. Though there was also the nonparticipation of Christians in state affairs, their resistance to recognising civil obedience has led to the charge of political unaccountability levelled against the Christians. However, in a turn of events, the winds of political change under Constantine saw the same Christians who were persecuted becoming part of the civil service, joining

the army and even accepting appointments to political offices. Before long, the Christians were themselves receiving privileges, which were becoming prestigious. Constantine, though not baptised, was very sympathetic to Christianity. Despite this, his actions were politically motivated, and this made Christianity an engine of state policy. He (Constantine) considered Christianity as a means of unifying his empire (Pfeffer: 1953, 14). However, one must consider the context in which Christians were persecuted and the origin of Christian persecution, which stemmed from Judaism that felt that Christianity was deserting the Law of Moses in proclaiming Jesus as the promised Messiah and introducing infamous, idolatrous practices into the empire based on the foundation of Jesus' teachings (Rusch 1982: 8). As a result persecution of Christians was begun by the Jews who accused them, and the latter sought to sow the seed of persecution throughout the empire at all levels. The other source of persecution came from people who were not associated with Judaism and were simple citizens of the empire. This form of persecution came about because it was believed that Christianity was a sect in Judaism. Soon after it became clear that Christianity was a new religion its followers were accused of atheism, cannibalism, incest, and idolatry. In the same context the state found support from both the Jews and non-Jews in accusing Christians as well as in attacking them. However, the Christian apologists were a new breed of converts who possessed knowledge about citizenship and the power that was in the empire. Most of the Christian apologists were educated and professional and were acquainted with the subtleties of Greek philosophy, like Quadratus in CE 125 and Melito of Sardis in CE 171 to 190 who undertook the defence, expansion and justification of the Christian faith. The Latin apologists were Felix in CE. 218 and 235 and Tertullian in CE. 220. These apologists were at the same time considered as the earliest Christian Theologians (Rusch 1982: 9). They were the first to organise and make a systematic presentation of the Christian faith. It was from this context that there developed in the church a clearer knowledge of the challenge to express the message of Jesus in the social, cultural, intellectual and political context which was in the world of the Graeco-Roman civilization. 'It was due to the apologists that the state-church relationship was advanced to a new level of encounter and confrontation' (Rusch 1982: 9).

1.2.2 Under Muslim rule (North Africa)

Alexandria was conquered and surrendered to the Islamic Arab army in 642 and Egypt, which for many centuries was part of the Roman-Byzantine Empire, as of the Christian Church, became a central pillar of Islam (Hastings 1994: 55). This act changed the cultural and religious history of Egypt and North Africa as a whole. The coastal region of North Africa along the Mediterranean, which in the past had been Christian and non-Arabic speaking, was occupied by the Muslims, due to military conquest especially by the mighty governors of the Caliphate of Baghdad, who were unchallenged in North Africa from the Red Sea to Morocco. For the Roman Empire, the situation was the same for centuries as they could not advance militarily across the desert. Over the centuries the notion about the existence of gold in the South Sahara was Africa's strong drawing card for almost a thousand years. While the situation in West Africa was not the same as in the North and East, especially in communication, trade and growth of knowledge the Sahara was very crucial for these as the South of Safar was being reshaped under Muslim influence (Hastings 1994: 55). However, the area around the Sahara was most difficult particularly in opening up to other cultures, from the Mediterranean coast, and this included Cairo as well. For the West African region Cairo was like a commercial centre and the heart of wealth, learning, power, literacy and religious confidence where the kings would briefly visit when they were on their way to Mecca. The interesting thing about the North African region of the Sahara was that it was never directly linked with the South of the desert but was partially transformed in doing so. The simplest thing was to trade through caravans and even enlarge the market, which was limited (Hastings: 1982; 56). This led to some states from the north (Europe) becoming traders and the market grew in leaps and bounds.

All in all, the Islamic world at that time was flourishing through slavery, particularly that of women. Slaves were part of the domestic, military and even the sexual system of the Islamic world (in the Muslim culture a man was allowed four wives, but in the case of slave concubines it was different as they could take more than this number of wives; this was only permissible after the Sudanese king became a Muslim. The number of his wives was reduced but not that of his concubines). In this case female slaves were preferred more than male ones especially in the Saharan area but it was the opposite on the transatlantic side (Hastings 1982: 56). This was the trend in the Upper Nile (Middle East) where there

was a need for a large scale supply of fresh slaves. But by the late medieval period the slave trade was beginning to decline except in Portugal and Spain, as these were under Arab dominance for a long time. However, in North Africa the political and religious context had changed as most of the region was under the Muslim authority.

In the Egyptian context the Coptic religious sensibility has been expressed in terms of a cluster of core symbols such as that Jesus once visited Egypt as an infant during the flight and that the Coptic Church was started by St Mark (Isichei1995: 218). The Coptic cross is woven with handlooms, and incised, and is also painted on the walls of the homes of the Copts. Historically the Copts spoke Arabic as their first language from the twelfth century and their practices were common with those of the Muslims as their neighbours. But the identity of the Copts was like that of the Jews which was ethnic, possessing independent religious affiliation, being members of 'the Coptic nation' and finally being the conscious heirs to ancient Egypt (Isichei 1995: 218). Many of the Copts held high offices under the Mameluks but this ended after the French invasion of Egypt in 1798, when they were at their lowest ebb in numbers and morale. 'In 1855, the Patriarch of Alexandria put their numbers at 217 thousand in a population of 5 million, and there were only seven desert monasteries' (Isichei 1995: 218). At that time the role of the Copts in society became very crucial when first Napoleon, recognised their administrative potential and gave them the leading role in the government. Interestingly, the situation of the Copts under Muslim rule improved compared to the time when they were under Christian authority (Isichei 1995: 219). This made the relationship between the Copts and the Muslims very strong as they had never been so close during the nationalist movement. However, this alliance was affected after the assassination of the Coptic Prime Minister (Pasha Burtus Ghali) by a Muslim in 1910. This relationship consequently came to an end and the Copts could only remember it as a golden age, when the Islamic scholars could preach in the churches while Abuna Segius spoke on freedom in the mosque of al-Ashar.

In North Africa, Islam spread through military conquest and trade. Commerce, civilisation and Islam go together and this made Islam become an urban and royal affair. The kings became Muslims and some even built mosques and attended them. In some instances

the Muslims imposed the wider Islamic law and practice upon their subjects, who were mainly Christians and Copts. Theoretically, Egypt was an independent state by 1922 but in practice it was still governed by the British military presence until the overthrow of Farouk. However, things were not to become comfortable for the Copts as Islam was becoming synonymous with Egyptian nationalism.

Nasser's reign saw the nationalisation of the property of the 600 wealthiest families, which led to the migration and exodus of the richest Copts and other Christians. As a result the Christian community lost most of its influential members at the time when Islamic militancy was rising (Isichei 1995: 219). It must also be borne in mind that the survival of the Church in Egypt was hard compared to that of Latin North Africa. For the Coptic Church its strength was based on the monasteries and its married clergy, as the latter made it easier for the church to operate closer to the people while the former provided spirituality and were centres of learning. What this means is that the celibate type of ministry which was favoured by Augustine was weakened as a result of it not being exercised close to the communities.

Under the Arab conquest, Christianity enjoyed remaining a majority religion, which the Arab rulers took for granted (Hastings 1994: 67). Without any doubt the Egyptians were ruled by foreigners for a very long time. However, the situation of being ruled by non-Christians was unforeseen when it came through the Muslims. Christians in this manner were inclined to regard Islam as something more like Arianism, which was destined not to last. The oppressive Muslim rule stimulated a major Christian uprising in the ninth century and its merciless repression brought a moment in which the Muslims were in the majority (Hastings1994: 67). As a result the Christians had to suffer special taxes, and were frequently abused through discriminatory laws. But from 967 to 1171 under the Fatimids the Coptic Christians were tolerated, possibly due to the fact that the Fatimids were themselves not orthodox Muslims, as they attended the public Christian ceremonies. The situation of Christian tolerance was short-lived when the Mameluks came to power (1171 to 1517). Repression became more persistent and the resources of the Copts were steadily diminishing as they could not withstand it. In the thirteenth century the Coptic

Church was still dynamic and had a sizeable membership but it was forced to give up the Coptic language which was spoken in Egypt and adopt the Arabic language (though Coptic was still being used in the liturgy). At the same time the Patriarch of Alexandria had also moved to the Arab city of Cairo. At the end of the Ottomans' rule the Coptic Church was at its lowest ebb, as opposed to the times when they were surviving through sheer numbers and determination. The pressure of many years saw this Church being worn out pathetically. For a short while it even entered the Council of Florence with Rome (Hastings 1994: 67).

1.2.3 The Church in a Marxist state

Within the African context the church did not escape the Marxist approach which was adopted in some countries; however, the focus area in Africa will be Mocambique in this study. This country is on the southeastern coast of the continent, north east of South Africa, and is a neighbour to Tanzania and Malawi in the north, while in the west are Zambia and Zimbabwe (Mckenna1997: 71). The majority of its people are black and very few white people can still be seen in Mocambique after its independence. Mocambique was a Portuguese Colony and gained its independence through the struggle which started in 1964, but was only granted autonomy in 1974 under Frente de Libercao de Mocambique (known as FRELIMO). FRELIMO was under the leadership of Eduardo Mondlane, who was a professor in the United States and later became a civil servant of the United Nations Secretariat. However, Mondlane was assassinated in 1969, and his successor was Samora Machel. Originally FRELIMO was the only movement in Mocambique which resembled the characteristics of a political party, while at the same time it did not totally embrace Marxist ideology. It was during the struggle for the liberation of Mocambique that FRELIMO started to embrace Marxism. Some of the members of FRELIMO understood what Marxism was all about through studying in the university circles in Lisbon, while others were influenced by reading Marxist material as well as by leaders from within the movement. At the same time there also were some settlers who leaned towards Communism because in the Portuguese army it (communism) was a force and some organisers of the Mozambican independence movement were communists from its

beginning (McKenna 1997: 73). In spite of all this, FRELIMO under the leadership of Samora Machel was not outright a Marxist organisation, but of their documents expressed Marxist thoughts which were used to consciously find a 'correct' revolutionary line. One of the reasons why FRELIMO did not call itself a Marxist Leninist party was partially due to the fact that many people who followed the movement were not interested in labels and not many of them understood the ideology, except for the content which concerned the liberation of Mocambique. It was only in the 1970s that Samora Machel started to move in the direction of a Marxist Leninist party, and this led to the opening of a school in 1974 to give the cadres a theoretical basis for their work. The lectures were given by both Samora Machel and the deputy president of FRELIMO, Marcelino dos Santos, in the school. Only in 1975 was Marxism fully accepted and adopted in the government public policy as well as in its party's restructuring. Machel was influenced by his military training from Algeria, which was also further deepened by Cuba and the Chinese Communists who played a role in assisting with the guerilla war (McKenna 1997: 74).

In its own policy, the government of Mocambique adopted Marxism as its guide to determine policies and programmes. The main aim of FRELIMO was to take over the riches of the country and distribute them fairly as well as to end exploitation. As a result many projects in Mocambique were nationalised as well as assets like land, transport, shipping, insurance, the export-import trade, medical facilities, banks, plantations and industries. With these developments taking place in Mocambique, the church found itself affected as well: education at that time was under the control of the church and many schools belonged to the Catholic Church. The reason for nationalising education was simply that the majority of the Mozambican population was found to be illiterate, and Samora Machel together with the ruling party felt there was a need to improve the situation. As a result the enrolment of children in primary and secondary schools increased within four years (i.e. 1974 to 1979) and the university programme was temporarily suspended as students were sent to teach in adult literacy classes and schools (McKenna 1997:78). What this meant for the university students was simply that they were to take up national service, which was equivalent to their period of stay at the university. Under the Marxist rule in Mocambique the medical services which had been under church control were also

nationalised, as hospitals and maternity clinics were now run by the state. Housing was also affected: houses that belonged to people who left Mocambique, rented houses as well as residences which belonged to the church were nationalised as a means of providing housing to citizens.

What about church and state relationship in Mocambique under Marxism? Mocambique like South Africa, was evangelised by the missionaries who came from Europe, many of whom were Catholics. These missionaries arrived in the fifteenth century and were only concerned with the religious needs of the Portuguese soldiers and merchants. A common phenomenon regarding the missionaries studied by many historians was that these missionaries were actively involved in conquest - an alliance of 'cross and sword' (McKenna 1997: 81). In some instances some of these missionaries were engaged in the slave trade and other trading. This situation was an embarrassment to the church, and it led to tension between the church and state in 1750. However, the main issue here concerns the church state - relationship under Marxist rule in Mocambique.

FRELIMO, after took over the government made a policy concerning religion. Many of its people belonged to the Christian religion, both Catholic and Protestant, while other religions included the Islamic religion. Samora Machel, as the President of both Mocambique and FRELIMO, was following the classic Marxist line in which he regarded religion as unscientific and as causing people to become submissive and passive, especially when they were supposed to deal with matters of nature and social organisation. Religion had kept people from analysing their problems and tied them to the traditional way of doing things. 'Religion has divided people instead of uniting them and the Catholic Church in particular had allied itself to the Portugese colonialists to hold the Mozambican peoples in subjection and was still allied with neocolonialists to restore that subjugation' (McKenna 1997: 85). Machel intended to do away with this type of mentality, which handicapped the emergence of a newly liberated society. His government therefore harassed the church and in particular the Catholic and other religious bodies but he made sure that there was no martyrdom. The measure of harassment differed from place to place and time to time but the method was similar to those used in other Communist countries,

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as perceived in the nationalisation of all the schools, medical facilities and educational institutions which were under the church's authority (McKenna 1997: 85).

The taking over of all the facilities from the church meant the taking over of every property that had been used by the church for other purposes and turning it into educational centres. As for the church residential areas which were taken over, most of them were intended to address the problem of housing, Not all the church residences were taken, only those which were seen as surpluses were used by the state. The church bank accounts were also frozen because they were thought to represent foreign funding from Portugal which was going to be used for subversive activities. The government came down heavily on the church and imposed severe limitations on the traditional ministries and ordered the missionaries to leave the country. Ministers needed to obtain a pass from the authorities to travel locally, but this was not easy for them as some of them were not granted the one. This made it difficult for the ministers to offer Mass and hear confessions in the rural areas (McKenna 1997: 86). To make matters worse the church vehicles were also taken over and the numbers of ministers travelling to the countryside were reduced even further. To this were added restrictions on religious services and instruction anywhere except in the church compounds. New church buildings were prohibited, and the government argued that there was only enough construction material to prioritise the important projects. The situation was further aggravated by the taking over of some church buildings in towns for other purposes. In the case of a church wanting to build a new structure the clergy had to apply for permission to build and permission was not given readily, sometimes not at all.

Ministry to the youth was made difficult as the clergy could not give any religious instruction to, or baptise, anyone under the age of eighteen. In addition the national youth organisation ran the programmes which kept young people too busy to engage in religious activities (McKenna 1997: 86). The government also took the initiative to close down the few theological seminaries that were left in Mocambique and insisted that candidates for the ministry should first do two years of national service, while at the same time the government was also trying to entice the young people in the seminary into public employment. In FRELIMO policy, which was also that of the government, only government sponsored

organisations could exist in the country. The policies that were applied against Catholicism were also applied to Islam and to the Protestant churches. As for the Protestants, it seemed as if the government was not as hard on them as on the Catholics because they seemed to have been more distant from the colonial government. The church publications were severely restricted, with the government contending that it needed to control the allocation of scarce resources like paper, ink, the use of presses and foreign exchange for overseas purchase. But these measures by the government were actually censorship, as it claimed that Catholic publications were criticising Marxism and Communist states. However, the church did not simply lie down and allow the conditions of the Mozambican government to determine its fate. The same could be said about that part of the church in South Africa which stood up against the policy of apartheid.

1.2.4 Anti-apartheid churches in South Africa

John de Gruchy (1986: 84) has described the English speaking churches in South Africa as merely English in terms of communication: these churches do not share anything common in regard to doctrine, liturgy and practice. Their designation is basically that of their British origin, which came to be shared over the years as a result of the ecumenical movement and their attitude towards racism in general and especially apartheid. Due to their position against apartheid they were labelled anti-apartheid churches, and in some quarters English speaking churches mainly by the media, politicians and the general populace. Charles Villa-Vicencio (1988: 150) argues that these churches (English speaking) differ significantly from the Dutch Reformed Churches owing to their opposition to all forms of racism. From 1948, since the National Party gained power political power in, South Africa Anti-apartheid churches or English speaking churches had protested against apartheid. However, these churches were also obliged to respond to the needs of their white membership, who were sometimes the custodians and beneficiaries of the government system of apartheid (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 150). As a result of the position these churches took against apartheid the situation in their church halls, arenas, cathedrals, synods, assemblies and conferences turned out to be platforms for conflict with the state from the 1960s to the 1970s and early 1980s. The ecumenical movement under the banner

of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) convened a consultation which was held in Hammanskraal (in 1975) the purpose of which was to confront racism. Many of the black delegates who took part in the conference came up with an ultimatum to the 'white Christians to demonstrate their willingness to purge the church of racism' warning that 'if after a period of twelve months there is no evidence of repentance in concrete action, the black Christians will have no alternative but to witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by becoming a confessing church (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 151). It was never clear what the intentions of the black members of these churches were. However, the position taken by these churches when the National Party gained political power is what is under discussion here.

Churches spoke out against race classification, forced removals of population groups due to the Group Areas Act, the Immorality Act and the Mixed Marriages Act, which were designed to keep racial purity untarnished. There were also different education Acts which were designed along ethnic lines, such as the job reservation Act which was intended to preserve employment for the favoured racial group. Apart from this legislation, the churches were protesting against the state's actions whether connected or not to any form of discrimination, be it forced removals of squatters, imprisonment of certain people without trial or extended periods of solitary confinement. This led to tension between the state and these churches. The conflict between the church and the state in South Africa about apartheid policy was in itself an anathema to the church. For the church there was no difference between separate development and apartheid except that the former was a little more sophisticated. The conflict was effectively about the essence of dividing the people on the grounds of ethnicity, and the church was concerned with its task of reconciling groups of people and implementing the social equity, and hence it was clear that church and state conflict was unavoidable. At the same time the government policy had affected the church in a negative way. The effects of this conflict were felt by the church through its property ownership, on the basis of holding conferences in residential areas open to all races (de Gruchy 1986: 88). Added to this was the state's action of taking over the black churches' schools in pursuit of separate development; this was the case with their hospitals as well. One example of this was the expropriation of the Federal Theological Seminary,

which showed victimisation of the church by the government, despite the state declaring South Africa to be a Christian country in its constitution in 1961. What this apparently implies was that there was no form of religious persecution in the country, as the state was encouraging the propagation and teaching of the Christian faith and respect for the rights of religious minority groups. In addition there was the statement by the leaders of the government that it was in the nature of the church to be prophetic and that it was part of its responsibility to be prophetic, as this was important for the well being of the state. In spite of this, the critique of the Anti-apartheid churches was disregarded by the state and this led to conflict and confrontation.

This tension between the Anti-apartheid churches and the state meant an uneasy coexistence, an uneasiness which intensified when words became deeds. As a result church people (i.e. ministers, missionaries, pastors, leaders and those who were involved in Christian projects and programmes) found themselves on the receiving end of the state's action especially when they were going against the state. The church found itself losing some of its own human resources due to deportations of missionaries, detentions without trial of some of its ministers and banning orders being imposed upon other church leaders (de Gruchy 1986: 91).

It was clear, therefore, that, throughout history church and state have often existed in an adversarial relationship. The reasons for this have varied - sometimes political power, sometimes differing ideologies, sometimes religious differences. But examples of church and state existing in opposition to each other can be found in the past as well as the present, and in various areas of the world.

1.3 Allies

1.3.1 In the Roman Empire

After the apologists took a stand to defend both the church and Christians the situation changed in favour of Christianity which had been formerly regarded as a Jewish sect but

was now fully recognised as legitimate. Christianity was now enjoying the favour which had been enjoyed by the previous religions (that of state support). After the Edict of Milan, the Christian church was established under the imperial authority and the clergy were freed from the public burdens which were carried by others. This was also an attempt by the state to control them. The private religions were now declared illegal, and the 'heathen' sacrifices were also forbidden and non-Christian temples were ordered to close down (Pfeffer 1953: 14). Sunday became a recognised public holiday, and urban residents were ordered not to work on that day.

With these favours accorded to religion by the state there was a price to pay: that of state interference in religious affairs. Constantine had the power to call and dismiss the church councils as well as to enforce unity of belief and practice (Pfeffer 1953:14). Constantine had also seen, in the tradition preserved by Eusebius, the mark of the cross in the sky, which bore the words 'in this sign you will conquer' before a decisive battle (Villa-Vicencio: 1986: 6). The church which had previously endured state persecution was now welcoming state persecution of nonconformists and the unorthodox. This led to a call by Nestor, who was the Bishop of Constantinople that all heretics should be destroyed. The call was heeded by the emperor, who made sure that deviation from orthodoxy was punishable by death and that heretics were not allowed to build churches nor to hold religious ceremonies. On the other hand the Byzantine Church possessed a relationship with the state which was known as a *'symphony',* or *'co - operation*', and which was between the leadership of the church and state government for the good of society. This kind of co - operation did not mean that the church controlled the state or the state controlled the church, though there were instances when the emperors attempted to control the church affairs and in most instances they succeeded. At times it seemed as if the church was a 'department of the state'. This could have been one of the ways which led to the failure of the Byzantine church (Ware 1964: 67). A good example of this will be control over the external administration of the church, like creation or abolition of dioceses, the appointment or confirmation of certain important bishops and the proclaiming of church doctrine as state law. In some cases the emperors had certain privileges in the church itself. One of these privileges, which were significant liturgical expressions of the important place of the emperor in the life of the

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church was the practice of allowing the emperor or empress an opportunity to receive the sacrament of holy communion at the altar itself, which was an area reserved for the clergy only (Noll 1997: 325).

In the Middle Ages the Roman Empire was beginning to collapse and disintegrate and monarchies were being consolidated among the feudal holdings, but the church stood permanent, stable and powerful. It did not come as a shock when the church was claiming its share, not of an equal status but of superiority to the secular state. This was visible in Gelasius and was symbolised by Pope Leo when he was crowning Charlemagne. The act endorsed an acceptance of the church's principle of its relationship to the state. According to Pfeffer (1953: 16) this union between the church and state was seen by the church as a union of the state with the church. This supremacy was, however, not accepted by the authorities of the state. Charlemagne was crowned by the pope and for him to nullify the pope's supremacy he crowned his own son as his successor. The history of the Middle Ages in fact revolves around the struggle for supremacy between the Prince and the Pope, as in the well known incident between Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII) and Emperor Henry IV in the 11th century. Subsequent to the revival of the Holy Roman Empire in Germany, the Popes were chosen by the emperors which to the local church leaders meant being totally dominated by the German princes, who were also capable of selling the appointments to the highest bidders (Pfeffer 1953:17). Pope Gregory VII, after his ascendancy to the papal position reasserted himself as superior to the Emperor. This was clearly admitted by Henry when he argued that: the Pontiff alone is able to bind and to loose, to give and take away, according to the merits of each man, empires, kingdoms, duchies, countships, and possessions of all men' (Pfeffer 1953: 17). Gregory went on to order Henry to conform to a papal decree that the episcopate receive their staff of office from the Pope and not from the Emperor. In return Henry responded by appointing a cleric of his choice to a seat of a bishop of Milan and he went on to call a council of his nobles and bishops to denounce or reject the powers of the Pope. This became a church and state conflict, since the Pope also issued the decree excommunicating Emperor Henry as well as releasing his subjects from their oaths and alliance to him (to the Pope). The situation became so serious that Henry had to beg Gregory not to excommunicate him. However, three years later, Pope Gregory

VII excommunicated the emperor and in retaliation the Emperor Henry IV took a drastic step when he marched to Rome, removed Gregory from his papal position and replaced him with a rival Pope. Later the situation calmed down when Henry and Gregory died and a compromise was reached by their successors. The Emperor was appointed by the Pope but was to be invested into office by the touch of the Emperor's mace. This situation also extended to England a century later with the reigns of Kings Henry II and John of and Popes Celestine III and Innocent III.

The church and state relationships did not end here: they gave birth to the Reformation, which came to be seen as the rise of religious liberty. The Protestants accepted the principle governing the relations between a democratic state and its citizens. Pferffer (1953: 22) argues that it is accurate to say that the reformers were the champions of religious liberty and of the acceptance of the principle of separation of church and state. The reformers like Luther and Calvin were encouraging tolerance between the church and state. However, Luther's reform spread as a rebellion of the German commoner against the princely authority. The individual's conscience moved easily to the notion of the autonomy of the political conscience. Despite this, Luther proved to be no rebel and took a stand on the side of the German princes against the rebels. He came down strongly against the peasants and their leaders, and some of the leaders were killed when about 6 000 peasants lost their lives in one day during the battle of Frankenhausen. Luther's reforms in Germany were not ones of political power nor the power of the local bishops or popes. The dependence of the church on the state was set as a characteristic feature of German Christianity, which is a feature even today (Bettenson1943: 259). In other words Martin Luther never intended to replace one form of authority with another (neither the church should be the authority over the state, nor vice versa). For Luther both institutions are autonomous and can exist alongside each other in harmony (Sinnema, quoted from *Confessing Christ in Doing Politics*, 1995: 73). This concept Luther adopted from St. Augustine's model of the two cities, which are the *City of God* and the *Temporal Authority* (Sinnema 1995: 73). Beyond this, Luther still maintains God's sovereignty over all governments.

Calvin, like Luther, introduces his notion of civil government by noting the difference between spiritual government and political government. However, his notion is slightly different from that of Luther: he uses the words 'kingdom' and 'government' interchangeably. According to Sinnema (1995: 89), the two terms in Calvin's perspective have more to do with the mode of the lordship than the realm of the lordship. John Calvin looked at the two kingdoms in a positive sense (in other words, both kingdoms are good rather than one being evil). This perspective set out to indicate that in both kingdoms are different kings and different laws and authority. The two worlds may constitute the outer and the inner, or the soul and the body. The one world is spiritual, where conscience is instructed in piety and on receiving God, while the other is political and is oriented human duties and human citizenship, which must be maintained by people (Villa-Vicencio 1986: 44).

1.3.2 National state churches after the Reformation (Anglican)

In England the status of the church and its relationship goes back to Henry VIII (1509-1547) in his reign, when he demanded that the church annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon because he wanted an heir to his kingdom and owing to the fact that Catherine had not borne him a son. This led to serious tension between the church and the English monarchy under Henry VII. As a result, Henry wanted to marry Anne Boleyn (Walker 1970:358). However, with Henry now having done away with the papal authority of the church in England he was determined to rely on the national feelings of hostility towards foreign rule. By 1531 he had charged the clergy with breaching the old statute of *Paremunire* of 1353. Henry demanded a great sum as the price of forgiveness for extortion, but the declaration by the assemblies in which the clergy met, that in respect to the church of England, he was 'single and supreme Lord, and, as far as the law of Christ allows, even supreme head' (Walker 1970:359), led to a situation where parliament was pressurised by the King to pass an Act forbidding payment to the clergy. As a result the clergy reluctantly agreed to make the new ecclesiastical laws without the King's permission, but they submitted all the existing statutes to a commission which was appointed by the King. In January 25, 1533, King Henry VII finally married Anne Boleyn and this was followed by the prohibition of an

appeal to Rome by parliament, which came about through Henry's conditional prohibition from Pope Clement VII confirmation of his appointment of Thomas Cranmer as Archbishop of Canterbury. Cranmer was consecrated on March 1533 and he formally held the court to adjudge the marriage of King Henry VII to Catherine null and void (Walker 1970: 359). As events were unfolding, the pope was also preparing a bull in which he was threatening to excommunicate Henry. In response, the King had a series of statutes passed by parliament, at his request which meant that all the payments to the Pope were forbidden, that all bishops were elected on the King's nomination, and that all oaths of papal obedience, Roman licences, and other recognitions of papal authority were done away with. Parliament then passed the Act of Supremacy which declared Henry and his successors the only supreme head, on earth, of the Church of England, without qualifying clauses, and gave him power to redress 'heresies' and 'abuses'. Though the King did not understand this to mean that he was to be given spiritual rights like ordination, administration of sacraments and other ecclesiastical duties, in everything else he was placed in the position of the pope; the result was that the breach with Rome was completed (Walker 1970: 359).

The changes that took place in England were more to do with ecclesiastical politics than religion as such, and the disturbed state of the country gave the opportunity to form a truly Protestant party, which appeared more indigenous than imported and followed basically the pattern of Wyclif and Luther. It aimed more at reforming the church, and viewed its riches as an obstacle to spirituality. Owing to this situation the Protestant party did not find any fault in Henry's assertions and confiscations. The circulation of the Bible and the conformity to the Scriptures were also valued by the Protestant party, as was seen in the eagerness of William Tyndale (1492-1536) to translate the New Testament into English. Leaders like Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555) and Hugh Latimer, all of whom were to become bishops who later died by burning for their faith, supported the involvement of the King in doctrinal developments in the church. Because Henry's opposition to Rome was growing stronger, Protestantism was spreading among lay people. In England this made the church an ally of the government and monarchy, as both its property and its clergy were under the authority of the English monarchy.

1.3.3 In Colonialism

The first missionaries to descend on the shores of South Africa were the Moravians; however, they did not stamp their missionary influence on the country, unlike their successors, the London Missionary Society (LMS). The latter was constituted mainly by Protestant denominations from a Calvinistic doctrinal background: the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians. Subsequent to the LMS arrived the Wesleyan Missionary Society which belonged to the Methodists, and also the Lutheran Missionaries, Anglicans and Catholics. Most of these missionary societies came to South Africa during the colonial period and they arrived in two forms, which were to serve the needs of the colonial administrators as well as those of the 1820 settlers. With the migrations of the settlers into the interior there was also a need to increase the number of the missionaries, and the latter also felt a need to evangelise the indigenous people they met in the coastal regions as well as those they met in the interior.

Missionaries who belonged to the London Missionary Society, like Dr John Phillip, Dr Johannes van der Kemp and Robert Moffat, were the best known missionaries during the colonial period. Some of these missionaries were accused of immorality, like van der Kemp who married a Coloured woman, while others were accused of treason (de Gruchy 1986: 12). The main problem was that these missionaries were not serving the interests and needs of the white settlers and that they were trying to be relevant to the struggles of the Coloureds and the African people. Many of these non-Europeans were considered to be inferior to their European counterparts and were regarded as being destined to serve the latter. They were further considered to be cattle-thieves and that they were the main cause of the frontier wars. As a result, the Xhosa people were regarded as the enemies of the settlers, and this became a concern to some missionaries. The result was that both the Dutch and the English settlers were not happy with some of the missionaries, who not only evangelised the indigenous people but also took their side in the struggle for justice, rights and land. At the same time the missionaries considered themselves as being the conscience of the settlers and protectors of the natives. And this led to some missionaries like Rev John M'Carter complaining that 'they were unwilling to listen to settler grievances

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and automatically presumed that their mission flock was in the right. But whatever the faults of the missionaries, from a black as well as a white perspective, it is true to say that the church's struggle against racism and injustice in South Africa only really begins in earnest with their witness in the nineteenth century' (de Gruchy 1986:13).

Missionary activity in South Africa, from the perspective of social functions in the transition from one culture to another, was visible as it was directly linked to cultural superiority (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 56), which many of the imperialists adopted and not only the missionaries; but this form of paternalism could also have been at the centre of the missionary structures of the churches. This stemmed from the ecclesiastical structures in England, which belonged to a different social class and were highly educated as opposed to the rank and file of the missionaries who were sent to South Africa. For many of these missionaries, mission meant imposing the English structures upon the emerging African church and its society. The results were that missionaries in the field were supposed to report every decision made and the expenses incurred. In responding to their African converts they were applying the same paternalism as did British society. However, this kind of attitude was not only applied by the missionaries to the African converts but they extended it to the missionary churches as well (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 57). In this instance the issue was the deference to the civil authority by the missionary church. With the Anglican Church the situation was simply that in England it was the state church and in the British colonies of the Cape and Natal it therefore became the government church, which demonstrated political support and conformity to the status quo. This was the position up to the time of the political union between the British colonies and the Boer republic in 1910.

Though the Methodist Church had been involved in labour class activities in England, this was not the case in South Africa as they were not involved in matters of politics (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 57). Contrary to the situation of their non-involvement in South African politics the Methodist Church (in the nineteenth century) informed John Ayliff, who was in Grahamstown that chaplains had been tried before conference for talking too much. At the same time Ayliff did take part with the authorities in imposing the 'native policy'. Another Methodist missionary (William Shaw), who was a superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission,

was very active in depriving the Basotho (under chief Moshoeshoe) of parts of their land. The LMS were also acting in keeping with the nonconformist heritage by responding with less submission to the authorities. People like Johannes van der Kemp, John Phillip and others tended to be relevant and they blamed the settlers for the frontier wars which took place in the colony. Their intention was to work among the indigenous people, who were reduced almost to slaves due to the advancement of the settlers. These were people who became landless and poor at the same time, as a result of the settlers' treatment of them (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 58).

1.3.4 Civil Religion (e.g. in the USA)

Ferdinand Deist (Kritzinger and Saayman 1990: 125) defines civil religion in four ways: first, the ancient way of hero-worshipping which was a practice in the Ancient Near East, with kings being deemed to be the gods. This practice was later adopted by the Roman emperors. The second definition refers to the dwellers of the medieval cities who sought the protection of their saints through artistic and ritual commemorations. These two versions of civil religion have some similarities with a sacred or mythological world-view, which reflected the political institutions as unchangeable divine ordinations (Kritzinger and Saayman 1990: 125). The third version which Deist discussed was found in the revolutionary and democratic 'will of the people', which dictated people what it meant to be a good citizen as well as a faithful subject. Simply, here 'civil religion' describes the democratic sentiments underlying the ideals of a modern society. The fourth version of civil religion may be called the 'religion of nationalism' which emerged in Europe during the Napoleonic wars. This version was understood to mean that the national state represented 'the march of God on earth' or that a particular 'people' were thought to have the divine vocation. Deist acknowledges the opinion that civil religion is a set of beliefs and attitudes which explain the meaning and purpose of any political society in terms of its transcendental, spiritual reality, that are held generally by people of that context or society and are expressed in public rituals, myths and symbols.

Many of the Dutch Reformed members moved to the cities in the 1930s and 1940s and

were becoming urbanised at the same time. However, in the Free State and Natal some of them remained constant and stayed on the farms or rural settlement. In attempting to adapt to the new lifestyle, the Afrikaners simply accepted their social conditions and tried to copy the successes of the English-speaking people in some sections of the cities. The same was true of many black people, most of whom were labourers in the farms, moving into the cities and being in competition with the former land owners for jobs in the cities. At the same time many blacks were beginning to attend schools in large numbers and they began to outnumber white pupils. For political reasons, the Afrikaners were not prepared to accept any form of equality owing to their fear and the process of levelling that was taking place particularly in matters of labour relations. This was a time when the Dutch Reformed Church still viewed itself as a 'volkskerk' (a people's church) and sometimes as a 'Boerekerk' (Kritzinger and Saayman 1990: 128) which had always been in contact with the spirit of the people (volksie). Historically the Dutch Reformed Church was influenced by Kuyperianism, which was compatible with fundamentalism. This influence saw theological scholars from the Dutch Reformed Church who were at the Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch changing their attitudes speaking of it (the Stellenbosch Seminary) as a 'confessional seminary' and of the same church as the 'Calvinist confessional Church'. Fundamentalism was at this point swopped for 'Calvinist'. The reason for this was very simple: fundamentalism was biassed and capitalistic as well as socially apathetic to the status quo, whereas Calvinism was socially and politically involved. This change reminded Afrikaners that they were the downtrodden people. Divine favour and their calling to be a Boerekerk was going to save the Afrikaner's self-respect and cultural norms. It was in distinguishing the relevant Christian rationale applicable to this context that the biblical hermeneutic of the Afrikaner civil religion began to play its role.

1.3.5 Apartheid (status quo) churches in S.A

Abraham Kuyper, as influenced by Groen van Prinsterer, gave a new and fresh expression to the strict Calvinist tradition. Kuyper was himself a statesman and a theologian who developed the ideas of Prinsterer into an all-embracing philosophy and lifestyle. He fought for the separation of church and state. For Kuyper the interpretation was simply 'that all

spheres of life exist by virtue of God's common grace, as distinct from saving grace, which is built into the structure of creation and provides the basis for Christian Nationalism in its various dimensions' (De Gruchy 1979: 6).

Many of the Dutch Reformed theologians received their training from the Free University in Amsterdam, which was founded by Kuyper. Most of the students who graduated from this university ensured that the Neo-Calvinist developments were propagated and assimilated in the Cape. The pillar of this move was Rev SJ du Toit, who was known as the father of Afrikaner Nationalism. This movement not only offered an articulate alternative to evangelical pietism, but it also laid the foundation for Christian National Education, which later became a basis for Afrikaner National policy. Kuyper's initiative of Neo-Calvinism was directly social and political in significance (Hofmeyr et al 1986: 146). The split (between Calvinism and Kuyperianism in over the doctrine of predestination Holland) and not only took place in Holland but also occurred in the Cape when SJ Du Toit left the DRC to form the Gereformeerde Kerk in Burgersdorp in 1859 (De Gruchy 1979: 7).

Despite this move, racism proved to be a more powerful tool than religion, and the DRC was confronted by a critical situation where the natives were readily accepting the gospel, the same way as the gentiles did in the early church. This was not welcomed by many whites, as racial prejudice was clashing with a theology which was warming up to accepting natives as equals. This clash was largely on the white interests in labour and land acquisition. However, the DRC in its Synod of 1829 took a decision that the Holy Communion would be administered simultaneously to all members without any distinction of colour or origin, as this was 'an unshakable principle based on the infallible Word of God' (De Gruchy 1979: 7). The practice of refusing to allow indigenous people to worship with whites was dividing the church and there was also a rift between the settlers and the indigenous people, who were mostly slaves (Hofmeyr et. al 1986: 147). This actually proved to be an obstacle, because as a result of social pressure the synod resolution had to be changed in 1857. The DRC decided that though not desirable or scriptural, due to the weakness of certain individuals (i.e. whites) it was permissible to hold separate services

for blacks and whites, not so much because of social pressure but because it was found to be convenient for a mission by many missionaries from Europe. What was meant to be an exception became a rule when separate churches were formed, and a daughter church was formed for the coloured people in the name of the Sending Kerk in 1881. This was followed by the NG Kerk in Africa for the blacks and the Indian Reformed Church. The missionary programme of the DRC in its development over the next hundred years followed culture and custom consistently, which provided the church with a blueprint for the Nationalist policy of separate development.

The DRC extended a great influence over the white Afrikaans speaking people in South Africa; however, one may not overgeneralise that all white people or all Afrikaans speaking people were its members. The basic truth about this church is simply that the majority of its members were from the dominant group, who had access to policy makers of the nation at that time. Many of its members were in Parliament as well as in the provincial councils throughout the land (de Gruchy 1986: 68), and included the military personnel and the police. This has made the history of the church and state in South Africa one of co-operation, particularly with the Dutch Reformed Churches which were deemed apartheid churches. This situation was direct result of the Sharpeville massacre and the Cottesloe Conference in 1960. Though the relationship of the state and church (the Dutch Reformed Church) in South Africa goes back to the colonial period, the outcomes of the conference were mainly rejected by the government and the then Prime Minister of South Africa, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, who took the DRC delegates who were at the conference to task, accusing them of submitting to the influence of the World Council of Churches (WCC), while they were forgetting their responsibility with regard to the 'high purpose of apartheid' (Villa-Vicencio 1986: 200).

The DRC, after its withdrawal from the WCC after the Cottesloe conference, was forced by the WCC to define its position towards the policy of apartheid. In 1974 the DRC produced a report known as 'Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture', which was distributed worldwide as the official position of the church towards the biblical justification for apartheid and was debated in many countries. This led to the

World Alliance of Reformed Churches in 1982 declaring apartheid a heresy and suspending the membership of the DRC. Irrespective of its theological support for apartheid, the results of the investigation of church-state relations which were contained in the document reflected the continuous, dominant emphases of classical state-church relations in the history of the church. The DRC was recognising the state as a God-given institution for the sake of public order as a means to fight evil and preserve justice, and the report made it very clear that the church's obligation was to 'preach the Word of God to the authorities, particularly regarding the norms of the Bible for mutual relationships and social justice, as well as the obligations of the authorities (Villa-Vicencio 1986: 201). The DRC was warning that justice and love were not enough to save the state from revolutionary chaos and political absolutism and tyranny, which was affirming the need for the church to submit to the state, 'provided the legal order does not conflict with the Word of God' (Villa-Vicencio 1986: 201). The church (DRC) was in a situation which permitted the oppressive legislation of the government, which was not in fact compared with the Word of God, but was justified in terms of the theology which was rejected by major Christian organisations both in South Africa and outside the country and declared as a heresy.

Church and state in South Africa therefore also have a long history of co-existing in harmony, if not open co-operation. Church and state often made use of or exploited each other to fulfill their own ambitions. This emerges perhaps at its clearest during imperial eras, when the church is required to provide divine sanction for the state imperial ambitions. The church at times was not free from such imperialist ambitions itself, and exploited state support to achieve this, as in the time of colonialism. Finally, in a situation where civil religion rules the land, it is sometimes difficult to say who is dominating or exploiting whom, church or state. This was very clear in the relationship between the National Party government and the white DRC in apartheid South Africa.

1.4 Neutrality

1.4.1 Anabaptist churches in post-Reformation Europe

Some people believed that Martin Luther with his reformation had still not far enough, such

as Zwingli. In Zurich Conrad Grebel and Felix Manz felt that even Zwingli's style of leadership and teachings were too conservative. This became evident when they demanded that the images of the mass be abolished. One of Luther's former pupils, later a colleague, was Balthasar Hubmaier (1480-1528) who debated this issue and even came to the point of doubting and questioning infant baptism (Walker 1970: 326). Hubmaier even went as far as discussing this matter with Zwingli and it turned out that Zwingli sympathised with him. The argument emanated from the lack of scriptural qualification for the administration of infant baptism. Hubmaier and Zwingli, supported by Conrad Grebel and Felix Mantz who reached the same conclusions, translated theory into practice. Their innovations led to a situation where the baptism of children was delayed until they had reached the stage of adulthood. In January 21, 1525, at Zurich, a prayer meeting was held by Grebel, Mantz and George Blaurock, in which the last mentioned stood up and requested Conrad Grebel to baptise him (Walker 1970: 326). As a result of this Blaurock went ahead to baptise the rest, after his own baptism. The following week a few other members of the group who held revival meetings and prayer groups in their private homes went through the same experience, especially with those who felt regenerated and were baptised through sprinkling. The event was later followed by the Lord's Supper. As a result of their acts, these people were referred to or nicknamed 'Anabaptists' or rebaptizers. The name was appropriate owing to the fact that they denied their infant baptism, which was much debated during the Reformation period. However, their acts led to the government of Zurich ordering the drowning of the Anabaptists in March 1526 for their hideous belief and this saw Felix Manz being executed. Conrad Grebel and his friends differed from Zwingli, particularly because they saw the test of Christian faith in discipleship of Christ and since they felt it must be experienced in spiritual rebirth or awakening, expressed in a life of saintliness. This was due to the fact that they were opposed to the use of force, particularly in matters of faith, and to their abandonment of the age-old requirement of religious uniformity as the guarantee of public peace and order. The Anabaptists refused to take part in any form of state-church relationship put in place by Zwingli in Zurich as in other areas of the Reformation. They (Anabaptists) chose to live in free communities and convents. This made them the first to practice the separation of church and state (Walker 1970: 327). This decision led to their persecution on account of their non-conformity, as

their acts of sectarianism were interpreted as hostility to ordered society.

Hubmaier's son gathered a community of Anabaptists and his initiative paid dividends as he had used the pen effectively. His view was that the Bible is the sole law of the church, and according to the Scriptural test the proper order of Christian development is preaching the Word, hearing, belief, baptism, works, with the latter being thought of as indicating life lived with the Bible as its law (Walker 1970: 327). The persecution of the Anabaptists saw the movement growing throughout Germany, Switzerland and Netherlands. The growth of this movement was mainly among the lower classes as the Lutheran Church was associated with the territorial princes and aristocratic city magistrates. In some areas the territorial rulers at first tried to check the movement by issuing mandates against it, as the Zurich government did. The first to do this was Ferdinand of Austria, who was later followed by his brother Charles V. Irrespective of persecution, the Anabaptists continued to be troublesome and this led the diets of Spier and Augsburg and the assembled German estates, which were both Roman Catholic and Protestant, applying the old Roman law against heresies. This meant that membership of any Anabaptist group was punishable with by death (Walker 1970: 328). In Catholic territories like Austria and Bavaria this law was carried out with maximum severity. In contrast, the Evangelicals treated the Anabaptists as seditionists and not as heretics. This means that their refusal to conform to the established ecclesiastical orders would result in their either withdrawing or emigrating. Refusal to do either would result in imprisonment or death, as such defiance was regarded as a disturbance of the peace.

In Germany a major centre of the Anabaptists was based in Augsburg where Hubmaier baptized Hans Denck in May 1526 and shortly thereafter baptised Hans Hut. It was Hut who caused the Anabaptist movement to grow and who won over members of patrician families. In 1527 the Synod of Martyrs was held, chiefly at Hut's initiative, to deal with apocalyptic ideas. He saw himself as a prophet who was affirming that the persecution of the saints was going to be followed by the destruction of the Empire. Many of the members of the Anabaptists were attracted to the movement simply because of its Christian discipleship and pacifism. The church was regarded as made up of local associations of

baptised regenerated Christians, united in the body of Christ by the common observance of the Lord's Supper; whose only weapon was excommunication. The total rejection of all 'servitude to the flesh', like the worship of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, and Zwinglian churches, was demanded. It was left to the individual congregations to choose their own officers and administer through them their disciplines (Walker 1970: 330). Their opinion was that even though a civil government was necessary in an imperfect world, there was no need for Christians to share in it: they should not bear any arms or use coercion, neither should they take any oath to government.

1.4.2 Secular states

Secular and sacred are often viewed as opposite, but the two are basically different only in levels or planes because they are not in competition nor conflict. To consider the sacred means to experience governance under divinity or God, which therefore deems God to be present in matters of authority, governing through the objects of faith. Secular refers to the same reality except that it is accessible only to humanity and is also under human control (Shorter et al 1997: 13). Both emphasise order and coherence. As it stands secular is not intrinsically opposed to sacred. It is a common phenomenon for secular states which are simple or unsophisticated to allow the sacred to invade their space and this tends to discourage human initiatives or innovations. Secularisation possesses its own momentum which develops, and is observed to dominate and replace the sacred. In other words secularism is a situation in which religious faith is felt to be superfluous. This is a state where religion loses its grip at the level of both social institution and human conscience; as a result secularism is a world view which denies the immanence of God. Organised religions cease to dominate society, and not only are different religious systems forced to compete against each other in a pluralistic society but they also lose credibility and religion tends to be seen as another department in a social order. A good example of this is Uganda, where anything religious seemed to be turned into a secular developmental or non governmental organisation. Secularism may also stem from a point of unbelief or even from the denial of the existence of God or of any religious dimension to human life (Shorter et al 1997:15). As it is, secularism is seen as a belief in human progress, and as holding the

knowledge that religion belongs to the infant stage of humanity and that primitive people were naively pious and gullible and were vulnerable to the teachings of priests and magicians. As a result of the human and scientific development, the thought has arisen that human beings have come to the point of throwing off the shackles of religion.

1.4.3 Present-day SA

Present - day South Africa is democratic and does not relate to any religion; however, it recognises the existence of all the religions which are observed. Albert Nolan (1995: 151) writes that the first democratic election in South Africa, on April 27, 1994, warrants the church and the state re-reading the text of Romans 13 because the government is now legitimate and must therefore be recognised as God's servant working for the good of the people. This means that both the state and the church will have to revise their relationship, both hypothetically and pragmatically. South Africa seems to be modelling its structures of governance on the Tanzanian style, in which Julius Nyerere after the liberation of that country reminded the Catholic Bishops that the government would take care of external and structural changes, while the churches should be concerned with the internal and personal changes needed in the hearts of the citizens. This seems to be the case with the democratic South Africa: that there is a need for the church to contribute significantly to the changes of heart and values in the white and black communities respectively. The impression is simply that both the church and state must work together in solidarity but in different realms (Nolan 1995: 152). In the past the church used to prophetically oppose the apartheid government but that does not mean that the same should be the case in present day South Africa. The church still needs to be prophetic in a new dispensation in spite of the solidarity. The prophetic and critical voices need to be directed against other people, institutions, corporations and organisations and not only the state. The grounds for prophetic criticism will in this case be the self-introspection of people, the nation itself and the government. In Nolan's perspective the prophetic role of the church in South Africa means it also has to be critical of itself and its own institutions, as well as of the organisations and the actions of people. It means the church must also be critical of businesses and big corporations and people involved in fraud and corruption (Nolan 1995:

152). In short the relationship between the church and state in South Africa should be a multipurpose one, which is supportive in some matters, and while playing a complementary role through changing the hearts of the people, at the same time it must take a firm, critical stand. This means that South Africa by virtue of its democratic principle and recognition of all the religions existing within it, makes a secular state.

1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the church has over the years been involved in politics in a number of ways. From the beginning of the spread of Christian religion in its early years, it was clear that the experience of being on the receiving end, as well as of being on the same side as the state, would be something which the church was going to live through in different contexts. This was clearly seen in the imperial state of Rome, when Christians were persecuted not because of their opposition to the political dispensation of that time but because of their religious beliefs. In a twist of events the same religion came to enjoy state support and found itself also persecuting people believed to be heretics: as some of the latter were burned at the stake for standing firm on what they believed. Over the years new trends also developed, such as the emergence of theories like Marxism, Socialism, Democracy, Secularism and other social theories. As they strongly claimed their stake in politics and governance, Christianity found itself sometimes wondering and looking for its own place, though in some contexts it has been in a comfort zone where the state declared itself Christian or a religious government. History therefore provides no conclusive answers about the relationship between church and state, but many warning examples of where this relationship went wrong. Such a situation was found in the homeland of Bophuthatswana, which is discussed in the following chapter.