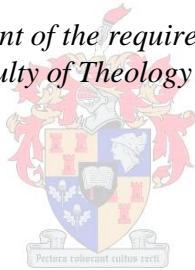


# **Beyers Naudé: advocate of hope? A historical theological reading of his public addresses**

by

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*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Theology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University*



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March 2013

## **DECLARATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Beyers Naudé has long been revered as one of South Africa's most influential church and civil leaders. He has been acclaimed both nationally and internationally as a symbol of hope. Recent developments at Stellenbosch University, with regards to the HOPE Project and the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, have given rise to renewed academic interest into the life and witness of Beyers Naudé, and specifically the concept of hope. The focus of this study is the contribution of Beyers Naudé to Christians' advocacy of hope in public life.

A theological historical reading of his public speeches from 1960 to 1990 is conducted in an analysis of his advocacy of hope. A heuristic framework is used in order to investigate the nature and method in which Beyers Naudé employed the concept of hope in his public addresses. This framework is constructed by drawing on the concepts of hope, public theology and historiography, resulting in what I have termed a 'historically hopeful citizenship'.

A chapter is dedicated to a biographical overview of Naudé's life and witness in order to understand the influences in his life and to work with hermeneutical sensibility in analysing his addresses. Furthermore, this study is concerned with exploring the possible contours of hope in Naudé's addresses and finally asking whether an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope could contribute historical and conceptual knowledge about the church's public witness and whether this can have implications for the field of public theology.

## OPSOMMING

Beyers Naudé word al vir baie jare as een van Suid-Afrika se mees invloedryke kerk- en samelewingsleiers geag. Hy is al op nasionale, sowel as internasionale vlak beskou as 'n simbool van hoop. Onlangse ontwikkelinge aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch, met betrekking tot die HOOP Projek sowel as die Beyers Naudé Sentrum vir Publieke Teologie, dra by tot hernude akademiese belangstelling in die lewe en werk van Naudé, sowel as in die konsep van hoop. Sy bydraes was veral beduidend in die publieke lewe gewees. Die fokus van hierdie studie is dus Beyers Naudé se bydrae tot Christene se voorspraak van hoop in die publieke lewe.

'n Historiese, teologiese ondersoek word ingestel op die publieke toesprake van Naudé van 1960 tot 1990. Hiervoor word 'n heuristiese raamwerk gebruik om die metode en aard van Naudé se voorspraak van die konsep van hoop in sy publieke toesprake te bestudeer. Dié raamwerk maak gebruik van die konsepte van hoop, publieke teologie, en historiografie en loop uit op 'n burgerskap ingebed in historiese hoop.

'n Biografiese oorsig word gegee van Naudé se lewe en werk om die verskillende invloede in sy lewe uit te lig en sodat hermeneutiese verantwoordelikheid en verantwoordbaarheid verseker word. Hierdie studie werp verder lig op die kontoere van hoop in die toesprake en ondersoek die moontlikheid dat 'n verstaan van die aard en gebruik van dié opvattinge van hoop sal kan bydra tot historiese en konseptuele kennis van die kerk se publieke getuienis en of dit implikasies inhou vir die studieveld van publieke teologie.

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Secondly, to the Faculty of Theology and the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, and in particular Dr Murray Coetzee, for providing me with practical assistance and a comprehensive archive with which to work.

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Hope and History, in the end, do rhyme.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1. Introduction

Beyers Naudé has long been revered as one of South Africa's most influential church and civil leaders and has been acclaimed both nationally and internationally as a symbol of hope<sup>1</sup>. His witness has also clearly been displayed in the public sphere<sup>2</sup>. The focus of this study, stated broadly, is the contribution of the life and work of Beyers Naudé to the public role of Christians in offering hope. A theological historical reading of his public speeches is conducted in an analysis of his advocacy of hope.

### 1.2. Background and Objectives

Recent developments at Stellenbosch University (SU) have given rise to renewed study interest into the life and witness of Beyers Naudé, and more specifically how this witness relates to both public theology and the concept of hope. In 2002 the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology was established. Since 2005 the Centre has published, and continues to publish, its *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology*<sup>3</sup>. The Centre has recently received new collections of Naudé's sermons, writings, and public addresses, many of which are unpublished. This new material could contribute to the academic work centred on the life and work of *Oom Bey*, as he is affectionately referred to. A selection of this material - and some of his public addresses in particular - is relevant for this study.

In addition to the already-mentioned developments at SU with regards to public theology, there has recently been institutional growth that influences this study, especially concerning

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<sup>1</sup> The titles alone of many publications convey this association of Naudé with the concept of hope. These include: *Resistance and Hope. South African essays in honour of Beyers Naudé*. (J.W. De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio); *Hope for faith. A conversation*. (C.F.B. Naudé & D. Sölle); *My land van hoop. Die Lewe van Beyers Naudé*. (C.F.B. Naudé); *Met De Moed Der Hoop: Opstellen Aangeboden Aan Dr. C.F. Beyers Naudé*. (C. Villa-Vicencio et al.); and titles in the *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology*, such as *Oom Bey for the Future: Beyond Resistance and Hope*. (G.I Akper). These references and classifications will form an integral part of this study.

<sup>2</sup> 'Public sphere' can refer to different fields within society, as will be shown in chapter two of this study.

<sup>3</sup> The series includes the following titles: *The legacy of Beyers Naudé* (L.D Hansen (ed.) 2005. vol.1.); *Oom Bey for the future: engaging the witness of Beyers Naudé* (L.D. Hansen, R.R. Vosloo (eds.) 2006. vol.2.); *Christian in public aims, methodologies and issues in public theology* (L.D. Hansen (ed.). 2007. vol.3.); *Globalisation: the politics of empire, justice and the life of faith* (L.D. Hansen, A.A. Boesak. (eds.) 2009. vol.4.); *Globalisation, volume II : global crisis, global challenge, global faith : an on-going response to the Accra confession* (L.D. Hansen, A.A. Boesak. (eds.) 2010. vol.5.); there are also more to be published in this series in the near future.

the concept of hope. In 2010 the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof HR Botman<sup>4</sup> (also founder and chief advisor to the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology) launched the HOPE Project which is aimed at showcasing academic initiatives that serve human need. This public display of the theme of hope raised interesting dialogues on the use and meaning of hope within public life<sup>5</sup>. Stellenbosch University's HOPE Project aims to create sustainable solutions to some of South Africa's and Africa's most pressing challenges. The Project is rooted in three core functions – teaching and learning, research, and community interaction. The academic initiatives are grouped into five focus areas that are aligned with the international development agenda<sup>6</sup>. Research into the theological advocacy of hope within public life can contribute to the HOPE Project's agenda in so far as the church is able to play a role in civil society.

The life and work of Beyers Naudé and the public role of Christians in offering hope are by no means new subject matters or issues in theology; a project that seeks to engage with these concepts will therefore have to contribute some very specific, focused research on both these matters. Thus a specific research focus is required in order to engage critically with these concepts, particularly in light of the various understandings of public theology that have emerged in this field. Many books and articles expound on various theses, proposals, suggestions and understandings in service of addressing the problem of Christian faith and public life, despite the relatively new terminology of 'public theology'. However, public theology serves only as the backdrop and heuristic framework of this study and there are only

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<sup>4</sup> As theologian, Prof H.R. Botman was appointed professor of Missiology at Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Theology on 1 January 2000. He served as chairperson for the Missiology Department, dean alternate of the Faculty of Theology and as principal of the Theological School of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and Stellenbosch University. In July 2002 he was elected as vice-rector (teaching) at Stellenbosch University and as rector in 2007, and reappointed in 2012. He also served as president of both the South African Council of Churches and the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches.

<sup>5</sup> The title of Botman's inaugural address as Rector of Stellenbosch University in 2007 was titled, "A Multicultural University with a Pedagogy of Hope", in which he explained his vision for the institution as founded on this "pedagogy of hope"; a phrase coined by the work of Paulo Friere in his book "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" which was released, and banned, during Apartheid. These ideas influenced the HOPE Project. See *A Multicultural University with a Pedagogy of Hope*. 2007. Available online: [www.sun.ac.za/university/management/ректор/docs](http://www.sun.ac.za/university/management/ректор/docs).

<sup>6</sup> According to the HOPE Project's website ([www.thehopeproject.co.za](http://www.thehopeproject.co.za)): "The University has thus positioned itself as a builder of hope by aligning its core activities with the following development themes from the international Millennium Development Goals: Eradicating poverty and related conditions; Promoting human dignity and health; Promoting democracy and human rights; Promoting peace and security; Promoting a sustainable environment and a competitive industry."

suggestive contributions made to this field. An engagement with Beyers Naudé's addresses as a public display of hope is valuable in this regard.

Naudé's far reaching impact, not only within ecclesiological circles but also on civil society, has resulted in his classification, retrospectively, as a public theologian<sup>7</sup>. A focus on some of his public addresses can contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to Naudé's value for public theology and it is this potential academic input that serves as a motivation for this study.

In his capacity as a minister, theologian, and plainly as a Christian leader, Beyers Naudé made an irrevocable impact on South African public life in his struggle for social justice. Research into this impact ties in with the related themes of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, namely that of faith and social identity, justice, human dignity and human rights, as well as responsible citizenship. It provides insight into the possibilities of how public theology, in the present day context, can be a tool in the hands of theologians who are concerned with issues relating to political and economic life, civil society or public opinion-formation. Past research has also suggested further study into this topic, as noted by M.T.Masuku<sup>8</sup>: "Benchmarking by Beyers Naudé, one could look at the impact of the reverends in today's politics (2010: 213)."

The research draws from the ambivalent and multifarious history of the reformed tradition in South Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while retaining a focus on the story and traditions surrounding Beyers Naudé. In this regard, it is noted that much can be said about the key biblical, theological and practical reasons for pursuing church history. The opportunity to hear Christian voices from the past can be instructive and informative, even encouraging; a necessary discipline and art that runs the danger of being lost in a-historical and a-contextual ecclesiology. Public life in the South African context in particular has shown an inclination to forgetting (or choosing not to remember) these voices as a result of its conflict-ridden past. The need remains to revisit the roles churches, individual Christians, and theology played -

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<sup>7</sup> More than one scholar has used this classification in reference to Beyers Naudé. This statement will be further explored in chapter two (2.2.2).

<sup>8</sup> See M.T. Masuku. 2010. *The Ministry of Dr Beyers Naudé: Towards developing a comprehensive mission (communication) strategy towards the victims of oppression*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

specifically during the anti-apartheid church struggle - by way of responsible church and theological historiography<sup>9</sup>.

The nature of Christianity is grounded in a belief that God has acted in a very real way in the course of human history. Engaging with the textual witness of a prominent figure in history such as *Oom Bey*, has the potential of contributing to contemporary questions and conversations and adding to the body of knowledge on how such a witness of God's work can inform theology today. Such an understanding of historiography serves as a motivation for the continued interpretation of history. The need for spiritual leadership and discernment in addressing the issues within public life and faith is as prevalent today as it has been since the days of injustice in apartheid-South Africa. The question of how the church fulfilled its prophetic role in the past and how leaders like Beyers Naudé acted as symbols of resistance and hope, yields valuable contributions in addressing this need in public life<sup>10</sup>.

Much authority has been attributed to the life and labour of Beyers Naudé as a result of the high position he held in society. Because of this, research exploring the value of his witness can make a worthy contribution towards a responsible historiography, especially with a figure that has received so much acclaim and praise, and who was the subject of so much controversy during his own lifetime<sup>11</sup>.

Secondary to the academic objectives of the research study is a personal interest in the areas of leadership and social change. Through a focused study of a South African minister and theologian who in many aspects epitomises the characteristics of a visionary and thought leader, one can hope to gain a better understanding of the leadership role that churches and theologians can play within public life. Ecclesiastical work almost always runs the risk of becoming a-historical in addressing social issues. Current conversations in the public sphere continue to ask questions about how we deal with our legacy and history; conversations

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<sup>9</sup> The value and contribution of historiography will be included in an explanation in chapter two of this study (2.2.1).

<sup>10</sup> The title of the 1985 publication by Charles Villa-Vicencio and John W. De Gruchy alludes to these qualities - *Resistance and Hope. Essays in honour of Beyers Naudé*.

<sup>11</sup> Once again, contributions in *Resistance and Hope: Essays in honour of Byers Naudé* (1985) by W. Saayman (*Rebels and Prophets: Afrikaners against the system*) and C. Villa-Vicencio (*A life of resistance and hope*) highlights the praise and controversy that surrounded Naudé as a prophet. These different responses will be looked at in this study.

characterised by a spectrum of dispositions - from amnesia to apathy to ardour. Hence, continued academic research in the field of ecclesiology is both necessary and relevant.

With these considerations in mind, a close and careful reading is made of some of Beyers Naudé's public addresses with an analysis of the advocacy of hope and related notions. The motivation and hope is that this inquiry could make a contribution to the fields of church history and public theology and consequently add to the relevance of contemporary thought and work on Beyers Naudé as a public theologian of hope.

### 1.3. Purpose of Research

The primary concern of this study is to gain a better understanding of the theme of hope and other closely related notions within the public witness of Beyers Naudé by analysing his public speeches. According to past research, Naudé functioned as a connected critic and retrospectively as a public theologian. Many titles and collections allude to his prophetic role and to the notion of hope<sup>12</sup>; therefore the aim of this research project is to investigate the nature and method in which Beyers Naudé employed the concept of hope in his public addresses and to see whether these descriptions can be verified or not. This research could strengthen the field of public theology, and more significantly, the profile of Beyers Naudé. Very little focused research has been done specifically on the public addresses of Naudé and therefore this research could make a valuable contribution.

This historical study traces Naudé's use and development of the concept of hope. Drawing from the many biographical works that have been produced on Naudé's life and work, interpretation is made of his work within the precincts of his published and unpublished public addresses, many of which have recently been donated to the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology<sup>13</sup>. A study of the public life and work of Naudé could inform current discourses on hope and public theology and its promotion of human dignity, in line with the work of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology.

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<sup>12</sup> Some of these descriptions will be elaborated on in chapters two and three. See footnote 1 for a list of titles. In addition to these, others are included such as *The Public Theologian as Connected Critic* (R. Thiemann); *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology* (vol. 1,2,3.), and *Naudé. Prophet to South Africa* (G. M. Bryan).

<sup>13</sup> The Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology was fortunate to receive donations of his original sermons and speeches from Ilse Naudé, his wife. This gesture led to the establishment of a Beyers Naudé archive which aids further research.

## 1.4. Research Questions

The main research question of this study is

- I. Does a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirm him as an advocate of hope?

For this question to be affirmed, the concept of hope and its related notions will have to be pivotal in the public addresses of Beyers Naudé<sup>14</sup>.

In addition to the main question two related secondary questions arise, namely:

- II. What are the contours of the concept of hope that are prevalent in the public addresses of Beyers Naudé?

Research will be done in order to evaluate whether these contours of hope transcend unadorned optimism and are informed by theological sensitivities. The third question is:

- III. Can an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope contribute as well as inform historical and conceptual knowledge about the church's public witness and does this have implications for the field of public theology?

The first two questions serve as valuable groundwork to be able to ask the third question. The first research question will thus be the primary focus of this study. The last question will therefore not be fully expounded on in this study; it can merely raise some discerning questions and provide some insights that aid this study and sheds light for further research.

These three questions, with a primary focus on the main question concerning the theological historical reading of the public addresses of Naudé, will guide our analysis.

## 1.5. Limitation of study

Strict limitations and restrictions are placed on the scope of this study. In terms of the selection of primary sources this study will only focus on public addresses. Although the rich collection of Naudé's sermons would add great value in understanding the profile and witness of *Oom Bey*, this study does not focus on these documents; even though further research concerning his sermons and publications as a whole is warranted. The constriction of material

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<sup>14</sup> The use of the word 'pivotal' means that the concept of hope is essential and fundamental in the addresses.

for research purposes in this study is also necessary in terms of excluding any other written or spoken witness<sup>15</sup>. This helps to serve an in-depth reading of only the public addresses. Furthermore, claims to profess thorough definitions on the concepts of hope, public theology and rhetoric are avoided.

The criteria chosen for classifying the documents for research as *public* addresses includes that they are (1) written documents; (2) prepared primarily for the presentation of an address; (3) delivered to any general public audience; and (4) excluding sermons.

The title refers specifically to the “theological” advocacy of hope by Beyers Naudé. In so far as Naudé spoke primarily as a representative of the Christian faith, this qualification of hope can be presumed. This description also demarcates the academic field of study in which this research is conducted and positions it within theology. There are other many academic fields and perspectives from which the public addresses could be justifiably analysed, such as sociology, anthropology, political science or linguistics, to name but a few.

## 1.6. Theoretical theological framework

For the purposes of this study, three heuristic concepts are of particular importance. The descriptions that follow are merely introductory and help to orientate us around the discourse on these three concepts. Chapter two will be dedicated to a more thorough discussion.

### 1.6.1. Historiography

Historiography can be defined as the study of the methodology and development of history as a discipline. Any undertaking of historiography needs to take a responsible and accountable approach when engaging with its sources. Careful academic approaches are taken in this study with regards to objectivity and subjectivity to ensure that justice is done to the past. In this regard it must be stated that there is also a realization that the questions and purposes of the reader cannot be divorced from even a close responsible reading. The sources are interpreted within meaningful historical narrative frameworks and with hermeneutical sensitivity. Even though little attention will be given to evaluating how church history in

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<sup>15</sup>See chapters four and five for a indication of the extent of this material. Further study could include any of the publications that Beyers Naudé contributed to as a member of the Christian Institute, *Pro Veritate*, or other study groups such as SPROCAS or member groups like the South African Council of Churches, to name but a few. Chapter three also provides an overview of Naudé’s wide range of involvement.

South Africa has been conducted in the past, Naudé's own understanding of a historic awareness will be looked at<sup>16</sup>.

Descriptions engaging with Beyers Naudé and his witness attempt to refrain from any sort of hagiography that leads to uncritical appraisal. A careful contextual study is made in order to ensure responsible, perceptive descriptions of the climate in which each public address was delivered. This also draws on the broader understandings of the socio-economic, political and religious developments in that time. A fitting methodology is expounded on in this chapter.

### 1.6.2. Public Theology

The understanding of public theology that is engaged with is primarily based on the definitions provided by South African theologians in recent research<sup>17</sup>. This study does not have the aim of presenting new developments within the field of public theology; merely producing findings that potentially could contribute to the field. Therefore, an understanding of what is meant when spoken of this research focus is required only as a basic exploratory framework. With this said, any form of anachronistic interpretation is avoided, as to stay clear of reading modern theories into historical documents. Chapter two is dedicated to the understanding of the nature of public theology, clarifying the framework that underpins this research.

### 1.6.3. Hope

This research does not attempt an original conceptualization of hope, but rather works with an understanding of hope in its most general sense, primarily as a theological virtue. A framework in chapter two is based on particular readings of the theological concept of hope, including the works of J. Moltmann, E.M. Conradie, J. Pieper and others. Its limits as an introductory overview must be noted. The language of hope that is studied in the addresses arises from a specific South African context, giving it a particular focus, and discernment in defining it is required in this regard. Moreover, the context with regards to the HOPE project of Stellenbosch University is taken into account in the final chapter concerning the findings of this study.

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<sup>16</sup>For a brief overview of the term 'church history' see Vosloo, R.R. *Qua Vadis Church History? Some theses on the future of church history as an academic theological discipline. Scriptura*100 (2009), pp. 54 – 64. This term needs to be sensitive to other related disciplines and sub-disciplines and has a certain "terminological fluidity" to it (Vosloo, 2009b:55).

<sup>17</sup>The work of D.J. Smit, D.M. Ackermann, N.N. Koopman, and J.W. de Gruchy are consulted in this regard.

## 1.7. Research design and methods

In keeping with the methodological approaches that have been used by researchers in the field of church history, the research on the life and person of Beyers Naudé gives a biographical overview focusing on a variety of questions pertaining to his legacy. This research draws from both primary sources (official public documents such as statements; published documents including publications, his autobiography and sermons; unpublished documents such as his public addresses, letters etc.; oral accounts in the form of recorded video interviews) and secondary sources (scholarly papers and publications on the life and work of Beyers Naudé including dissertations, journal articles, a book series; historical works on South African history, including history on apartheid theology and ideology).

The task of reading unpublished public addresses investigates aspects such as context, content, and reception. Uses of the theological virtue of hope and related notions are identified and explored, engaging a conceptual problem of the use of hope by Naudé in his public addresses. The addresses that are studied are framed within a 30 year time span, ranging from 1960 to 1990. Periodisation is applied in this investigation, distinguishing between the speeches before and after Naudé's 'seven lean years' (1977-1984). This allows for comparison of the findings emerging from different contexts.

A selection of his speeches is made according to set criteria; availability, an apparent focus on and prevalence of the theological virtue of hope and of a prophetic theology, substantial content and length of the public address. The opportunity for this research has been made possible by recent archival efforts at the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology.

## 1.8. Divisions of chapters

In chapter two the concepts 'public theology', 'hope', and 'historiography' are discussed in order to familiarize ourselves with these concepts, which form a heuristic framework that is required for the inquiry into the public addresses of Beyers Naudé. The aim of this brief overview of these three concepts is therefore to draw on some of the major developments in the fields, in order to engage constructively with the primary sources being studied. Chapter three is a biographical overview of the life and witness of Beyers Naudé, with special attention given to the elements of hope embedded in his history and the history of the institutions and communities that he formed part of. Here we attempt to uncover defining traits, themes and burdens that lend understanding to an analysis of his addresses. This

analysis is covered in chapter four and five, in which the three research questions are explored. The emphasis is on critical inquiry into the content of the addresses, in order to pick up on the advocacy of hope. Chapter six offers a final analysis and interpretation of the findings of chapters four and five.

## **1.9. Conclusion**

“Beyers Naudé was a remarkable man, and he has left us a remarkable legacy...Now that political change has come, we cannot afford to become complacent...we too must make a conscious choice about the road we wish to follow...the work of Beyers Naudé will be one of our best guides to the road ahead” (Ndungane 2005:1,5). These are the words of Njongonkulu Ndungane in his capacity as Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. His observations about the work of Beyers Naudé have been qualified and supported by numerous academic and theological endeavours and celebrated on many public platforms. A theological historical reading of his public speeches during the years of apartheid in South Africa can contribute to this. In drawing together the remembered hope of this valuable part of history we could gain further insight into his work as “one of our best guides”.

## Chapter 2: Key Concepts for a Heuristic Framework

### 2.1. Introduction

As part of the heuristic framework required for the inquiry into the public addresses of Beyers Naudé, a general construct of the concepts ‘public theology’, ‘hope’, and ‘historiography’ is necessary. The aim of this brief overview of these three concepts is therefore to draw on some of the major developments in these fields and themes, in order to engage constructively with the primary sources being studied. Where these developments have been applied to the life and work of Naudé in past research, they have been included in the discussion.

### 2.2. Theoretical Framework

#### 2.2.1. Historiography

Historiography can be defined as the study of the methodology and development of history as a discipline. A responsible historic hermeneutic has to be applied in such a methodology<sup>18</sup>. It is the intention of this section to establish some key points that can help guide one in this historiographical process. It is therefore limited by not offering an overview of the study church history in South Africa in particular, even though some comments are made about the presence and absence of historic awareness in apartheid and anti-apartheid theology.

This study is focused primarily on the interpretation and rereading of the public addresses of Beyers Naudé. Therefore, one has to make sense of the manner and method used by Naudé in recollecting past events in history in these addresses, in addition to constructing a responsible historiographical overview of the context in which these documents were created. In addition to these addresses, many other documents and primary and secondary sources<sup>19</sup>, as listed in

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<sup>18</sup> Bradley (1995: 11) notes how church history has developed over the centuries, admitting its uncritical and subjective past which did not always serve a responsible historic hermeneutic. Insufficient historical hermeneutics has also been displayed in some South African church and theological historiographical projects, as noted by B.C. Lategan. See Lategan, B.C. ‘*History, Historiography, and Reformed Hermeneutics at Stellenbosch: Dealing with a Hermeneutical Deficit and Its Consequences*’. In *Reformed Theology*, Alston, W.M. & Welker, M. (eds.). 2007. Eerdmans Publishing Co: Michigan. pp 157-171. Historiography today will have to learn from its past in order to offer a more comprehensive and critical approach.

<sup>19</sup> Heath (2008: 59 – 70) makes a constructive distinction between these two. Vosloo (2012) highlights the value and importance of such a methodology; “It can easily happen in our representation of the past that we work with generalisations and stereotypes that are then also transmitted uncritically as a result of ignorance or careless engagement with sources. The emphasis on the need to consult primary sources and to do thorough

chapter one, are also studied and are therefore subjected to the same questions regarding methodology and a responsible historical hermeneutic. The historic and hermeneutical awareness of Naudé has been researched and summarised in the work of M.H. Coetzee, bringing it into dialogue with the historical and hermeneutical vacuum that was prevalent in apartheid theology<sup>20</sup>. It was inevitably this vacuum that made way for the ideology of apartheid to inform and influence theology in South Africa (Coetzee 2010:553). This research is indeed valuable in highlighting the climate in which Naudé's theology was formed and hence, how he engaged with his convictions in public. The influences that Naudé was confronted with and which gave rise to his framework of thinking with an historical awareness are covered in chapter three.

Any historiographical undertaking needs to take a responsible and accountable approach in engaging with its sources; this makes the question of *how* we engage with the past a fundamental consideration<sup>21</sup>. Careful academic approaches are taken with regards to objectivity and subjectivity in ensuring that justice is done to the past, through the meaningful historical frameworks. What is more, the Christian “future”, its vision and expectation of the future, should not be abstracted from a faithful and creative historical engagement with the past (Vosloo, 2009b: 63).

Vosloo makes an important observation about the exclusion that can take place in light of the historical hermeneutic that is operative in one's engagement with the past - selective remembering that represents the past in a way that excludes<sup>22</sup>. Deliberate exclusion is avoided in this study, while paying attention to one particular perspective. This perspective and the

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archival research should therefore be maintained. The quality of church historical research depends largely on the documents that are preserved and archived.”

<sup>20</sup>For a thorough analysis of the presence or absence of a historical and hermeneutic awareness see Coetzee, M.H. 2010. *Die “Kritiese Stem” teen apartheidsteologie in die Ned Geref Kerk (1904-1974)*. Wellington: Bybel-Media.

<sup>21</sup> Vosloo (2012) notes how history is inextricably tied to memory: “Memory is rightly described as the womb or the matrix of history. It is, as the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur has also noted in his monumental work *Memory, History, Forgetting*, the soil in which historiography is rooted. We should therefore affirm the close link between memory and history, albeit that we should also acknowledge that both memory and history are fluid conceptual categories with multiple senses and complex genealogies.”

<sup>22</sup>Another aspect highlighted by Vosloo is the call to take seriously the interwoven nature of our shared and divisive histories (2009a: 285; 2009b:62). A healthy ecumenical focus needs to be upheld – which is largely supported by the ecumenical ecclesial focus which Naudé increasingly developed in his work and witness.

voice of Naudé could, on the one hand, be classified as representative of “the view from below” – who according to Vosloo are those side-lined figures in society (2009a: 284). This context will become clearer in the overview offered in chapter three. On the other hand his voice can be seen, not necessarily as that of a victor or part of the ‘official history’, but none the less as that of a leader, prominent and representative precisely of those who were silenced and marginalised. He most likely assisted in raising the voices and views “from below”.

The descriptions of Beyers Naudé and that of the historical events and documents refrain from any sort of hagiography that could lead to idealization or uncritical appraisal. A contextual study is made in order to ensure responsible, perceptive descriptions of the climate in which each public address was delivered. A historical fundamentalism, where absolutes are assumed and complexity is undermined, is a danger in dealing with the ‘facts’ of the past (Vosloo 2009a:281). In this regard it must be stated that there is also a realization that the questions and purposes of the reader cannot be divorced, even from a close responsible reading. Writing on historical heuristics, Moltmann also highlights the complexity of describing the past: “While historical criticism in the name of fact does attack interpretations of fact in the sources, yet the facts themselves cannot possibly be known and stated without other interpretations”(1991:241).

These outlines with regards to a responsible historiography have highlighted the importance not only of how we engage, but also why we engage with the past, assisting us with some key points. A hermeneutical sensibility will be employed, keeping these considerations in mind. Let us now turn to how Public Theology can be understood and how this relates to the study at hand.

### 2.2.2. Public Theology

As part of the heuristic framework required for the inquiry into the public addresses of Beyers Naudé, a general construct of the concept and term *public theology* is not only necessary, but will be shown to add value. This is equally true for an understanding of the term *public theologian*; therefore, the aim of this brief excursion on public theology is to draw on some of the major developments in the field, in order to establish a familiarity with what is meant when one refers to public theology. Such a preliminary orientation must acknowledge its limitation to present a detailed summary of recent developments and paradigms of thinking in the field of public theology. What is attempted is a heuristic framework, an operational definition, with which to understand the witness of the public

addresses of Beyers Naudé in the South African context. This admittedly incomprehensive and vague definition will be further informed by past engagements between the life and work of Naudé and what is termed as ‘public theology’. However, the witness arising from the addresses themselves, as seen in chapters four and five, will remain the dominant focus throughout the study.

### *Origins and Development*

In a recent article, Nico Koopman (2010) reflects on some crucial contours for the development of public theology, showing not only the different approaches to public theology and the nature of its intra-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary approach, but also highlighting that public theology is rapidly growing all over the world. What is more, the status of public theology in light of these developments is uncertain in terms of whether it will become a new theological discipline, sub-discipline, research field, organiser of curriculum, catalyst, or new contextual theology (2010:131). At present there are an increasing amount of courses in public theology being taught in seminaries, colleges and universities. Several centres for public theology now exist in Europe, the Americas, Australia, New Zealand, and parts of Asia<sup>23</sup> (Breitenberg 2010:4) – not to mention the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology at Stellenbosch University<sup>24</sup>. The use of the term ‘public theologian’ has in recent history also been attributed (some retrospectively) to a large number of individuals, including Beyers Naudé<sup>25</sup>.

The role of the church in South African society has dramatically changed since the apartheid years and the 30 year time frame from 1960 to 1990 that is in focus for this study<sup>26</sup>. Public

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<sup>23</sup>Koopman mentions the establishment of the Global Network for Public Theology in Princeton, New Jersey, in 2007. This network consists of twenty-five research centres for public theology at institutions for higher education on literally all continents of the world (2010: 123).

<sup>24</sup>As mentioned previously, the centre was established in 2002 and has as its main objective the promotion of knowledge to the public arena in respect of the field of the role, task and responsibility of public theology, by means of research and the rendering of service.

<sup>25</sup> The relationship between the legacy and work of Beyers Naudé and that of public theology is one that has already been cemented by developments at the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. This is seen in the establishment of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology. The understanding employed by those who have described Naudé as a Public Theologian will be given attention in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Smit (2008: 70) makes a useful distinction between six different forms or manifestations of church – using the word ‘church’ can refer to the church in different capacities or facets, including: the church as a worship service, a local congregation, a denomination, ecumenical bodies, individual Christians engaged in their normal daily activities, and lastly individual Christians as volunteers in various organs of civil society.

life, as understood in a modern democracy, did not function in apartheid South Africa. The use of terminology in terms of the public engagement with the church has therefore also changed. The reference to public theology with its different understandings did not exist in the time when Naudé delivered his public addresses. The theology in which he believed, and which he employed in his life and work, did not carry the label of ‘public theology’, but that is not to say that it did not carry the same intention and meaning as other forms of such public witness do today. The challenge in this is therefore to assess the public addresses as concrete examples of Naudé’s public engagement according to his ecclesiological and theological convictions, and to evaluate its content – which can be elucidated by modern theories in ‘public theology’. This leads us to distinguish between the *term* and the *practice* of public theology by asking the question, as posed by Smit (2011), “Must something be called public theology in order to be public theology?” An answer to this question can be found in exploring the developments and origins of the term ‘public theology’ and then also comparing these with the context in focus, that of Beyers Naudé’s witness<sup>27</sup>.

In a recent paper delivered by D.J Smit (2011), he traces the origins and developments of the paradigm of public theology by exploring six stories that function as the different responses to the question of where public theology originated and how it developed<sup>28</sup>. In doing this, he consolidates a wide range of perspectives and body of literature produced in the field. However, it is not the intention of Smit, neither of this study, to uncover ‘true’ public theology by exploring these developments – it is rather an acknowledgement and exploration of the depth and multiplicity in this field. Briefly elaborating on a selection of the developments covered in this analysis by Smit helps with this preliminary orientation.

At the risk of over simplifying the ‘stories’ that Smit categorizes, they can be summarized and identified as follows: The first, the ‘dominant story’, has to do with the well-known historical and influential developments in the North American context, which poses answers to the question of *how* public theology functions<sup>29</sup>. In this understanding, public theology is

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<sup>27</sup> This comparison will be done in chapters four and five.

<sup>28</sup> In the conclusion to this paper, Smit asks the question whether it is justified and helpful to speak of public theology as *a paradigm* – a question that carries weight in this study too. His observations will be included. For this distinction Smit draws on the work by Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, who fathered, defined and popularized the concept of “paradigm shift”.

<sup>29</sup> These developments include the works of Robert Bellah, Martin Marty, and David Hollenbach (see Breitenberg, E.H. Jr. 2010. What is Public Theology? in Hainsworth & Paeth, 3-17).

about faith traditions addressing issues of an ethical nature in the public arena in such a way that anyone can understand the argumentation<sup>30</sup>. The second ‘story’ covers the formulation in terms of ‘public discourse’, and by looking at the critical rational discourse that diverse publics share, focuses more on the question of *why* theology can contribute to public discourse<sup>31</sup>. The third ‘story’ helps to raise questions on *where* public theology takes place, covering the developments in the German-speaking world and showing that each society has their own particular histories regarding the role of theology in public life – context is shown to be integral to the story of public theology. The fourth ‘story’ links to this *where* question, bringing in the perspective of contexts of struggle where the same questions as those raised in peaceful, discursive and democratic societies were asked under descriptions such as liberation theologies, black theologies, feminist theologies and others<sup>32</sup>. The last two ‘stories’ cover the *who* question – the first offers the perspective of a growing global awareness in public theology, and quite interestingly, bringing it into conversation with the story of ecumenical witness. The last ‘story’ explores the public return of the religious and the public claims made by a plurality of religious traditions (Smit, 2011).

Smit’s concluding thoughts on public theology end by offering two options in understanding its nature as a paradigm; two answers determined by the question ‘*what* is public theology?’. On the one hand, the public theology paradigm can be a normative notion, a fixed understanding of how the science works at any particular time (it may change with time

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<sup>30</sup> The publication in which Breitenberg (2010) explains these developments offers a like-minded understanding of public theology, describing it in its most basic form as “the claim that one can present theologically rooted arguments concerning human identity, norms, and society in ways that can be considered and understood beyond one’s particular confessional context” (Hainsworth 2010: xviii).

<sup>31</sup> Amongst others, the work of David Tracy is included here, including his influential distinction of the three “publics” or “reference groups” in his work, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (1981). He defines three different publics – society, academy, and church. For Tracy, all theology is public discourse, the only question is which public is the addressee. These three groupings are merely the different reference groups to whom Tracy argues the theologian can speak. The point is that one can refer to all spheres as a form of public as Tracy does, or alternatively public can be intentionally limited to society as a specific public.

<sup>32</sup> The relationship between these different terminologies is discussed in this chapter. In an essay titled “Doing theology in a situation of conflict”, Frank Chikane notes how there is a serious engagement in the transformation of society when it comes to black theology. To a certain extent, the notion of ‘doing theology’ which he identifies as a unique approach in black and liberation theologies, shares with public theology a focus on orthopraxis, as opposed to orthodoxy (Chikane, 1985: 102). For more on this, see Naudé, P.J. 1987. *Ortopraksie as metodologiese prinsipe in die sistematiese teologie: ’n Sistematies-teologiese analise van Latyns-Amerikaanse bevrydingsteologie en die politieke teologie van Johann Baptist Metz*. D.Th.-Verhandeling, Universiteit Stellenbosch.

through new scientific revolutions, but at the present time it is the fixed best practice). That is to say, according to the formulation used in the previous paragraph, that the *how*, *why*, *where*, and *who* questions will inevitably be alike or congruent. The other option is that it can only be understood in reference to particular examples, and that each context offers a unique understanding of these descriptive questions. The paradigm is thus not the general rule, but the particular, the specific, the concrete example. In this mode of reasoning, he also points out that it would make sense referring to someone like Beyers Naudé as one specific example of how things could be done under their particular circumstances and in their particular context<sup>33</sup> (2011).

### *Terminology: Content and Context*

In addition to these perspectives on how public theology can be defined, other perspectives on terminology can also be considered. The content and themes of public theology have in the past been described by different terms such as ‘civil religion’ and ‘political theology’. As Smit writes:

*The discourse of civil religion addressed all kinds of questions<sup>34</sup>. And with the disappearance of the term itself, new methods and terminologies must be found to analyse, understand and describe these complex but crucial themes.*

(Smit 2007:121)

Regarding civil religion, Smit remarks that “the *notion* is notoriously vague and ambiguous and can be used in many different ways.” It has been used by scholars in the past to describe the relationship between religion and culture in South Africa, but has been largely replaced, as the quotation above demonstrates (Smit 2007:106-108)<sup>35</sup>. Stackhouse (2007:79-95) presents some significant nuances that distinguish ‘public theology’, ‘civil religion’, and

<sup>33</sup> Such a distinction between a particular and a universal understanding of public theology, is at risk of falling to either side of the spectrum which ranges from relativism to determinism. This is not Smit’s intention in the article. Even though one might opt for the latter option of an irreducible historicity and particularity in each context that cannot be ignored, some base characteristics of public theology cannot be ignored and need to be laid as the foundation for qualifying something as public theology.

<sup>34</sup> Just some of these include the nature and function of the common good; the public and perhaps prophetic role of faith, church and theology; and a shared value system (Smit 2007:121).

<sup>35</sup> These are seen in publications such as *The rise of Afrikanerdom: Power, apartheid and the Afrikaner civil religion* by Dunbar Moodie (1975), *English-speaking South Africans and civil religion* by John de Gruchy (1977), and *The roots and fruits of Afrikaner civil religion* by David Bosch (1984).

‘political theology’, in which historical developments play an important part<sup>36</sup>; therefore, each term does carry its own nuances, depending on its context. Much can be said about the development of these notions and the terminology, although it is perhaps sufficient to state that the issues at stake in these various terms have remained of crucial importance, and that because the meaning of these terms overlap, they should always be used with descriptions.

In addition to these considerations about public theology’s origins, development, and terminology, one can also reflect on how it relates to the content of other theologies. Public theology is concerned with social analysis, involving participation in public life in space and time. An earlier observation in this chapter alluded to the use of terms such as ‘liberation theology’ and ‘black theology’ in contexts of struggle. An understanding of how public theology operates can therefore be informed by a very brief description and overview of contextual theologies such as prophetic and liberation theology and how these relate to the focus of this study.<sup>37</sup> This will also assist in discerning the theology employed in the public addresses of Beyers Naudé.

Liberation theology, although it has grown into an international and inter-denominational movement, began as a movement within the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America in the 1950–1960’s. It took hold in South Africa during the apartheid struggle, where people were subjected to racial oppression and exploitation. Some of the basic tenets of liberation theology incorporated in the prophetic Christianity in South Africa during apartheid included, according to Walshe (1995:165), the abolishment of oppressive economic, political, and social conditions; reform of oppressive institutions, which casts the beneficiaries in the role of oppressors of the victims; and also the eschatological (religious and eternal) value of bringing about liberation. In this regard, Koopman states that the agenda of a faithful public theology (writing in 2007) cannot be different than the one set decades ago by liberation theology (2007:137), in the sense that both are focused on those whose dignity is violated and who suffer exclusion and exploitation.

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<sup>36</sup>For the sake of this study, two elements that differentiate public theology from political theology and civil religion respectively can be observed. Firstly, political theology places more of a priority on a ‘top-down’ approach in enforcing what it believes to be its divine mandate. Civil religion projects the experiences and values of the civic order onto the cosmic order for the sake of social solidarity (Stackhouse 2007:93).

<sup>37</sup> De Gruchy (2005:88) identified liberation theology as having been part of the three influences in the life of Beyers Naudé. The other two influences were Martin Luther King Jr and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Public theology, in so far as it is also contextual, should not be seen as something wholly different to, or removed from, other theological streams like prophetic or liberation theology, even though it should be seen as having a unique, distinguishing accent. “Public theology does not aim to replace the various contextual and liberation theologies but rather drink from their rich wells” (Koopman 2010:134).

This great spectrum of content, classifications, and contexts for public theology can be overwhelming. Precisely because of this plurality and diversity, it is questionable whether it is at all possible to identify elements within theology which, when present, define it as public theology. There is a certain danger in using it too loosely, in the sense that if everything (all theology) is public theology, then nothing can be public theology. While acknowledging that public theology might be a tautology, Koopman shows the value of this construct: “We, however, need this disturbing and frustrating tautology called Public Theology to conscientise and inspire us regarding the threefold task of acknowledging, appreciating and discerning the inherent public nature and thrust of our faith, the rationality and reasonability of our faith and the significance of our faith for all facets of life”(2012: 3). It is highly unlikely that one would be able to construct a meaningful exhaustive list of characteristics of public theology, and much less view them as prerequisites for a classification as public theology. This would undermine its value. This is partly because public theology does not only have to do with the subject matter of what is being communicated, but also with the method of engagement with an audience. Where does this leave us?

Koopman (2010:136) makes sense of this plurality and ambiguity by stating that it should not leave one with a feeling of being overwhelmed or of relativism. Such diversity fosters an acknowledgement and appreciation of the variety of public theology initiatives in different contexts. In the assessment and analysis of the public addresses it will hopefully become more evident how Naudé thought about the notion of public and how this related to his theology.

The non-classification referred to can be explained by the following thought about the nature of public theology, expressing its humble disposition of not seeking acclaim: Koopman writes, “Public Theology as Christian Theology is, in terms of the confession of the threefold office of Christ, a prophetic, priestly and royal-servant theology”(2012). Explaining this last office he states, “Royal-servant Public Theology advances an ethos of servanthood, hope and responsible and ethical discipleship and citizenship .... This royal servant office teaches

contemporary societies about authority, freedom, power and hope” (2012). With reference to the servant power that is characteristic of public theology, Koopman points to the “*Christocracy*” which tells of a “Lord, a King who is Shepherd and the most humble of servants”. As will be shown, Beyers Naudé publically subscribed to such a “Christocracy”; serving humankind by serving God.

A distinction made by Koopman that deals with the three main questions which public theology addresses, is helpful in orientating one’s thoughts in this assessment: “Public Theology namely investigates the inherent public contents and thrust of Christian faith convictions, the inherent public rationality and reasonability thereof, and the public implications, impact and significance of Christian faith” (2012:2). These investigations are both useful and applicable for this study. What is more, another perspective is offered by Charles Mathewes, which builds on these past reflections and questions and leads us to a useful formulation of faith and public life.

### *A Theology of Public Life*

Charles Mathewes, an Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia, offers a broadly Augustinian “theology of public life” as a picture of Christian life as it should be lived in public engagement. He reframes the understanding of ‘public theology’ (which he finds too “accommodationist”) by arguing for an understanding of “the public” defined theologically; rather than theology and religious engagement fitting into public life, all of life is seen as God’s creation and our existence in it as ascetics<sup>38</sup>. It is through “ascetical engagement” with the world that Christians can be formed spiritually. The book is divided into two parts – the first unpacks the understanding of how the basic dynamics of faithful Christian existence promote Christian’s engagement in public life, while the second part analyses how being a citizen of the world can form Christians in their identity and vocation as citizens of the kingdom of heaven (Mathewes 2007:1,2).

He states clearly that this argument does not seek to contribute to previous debates on religion’s role in public life, but rather to build on it. He attempts to show what a “better

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<sup>38</sup> “For me theology is...*imagination for the kingdom of God* in the world, and for the world in God’s kingdom. This means that it is everywhere *public* theology, and never, ever, a religious ideology of civil and political society – not even so-called Christian society” (Moltmann 1996:xiv – his emphasis).

model of faith as a way of life” looks like which will allow Christians to engage publically (Mathewes 2007:3, 6).

We can therefore say that it does assist in understanding the witness of a Christian leader such as Beyers Naudé in the sense that it affirms *why* he lived “a dogmatics of public life” (2007:3). Mathewes highlights this theological rationale as the pivotal point that has been absent is past criticisms on the engagement between faith and public life. Many dimensions of this viewpoint and valuable book by Mathewes could have relevance for this study. The one virtue of a theology of public life in particular that Naudé lived and that will be analysed in his public addresses is the capacity he had to be a hopeful citizen.

### *Past classifications*

These are only some of the options, amidst a range of possibilities of thinking about the engagement between theology and public life, which resonate more narrowly with how and what Naudé communicated. Now that we have an overview of some of the elements of public theology, let us turn to how past scholars have referred to the life and witness of Beyers Naudé in relation to public theology. Denise Ackermann, in a lecture titled *Beyers Naudé: Public Theologian*, qualifies this title by acknowledging the characteristics evident in the life of Naudé that correlated with her understanding of public practical theology. These include his ability to be a ‘connected critic’<sup>39</sup>, to experience solitude and show solidarity, and his willingness to face alienation and to enforce moral authority. The following statement by Ackermann condenses many of the significant elements of a practical manifestation of public theology, which are very evident in the legacy of Naudé:

*...public theology as public practical theology not only affirms the public character of all theology but points to the fact that theology lives in the tension between theory and praxis, between what we believe and what we do about what we believe. Public practical theology is done in service of the reign of God comes*

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<sup>39</sup> Ronald Thiemann describes public theologians by using the term ‘connected critic’, which he defines as “those who are fully engaged in the very enterprise they criticize, yet alienated by the deceits and shortcomings of their own community”(2003:105). This concept of being deeply connected to the enterprise that he criticized is evident in many other witnesses of his life. This includes the television interview conversation with Dorothee Sölle, recorded in *Hope for Faith: a Conversation (1986)*, where he states, “And, you know, I must feel the agony of this [referring to apartheid injustices], these are my people. I cannot deny that I am an Afrikaner. I don’t want to deny it. How can I? I am nothing else but an Afrikaner, and yet in that sense I don’t see myself to be there – then the agony of that separation.”

*out of a critical consciousness informed by social analysis, a concern for justice, the creative use of human imagination and the willingness to risk actions that express our hope for a better world.*

(Ackermann 2005:69)

John De Gruchy defines Beyers Naudé as a public theologian for many of the same reasons in his article *Beyers Naudé and Public Theology* (2005). In this tribute to Naudé on his 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, he highlights three themes in the witness of Naudé. He elaborates about his commitment to ecumenicalism, his transition to becoming a confessing public theologian<sup>40</sup>, and lastly his ability to live in solidarity<sup>41</sup> with the other.

The fact that Naudé lived with a social and historical awareness, integral to his spirituality, is picked up by J. C Pauw's paper, *Beyers Naudé, The Secular Christian* (2006). Pauw shows how Naudé maintained the balance between a spirituality rooted in the gospel, on the one hand, and a critical awareness of the social forces that shape people's lives, on the other<sup>42</sup>.

### *Final Classification*

The aim of this brief overview of public theology was to draw on some of the major developments in the field, in order to establish a familiarity with what is meant when one refers to public theology. To summarize, the following was established: It is clear from the

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<sup>40</sup> This shift is from a confessional theologian to a confessing one. De Gruchy describes this as a transition from being someone well versed in the confessions of the (Reformed) church to being someone who publicly says what you mean in terms of the issues of the day. This resulted from his exposure to Germany and the confessing church, the Barmen Declaration and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings while on a study tour in 1953. He also mentions Naudé's ability to repeat the confessions publicly. He did this by engaging in dialogue on radio and television with others – De Gruchy mentions the examples of the visit of prominent Dutch theologian Johannes Verkuyl in 1970 and the public discussion with Dorothee Sölle in 1985 (Recorded in the publication, *Hope for Faith: a conversation* (1986) (De Gruchy 2005: 84-87).

<sup>41</sup> Anlené Taljaard, in a contributing article for the *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology*, reflects on Naudé's solidarity in terms of his ability to side with the oppressed and the 'other' brothers and sisters who did not form part of the *Afrikanervolk* (2006:93).

<sup>42</sup> Pauw quotes Villa Vicencio's observation of this in the *festschrift Resistance and Hope: South African essays in honour of Beyers Naudé* (1985). Reflecting on the Word of God, he writes, "It must be tested within a community of people of goodwill, including both Christians and those who care not to be known as such. It must be concretised in relation to on-going political and economic analysis, and ultimately verified in a deeply spiritual inner conviction. [Naudé] is today at once a deeply spiritual and profoundly secular person." He continues, "His is a worldly Christianity, but one deeply grounded in a very traditional understanding of theological identity."

studying the origin, development and nature of public theology that, despite its growing international expansion and interest, it is a multifarious concept that is difficult to delimitate. What stands uncontested amidst this diversity is that the church and theology is in relationship with society and public life and that the construct of public theology helps to make sense of this relationship. This relationship can be defined, but not confined, by the construct or paradigm of public theology. In this sense, many other terms have been used to express the practice that public theology gives expression to, each with its particular nuances. Past classifications of a figure such as Beyers Naudé also assist in making sense of these practices and by what standards one's work as a Christian can be defined as public theology and what then constitutes the work of a public theologian. With regards to Naudé's own classification as a public theologian, it must be noted that he never referred to himself in this way and according to Ackermann (2005:74), would probably preferred just being called a servant of Christ. This does not take anything away from the fact that he wanted to bring the wisdom of the Christian tradition into public conversation to contribute to the well-being of society.

### 2.2.3. Hope

The association of Beyers Naudé with hope has been accentuated by many theologians and academics in the past<sup>43</sup>. The primary concern and unique nature of this study is to gain a better understanding of the theme of hope and other closely related notions within the public witness of Beyers Naudé by investigating his public speeches. The notions related to hope, which are referred to in this study are concepts such as expectation or trust. It implies belief in a future that holds something other, something better, than the present. A broad understanding of hope as an exploratory framework established in this chapter will serve to make sense of and uncover the content of these public addresses, which will be analysed in order to test the hypothesis of this study.

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<sup>43</sup> The titles of some publications dedicated to Beyers Naudé display this association quite clearly, not to mention their content and many other reflections on his life: *Resistance and Hope. South African essays in honour of Beyers Naudé* (J.W. De Gruchy & C. Villa-Vicencio); *Hope for faith. A conversation* (C.F.B. Naudé & D. Sölle); *My land van hoop. Die lewe van Beyers Naudé* (C.F.B. Naudé); *Met De Moed Der Hoop: Opstellen Aangeboden Aan Dr. C.F. Beyers Naudé*. (Villa-Vicencio, Charles et al.); and *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology (especially volumes 1 and 2)*; *Naudé. Prophet to South Africa* (G.M. Bryan).

### *Defining 'Hope'*

One should be careful in making any assumptions when referring to the term 'hope' – any distinction between its possible definitions, especially for this study, needs be as basic as evaluating its grammatical use, and as nuanced as to be able understand its theological implications. Theological and philosophical reflection on hope is rich and vast, and only a few elements of the composite knowledge of these reflections can be touched on<sup>44</sup>.

One can express hope (as a noun) for something banal, such as hoping for good weather, thereby using the term merely as common optimism; but such references should not deter us from seeing hope as one of the most fundamental theological virtues underpinning the Christian faith<sup>45</sup>. It is in this explicitly theological frame of reference that hope and its related notions will be dealt with in this study.

Through over-use, some say the word hope has even succumbed to cynicism (Mathewes 2007:214). Our definition of hope as a theological virtue, as testified to in the Bible<sup>46</sup>, will therefore have to be clear. What is of value is not the actual word itself, lest one delves into an etymological study or linguistic gymnastics<sup>47</sup>, but an understanding of what it conveys. Attention will also be paid to how some theologians have formulated this theological virtue of hope in the past, especially within the South African context during the “struggle years”, and have found it to be expressed in public. Let us then turn to how hope is understood broadly within its designation as a theological virtue.

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<sup>44</sup> In the first chapter of *Hope and History*, Pieper, in attempting to offer views on the question 'what is hope', states the challenge one already faces just by drawing out the meaning on the basis of living, spoken language (1994:19).

<sup>45</sup> Pieper (1997: 99) believes that hope is either a theological virtue or not a virtue at all. He understands virtue as “the enhancement of the human person in a way befitting his [sic] nature...it is the most a man [sic] can be...the realization of man's [sic] potentiality for being.” It must be theological because this realization cannot happen by humans themselves, and has its source in the reality of grace. He makes a distinction between natural and supernatural virtue, which is explained by the understanding that all virtue must aim at the good. Given that it is possible for natural hope to be directed to evil, it cannot be a virtue. Theological hope is thus a virtue only in the supernatural sense, given as a gift to humans.

<sup>46</sup> This is not to say that there is only one specific interpretation or Biblical perspective to make sense of hope in its entirety – the understanding of hope, even as found in the Bible, is nuanced and has different dimensions, as will be shown in this chapter.

<sup>47</sup> This is a legitimate reservation in the context of a study such as this, which analyses written speeches.

## *Hope and Theology*

Hope is an essential and fundamental element of Christian life, so essential indeed, that, like faith and love, it can itself designate the essence of Christianity<sup>48</sup>. Considering this weight of hope, a distinction must be made between what is *hoped for* and that in which (or in Who) hope is rooted or based on; a solution to this distinction, and perhaps a more constructive question to ask, can be found in asking *why* we (can) hope. Asking these questions assists in categorical classification.

Conradie (2000: 20) observes Klaus Nürnberger's "inner logic" on hope, which identifies the need for hope as growing out of a unacceptable present, prompting hope for what is lacking, which is especially prevalent in times of suffering and need. Conradie formulates his own observation about the human predicament to which eschatology has traditionally responded - the predicaments of human self-enclosure as a result of the effects of sin in various manifestations of evil; to human finitude in time (mortality and transitoriness); and also finitude in space – human knowledge and power is limited<sup>49</sup>.

However, as Conradie points out (in agreement with Pannenberg, Tillich and others), it is not these events that give rise to Christian hope, or are the reason why we can hope – the reason why we can hope is based on God's grace and God himself. Even though hope is a response to a context (Mathewes 2007:243), we cannot view any of these predicaments as the cause of which hope is the effect; the Christian hope is located outside of human predicament<sup>50</sup>.

Biblically, hope is an ever-present, all-enduring element of faith. Paul understood something about this hope against hope (Romans 4:18). This is because hope is tied to a faithful God. Moltmann conveys this connection between the One in which Christians anchor their hope:

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<sup>48</sup> Moltmann agrees with this belief that hope is the very medium of Christian faith as such, stating: "From first to last, and not merely in epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope, forward looking and forward moving...The eschatological is not one element in Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such, the key in which everything is set" (Moltmann 1991:16).

<sup>49</sup> Moltmann also speaks on hope as responding to the sin in the world; sin bases itself in hopelessness, which can take on two forms: presumption and despair. "Presumption is a premature, self-willed anticipation of the fulfilment of what we hope for from God. Despair is the premature, arbitrary anticipation of the non-fulfilment of what we hope for from God" (Moltmann 1991:23).

<sup>50</sup> Even though human predicaments do not 'create' hope, it is rather hope that responds to them, the concrete examples of predicament in the period of apartheid struggle will be looked at; for as we will see, these examples illustrate that which we hope for, which in turn demonstrates something about the source of hope.

“The God of promise and exodus, the God who raised Christ and who lets the power of the resurrection dwell in us, is the ground for active and passive hope” (1991:9). What is more, for Christians, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is “the great symbol of our hope”<sup>51</sup>. It is not the basis of our hope. The basis of our hope is God, and God alone” (Nolan 2009:11). It is clear that one’s image of God influences one’s understanding of hope.

That which is hoped for can indicate what your hope is based on. Christian hopes and eschatology are thereby unique. To speak about your hope for a new political dispensation or social change does not mean that we place trust in these changes, but because one trusts in God, and has a Christian understanding of hope, one can believe in these changes in society. But the Christian ethics of hope sees more, sees further, than these concrete physical changes. A definition of Christian eschatology as Christian hope would perhaps offer some clarity to such a statement.

### *Eschatology*

Is eschatology something more or something other than Christian hope, or can these terms be used interchangeably? Eschatology is concerned with what is believed to be the final events of history, the ultimate destiny of humanity—commonly referred to as the “end of all things” or “end time”. Moltmann defines *Christian* eschatology as something much more than ‘the last things’:

*Christian eschatology has nothing to do with apocalyptic ‘final solutions’ of this kind, for its subject is not ‘the end’ at all. On the contrary, what it is about is the new creation of all things. Christian eschatology is the remembered hope of the raising of the crucified Christ, so it talks about beginning afresh in the deadly end.*

(Moltmann 1996:xi)

In a reflection on the personal dimensions of hope and search for a new beginning, Moltmann defines the Christian hope not as an apocalyptic expectation of the end of the world or life or existence, but as the expectation of a new beginning, a new revelation of the Kingdom of God (Moltmann 2004). Moltmann is also quoted by De Gruchy (1979: 229), who writes about the

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<sup>51</sup>“Through Christ’s resurrection from the dead we, God-forsaken and Godless ‘dead’, are born again to a living hope (1 Peter 1:3)” (Moltmann 2004:75).

connection between the coming of the kingdom and the work and witness of men and women – Moltmann notes how Bonhoeffer and Barth spoke constantly of “the stimulation and intensification of historical hopes through the eschatological hope” (1979:229). This is to say that work in the present is a sign pointing to that which is coming with God’s ultimate kingdom.

This understanding of Christian eschatology is therefore not something other than the theological virtue of hope. Christian eschatology can in a sense be said to be the context in which Christian hope functions. Conradie (2000:17) phrased it as follows: “Eschatology is the centre that holds the whole web of Christian doctrines together”.

Pieper’s anthropology and ontology is based on the concept of *not-yet-being* – that we are *in via*, incomplete beings who live in the condition of “being on the way” (*status viatoris*), who live in temporality<sup>52</sup> (1997:91-95). Something of this is communicated by Paul too (Phil 3:13). In the same way, Christian hope can be said to be associated with this understanding of being on the way, in no way yet “accomplished” (Mathewes 2007:244).

This understanding of Christian eschatology then fundamentally has something to do with the future. “Future is not just something or other to do with Christianity. It is the essential element of the faith which is specifically Christian: the keynote of all its hymns, the dawn colouring of the new day in which everything is bathed” (Moltmann 2004:87). The importance of the current times, which Naudé spent considerable time assessing, is necessary for the theology of hope, because it brings the future events to the here and now. This theological perspective of eschatology makes the hope of the future, the hope of today (Moltmann 1991).

### *Kingdom of God*

What is hoped *for* are then those things that fall through because of these human predicaments<sup>53</sup>. A life without predicaments is essentially the establishment of the kingdom

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<sup>52</sup> Pieper writes, “It is astonishing how many basic concepts of theology have a meaning in reference to the state of being on the way that is different from their meaning in reference to the state of total possession” (1997:92).

<sup>53</sup> Pieper makes the distinction between our hopes (plural), which can be any-thing (any general good thing in life), and our hope (singular), which is ‘fundamental’ (without object) and more of a disposition, and an integral aspect of humankind as *status viatoris* (1994:27).

of God, ‘on earth as it is in heaven’, where the will of God is met. As Nolan (2009:7) states, “The object of Christian hope is the coming of God’s kingdom.” What is more, humankind has a desperate need for this hope:

*For hope is always needed and always something we do not properly possess. It is a divine dynamic in which we may, through grace, participate, but which we try perpetually, in sin, to control. Our need, and our lack, are especially visible in public life, where our need of hope is accentuated because of the many frustrations that lurk therein.*

(Mathewes 2007:214)

If Christians say they hope for this will of God, how is this will discerned? Nolan (2009:8) believes that the object of Christian hope is the common good; when we work for the common good, our work becomes a participation in God’s work and we contribute to God’s will<sup>54</sup>. Hope is characterized by a sense of solidarity, with the source of hope, but also urges us towards solidarity with others as well (Mathewes 2007:244). The coming of the kingdom is ultimately in God’s hands<sup>55</sup>, while the Christian community is called to live and act as the agents and instruments of its coming here and now. Conradie (2000: 270) phrases it by defining the Christian ethic as an ethic of hope, as does Moltmann in his latest book, *Ethics of Hope*<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> One of the features of hope, according to Pieper (1994) is that the object hoped for is always good – understood in the ontological, not in the moral sense.

<sup>55</sup> Pieper (1994:23) also explores this aspect of the active and passive role players in the virtue of hope when he writes, “Nobody says that he is “hoping” for something that he can produce or obtain himself [sic].” Conradie also calls for reservation in equating political liberation with God’s kingdom: “The Kingdom ultimately remains God’s, not ours...the coming of the kingdom is an act of God’s grace, not merely the product of human struggles” (2000:271).

<sup>56</sup> In the introduction to his book, *Ethics of Hope*, Moltmann comments on the theological connection between hope and action. He observes how the different answers to Immanuel Kant’s question, ‘What can I hope for?’ always affect the various choices of action open to us in response to the question, ‘What should I do?’. He states, “We become active in so far as we hope. We hope in so far as we can see into the sphere of future possibilities. We undertake what we think is possible” (2012:3).

### *Hope and History*

In describing what motivated him to write his influential book<sup>57</sup>, *Theology of Hope*, Jürgen Moltmann states that it was an attempt to make sense of how history is understood. Preliminary remarks have been made about the understanding of hope and eschatology as related to time and the future. A connection between hope and history is therefore also valuable.

In his book, *Hope and History*, Josef Pieper, a Thomistic philosopher, addresses the topic of hope from the perspective of human history and asks the question: “Is the nature of human hope such that it can be at all satisfied within the realm of history?” (1994:32). His understanding of history and of what constitutes an historical event is tied to his understanding of humankind as being “on the way”.

In *Theology of Hope*, Moltmann develops the argument and understanding of history as rooted in actual events and sets its sights on a real future in accordance with God’s promises. Hope is the other side of faith and more than anything else is the unique characteristic of Christianity. “Christian hope is founded on Christ’s resurrection and opens up a life in the light of God’s new world. Christian ethics anticipates the universal coming of God in the potentialities of history” (Moltmann 2012:5).

Let us now turn to the history of South Africa in particular to see how hope has manifested in this context.

### *Hope in South Africa*

Any study of eschatology in the South African context would have to take into account a wide range of perspectives, including, amongst others, Afrikaner Calvinism and nationalism, English liberalism, evangelicalism, liberation theology, black theology, and African Pentecostalism (Conradie 2000:261). In chapter three the wide range of influences on Beyers Naudé’s life in particular is made evident, especially in his commitment to ecumenical

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<sup>57</sup> The first edition was published in 1964, and the English edition in 1967, but reprinted 25 years later with a new preface in which some comments are made about its impact. Moltmann notes how many theologians from the Third World responded with ‘Hope in action’ being translated into many different political and cultural contexts and bearing fruit contextually. South Africa is one such an example.

ministry. This is to say that one cannot draw too heavily on one singular influence of thinking theologically about hope.

In the *Pro Veritate* of 15 July 1973, the Christian principles for which the Christian Institute stood are described. Amongst these is listed “Christian Hope”, which is described as follows:

“The Creator and Sustainer of the world has a purpose for it which He will fulfil. Jesus Christ reconciles all things and He is the hope of the world. Christians should have an optimism arising from the grace of Christ which prompts them to face the blackest [sic] circumstances with the assurance of ultimate victory.

Fear, pessimism, and bitterness dominate the South African scene. Blacks hope for liberation from oppression, injustice, and defeat, but the effort to combat fear, the heritage of psychological deliberation, and the sheer weight of oppression is dismaying. Whites dream of utopia, snatch at material wealth, but are dominated by fear of annihilation. Marginal change is no solution: it produces only frustration. Christian change means the discovery of a new verve for living, the courage to proclaim fundamental change through the Good News of Jesus Christ.”(*Pro Veritate* 15/7/1973:12)

One sees in this statement of belief something of hope being intrinsically tied to Jesus, but also of the difference in hopes and fears of the different race groups, as well as the radicalness of change that is called for by this Christian hope. It is therefore not only the diversity of the theological traditions that decorate the South African landscape of hope, but also the cultural and racial diversity. These tendencies will be picked up on in the addresses to different audiences by Naudé.

Conradie (2000 262-271) picks up on the prominent theme of hope<sup>58</sup> in the “struggle” period of 1960-1994. The emergence of a few seminal ecclesial documents that express this theme of hope took place in this period – the background of which will be briefly discussed in

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<sup>58</sup> In addition to the publications referenced earlier in this chapter, other titles by prominent figures in the struggle carry the word hope. These include *Hope and Suffering* (A selection of sermons by Desmond Tutu); *Fighting for Hope* (Carl Niehaus’ biography); and *The spirit of hope* (Villa-Vicencio’s book with conversations with eminent South African political figures and church leaders).

chapter three<sup>59</sup>. Despite this, very few detailed and systematic discussions on the content and social impact of Christian hope in the struggle have been produced (2009:262). To a large extent, hope was defined negatively as resistance against the present.

Conradie provides an “eschatological road map” of some of the features of hope in the struggle literature, while acknowledging that a comprehensive study would have to investigate the “liberating praxis, the pre-reflective experiences, the forms of resistance, the spiritualities, the prominent personalities of this period” (2000:263). However, his observations are noteworthy for this study. These observations, while being restricted from any in-depth discussion, will help to make sense of any references to hope found in the public addresses of Naudé.

Firstly, Conradie notes how Christian hope responds almost exclusively to the predicament of human sin. Sin is predominantly understood in terms of “the sins of the powerful and as the power of evil manifested in social structures: oppression, injustice, and tyranny” (2000:267). The removal of sin demands a “radical liberation and transformation of society and humanity itself”. Secondly, the predicament of finitude is stressed – understood as limits that are placed on life (primarily because of untimely death), especially because of the sins of others and inflicted by the powerful. Thirdly, he includes the theme of liberation from oppression, understood in “this-worldly terms...manifested in concrete, earthly changes ... closely and specifically linked with the downfall of the apartheid regime<sup>60</sup>” (2000:268). Another feature included by Conradie (2000:268) is the rhetoric of activism calling for a concerted effort by a committed citizenry (in some instances of struggle literature with an acknowledgment of the grace of God), in order to bring about liberation from slavery and oppression.

Lastly, he stresses hope that has a social impact – which is manifested in resistance to evil and oppression in despairing situations when all optimism and illusions have been stripped away (2000:269). Mathewes also reflects on this participation in change, which arises out of much

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<sup>59</sup> See chapters three and four for a discussion on these documents. They include The Message to the People of South Africa (1968), the Confession of Belhar (1982, 1986), the Kairos Document (1986), the Evangelical Witness in South Africa (1986), the Road to Damascus (1989), and the Rustenberg Declaration (1991).

<sup>60</sup> Other views from theologians such as John De Gruchy and Shun Govender are also included as perspectives on liberation as the coming of the Kingdom of God. These two examples are used to express contrasting views about what the coming of the Kingdom of God can mean; on the one hand an earthly shalom, and on the other, something much more, such as victory over demons and eternal life (Conradie, 2000:268).

more than optimism: “To hope is not simply or finally an interior state of mind or psychological disposition; it is a mode of assenting to participation in the rhythms of history. Our hope is secondary, our response to that, or whom, by which we are called” (2007:244, 245).

The connection between the eschatology of the struggle period with the prophetic roots of Christian hope is shown to be very distinct by Conradie (2000:270), with a clearly practical nature rather than a speculation about life beyond death or heaven one day. Some insight can be drawn from how Albert Nolan, a South Africa Dominican priest who had an influence on Naudé’s life, describes theology in a prophetic mode always being bound to time (2009: 76). Prophetic theology’s fundamental insight, according to Nolan, is “the recognition that an eschaton or day of reckoning and liberation is near, which turns the present moment into a kairos<sup>61</sup>” (Nolan, 2009: 84). Writing just after the Kairos Document had been formulated (1986), he demonstrates this time-bound quality at the hand of this example which called for theology in a prophetic mode. What is more, this theology is informed by the knowledge of how the prophets in the Bible functioned – discernment for ‘kairos’ times in history; finding and experiencing God in these times; turning attention from the past to the future, the eschaton, whereby the present time makes sense in terms of a new, future act of God; the announcement of God’s judgement and salvation. This theology has been associated with hope, which is fitting considering the above-mentioned characteristics<sup>62</sup>.

### *Hope as a theological virtue*

In these various brief perspectives we have seen the diversity and the richness that lies within the theological virtue of hope. In this we have observed something about the source of hope and about its manifestations.

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<sup>61</sup> Kairos is described by Nolan as follows: “Kairos refers to time as a quality...[it] is a time for decision and action, a time for oppressors and wrongdoers to be converted. At the same time, the kairos is a time for rejoicing and for hope because the eschaton as the day of liberation is near at hand” (Nolan 2009:84).

<sup>62</sup> It is also characterised by a very definite public witness element, as is seen in the description by Nolan of the time following the Kairos Document in apartheid South Africa: “[it is] a time to call upon *all in the world* who can still hear the voice of God to do everything in their power, and at whatever cost to themselves, to hasten the downfall of the apartheid regime...” (own emphasis) (Nolan 2009:87).

In part two of his publication, *A Theology of Public Life*, Charles Mathewes defines his “liturgy of citizenship” in terms of a “hopeful citizenship”. In this chapter about hope, he seeks to answer the question of how a “resistance to an improper secular sovereignty actually manifest[s] in political action”. In exploring the question of how hope should shape Christian citizen’s public engagement, he acknowledges the essential role that it played in the civil rights movement and other campaigns for liberation. Within the South Africa context, we will pick up on this public engagement and “hopeful citizenship” by Beyers Naudé.

We have seen how Christian hope translates into action in the present. “Hope engages us in the world; in contrast to a fundamentally spectatorial optimism, hope is always involvement, participation in a process or on-going reality” (Mathewes 2007:246). Hope calls attention, not to itself, but to the world – to how the world can change. Hope is an eschatological hope at the end of history, but is also the belief in God’s involvement in history here and now. This connection between hope and action is noted by Russel Botman: “Confessing hope is confession and not acts of human assertiveness. The hope of a disciple is never based on one’s own agency but on one’s following of the acting God who has acted then in Jesus Christ and now in and among us all in the world” (2001:115).

Christian hope is also fundamentally tied to Jesus Christ, the source and the author of hope. “Whenever life is perceived and lived in community and fellowship with Christ, a new beginning is discovered hidden in every end. What it is I do not know, but I have confidence that the new beginning will find me and raise me up” (Moltmann, 1996:xi).

### 2.3. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to orientate us within the fields of public theology and historiography and give us a clearer understanding of the concept of hope. Its aim was to provide a heuristic framework, an operational definition, with which to understand the witness of the public addresses of Beyers Naudé in the South African context. This framework, at risk of over simplification, can be described as looking through a lens of a ‘historically hopeful citizenship’. It is also sensitive to a historical consciousness, a faithful disposition of Christian hope, and a publically engaged dogmatics.

These findings have assisted in a theological and pragmatic understanding of how the theological virtue of hope can function in a theology of public life. A ‘historically hopeful citizenship’ is constituted by being present in and for public life, yet without accepting the

given protocols of that life (Mathewes 2007:214,215). This active participation in history as a Christian cannot be something other than the manifestation of a Christian hope. If hope is the source of such involvement, then public theology is our method, and history is not only our playground, but also our guide and teacher.

## Chapter 3: Beyers Naudé: A Public Witness to Hope

### 3.1. A Public life as one of hope

“If someone asks me what kind of a person a New South African should be, I will say: Take a look at Beyers and his wife Ilse.” These are the words of former president Nelson Mandela on the occasion of Naudé’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday (Ryan, 2005:207). Heralded by leaders and key figures in the South African civil society narrative such as Mr Mandela and Desmond Tutu as a prophet<sup>63</sup>, and by countless religious leaders as a source of inspiration, it is fitting that Beyers Naudé’s life be viewed through the lens of hope and related notions.

The hypothesis which will be employed in this short biographical overview is that the different influences that played a formative role in Beyers Naudé’s life transpire within the public witness and addresses which he delivered. This overview will therefore identify and evaluate his life’s engagement with the concept of hope and related notions by asking questions such as: when and how did hope function in his life? What are both the source and the object of his hope and the hope that he raised? Why has he been so largely associated with the virtue of hope?

Such a reading of his biography will contribute to the testing of the main hypothesis of this study, namely whether the concept of hope and its related notions are pivotal in the public addresses of Beyers Naudé, and therefore, whether a historical theological reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé can affirm him as an advocate of hope. Some of the historical markers in South African history will also be considered and included in this short overview, especially taking into account the times and expressions of hope and hopelessness. To understand the historical events which lead to the formation of Naudé as a public theologian and someone attributed with hope, is also to affirm these values identified in him.

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<sup>63</sup> This title has been used on various occasions, also in Tutu’s address at the official opening of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology on 21 November 2002, when Tutu chose the description of ‘unlikely champion of justice’ as the title (Tutu, 2005: 47-53), explaining how such an unlikely candidate, a quintessential *NG dominee*, could have become such an ecumenical leader and activist against the system which he had been a part of for many years.

### 3.2. Childhood and student years (1915 - 1939)

#### *Family, Faith, and Formation (1915- 1932)*

Christian Frederick Beyers Naudé, named after a prominent General in the Anglo Boer War and close friend of his father (General Christian Frederick Beyers), was born on 10 May 1915 in the Dutch Reformed parsonage in Roodepoort, Transvaal (Johannesburg, Gauteng). Born to a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church who was a Boer chaplain during the Anglo Boer War, and founder member of the Afrikaner-Broederbond (AB), Rev. Jozua Francois Naudé, he was deeply influenced by a nationalistic, religious environment. His father was a man of strong convictions, deeply committed to instructing his children in his understanding of the ways of God with the Afrikaner people. He undoubtedly brought about a consciousness of the Afrikaner history, which from his point of view was the history of an oppressed people, fighting with a just cause for their liberation against the British aggressors. Naudé was influenced by a sense of social and political justice with a bias in favour of the Afrikaner, and with this also a deep religious faith in a God who is the God of the oppressed (Villa-Vicencio 1985:5). Such an environment allowed for the fostering of an unwavering trust and hope in a God who brings resolution.

Naudé spent the majority of his childhood in the Karoo town of Graaff-Reinet; a great influence in his life, as he states: “Everything in and about Graaff-Reinet made a lasting impression on my experience as a child”(Naudé 1995:13 - own translation). Thousands of families in Graaff-Reinet and on surrounding farms lived in dire poverty and on many occasions the Naudé family provided overnight shelter to poor white tenant farmers. As a child, Naudé was moved by the hopelessness of these people; as adult he would come to feel the same empathy for the impoverished Black people of South Africa. Ryan (2005:14,15) notes how these impressions formed Naudé’s social consciousness, especially of the helplessness of people who experienced forces and events which they were powerless to control or direct. His mother’s tendency to suppress her children’s ideals and wishes because of her own traditionalist Afrikaner agenda developed in Naudé a concern for the underdog and those barred from reaching their highest potential (Ryan 2005:19).

His childhood was probably typical of most patriotic and religious Afrikaners of the time<sup>64</sup>; he inherited a sense of religious piety and captivity to certain imposed moral norms. This stemmed from the strong convictions and determinate will of both of his parent's, especially his mother, Adriana Zondagh Naudé (van Huyssteen), who enforced strict discipline and house rules<sup>65</sup>. He inherited some of his mother's sensitive qualities too, as well as an optimistic view of life from his father (Ryan 2005:18).

All eight children were seated in the pews each Sunday while their father preached. His family was "deeply religious" (Naudé 1995:13) and given the influence of religion and faith in his life, it is not surprising that he would follow in the footsteps of his father, even though he could easily have studied law if provided with the opportunity (1995:26).

In a Pentecost service in the community hall in Graaff-Reinet, Naudé took ownership of the message preached by his father to dedicate one's life to Christ, thereby stepping into his own faith through this bold action - his first public confession. He was 16 years old. He writes, "That particular action as a young boy had a great effect on my whole life; my whole career was affected by it to a great extent, although I did not realise it at the time" (1995:19 – own translation).

#### *Involved, Influential, Independent – Student Years (1932 - 1939)*

In 1932 Beyers Naudé enrolled, together with his brother, Joos, to study theology at Stellenbosch University. Naudé's eager involvement in many campus activities created a space in which his leadership abilities could be showcased and tested. His peers clearly identified him as a leader, electing him as *Primarius* of Wilgenhof, the most renowned and also the oldest men's residence at Stellenbosch University; it has always been home to many influential South Africans, prominent business leaders, Springbok rugby players, and even political leaders such as Frederik van Zyl Slabbert – indeed a breeding ground for agents of change. He also displayed his leadership abilities by serving as chairperson of the Students'

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<sup>64</sup> In his public address, "The Afrikaner and Race Relations", Naudé highlights the historic attitudes of the Afrikaner. To summarise, he mentions 6 outstanding characteristics: (i) An attitude of separateness; (ii) a deep sense of mission as a "Christian nation" towards the non-Christian population; (iii) the inferiority of "non-white" people; (iv) a deep sense of justice in accordance with the Christian faith; (v) a change in race relations between Christians of different races; (vi) his fear of being overpowered, swamped or submerged by a hostile world (Naudé 2005e:55-57).

<sup>65</sup> "Ek dink albei van ons, ek en my vader, is en was mense wat sterk geglo en sterk oortuigings gehad het oor dit waarin ons glo"; "My moeder het 'n baie sterk persoonlikheid gehad" (Naudé 1995:16,17).

Representative Council – the top leadership position on campus and a true honour for any student leader. He also participated in the *Berg-en-Toerklub* as chairman, where he met his future wife, Ilse Weder. His “carefree, cheerful student life” (1995: 23) also consisted of participation in tennis, debating, and Wilgenhof’s serenading singers, *Die Kraaie* (1995:25, 26).

Enrolling as a student at Stellenbosch University meant a break from a confined environment of limited choices. While he retained the religious, moral, and nationalistic views from his upbringing, it was at this time where he started to display clear independent thinking. The development of a healthy measure of discontent and non-conformity with the *status quo* is evident in this phase of Naudé’s life. Signs of this attitude were already clear in his high school years when, together with his brother and four friends, he formulated a letter of protest against the ‘authoritarian’ attitude of the principal of his school (Naudé 1995:18). This attitude continued at university with the establishment of *Pro Liberate*<sup>66</sup>, a student publication, which was started as a reaction to the culture of conservative student politics.

The theological trends that were dominant in this time in the DRC and the *Kweekskool* at Stellenbosch, and which inevitably influenced his ministry, were the South African neo-Calvinism, the Reformed evangelical trend, and the Neo-Fichtean romantic nationalism (Coetzee 2010:445). Naudé was mostly attracted to the Reformed evangelic trend.

The major figures of influence that he mentions in his recollection of his student life include Johannes du Plessis, who had been tried for heresy and dismissed from the DRC seminary attached to the university, H.F. Verwoerd, who lectured Naudé in sociology (who Naudé called “my most interesting professor” and described him as a rational thinker, unpitiful and cold-hearted) and later became Prime Minister, and B.B. Keet, his seminary professor of ethics (Naudé, 1995:23). It is worth mentioning that here again one picks up a concern for justice and investment in a side-lined figure in the form of Du Plessis. Villa-Vicencio (1985:6) remarks how Naudé spoke of the “pettiness, the corruption and the close-minded attitude of the NGK (DRC)” with regard to his heresy trial. The Du Plessis trial propagated a certain hermeneutical vacuum within the DRC and had a major impact on the theology of the

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<sup>66</sup> This name and publication was a sort of foretaste to what was to come thirty years later with *Pro Veritate*, also giving voice to a less conservative traditional school of thought on issues in public life.

church, especially with regards to the Biblical reasoning behind apartheid<sup>67</sup>. The trial and discharge of Du Plessis formed a climate where critical investigation and any debate on disputable issues was no longer welcomed (Kingham 1986:56).

Naudé never immersed himself in his theological studies. This was as a result of the lecturers, whom he perceived as functioning with a degree of trepidation and circumspection following the strict order applied to Johannes du Plessis. He saw this as barring critical thinking and discussion and he therefore never received the pleasure and fulfilment that he had hoped to receive during his theological training (1995: 24). He did however find liberation and inspiration from Prof. B.B. Keet, who was an exception and regarded by Naudé as, “one of the most profound minds that Church has had in their midst” (1995:28 –own translation).<sup>68</sup> This support for Du Plessis and interest in Keet also showed that he was much less inclined to following the neo-Calvinistic trend (Coetzee 2010:446). Keet would also play a significant role later in his life. Speaking about his years involved with the Christian Institute, he refers to the connection he shared with Keet of a joint hope – “we fostered the hope that the Christian Institute could be influential within the DRC to change the different perceptions in relation to the Biblical grounding of apartheid” (Naudé 1995:28 – own translation). These figures represented character traits that resonated with Naudé: critical thinking, strong conviction, and truthful defiance.

Ilse Weder (Naudé), Beyers Naudé’s wife, had a great influence on him, especially in the developing of an ecumenical consciousness. She came from a Moravian background and a community living with a greater racial integration than what was commonplace to the typical Afrikaner community. She brought him into contact with a church that did not have the same racial divisions as the DRC. This experience in Genadendal, her hometown where her parents

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<sup>67</sup> The accusations held against Du Plessis were largely as a result of some of his judgements made with a historic-critical approach to Bible interpretation. This opposition of a historic-critical approach has been noted in chapter two (2.2.1). This opposition and vacuum of a historic hermeneutic would also contribute to Naudé’s formation as someone concerned with a historical awareness (Coetzee 2010:553).

<sup>68</sup> At a conference in Pretoria in 1953 Prof B.B. Keet made clear his stance on the unity of the church, which explains why Naudé could relate to his thought and convictions, “Personally, I believe that our brethren [DRC members] who want to maintain apartheid on biblical grounds are labouring under this misunderstanding. They confuse apartheid, which is an attitude of life, with a diversity which includes unity. Christian unity, I know, will include diversity but it must never be seen as separation; and apartheid is separation” (De Gruchy, 1976: 59).

were missionaries, was most likely the first time that he questioned the racial policy of the Afrikaner (Ryan 2005:21). They married on 3 August 1940.

### 3.3. Ministry in the DRC (1940 - 1963)

On 27 July 1940 his ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church began when he accepted the position as assistant minister in Wellington. This was the beginning of his 23 years as a minister in the DRC. In this time Naudé made remarkable transitions in his assessment of how the gospel was to be lived. Although he would remain loyal to the DRC his whole life, considerable alterations were to take place in his relationship with the church. This change would be great enough to sway him from being someone who entered into ministry in the church as a spearhead figure, to being the carrier of hope for those fighting against the very convictions and policies which he directly supported and represented for many years. This notion of being a ‘connected critic’ is what legitimized and authenticated what he stood for as a symbol of hope.

His first congregation, where he served as assistant minister, was in Wellington, as mentioned previously. It was in this time that he was invited to join the Afrikaner-Broederbond (AB), the youngest member at that time to have ever been invited. This is yet another sign of his leadership qualities and the sphere of influence that he had. He accepted the invitation without hesitation; seeing as his father was not only one of the founders of the AB, but also elected as its first president. This must have been quite an honour.

This was also the time where seeds of doubt had started to be sown - this stemmed from his observations of the lack of equality when it came to training of ministers for the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in comparison with the white Stellenbosch *Kweekskool*-students (1995:32, 33). Here again we see a concern for those experiencing a position of subjugation, prevented from reaching their highest potential. This was also one of the influences that started to develop his historical awareness

After ministering in Wellington, he accepted a call to a small town in the Karoo, Loxton, where he served for 3 years. In 1945 he accepted a call to a new congregation in Olifantsfontein (Pretoria-South). Here, when walking through the concentration camp cemetery in the area which he often did, he was confronted with the dolorous history of conflict between the English and the Afrikaners (1995:36).

Naudé and his father both celebrated the National Party's political victory in 1948, seeing it as the Afrikaners finally reaching their full potential and overcoming a history of being defeated. His father passed away shortly after he had confirmed Naudé in his new congregation in Pretoria-East. Here Naudé could turn his focus to students, which allowed for a series of awakenings. He was well liked by the students. Dr Nico Smith, a member of his congregation and later anti-apartheid activist, remembered him as someone who "had the gift to make you enthusiastic" (despite Naudé's apparent lack of theological knowledge) (Ryan 2005:35).

Dr Ben Marais was also a minister at this congregation. His book, *Die Kleur-krisis en die Weste* (1952), contributed to the rising tide of suspicion and doubt in Naudé's mind about racial segregation. It created serious tension amongst the Afrikaner-Broederbond and in the congregation. Naudé found himself in a difficult situation, cautious due to his allegiance to the AB, and therefore decided on keeping his opinions about the book to himself; but this silence would only last for a few more years.

Two other important events took place in this time which had an influence on Naudé's formation - the launch of the *Kerk Jeugvereniging*<sup>69</sup> (KJV) of the Dutch Reformed Church, and the relationships that he formed with the theology students that were a part of his congregation, whom later became ministers in the other 'daughter churches' of the DRC. Through his affiliation with the KJV (as chairman) he was given the opportunity to travel to Europe and North America for 6 months, in order to study and investigate church youth work. This, his first international travel, made an unforgettable impression on Naudé's life, his theological formation and his future ministry. He gained fresh perspective and a new vision for church unity, race relations, and the ecumenical movement. His confrontation with burning questions and sharp criticism against apartheid from the international community, created an awareness that would only be strengthened with time. At that stage all he and his travel mate, Willem Strauss, could do was to give the official stance of the church and keep their own opinions to themselves (1995:39).

Amongst the students that he build relationships with, a commitment to an active citizenry and an avid and genuine hope existed to see separate development be thoroughly

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<sup>69</sup> We see the aim of this youth group in the words of Naudé: "I wanted the KJV to be a channel for young people to become involved in meaningful work of mission, in evangelism and service, in welfare work, and in a ministry of compassion" (Ryan 2005:36).

implemented, as it was believed to be Biblically sound and in the best interest of the development of the Black, Coloured and Indian communities (Naudé 1995:40).

In this time Naudé was also asking questions about the future of the DRC's missionary work in light of the new independence of several African Countries, expressing his evangelical focus. Realising his inadequate theological insight and knowledge to act on his broadened vision and understanding of church and society, he undertook private theological study. The more he read the more uneasy he became (Ryan 2005:38).

Throughout the fifties Naudé remained a loyal member of the AB. Yet, his doubts about apartheid never left him and, after he had read BB Keet's 1955 book *Whither, South Africa?* he was determined to seek clarity on his church's relationship with apartheid.

Perhaps some of Naudé's most formative years were spent in a congregation in Potchefstroom (1955 – 1959), during which he had growing interaction with the conservative Gereformeerde Kerk (the *Doppers*) and continued to carefully study the Biblical grounding of apartheid. It was the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, an international ecumenical body, in Potchefstroom (August 1958) that played a decisive role in his eventual 'dreadful discovery' (1995: 42) that the Church's support of apartheid on the grounds of Scripture was a serious mistake. He explains this realisation and courage to follow through as coming from obedience to the Holy Spirit, convicting him to choose his loyalty to God above his fear of being rejected by the DRC and thereby jeopardising his future (1995: 42). However it would take a few years before these serious seeds of doubt would begin to flower.

Up until then Naudé was struggling with the allure of "the second most powerful position in the country" (Ryan, 2005:43), the moderator of the DRC. The influence of the AB was incredibly strong in keeping him from voicing his ideas and concerns.

*An impeccable Afrikaner background, steady progress through the hierarchical structures of Afrikanerdom, high intelligence, great personal charm and considerable gifts as an orator had left him, by the early 1960's, poised to enter the commanding heights of the nation's religious and political life.*

(Randall 1982:2)

His growing disillusionment was strengthened by the witness of many of the white ministers who had been a part of his student ministry in Pretoria, telling and showing him contemptible instances of racial tensions and strict injustices taking place in the Black, Coloured and Indian congregations they were serving (Villa-Vicencio 1985: 8). The cracks were showing, and he could no longer trust the foundation on which he was standing. It would be in his time at Aasvoëlkop, his last NG congregation situated in the wealthy suburb of Northcliff North-West of Johannesburg, that this foundation would be properly shaken. It is also in this next phase of his life in which his public witness truly developed, as Villa-Vicencio states, “The name of Beyers Naudé was poised to become a household word throughout South Africa, and soon it would be known in Christian circles around the world” (1985:8).

While in DRC Aasvoëlkop, Beyers Naudé’s interest in ecumenical matters started to grow. He started to bring his evangelical convictions in line with a broader social consciousness. He worked very hard to establish a Bible study movement between the different churches. The groups paid attention to what they found in Scripture in thinking about apartheid. He realised that Christians needed to find one another and acknowledge their unity as the Body of Christ if there was to be any hope of making an impact on the world. His hope for church unity, based on evangelical mission, was a primary focus of his ministry<sup>70</sup>. Although major shifts had taken place in his political and theological thinking, he was still far from appreciating the full depth of black anger and resistance to apartheid laws. His understanding and approach was still largely based on the changes he believed white South Africans and Christians had to make.

On 21 March 1960 a crowd of protestors presented themselves at their local police station in Sharpeville, following the PAC’s call to leave their ‘passes’ at home and protest against the pass laws. 69 people were killed by police fire in a massacre shooting. Immense anger and defiance spread throughout South Africa, with the ANC and PAC calling a day of mourning on 28 March 1960 (Ryan 2005:52). These organisations were outlawed and a state of emergency was declared. Sharpeville represented a turning point in African nationalism (Villa-Vicencio 1985:8). Cries for stronger resistance and of revolution had begun.

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<sup>70</sup> In an interview with Colleen Ryan, Beyers Naudé described the thinking of that time: “If we are truly the people of God, proclaiming the gospel of salvation and liberation, the transforming of human beings and society, then the church has to be one; we must be united, otherwise we are going to create tremendous problems and divisions” (Ryan 2005:51).

Naudé immediately realised the weight of this incident: “I sensed deep within my heart that this was a case of injustice against people who were protesting peacefully, and that I, Beyers Naudé, could no longer remain silent” (Naudé 1995:47 – own translation). As a member of the organising committee, he was closely involved with the planning of the consultation.

The deplorable actions of Sharpeville sent shockwaves around the globe signalling international action. From 7 to 14 December of that year a World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation responded to the crisis by meeting with the eight South African member churches at Cottesloe in Johannesburg. This development followed the actions of the WCC who sent a representative, Dr Robert Bilheimer, to try to heal the rift among member churches. After meeting with different representatives, he proposed inter-church dialogue in the form of the consultation. The rift resulted from different reactions to the Sharpeville protests, and was accentuated by a letter from the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Joost de Blank, which called for the expulsion of the DRC from the world body (Ryan 2005:54). With this consultation, the South African church entered into a new phase of its history.

Naudé was nominated to represent the Transvaal Synod of the DRC together with a group of representatives led by the moderator Rev AM Meiring. This was an important opportunity for him to voice his opinions. As Pauw (2005:13) notes, up to the start of the conference his public statements were still very loyal to and defensive of the image of the DRC and his political views were conservative and paternalistic.

The conference failed to achieve its outcomes in the sense that all of the decisions and resolutions that were made were rejected by the DRC synods of Transvaal and the Cape at their meetings in 1961, which Naudé described as having a heavy-laden atmosphere filled with tension (Naudé, 1995:57). What is more, the ruling National Party spoke the same language, and therefore this decision did not come as much of a surprise after the Prime Minister, Dr Verwoerd, expressed in his New Year’s address on 1 January 1961 a clear disregard for the decisions made, stating that only after DRC synod meetings would the voice of the church truly be heard. The Afrikaner-Broederbond also fully rejected the statements made by die consultation, isolating Naudé to an even greater extent. All these developments

played a part in the refining of Naudé's convictions about the ideology of apartheid which was dogmatically supported by the DRC<sup>71</sup>.

Three significant and momentous messages delivered by Naudé at crucial times in 1963 were included in a publication by the Christian Institute of South Africa titled, *My Decision*. This includes 'Obedience to God', preached on the occasion of his announcement of his decision to accept the directorship of the CI and 'The Flame of Fire and Sledgehammer', which was his farewell sermon on Jeremiah 23:29 delivered at the Aasvoëlkop congregation on 3 November 1963. The third was the address titled 'Reconciliation' delivered at his inauguration as director of the CI (see chapter four).

All three of these messages bear witness to the conviction with which Naudé lived. The decisions which he had to make as a result of these convictions were not easy. As Villa-Vicencio (1985:3) states, Naudé's life was one torn between hope and fear. To question the fundamental structures which gave one birth is necessarily a painful and costly journey of spiritual, moral and ideological compromise.

Another cause of personal grief was the sorrow that he caused to the members of the AB by leaking confidential documents by sharing them with Prof Albert Geyser, a close friend and theologian, which ended up in the hands of a *Sunday Times* reporter (Bryan 1978:39; Coetzee 2010:474). This demonstrates one of Naudé's weaknesses – the trust he sometimes foolishly placed in others (Heaney 2004:263). However, he did display humility by asking for forgiveness for this mistake.

### 3.4. *Pro Veritate and the Christian Institute (1963 – 1977)*

*Pro Veritate* ("for the Truth") was a Christian monthly paper for Southern Africa, that resulted from the need (as stated in its first issue) for a Christian monthly that would aim at approaching and discussing vital problems of the Church and the community in the light of

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<sup>71</sup>Kinghorn makes the distinction between an ethical and a dogmatic support of the apartheid theology. The latter, which he shows by implication to be the choice of the DRC following their decision to reject the decisions of the Cottesloe Consultation, is a choice to understand and define the social-political reality against the background of unmovable principles of how society should be structured. This was because the Cottesloe Consultation, although they did not propose outright rejection of separate development, suggested a more 'natural' methodology of segregation, which could in theory have meant acceptance of an alternative political policy; a decision a dogmatic approach could not support. Cottesloe was a testing ground for this dogmatic approach, one which had already been established and cemented (Kinghorn 1986:119-121).

Scripture. This need was initially recognised amongst the three Dutch Reformed Churches, although the focus would later shift to be much more ecumenical. *Pro Veritate* sought to answer questions such as: “What is the answer which the Bible as the revealed Word of God, gives us on present day problems?” This truth was the truth as found only in Christ and in his Word (Wat ons wil, 1962: 3).

The vision of *Pro Veritate* was to promote unity within the body of Christ and the ecumenical cause; the Christian Institute (CI), to be established the following year, would support the same vision. This unity, according to the first issue of *Pro Veritate* (Wat ons wil, 1962: 3) was necessary in order to strengthen the witness of the Protestant Christian church against the anti-Christian powers that threatened it<sup>72</sup>. Such unity posed to remove any sinful divisions in the body of Christ. Their choice of editorial members, which included Black and Coloured members, reflected this venture. De Gruchy (1985:15; 2005:85) notes how the early issues show the influence of the Confessing Church struggle in Nazi Germany and the Barmen Declaration of May 1934 on its editor (Naudé) and authors<sup>73</sup>. The theological orientation of *Pro Veritate* shifted in later years, showing greater influence from black and liberation theology. This also parallels the development of the CI and with the developments in the church more generally (1985:17). These influences will also become clear in the public addresses discussed in chapters four and five.

Naudé resigned from the *Afrikaner-Broederbond* (AB) in 1963; as editor of *Pro-Veritate* he would not be able to be impartial in any commentary or report while still being a member (Naudé, 1995:65). This was shortly before the establishment of the new Southern Transvaal Synod in April. Much to his surprise, Naudé was elected as Moderator of this synod – whether this was a ploy orchestrated by the AB to quiet his anti-apartheid inclination or whether it was as a result of backing by those still supporting the resolutions of Cottesloe, remained a mystery to Naudé. It was clear, however, that his ecumenical work with the *Pro-Veritate* would not be tolerated, and he was asked to resign. True to his obedience to God, he refused to resign, based on his belief that his position as editor was not in conflict with the confession and work of the church.

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<sup>72</sup> Some threats mentioned include communism, Islam (“Mohammedanism”), and secularism.

<sup>73</sup> “It should be clear to anyone who is familiar with the development of the church situation and the Third Reich and looking at the events in our country affecting the church and the state that there are more and more parallels between Nazi Germany and present-day South Africa. If I think about all these signs, then it is clear that the time has arrived for a confessing church in South Africa” - own translation (*Pro Veritate*, July 1965, 6).

Beyers Naudé had a growing urgency to produce, in a more concrete manner the outcomes of a Confessing Church movement, as well as that which *Pro Veritate* bore witness to. In October 1962 Naudé had already started serious discussion to make this a reality, but it was only after the synods of April 1963 that the Christian Institute (CI) was established. The CI grew out of ecumenical Bible study groups that were started even before the Cottesloe Consultation. It was a prophetic and ecumenical movement in the light of the Afrikaans churches' failure to address racism and injustice in South Africa, but its focus would indeed shift.

Shortly after the CI's installation on 13 August 1963, Naudé was asked to assume the position of Director. He placed this request before the DRC, but was denied by the church (without supporting reasons) the right to keep his status as minister in the DRC. His choice to continue with the CI was made on the basis of whether there was enough support from within the DRC to bring about the change which the CI envisioned. He found that this was not the case, and that change had to be effected from the outside. That Sunday, 22 September 1963, he delivered the sermon titled "Obedience to God" based on Acts 5:29, "We must obey God rather than men"; a sermon which was not only a symbolic and significant advancement toward his convictions, but a message that would become his mantra and which would be a recurring theme in the coming decades.

Beyers Naudé's severance from his ministry as a minister in the white DRC was based on a hope that in doing so, he would be able to achieve what he believed to be justice, demanded by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was precisely his deep and inner love for his church as part of the Church of Christ in South Africa that he had to follow through on his convictions (Bryan, 1978:27). The day before he started as Director of the CI, 4 November 1963, he delivered what would be his last sermon in the DRC until the late 1980's, "The Flame of fire and sledgehammer". This was a significant turning point in his life.

His wife, Ilse, also had to make a tremendous sacrifice in supporting her husband's decision to leave the ministry in Aasvoëlkop, seeing as she was actively involved in many women's groups. Many Afrikaners did not understand Naudé's reasoning, and he was regarded by

many as a “verraaier”, a turncoat who betrayed the *Volk* (Tutu, 2005:49). This social ostracism was very harsh and painful for Naudé and his family<sup>74</sup>.

The Directorship of the Christian Institute was an opportunity for Naudé to live out and explore, together with Christians from all races, what it meant to live in obedience to God in political terms. Naudé, in an interview for the film *Cry of Reason* (1995), states the clear and definite three-fold purpose for the establishment of the CI:

*Firstly, to challenge and to destroy the moral basis of apartheid, which was built on a totally distorted concept and interpretation of the Bible. Secondly, to promote the cause of Christian unity in a country proudly claiming to be Christian but deeply divided in different denominations, and confessions, and races as no other country in the world. Thirdly, to promote the cause of social justice.*

*Pro Veritate* remained an independent journal, but was housed within the CI. The following statement by Peter Walshe is of particular value in identifying the prophetic role that the CI was to play:

*Naudé and the Christian Institute had a long way to go before coming to the full realization of the centrality of the black viewpoint for the future of Christianity and of justice in South Africa. Nevertheless, something new has been started in the Institute. A prophetic Christian voice was being heard and simultaneously there emerged the prospect of a prophetic ecumenical movement.*

(De Gruchy 1985:17)

Villa-Vicencio writes, “The euphoria hitherto associated with Cottesloe was now located in the Christian Institute and more especially in the charismatic leadership of Beyers Naudé” (1982: 89). He further notes how Naudé was regarded as a symbol of hope for the English-speaking churches in this time:

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<sup>74</sup> Naudé notes the impact of his severance from the traditional Afrikaner ranks: “What really annoyed the leaders of Afrikaner nationalism when I broke ranks was that I was every bit as much a white Afrikaner as they were. I think I reminded them of that side of Afrikanerdom which they have never been able to tame. It is an Afrikaner willingness to cross frontiers – relating the Afrikaner experience of exploitation, poverty and struggle to others who face similar experiences.” (Villa–Vicencio 1993:220)

*...the English speaking churches were ready to make an Afrikaner rebel their hero. The popularity of Beyers Naudé in the English-speaking churches was at its height. Their hope was that their prophecies of doom would be proved wrong...that miraculously the Spirit of God would employ this man to bring his people to their senses. Beyers Naudé had become a symbol of hope to the English-speaking churches.*

(Villa-Vicencio 1982:89)

The witness of Christian hope is found throughout the 15 year history (May 1962 –September 1977) of the *Pro Veritate* publications. These include a substantial volume of contributions by Naudé, but also from many other Christian contributors. One example includes a contribution by Jim Cochrane (1976:11-12) in *Pro Veritate*, ‘Facing the future with hope – a search for Christian liberation’, in which the meditations of a program on “the future and Hope” are included; a program presented by the CI in November 1976. The contents include reflection on a variety of passages from the Bible offering perspectives for the both hopeless ‘Blacks’ and worried ‘Whites’.

G. McLeod Bryan, an American theologian who had a long personal association with Naudé, wrote in 1978 about Naudé’s love-hate relationship with the church, stating: “His faith in the church sank awfully low sometimes. At times he appears to have no hope at all for the church” (1978:28). The CI and *Pro Veritate* had become his new pulpit. Bryan continues, “It cannot be denied that these organisations gave him an opportunity to run ahead of, to short-circuit, and even to contravene the usual cumbersome machinery of official Christendom, and therefore risk the danger of isolation and impracticality” (1978:28).

Naudé delivered many public addresses in his capacity as Director of the CI, many of which are discussed in Chapter four of this study. Bryan (1978:28) highlights three public addresses delivered in the year 1975–76, published throughout the world, where Naudé reiterated his despondency over the church’s effectiveness. This includes the addresses titled, “A glimpse into the future of South Africa”, “The individual and the State in South Africa”, and another address delivered to ‘Christians in Europe’ on 31 October 1976.

The CI’s approach of acting as a prophetic critic of the Afrikaner Reformed Churches was not met without opposition. There were many instances of police raids on the offices of the

Institute<sup>75</sup>. Charles Villa-Vicencio comments on this resistance with which his work was met. Writing on the characteristics that have produced both resistance and hope he states:

*It is also these characteristics that have endeared him to that vast cross-section of people who are best able to discern what it means to affirm one's humanity amidst conflict in a dehumanising society – oppressed people, not only in South Africa but around the world. These same characteristics make him a prophet without honour among his own people, and leave lesser beings and underminers of his character, on both sides of the political divide, barking and snapping at his heels.*

(Villa-Vicencio 1985:3)

The South African Council of Churches (SACC) and its forerunner, the Christian Council of South Africa, had close ties with the CI. Long before the birth of the CI, the churches and missionary societies in South Africa were related to each other through the Christian Council. Unfortunately, it was ill-equipped to serve the church in a time of crisis such as Cottesloe (De Gruchy 1979:115), and subsequently, reform was necessary.

The SACC, in which Naudé played a significant role, was established in 1967. Although they co-operated well with the CI, their relationship was not free from tension. The CI was unique, in the sense that it did not report to the member churches, and thus had a level of freedom. The CI's function included much more than public pronouncement of a political nature, and therefore much of their work was out of the public eye.

Great support and inspiration was drawn from international sources in Africa, Europe and America for both the CI and the SACC. The World Council of Churches' 1966 Church and Society Conference in Geneva had a major impact on Naudé, the CI, and the formation of the SACC. This led to a series of conferences in South Africa, and also to the composition of

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<sup>75</sup> A few other examples include a series of articles of a slanderous nature published in September 1965 by *Die Transvaler* (an Afrikaner Nationalist daily newspaper in Johannesburg). Many DRC ministers followed suit by speaking against the CI and its Director as propagating 'liberalistic' and 'Communist' tendencies (De Gruchy 1985:18). These accusations were especially prevalent after Naudé compared the church situation in South Africa to that of Nazi-Germany. An open letter was sent to 1500 DRC ministers defending their positions and setting out the Institute's convictions of why apartheid was in conflict with the Word of God and the confessions of the church. Other instances included a series of articles by Prof Adriaan Pont in *Die Hervormer* which ended in a lawsuit against him for defamation (Naudé 1995:76) and a motion at the General Synod of the DRC in October 1966 declaring the CI as heretical and calling DRC members to resign.

*The Message to the People of South Africa*<sup>76</sup>; the first official South Africa church document declaring apartheid as a false gospel and paving the way for later developments such as SPROCAS, the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society<sup>77</sup>. The public agenda of the churches in the seventies was greatly determined by the WCC Programme to Combat Racism (1970) (De Gruchy 1985:21) which donated a large sum of money. SPROCAS 2 (Special Programme for Christian Action in Society) was an action orientated program, with different programmes for Black and White people.

Villa-Vicencio describes Naudé as having been a symbol of both the hope and despair of the white, English-speaking members of churches belonging to the SACC and the WCC – singling out the serious-minded members who had “bad consciences about being part of white South Africa but who also enjoy(ed) its flesh pots” (Randall 1982:83).

On reflection of the successes of the CI, Naudé (1995:95) highlights SPROCAS as a definite achievement in offering concrete answers to what the new South Africa that was hoped for would look like. As De Gruchy states, “It is one thing for the church to be prophetic, it is another for it to provide concrete models and alternatives to apartheid, as well as strategies for change” (1985:21). These concrete models had started to take shape. Naudé also mentions the CI as a prophetic voice for the South African churches that reminded them of the implications of acceptance of the Gospel in their situation. Other achievements or strengths listed about the CI by Randall (Randall 1982: 44, 45) include the flexibility and openness to change it displayed, its willingness to tackle controversial issues, its support and stimulus it provided for black clergy in the DRC, and lastly its contribution to a wider understanding of the concept of Christian unity in South Africa.

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<sup>76</sup>*The Message* created renewed conflict between the ruling party and the SACC and the CI. Mr John Vorster, Prime Minister, blatantly accused them of being insolent in attacking his Church and not keeping to the essence of the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ (De Gruchy 1979:119). The content of *The Message* includes the implications of the atoning work of Christ in terms of South African society – this gospel of salvation offers hope and security for humanity (Conradie 2000:263). It states that apartheid and separate development denies the work of Christ and the essence of Christian reconciliation. The hope that accompanied this message was that it should contribute to the debate, challenging and enabling the churches to become more faithful.

<sup>77</sup> SPROCAS was a research commission established in 1969 by the SACC and the CI and tasked with examining South African society in the light of Christian principles, to formulate long-term goals for an acceptable social order and to consider how change towards such a social order might be accomplished (Randall 1971:1).

The need for ecumenical contact across racial divides was a growing sentiment amongst many Christians in this time. Upon an invitation from Naudé, Robert Bilheimer addressed one of the ecumenical Bible study circles stating that it was “of crucial importance for people across the colour line to get to know and trust each other, as happened at Cottesloe, because without trust there is no hope” (Ryan 2005:68). This need for trust was evidently taken seriously by all those who sided with Naudé in forming not only the Christian Institute, but also in contributing to several other attempts at uniting the body of Christ against the injustices inflicted by the policies in place. It must be stated that trust in any White leader was hard to come by in this time. Interestingly, the opposition from the DRC and the Government against the CI strengthened the trust of the Black population (Naudé 1995:94). The CI only later shifted its focus from changing white attitudes to earnestly showing support for the black struggle for justice and liberation. This trust in Beyers Naudé from the side of the oppressed would grow considerably as the apartheid struggle ensued for a couple more decades.

One such an example of trust was that of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement. Black Theology, related to the cause of the Black Consciousness Movement, also played an irrefutable role in the church struggle in South Africa. Its advocates found in the gospel, in Christ’s identification with the poor, the suffering and the oppressed, signs of hope (Ryan 2005:141). Black Theology was labelled by Desmond Tutu and others as a definite form of liberation theology (De Gruchy 1979:160); such theology brought about a necessary form of being acknowledged as real people for Black South Africans, being liberated, in order that true reconciliation could take place. This was the hope of Black men and women, especially in the height of apartheid during the 1970’s. Tutu stated the following in support of the Black consciousness movement: “Black consciousness merely seeks to awaken the Black person to a realisation of this worth as a child of God, with the privileges and responsibilities that are the concomitants of that exalted status” (1979:160) In chapter four, the address, “Black anger and white power in an unreal society”, will explore these notions.

What is more, Mamphela Ramphele, who was an active role player in the Black Consciousness Movement, explains the impact of the Black Community Programs, which she initiated and established in Tzaneen during the 1970’s as a part of this movement in the following manner: “the projects can be looked at as signs of hope that gave hope to people who were otherwise living in a situation of desperation” (Cry of Reason 1995).

The Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organisations (Schlebusch/Le Grange Commission) was established by the state in 1972. On 24 September 1973 Naudé and four other leaders in the CI handed over the document “Divine or Civil Disobedience” to the Commission, stating their reason for refusing to testify. This refusal to testify to this Commission, which investigated the CI and other organisations, resulted in a three year trial. The CI was eventually declared an ‘affected organisation’ on 30 May 1975 and labelled as a political organisation, and therefore posed a threat. They subsequently could not receive international funding and were forced to scale down (Naudé 1995:103).

In mid-1976, tension was rising in Soweto, with daily reports being delivered to the offices of the CI by Black personnel of the ecumenical organisations working in Diakonia House where the CI was situated. On 16 June 1976 thousands of school children took to the streets in protest against government educational policies that required the use of Afrikaans in the teaching of high school subjects. Today this has arguably become one of the most prominent dates in the history of the apartheid struggle. Violence and counter-violence in the country escalated and for the following months fear, hopelessness and anger pervaded.

This protest was met with intense clamping down from the authorities – Steve Biko was arrested and died in police custody on 12 September 1977. Many Black community leaders were arrested and organisations banned. A period of renewed enforced government restrictions had developed and the CI would not be spared. As De Gruchy observed, “If Sharpeville was the indirect cause of the CI, the eruption of Soweto in June 1976 unintentionally led to its end” (1985:25).

Taking a stand against the injustices that lead to the Soweto uprisings and the death of Steve Biko was a pivotal point in distinguishing Naudé as a true leader and more than merely a cleric and church man<sup>78</sup>. He had become a political leader too.

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<sup>78</sup> In an address following Biko’s death at the Citizen’s Protest Meeting (a predominantly White audience) in Johannesburg on 19 September 1977, Naudé attempted to do justice to Biko and his message, calling him one of the most outstanding Black leaders that the country had ever produced and mourning the fact that his creative and challenging ideas were prevented from being shared as a result of the system of apartheid. He called him a sacrifice on the altar of separate development. He also highlights the different messages which Biko represented to different communities – prophetic and discerning messages. In doing so, Naudé demonstrates his understanding and insight into the life of another prophet and exceptional figure in the Black Consciousness Movement.

According to Peter Walshe, the CI's activities can be viewed as an example of the historical phenomenon of recurring hope: "Time and again over the centuries, individuals, groups, and even classes have expressed a vision of greater equality. Sometimes such hope has focused on a redistribution of economic resources; at other times the concern has been for more democratic form of government; often the vision has embraced both economics and politics" (Walshe 1982:66). He continues to list historical examples of this, many of which were inspired by biblical values, which he terms "eruptions of hope" – of which the CI's and the wider phenomenon of liberation theology are examples – "offering an alternative to the widespread erosion of civic virtue and legitimate government, as privilege allies itself with tyranny in many countries around the globe" (1982:67).

In the *Pro Veritate* of March 1977, the editorial summed up what motivated the CI from the day of its inception. Reflecting on the hope for the future in South Africa it stated the following:

*Gloom and despondency dominate many white Christians. The future looms before them in dreadful greyness, unrelieved by any sparkle of hope or delight, so they seek means of sensual or spiritual escapism, and let the government be their god. Sixty-seven years of white power have failed to produce a peaceful and hopeful society, and government promises to secure the future of whites by the use of massive armed force are no comfort. The economy is breaking down under the cost of forcefully segregating and subjugating 80% of the population. Is there no shame when whites must shoot hundreds of school children to maintain their supremacy? Superior in what? But Christians who prophesy only doom must realise they are not speaking with a Jesus voice. There is an alternative programme in which the positive contribution of whites is fully demanded, arising from the faith that God is busy with his programme. The strategy of God is at work in our history and it is our task to find and follow his purposes. That is what the Christian faith is about, and the task for which we are sent to make disciples.*

(Mayson, 1977:3)

In hindsight, Naudé identifies three mistakes that he felt the CI had made – not engaging in more focused dialogue with the DRC; not taking seriously the history and needs of the

African Independent Churches; and lastly, not having a specific focus and involving Black Christians from the start.

Following the Soweto protests of 1976 and the death of Steve Biko, the Christian Institute, together with several other organisations, was banned in October 1977 - perhaps the ultimate expression of its identification with the oppressed (Randall 1982:47). The offices of the CI were raided and closed and many documents were confiscated. A banning order was served on Naudé that had many implications. Prohibited from free social contact with family and friends, he was restricted to the magisterial district of Johannesburg and only allowed to meet with one person at a time. He was also prohibited from attending meetings, while his previous work was deemed unlawful to quote. Most significantly, this prolific figure in the struggle against oppression was prohibited from speaking in public or writing for any publication – resulting in an absence of any addresses in this time (Naudé 1995:113-114).

### 3.5. Seven Lean Years (1977 - 1984)

The chapter in his autobiography in which the story of this phase of his life is told is titled, “Sewe maer jare” (seven lean years)<sup>79</sup>. In a video documentary (Cry of Reason 1995), Naudé had the following to say about this period: “If I look back at my period of my banning, of those seven years, and people ask me, ‘do you feel that period was lost?’ I would immediately answer by saying, ‘on the contrary, in a very specific sense, it was the most meaningful, and the most fruitful, and the most fulfilling period of my whole life.’”

Naudé spent much of his time in pastoral counselling, just listening to the voices of young black activists, students, family members of banned or jailed individuals, trade unionists, and also young white activists who were opposed to apartheid; “And so seven years of listening and learning followed and the seven leanest years of my life became the seven most enriching years of my life” (Naudé, 1995: 116). It is evident that in this enforced solitude he found solidarity (Ackerman 2005:72).

He spent this time in reflection upon many issues such as on the rise and crisis of the Afrikaner people, on the English liberal tradition, on the situation facing both Black and White students to discover for themselves what future they would like to face, on the growth of black political power and the emergence of trade unions, and the position of churches and

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<sup>79</sup>See also Naudé, CFB. 1985. “My Seven Lean Years”. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, June, 51, 5-15.

the role of Christian faith in our country. Vosloo points out the irony of the situation: “The power of an open heart prevailed against attempts to imprison it” (2006: 132). These words by Ackermann further attest to the influence that Beyers Naudé continued to have in this time: “His voice, though crying from the wilderness, was a voice that gave hope to the millions who saw in him a man of prophetic courage and deep and abiding moral values precisely because he had dared to confront his own community” (2005:73).

### 3.6. SACC (1985 - 1988)

In 1984 the banning on Naudé was suddenly lifted and he and his family were free to enjoy the freedom that had been denied them for seven years. Less than a month after his release, Naudé was called upon to replace Desmond Tutu as General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. In accepting the position, he made an abrupt passage from a life of solitude and reflection to one of public commitment to the struggle for freedom in South Africa. He was honoured and surprised to be offered the opportunity, even though he had many reservations and did not initially believe he was the right man at the right time for the position. Despite this, this period would offer Naudé the chance to see through what he had dedicated most of his adult life to and the opportunity to invest his new freedom. He would hold this position until July 1987, when Dr Frank Chikane took over as General Secretary. Like other passages in his life, this one marked a new stage in his long pilgrimage as a true South African. The mere fact that he was chosen to be the leader of an ecumenical body whose constituency was overwhelmingly black in its member churches was a tribute to his character and that which he had come to represent.

Naudé included two quotations in his biography that he believed summarised the message that he communicated at this time in his life (Naudé 1995:126). The first can be paraphrased as an appeal to care for the oppressed and the advancement of human rights, human dignity, and to take responsibility in order that the future of the country can be secured. In essence, this was an expression of a fervent belief in creating hope amidst hopelessness. The second quotation that he includes is in reference to the international pressure, which he called for in order that political prisoners could be freed and those banned, exiled and banished could return. Even though the documents in which these messages were communicated were not available for study and inclusion in this work, the themes will be picked up again in chapter five.

In his time as General Secretary he focused on four main issues. Firstly, offering legal assistance to those convicted under apartheid laws. Secondly, the distribution of financial aid (Asingeni-fund). Thirdly, he worked on the creation and expansion of local councils of the Council of Churches throughout South Africa. Lastly, his focus was to meet with the leaders of the freedom struggle, especially the ANC and PAC, in order that non-violent solutions could be sought (1995:127-128).

Naudé is also honest about the mistakes and shortcomings of the SACC while serving in this position, listing things like poor training of the local councils with administrative skills, closer ties with the member churches, communication of the ecumenical vision to non-members of the Council, and also the failure to communicate to DRC members that the SACC was not opposing the Afrikaner, but rather the whole political system of apartheid (1995:131).

Naudé played a significant role in bringing the family of Dutch Reformed Churches together. The separation of the different churches was based on nothing else than race – White, Coloured, Black, and Indian each with their own church, even though they had the same set of faith confessions and followed roughly the same church order. There are many examples of actions taken since the inception of apartheid, but especially in the 1970's and 1980's by the leaders in the various churches to reunite the Body the Christ as it stood before 1857<sup>80</sup>. This hope lived in many Christians' hearts. Already in 1975, the year after the publication of *Ras, volk, nasie en die volkere verhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* ('Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture') was accepted by the General Synod of the

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<sup>80</sup> One example is the Kairos Document that was published in September 1985 and presented to the world by Naudé, General Secretary of the SACC at the time, at a press conference at the World Council of Churches' headquarters in Geneva. The document challenged the churches' response to what the authors saw as the vicious policies of the apartheid state under the State of Emergency declared on 21 July 1985. It evoked strong reactions and furious debates, not only in South Africa, but world-wide. Writing on the eschatology that features in this document, Conradie (2000:264) shows how it exemplified the prophetic genre of numerous publications from the struggle period. It denounces sin and announced salvation. It also contains two sections titled "Liberation and hope in the Bible" (4.5) and "A message of hope" (4.6). The Christian hope expressed is "thoroughly this-worldly – as hope for a victory over the forces of evil, injustice, oppression, and tyranny" (2000:264). See chapter four for a continuation of this reflection on the Kairos Document.

Another contribution to church unity that must be noted is the Belhar Confession of 1982, which was accepted by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in 1986. Although progressions have been made to accept this confessional document within DRC, it still remains a contested document in 2012. Conradie (2000:263) observes how it has an implicit eschatology which structures its statements on the unity of the church, the ministry of reconciliation and the need for social justice.

DRC, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa stated at their synod meeting of that year their desire and commitment to reunite with the three other Dutch Reformed churches<sup>81</sup>.

### 3.7. Last years: vindication, tribute, and death (1989 - 2004)

A milestone in the long struggle against apartheid in the family of the DR churches was the Vereeniging Consultation in March 1989. On request from the Reformed Ecumenical Council, representatives of the four churches met to discuss their perspectives on the South African situation (Naudé 1995:137). The result of this consultation was a motion accepted by the Black Dutch Reformed Churches that, amongst related issues about the history of enduring an apartheid state, defined apartheid as sin and irreconcilable with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They called on the government to reform its practices and on the church to unite as one body, irrespective of race. They also expressed a clear hope for the future of South Africa as a nation reconciled on the basis of the Gospel, working towards a democratic country in solidarity with one another in obedience to God (1995:138-139). It would be a few more years before these hopes would become a reality, some only coming to fruition in part. In a reflection in a *Dunamis* publication (1989) titled “A plea for courage”, Naudé expresses his thoughts on the Vereeniging Consultation, concluding with the following expectation: “Now the ball is in the white DRC’s court. If the response of the white DRC to the “Testimony of Vereeniging” is positive, there is real hope that we can face a new future, not only in the family of the DR churches, but also in the country as a whole.”

Of equal importance was the National Conference of Churches in South Africa held at Rustenburg in November 1990. In the preamble of the Rustenburg Declaration it is stated, “... on this we are all agreed, namely the unequivocal rejection of apartheid as sin. We are resolved to press forward in fellowship and consultation towards a common mind and programme of action.” It continues in its first section to express the role of the church in the context of the possibility of a new dispensation and the promise of reconciliation between South Africans: “In this context Christians are called to be a sign of hope from God, and to share a vision of a new society which we are prepared to strive for, and if needs be, suffer for.” Its value and significance is elaborated on in Chapter four and five, where the address of Naudé on this occasion will be studied.

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<sup>81</sup> This document was in a sense a summary of the thought process within the DRC reaching as far back as the 1930’s. It consisted of three ground principles or norms on which its content was based. It was backed by the pluriformity concept, as developed in the South African context to support the apartheid ideology.

Naudé played an important political role as mediator in the time of transition to a democratic South Africa. He was even invited to the first formal meeting between the South African government and the ANC in February 1990 (Bam 1995:37). On 2 February 1990, FW de Klerk announced the unconditional lifting on the prohibition of several banned organisations, thereby heralding in the new dispensation in South Africa.

Beyers Naudé was vindicated by the DRC General Synod in 1994, which in its self was a real sign of hope. A part of the vindication of his life's work was also the peaceful transition to a democratic South Africa (Villa-Vicencio 1995:29).

In an interview with Charles Villa-Vicencio eight months after the first democratic government was elected to power Naudé described the expectations or hopes of the different race groups as follows:

*Things have gone a lot better than I anticipated. The government has had to face enormous obstacles and historic problems that will not disappear overnight...The expectations of people must at the same time not be destroyed. It is important for whites to realise that black ideals must be fulfilled. Blacks on the other hand need to realise that the fulfilment of their expectations will take time...We must keep the pressure on government to meet the needs of the poorest of the poor.*

When writing his autobiography on 29 June 1995 at the tender age of 80 (nine years before his death in 2004) he expressed his concrete hope of contributing to society by focusing on four priorities – the ecumenical movement, economic justice, the problem of corruption, and lastly truth and reconciliation<sup>82</sup>.

Until the day of his passing, Beyers Naudé cultivated an unwavering hope for South Africa's future. One sees in this last phase of Naudé's life a clear correlation between reconciliation and hope. If the injustices of the past could be resolved through the challenging process of reconciliation, then it meant that a future could be secured. His hope is succinctly composed in the final paragraph of the chapter titled, "Land van Goeie Hoop" (Land of good hope):

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<sup>82</sup> In an interview with a British Baptist Minister, Dr Keith W Clements, in 1996 Naudé reiterates these priorities for South Africa which he hoped to see fulfilled within his lifetime. He mentioned three hopes: (i) for the gap between affluence and poverty to be bridged and a just distribution of economic wealth; (ii) the culture of corruption to be stopped; (iii) a strengthening of the ecumenical movement.

*On the grounds of my faith convictions, my trust in God as the source of all love, of all justice and reconciliation, but also on the grounds of my trust in all the wonderful and positive things that are developing in South Africa (regardless of the serious problems which we cannot turn a blind eye to), I regard it as a privilege to dedicate myself with all my strength to this tormented, this beloved country of mine: Land of hope and promise!*

(Naudé, 1995:151 – own translation)

Beyers Naudé passed away at the age of 89 on 7 September 2004. Prof Russel Botman described him as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and a deep faith. His sermons were always expressions of hope. The courage to hope and to give account of one’s hope were the cornerstone of his ministry” (Botman 2004). Minyalaza Masuku quotes the *Tribune* of 12 September 2004, in which Naudé’s daughter, Liesel, was quoted saying, “He said that when he is gone, he didn’t want people to cry, but to be hopeful” (Masuku 2010:117).

With the closing scene in the documentary on the life and work of Naudé (Cry Of Reason 1995), he concludes with the same hopeful tone that he expressed right throughout his entire life:

*Every day that I live, [my life] becomes to me more meaningful and for me, much more enriching. Time is too short, so I have discovered, for all the tremendous revelations of the love of God, which he has given me; new insights, new visions, new possibilities, new dimensions of human living, new relationships with people around me, new depths of concern and of agony and of joy, which makes my life...yes, I can truly say, so deeply meaningful, that I am eager when I go to bed at night to awake the next morning and to say, it is a new day, it’s a new life, it’s a new experience, of God, and of humankind.*

### **3.8. A Life of Hope?**

Beyers Naudé’s life and witness serve as an example of a person who clearly and unambiguously unmasked the political and social system on theological grounds. His hope flowed from a firm knowledge that, through the power and grace of God changes in society and life are indeed possible and worth sacrificing for. It was the strength of his convictions and the magnitude of his courage that made it possible for others to look to him for

encouragement that fostered in them the hope that society could indeed be different<sup>83</sup>. This hope was the existential component of his commitment, the moral dimension of his politics, and the integrity of his ideology. As Naudé stated in an interview with Villa-Vicencio (1995:29), “If politics is about what is possible, religion is about the quest for what is not immediately possible.”

Naudé embraced the imperative to make humanity meaningful and available to everyone. He fervently laboured for justice – he hoped for and demanded a life of justice for all. Nelson Mandela has called Naudé, a “living spring of hope for racial reconciliation”. The fact that he was able to act in the way he did, to live in solidarity for the sake of reconciliation, meant that others could look to his life as a sign of hope that Christ can and does act through individuals. Desmond Tutu also gives acknowledgement to his work in the Christian Institute which helped to rehabilitate Christianity in the eyes of the oppressed (Tutu 2005:50).

Vosloo (2006:135) helps us by drawing attention to the childlike quality that Beyers Naudé possessed. This degree of recklessness that he had, which others also recognized in him, could be the quality that made it possible for him to hope, to believe in the future, and to see the Kingdom<sup>84</sup>. It is this trust in others that characterised the hope that he embodied – even if this trust was sometimes unwarranted.

It is clear in the events described in this chapter that his integrity and honesty made it possible for those that he led and those with which he worked to place a great deal of trust in him. Self-effacing, open and always hopeful, Beyers Naudé gained a moral stature rare in the times that he lived. Njongonkulu Ndungane, while serving as Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, made a very significant observation in the forward to the first publication in the *Beyers Naudé Centre Series for Public Theology*, stating that one lesson that can be learnt from Naudé is the capacity that he had, not only to change, but to effect change at both a personal

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<sup>83</sup>Commenting on Beyers Naudé after he had given the benediction at the funeral of Johnny Makhatini – for many years the head of the ANC’s department of national affairs – in 1988, Elinor Sisulu had the following to say about him: “I was struck by the courage, power and humility of the man. He challenged my own prejudices and dislike of Afrikaans and my stereotype of Afrikaners. He made me feel that Johnny Makhatini had not died in vain because there is hope that South Africans will come together in love and fellowship one day” (Bam, 1995:36). Sisulu is a Zimbabwean, a writer, human rights activist and political analyst and is married to then ANC activist and presently Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, Max Sisulu.

<sup>84</sup> This includes references to his naiveté about people’s contributions and his terrible judge of human character (Villa-Vicencio 1985:13). Also, his almost childlike acceptance of and belief in the ultimate goodness of humanity is noted by Ackerman (2005:74).

and public level; “a source of hope for the world” (Hansen 2005:3). What is equally as remarkable was his ability to retain a level of consistency (never leaving the DRC family), while embracing the winds of change and God’s Spirit of transformation.

Such change requires tremendous courage – a quality of a true prophet and leader. De Gruchy’s witness is moving: “I do not think that I have ever met anyone – and I’m sure this will be true for many, many others who knew him – anybody, who in the most adverse circumstances, in the most appalling times of darkness, was always so full of hope and courage” (2005:89). Coupled with compassion, this bravery made him so popular amongst those that he led as both pastor and prophet. On the other hand, Villa-Vicencio (1982:89) accurately articulates the trouble with those deemed to be prophets – they have a way of challenging and disturbing those very people who would like to support them and ultimately causing them a measure of despair.

Naudé represented different things to different people, and invariably at different times. The major lines of division between these groups were arguably race, political loyalties, and religious convictions, but the divisions were also drawn along the lines of gender. One example of this is evident in the words of Hlophe Bam (1995:37); reflecting on the influence of Naudé on her own life as a Black woman, she writes: “Beyers presents a challenge to the way black women deal with the humanity of those who oppress us and the way in which we view power.”

As a concluding thought on this chapter on the life and legacy of Beyers Naudé, it is perhaps fitting to turn the attention to God’s guidance in forming human identity. In an interview with Charles Villa-Vicencio, Beyers Naudé had the following to say about the contours of human identity of which we admittedly can learn so much:

*One’s identity is formed as much by social forces and experiences to which one is exposed in life as by one’s response to those forces. Some turn and run when faced with realities that challenge their presuppositions, others enter the eye of the storm and find themselves changed by these forces. Exactly why some flee and others adapt no-one knows. Perhaps Jeremiah was right, it had something to do with the way in which God has made us.*

(Villa-Vicencio 1995: 19)

## Chapter 4: Public Addresses 1960 – 1977

### 4.1. Introduction

Chapter three has laid the foundation for an understanding of Beyers Naudé's context, the life that he lived, and the influence and impact he had on civil society. We have observed his investment of time and energy into faith praxis. This contribution cannot reasonably be defined as the work of an academic theologian; such a classification is not supported by the historical evidence. It is in light of this observation that one needs to consider his written work, of which he produced a sizeable amount. By far the majority of this written work is comprised of his sermons and material in preparation for his role as cleric. A bibliography compiled by Stephan M. De Gruchy-Patta (1985:27-35) in 1985, consists of all of his papers, addresses and writings from 1960 to 1977 listing 174 documents – the majority of which were included in *Pro Veritate*, and many of which were also his editorial letters. Only a select few of the public addresses that form part of this body of literature were considered for analysis in this study, chosen against criteria discussed in chapter one (1.7). The periodisation and methodology chosen for this study are stated, followed by the analyses.

### 4.2. Periodisation

The timeframe chosen within which to work stretches from 1960 to 1990. Within the narrative of South African history, both of these dates are linked to significant events and crucial turning points. These two markers are also associated with important consultations in the church history narrative of South Africa.

This 30 year timeframe includes the seven years that Naudé spent in banning – his 'seven lean years' (description given by Naudé himself – Ryan 2005:192). His work in the periods before and after these seven years naturally had different emphases, as highlighted in chapter three of this document. As a result of these different experiences and varying involvement in the church and public life in these two time periods, the speeches arising from them respectively, are critically compared.

1960 was the year in which the shocking events took place at Sharpeville, followed by the Cottesloe Consultation. The Sharpeville massacre sent shock waves through the country and also caused an international outcry. Naudé describes the period surrounding Sharpeville and

the subsequent consultations as a watershed time<sup>85</sup> – not only for him personally, but also in South African history. He was deeply burdened by what happened at Sharpeville and had a sense of responsibility and ownership in taking action against the injustices that were unfolding. The effects of these events have been expounded on in chapter three and should be kept in mind regarding the analyses of addresses to follow.

The protest marches of Sharpeville and Langa led not only to a severe increase in racial tension but also to more repressive legislation on the part of the government against the different Black, Coloured and Indian racial groups. From 1961 onwards, Naudé notes how there was “...a sense of deep despondency amongst Africans, Coloureds and Indians, a spiritual and mental lethargy born out of despair of any hope that any meaningful political change would be effected in the foreseeable future” (1971:8). A time of definite hopelessness and fear had dawned on millions of South Africans<sup>86</sup>.

Thirty years after Cottesloe, the National Conference of Church Leaders was held near Rustenburg from 5-9 November 1990. This Conference was convened by church leaders from a very broad ecclesiastical and theological spectrum to consider the role of the church in this transitional phase in the history of South Africa. It was closely related to the Cottesloe Consultation; in the words of De Gruchy, “as several speakers at Rustenburg suggested, the most comparable event in the history of the church struggle was the Cottesloe Consultation” (1991:22)<sup>87</sup>. De Gruchy, one of the guest speakers at the conference, explains its success as follows: “At Rustenburg an overwhelming majority of church leaders from across a very wide denominational spectrum unequivocally rejected apartheid as a sin, confessed their guilt

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<sup>85</sup>The title of the chapter in Naudé’s autobiography describing the events of 1960 is titled “Waterskeiding” (“Watershed”) (Naudé,1995:46). Heaney (2004:49) also notes how others, such as Willie Jonker, have referred to this year in the same manner.

<sup>86</sup> There are many examples of other conferences and publications in which Cottesloe is used as reference point and that show how it has become “a site or place of memory in the collective memory”. Vosloo mentions such examples, including an editorial in *Die Kerkbode* of 9 September 1970 titled, “’n Tweede Cottesloe?” (“A Second Cottesloe?”) and a conference held on 12 September 1990 titled, “Cottesloe after 30 years” (where Naudé was a speaker) (Vosloo, 2011: 3).

<sup>87</sup>The Cottesloe and Rustenburg conferences dealt with virtually the same issues and agenda. As De Gruchy notes, the questions remained the same, 30 years later: “How can the Christian churches in South Africa unite in their witness against racism and injustice? What does faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ mean at this time in our history?” (1991: 23). What is more, Frits Gaum’s report on the Rustenburg conference in *Die Kerkbode* (16 November 1990) had as its heading “*Die lang reis van Cottesloe na Rustenburg*”.

in relation to it, and pledged themselves to the struggle for justice and equity in the land” (1991: 21).

The crucial turning point in 1990 was when the State President at the time, F.W. de Klerk, gave his famous speech in which he unbanned several political parties. This included the ANC, and the announcement of the release of some political prisoners, most prominently Nelson Mandela, thus heralding in a period of transition that led to the first democratic elections in 1994.

The decades between 1960 and 1990 constituted, without doubt, a dramatic period in South African church history as churches, ecumenical bodies, church leaders and theologians responded in their different ways to the realities of apartheid South Africa. The need remains to revisit the role churches and theology played in the church struggle by way of responsible church and theological historiography. Now that we have established the scope of this study, we look to the method of analysis of the chosen public addresses to extrapolate insight into the public role of theology and the concept of hope enacted by Beyers Naudé’s witness.

### **4.3. Method for analysis**

The analysis of the public addresses is aligned with the three research questions of this study, namely: (i) Does a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirm him as an advocate of hope?; (ii) What are the contours of the concept of hope that are prevalent?; (iii) Can an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope contribute, as well as inform historical and conceptual knowledge about the church’s public witness and does this have implications for the field of public theology?

The analysis and study of the public addresses includes a description of the context in which these addresses were delivered, its audience, as well as the purpose of each gathering. This analysis is detailed insofar as it serves the understanding of hope and related notions expressed. This approach also includes a careful exposition of the content of the addresses in a factual, marked way, so as to be able to analyse it purposefully and efficaciously. Lastly, the reception of the addresses and any subsequent actions following from them (where this information is available) is looked at and included in order to achieve the proposed research aims.

The length of these various elements of analysis differs depending on the availability of the source content. It is to be noted that the addresses are arranged chronologically, rather than thematically. The content is evaluated and critically discussed according to the themes and heuristic concepts set out in chapter two of this study – in essence the framework of a 'historically hopeful citizenship'. This will be done to compliment what is found in the addresses themselves, in order to understand it within a theological historical framework.

Following chapter four and five's analyses and study of the public addresses, a comparison is drawn between the content arising from the two different time periods, which aims to deepen the understanding of the concept of hope and related notions.

#### **4.4. Public Addresses (1960 - 1977)**

Several addresses have been selected in the period from 1960–1977. These addresses were given by Naudé in different capacities, delivered in a variety of contexts, and addressed various issues warranting commentary from an ecumenical Christian leader.

Beyers Naudé's life changed during these 17 years in ways that are taken into account in the analysis of his messages. This is not to say that there was a change in the fundamentals of what he believed, as we have seen in chapter three, but rather a progression in how these beliefs transpired into a practical public theology and a growing critical consciousness; his obedience to God and his capacity for discerning leadership and solidarity remained constant.

Reflecting on Naudé's capacity for decision making, Allan Boesak (2012) states: "For Beyers too, the first, final and compelling question was Christ: 'Is your first obedience and highest loyalty to Christ?'" The title of the collection of sermons of Beyers Naudé published by the Christian Institute, *My Decision*, further demonstrates this capacity that Naudé had to stand by what he believed.

The following quotation not only demonstrates the implications of such decision making, but also provides us with some insight into Naudé's context from which he delivered the speeches in this time:

*So Beyers Naudé's decision led him from the isolationist comfort of privileged Afrikanerdom to the exposed identification with South Africa's oppressed; from the protection of power to the vulnerability of solidarity and powerlessness; from*

*ensconced neutrality to passionate engagement; from a theology of apartheid to an intuitively-critical Reformed theology; from unquestioning resignation to sustained resistance, from the certainties of entitlement to the risks of struggle. In doing so, it brought him to the “place where Christ stands”, and is always to be found.*

(Boesak, 2012)

This 17 year period culminated in his banning in a renewed surge of apartheid oppression from the government after the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Even though he was silenced by the state, his witness and his message to South Africa and the international community would continue to foster hope. How was this possible and what was the content of this message and witness? Let us turn to seven of his public addresses in this time.

#### 4.4.1. *“DIE PROFETIESEROEPING VAN DIE KERK IN HIERDIE TYD” (“THE PROPHETIC CALLING OF THE CHURCH AT THIS TIME” )*

This address was delivered to a group of ministers (‘evangeliedienaars’) in Pretoria on 11 May 1960, roughly two months after the unsettling events at Sharpeville. In this address Naudé emphasises and explains the church’s responsibility to live out its “prophetic calling”. The title explicitly states ‘at this time’, drawing attention to a contextual analysis. The period following Sharpeville was a time of renewed consciousness about the injustices that were taking place in the country as a result of government policies. It is essentially race relations that exemplify the context, and content, of this address. Randall justly refers to 1960 as “a troubled year” (1982:17); a fitting description, as we have seen.

Naudé frames the context of the gathering and the relevance of his message by noting the attention that had been drawn to the country internationally. This was due to the violence of the Sharpeville Massacre, which had severe effects as we have highlighted in this study. These international reactions resulted in an eruption of conversations, media coverage, and congresses. He communicates with urgency, calling the church to engage earnestly in their calling because of the recent events.

Naudé notes how the ‘man on the street’ (“gewone man”) has given priority to a concern for the future of the White people (“blankedom”) over and against a concern for the prophetic calling of the church; how the political agenda of the White nation has been outweighing the

Christian mandate. This interwoven nature of the two facets of this nation's identity, according to Naudé, poses a threat to the prophetic calling of the church.

At this time, Naudé was still a Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) minister in Aasvoëlkop. He was still predominantly invested in the interests of his White congregation and in advancing as a leader in the DRC (Ryan 2005:53). He served as assessor on the Transvaal moderature and would also later be nominated as moderator of the newly formed Southern Transvaal synod (2005:53). This meant that his understanding of the "prophetic calling" was connected to the DRC's theology.

At this point he reminds his audience of the primary character and calling of the church to be the church of Jesus Christ and to be true to its divine calling to let the Word of God speak, and in doing so, to faithfully lay claim on the justice and truth it asks of all people. What is more, he highlights the importance of the Dutch Reformed Church in particular to be cognisant of this calling in light of other churches concern for the apparent prophetic paralysis of the DRC.<sup>88</sup>

Naudé continues his address by stating the prerequisite for the church to live its prophetic calling faithfully and honestly: careful introspection into its motives and standpoints. This introspection should not be misinterpreted as a lack of appreciation for what has been achieved in the past, but should carry with it the knowledge that "true love always seeks the truth" (Naudé 1960). This truth, Naudé states, frees one from all tension and fear.

Ryan (2005:53-54) cites a contribution by Naudé to a church newsletter in the same month, May 1960, in which he states: "It is clear that the NGK (DRC) has a great responsibility to correct the outside world's twisted image and to convince overseas churches of the sincerity of our intentions and the scriptural basis of our standpoint" (Ryan, 2005:53, 54).

The body of his address unpacks his call upon the church to live out this prophetic calling through three distinct actions – reflection, preaching and experience ("besinning"; "prediking"; "belewing") (Naudé, 1960).

In the first of these three sections one picks up on a clear orientation towards the future, as Naudé identifies a greater sense of urgency than ever before in the Church to reflect upon the

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<sup>88</sup> It is interesting to note that already at this time Naudé picks up on the commentary of the international Christian community (May 1960), even before the statements of the Cottesloe Consultation.

future of the church; also about the calling and the essence of what the church is to be. In light of the increasing racial tension and focus on race relations, Naudé calls on the church in South Africa to reflect and re-evaluate their understanding and practice of the unity in the church and of the eschatological separation found in the New Testament between the church and the world.

Naudé frames the reason for the urgency and need for reflection upon the unity of the church within the prophetic calling of the church, stating that failure to answer the questions posed to the church would be detrimental to the witness of this calling<sup>89</sup>. What stands in the way of making clear statements about the church's stance on unity and race relations is the fear that it will be in conflict with the traditional views of the church members or current church practices and regulations.

With regards to the eschatological separation found in the New Testament, Naudé assesses the need for the church to state clearly that the separation that is spoken of is not between people of different races, but according to "faith and disbelief, between church and the world, between God and Satan, between Christ and the antichrist"(Naudé 1960 – own translation).

In the second section on preaching, attention is paid to the preaching of the gospel and God's Word, with authority and in its entirety, in order to explain the prophetic calling of the members of both the Mother and Daughter churches. The context presents a unique opportunity to let this truth be heard and to address issues. This is because he speaks in a time of crisis and doubt. He advocates the hope that is tied up in prophetic ministry. "Times of doubt and crisis are times of opportunity to call out in the power of the Holy Spirit: thus says the Lord! Was it not because of the suffering, but also the power of the prophets of the past, that they could say, because they were forced to say: Hear the Word of the Lord!" (Naudé 1960 – own translation)

The call is made to voice critical issues in terms of race relations from the perspective of God's Word. He mentions numerous issues such as the self-preservation and self-denial for White Christians, and also calls for the *evangeliedienaars* to be God's messengers in interpreting "Christian justice, love, and responsibility" in terms of race relations.

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<sup>89</sup> Specific questions are highlighted. These include a question about specific articles promoting white privilege in the Dutch Reformed Church's church order, about church practices not agreeing with church polity, and lastly about racially mixed marriages of Christians in particular (Naudé 1960).

Albert Nolan's reflections, which have been noted in chapter two concerning prophetic theology correlate with the findings in this address; these reflections include prophetic theology as informed by the knowledge of how the prophets in the Bible functioned, and importantly its time-bound element – the recognition of a *kairos* time and the expectation, the hope, of the eschaton. This understanding of prophetic theology also deepened Naudé's historic awareness.

In the third section on experience a plea is made for the church to gain first-hand knowledge of those to whom it preaches the gospel; knowledge about the economic and social wellbeing of those in need. "As Christian church, the church must be an advocate for the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the voiceless, the unjustly treated - notwithstanding whether they are white or black" (Naudé, 1960 – own translation). He stresses the need for the church to fulfil this role and not to let the Black, Coloured and Indian people who are suffering deny the church of its role.

In closing Naudé lays his finger on a concern that he perceives to be on the minds of his audience members. This concern is the question of whether the suggested actions of reflection, preaching and experience will indeed have the desired effect of bringing about improved race relations. He offers them the assurance that in doing so they would at the very least have a clear conscience about their commitment to their Christian witness to the world. He also assures them that they can trust in God's provision for his Kingdom. Naudé also asks what would happen if they fail to live out this prophetic calling, whereupon only phrasing as a question Revelation 3:16<sup>90</sup>. He closes with a prayerful blessing for God's provision: "Pray that God gives us at the southern tip of Africa the time to identify and to live out our prophetic calling as church fearlessly" (Naudé 1960 - own translation).

In the church newsletter referred to earlier Naudé also states: "The NG Kerk stands condemned before the whole world as a church which has neglected its Christian calling with regards to the non-whites, which has not done enough to plead for their legitimate needs...if we are not careful...these events could be exploited and misused with the result that our mission could be set back" (Ryan 2005:53-54).

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<sup>90</sup> "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth" (English Standard Version).

As we have picked up in chapter three, Naudé had developed a deep concern for the missionary task of the church since his student days where he had gained insight from conversations with Prof Du Plessis. The understanding of mission, for Naudé and for all the evangeliedienaars in the DRC, influenced race relations. This is seen in the witness of the students with which he had built relationships as minister in Pretoria-East. They chose to serve in the daughter churches of the DRC and were still committed to see separate development be thoroughly implemented, as it was believed to be Biblically sound and in the best interest of the development of the Black, Coloured and Indian communities (Naudé, 1995:40). The events of 1960 – Sharpeville and Cottesloe – would, however, bring about a shift in some DRC ministers’ thinking about race relations and subsequently, about their mission strategy.

According to Ryan (2005:53-54), Naudé at this time “did not show an appreciation for the real issues at stake, and merely looked at black unrest as a threat to the mission of the church”. This is perhaps just symptomatic of the fact that he had a deep loyalty to the DRC and was still conservative in any opposition to its official policies.

In the same church letter Naudé states, “The past events should make us realise that the church must continue, with even greater speed and seriousness, in its missionary activities so that more people can find the light that exists in Jesus Christ” (Ryan, 2005: 54). Despite this concern expressed for the prophetic calling of the church, it was a time in which his political views were still conservative (Ryan 2005:55; Pauw 2005:13).

This address is a typical example of how Naudé relates the church with the world. Even though he is addressing an entirely Christian audience, one sees in this address a definite exhibition of the notions of public theology picked up in chapter two and three. It is public theology in the sense that he instructs his audience to engage, as Christians, in the world – to “let the Word of God speak”. The advocacy which he calls for “for the poor, the oppressed, the hungry, the voiceless, the unjustly treated” is one example of the hope that Conradie identified as prevalent in this period in South African history - liberation from oppression, understood in “this-worldly terms...manifested in concrete, earthly changes” (Conradie 2000:268). He also has faith and trusts in God’s provision for his Kingdom – as we have said in chapter two, the coming of the kingdom is ultimately in God’s hands.

#### 4.4.2. “RECONCILIATION”

This is the inaugural address given by Beyers Naudé as the director of the Christian Institute of South Africa (CI) on 15 December 1963, in the Methodist Central Hall, Johannesburg. It was first published in a collection of sermons of Naudé, *My Decision*, and later in the first edition of the *Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology, The Legacy of Beyers Naudé* (2005).

Hlope Bam, the first Black woman at the head of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), commented in the 1995 Festschrift for Beyers Naudé on Naudé’s ability to speak on reconciliation and healing in a time when it was not fashionable to do so. She goes as far as to say that these were in fact swearwords in many circles. “Beyers was a pioneer of healing and reconciliation” (Bam 1995:32).

With the theme of reconciliation, which Naudé explicates in this address as elucidated in 2 Cor. 5:14-21, he defines his understanding of the term not only as a Biblical term, but a Biblical truth, a wholly Christian concept, which is essential to the Christian identity. He continues to list the implications of his understanding of God having become the great Reconciler in Christ Jesus. In this he elaborates on the themes of (i) forgiveness; (ii) the inclusivity of God’s offer of reconciliation; (iii) the act of reconciliation, and; (iv) the consequences of divine reconciliation for human relations.

In his thoughts on the implementation of these implications of God’s reconciliation he expresses his hope for a mutual trust between different races and cultures as the result of reconciliation. This hope for a country free from hatred, fear and prejudice is expressed in light of the divisions that existed at that time between Afrikaans- and English- speaking people, and between different racial groups in South Africa, to which he extends the challenge to live reconciled. He expresses a fervent belief in the power of reconciliation to establish communion and to awaken people to “a new willingness to obey the dictates of a sensitized Christian conscience in all matters touching on righteousness, truth and mercy, and a new preparedness to act more lovingly and sacrificially” (Naudé 2005b:141).

The results of such a communion failing, where Christians are hindered from re-enacting the reconciliation of God in their human relations, Naudé believes will be anarchy, chaos, and will make it possible for communism to take over.

He further expresses his hope for Christians of all cultures and races to form a new commitment to the cause of the Kingdom of God in South Africa. In this regard, he sees the role of the Christian Institute as “an instrument for conversation, consultation and consecration” (2005b:142). He hopes for the creation of more opportunities for a diversity of church groups to interact, to share their faith and fears, experience fellowship and receive a wider vision of Christ’s truth and love so as to be of service to the world. Neither political, educational, economic or social powers offer the solution that Christian reconciliation does, as Naudé states: “Only in and through Christ and his reconciling work can we hope to attain the leadership that God expects of his followers in this crucial hour of our history” (2005b:142).

His last thought he states unequivocally: unity, faith and sacrifice of self is cardinal to any attempt at transforming the hearts of men and women and changing the destiny of South Africa; such a South Africa affirms the “Christocracy” defined by Koopman (2012), which is essentially government based on the teachings of Christ.

These thoughts on reconciliation remained, not only a seminal part of the message that Naudé continued to express throughout his life, but also specifically in the life of the Christian Institute. James R. Cochrane, Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town, remarks the following about the role the CI played: “It stood on a prophetic precipice, for which reason many others saw it as the necessary public embodiment of their faith and their hope; and, over time, they wished to see it take even stronger positions and act even more decisively” (Cochrane 2007:165). Some other reflections on this theme of reconciliation will be included in chapter five.

#### 4.4.3. *“FREEDOM IN OUR SOCIETY TODAY”*

This is the address given on the occasion of the University of Cape Town Day of Affirmation of Academic and Human Freedom on 1 June 1967. The year before, on 6 June 1966, Robert F. Kennedy, an American Senator, delivered an address at the same Day of Affirmation upon invitation from the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). His speech was one of one his most noted and is known as his “Ripples of hope” speech (Kennedy 2012)<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup> What makes this connection with Robert Kennedy more significant is that Beyers Naudé was awarded the Robert F Kennedy Memorial Human Rights Award in 1985. In this speech he recalls Kennedy’s 1966 address: “He delivered an address at the University of Cape Town which deeply moved his audience because it reflected

In light of the fact that Beyers Naudé was invited to give this address on this same occasion the following year, the following excerpt from Kennedy's speech is quite apt: "Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance" (Kennedy 2012).

A further point of convergence between these two figures is that both Kennedy and Naudé display a fervent belief in the youth in light of hopelessness; "Our answer is the world's hope: It is to rely on youth" (Kennedy 2012). Naudé also addresses the youth and calls for them to play an active role as citizens.

Naudé opens his address by assuring the audience of his proudly South African, Afrikaner identity and stating his motivation for speaking on freedom in society. He does this in order to make his intentions clear and thereby, substantiating his message. He mentions in particular a common concern amongst South Africans for the future of the country, and despite the use of the word "today" in the title of this address, one sees a display of a definite orientation towards the future. This concern, as he states, is imbedded in a South African identity which connects him to a "common allegiance to [his] country...common dedication to its welfare" (Naudé 1967:1). He declares his identity and the knowledge base from which he is addressing his audience unequivocally as being *Christian*, and motivated by a love for his country and its people. The truth of the Bible is the only basis on which he believes a free community can be established. It is what has brought about his awareness of being a South African.

He continues to define the understanding of the Western concept of freedom as being founded on the Biblical concepts of the "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man" (1967:2). He acknowledges and gives credit to the two great forces of liberal Greek philosophy (including their political concepts), as well as the Roman legal principles, and the "inestimable value" (1967:2) of their contributions to Western civilisation. With this he seeks to demonstrate the complexity of the development of individual and communal freedoms, the history of their formation, and the heritage drawn from both the Christian faith and Stoic

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so clearly his concern for the oppressed, his sharing of their suffering and his vision of hope for their liberation." He continues, "Those words...remained a source of inspiration and direction to many people in many parts of the world including South Africa" (Naudé 1985c).

religious thought which was guided by Roman legal systems. He concludes this description by stating: “It was, however, through the proclamation and implementation of the Christian faith that the Christian concept of freedom took root and spread throughout the whole Western world and all its institutions” (1967:2).

His thesis of freedom in society is thus based on the notion of freedom in the Christian understanding of humankind. In this understanding, freedom is bestowed upon humankind by God; a freedom that transcends any injustices that form part of human existence. This does not mean the enslavement of humanity in the form of human bondage is permissible. Naudé explains, “It is just because of this freedom of faith that certain liberties which are an integral part of the order of creation have been given to man [sic] by God” (1967:3).

With this understanding of the foundation of human rights and freedoms based on Judaistic and Christian thought and concepts, and given the fact that the majority of South Africans classified themselves as Christians<sup>92</sup>, Naudé addresses the need to explain why it is exactly at this point of freedom that there is such tension and misunderstanding between different races and cultures. He makes two observations: firstly, about the history of South Africa as a nation deeply conscious of continuing clashes between groups on the basis of culture and colour.<sup>93</sup> The second reason carries more weight and has to do with both the approach to, and the definition of, the word ‘freedom’<sup>94</sup>.

A common understanding amongst Christians, according to Naudé, would relieve the serious tensions and understandings that cause the separations in the country. He seems to have the answer as to why a common Christian faith and Western heritage, so entrenched in the South African history and also in its (then) current landscape, does not serve freedom. He states it as follows, “it is because of our lack of or a wrong understanding of the meaning of our Christian faith for our political, cultural, economic and social life” (1967:5). He blames our “superficial Christian insight in spiritual and moral truth”, and directly the churches and

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<sup>92</sup> Naudé states the percentages as follows: 90% of white and more than 70% of all non-white inhabitants of South Africa regard themselves as Christians (Naudé 1967:4).

<sup>93</sup> Reference is made to the Afrikaner’s struggle to gain and maintain national, cultural, economic and social liberty in conflict with both British rule and domination and with indigenous African tribes.

<sup>94</sup> He also lists concepts which relate to freedom such as human dignity, responsible government, neighbourly love, and moral responsibility (Naudé 1967: 5).

individual Christians, for the divergent and opposing views on the concepts such as freedom, justice, equality and fraternity.

Next, he identifies the reasons why the struggle for freedom has been made difficult and what has hindered the enjoyment and responsible use of these freedoms, listing factors such as freedom without responsibility and freedom without justice<sup>95</sup>. Naudé expresses his hope that freedom for all can move parallel to responsibility by all for the greatest benefit of all. This hope is embedded in a responsible, accountable expression and embodiment of freedom as understood in the Christian faith. He also includes the value of taking seriously the fears and objections of White South Africans about the integration of “non-whites” into political, economic and social life in order that freedom and justice can be ensured for all: “if we do not ... there is no hope of coming to a new understanding and to ensure freedom and justice for all” (1967:8).

Naudé makes clear his Christian understanding of the relationship between faith and freedom, and faith and justice:

*If we again listen to and apply the truths concerning freedom and justice as expounded by the prophets of the Old Testament, or Christ and his followers in the New Testament, we must discover that any society wishing to preserve its identity or to ensure its future by transgressing moral laws and countenancing grave injustices towards people on the basis of group or class or colour or race, can never survive.*

(Naudé 1967: 8)

He even references the history of the Afrikaners who did not rest until their freedoms and rights were secured, showing how the victim has become the victimizer, but more importantly, asking whether the same process will not repeat itself. With this we see Naudé’s historic awareness that is demonstrated in this address.

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<sup>95</sup> Naudé uses the example of African states gaining independence (political, economic and social freedoms) and some of the disastrous effects that has had. He notes the misuse of these examples of deplorable results of freedom by those in power in South Africa to resist granting freedom. He asks the rhetorical, convicting question of whether South Africans in power have forfeited all right to criticize, condemn or advise these young African states, as a result of their denial of the basic rights and freedoms of the majority of their own inhabitants.

Naudé continues to ask piercing questions about another Christian conviction to those who claim to be Christians – the belief that “the Gospel of Jesus Christ brings salvation i.e. liberation from bondage, to all individuals and peoples” (1967:10). He questions the level of trust and belief in this message, which transformed the very lives of the Christians themselves and which has been spread through Africa for centuries. He challenges their acceptance of the goodwill and willingness on the part of the non-white communities to co-operate with the White Christians to build the future of the country. Naudé probingly asks of the beneficial effects of obedience to the demand of their faith in effecting freedom, and therefore justice.

In the ensuing paragraphs, Naudé discusses freedom and its ideological counterparts with the aim of showing how the task of building a plural society based on justice, truth and equity can be achieved<sup>96</sup>. He advises the student community on the following actions: to choose a faith in a living God which meets the requirements to “transform society, to satisfy man’s [sic] deepest needs and to ensure true freedom for all ... to meet victoriously the challenges of life, the issues of our day and the needs of humanity” (1967:15). He singles out Christianity as the only one able to meet these demands. The manifestation of a “royal-servant ethos”, built on “authority, freedom, power and hope” (Koopman 2012:13) is clear in what he advises.

Secondly, he advises his audience to live with integrity according to a value system - to live up to the highest convictions and principles of the spiritual and moral truths of the Western heritage. Thirdly, he encourages them to cultivate opportunities of discussion and dialogue to share their convictions with a diverse group of fellow students. The last two points call for a vision of service and also for the students to be “seekers after truth” – truth that can always pass the highest test of justice, love and freedom (1967:15).

This address, in particular, offers valuable insight into Naudé’s understanding of the interaction between Christianity and the ‘public’. His application of the basic elements of Christianity – freedom, truth, justice – to the issues of the day resonates with some of the paradigms discussed in chapter two; in particular Koopman’s (2012:2) perspective on the three main questions that public theology addresses, which refer to the content, rationality,

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<sup>96</sup> He includes in this reference totalitarian philosophies and systems of government such as Fascism, National Socialism, Communism, and other new forms of nationalism.

and impact of Christian faith convictions<sup>97</sup>. The way in which Naudé describes these basic elements offers some concrete answers to these root questions.

Is it also clear how he advises the students on an “ascetical engagement” (Mathewes 2007:1), showing them how the basic dynamics of faithful Christian existence promote Christian’s engagement in public life.

#### 4.4.4. *“BLACK ANGER AND WHITE POWER IN AN UNREAL SOCIETY”*

This address was delivered as part of the Edgar Brookes Lecture at the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg on the 19 May 1971 on invitation from the Students’ Representative Council. The title was chosen as a description of the social system which had been created, and was chosen following eruptions of violence at Gelvandale Coloured Township of Port Elizabeth<sup>98</sup> (Naudé 1971:7).

In this address, Naudé shares his perception of the South African apartheid-reality and society as being in an unjust, morally corrupt state. Delivered in 1971, after more than 20 year of apartheid policies, this address firstly defines the “unreal society” that had been created up until that point and then seeks to describe the historical developments of repression, while drawing on significant changes and the different perspectives of both Black and White in dealing with these societal changes. Lastly, several thoughts are offered on the future and what it might hold for this society.

When Naudé speaks of an “unreal society”, he uses it to define the unjust, inhumane society that has been constituted. He identifies various capacities in which this ‘unreal’ nature is a reality – morally, politically, economically, and socially. In the first instance of morality, he notes some inner contradictions to the principles of justice contained in its Judeo-Christian tradition. He states unequivocally how the claim to be a Christian country with a Christian heritage, ruled by a Christian government is made a mockery by “the deliberate disregard for the fundamental law of the Christian faith, namely love to God and love to one’s

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<sup>97</sup> “Public Theology namely investigates the inherent public contents and thrust of Christian faith convictions, the inherent public rationality and reasonability thereof, and the public implications, impact and significance of Christian faith” (Koopman 2012:2).

<sup>98</sup> This violence is cited in a publication by the South African Institute of Race Relations as the result of increase bus fares for the community which acted as a trigger for violent expression of general public resentment of the living conditions that the Coloured Community were subjected to (Horrell 1972:19-20).

neighbour....” Politically he references what he regards as the “unrealistic and unrealizable” policy of separate development. Economically, the system enforced by the White minority is labelled as restrictive and exclusive. Socially, the ‘unreality’ of society is identified in the unnatural physical separation of different races by strict laws.

Naudé picks up on a degree of hopelessness resulting from the failure of the attempts by Black individuals at ensuring basic human rights for the millions of Blacks. This resulted in feelings ranging from despondency and deep pessimism to bitterness and even hatred – as the title of this address states. At the outset of the then ruling party’s term there was a sense of hope amongst the Black population: “....there was the sincere hope that the White man [sic] would understand and accept the demand for sharing the political future in the country with the Blacks” (1971:8). This hope was increasingly and ruthlessly suppressed by restrictive policies and any measure of political aspirations barred by severe harassment, interrogation and intimidation by police, “... suspicion, distrust and fear became part and parcel of the life of the whole community, both Black and White” (1971:8).

Following Steve Biko’s death, Beyers Naudé delivered his address *Steve Biko: The man and his message* (1977), in which he states the three-fold message of his life and death to the Black, English-speaking White, and the Afrikaner community respectively. The message that Naudé points out for the Afrikaner community links with the ‘White power’ reality sketched in this address. He states: “Break free from the prison of your subservience to an ideology that is leading our country towards disaster and that can destroy the Afrikaners as well ... stop talking behind closed doors or in the boardrooms of white political power over black people and stop taking decisions on their behalf” (Naudé 2005f:79).

Returning to the address, we see the historical developments are further elaborated to show the changes that took place in increasing Black power *and* Black Bitterness<sup>99</sup> - the decolonization of Africa; a growing international awareness and concern of the dangers of racialism in any form; the increasing indispensability and value of the Black labour force for the economy; also the emergence of a “Black Power Consciousness” (Naudé, 1971: 9).

Naudé notes how this clear context of a development of bitterness and anger places a specific responsibility on the shoulders of the White people in power to curb violence through

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<sup>99</sup> Examples of this Black Power and Black Anger are included such as the work of SASO, ASSECA, and black clergy working towards the ideal of a united Black Church.

changing their belief in their supremacy. He warns about the consequences if this is not the case: “Black anger as a reaction against White supremacy is like a rumbling volcano which could erupt at the most unpredictable moment in the most unpredictable way” (Naudé 1971:10).

The thoughts that are offered on the future and what it might hold for this society are presented while realizing any expectations carry a large degree of uncertainty in such times of change. This is perhaps a very concrete display of the prophetic nature of Naudé’s methodology. He even states himself that, “only a prophet would dare to predict what the future will bring but I make bold to suggest that one could reasonably expect the following” (Naudé 1971:10).

He expresses his belief in several significant changes. Firstly, in a growing militant Black power consciousness in the form of political awareness and psychological withdrawal from Whites, and secondly in a greater economic independence and determination to Africanize all bodies and institutions operating amongst and serving the African, Coloured and Indian communities. He continues to make three points about the psychological link-up that he believes Black organizations will continue to develop in relationships with other parts of the world. In this he includes publications on Black Power movements that will be read, impending violence that can result as lack of justice, and lastly, the position of organizations usually described in the term of “White liberal” or “White controlled” that will increasingly become unenviable.

Next, he constructs the challenges, urgency and value of a concerted effort to engage in reconciliation, reiterating many of the points made in his 1963 address titled, “Reconciliation”. On the note of action being taken, he refers to the work of the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society (SPROCAS), labelling it as a responsible and significant attempt to point the way to a new future. He believes that a confrontation of violence is inevitable, but that much could be done to diminish the harmful and unpredictable results of such a conflict. He ends by placing his hope in, and challenging, his young audience to be the builders of a responsible society, where freedom and justice for all is realized.

The hope and related notions arising from the address are framed around a prophetic perspective on the necessary actions to address the climate of anger, impending violence, and rapid change. His predictions about the violence would prove to be accurate, as seen in the

Soweto uprisings and the death of champions of resistance such as Steve Biko; this recalls one of Conradie's (2000:267) observations about the features of hope, that it was prevalent where the predicament of finitude is stressed – understood as limits that are placed on life (primarily because of untimely death), especially because of the sins of others and inflicted by the powerful.

Naudé had the ability to live in solidarity with the angered Blacks that he describes in this address. Desmond Tutu describes this relationship as follows:

*For the multitude of blacks who had been running the gauntlet of a vicious system the gospel had found the champion they had been longing for. Here was someone who proclaimed a God who did not give useful advice from some impregnable mountain fastness, but one who was indeed Immanuel, immersed here with them in the muck of their misery, who entered the fiery furnace of their anguish.*

(Tutu 2005:50)

We see in this address a contextual understanding of the situation of the both the Black and White perspective, as assessed by Naudé.

#### 4.4.5. “A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA”

This address was delivered to the Convocation of the University of Natal at Pietermaritzburg on Friday, August 22, 1975. This was in the time after the CI had been declared an ‘affected’ organisation on 30 May 1975 and the Schlebusch report was released. It was part of a series of lectures in which Naudé expressed the fear that South Africa was on the brink of violent confrontation (Ryan 2005:171). One of the other addresses included a lecture that Naudé was invited to give at The Royal Institute of International Affairs in London (“The Individual and the State in South Africa”), but was refused by the SA government to leave the country. In this address he displays the factors barring hope; he offers some insightful critique on the role of the church and his loss of hope specifically in the DRC<sup>100</sup>. The seminal document, *Human*

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<sup>100</sup> “A number of people have pinned their hopes on the white DRC emerging as a major force of change in the South African political scene. Unfortunately, I cannot share that optimistic view as the decisions of recent synods of the three DRC’s and the conservative leadership elected, gives me no hope to believe that any worthwhile change could be expected from this source in time to influence white political thinking to move in the opposite direction” (Naudé 1975b:9).

*Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, was accepted the year before at the DRC General synod of 1974<sup>101</sup>.

The opening paragraph sets the context of a climate of change that was taking place in the neighbouring countries of South Africa<sup>102</sup>. This change entailed social, economic and political changes where racial policies in neighbouring countries showed greater support for the rights of all Africans, eliciting questions such as those posed by Naudé in this address: “What is happening around us? What is going to happen tomorrow?” (Naudé 1975:1). The questions posed are symptomatic of a consciousness of change.

This change in the surrounding countries was influencing “the mental and psychological attitudes” of South Africans. The point of contention being addressed is whether these changes in South Africa were seen to be “sweeping, far-reaching and fundamental” or rather “marginal and superficial” (1975:1). This change, according to Naudé, elicited either anxiety or hope, “depending on which racial group one belongs to” (1975:1) and was coupled with an uncertainty about present-day commitments and their value for the future.

There are two different perspectives put on the table by Naudé – that of the hopeful Black community, as deduced from his personal discussions and contact (which included the “verligte” Whites) and that of the majority of the anxious White community (“verkrampste” Whites). These Whites see the changes as far-reaching and feared for white security.

Naudé’s personal perspective of the Black community is discussed under three headings which can be summarized as covering the topics of despondency about, and rejection of (i) separate development, (ii) the economic system and lastly, (iii) the need for Black liberation to start with a focus on South Africa, rather than on cooperation and rapprochement with independent Black Africa. He then continues by addressing “the options open to whites” in an assessment of the different options for Whites to “secure both their identity and lasting security through a peaceful co-existence with the ever-increasing Black majority in South Africa” (1975:5).

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<sup>101</sup> The report discusses the role of the church in society, the relationship between church and state, the questions of social justice, human rights, and social change. It cemented the ideology of apartheid by reiterating Biblical sanction (De Gruchy 1979:73).

<sup>102</sup> Naudé makes mention of “Mozambique, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Angola, and Namibia” (Naudé 1975:1).

Following this Naudé singles out those bodies or groups that he believes to be possible “change agents” in the (then) present South African situation. He includes in this selection existing political parties or bodies that were represented in parliament at that time, making mention of the United Party (who are not regarded as a possible change agent due to its lack of interest in black political aspirations), the Progressive Reform Party, and the Nationalist Party, highlighting the potentiality, as well as the challenges for each of them.

Furthermore, he includes groups he sees as either carrying the hope for the future or not being able to do so: ‘commerce and industry’; ‘the Academic Community’; ‘Churches and Religious Forces’; ‘Pressures from the Black Community within South Africa’; and lastly ‘Pressures from the World Community outside South Africa’. He carefully discusses each group indicating the level of hope that there exists for them to bring about the fundamental change that was needed in South Africa and where they were busy failing or succeeding.

His assessment reveals only two major forces of change – the Nationalist Party and the “rising tide of Black hopes” (1975:10). The role that the Nationalist Party would have to play is one of willingness to share political power and wealth as demanded by the Black communities of South Africa – essentially putting an end to the policy of separate development. The “Black hopes” includes freedom from oppression and everything that is coupled with the dismantling of apartheid. Naudé notes how the international support for this will also play a major part.

Naudé’s loss of hope (which he admits reluctantly) in the churches as being a primary agent of change relates to his belief in a confessing church movement noted in addresses such as “*Die Tyd vir ‘n Belydende Kerk is daar*” (Naudé 1965:1)<sup>103</sup>. This hopelessness will be contrasted with how he speaks about the churches role in other addresses.

In the conclusion he includes serious doubts that he has for a non-violent and peaceful transition to a shared society. Whilst believing that change is inevitable and immanent, with the greatest responsibility on the Black, Coloured and Indian leadership, Naudé highlights several aspects that he believes will require special forethought and attention from these

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<sup>103</sup> The following words express Naudé’s despondency “I am therefore reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there is very little hope that the churches as institutions would be willing or able to take the lead in bringing about the fundamental change which is so desperately required to avoid a major confrontation between White and Black in our country” (Naudé 1975: 10).

leaders: first of all the need to meet the fears of the White community without any compromise in principle. Secondly, is the need to effect these changes without any violence. Thirdly, he identifies the need for wisdom to deal with the unification of a country that has a long history of glorifying separate identities, separate cultures and separate races.

One sees a clear prophetic nature to Naudé's address, as the title suggests. It is also visible in this observation (1975:12): "It will only be after the event of liberation that the full picture of the terrible damage which has been inflicted upon the humanity of both Black and White by the idolising of the idea of separateness of people of different cultures, colours and races, will emerge." One element of this damage did surface only a year later when the violent Soweto uprisings erupted, signalling a new phase of violence and crisis.

#### 4.4.6. *"THE SOUTH AFRICA I WANT"*

This address continues to try to unmask the blindness of the South African society in terms of the social and economic injustices that were taking place. It was delivered just days before the Soweto uprisings on 3 June 1976 at the University of Cape Town at the invitation of its Students' Representative Council (Naudé 2006b:121). The title is clearly an expression of a reality that is hoped for.

Naudé explains the title of the address and the use of the prominent personal pronoun as drawing on the double-mindedness of the White students of English speaking universities about the South Africa they want. He subsequently mentions a few options as to why this is the case. With this he makes the point that there is "no general consensus of opinion amongst White English speaking students about the nature and pattern of the South Africa of tomorrow which they would wish to share in and assist in building" (Naudé 2006b:121). He mentions four options for this 'tomorrow', ranging from a racially and geographically fragmented South Africa to a non-racial society based on communalism with franchise rights for all and a promise of protection for minorities. Given this wide range of potentiality for the aspirations of the students he is addressing, Naudé emphasizes that his thoughts are his own and that he can at best only encourage the students to make their own decision.

Before elaborating on the South Africa he wants, Naudé shares his personal views on the South Africa he does not want. In doing this he hopes that the students will subscribe to these views.

In describing the South Africa he does not want, Naudé outlines some of the major political, economic, and social developments that he believes are unjust. He highlights five aspects which include: authoritarian or dictatorship rule; endangered internal security; the political ideology of separate development; press freedom and censorship of publications; unequal distribution of land, economic wealth, social privileges and educational opportunities (2006b:122-124).

Beyers Naudé advocates the position in which he wants his country to be in the hope of attaining either agreement and support or at least a serious consideration of the thoughts that he presents. He does this by putting forward his ideas, grouped into seven points, as follows:

Firstly, he calls for the recognition of the permanency of those Black, Indian and Coloured South Africans working outside of the homelands. Secondly, a rejection of forced separation of people of different races and colours is required. Thirdly, the removal of all forms of discrimination, including political discrimination in particular, deserves attention. Furthermore, he states that the pass law system should be repelled and the economic and social well-being of both Black and White are to be safeguarded. Free, equal and compulsory education and equal access to tertiary education is prioritized. The issue of resentment towards capitalism is to be taken seriously and in-depth, joint study (by Black and White) is to be made on economic justice, socialism and capitalism. Lastly, he puts forward his wish for the full participation of the student community in the changes proposed in order to bring about peaceful, non-violent change.

It is at this point of reference to non-violent change that he also mentions the growing restriction being enforced by authorities on protests, which was tragically confirmed by the Soweto uprisings that took place two weeks after this address was delivered.

The element of decision-making picked up by Boesak and referenced earlier is once again projected here: “If you truly love your country, then decide now – once and for all- what kind of country you wish to give yourself to ...” (2006b: 127).

What one finds in this address is thus a unique presentation of the content of his hopes for the future of South Africa. This address offers a concise summary of the major political, social, economic and cultural thrusts of change which Naudé advocated in this period of his life. “A new South Africa is being born – a South Africa in which I wish to live, a South Africa in

which I wish our children to live, a South Africa in which I wish to give of myself to all the people of our land” (2006b: 127).

#### 4.4.7. “DIE AFRIKANER AS REBEL” (“THE AFRIKANER AS REBEL”)<sup>104</sup>

This address formed a part of the panel discussion on Friday, 4 February 1977 as part of a Summer School of the University of Cape Town on the theme: “*Suid-Afrika 1984: Afrikaner Waarheen?*” (South Africa 1984: Afrikaner Where To?). Beyers Naudé expresses his hope for an Afrikaner opposition that could bring about decisive change in South Africa.

Naudé, in keeping with his style and format, starts this address by offering his own perspective in a systemic and symptomatic manner on the crises and circumstances in South Africa. His point of departure is that the Afrikaner is responsible for the crisis in which they find themselves, and should not be looking to put the primary blame on external parties. It is therefore the Afrikaners themselves who must look to secure their future and foster responsible co-existence with other population groups in South Africa.

In the first edition of his influential book, *The Church Struggle in South Africa* (1979), De Gruchy ends with a section titled “The Hope of the Kingdom”. In this he makes a critical assessment of how this hope functioned (writing at the end of the 1970’s). He notes how many White South Africans (which necessarily included these ‘Afrikaners’) were going through a “slough of despond” (De Gruchy, 1979: 227). He asks, in line with the thought of Naudé, “How is it possible to hope in contemporary South Africa? For what are we to hope? What can we do to realise our hopes?” (1979:228).

De Gruchy’s reflection resonates with the descriptions of the theological virtue of hope explored in chapter two; some of his convictions include that hope is fundamental to the kingdom of God and that “the good news is for this life as well as that beyond, and it is no less personal than it is social, no less social than personal” (1979:229).

The crisis that the Afrikaner finds themselves in - brought about by the racial policies of the Afrikaner - is described by Naudé by categorising a range of engrained challenges. These

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<sup>104</sup> The chosen title might refer to the label of ‘rebel’ in light of how the term was used in the time that Naudé was born. The man after whom Naudé was named, Genl. Christiaan Frederick Beyers, was ‘n ‘rebelleleier’ (rebel leader) and those that refused to participate in the governments’ plans (under the leadership of Boer general Louis Botha) were branded as a ‘rebel’ (Naudé 1995:11).

include political, economic, church-theological, national and international challenges. He continues to state his beliefs on the cause for these crises, singling out racial discrimination, the refusal of official church leadership to acknowledge the contradiction between the countries policies and Biblical norms and the gospel<sup>105</sup>, and the apparent apathy, even refusal, of Afrikaner academics to deliver pertinent, principled critique against the political policy. Another cause that he identifies includes the obstinate refusal of the White community to pay attention to the openhearted and frequently shrewd criticism of Black and Coloured leaders<sup>106</sup>. One senses the desperation and urgency with which he delivers his message in the following question posed: “Is it an idle dream, even at this late stage, to continue to hope that a group of Afrikaners will have the courage to step forward and establish a “Genootskap van Vrye Afrikaners” (Association of Free Afrikaners) that will confront the powers that want to destroy us and say: no more?” (1977:7 – own translation). Although he realised how difficult this would be, he did not lose hope; Naudé evidently advocates hope for change within Afrikaner ranks.

Writing eight years after Naudé’s address in 1985, Willem Saayman, in his contribution *Rebels and Prophets: Afrikaners against the system* (1985), reflects on these hopes and asks: “Have the changes which have taken place, the divisions which have come about, brought Beyers Naudé’s hope any closer to realisation?”<sup>107</sup> He reflects on the various schools of thought among Afrikaners in answering the questions; loosely termed as ‘right wing’, ‘enlightened’ (‘verligte’), and those to the ‘left’ of the National party which included the ‘prophets’<sup>108</sup>. He finds that Afrikaner political supremacy still reigned in 1985, riding on a pseudo-theological ideology, which only a prophetic theology, coupled with sharp ideological criticism could dismantle. Despite many of these hopes being unfulfilled, Saayman still expresses belief in Naudé as ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness’, able to “call his people, the Afrikaners, to an alternative, more hopeful way” (1985:60).

<sup>105</sup> Here he includes Biblical norms such as neighbourly love, justice, community, reconciliation, and renewal.

<sup>106</sup> He mentions the names of Steve Biko, Allan Boesak, Gatsha Buthelezi, Manas Buthelezi, Sam Buti, Alan Hendrickse, Sonny Leon, and Desmond Tutu.

<sup>107</sup> In this essay Saayman draws on the characteristics of Afrikaner Christian-Nationalism in making sense of Afrikaner rebellion. The understanding and rationale of Afrikanerdom and their striving for political unity is briefly covered in this essay. See also the following footnote on *Afrikaners and Race Relations*, also *Afrikaner piety and dissent* (J. Durand) in *Resistance and Hope* (1985)(C. Villa-Vicencio and J.W. De Gruchy) for more on this.

<sup>108</sup> “Because of the radical nature of their opposition to the system, these opponents perhaps merit to be called prophets....the main prophetic inspiration emanating from Beyers Naudé” (Saayman 1985: 55).

In the closing of the address, Naudé looks to the future and suggests three steps that need to be taken by those that are willing to take the bold step in speaking out against the political policy of separate development and its resultant crises. First, such individuals will need to break away from the political *status quo*, not by denying their Afrikaner identity, nor allowing for any prescriptive understanding of being an Afrikaner. Secondly, it will require willingness to head up an organised, peaceful resistance movement against all forms of injustice being demanded in the name of preservation of White identity and Christian-nationalism. Thirdly, it requires a new lifestyle and way of living where small alternative communities consisting of a diverse group of people, embody the values and characteristics of the desired future. Such an attempt will act as a “symbol of hope” that it is possible for different races to live together harmoniously in the land of the future.

In this address one gets a sense of the relationship that existed between state and civil society, calling for a rebellion from the Afrikaners against the injustices. Once again, Naudé’s ability to offer a solution, an applied critical consciousness, is demonstrated. We see the characteristics of a ‘connected critic’ displayed once again in the way that he enforces a moral authority by offering critique and guidance to the Afrikaners whom he was ‘connected’ to<sup>109</sup>. His concern for justice and the willingness to risk action in the expression of hope for a better world is displayed.

The audience in this case is not a church gathering or a group of Christians. Nowhere in the address do we see an explicit framing of his fundamental hope or spirituality of hope as Christian. However, this identity of Naudé was never concealed.

Many explicit references to his identity can be listed. One example is found in the document titled ‘Divine or Civil Obedience’ released by the members of the Christian Institute in 1973, where a response is offered to the question of whether it would be a “positive Christian action for people to refuse to cooperate with a government in a matter which can be proved to be

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<sup>109</sup> Further insight can be drawn from Naudé’s description of the Afrikaner *volk* in “*The Afrikaner and Race Relations*”. It was delivered in December 1967 and gives his impressions of the characteristics of the Afrikaner on the issue of race relations from a historic and, at the time, current perspective. Here we see a display of the contours of hope being informed by theological sensitivities. He traces the complexities which gave rise to the separation of Dutch Reformed Churches and how this influenced the thinking of the Afrikaner people, resulting in the policy of separate development. “Thus does false theology always create ideology” (Naudé 2005e:56). See *The Legacy of Beyers Naudé* (L.D. Hansen 2005:55-62).

unchristian” (Bryan 1978: 120)<sup>110</sup>. The final section of the document includes a description of their conviction, “Christians may in prayerful anticipation hope” (1978:133). In this section they state the conviction that Christians hope “that God’s righteousness may become the criterion in every facet of their lives, and particularly in their political life in South Africa” (1978:133). On grounds of their obedience to God they did not deem it necessary to testify to the commission or co-operate with the government. This is just one example of the expression of faith that Naudé demonstrated in this time.

## 4.5. Summary of Content

### 4.5.1. Advocacy of hope

From the selected readings one can formulate a body of ideals that are hoped for, as well as discern the source and basis of the hope that is expressed. While avoiding mere repetition of the content of the addresses, an analytical synthesis of the content is drawn up.

In asking the main research question of this study – ‘does a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirm him as an advocate of hope?’ - a distinction between the content and the source of hope is not specified. Evidence for either of these distinctions can however affirm this hypothesis. If one believes that that which is hoped for can indicate what your hope is based on, and *vice versa*, then the affirmation of the concept and witness of hope is also strengthened. This distinction becomes clear through the presentation of the content of the addresses that is integrated with the heuristic framework established in chapter two.

### *White Hopes, Black Hopes*

The first distinction that can be made with regards to the content of his hope – that which is hoped for – is based on the differentiation made between White hopes and Black, Coloured and Indian hopes. Such distinction in the addresses necessarily arose out of entirely different circumstances in which the different race groups lived. In many cases, the composition of his audience would consist of such discrimination based on skin colour. In *A Glimpse into the future of South Africa* (1975) (4.4.5) a definite consciousness of change - social, economic

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<sup>110</sup> This document was a response to the Schlebusch/Le Grange Commission as noted in chapter three. The members included Brian Brown, Theo Kotzé, Roelf Meyer, J.E. Phakathi and Beyers Naudé (Bryan 1978:134).

and political changes - is noted. This change, linked to the increasing political and economic liberation of oppressed Blacks in Africa, elicited either anxiety or hope, “depending on which racial group one belongs to”. Naudé demonstrates his ability to pick up on the sense of despondency amongst Black people, and therefore understand and promote their hopes of liberation from White oppression (4.4.4; 4.4.5). He could also address the hopes of Whites (the “verligte” whites) for a new political and social structure of the future where tension between Black and White would be diminished.

### *Worried Whites*

His message of hope for Whites in this period is most clearly seen in the addresses *The Afrikaner as Rebel* (4.4.7) and in *The South Africa I want* (4.4.6). It is a hope for a change in attitude and change in action on the part of the unjust authorities. Naudé motivates the need for such change by showing how the Afrikaners (and by implication Whites) were responsible for their own situation of political, economic, church-theological, national and international challenges (4.4.7). He also offers a vision of the future where it is lacking – particularly to the White English speaking students (4.4.6). His message to Whites was also frequently framed in the context of speaking to, and about, the White DRC (4.4.2). In these instances he made claim on the Christian hope for unity in the body of Christ, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

He confronts the White majority’s thinking with prophetic messages about the future of the country. In *The Afrikaner and Race Relations* (1967) Naudé shares his thoughts on the majority thinking of Afrikaners (Whites) who believe that “only in separate development can true reconciliation, peace and harmony be found”; he states, “I am convinced that this policy is morally indefensible and incapable of implementation” (Naudé 2005e:61).

### *Bitter Blacks*

Naudé’s message and advocacy of hope was quite different to the Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans which he addressed. He understood, through his contact with Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement, and through many other Christians through the Christian Institute, that there was a rising Black power consciousness (4.4.4). There was an increasingly greater economic independence and determination to Africanize all bodies and institutions operating amongst and serving the African, Coloured and Indian communities (4.4.4; 4.4.5). He acknowledged these hopes, calling for concrete actions, such as those listed

in *The South Africa I want* and *A glimpse into the future of South Africa*. Naudé did this by voicing the hopelessness resulting from the failure of the attempts by Black individuals at ensuring basic human rights for the millions of Blacks.

In June 1973, Beyers Naudé, in that part of his address devoted to Black people (in *The Need for Political Reform*), shared his dream of a new country where fundamental political change will have taken place. He expressed his “unwavering belief that the day will come, and is already coming, when your humanity will be fully recognised, your rights will be fully ensured and your people will be truly free”; that when that day comes, they “will be able to lead South Africa to a new future where all forms of racial superiority, of religious bias, of social inequality and of political injustice will have been left behind” (Naudé 2005c:91). That was his dream and his hope.

### *Reconciliation*

The dismantling of racial segregation is one of the primary hopes that he advocates. The theme of reconciliation, and therefore the propagation of a joint hope amongst races, is prevalent throughout this period (4.4.2; 4.4.3; 4.4.4; 4.4.7). This hope is seen in his call, in more than one address, for Whites to gain knowledge about the economic and social wellbeing of those in need in order to establish improved race relations. He challenges the expectation of White Christians of what it would be like to attempt reconciliation between divided race groups and Black’s goodwill and willingness to co-operate with the White Christians to build the future of the country. Attempts to live a new lifestyle where small alternative communities consisting of a diverse group of people embody the values and characteristics of the desired future will act as a “symbol of hope” (Naudé 1977) so that it is possible for different races to live together harmoniously in the land of the future (4.4.7). He encourages discussion and dialogue, especially amongst students, to share their convictions with a diverse group of fellow students (4.4.3).

Rev. Robert S. Bilheimer<sup>111</sup> addressed one of the ecumenical Bible study circles in the 1960’s, stating that it was “of crucial importance for people across the colour line to get to know and trust each other, as happened at Cottesloe, because without trust there is no hope”

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<sup>111</sup>Bilheimer was a Presbyterian minister with an ecumenical focus. He organized the first meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and was the representative responsible for organizing the Cottesloe Consultation.

(Ryan 2005:68). Naudé had a natural understanding of this trust. He even trusted too easily, as we have seen in chapter three.

#### 4.5.2. Contours of hope

Beyers Naudé's identity as a Christian was never something that he concealed or distanced himself from. We have established this through the biographical background covered in chapter three. Just one example is found in an opening statement in the article titled *Apartheid Morally Unacceptable* which appeared in a public newspaper<sup>112</sup>:

*I am writing as a Christian and as an Afrikaner: As a Christian who, through realising numerous short-comings and failings in my Christian witness, nevertheless knows that obedience and loyalty to Christ's word and injunction in my relationship to my fellow-man [sic] tower above any other love and loyalty.*

(Naudé 10 November 1970)

The source or theoretical basis for the hope and related notions that are expressed in these public addresses is evidently based on Christian doctrine. This is furthermore seen in the address *Freedom in our society today* where he declares his identity and the knowledge base from which he is addressing his audience unequivocally as being Christian (4.4.4). He even explains that his understanding of the foundation of human rights and freedoms is based on Christian thought and concepts. He states on more than one occasion that the Gospel of Jesus Christ brings salvation; liberation from bondage to all individuals and peoples. In the closing of the last mentioned address Naudé advises the student community to choose a faith in a living God in order to "transform society, to satisfy man's deepest needs and to ensure true freedom for all...to meet victoriously the challenges of life, the issues of our day and the needs of humanity" (Naudé 1967:15). He singles out Christianity as the only faith able to meet these demands. These are much more than sanguine expectations.

This witness of Christian conviction by Naudé is also evident in many other addresses, especially his editorial letters in the *Pro Veritate* collection. He ends an address (published in the April 1977 edition of *Pro Veritate*) to the graduates of the Federal Theological Seminary at Edendale, Pietermaritzburg (16 March 1977) with the following words:

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<sup>112</sup> This article originally appeared in Afrikaans in STER (13<sup>th</sup> November 1970) under the title "Apartheid is in Stryd met God" (Apartheid is in Conflict with God).

*As the crisis deepens and the day of liberation dawns, the church will be challenged as never before to substantiate the claims of its Master that He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I believe that Christ has the power and the urgent longing to lead us as a Christian community into a new understanding of what Christian commitment and Christian relevance mean at this time in the history of His Church in our country. I do not know what the answers will be that He will give to us, nor do I know where this will lead us to, but this I know: In Him is all the fulfilment of all the aspirations and the hopes of all the oppressed, the imprisoned, the blind, the millions who are shackled by the forces of evil. He stands at the entry of a new time, a new period in history of our country and He beckons us to follow Him as He leads us into true and full liberation.*

(Naudé 1977b:6)

An explicit reference is made to the Kingdom of God in at least half of these addresses. Again, the understanding of the Kingdom has to do with a very practical hope for the human predicaments in the present and those expected in the fulfilment of ultimate hope - “the stimulation and intensification of historical hopes through the eschatological hope” (De Gruchy 1979:229). As Naudé stated in an interview with Villa-Vicencio (1995:29) “If politics is about what is possible, religion is about the quest for what is not immediately possible.” His hope and understanding of the kingdom of God was rooted in both politics and religion.

#### 4.5.3. Public Witness and Public Theology

“In order to inspire people with hope for the future, the church must live with deep-seated faith in God and must be rooted in the present-day world” (Heaney 2004:222 – own translation). Considering the public expression of this fundamental hope, Naudé has specific messages for the church. The role of the church as an agent of hope is very explicit in his addresses. He balances his disillusionment with the DRC with the hope of what the church is called to be according to Scripture, which he sees as embodied in the concept of a confessing church which has the ability to publicly express its convictions in terms of the issues of the day. This also includes the prophetic calling of the church and the appeal for church unity that he calls for. He also hopes for the diversity of church groups to interact, to share their

faith and fears, experience fellowship and receive a wider vision of Christ's truth and love so as to be of service to the world (4.4.2).

Naudé also urges for an investment into the lives of young people as valuable agents and carriers of hope (4.4.3). In the editorial of *Pro Veritate* of 15 February 1963 Naudé writes, "A Christianity which retreats into a personal piety with a faith divorced from life in all its aspects will not only lose its power to witness to the outside world, but it also stands in danger of losing its youth – and thereby its whole future" (Naudé 2006a:45).

#### 4.6. Conclusion

The advocacy of hope which we have observed in these addresses has been much more than the linguistic expression of future expectation and sanguine beliefs. The public addresses have attested to Naudé's understanding of a hopeful citizenship which defined and confronted his context with discernment. Allan Boesak defined Naudé's ability for decision-making as having a reach past mere linguistics:

*I speak of decision not linguistically, as a word, but theologically, as an act of faith, a fundamental and transformational choice with consequences for oneself certainly, but far beyond oneself. It is an act taken not in certitude or pride but in fear and trembling, walking not by sight but by faith. It is an act the consequences of which one cannot foresee nor be completely prepared for, but it is nonetheless taken in what one is convinced is obedience to Jesus Christ.*

(Boesak 2012)

Such was the nature of his hope too. In the address, *Christian Involvement in the Struggle for Human Rights and Justice* (1975), Beyers Naudé quotes the following part of a soliloquy by John Harriott, a British Jesuit priest. He states that this expresses the solidarity and "the hope of the Christian faith that inspired many of his and others efforts" (Naudé 2005d:115):

*Let us open the clenched fist and extend the open palm  
Let us mourn till others are comforted, weep till others laugh  
Let us be sleepless till all can sleep untroubled  
Let us be meek till all can stand up in pride  
Let us be frugal till all are filled  
Let us give till all have received  
Let us make no claims till all have had their due  
Let us be slaves till all are free  
Let us lay down our lives till others have life abundantly*

This disposition of living with ‘till’ is central to whom Beyers Naudé was and the way he served humankind, by serving God.

## Chapter 5: Public Addresses 1984 – 1990

### 5.1. Introduction

Beyers Naudé was finally unbanned in September 1984 at the age of 69. In the years following his banning, Naudé worked incredibly hard for political liberation and what he believed was inevitable: the collapse of apartheid (Ryan 2005:201). He immediately took up the challenge that lay before him by being highly involved in serving the needs of the oppressed and living in solidarity with the suffering (Coetzee 2010:542). He served as the General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) until July 1987 which provided the platform from which many of his public addresses were delivered.

Several addresses have been chosen that communicate some of the major messages that he communicated in public during this time. Once again, these public addresses are arranged chronologically and analysed individually, which is followed by a consolidated summary of the major tendencies and an evaluation. Throughout the reading of these addresses, the three research questions will be asked, namely: (i) Does a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirm him as an advocate of hope?; (ii) What are the contours of the concept of hope that are prevalent?; (iii) Can an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope contribute, as well as inform historical and conceptual knowledge about the church's public witness and does this have implications for the field of public theology?

### 5.2. Public Addresses

#### 5.2.1. *"CONFESSING THE FAITH IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY"*

This address was delivered on the occasion of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Belydendekring in Mayfair, Johannesburg on 8 December 1984. The Belydendekring was known as the Broederkring for many years, but changed its name to be gender inclusive and to express their aim of reformed Christians actively confessing their faith in apartheid society (Belydendekring Bulletin 2/5/84). The Broederkring was established, according to Naudé's description in this address, by ministers from the three younger churches of the DRC family when they realised the increasing evil effects of the apartheid policy on the life of the church and the community. It consisted mainly of Black and Coloured, but also a few White

ministers of the DRC, who wanted to bridge the racial divisions (Ryan, 2005: 175). They set out with two goals<sup>113</sup>: “to seek organisational unification of the family of four NG Churches in South Africa and to express its total rejection of the policy of apartheid as unchristian, immoral and dehumanising” (Naudé 1984).

The address is opened with a discerning question which brings to the fore the disparity in the South African society in this time. Naudé asks, “Which South Africa are we talking about? This is the question we have to ask and answer before we enter into discussion of the meaning of confessing the faith.” He then sets out to typify the two extremes- “Are we talking about the South Africa of spacious homes and gardens where children are being driven to school in safety – or are we talking about the South Africa of overcrowded match-box homes, empty schools, protesting students, teargas and bullets, injury and death?” (Naudé 1984)

He explains how the contexts, and thereby the different faces of faith that are experienced by different people in South Africa, challenge the notion of talking plainly about ‘the Christian faith’. “An authentic confession of faith”, he states, “can never be made in a political, social or economic vacuum ...”. The state of the country, according to his judgement, could be described in no other terms as being in a state of crisis – and that the recognition of this judgement is largely from the side of those living in struggle, not the privileged White minority.

By reiterating the two main goals of the Belydendekring, he shows how their “reasonable hopes” of achieving their goals of unification and dismantling apartheid had to a large degree not realised since its establishment, but that giving attention to these two aspects of the Christian community of South Africa was still the only hope for Christian witness to have any relevance and possible significance in the future.

Next he highlights the Belydendekring’s shift in focus; paying attention to the issues of political justice and human rights following their discovery that change was unlikely within the ranks of the White DRC. In addition to this is the fact that the government was entrenched in every single sphere of human life, and enforced their rules and regulations. The political

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<sup>113</sup> The aims of the Belydendekring, according to the *Belydendekring Bulletin* of 15 February 1985, ten years later, were still to stand for and strive towards achieving the unity of reformed congregations within the DRC family, and to dismantle apartheid as a state policy. “These objectives are as valid today as they were ten years ago, if not more urgent” (*Belydendekring Bulletin*, 15/2/85).

rights of the Black community had been most seriously affected by this, leading to one crisis after the other. Naudé draws attention to this, calling for the Belydendekring to direct their leadership to focus on political justice; “This is a tragedy of the Christian faith in South Africa that so many denominations, including so many Christians, do not see a direct link between their Christian faith and the need for fighting for the political rights of others” (Naudé 1984). Naudé puts his counsel plainly - a failure to do this is to fail in one of the basic obligations as Christians.

Naudé does not stop at his admonition for political involvement, but continues to express his hope for an intervention in the capitalist economic system and structure, which was leaving millions of South Africans, the majority, pulling at the short end of the stick. True and concrete expression of the churches’ understanding of justice in the Biblical sense of the word would mean the presenting of an economic system which is more in accordance with the Biblical criteria of justice, freedom, and human dignity. He states the demands such a disposition will make on Christians and churches. Some of these include: critical self-appraisal of personal lifestyle, involvement in trade union struggles, confessions of non-involvement in the struggle of millions for basic rights, and also rethinking the theological training of ministers. “Have we ever begun to ask ourselves what the full implications are of the prayer which we so constantly participate in: Give us this day our daily bread?” (Naudé 1984).

Lastly, he mentions the cry for educational justice and the millions of young people who will have no choice but to become disenfranchised about the Christian church, Christian faith, and the Christian people if no action is taken. Naudé points out that any meaningful confession of faith in South Africa cannot ignore these realities of injustice.

In this address we see an observant evaluation of the social, political, and economic realities of the day and how this relates to the task of confessing Christians. Naudé’s ability to understand and contextualise the hopelessness of the country is displayed, thereby demonstrating his advocacy of hope, the contours of which are clearly Christian. The call for action in light of this time of need is tied to concrete deeds of service.

In this quest to understand how one can confess faith in South Africa today, one sees a clear emphasis on prophetic ministry when he proposes faith in God who he describes as “God is a

God of justice and peace, a God who is on the side of the oppressed, a God who seeks liberation for all who are in bondage ...” (Naudé 2005:127).

Beyers Naudé’s identity as a ‘confessing theologian’ has been emphasized in De Gruchy’s reflection in chapter two (2.2.2.4). The title of this address, and its content, concurs with the confessing theology and confessing church, which Naudé propagated in the 1960’s. In his 1965 editorial for *Pro Veritate*, ‘Die Tyd vir ‘n “Belydende Kerk” is daar’ (The time for a confessing church is here) he shares these convictions about the church being called to publically state their convictions<sup>114</sup>. According to this editorial letter, it is a call for Christians from all churches to unequivocally and fearlessly take a stand for what they believe. Almost 20 years later, the same plea is made to Christians to take up this responsibility with love and in all seriousness.

### 5.2.2. “THE ROAD TO RIGHTEOUSNESS IN OUR LAND”

“To what degree do we believe that the issue of justice is of crucial importance in determining the future of our land?” (Naudé 1985a) These are some of the opening words presented by Naudé in his address to the people gathered at the Emmanuel Temple in Parktown, Johannesburg, on 10 March 1985.

The Emanuel Temple is a Jewish congregation that served on this occasion as the gathering place of both Jewish and non-Jewish citizens. The audience, as deduced from the written speech itself, was predominantly White. Naudé expresses his displeasure of this, stating “[I] regret the fact of speaker and audience being exclusively/predominantly white – through no fault of the organisers but it nonetheless reflects part of the situation of estrangement...between black and white which we have reached in our country.” Later references are made to some of the audience possibly adhering to either Christian or Jewish faith. The content of his address is clearly faith-based and is structured around five principles he deems to be important for any faith community that claims to have a concern for justice.

He establishes the implicit shared understanding that the title given to the gathering shows “the acknowledgement that our society is an unjust one, a land lacking in true righteousness”

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<sup>114</sup> Other articles in *Pro Veritate* in 1965 on the Confessing Church include “Nog eens die ‘belydende kerk’” (November 1965) and “Nou juis die ‘belydende kerk’” (December 1965). Also see footnote in 3.4.

(Naudé 1985a). The point of contention or possible disagreement in this evaluation, Naudé suggests, could lay with the understanding of the nature and extent of the crisis.

Naudé uses the mutual ground of religious faith and belief of his audience - adherents of either Christianity or Judaism - to establish a commonality amongst the audience and to perhaps cement his observations. The five principles highlighted by Naudé draw on the character of God, “as found in God’s word” (although he makes no references to Bible verses) (Naudé 1985a).

Firstly, the principle of God as a God of love and justice, who always takes the side of all those who are oppressed, “the victims or the sufferers under acts or systems of injustice“. Secondly, every human being should be granted the opportunity to express in a responsible way their view of the injustices afflicted upon them or their community. A just society should create and protect such platforms to let people express themselves without any fear. Thirdly, God’s followers should stand in solidarity with all individuals and communities who suffer under oppression and injustice. He continues to state that every form of injustice has to be dismantled and every system sustaining or entrenching structural form of injustice has to be removed. Lastly, he includes another of his well-versed themes by declaring that God’s justice requires true reconciliation between opposing groups or individuals. “... no reconciliation is even possible as long as injustice has not been honestly faced and removed” (Naudé 1985a).

Naudé continues to highlight some of his convictions which he regards to be “fundamental prerequisites” to build a society of peace and justice; “There can never be peace with justice in our land as long as a substantial section of the total community of SA regards itself to be in conflict with a political system which it regards as basically unjust” (Naudé 1985a). He makes note of the need for economic redress, the need for a restoration of faith in the legal system in the country, as well as a need for the appreciation and recognition of a diverse South African society based on justice. “How does one build a just society if some of the crucial pillars of justice are either absent or cracked and crumbling?” (Naudé 1985a)

Naudé’s foresight and ability to look plot the ‘road’ to an improved future life in South Africa is displayed here. It is framed within the Christian context and witness.

### 5.2.3. “LIVING CHURCHES CHALLENGING THE WORLD”

In this address, Naudé once more highlights the basic challenges facing South Africa. He qualifies and demarcates the meaning of the reference to “world” used in the title to refer only to the South African situation and sets out to define this “world” which the church has to challenge. These basic challenges could get lost or diluted in a focus on the world in which humankind was living as a whole. The use of the term “world” was perhaps chosen as a result of the context in which this address was delivered, and seems to be the theme of the congress. The audience was a gathering of the “Missiological Society Congress” (according to the address) in 1985, which was most likely a gathering of the South African Missiological Society (SAMS), a multiracial and ecumenical fraternity of mission scholars<sup>115</sup>.

Naudé claims to speak only from his own experience, choosing to elaborate on the challenges of deep division, serious conflict, and rapid transition. The division of ‘worlds’ he refers to is that between Black and White South Africans, entrenched over decades. The effect on the political and educational spheres are the most noticeable, resulting in dramatically opposed goals and aspirations for Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians on the one hand, and Whites on the other hand.

What is more, he labels the division in the churches as not only the most clearly seen, but the most painful to admit. Churches in South Africa are divided with regards to their stance on apartheid in three separate camps<sup>116</sup>, which touches on a number of issues, including their judgement on a body like the World Council of Churches and contradictory views on social justice, civil disobedience, and on violence and counter-violence (to name a few). “For all practical purposes they live, work, worship and witness in three different worlds” (Naudé 1985b).

He continues to speak on the serious conflict that arises from these opposing political views, showing the clear conflict that arose and could further develop between the United

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<sup>115</sup> David Bosch, a world leader in the field of Missiology, served as its general secretary from its formation in 1968 until his death. A major aspect of the work of the SAMS is the production of *Missionalia*, the society's journal.

<sup>116</sup> The DRC Churches supporting the policy of apartheid; the group of multi-racial anti-apartheid churches which form the membership of the SACC plus the Catholic Church; and as a third group the particularly non-active and non-involved churches comprising the Pentecostal, Baptist and a number of African Independent Churches (Naudé 1985b).

Democratic Front (UDF) and the government. He also lists examples in the economic sphere such as consumer boycotts and divergent goals regarding the issues of disinvestment and sanctions. Conflict is evident in the educational sphere too, such as that arising from the establishment of a system of people's education.

Naudé expresses unequivocally how he views the conflict on ecclesiological and confessional level. He states, "There is no doubt in my mind, the Kairos, the moment of truth for the church has arrived...It is not the church challenging the world, it is in fact the opposite: the world challenging the church!"<sup>117</sup>(Naudé 1985b).

His third observation about a world in rapid transition continues to evaluate the South African 'world' through the lenses of politics, education, economics and church. Naudé points out how he and other leaders in these spheres constantly had to answer questions about how they saw the future of South Africa in 5 to 10 years. Prohibited by the tense and disorderly state of the country at the time, he chooses to refrain from making any specific predictions – the "fluid situation" leaves too many uncertainties.

He does, however, admit that "forces for change" have been brought into play "which can no longer be stopped"; that is to say the hope for rapid transition in different spheres. He believes that the outcome of this transition, regardless of how much time it will take, will be "a new political dispensation, a new economic approach and possibly a new system, a different form of education and in certain church circles a new confessional movement of some kind which will deeply affect a number of church institutions" (1985b).

He ties his hope for change within the confessional movement to two recent confessional documents; the Kairos Document and the Harare Declaration<sup>118</sup>. Furthermore, he states his trust in the Belydendekring to provide momentum and direction for the confessing movement by providing practical steps. The effect would be greatest on the "so-called English speaking churches, especially those multi-racial churches belonging to the SACC" (1985b), more than on the White DRC. He states that a confessional movement would be able to take a stand on the issues of "civil disobedience, on violence and non-violence, on their attitude towards

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<sup>117</sup> He refers to examples of tension such as the Ottawa resolution in 1982, where the DRC's membership from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches was suspended; the Belhar Confession; the Kairos Document; and the rising movement towards challenging old denominational *versus* confessional boundaries.

<sup>118</sup> The Harare Declaration resulted from the December 1985 meeting of the World Council of Churches in Harare.

liberation movements such as the ANC and PAC, and on the moral legitimacy of the present government” (1985b).

Beyers Naudé continues in his evaluation of a possible upsurge of religious fervour amongst white evangelical and pietistic circles, who will seek “spiritual and emotional refuge from fear and uncertainty and confusion” in this time of transition – to these groups he issues a clear message: “the spiritual solace that they are seeking and may be temporarily finding, is not going to solve any of our problems until the issue of justice, repentance for past wrongs and restitution for such wrongs has not been found and met.” What is more, he states that the Black community will see such spirituality and evasion of reality as “a sign of weakness” and “a turning away from the judgment of God” (Naudé 1985b).

In closing<sup>119</sup>, Naudé reflects on the definition of the term “a living church”. He points out his discomfort with the use of the plural (‘churches’) in the title, calling for church unity. He also states that the church can only truly be ‘living’ when it seeks to re-define, in terms of present day events, what it means to authentically seek obedience to Christ and his Gospel in every aspect. A sign of a living church is: “To understand and implement its understanding of the realisation of God’s kingdom in our midst: its real nature, its relationship to the kingdom of the world” (Naudé 1985b). A living church is, as Naudé defines it, can very well then be defined as a carrier of the Christian hope.

In a study on the mission strategy and theology in Beyers Naudé’s ministry, Masuku (2010: 104) picks up on three strains which were prominent in the final quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. One of these, on which Naudé puts “more emphasis”, is “mission as continuation of the mission of Jesus Christ to preach, serve and witness to the justice of God’s ‘already’ but ‘not yet’ reign” (Masuku 2010:104)<sup>120</sup>. This alludes to the understanding of Christian hope as eschatology covered in chapter two (2.2.3).

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<sup>119</sup> The speech seems to be incomplete, ending with a numbered bullet point.

<sup>120</sup> See also Botman, HR. 2001. “Hope as the coming reign of God”, in Bruggemann (ed.) *Hope for the world. Mission in a global context*. Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox Press, p. 69-81.

#### 5.2.4. “WHITHER THE WHITES?”<sup>121</sup>

The address, delivered in April 1986, opens with a quotation from Helen Suzman, a South African anti-apartheid activist and politician: “It is D-day for South Africa”. This is followed by Naudé’s own dramatic and bold statement, “The moment of truth has arrived for SA – the Kairos of our destiny”. This address took place in the time when the country was in a State of Emergency that had been called by the state president P.W. Botha in 1985 and would only be lifted in 1990 by F.W de Klerk. Naudé substantiates his conviction by listing six reasons.

Firstly, he references a recent Business Day article of 8 April 1986 claiming South Africa to be on the verge of bankruptcy, which according to Naudé was uncontested. He notes the disinvestment and sanctions that were contributors to this. Secondly he demonstrates what it means for the country to be in a state of emergency. He states various facts, drawing on the March report of the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC). Thirdly, he mentions the lack of trust in the legal systems’ ability to establish and uphold justice. What is more, according to Naudé, government reforms had failed and were failing. He demonstrates the apparent superficial attempts of reform by stating the government’s strategy of attempting to share power whilst upholding white minority control. The next factor he makes mention of is parliamentary politics which were also a reason for this moment of truth. He believes that any addition to the parliament structure (probably in reference to the Tricameral Parliament structure) is a strengthening and entrenching of apartheid, bound to be unsupported by the majority of the people. References are made to Dr F. van Zyl Slabbert, Dr A. Boraine and the United Democratic Front (UDF) who supported this notion. He also notes the Progressive Federal Party’s reluctance to admit it, seeing as their MPs would have to resign. Lastly, Naudé includes ensuing police brutality against Blacks.

Drawing from these concrete examples of impending crisis in South Africa, Naudé sets out what he believes the message is to the White community. He believes that racial strife, animosity and hatred are being promoted by the presence of army troops in townships and calls for Whites to disengage. The second point he makes concerns an active citizenry:

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<sup>121</sup>The title “whither” chosen for the address is reminiscent of the title of B.B Keet’s book, *Whither, South Africa*. Reading this book by BB Keet in 1956 contributed to Naudé’s determination to seek clarity on his church’s relationship with apartheid (Coetzee 2010:451).

*Please realise that the crucial decisions which are determining the future of our country are no longer being taken in parliament – they are no longer being made in the boardrooms of directors of banks or corporations or companies, they are no longer being made in church synods or religious gatherings – they are being made in the townships, on the streets, on factory floors, at funerals and in graveyards, in prison cells and in simple homes! They are being made there where people are suffering, where the wounded are being nursed, where the youth are mounting their resistance, where the people are seeking to mobilise their power!*

(Naudé 1986)

He calls on Whites, firstly, to face their fears of Blacks and to enter into dialogue with the Black community to discuss these fears. Secondly, he calls them to put pressure on government through massive peaceful protest. Thirdly, to join and support the forces seeking to build a non-racial, democratic future for SA.

He then makes a special call to “all white fathers and mothers who have a concern for their country, for peace, for the future of their children; all white academics, business leaders, opinion-makers in white society: Cross the Rubicon...of white domination, white interest, white fear” (Naudé 1986)<sup>122</sup>.

In the closing of his address Naudé makes a special appeal to the Afrikaners (as they were chiefly responsible for the conceptualisation and lawful implementation of the apartheid policy and because South Africa is their only homeland), in their different capacities, citing the metaphor Jesus used in Matthew 9:17 of new wine that requires new wineskins. “Let the wine of new life flow in new wineskins; stand up and step over the Rubicon into a new future where black and white can develop and rule the country together!” (Naudé 1986 – own translation)

#### 5.2.5. “THE FUTURE OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA”

The speech, delivered at UNISA in 1987, is given in the context of questions asked, some in fear and uncertainty, about the future of the Christian faith in a “new” South Africa – the

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<sup>122</sup>The word “Rubicon” was known for its use by President P. W. Botha in an infamous Speech in Durban on 15 August 1985.

hoped future beyond the context a apartheid society. Naudé states, “My belief (is) its life, its existence, its contribution will not depend upon or ultimately (be) determined by the state, by other faiths, by scientific developments, it will depend on its own inner life and contribution to the human being and his/her deepest needs.”

This “own inner life” and its independent relationship from the state or other faiths is typical of a theology of public life, as we have seen in chapter two (2.2.2), according to the framework constructed by Mathewes. Rather than theology and religious engagement fitting into public life, all of life is seen as God’s creation and our existence in it as ascetics<sup>123</sup>. It is through “ascetical engagement” with the world that Christians can be formed spiritually

The future he puts forth he does, not as a prediction, but as a suggestion of “what it has to be in order to grow in its contribution” (Naudé 1987). This contribution is most probably to the establishment of the “new South Africa”. The church must be: (i) Ecumenical – Naudé identifies a dire need for ecumenical witness, co-operation, leading to closer spiritual and structural unity and ecumenical action. “The deepest needs of our Christians in SA are no longer reflected in a specific confession or a special confession or a specific document”; (ii) Contextual; (iii) Spiritual – “understanding the nature of God, the meaning of creation; understanding the nature of a responsible society built on lasting values: a foundation of love, of trust, of justice, of tolerance, of compassion, of integrity”; (iv) Diaconal – “The Christian faith is both deeply spiritual and intensely material”, calling attention to “issues of economic justice, homelessness, health care, education, human dignity, equal opportunities and human rights” (Naudé 1987).

#### 5.2.6. “THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA”

This is the address delivered by Beyers Naudé at the National Conference of Churches in South Africa held at Rustenburg in November 1990. The value and focus of this conference has been noted in chapters three and four. To recapitulate: The conference was as a result of F.W. de Klerk’s call on all the churches in South Africa to strategize about reconciliation, change and dialogue. Forty churches were represented at this ecumenical conference with 230 church leaders present (Heaney 2004:216). De Gruchy (1991:23) frames the pertinent

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<sup>123</sup> “For me theology is...*imagination for the kingdom of God* in the world, and for the world in God’s kingdom. This means that it is everywhere *public* theology, and never, ever, a religious ideology of civil and political society – not even so-called Christian society” (Moltmann, 1996:xiv – his emphasis)

questions, “How can the Christian churches in South Africa unite in their witness against racism and injustice? What does faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ mean at this time in our history?”

Naudé’s address focuses on the task of the church in establishing justice. The rejection of apartheid by most of the mainstream churches brought great relief and joy. However, he states that this acknowledgement of apartheid as sin has to be translated into action in the churches’ ecumenical calling to address the challenges.

Many of the themes covered in the aforementioned addresses resurface on this occasion. What is unique about this address is that it is focused on the audience of the ecumenical church and therefore draws heavily on the role the church is called to play.

Naudé’s message to the churches in this critical transition time in South African history is the following: he calls on the churches to pay attention to their own witness by embracing opportunities for shared worship services and communion. Discriminatory practises are to be ousted in order that the body of Christ can be built up. Biblical teaching that condemns racism, paternalism and racial prejudice needs to be taken up. Dialogue will also be necessary between churches on their theological, social and political viewpoints, especially when it comes to ecumenical witnesses and documents such as the Kairos Document and the Belhar Confession.

What is more, churches are called to take the lead with regards to repelling and showing opposition towards all discriminatory and apartheid laws. A community based on justice will have to be formed in addressing the education of the country in order that unemployment can be countered and the crisis of Black education can be redressed. Another issue includes housing. He also calls on the churches to confess where they contributed to the suffering of the nation during apartheid and to seek forgiveness. The victims of violence will have to be given support, spiritually and physically.

Churches are to be agents of change, playing an active role in offering guidance to the state regarding the biblical values of justice, peace and human rights – and to do this by the inclusion of a charter of human rights that is entrenched in a charter of human rights for South Africa. Also, they are called to play a mediating role in reducing stumbling blocks for a peaceful transition.

Naudé expresses his greatest concern for the economic processes which will have to follow, calling the churches to play a role in economic justice and representing all people, not only the middleclass.

Reflecting on this address, Heaney writes:

*Beyers Naudé's statement signifies that he recognised both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of the gospel. His question was whether the church was open to being convinced by the Holy Spirit and willing to realise that all authentic prayer leads to meaningful acts of witness and service to everyone who yearns for a new life and a new future.*<sup>124</sup>

(Heaney 2004:222)

### 5.3. Summary of Content

#### 5.3.1. Advocacy of Hope

These public addresses present a number of themes and messages which Beyers Naudé communicated and stood for in this time. Even though these addresses are only a selection of his many written and oral communications, a wide range of themes are identifiable. Once again, the discerning question has been whether a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirms him as an advocate of hope. Various observations have been made about the concept of hope and its related notions - such as future, expectation, destiny, and trust - being pivotal in these public addresses of Naudé.

What follows is a summary of what the speeches have highlighted and also the findings of the secondary questions - whether the contours of hope transcend unadorned optimism, informed by theological sensitivities, and, whether an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope contribute as well as inform historical and conceptual knowledge about the church's public witness and if it has implications for the field of public theology. Some of the

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<sup>124</sup>"Beyers Naudé se uitspraak beteken dat hy sowel die vertikale as die horisontale dimensies van die evangelie raakgesien het. Die vraag vir hom was net of die kerke oop is vir die oortuigingswerk van die Heilige Gees en bereid is om te besef dat alle outentieke gebed lei tot betekenisvolle dade van getuienis en diens aan almal wat smag na 'n nuwe lewe en 'n nuwe toekoms" (Heaney 2004: 222).

major contours and messages of hope - that which Naudé hoped in and that which he hoped for - are grouped together here.

### *Future South Africa*

In his autobiography, Naudé (1995:126) cites two quotations from speeches delivered in 1985, which he states summarises his message in this time, as highlighted in chapter three of this study. Although the speeches themselves were not available for further study, their messages remain valuable. The first quotation conveys the message of appeal to care for the oppressed and to labour for the advancement of human rights, human dignity; also to take responsibility in order that the future of the country can be secured and that all people may live in freedom. In essence this was an expression of a fervent belief in creating hope amidst hopelessness. It demonstrates how he had a concern for the future, and advocated hope that this could be realised. The theme of justice comes through strongly in various speeches (5.2.1; 5.2.2; 5.2.3).

This is especially clear in *Confessing the Faith in South Africa Today* in which he shows support for their two goals of dismantling apartheid and church unity and equality (5.2.1). He sketches the future South Africa – the “world” (5.2.3) – that Christians’ hope challenges. This world was undergoing forces of change, many of which Naudé tied to confessional documents being lived by a confessing, living church (5.2.3). In *The Future of the Christian Faith in the New South Africa* the contribution of a hopeful church to the formation of a new South Africa is highlighted (5.2.5 and also in 5.2.3; 5.2.6).

Furthermore, the concept of a *kairos* time is picked up by Naudé (5.2.3; 5.2.4). In a speech such as *Whither the Whites*, his critique tries to expose the ideological nature of apartheid and the Afrikaner civil religion in which it was embedded. The Afrikaner people were prisoners of their own history, afraid of the future. The ideological nature of apartheid seemingly blinded most Afrikaners to any future besides the one held out by the National Party. Yet in this desperate situation, he encouraged Christians to remain hopeful; according to his convictions it is not fate that controls the destiny of South Africa but the God of history.

## *Restitution*

The second quotation in his autobiography about his message in this time is in reference to the international pressure which he called for in order that political prisoners could be freed and those banned, exiled and banished could return<sup>125</sup>. Other forms of restitutions that he calls for are tied to justice (5.2.3). The road to restitution and justice is paved by Naudé by laying out Christian principles (5.2.2; 5.2.6). This includes a society able to express in a responsible way their view of the injustices afflicted upon them or their community. He hopes for the removal of structural form of injustice and links this with reconciliation.

### 5.3.2. Contours of Hope

The critical role of Beyers Naudé with regards to offering South Africa hope for a better future for all was built on his deep-rooted faith in God and in the message of the gospel. These guided his actions right through his entire life, even though he had to turn away from his own people and wait for 30 years before his prophetic vision, already evident in the 60's, became a reality in the 90's. The theological sensitivities of his hope are evident in the addresses discussed above, such as demonstrated where he refers to the prophetic ministry towards the oppressed (5.2.1). He also ties spiritual solace to the prevalent theme of justice (5.2.6).

### 5.3.3. Public Witness and Public Theology

Actions in public life are hoped for in many of the addresses observed. This includes actions such as the explicit involvement of Christians in deeds promoting political justice (5.2.1; 5.2.6) and involvement in reforming the capitalist economic system; according to Naudé, a failure to do this is to fail in one of the basic obligations as Christians (5.2.1).

Interestingly, Naudé points out that public life is observed by churches in different lights, according to their stance on the policy of apartheid (5.2.3); "For all practical purposes they live, work, worship and witness in three different worlds" (Naudé 1985b).

The developments in apartheid had brought focused attention to the relationship between church and world; "There is no doubt in my mind, the Kairos, the moment of truth for the

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<sup>125</sup> Naudé played a major role in the Release Mandela Campaign, believing that South Africans would ultimately be forced to resolve their differences around the negotiating table (Ryan 2005:204).

church has arrived...It is not the church challenging the world, it is in fact the opposite: the world challenging the church!” (Naudé 1985b). In *Whither the Whites* it is shown how the power for decision making is in the hands of the people and that it is not only the churches responsibility, but their obligation to act as active citizens in making these decisions (5.2.4, 5.2.6). References to a confessing church movement are evident in many addresses (5.2.1; 5.2.3; 5.2.5) in which the church is seen as a primary contributor to the new South Africa – through the establishment of values and the expression of love and service.

Explicit questions of public witness are asked (5.2.6), such as: “What does faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ mean at this time in our history?” (De Gruchy 1991:23). The vertical and the horizontal implication of his faithfulness are explicated.

#### 5.4. Comparison of two time periods

The analysis of the public addresses from the two periods has revealed that Beyers Naudé was indeed an advocate of hope. We have seen this through his close contextual analyses and the application of his ‘mantra’ – his obedience to God. His support of the framework of a ‘historically hopeful citizenship’ is equally present in both time frames. The differences we have witnessed was not as a result of a change in his fundamental hope, but in his hopes.

The things that Naudé hoped for changed because his theology was contextual. He supported the notions of prophetic theology and liberation theology. The fact that changes took place also reveals the value of his advocacy of hope as being tied to the ‘horizontal’ dimension. Jürgen Moltmann and others have taught us that Christian hope embraces more than the object hoped for. It is also a contradiction of ‘what is’ (Villa-Vicencio, 1982: 89). As such, it is grounded in a rejection and a transforming of the present situation. Therein lies the despair of a prophet, as Naudé has been classified, but also the undeniable hope.

In chapter three we have seen that the time spent in banning provided Naudé with a significant, unique opportunity not only to minister in a pastoral capacity, but to invest in his own formation. As he stated, it was in a sense “the most meaningful, and the most fruitful, and the most fulfilling period of my whole life”. This period of investment translates into a renewed social consciousness and willingness to fulfil this role of prophet. Some of these include his sharper criticism towards the Afrikaners and church groups supporting Apartheid, his demand for the realisation of justice, and for a confessing church to bring about change.

## 5.5. Conclusion

*I say to my fellow South Africans: if you have no hope, you should get out as soon as possible. If you have unbounded hope you should go and see a psychiatrist. If you can't give up hope, if you insist on hoping against hope, then persist with all the things you have been doing to make this a better country.*

(De Gruchy 1979: 237)

These are the words of Alan Paton, an author and anti-apartheid activist, in a 1977 newspaper article. It conveys not only the urgency - the need - for hope, but also its value in the efforts of making a difference in South Africa. What we have witnessed in these addresses is that Naudé insisted on this “hoping against hope”.

This balance between dealing with the hopelessness and crisis of South African civil society and the belief in a God of hope has been demonstrated by Naudé's addresses. We see a dependency on God that characterises Naudé's hope. De Gruchy (1979:237) quotes Martin Luther's commentary on Romans 15: 13<sup>126</sup> which Naudé has emulated: “He that depends on the true God has laid all tangible things aside and lives by naked hope”. His understanding of God and his understanding of hope cannot be separated; Luther continues: “In short, He is the “God of hope” because he is the Giver of hope, and even more, because only hope worships him.... ”

Lastly, Beyers Naudé's relationship with and contribution to the church, especially the ecumenical church in South Africa, confirms him admittedly as an advocate of hope – as Luther's words on the church demonstrate: “in bearing witness to the providence of God over and in history....it keeps hope alive” (De Gruchy 1979:237).

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<sup>126</sup>“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

## Chapter 6: Findings of a Historically Hopeful Citizenship

### 6.1. Introduction

In a recent conference held at Stellenbosch University on ‘*The Reformed Churches and the Struggle for Justice: Remembering 1960-1990*’, Robert R. Vosloo observed that, “Often our work with primary sources challenges many of our preconceived ideas and helps us to speak in a more nuanced way about the past” (Vosloo 2012). My expectation is that this would be true for this research project. By working with the framework of a ‘historically hopeful citizenship’, a serious attempt has been made to pick up the nuances of hope in the public addresses of Naudé. Vosloo (2012) continues to highlight the importance of interpretation, which necessarily applies to the study at hand. He states,

*Along with the emphasis on the importance of primary sources, however, we should remain vigilant against the fallacy that we can move from the sources to (literary) historical representation without interpretation. Access to archives and primary sources does not absolve us from the task of interpreting the sources and placing them within meaningful interpretive frameworks and narrative configurations.*

(Vosloo, 2012)

Such meaningful interpretative frameworks have been employed in this study in an attempt to work with hermeneutical sensibility. In this final chapter we will look at the meaning of the research findings and analyse the answers found to the research questions.

### 6.2. Research question findings

#### 6.2.1. Introduction

In chapters four and five the discourse on hope and its various formulations and expressions in the public addresses have been summarised. In this final chapter an integrative interpretation of this content is attempted. To what extent has there been evidence to support the research questions? Does this research also tie in with the related themes of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, namely that of faith and social identity, justice, human dignity and human rights, as well as responsible citizenship?

### 6.2.2. Main research question

*Does a theological historical reading of the public speeches of Beyers Naudé affirm him as an advocate of hope?*

In chapter four the theme of reconciliation and the differing realities of the segregated racial groups in South Africa, each group with their own nuances of hope, have been evident. The concept of hope has indeed been essential and fundamental to the content of the addresses. Notions relating to hope, such as an expectation of the future and a firm trust in God's providence, are pivotal in these addresses. He advocates hope for faithful Christianity; values and ethics; the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Kingdom of God<sup>127</sup>; freedom; justice; and political, educational, economic and social reform.

In chapter five we have observed a strong focus on the future South Africa and in various addresses the role of faith and the church in this expectation. Furthermore, the focus on restitution is evident with the hope of ensuring freedom and equal rights for all. Hopelessness is evident in isolated instances where Naudé speaks of the loss of hope in the DRC as institution to bring about the change needed. He never loses hope in the church as individual Christians. Hence, a theological historical reading of the public addresses of Beyers Naudé evidences hope being advocated.

### 6.2.3. Contours of hope

*What are the contours of the concept of hope that are prevalent in the public addresses of Beyers Naudé?*

Beyers Naudé advocates not only the hopes listed above, but fundamentally the Christian hope. Such a hope, as seen in the addresses, is built on the foundation of the gospel which calls Christians to this-worldly participation in bringing about the kingdom of God. This Christian hope, Moltmann states, "leaves the existing situation behind and seeks for opportunities of bringing history into ever better correspondence to the promised future." Desmond Tutu comments on this dimension of the theology of hope, which translated into

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<sup>127</sup> In an address titled *Christian Ministry in a time of Crisis* (1977), Naudé puts this in his own words. Referring to ministry which is only focused on the vertical dimension he stated: "I do not wish to suggest that this form of ministry is not valid, but what image of the gospel of Christ and of His Kingdom is being conveyed to the world by such a ministry if no other dimension is added? Such a form of priestly service could be seen to be so timeless, so generalized and so unspecific as to be largely meaningless" (Naudé 2005:82).

faith praxis - “Theology was not just a neat, tidy thing for books and lectures; it was engaged; it was authenticated by striving to answer questions of life and death. It was particular and contextual” (Tutu 2005:51).

Another element of Naudé’s hope is seen in his contextual theology as lived in his mission strategy; his appreciation and embrace of Christian mission is seen in these addresses. He understood mission, as Moltmann (1991:330) phrases it, “not merely as propagation of faith and hope, but also historic transformation of life”. Commenting on Romans 12:1-2<sup>128</sup>, Moltmann writes:

*Not to be conformed to this world does not mean merely to be transformed in oneself, but to transform in opposition and creative expectation the face of the world in the midst of which one believes, hopes and loves. The hope of the gospel has a polemic and liberating relationship not only to the religions and ideologies of men, but still more to the factual, practical life of men and to the relationships in which this life is lived.*

(Moltmann 1991:330)

The influences on the theology that formed Naudé’s hope have also become clearer in these addresses: his Reformed evangelical background; inspiration from prophetic and liberation theology and from the Confessing Church movement; and a strong ecumenical exposure all are evidenced. The contours of hope evidently transcend unadorned optimism and are informed by theological sensitivities. Heaney (2004:5) wrote: “His message of hope, under dire circumstances, like his banning, inspired many in the struggle against apartheid and created space for the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ”

#### 6.2.4. Public Witness and Public Theology

*Can an understanding of the nature and use of these notions of hope contribute as well as inform historical and conceptual knowledge about the church’s public witness and does this have implications for the field of public theology?*

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<sup>128</sup> “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” Romans 12:1, English Standard Version.

The ideology of apartheid was imbedded in a particular Kuyparian neo-Calvinism (Saayman, 1985:59; Coetzee, 2010: 445). It is thus theology that assisted in leading South Africa into the injustices and dark days of apartheid; the same theology could therefore not lead the way out. What was needed was a prophet who understood the “false theology”<sup>129</sup> and could offer something different, who could show the way to a different future. Naudé fulfilled this prophetic role because he could discern ‘true’ theology that understood something about public life; that engaged a social consciousness<sup>130</sup>. As Saayman stated in 1985, “Whoever wants to bring about real change in the social, economic and political structures of South Africa will have to deal with racism at the fundamental, ideological level” (1985:59). That Naudé addressed the ideology of apartheid through a hopeful citizenship – a theology of public life - has been shown to be quite evident.

In a tribute to Naudé on his 89th birthday, John W. De Gruchy spoke on “Beyers Naudé and Public Theology”. From this we can draw significant value when we ask the questions regarding historical and conceptual knowledge about the church’s public witness. In reference to the contribution of SPROCAS, the Study Project of Christianity in Apartheid Society, which grew out of the *Message to the People of South Africa*, De Gruchy recalls Naudé’s sentiment: “It is no good us simply saying “that”, we have got to work out what “that” means in the public arena” (De Gruchy 2005:86). Six commissions were set up through SPROCAS, each looking at a particular aspect of public and social life in terms of the Gospel. Although the content of SPROCAS cannot be fully explored within the limitations of this study, it suffices to acknowledge that these commissions offered a translation of many of the theological convictions which we have observed in Naudé’s addresses.

Before SPROCAS, in his 1965 editorial for *Pro Veritate*, ‘Die Tyd vir ‘n “Belydende Kerk” is daar’ (The time for a confessing church is here)<sup>131</sup> he shares these convictions about the church being called to publically live their convictions. He calls for Christians to confess the following:

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<sup>129</sup> This term was used by Naudé in *Afrikaners and Race Relations* (1967).

<sup>130</sup> Coetzee (2010:582) explains this ability to discern by discussing the hermeneutic of suspicion that Naudé had developed. See Coetzee, M.H. 2010. *Die “Kritiese Stem” teen aparheidsteologie in die Ned Geref Kerk (1904-1974)*. Wellington: Bybel-Media.

<sup>131</sup> See footnote in 3.4.

*We are, and wish to be, nothing other than Christians, men [sic] of God, called to offer the witness of Jesus Christ and his reign in the world – a witness to free people and communities from their fear and hate, a witness of unity of all Christians in love, community and service across the divide of language and race and culture and nation, a witness of the recognition of the image of God in every human being irrespective of their status or skin colour, and of the intentions of neighbourly love, compassion and justice in all human and social relationships<sup>132</sup>*

(Naudé 1965: 6 – own translation)

If one looks at the definition or measure which is used by the Director of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, then one can say that it is fitting to talk of the work of Naudé as public theology. “The agenda of public theology is to reflect on the contents, rationality, and implications of God’s love for the whole world, especially for those whose dignity is violated and who suffer exclusion and exploitation....” (Koopman 2010:137).

Max du Preez (*The Star*, 9 September 2004) explained the role of Beyers Naudé as follows: “Exactly because Black South Africans knew that he was a *murg-en-been* Afrikaner, he became a symbol of hope during the dark time between the 1960’s and late 1980’s. His presence meant that not all Afrikaners and Whites were intractable racists and oppressors, with some pressure and persuasion the rest could one day follow.” Prof P.G.J Meiring, a DRC theologian and acquaintance of Naudé for more than 50 years, also picked up on the courage Naudé had, despite the fact that he faced challenging times: “Beyers Naudé was courageous, a symbol of hope. What is happening in the world is not in the hands of politicians but God is in command. He challenged us to think of the implication of the gospel in our daily lives” (Masuku 2010:240).

#### 6.2.5. Conclusion

This final chapter has provided an integrated interpretation of the content offering evidence for the research questions. It has also become clear how the research ties in with the related

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<sup>132</sup>“Ons is en wil niks anders wees as Christene, manne van God, geroepe om die getuienis van Jesus Christus en sy heerskappy in die wêreld te gee – ‘n getuienis om mens en gemeenskap van hulle angste en haat en vreed te bevry, ‘n getuienis van eenheid van alle Christene in liefde, gemeenskap en diens oor die grense van taal en ras en volk en nasie heen, ‘n getuienis van die erkenning van die beeld van God in elke mens ongeag sy stand en kleur, en van die bedoeling van naasteliefde, medemenslikheid en geregtigheid in alle menslike en maatskaplike verhoudinge.”

themes of the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology, namely that of faith and social identity, justice, human dignity and human rights, as well as responsible citizenship.

### 6.3. Questions and Suggestions for further research

“But I think we should also affirm that we are not merely interested in the past for antiquarian purposes, but also because we have certain present concerns and future hopes. Therefore we are also challenged to ask ourselves ‘With what future in mind are we remembering the past?’” (Vosloo 2012). These remarks by Vosloo are of value, and express the notion of looking ‘back’ while looking ‘forward’; even looking ‘back’ *so that* we can look ‘forward’. This study has picked up on some insightful observations in this regard.

Anlené Taljaard remarks how Beyers Naudé’s legacy of witness to resistance, solidarity and hope confronts our and future generations with the following questions: “Do we understand Beyer’s Naudé’s acts in the past of resistance, solidarity and hope as acts of confession of his faith, and will this particular confession of faith have any influence on the faith that we accept and pass on to our children? And in confessing our faith today, what do *we* resist, with whom are *we* in solidarity, and what do *we* hope for?” (Taljaard 2006:94) These are questions worth asking and holding on to in light of what we have witnessed in this study.

In the first chapter remarks were made about the context of this study with regards to the HOPE Project of Stellenbosch University. At the launch of the HOPE Project in London in 2010, Botman stated, “The HOPE Project is essentially the practical realisation of the University’s moral decision to break with the past and help build a better future<sup>133</sup>”. It therefore engages with a historical and contextual consciousness. The research findings of this study is relevant for the African context of the HOPE Project insofar as the horizontal dimension of the theological virtue of hope, as demonstrated by Naudé, contributes to the HOPE Project’s goals and aims.

The fruit of Naudé’s public witness is already evident in various vindications, such as the Beyers Naudé Centre for Public Theology and the annual Beyers Naudé Memorial Lecture Series at the University of the Free State. Desmond Tutu, in a contribution at the Beyers Naudé Centre remarked: “What a spectacular vindication for *Oom Bey* but, in a very real

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<sup>133</sup> See Botman, H.R. 2010. *Stellenbosch University*. [Available online]: [www.sun.ac.za/university/management/ректор/docs](http://www.sun.ac.za/university/management/ректор/docs). [accessed 19 November 2012]

sense, what a spectacular vindication for God. God has been vindicated in the vindication of God's servant that indeed lies can never prevail forever over truth, injustice and oppression can never have the last word, that this is indeed a moral universe, that goodness is stronger than evil, that light is stronger than darkness, that life is stronger than death. Victory is ours through Him who loves us" (Tutu 2005:53).

What can Christian hope mean to those who are in despair in a world marked by poverty, global warming, global economic downturn, war terrorism, and the collapse of human rights? Conradie (2000:270) asks, "What should Christian hope mean for those who believe that another world is possible and who are involved in global and local campaigns against poverty and injustice?" What we have seen expressed in Naudé's witness is an element of the Christian eschatology as "remembered hope of the raising of the crucified Christ" (Moltmann 1996: xi). It is this form of eschatology that can provide reassurance that all is not lost at the point when the revolutionary struggle collapses. Christian eschatology also understands that unjust social structures are not simply the product of history, but are the result of human sin and that no revolution can thus ensure the birth of a political utopia.

Many of the reforms that Naudé hoped for - reforms which he advocated and fought with courage and solidarity for - were realised in the transition to the new democratic South Africa. Despite these fundamental changes in the political and social realities of millions of South Africans, the country is still laden with challenges and injustices with regards to education and economic justice, to name a few. In a recent study on the ministry of Naudé to the victims of oppression during the apartheid rule in South Africa, Masuku (2010:4) employs the thesis that there are post-1994<sup>134</sup> victims of another form of oppression or 'apartheid'. The need for hope, and the milieu of hopelessness in which Naudé's hope was fostered, still exists in many post-1994 South African communities. In a diverse country, any pronouncement of Christian hope will have to look to the left and to the right, backwards and forward, in order to maintain the solidarity and dignity which is intrinsic to all forms of Christian hope. As Russel Botman stated in his address at Naudé's funeral; "There is no real hope for the son of the farmer unless there is hope in the heart of the daughter of the farmworker" (Botman 2004).

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<sup>134</sup> The term 'post-1994' is used as a historical marker to indicate the time period after the end of apartheid.

## 6.4. Conclusion

“The courage to hope and to give account of one’s hope was the cornerstone of his ministry” (Botman 2004). These words spoken by Russel Botman, then president of the SACC, at Naudé’s funeral service on 18 September 2004 is not an isolated statement. Beyers Naudé has been celebrated by many theologians, fellow civil servants, and scholars, not only as a symbol, but as an *advocate* of hope. A theological historical reading of his public addresses has contributed to this discourse and has highlighted some specific nuances of hope expressed by Naudé.

Such classifications and veneration should not idolise his contribution – lest the contributions are abstracted from life and become of lesser value. Most of his convictions and his hope(s) were not in any way unique or different to thousands, even millions of other South Africans during the apartheid era. As we have seen, he also had flaws and shortcomings; “He can be a stubbornly independent person, quite reckless with passionate abandon, and over-enthusiastic about ideas that simply cannot work. He can be a terrible judge of human character, and then fiercely loyal to colleagues and friends even in the face of the most damning evidence against them” (Villa-Vicencio 1985: 13). Margaret Nash, reflecting on Naudé’s contribution, also displays a balanced evaluation when she writes: “Beyers is not a saint, he is not a perfect person ... Beyers Naudé could justly be described as the single most important church person this country has so far produced. His was the ecumenism of faithfulness to love and truth and unity. I think we will go on learning, exploring and reflecting on his contribution for many years to come” (Ryan 2005: 191).

Notwithstanding these human elements, the manner in which he utilised the opportunities he had been given and his position in civil society – often sacrificing the good, in the hope of something great – in an orthopraxis of hope remains a worthy guide for his ‘Land of Hope’.

In acknowledging the past - the history and legacy of someone such as *Oom Bey* - we take up the burden to bring about change and justice. The following words by Seamus Heaney from *The Cure at Troy* describe the relationship between two fundamental conceptions that have been procured by studying the public addresses of Beyers Naudé, Hope and History:

History says, Don't hope  
on this side of the grave.  
But then, once in a lifetime  
the longed for tidal wave  
of justice can rise up,  
and hope and history rhyme.

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