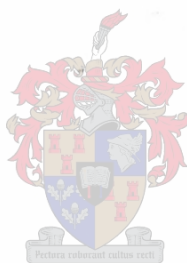


THE QUEST FOR UNITY BETWEEN THE BANTU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTHERN AFRICA 1959-1973

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Promoter: Prof. Dr. P. Coertzen

March 2000

ABSTRACT

Declaration:

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it an any university for a degree.

Signature:

Date:

ABSTRACT

Nineteenth century Presbyterian witness in South Africa provides us with a wonderful testimony of close work relationships between ministers that served independent colonial congregations and missionaries in native mission stations. However, these relationships remained good as long as these two streams of Presbyterianism were kept separate. Attempts to form one Church failed resulting to the formation of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, a coming together of some mission and colonial congregations, in 1897. The majority of mission congregations stayed out of this union and formed themselves into the Bantu Presbyterian Church in 1923.

From the beginning of the twentieth century the Ecumenical Movement posed a challenge to the world church, condemning her inability to live as the Body of Christ and as God's one big family. South Africa witnessed a deeper polarization of society through the rise of divisive nationalist ideas among Africans and Europeans. Churches did not escape this wave of thought. They also could not ignore the challenge by the World Council of Churches. Unity talks started just after 1923 and took a serious turn in 1959 under the heat of South Africa's racist policies. In the same year a Committee on Union Negotiations was appointed by both Churches. It had become very clear that a divided witness was a mockery of Presbyterian witness as well as of Christian witness in general. This was evident in continued conflict in areas where work overlapped. Africans in both Churches did not understand why there were two Presbyterian Churches. They changed Churches as it suited them sometimes to avoid disciplinary action.

Whilst there was a desire to have the two Churches unite problems relating to,:

1. the laws of the land, the legal policy of the Government, that of separate development and an un-Christ-like attitude of Whites towards blacks weighed heavily in the minds of most people.
2. a distorted Christian understanding of the members of both Churches as the Body of Christ due to lack of theological reflection,
3. suspicion and mistrust of each other

4. and an inadequate or total lack of information on unity negotiations with decisions only at the top with very little or no input from most congregations

derailed all attempts on union. There were genuine fears on both sides. Blacks had learnt never to trust white people. These negotiations came to an end in 1973 with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa voting in favour and the Bantu Presbyterian Church against.

In 1994 another attempt was made. This time the laws of the land had changed, Both Churches had come to accept the need to come together. Past hurts were addressed and this led to the formation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa on the 26th September 1999. It is still not too late. We can still help make this union have real meaning to most people at grass root level. We must help people develop trust, create a strong theological base and mobilize them around a better understanding of the church.

OPSOMMING

Negentiende eeuse Presbiteriaanse getuienis in Suid-Afrika verskaf aan ons 'n wonderlike getuienis van noue werksverhoudings tussen predikante, wat onafhanklike van koloniale gemeentes gedien het, en sendelinge wat die inheemse bevolking vanuit sendingstasies bedien het. Hierdie verhouding het goed gewerk solank as wat die twee Presbiteriaanse strome apart gehou is. Pogings om een kerk te vorm het misluk en aanleiding gegee tot die stigting van die Presbiteriaanse Kerk van Suid-Afrika deur die samevoeging van 'n aantal sendingstasies en koloniale gemeentes in 1897. Die meerderheid sendinggemeentes het egter buite hierdie kerkeenheid gebly en hulleself gedurende 1923 georganiseer as die "Bantu Presbyterian Church".

Sedert die begin van die twintigste eeu het die Ekumeniese Beweging 'n uitdaging aan die Wêreldkerk gerig deur haar onvermoë tot uitlewing van "die liggaam van Christus" en "God se groot familie" te veroordeel. Suid-Afrika is verder gepolariseer deur die opkoms van verdelende nasionalistiese idees tussen die Swart en Wit gedeeltes van die bevolking. Die Kerke het nie ontsnap aan hierdie kennisgolf nie en hulle kon ook nie die uitdaging van die Wêreldraad van Kerke ignoreer nie. Versoeningsgesprekke het net na 1923 begin en 'n ernstige wending in 1959 geneem veral as gevolg van Suid-Afrika se toenemende rassistiese beleidsrigtings. In dieselfde jaar is 'n Komitee van Eenheidsonderhandeling deur beide Kerke aangestel. Dit was duidelik dat die verdeelde geestelike uitlewing 'n bespotting van beide Presbiteriaanse sowel as Christelike getuienis gemaak het. Daar was volgehoue konflik binne areas waar werk oorvleuel het en Swartmense het nie verstaan waarom daar twee Presbiteriaanse Kerke was nie. Hulle het dan ook na willekeur van Kerk verander ten einde dissiplinêre stappe te voorkom.

Alhoewel daar 'n begeerte vir die vereniging van die twee kerke was is dit ernstig belemmer deur o.a.:

1. Die wette van die land, die regsbeleid van die Regering, afsonderlike ontwikkeling en 'n on-christelike houding van Blankes teenoor Swartes.
2. 'n Verwonge begrip van die Kerk (as Liggaam van Christus) onder gemeentelêde, hoofsaaklik as gevolg van 'n gebrek aan teologiese refleksie.
3. Agterdog en wantroue en
4. 'n onvoldoende of selfs totale gebrek aan inligting oor eenheidsonderhandelings. Besluite is slegs in die topstruktuur geneem en daar was weinig of geen insette van die afsonderlike gemeentes nie.

Bogenoemde faktore het alle pogings tot eenheid ontspoor, daar was werklike vrese aan beide kante en Swartes het 'n totale wantroue in Blankes ontwikkel. Die onderhandeling het in 1973 tot 'n einde gekom toe die Presbiteriaanse Kerk van Suidelike Afrika ten gunste van en die "Bantu Presbyterian Church" teen eenwording gestem het.

'n Verdere poging tot eenwording is in 1994 aangewend. Teen hierdie tyd was die landswette reeds gewysig en beide Kerke het die onderlinge behoefte aan mekaar besef. Verskille van die verlede is aangespreek en die "United Presbyterian Church in South Africa" is op 26 September 1999 gestig. Hierdie eenwording was nie te laat nie en dit kan werklike betekenis vir mense op grondvlak hê. Mense moet egter gehelp word om vertroue te ontwikkel, 'n sterk teologiese basis moet ontwikkel word en hulle moet gemobiliseer word tot 'n beter begrip van die kerk.

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Akukho qili linokuzikhoth'umhlana is a Xhosa saying that to scratch ones back one needs a second person. Without the help of others there are things we cannot do. I wish to thank everyone who has been helpful, in whatever way, in making this work reach its final stage. Thanks to the JL Zwane Memorial Church for taking so much pain by carrying on without me. My family Zethu, Hlalumi and Nonkuthalo for all their support and encouragement. A trusted friend and brother, Prof. Jan du Toit for pushing me to far even when I have felt "genoeg is genoeg"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	i
OPSOMMING	iii
GLOSSARY	x
 INTRODUCTION	 xi
 CHAPTER 1	
 THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT, AFRIKANER AND BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCHES	 1
1.1 The church as the body of Christ	9
1.2 The church as the people of God	12
1.3 The church as the Messianic community	13
References	16
 CHAPTER 2	
 A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FOUNDING OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN SOUTH AFRICA	 18
2.1. The early days	18
2.1.1. At the Cape Province	18
2.1.2 Growth in the Cape Colony	25
2.1.3 The Rhodesian Congregations	26
2.1.4 Summary	26
References	28
 CHAPTER 3	
 THE FORMATION OF THE PCSA IN 1897	 29
3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION	29
3.1.1 The divided witness of Scottish Presbyterianism.	29
3.1.2 Overlap in the work done.	30
3.1.3 The need for a South African court unifying different Presbyterian Congregations.	30
3.1.4 Talks about a union between two mission Presbyteries.	32
3.1.5 The process followed in unity discussions.	34
3.1.5.1 The Scriptures:	35
3.1.5.2 Subordinate standards:	36
3.1.5.3 Church and State:	36
3.1.5.4 Worship:	36
3.1.5.5 The name of the New Church:	37

3.1.5.6	Constitution, Jurisdiction & Co	37
3.1.5.7	The exercise of Discipline.	38
3.1.5.8	Financial Relationship with the Mother Churches.	38
3.2	The Federal Council and the formation of the PCSA.	40
3.3	The Draft Basis of Union.	41
3.3.1	The Question of Salaries.	45
3.4	The Historical Event	48
3.4.1	Presbyteries and congregations represented	48
3.5	Summary	55
	References	58

CHAPTER 4

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS AND THE FORMATION OF THE BANTU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH **59**

4.1	Presbyterian Missions	59
4.1.1	Uniting the Mission Work of the United Free Church of Scotland	63
4.1.2	The Name of the proposed Church	65
4.1.3	Membership within the Courts of the Church	65
4.1.4	The Relationship between the New Church and the Presbyterian Church of South Africa	66
4.1.5	The date of the consummation of union	66
4.1.6	Convocation	67
a.	Presbytery of Kaffraria (United Presbyterian)	67
b.	The Synod of Kaffraria (Free Church)	67
c.	Presbytery of Mankazana	67
d.	Mission Council of Natal	67
e.	Election of a Moderator	68
f.	The first General Assembly	68
g.	Clerks of Assembly	69
h.	Reception of Deputies and Chiefs	69
i.	Name of the church	70
j.	Church treasury	70
k.	Creed and Formulae	70
l.	Relations with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa	71
m.	Members of the higher courts of the church	71
n.	Presbyteries	72
o.	Committees	73
p.	Finances	76
q.	Schools	77
3.2	Conclusion	77
	References	79

CHAPTER 5

TALKS ABOUT A POSSIBILITY FOR UNITY 1923-1959 **81**

5.1	Introduction	81
-----	--------------	----

5.2	Practical problems experienced	83
5.3	Summary	96
	References	100

CHAPTER 6

SERIOUS UNITY TALKS BEGIN (1959-1971) 102

6.1	Introduction	102
6.2	Representatives of Presbyteries:	109
6.3	Book of Order.	112
6.4	Relationships with the Mission Council of the Church of Scotland.	113
6.5	Name of the New Church.	114
6.6	Status of Charges	114
6.7	Reconstruction of Assembly and Presbytery Committees.	115
6.8	Stipends	117
6.9	Amalgamation of Funds.	120
6.10	Training of Ministers and Evangelists.	123
6.11	Organisations of the Church.	125
6.12	Service Books.	126
6.13	Readjustment of smaller congregations in overlapping areas.	126
6.14	Joint Moderators in Presbytery and Assembly.	127
6.15	Credal Basis.	128
6.16	Contact between the Churches:	129
6.17	Properties:	129
6.18	Drastic change for one or the other Church would relate to:	141
6.19	The draft basis of union	142
	References	156

CHAPTER 7

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND TRADITIONS 159

7.1	The Women's Christian Association	160
7.1.1	Financial assistance to the work of the church	161
7.1.2	The use of uniforms	163
7.1.3	A competitive and divided witness	166
7.2	The Girls Christian Association	168
7.3	The Young Men's Guild	168
7.3.1	Reason for existence	169
7.3.2	Uniform	171
7.4	The Youth Fellowship	172
	References	174

CHAPTER 8

DEALING WITH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, PREJUDICE AND BIASES: A REAL CHALLENGE FOR CHURCH UNITY 175

8.1	Cultural diversity, a problem for union	175
-----	---	-----

8.2	Destroying barriers and building bridges	178
8.3	A sharing of impressions about one another	182
8.4	Christian identity and culture	184
8.5	A new identity in Christ	186
8.6	Acknowledge work done	189
	References	193

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION	194
-------------------	------------

9.1	The laws of the land	194
9.2	Lack of theological reflection	195
9.3	Suspicion and lack of trust	196
9.4	Inadequate or lack of information on the negotiation process	196
9.5	Another attempt on union	197
	References	203

Appendix I	204
-------------------	------------

**Proposed procedure in dealing with the Draft Basis of Union
On its presentation to the churches 1963**

Appendix II	207
--------------------	------------

**Suggested scheme for the re-allocation of presbyteries in the
Bantu Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church of
Southern Africa, 1959**

Appendix III	208
---------------------	------------

The Synod, 1964

Appendix IV	216
--------------------	------------

Rev. E F C Mashava's paper, 1971

Appendix V	221
Revised Draft Basis of Union, 1970	

REFERENCE LIST	230
-----------------------	------------

GLOSSARY

Kaffraria (double 'f'):	Used as reference to the Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
Kafraria (one 'f'):	Usually refers to the Free Church of Scotland Synod.
BPC:	Bantu Presbyterian Church changed the name into the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA) in 1982.
PCSA:	Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (known as the Presbyterian Church of South Africa until 1958 when the membership of congregations in Zimbabwe was recognised and the name changed from South Africa to Southern Africa).
African, Native, Black:	These words are referred to as used at the time at various periods in history of our country. They depict South African political life. Such usage reflects the context at the time under discussion.
European, white:	Same as above.
Negro:	Same as above.
Church & church:	Church with capital 'C' is used whenever reference is made to a particular denomination or the two Churches involved in unity talks and church with a small 'c' is used as reference to church in general.

INTRODUCTION

A. INTENTION

Hopes of a united church were raised when unity talks between the Bantu Presbyterian Church (later known as the Reformed Presbyterian Church) and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) began on Friday the 8th day of May 1959, within the Saambou buildings in Johannesburg. A Joint Committee of the PCSA and the BPC was meeting with a mandate to discuss a possible basis of union and report to their various General Assemblies (minutes of the Negotiations Committee 1959). It soon became evident that it was not an easy undertaking. On the 2nd of August 1962 the two Churches welcomed the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (TPC) as a member of the Tripartite Negotiations (minutes of the Negotiations Committee 2 August 1962). The three Presbyterian Churches met from time to time until it became clear in 1973 that a union was not possible. This research will focus on two churches, the Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC) and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. Reference will be made, from time to time, to the contribution made by members of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church in the search for unity. In 1973 the PCSA voted in favour of union with a resounding majority and the Bantu Presbyterian Church decided against such a union on reasons that will be discussed. Both Churches, however, re-affirmed the desirability of a union.

A significant number of the membership of both churches is not aware of the problems that stood on the way of a union. It is even more disturbing to note that those who are presently involved in these talks are not well informed about what has been done. The intention of this research is to underscore and tell the story of what actually happened, reviewing the full course of the process with reference to related problems. It is hoped that the information herein contained will assist those whose hearts are filled with a desire and a hope of a United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa as well as other processes of Church unity. The fascinating manner in which unity negotiations were handled, problems encountered with solutions suggested help sharpen our minds on what we could do better.

What happened is now history. This thesis deals with the Church as the subject matter of this history. It looks at how the two Churches conducted unity talks and the challenges they faced in attempting a union. It looks at the process theologically. It is crucial that obstacles that stood on the way of union be identified

and evaluated in the light of what the Church. These obstacles were, among other things:

1. The laws of the land
2. Lack of theological reflection
3. Suspicion and lack of trust
4. Inadequate or lack of information on the negotiation process

A closer look at the records of the negotiating team reflects that there was fear and lack of openness among participants. This was the case in all spheres of life under the previous government. What is of paramount importance now is that people must share memories of the past, face realities of the present and inspire expectations of the future without any fear of victimization. Better channels and ways of wrestling with the problems that stood in the way of a union must be opened. The fact that the proposed union demands wisdom as well as effort on the part of both churches must be acknowledged. Suffice to say black and white Christians need a real change of heart and a new identity, a new sense of belonging to one another as Children of the same family of God, to be able to embrace each other.

B. THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

There were two Presbyterian Churches, the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (PCSA) and the Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC) with the same Scottish origins. The former was established in 1897 (Ogilvie, 1925, 234). It largely grew out of independent Presbyterian settler congregations that were established by Presbyterian communities settling in South Africa since the first British occupation of the Cape Colony between 1795 and 1803. There were also black congregations that belonged to the mission work of the United Presbyterian Church (Scottish) forming the PCSA in 1897. Ogilvie observes that the PCSA had to face up the problem of adjusting the relation of Black and White in the Church Courts right from its inception (Ogilvie, 1925, 235). Since the 1843 Disruption of the Scottish Church mission work in South Africa was in two parts. There were missions belonging to the Free Church of Scotland and those of the United Presbyterian Church. The latter came into existence in 1847 (Burleigh, 1983, 362). For reasons that will be discussed in Chapter 2 missions of the Free Church refused to be part of the formation of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa in 1897.

The Bantu Presbyterian Church was formed in 1923 not as a secessionist church (Wilson & Perrot, 1973, 390). It was the coming together of Scottish missions of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church. Those of the United Presbyterian Church that had become part of the PCSA in 1897 were furnished with disjunction certificates by the PCSA General Assembly to join the new church being formed if they wished to do so. However, some members of the PCSA were disappointed at the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. They had taken it for granted that the natural Christian response for the Scottish missions was to let themselves be incorporated into the already existing Presbyterian Church. Two Presbyterian Churches were in existence along side one another.

Scottish missionary congregations formed an indigenous Church in 1923. The 1924 edition of *Imvo Zabantsundu*, a Xhosa newspaper, published by John Tengo Jabavu since 1884, reports that this was a great event and a realization of what African patriots had always fought for: a church in which the Black members, officers and considerations would determine what is good for the African Christian without any white presence. It was reportedly envied by some ministers of other denominations where such black leadership was unheard of, according to Jabavu the editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu* (July 24, 1923). Although it is claimed that this church was never formed with racial separation in mind, reports of this event testify to the contrary. A black Church was formed. To keep some form of connection between these two Presbyterian churches, the BPC and the PCSA an arrangement was made that six delegates from each Church should attend the General Assembly of the other Church (Ogilvie 1925, 236). White domination, which would have been the case had incorporation into the PCSA not been avoided, was detested. However, white presence did not diminish overnight. This Church remained under the leadership and influence of Scottish missionaries for a long time with a relative involvement of blacks in leadership positions (see minutes of the BPC General Assemblies and the composition of her committees over the years). Attitudes and images developed over the years due to black and white relations in the country and within the Churches rendering the task of uniting the Churches more difficult. While mistrust between black and white characterised relationships nationally, relations between race groups within the Christian churches were not any better.

The Bantu Presbyterian Church was and still is largely rural. During its formation there was an agreement with the Presbyterian Church in South Africa that it will concentrate in rural areas whilst the PCSA would restrict herself to urban areas (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1923).

Members of the BPC moving into towns in search of work opportunities preferred to maintain their church connections, thus forcing the Bantu Presbyterian Church to start congregations for its members in the cities. The congregations formed, constantly found themselves in unwitting conflict with congregations of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, an experience that was unheard of in most rural congregations.

Unity of the two Churches was always considered and talked about. A formal process of union started in 1959 and broke down in 1973. This thesis concentrates on the period mentioned, 1959-1973. It investigates why these unity talks failed. Any attempt on uniting any denominations is always welcomed as good news. However it usually takes a lot of time and energy to get to the desired results. Such was the experience of the PCSA and the BPC. The story will be narrated and investigated.

Unity discussions focussed on the life and work of both churches. There were grey areas on both Churches. It was very crucial that there be trust and openness about the state of the problems confronting the Churches at the time. Congregations of both churches, especially those in urban areas, had much more to say on the proposed union as they had more physical contact with each other.

The two churches represented two different cultural traditions, the European and the African, with separate ways of doing things. Can someone worship in a second language? Is cultural relativeness essential to hold Christians together? Is it possible to have a structure that would allow unity with diversity? The above questions could not be avoided. A united church would have implications for the life and work of local congregations. Intensive work was done through the committees of the General Assemblies of both Churches between 1959 and 1973

C. HYPOTHESES

Unity talks between the two churches failed between 1959 and 1973 because of the following reasons:

1. The discriminatory nature of the Laws of the Land stood as a barrier to union. The political situation of our country was not conducive to such a union. Black people were nobodies. There were doubts among black people whether a union would bring about the dignity they had lost. They had no confidence in their

white brothers and sisters. The Church allowed politics to dictate her life and work, imposing enormous limitations regarding her witness. Black and white relations in Church and outside sent wrong signals that a union was impossible. D.V. Sikutshwa, the then General Secretary of the Bantu Presbyterian Church argued that *"union is an absolute impossibility."* (Wilson & Perrot, 1939) The discriminatory nature of the laws of the land contributed much to spoil and derail these negotiations.

2. There was a lack of Theological reflection. Throughout the history of negotiations there is no record of any theological hermeneutic to critique political as well as socio-economic processes of the period under question. Such discussions on unity ought to be guided and determined by a Biblical understanding of God's purpose for the Church of Jesus Christ. A critical evaluation of these negotiations will question the extent to which role players were committed to the Gospel imperative of union or oneness in Christ.
3. Information on unity talks did not reach every member of the two churches and the grassroots members were not directly involved. A lot of what reached some members was very distorted. Too often it is argued that it was the PCSA that failed to agree on a union. This study will attempt to put the facts right. The majority of the predominantly white PCSA voted in favour of a union by a large majority. This would have left whites a distinct minority in the General Assembly of a United Church as well as in numerous Presbyteries.
4. The study will clearly state that nothing can ever justify a separation or a fragmentation of the body of Christ. No one church can be blamed for the failed union. Both churches are called out, set apart to a Christ like teaching and life. The challenge is that unity talks should continue until union is achieved.

In this research I will argue that unity is possible first and foremost as a response of the churches to the Gospel demand. It is a Scriptural imperative. It is essential for members of both churches to sacrifice their pride of race, sad past and renew their commitment to the Scriptural indicative and demand. The 1959 to 1973 round of talks failed because both churches were not really committed. A real commitment to the process would have meant a better understanding of issues at stake. Black members welcomed the discussions as they afforded them the opportunity to rub shoulders with white Christians and share their concerns arising from the political context. White members did not always understand or respond positively to

frustrations experienced by their black brothers and sisters. Negotiations were characterized by a serious lack of honesty, openness and commitment. Suspicion and lack of trust stood in the way. This resulted to a lack of genuine dialogue between the participants.

I will argue that these problems will continue to hamper future discussions.

D. METHOD APPLIED

The dissertation evaluates the challenge posed by the Ecumenical Movement, taking into account historical developments, such as the rise of Afrikaner nationalism as well as Black nationalism which led to a seriously fragmented society in our country (Chapter 1). It wrestles with the theological implications of such challenges towards the end of the same chapter. It presents the historical information regarding the origins (Chapter 2), developments within the PCSA (Chapter 3) and events leading to the formation of the BPC (Chapter 4). Since the formation of the BPC in 1923 there have been attempts to unite the two Churches and this is dealt with in Chapter 5. An account of what actually happened during the negotiations between the years 1959 and 1973 is discussed in Chapter 6. The different church organizations and traditions of the two churches are discussed in Chapter 7. This Chapter looks at the pivotal role played by these organization and attempts to warn the two churches to take their theology (theology from below) very seriously. The Church has been very slow in addressing problems posed by cultural diversity. Questions on how to deal with this complex issue are raised in Chapter 8. Chapter 9 covers the conclusion. The laws of the land derailed any consideration of union. They contributed to suspicion and lack of trust. There was very little theological reflection done and all that was done at this level did not really reach every member of the BPC and the PCSA. A number of historical documents are included in the Appendix's.

The thesis researches, analyzes and evaluates the information historically as it presents itself through the minutes of the negotiating team. Theological questions as well as input cannot be ignored.

South African political life determined the relationships between race groups, and churches were no exception. Leadership within the BPC was black, during an era when public and official black leadership in general was unwelcome. Any union with a white led church would have necessitated a lot of adjustments. It is obvious too

that unity negotiation provided the platform for a struggle against oppression. However, not every member of the negotiating team was happy with free expression of frustrations by black participants. Some thought any reference to the problems posed by the laws of the land was just a feeble excuse. These were concerns that were indeed very legitimate and needing attention at the highest level of Church government.

The research is conducted by way of a Church historical method. Both churches had different experiences or separate histories and these contributed in some way to the perpetual separation from one another. History sets the context to which both churches are related and are separated. Theology critiques the extent of this relatedness and separation as it failed to bring the two Churches together in spite of the common identity as the body of Christ.

E. SOURCES USED

The research and analysis will be done in terms of primary and secondary sources. There is very little written material on the history of both churches. Dalziel's thesis on the Origins and Growth of Presbyterian Ordinances of Worship among the English-speaking South Africans prior to the formation of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa in 1897 has been used as the main source of information. The rest is listed in the bibliography.

The minutes of the Negotiations Committee as well as letters by individual members of the committee have been traced and collected. These can be found at the Research Institute on Christianity in South Africa, University of Cape Town. However, I cannot claim to have laid my hands on all the material regarding these negotiations. Nevertheless, I have managed to collect the sources to enable this study. There is no doubt that some material could still be somewhere in the hands of certain individuals. It is of utmost importance that all available material be gathered and kept in a central place.

F. OUTLINE

In short the study will

1. Evaluates the contribution made by the Ecumenical Movement, the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, Black Nationalism (Chapter 1 pages 1-9) and revisits our understanding of ecclesiology.
2. Give an historical account of the events and circumstances leading to the existence of the two Presbyterian Churches (Chapter 2), the search for a union (Chapter 5 and 6) and the reasons for the breakdown of unity talks in 1973 (Chapter 6).
3. Acknowledge and survey work done during unity negotiations from 1959 to 1973 (Chapter 5 and 6).
4. Advocate a commitment to embracing every member of the two Churches in the search for organic union including the organizations (Chapter 7).
5. Argue that unity was almost impossible due to apartheid policies and differences of race and culture but could have been achieved had white Christian demonstrated solidarity with black Christians in their experience (Chapter 8 and 9).

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CHAPTER 1

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT, AFRIKANER AND BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCHES.

Twentieth century Christianity has been characterised by the quest for church unity. The Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 marked the beginning of a concern by the world church to confront divisive issues of doctrine, polity and practice in the life and work of the churches (Manschreck, 1964, 265). This resulted in the formation of a number of ecumenical councils leading to the Constituent Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 in Amsterdam (Manschreck, 1964, 268). During the same period we see the rise of the Afrikaner civil religion as well as the rise of Black Nationalism. I propose to begin with the work of the ecumenical movement, the World Council of Churches in particular, and the challenge it continued to pose to churches in South Africa. I will make reference to the rise of Black Nationalism as I think it also contributed in hardening the hearts of some black people as they pondered the question of a union with a white church.

The Faith and Order Commission, which was to become one of the main agencies of the WCC, was given the task to proclaim the essential oneness of the church of Christ and to keep prominently before the World Council and the churches the obligation to manifest that unity and its urgency for the work of evangelism. It was to study questions of faith, order and worship with the relevant social, cultural, political, racial and other factors in their bearing on the unity of the church. Amsterdam made it clear that the church as the Body of Christ is a unity, which makes it impossible for us to forget each other or to be content with our differences (Castro, 1988, 351). God has given to His people in Jesus Christ a unity which is His creation and not our achievement. The church is part of the gospel, and unity belongs to the church, to the body of Christ (Bilheimer, 1980, 92).

The ecumenical movement, with its focus on a credible witness of the world church affected most member churches on an increasing scale. What it attempted to do was to challenge the churches, in their particular situations, to live out a life consistent with the witness of Scripture and to manifest more visibly the unity which is already given in and through Jesus Christ (Castro, 1988, 350). Churches were challenged to acknowledge their conformity to worldly standards of success, class division, economic rivalry, segregation by race, as a shame (Castro, 1988, 351).

Meanwhile South Africa was committed to racial segregation that would have serious implications for the black population in our country. In 1948 South Africa witnessed the victory of the National Party led by D.F. Malan, who had been a minister of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (Hope, 1981, 31). His gift to the world was a new word and policy "apartheid". He argued that race groups should be kept apart, and allowed to develop thus. Measures to consolidate whites geographically, economically and politically were intensified. The National party ideologues turned to Afrikaner theologians for a scriptural and theological justification for their racist policies which they readily obtained, to the dismay of other Christians including some NGK theologians and ministers. Afrikaner churches thus provided a theological base upon which separate development could flourish (Hope, 1981, 32). In 1948, the Die Kerkbode stated that "As a Church, we have always worked purposefully for the separation of the races. In this regard apartheid can rightfully be called a Church policy". (Villa-Vicencio, & de Gruchy, 1985, 59). Unfortunately, apartheid was embraced by a Church with a great deal of influence in South Africa at this time.

There were some NGK theologians like Professor Ben Marais who argued that apartheid could not be presented as a biblical obligation although practical considerations may necessitate its implementation (Marais, 1952, 150). This points to the fact that there were mixed feelings within the NGK on how the Church should handle the race issue. But the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk, in practice as well as theologically, supported Apartheid.

The National Party committed itself to "preserving and safeguarding the white race" (Bunting, 1964, 114). Black South Africans were divided into ethnically defined groups. This resulted in the most brutal and costly programme of forced removal of Africans into areas zoned for them. Race relations deteriorated in all walks of life. The identification of apartheid with Christianity, as within the NGK deepened the conflict. The attitude of the NGK was seen by some Africans as representing the general opinion of white Christians. Was unity between a black church and a white church possible?

The World Council of Churches on various occasions, urged member churches to eliminate racist practices in their own ranks, to recognize their involvement in racial tensions in the world, and to denounce the violation of human rights through discrimination on grounds of race, colour and culture. Failure to do so would render the witness of churches weak. Would it be possible for any church in South Africa at the time to embrace the New Delhi statement that:

"We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people" (Visser't Hooft, 1962, 119).

The policy of apartheid featured prominently in the WCC's agenda. At almost every meeting of the Central Committee from the sixties a debate was held on the appropriate action to be taken. Although some would want to think that declarations made by WCC officers made little impression on white opinion these challenges could not be ignored. Some churches were challenged to join the struggle for justice and peace. The message was clear and unambiguous, the church's most basic way of communicating the gospel is through the quality of its communal life. The love of Christ becomes knowable and visible through its power to draw people out of isolation and sinful separation, out of pride of race, language, authority or sex, into a community where all are made equal with the humblest that all may share the glory of the Son (Bilheimer, 1980, 119).

In 1950 the Central Committee of the WCC's proposal to send a multi-racial delegation to South Africa was rejected by the NGK, preferring a visit by W A Visser't Hooft, the General Secretary (Balía, 1989, 11). During this visit he observed that the integration of 'Bantu' society was the critical problem. Regarding the witness of the English-speaking churches he noted the discrepancy between the multi-racial principle these churches advocated, and the realities of church life. Church life was characterized by white domination (Balía, 1989, 11). In 1960, a secretariat on Racial and Ethnic Relations was set up within the Department on Church and Society of the WCC (Balía, 1989, 12). This development was to intensify the struggle against apartheid.

The same year at Sharpeville an African crowd, including women and children stood before armed police protesting against the pass laws. Sixty seven were killed, many of them shot in the back as they fled from the scene (Balía, 1989, 16). The news spread world wide. The crisis led to the Cottesloe Consultation, a conference convened by the South African member churches of the WCC, with a multi-racial

delegation. While differing opinions were shared during the conference, the majority of delegates, including those of the NGK, accepted the final statement which rejected unjust discrimination, argued for African people's right to own land as well as for equal work opportunities and education. Cottlesloe stated unambiguously that no one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any church on the grounds of colour or race. The spiritual unity among all who are in Christ must find visible expression in acts of common worship and witness, and in fellowship and consultation on matters of common concern. (Strassberger, 1971, 356 ff).

Through pressure from Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoed, the synods of the NGK rejected the report and submitted to government pressure. This led to the break between the NGK and the WCC in 1961. This withdrawal was, in the words of Ans J van der Bent, "a reminder for Christians in the ecumenical movement of the difficulty in resolving the race problem." (van der Bent, 1980, 2).

The Nationalist response to the African agitation following Sharpeville was even more repressive than previously. African leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Mangaliso Sobukwe and many others were jailed for life. Some left the country for fear of their lives. Organizations were banned making legitimate organisation against the government impossible. Some Africans hoped that churches, the English speaking churches in particular, would speak out much louder against the system. Sadly that did not happen sufficiently.

The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, like most English-speaking churches, was not radical in condemning the racist policies of the South African Government. The Church and Nation Committee which was supposed to keep the church informed on social, economic and political issues directed its energies towards problems of the abuse of liquor, gambling and family life as is reflected in the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The struggle of the oppressed was given very little attention especially before 1960. The church was reluctant to make statements on race relations for fear of division as they could not speak with one voice. Some confined the church's social witness to charitable works, a commitment to 'supplying people with eggs rather than giving them the hens'. They feared any involvement in the ambiguities of politics. There were those who attempted to raise their voices against injustice. But their commitment was more of words than action.

What was the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa's response to Sharpeville? The 1960 Assembly statement on race relations begins with the claim "that every man is of unique value to God.... differences of colour, race, class or cultural background are irrelevant to Christianity in any fundamental sense" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, 1960, 117). The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa acknowledged the diversity of humanity which involves varieties in colour, race, custom and language together with marked differences in ability, cultural development and standard of living. But this posed a contradiction in their anthropology. They criticized the Bantu Education Act, the Group Areas Act, the Job Reservation Act, and others, but noted that "It is not doubted that much of the 'apartheid' legislation is a sincere attempt to solve problems and to create a reasonable way of life" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, 1960, 120). They noted the disquiet which had been a marked feature of inter-racial tension but blamed it primarily on how the laws of the land were being enforced, as well as the attitude of those whose task it was to enforce them. The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa's position on the laws of the land, during this period, was rather confusing. White Christians in general were accused of callousness by some African Christians.

The 1966 WCC sponsored Geneva conference on Church and Society was unique in the history of the impact of the ecumenical movement in this country. It was charged with advising the churches and the WCC on its ministry in a world undergoing revolutionary social change. Racial discrimination was recognized by the participants as one of the greatest immediate dangers to humanity, based not only on fear and resentment but also upon economic self-interest. It was noted that since many whites in Africa refused to accept Africans as brothers and sisters, Africans often failed to accept whites on the same terms (World Conference on Church and Society Report, 1967, 136).

Christians and churches were called upon to multiply efforts to ease tensions between local citizens and strangers in their midst, to encourage the legitimate aspirations of suppressed majorities and minorities, and to "support all practicable measures aimed at changing any political and economic order which reflects the denial of political rights or economic opportunity, segregation, discrimination, or other suppression" (World Conference of Church and Society Report, 1967, 137). The message and the challenge of this Conference were brought home by the Rev Beyers Naude and Christian Council of South Africa secretary, Bishop Bill Burnett. Regional consultations throughout South Africa were organised thus setting the

agenda for theological debate and social action within the WCC member churches. Such an initiative was aimed at confronting the churches with the demand to live out the Christian faith.

A strong prophetic voice also came from the Uppsala Assembly of 1968.

"We heard the cry of those who long for peace: of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice; of the victims of discrimination who claim human dignity; and of the increasing millions who seek for the meaning of life. God hears these cries and judges us. He also speaks the liberating word. We hear him say - "I go before you". Now that Christ carries away your sinful past, the Spirit frees you to live for others. Anticipate my kingdom in my joyful worship and daring acts. The Lord says "I make all this new" (Goodall, 1972, 5).

The WCC sought solidarity with the refugees of war, victims of natural disasters and racial conflict. It stood with the poor and the oppressed African masses of South Africa. This constant call to make the church visibly active in every place, becoming the voice for those the voiceless, and a home where every one will be at home, did not escape the attention of the church in South Africa. It made disunity within ecclesiastical life a glaring fact. Churches felt the need for closer working relationships. Those who had already begun unity talks were to press even harder for the ideal of a united church.

In 1968 Uppsala observed that racism is linked with economic and political exploitation. The Assembly urged that churches be actively concerned for the economic and political well being of exploited groups so that their statements and actions may be relevant. In order that the victims of racism may regain a sense of their own worth and be enabled to determine their own future, the churches were requested to make economic and educational resources available to the underprivileged groups for their development to full participation in the social and economic life of their communities. They should also withdraw from institutions that perpetuate racism (Castro, 1988, 344). A call was made that churches must work for change of those political processes which prevent the victims of racism from participating fully in the civic and governmental structures of their countries. As most Christians suffered discrimination within church structures, churches were urged to eradicate all forms of racism from their own life. The WCC fought all forms of racial exploitation especially through the much publicised work of the Programme to Combat Racism. Thus throughout the seventies the WCC tried to help its member churches towards greater understanding, deeper commitment and more courageous

action in the struggle for racial justice. It provided many opportunities for contact, consultation and dialogue with the leaders of the oppressed (Goodall, 1968, 5ff).

The Programme to Combat Racism must be seen in relation to the World Council of Churches' commitment to the search for church union. Increasingly during the 1970's, the Commission on Faith and Order, whose task it was to promote union, recognized that the search for union and the struggle against racism were interconnected. This was not always recognized in church union negotiations in South Africa or elsewhere though it was noted by the Church Unity Commission in South Africa at the beginning of the seventies (Paton, 1975, 60ff).

The ecumenical movement thus raised hopes of providing the church with tools to overcome the divisions both ecclesiastically and racially. But sadly the good work done did not reach those for whom it was intended, at grassroots level. Discussions remained within the leadership, and how the leadership responded to this challenge depended on their attitudes to the ecumenical movement. However, some took this challenge seriously. The hopes of a rapid end to division served as an incentive to work harder. The Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa like most English speaking churches committed itself to a search for church unity, not only with other Presbyterians but also with other denominations such as the Methodists, Congregationalists and the Church of the Province of South Africa. The result of this commitment was the Church Unity Commission formed in 1968. On 24 November 1974 the member churches celebrated their acceptance of a Declaration of intention to seek unity. They undertook to seek agreement on a common form of ministry of word and sacraments, to admit to the Lord's table communicants of the partner churches and to work for increasing cooperation in all areas of church life (Best, 1992, 13). Most Africans, however, saw little importance in a commitment to a search for ecclesiastical unity. They were concerned that the church's energies be mobilised for social action and the liberation of the oppressed before any talk about church unity. Many black Christians dismissed the Commission's approach as western, elitist and out of touch with reality (Best, 1992, 13). The feeling was that it would be unwise to go into an ecclesial union in chains, as it would deprive them of a full participation in the life and work of a united Church.

During the same period under review we observe a tense struggle against apartheid through the rise of Black Nationalism. Urbanization as well as education was very key to promoting African Nationalism. Christianity played a pivotal role in this aspect in the sense that educated black Christian leaders identified very well with the

experience of black Christians in Countries such as the United States of America (Hope, 1981, 37). The struggle of the Negro's was the seen as posing a challenge to all black people to rise and learn from one another as brothers and sisters in the struggle. This led to the emergence of independent African churches. These were, in most cases, a result of protest against white domination (Hope, 1981, 37). This dissatisfaction about discriminatory and divisive tendencies by some white Christian leaders goes back to the Nehemiah Tile's conflict with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in the 1870's (Oosthuizen, 1981, 102).

Many such conflicts followed. Oosthuizen remarks that "Tile set in motion a movement which would react strongly against white control working at the expense of African potentialities, initiative, self-determination and understanding of their own situation and their people. It helped to prepare the soil for the formation of the South African Native National Congress in 1912 (Oosthuizen, 1981, 103). Oosthuizen observes that this Congress which was renamed the African National Congress in 1925 was formed because blacks were completely ignored with regard to very important socio-economic and political issues in the country. They were not at all part of the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (Oosthuizen, 1981, 103).

This attitude was also prevalent in ecclesial circles as Saayman equally observes that even as late as 1960, at Cottesloe, the Black Christian voice was still very much obscure. He makes the point that though the heritage of Ntsikana, Tile, and Soga was not appreciated in mission church structures it was kept alive outside the church. "Great contemporary Black Christian leaders such as Prof. Z. K. Matthews and Chief Albert Luthuli were prophets not yet honoured in the White-dominated South African Churches (Saayman, 1991, 79)." The ANC membership was very diverse in terms of ideologies, religion, and race and the main movement of African nationalism never embraced black racism. Whilst Afrikaner Nationalism was exclusive the ANC encouraged interracial cooperation with an emphasis of solidarity among the oppressed (Hope, 1981, 38). In the leadership of the ANC there were a number of theologians such as the first President John Dube, Zacheus Mahabane. Whilst their active involvement, in the fight against injustice, was welcomed by the black majority, it made no sense to a number of churches. A number of events led to serious confrontation between black and white in the country, violent disorder as well as nonviolent demonstrations and strikes continued. African nationalism empowered boys and girls, men and women with the courage to even stand unarmed before the machine gun in the fight for justice. Most black people were disillusioned with the churches. Was a union of the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian

Church of Southern Africa possible? What was it that needed to be done first to convince disillusioned blacks that white Christians were committed to a union where blacks will not be discriminated against. All these questions, as was the case with the ecumenical movement, will always force us to ask searching questions about our understanding of the message of the Scriptures. It is clear that there was very little reflection on the Word of God for the churches during the whole negotiation's process. The call to a union requires that both churches work to establish and maintain an open community of theological discourse as they seek to find one another and to learn to witness together in such a divided society.

It is important that we revisit Scripture, ask what God wants done but before we wrestle with that, may I appeal to the African understanding of "ukuzalana" (being relatives or a family or a clan). I want to suggest that in and through Christ, God has made us relatives. We are related to one another. We are a clan. The people of God can be described as a family clan, a theocratic nation, an institutional state, and afflicted remnant, and a religious community. An African understanding of relatedness lays emphasis on what is common between two or more people or groups that are related to one another whilst acknowledging what is unique to each one of them. These are usually blood relations no matter how distant they are. Relatives have to explain by tracing how related they are. It may be a relation that is either maternal or paternal. That which is common becomes very important as a binding factor. All other things which do not enhance the common bond are ignored. Most Africans would take a lot of effort to want to find out about relatives. Asking very searching questions on meeting another person too often does this. This would go on and on until one says: "Tyhini! Siyazalana! Which means: "Wow we relatives!"

1.1 The church as the body of Christ.

We recognize that the expression "body of Christ" can be used in a very flexible and elastic manner (Minear, 1960, 175). However, we shall use it as referring to members of the church as belonging to the body of the risen Christ thus constituting the body of Christ. Paul describes the church in Corinth (1 Cor 12:12f) and in Rome (Rom 12:4f) as the body of Christ. He uses the body figure to describe the relatedness of Christians as members of Christ and of each other. By presenting the

image of the body, Paul wants to encourage members of these communities to live in unity, with mutual help and sympathy (Kung 1968, 228). In the interest of the body, members should function harmoniously, manifesting a mutual concern for one another, and participating all together in the sorrow and joy of each. Paul links the unity in the body to the unity of the Spirit and unity in Christ through baptism. Because believers, through baptism and in the Spirit, are members of the body of Christ...they ought in their everyday, lives to live as members of the one body and realize the unity of the one body (Kung 1968, 229). All are baptized into one body, a baptism that displaces solidarity of race and class. One has to wrestle with the real meaning of Christian solidarity, being members of Christ and of one another in a country divided on race, language and culture.

Paul wants to affirm, first and foremost, the unity of all sorts and conditions of people (Bartlett 1993, 47). We are God's Children (1 John 3:2). Siyazalana. This fact can be traced from the manger, to Calvary and the empty tomb. The work of God in and through Christ made us one holy nation, sons and daughters, heirs of God's kingdom. We are a family. We are one. Paul's sense of this oneness implies a sharing of pain and suffering to the extent that if one is oppressed we all experience it in a very real way. The image of the body articulates the reality of unity in the plurality of suffering and glory, and attributes to the service of Jesus, the work of God, and the gifts of the Spirit in a new age (Minear, 1960, 193). We need to seek visible unity so that we may witness as members of God's big family. This would assist the church's mission of making disciples. It would bring a sense of credibility in a country where the church has been instrumental in dividing communities.

The description of the church as the Body of Christ can be understood in the light of a union with Christ. Christ as the last Adam is the head of this Body, the new humanity. Those in Christ had become the bones of His bones, flesh of His flesh and blood of His blood. The body of Christ in active engagement with the world, in his suffering and dying on the cross, is the body in which the church is engrafted into Him and redeemed (Eph. 2:16). When Christ died on the cross those who are "in Christ" died with him. Participation in the body of Christ thus means participating in both his dying and his new life, breaking away from binding servitude to sin (Minear, 1960, 176).

The use of the body figure symbolizes the interdependence of Christians as members of Christ and of each other. The unity of the church and the mutual interdependence of its members are expressed in the body metaphor (Beker, 1980, 313). This places upon Christians the obligation to love one another and even embrace those outside the Christian faith. Its vocation is not self-preservation for eternal life but to render service to the created world. It is a body whose mission is not to itself but outside and beyond itself. It cannot be content with too much concern about the self but must love the neighbour as it loves itself. There is, for me, another dimension to the greatest commandment and that is a warning that the church as the body of Christ has as its neighbours those outside the faith. The gospel demands that they be loved as the love for the church. The African saying that “umntu ngumntu ngabanye abantu” (a person is a person because of others) puts emphasis on the fact that it is how the church relates to other people that even its own identity becomes clear. One’s identity is best understood when viewed in relation to existence with other people. Christ is united to his body as the husband is to his wife, not as part of the body instead as Lord over the body (Eph.1:22, 23; 5:21f; Col.2:10; 1Cor.11:3; 1Cor 12:21).

Within this unity there is recognition of the functional differences that exist between members of the same body. These differences are for the benefit of all. This diversity cannot be emphasized to the detriment of the body instead it is a fact that makes the body function with perfection. Both the BPC and the PCSA represent a wide racial, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity. The challenge is how the negative sides of such diversity could be tackled and the positive sides harnessed for the benefit of all members in a united Church (Best, 1992, 10). It is how to balance the unity against the diversity (Macquarrie, 1966, 402). We need to note that whilst the differences exist and are acknowledged they find meaning in their common head. Once we lose sight of the fact that Christ is the only head of the church we are likely to find nothing challenging the existence of our different denominations that we look for anything to justify. Christ is the head of the church and therefore the source of its unity. Through His word He reigns. There is one Lord over the one body. This one body is made up of a humanity that professes one faith and receives one baptism. There is no two ways about it. The unity of the

Body of Christ is essential in shaping the life and work of the church in response to the call to make disciples of all nations. What reasons can be forwarded for our own separations and divisions? If the dividing walls of history, race and cultural heritage become reasons for separations can't we argue that the incarnation and his death was in vain? If Pauline theology on the unity of rich and poor, slave and freeman, Jew and Gentile carries no weight now and is not effective enough to have meaning to us here and now are we still bearing witness to the same Jesus of Nazareth? How sincere are we to the Gospel intention, that of having us one as the Father and the Son is one?

The phrase "body of Christ" conveys the universal solidarity of all persons in Christ. As Christians we have been brought together in Christ from all our different backgrounds, to witness together to a world in need of healing. He (Christ) is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross thereby bringing the hostility to an end (Eph.2:14-18; cf.3:6; 4:4).

1.2 The church as the people of God.

The church is the people of God. The Greek term "ekklesia" used in the NT distinguishes the people of God from people in general in the sense that they are not ordinary people but called out into a special relationship with God. The people of God in the Old Testament enjoyed this special place. They were a saved people who were rescued from bondage in Egypt. They are a pilgrim people with many difficulties to be overcome in the wilderness and through to the Promised Land. The very existence of the people of God has God's purpose as the starting point. The emergence of this people is a manifestation of God's purpose. It is God who creates this society as God's people by God's choice of them (Minear, 1960, 69). They are in a covenant relationship with God (Dt. 9:10, 10:4). They find their identity in the keeping of God's commandments. They center around God for covenant renewal and for feasts that are related to the covenant (Dt. 29:1; Jos. 8:35, Lv. 23). The whole life of the people of God finds meaning in what God has done. It is a life of

thanksgiving, praise and a constant renewal of the covenant made with the forefathers. The prophets keep this assembly focussed. They remind the people of God of things to come that culminate with the ingathering to the feast of the Lord in the latter days (Is. 2:2).

The NT presents Christ as the Lord that gathers God's people, announcing that the great feast has been prepared (Mt. 9:36; 12:30; 16:18, Lk. 14:17). By his dying and rising Christ fulfilled the feast of the Passover. Christians gather around Jesus and they are made God's people in and through Jesus Christ. This assembly constitutes the church. Christ is central to its very existence. God dwells in the church. The church is the new tabernacle where God dwells among the people. The incarnation lays emphasis on God who became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn 1:14; 2:19,20). This Christo-centric nature of the church demands that Christians follow in his footsteps, to be and to do what God wants done. This identity is prescriptive in what the church ought to do. Among other things unity among believers becomes crucial as Christ and God the Father are one. The church in South Africa is nothing but the people of God in this country. "In calling the Church "people", there is recognition of its essentially human character and of its ties with the whole human race; but in adding the qualification "of God", there is the assertion that to this people belongs a depth and significance that differentiates them from people in general." (Macquarrie, 1966, 387). The people of God are constituted by an act of separation from own natural descent and of solidarity with people other than their own. To become a member is to come to a new type of solidarity transcending race, culture, sex and age. The Christian church breaks away altogether from national mold to become a new kind of people of God (Macquarrie, 1966, 388).

1.3 The church as the messianic community.

The church is the messianic community. Christ gathers his disciples as the remnant flock that will receive the kingdom (Lk. 12:32). It becomes the very foundation upon which the kingdom of God is realized. Christ builds and constitutes the church as the new people of God. Christ's word is the law of the church (Heb. 1:1; 2:3,4; Jn. 14:26; 16:13, 14). It is not a democracy but a Christocracy. It is under the direct rule of Christ. His Spirit gives life to the church (Jn. 14:16-18; Rom. 8:9). With the same

Spirit Christians are called to gather the nations. As they become the body of Christ, the people of God, and the Messianic community they indeed take new identity. Barriers of race, colour and creed are broken down. This new community is constituted, governed and protected as the community of the kingdom. It becomes the salt of the earth and the light of the world. There is all the reason for the world to look up to the church as possessing resources the world cannot have in making it a better place to live in. The church cannot tolerate racial prejudice and hatred because it goes against its very being as a multi racial messianic community.

It is in the light of this understanding of the church and what God has done in and through Jesus, that lack of theological discourse during the unity talks that failed in 1971 is questioned. There was a great need for a strong sense of solidarity transcending race, language and culture based on the nature of God. This was sadly lacking. It would be a shame for the church not to have learnt lessons from mistakes made.

In the Chapter that follows, we shall look at the beginnings of Presbyterianism in South Africa and how work eventually grew into two racially divided Churches. These divisions were dictated by socio-political circumstances and lack of solidarity among believers. Their commitment was more to blood relations rather than a common commitment to Christ. The church as the body of Christ must learn to continually and faithfully submit to God's creating, calling, sustaining, judging and saving of it.

Scripture presents the church as the people of (one) God. It is too often seen as very bad, disgraceful and embarrassing for children of one man and wife to quarrel and be at each other's necks. Christian witness has an ugly history of contradictions. Disunity, racism, quarrels, factions, pride, and jealousy, – sometimes of a kind that is not found even among pagans (1Cor5:1) threaten to tear the church apart and divide Christ himself (Beker 1980:307). Presbyterians in South Africa need to, first and foremost, look at their common heritage which does not only begin with the beginnings of Presbyterianism but with the whole history of salvation. The question about fragmented Christian witness remains and divisions within the Presbyterian family was just part of a bigger concern in the years up to 1971. It is with the above

understanding of the church and what God requires of it that we shall critique the attempt on union between the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. We shall look at the role played by the laws of the land in perpetuating divisions, lack trust and of information at all levels.

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CHAPTER 2

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FOUNDING OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 The early days

2.1.1 At the Cape Province

Presbyterian work in the Cape points to the common heritage of both the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, which can be traced to the natural growth of the European Presbyterian settler community and Bantu Presbyterian Church, a branch of the mission work of the Churches in Scotland. There is no way that one would understand the beginnings of the one Presbyterian denomination without the other in the former British colony. Neither can one claim that any specific mission was solely leading to either the PCSA or the BPC.

The origins of both Churches in Southern Africa can be traced to the work of Scottish ministers and missionaries. We read that in 1795 a small group of ministers met and shared a vision of sending the Gospel "to distant and dark" countries in the fashion of the London Missionary Society (LMS) (Shepherd, 1940, 23). On the 9th of February 1796 the Glasgow Missionary Society was formed (Shepherd, 1940, 23). Its main objective was to spread the Gospel to foreign countries (Shepherd, 1940, 23). This idea was condemned by the 1796 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland as a preoccupation with propagating the Gospel abroad amongst barbarous and heathen nations while there remained at home some without religious knowledge. In spite of this resolution against engaging in missionary work, the Glasgow Missionary Society committed itself to this main objective (Shepherd, 1940, 23).

The Glasgow Missionary Society (GMS) was composed of and supported by the different Scottish Churches with a considerably large number from the established Church. It was, however, independent from any of the Scottish Churches. From the work of this society Presbyterian churches and missions were later established in the Eastern Cape.

In 1806, a Scottish regiment, the 93rd Regiment or Southern Fencibles, was posted to the Cape of Good Hope. As no chaplains were appointed to regiments at that

time, the soldiers on their own initiative founded a Calvinist Society for Bible study, prayer meetings, worship and fellowship (St Andrews Presbyterian Church A Centenary record Cape Town 1929, 7). They were the first English speaking Presbyterians in South Africa (Dalziel, 1956, 40).

In 1812, the Rev. George Thom, a Scottish Presbyterian Minister, of the London Missionary Society arrived at the Cape and founded a Presbyterian congregation from this Calvinist Society. He was on his way to India but changed his mind preferring to serve them (St Andrews Presbyterian Church A Centenary record Cape Town 1929, 7). Thus was established the first Presbyterian congregation in South Africa, St Andrews, Cape Town. The soldiers were responsible for his maintenance, that is, paying his stipend that they raised among themselves (Dalziel, 1956, 41). Members from other denominations were also enrolled. Thom understood his ministry as to this group rather than reaching out to the natives. However, in 1878 worship at St Andrews was open to all race groups (Dalziel, 1956, 99).

In 1816 under the London Missionary Society Mr Joseph Williams established a mission station at Emgwali (Dalziel, 1956, 156). After his death in 1818 Ntsikana continued prayers (Shepherd, 1940, 19ff). In 1818, the 93rd Regiment was removed from Cape Town. The 27 members who were left could not maintain Rev. Thom. He, as minister, severed this connection with the Society in order to accept a call to be minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Caledon. The congregation he had formed was left without a minister (St Andrews Presbyterian Church, A Centenary record Cape Town, 1929, 10). In the same year Dr. Philip, an agent of the London Missionary Society arrived at the Cape and was inducted as minister to the said congregation. Under his ministry the congregation ceased to be Presbyterian, and no services of a distinctively Presbyterian order were held for four years. Representations were made to the Governor of the day on the needs of the Presbyterian community (St Andrews Presbyterian Church A Centenary record Cape Town, 1929, 9).

In 1820 Mr Brownlee took over from Ntsikana at Mgwali (Shepherd, 1940, 22). In the same year Dr George Thom visited Scotland on a mission of the Cape Government to obtain ministers for the DRC and teachers for local schools (Shepherd, 1940, 30). Dr. Andrew Murray (Sr) came to Graaff Reinet as a response to this appeal. Several other Scottish ministers accompanied him and served in DRC congregations. It was during the same visit that George Thom urged the Glasgow

Missionary Society to start mission work in the Cape Colony (Dalziel, 1956, 151). However, a quick response came from the London Missionary Society.

Meantime, in the same year 1820, under a Government scheme, a large number of British settlers had arrived at Algoa Bay. A Scottish contingent trekked to the Baviaans River Valley where, under the leadership of Thomas Pringle, divine services were held from the very first Sabbath of their arrival.

In response to Dr George Thom's request of 1820 to the Glasgow Missionary Society, on 29 May 1821 Rev W B Thomson and Mr John Bennie were designated missionaries to Kaffraria. Landing at Cape Town, they penetrated to what later came to be known as the Ciskei and settled at a spot near the Tyume River, Alice (Shepherd, 1940,30).

Whites were already over a century in South Africa by the time these missionaries started their work. Blacks had by the time experienced the problems of co-existence with white settlers especially with the farming community. Relations can be understood in the light of historical, social, economic and political events. The conflict over the use of land for cattle to graze and to hunt for game resulted in wars that lasted a century (Wilson, 1969, 237 & Majeke, 1952, 25).

When the first missionaries of the GMS arrived in the Eastern Cape around 1820 Blacks and Whites had had about 45 years of wars over frontiers. Since 1779, which marks the first frontier war, defining the borders between one group and the other was an issue that led to the destruction of mission stations and the killing of many people (Wilson, 1969, 237 & Majeke, 1952, 25).

There is no doubt that mission work suffered greatly due to anger and the fact that missionaries were sometimes accused of collaborating with the colonial power. Indeed, some played a major role in the conquest of the indigenous people (Villa-Vicencio, 1988, 54). They undoubtedly needed some measure of stability to register any success in their missionary work. A government agent who was stationed among the Thembu, Mr J.C. Warner, is quoted by Wilson as arguing that:

"The political and religious government of the Kaffir tribes are so intimately connected that the one cannot be overturned without the other, they must stand or fall together. As so many untoward events have happened in our intercourse with these people, and so many clashing interests now exist; and as the Kaffir tribes have now become so thoroughly imbued with hatred to the 'white man' and appear so resolutely determined on his destruction, or to lose their political existence in the struggle, and above all as they have resolutely and so perseveringly refused to give to the Gospel even an attentive hearing, it seems to me that the sword must first break them up as tribes and destroy their political existence; after which when thus set free from the shackles by which they are bound, civilization and Christianity will no doubt make rapid progress among them" (Wilson, 1969, 264).

Some missionaries identified more with the government than they did with the Africans (Wilson, 1969, 267). Like missionaries of the LMS and those of other denominations, those of the GMS had among themselves conflicting attitudes towards the government.

Among the Africans, those who accepted the Christian faith were too often ostracised by their communities (Wilson, 1969, 265). The chiefs were resentful of the missionary interference that was made possible by their Christianized subjects. Majeke observes that "in asserting the forces that brought the downfall of the maXhosa, there is no doubt that a most important factor was the breach made in the Xhosa ranks by the missionaries" (Majeke, 1952, 75). The loyalty of the converts to their ministers meant a disregard of the authority of the chiefs, thus disarming the Africans in the wars against colonial expansion. Africans lost not only land, but also political power. Villa-Vicencio remarks that the missionaries "became part of the process that destroyed African political power in the region" (Villa-Vicencio, 1988). They were indeed trapped in a colonial ideal that left them confused as to how to accommodate the African worldview. The role of the chiefs, which was central to the socio-economic as well as the political structuring of the African society was undermined. Their territories were divided into magisterial districts with many sons of the missionaries taking part in government as native commissioners, magistrates and other officials (Wilson, 1969, 267).

There was much hostility between the Africans and the government at the time. This was a setting that even the church could not overcome. There was a gap between the missionaries and their Christian converts that threatened to widen whenever there was racial conflict. However, despite all this bleak history, Scottish missionaries have a history of involvement in Education, Health Care, Development and the upliftment of the indigenous people in general. This service was undoubtedly well received and appreciated by the Natives (Hope, 1981, 22).

In 1824 Reverend John Ross, sent out by the Church of Scotland, joined Mr John Bennie and Rev Willam Thomson (Shepherd, 1940, 62). He came with a small Ruthven printing press. On his arrival, John Ross, the Rev William Thomson, Mr John Bennie and Mr Brownlee formed themselves into a Presbytery. It was the first of its kind in South Africa (Dalziel, 1956, 154).

Like the GMS the Presbytery was not under the established Church in Scotland. It was not a court of the Church of Scotland, but directly under the GMS (Dalziel, 1956, 154). Several mission stations were established, the most notable being the institution of Lovedale, which was founded in 1824. This institution was named after Dr John Love, chairman of the GMS. He played a pivotal role in the history of the missionary enterprise, commanding a special place in the minds of many people both in Scotland and in South Africa (Shepherd, 1940, 64).

Work that began in the Western Cape continued to grow. On the 25th of November 1824, at a public meeting held with the approval of the Governor Lord Charles Somerset, in the Lutheran Church, Cape Town, a resolution was passed:

"That as the Scottish and Presbyterian community residing in this metropolis and the neighbourhood forms a considerable proportion of the Anglo Colonial population, it is highly desirable, as regards both the moral and religious interest of that body, that a Presbyterian Church should be erected in Cape Town and placed in connection with the Established Church of Scotland and under the immediate protection of His Majesty's Colonial Government" (St Andrews Presbyterian Church A Centenary record Cape Town, 1929, 12).

Thereafter plans were drawn up for the erection of a church building. Through a grant from the Government in the form of a site, one third of the cost of the building and making an allowance of 100 pounds per annum towards the stipend of a

minister and also voluntary contributions, sufficient money was secured for the erection of a building. Assistance was received from the DRC congregations of Graaff-Reinet and Stellenbosch (Dalziel, 1956, 1557).

A request for a minister was addressed to the Moderator of the Edinburgh Presbytery. Mr James Adamson was appointed and arrived in Cape Town on the 11th of November 1827 (Dalziel, 1956, 68). A congregation was constituted and a Session formed in 1828. The new Church, to be known as St Andrews Presbyterian Church, and whose foundation stone was laid in 1827 was officially opened on the 24th of January 1829 (Dalziel, 1956, 69). The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was advised of the development. The scheme came under the patronage of the Presbytery of Edinburgh, which Presbytery recommended James Adamson as Minister, and duly ordained him to commence his ministry in the same year thus becoming the first minister (Russel, 1924, 12). His arrival marked the return of the Church founded by Thom to Presbyterianism. Dalziel observes that Coloured people were invited to worship at St Andrews. However, language may have been a problem for the Dutch speaking Coloured community. Services were in English (Dalziel, 1956, 98).

In the Eastern Cape a place of worship was erected at Glen Lynden in 1827, and the Rev. John Pears was called as the first minister (Dalziel, 1956, 341). The Church at Glen Lynden still stands and has been proclaimed a national monument. It served both Afrikaans and English Presbyterians and is now the property of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Lovedale, as a congregation, was established in 1840 the same year as the Pirie congregation. Presbyterian churches in towns were formed as Europeans continued to settle in the colony. These new churches were assisted from time to time by the missionaries, who were already spreading the gospel among the natives. As Balfour puts it

"The primary work of these missionaries was the conversion of the natives to the Christian faith, but they could not see the gradual increase of the European population without doing what in them lay to organize them into congregations and supply them with the means of grace" (Balfour, 1899, 284).

The missionaries did much more. They assisted these congregations, most of which were later to become PCSA, in acquiring ministers from overseas. It should be

noted that at this particular time in history neither the missionaries nor the congregations knew that what was to be born, was a Church fragmented on racial lines. At this point it was only the growth of Presbyterianism.

As a result of the great disruption, which took place within the Church of Scotland in the year 1843, the Free Church was formed and later in 1847 the United Presbyterian Church (Burleigh, 1983, 352). The missionaries already in South Africa were given liberty to choose which Church they wished to serve. Consequently, from then on two Churches developed mission work in South Africa. There were missions developed by both the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church in the former Ciskei and the then Transkei, among the Xhosa speaking people. This means that the work and districts of these two Churches greatly overlapped. This becomes evident when one looks at the location of the congregations in question. Those of the Free Church were Cunningham, Ross, Main Memorial, Idutywa, Somerville and Blythwood. These congregations later formed the Presbytery of the Transkei (Free Church). Congregations like Emgwali, Gillespie, Buchanan, Tutura, Malan, Mbulu, Columba, Miller and Mbonda Mount Frere were United Presbyterian Church missions. They were constituent members of the Presbytery of the Transkei (United Presbyterian). In other words there were two Presbyteries under the name Transkei belonging to two different denominations of the same Scottish origins.

The work begun at St Andrews gradually expanded with new congregations being established. This led to the formation of the Presbytery of Cape Town on the 11th October 1893, with St Andrews, Woodstock and Clifton Hill (Dalziel, 1956, 115). Gardens Church was a preaching station of St Andrews and became an independent charge in 1894 (Dalziel, 1956, 110). In 1897 a hall was built in Mowbray and opened to the public for worship. Presbyterian congregations were established in other parts of the peninsula. Isolated Presbyterian communities sprang up wherever towns or settlements were established, e.g. Touwsrivier, Matjiesfontein, Beaufort West, Victoria West and elsewhere. Most congregations within the Presbytery of Cape Town joined the PCSA at its establishment in 1897 (Dalziel, 1956, 110).

The building of churches as well as serving congregations and members was sometimes shared with the DRC. Dalziel observes that

"underlying the strong relationship that existed between the DRC and the PCSA was the continued appointment of Scots missionary into the DRC" (Dalziel, 1956, 98).

In fact, by 1837 half the DRC Synod consisted of Scotsmen who learnt Dutch and married into Afrikaner families (Cameron and Spies, 1986, 86). This arrangement made it less important for some Presbyterian ministers to press for an English speaking Presbyterian Church where there was already a DRC congregation. There were, however, exceptions to the rule. There was also pulpit exchange as well as mutual support. The Presbyterian Churches that were built received, from time to time, some financial support from the already established DRC congregations.

In 1897 most European congregations joined the PCSA. The mission stations formed themselves into the Bantu Presbyterian Church in 1923 (Ogilvie, 1925, 234).

2.1.2 Growth in the Cape Colony

St Andrew's and Glen Lynden, served the European members of the community but mission work was not neglected. The church gradually expanded as the colony developed. Isolated Presbyterian communities sprang up wherever towns or settlements were established. At the same time the missionaries were moving further into native areas that had not been evangelized. The result was the establishment of black and white congregations in towns and rural settlements alike (Wilson, F., & Perrot, D., 1971).

Similar to the development in the Cape Colony, Presbyterianism took place in Natal starting at Pietermaritzburg (1851) and in Durban (1863) spreading to the Orange Free State, at Harrismith, Bloemfontein, Bethlehem and other flourishing centres. With the development of the country, and particularly with the discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape, and later the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, extension work was carried out and congregations were established in the rapidly growing communities of Kimberley and the Witwatersrand. Development referred to in this paragraph grew into the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The close work relationship between the missionaries and those that had come to South Africa with Presbyterians from foreign countries is not so evident in Natal as it was in the Eastern Cape.

2.1.3 The Rhodesian Congregations

Beyond the Limpopo Presbyterian Work was pioneered in the Rhodesia's. Congregations were formed at Bulawayo and Salisbury, the two main centres, and in Northern Rhodesia. The movement spread to Livingstone, Gwelo and Umtali. In view of the growing number of Presbyterian congregations throughout South Africa, steps were taken in 1892 through the Federal Council to unite them and to establish a South African Presbyterian Church (Ogilvie, 1925, 234).

In Bulawayo in 1895 a Committee of Presbyterians was formed for the purpose of establishing a Presbyterian Church. Owing to the outbreak of a native rebellion, and the unsettled state of the country, the committee suspended its activities for a period (Unpublished paper, The Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Its History and Tradition).

In 1898, the committee resumed its work and the Rev. T. Hendry Jones of Addiewell Parish was called to Bulawayo. Dr. T. B. Porteous, then Convener of the Assembly's Church Extension and Aid Committee, visited Bulawayo. During this visit a unanimous resolution was passed by the Bulawayo Congregation, attaching the Presbyterian Church of Bulawayo to the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (Unpublished paper, The Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Its History and Tradition).

In 1903 Dr. Gray as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa opened a new Church in Bulawayo. A liberal guarantee fund was raised for the erection of a Church in Salisbury, and the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland was requested to select a minister for this charge. In 1904 the Rev. H.W Cochrane was inducted (Unpublished paper, The Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Its History and Tradition).

2.1.4 SUMMARY

It is clear that the founding of Presbyterianism in Southern Africa cannot be understood without the context of colonization. It took place at two levels. The works of the missionaries as they attempted to spread the gospel amongst the indigenous people on the one hand, and on the other, work amongst the settler communities. Missionary work was under the GMS, with some support from the Church in Scotland. There was, therefore, a strong relationship between

missionaries and the mother body, the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, which lasted for a long time. The Bantu Presbyterian Church maintained these ties whilst the PCSA started and developed with less and less formal connections. Throughout the history of this section of Presbyterianism the link with the established Church in Scotland was not as strong as it was with the Bantu Presbyterian Church.

It is important to note that the two connections of Presbyterianism had a common historical, doctrinal and credal background with a theological emphasis on classical Calvinism. Colonists and natives, alike, shared this common heritage. Sometimes the missionaries rendered service to both the settler congregations as well as mission congregations. However, cultural differences remained. During this time there was no legislation separating black and white. Any separation was dictated by differences of language, culture and politics in general. It was easier, one assumes, to identify with ones homogeneous group especially in the light of the wars of colonial conquest. Here blood was thicker than water. Christian solidarity that could transcend race, culture and language based on the church's self understanding as the Body of Christ was not strong enough to bring together in a real way people of diverse backgrounds. It must be noted, too, that very few of our members are aware of this history of the beginnings of Presbyterianism in this country. In the Chapter that follows we shall see how the majority of independent European congregations grew into the formation of the PCSA in 1897.

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CHAPTER 3

THE FORMATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA 1897

3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A Presbyterian / Reformed Church of Dutch origin, the Dutch Reformed Church, was already over a century in South Africa when the Scottish missionaries arrived. A question can be asked as to why they did not just join this Church. This would have undoubtedly strengthened the Presbyterian cause of the Cape Colony. Ogilvie argues that the formation of many Presbyterian Churches in South Africa was due to the fact that Scots in the colony struggled with the tongue of the Cape Dutch. The services within the Dutch Reformed Church were conducted in this language. He further observes that there were strong national preferences too. The separation as far as worship was concerned was therefore deemed necessary (Ogilvie, 1925, 234).

3.1.1 The divided witness of Scottish Presbyterianism.

Scottish missionaries represented two denominations in Scotland. These were the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church. Scottish Presbyterianism was seriously divided especially since the great disruption of 1843 (Burleigh, 1960, 334). These divisions affected the mission field as congregations developed by Scottish Presbyterians belonged to either the Free Church or the United Presbyterian Church (Shepherd, 1940, 104).

It is also evident that other factors such as language, culture and race contributed to a further division within the various churches. Congregations such as Mgwali, Tarkastad, Adelaide and Alice had two services either for the Natives or the Europeans. There were many more such congregations with some that were thoroughly integrated.

3.1.2 Overlap in the work done.

Missionaries in congregations that later became Bantu Presbyterian Church (BPC) were actively involved in the life and work of European congregations. Scottish missionaries and ministers had a common concern and helped each other. Rev. James Laing was a minister of an African missionary congregation but represented the European congregation of King William's Town in Scotland during his visit, to secure financial support for them (Brown, 1992, 164). The Glenthorn congregation relied heavily on Rev John Chalmers for the administration of the Sacraments though he was a minister of an African congregation (Brown, 1992, 206). A minister in a Native congregation often rendered services in a European congregation closer to him in the event of a vacancy and vice versa. Ministers of the Free Church served in congregations that were United Presbyterian and ministers of United Presbyterian connection served Free Church congregations whenever they were approached to assist. Missionaries and ministers assisted whenever they were called upon to do so. It was Presbyterian work and they were Presbyterian office bearers.

Sharing Presbyterian ministry was not only between Native and European congregations. It was also between Native congregations. Cunningham and Mbulu congregations were very close to one another yet they belonged to two different Scottish denominations. The same could be said of Malan and Idutywa as well as Miller and Ross. It must have been difficult to really draw a line as to where one's work stopped, let alone the confusion that may have been caused among the natives.

3.1.3 The need for a South African court unifying different Presbyterian Congregations.

As Presbyterian work continued to grow, a need developed to have congregations served by Presbyteries. The need was expressed in 1824 after the arrival of Rev John Ross in the eastern Cape. This also happened with the independent European

congregations. Congregations were grouped into small Presbyteries, "linked with different Scottish ecclesiastical bodies," and not with each other (Ogilvie, 1925, 234). This was the case with the Presbytery of Kaffraria (United Presbyterian Church), the Presbytery of Kafraria (of the Free Church of Scotland), the Presbytery of Adelaide etc. Significant is the fact that while it was deemed necessary to have Presbyteries, they were created to accommodate missionaries and ministers of a particular denomination. There was no union of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian work for some time. Such a union would have undoubtedly made things easier for church workers. A close look at the geographical situation of these congregations makes it very difficult to understand how the Scottish missionaries worked. Congregations such as Gillespie, Buchanan and Mbonda are in the Mt Frere and Mt Ayliff districts and yet were grouped with Tutura, Mbulu and Emgwali, congregations around Butterworth and Keiskammahoek. All these congregations were under the United Presbyterian Presbytery. Those that were very close to either group belonged to the Free Church, a different denomination and therefore a different Presbytery. Any union would necessitate a readjustment of Presbytery boundaries. Some congregations would form new Presbyteries with the ones closer to them and be no longer joined to congregations far away.

Presbyteries were also established as European congregations grew in numbers. The formation of these Presbyteries must have been for mutual support and was an important step in the right direction as it later became easier to negotiate a union that led to the formation of the PCSA. At least there were Presbyteries through which these negotiations were been conducted. It was not a question of independent congregations without a court for mutual concerns and discussions. From time to time issues discussed would be sent to the congregations through Presbyteries and responses received making it easier to come to decisions. At this stage there were no courts above Presbyteries and some Presbyteries were accountable to their denominations in Scotland.

3.1.4 Talks about a union between two mission Presbyteries.

A concern to unite Presbyterian work in the colony dates back to 1878. At a meeting of the United Mission Council at Lovedale, 1878, the issue was raised (Dalziel, 1956, 663). This meeting was between the Free Church Presbytery of Kafraria and the United Presbyterian Church Presbytery of Kaffraria. It is important to note that these negotiations were just between the two Presbyteries mentioned above, excluding the independent Presbyteries formed by independent European congregations, the Presbyteries of the Cape, Natal and Transvaal. A later unity movement under the Federal Council involved all Presbyterian work.

The Presbyteries of Kafraria of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church set up a Union Committee to negotiate their unity. The two Presbyteries mentioned above were involved in both Missionary and European work. The Free Church Presbytery of Kafraria appointed Rev John Don as convenor of their Union committee while the United Presbyterian Presbytery of Kaffraria appointed Rev Peter Davidson to convene their committee (Dalziel, 1956, 664). The United Mission Council, a committee of Presbyterian Missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church which met from time to time to discuss matters of mutual interest, discussed the proposed union at Lovedale in 1878. In 1879, through the work of Jon Don and Peter Davidson and their committees, a "Draft basis of Union" was produced. In 1880, at King William's Town, unity discussions were held between the two Presbyteries (Dalziel, 1959, 663). There were the Presbytery of the Transkei of the Free Church and the Presbytery of the Transkei of the United Presbyterian Church. Missionaries in the Colony at the time felt that divisions in Scotland should not be allowed to keep work in South Africa separate. There were also independent congregations like Trinity, Grahamstown and Adelaide.

The Draft basis of Union contained information under three headings:

1. Doctrinal Basis
2. Jurisdiction and Ecclesiastical Relationship to the Mother Church.

3. Financial Relationship to the Mother Church (Dalziel, 1956, 666).

There was no doctrinal basis or rather it was agreed that one should be sought. The paragraph on the subject is vague and it reads as follows:

"It was recognised that one or other of the bases on which union has already effected elsewhere might fitly form the basis in this country. It was agreed that some of these should be submitted for consideration as alternatives" (Dalziel, 1959, 663).

This meant that the proposed union of Presbyterian denominations was not the first of its kind and therefore the uniting Presbyteries could look around for a doctrinal basis that could be acceptable in the colony which has worked in another part of the world. It was acknowledged that there were also other churches in South Africa who, like the negotiating presbyteries, had the same type of doctrine and form of government but with distinct standards due to historical and national reasons. Distinctions of race and language were acknowledged. Due to these differences the Westminster Confession was not to be adopted without consideration of those who held similar standards. Inclusion was dependent on consensus of Reformed Confessions.

The proposed united Church would be composed of European and Native congregations. It would be divided into three Presbyteries, all in the Cape Colony with boundaries clearly stated (Dalziel, 1959, 666). There was no agreement on the issue of the exercise of discipline, especially as it related to the right of appeal. Ministers or missionaries wishing to appeal against any judgement would be free to do so to the Supreme Court of either the Free Church or the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Some maintained that cases is referred to the churches that ordained those concerned. This left a big question around the court of appeal for African members of the new Church. African members of the presbyteries concerned had no forum that was purely theirs and it is not easy to ascertain what their opinion on the subject was.

Presbyteries were undoubtedly multi-racial in their composition. However, the extent of influence African members had cannot be measured. They were new in ecclesiastical matters as far as their European colleagues were concerned. Doctrinal bases were also not such easy subjects to deal with.

There was nothing new regarding the financial relation to the Mother Churches. They would have full powers over funds contributed with ministers totally dependent on their respective Managing Committees or Boards at home. The Mother Churches would be consulted for any changes that would take place due to transfers of ministers to other congregations and for the establishment of new ones. What would the future of new stations established after such a union be? What if not one of the concerned Home Churches wanted to support the new work? All financial support, it was said, would remain "as at present". What did that imply? Did it mean that the united Church to be formed would be supported by two Churches separately? Whilst the need for the treasury to be centrally controlled was seen as crucial, it was agreed that it should develop over time. It was felt that any quick changes on the issue would derail the proposed union (Dalziel, 1959, 671).

It had dawned to most Presbyterians that the cause of Presbyterianism in South Africa was suffering from its scattered and disunited condition. The desire for a visible and comprehensive union was now burning in the hearts of many. However, as is always the case when arranging ecclesiastical unions, difficulties that required wisdom and patience arose. These were not due to doctrinal differences but practical problems.

3.1.5 The process followed in unity discussions.

Kirk Sessions were involved in the discussions of the Draft Basis of Union, through their various Presbyteries. Matters were from time to time referred to Presbyteries for consideration. Reports were received from presbyteries and dealt with by the conference (Minutes of the 1881 Federal Council, 2). At this level there is no doubt

that individual ministers were really vocal. There is no reference to any contribution made by elders be they European or African.

The first draft, referred to above, lacked substance. In fact it was not adequate enough to help or assist members with tools to wrestle with the proposed unity. It made reference to documents that were not there but in the process of being compiled especially on the issue of doctrine. It dealt with the jurisdiction and relationship with the Mother Church in a way that needed more detailed work. The two negotiating Presbyteries, on receiving the report of the 1880 Draft Basis of Union could not accept it. They were both not happy about the question of appeal and the Financial Relation of the new Church to the Mother Church. This rejection of the first draft led to another one being drafted by the same Union Committee. It was ready for presentation in 1881 at King William's Town (Minutes of the Federal Council 1881, 1ff).

One should take into account that in spite of the fact that the union was of two Presbyteries in South Africa, they were still rooted in Scotland. Is it possible that talks dragged because the draft did not meet the expectations of the divided Church in Scotland? What was the extent of the involvement of the Churches in Scotland in the negotiations for union? These are questions that cannot be answered without any uncertainties. However, the second draft presents us with a much clearer idea of who the negotiators were, the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

It was, in a way, similar to the Basis of Union adopted by the Scottish Secession and Relief Synods in 1847 (Fleming, 1927-1933, 265). It dealt with the following subjects:

3.1.5.1 The Scriptures:

The word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only rule of Faith and duty (Dalziel, 1956, 672). This was in line with the

Westminster Divines. The church can be understood on the basis of a literal biblical appeal. The true church must preach the Word and administer the Sacraments the right way.

3.1.5.2 Subordinate standards:

During the Mid-seventeenth century church struggles in Scotland and England led to the Westminster Assembly (Burleigh, 1960, 225). Presbyterianism was scholastically defined covering subjects like the form of church government, the confession of faith, a larger and smaller catechism, and a directory of faith (Burleigh, 1960, 226). The basis of Union of 1881 proposed the acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Longer and Shorter Catechisms as the subordinate standards of the Church (Minutes of the 1881 Federal Council, 1).

3.1.5.3 Church and State:

It was noted that whereas certain sections of the Confession of Faith, especially those that deal with the power or duty of the civil magistrate have been understood and objected to as teaching principles that conflict with the church and her understanding of herself, the church is not under the state but under the Lordship of Christ, the only King and Head of the church. He is not only King of the church but also of Nations and everyone in every capacity and relation is bound to obey His will as revealed in the Scriptures. The state should not interfere in ecclesiastical matters in whatever way (Dalziel, 1956, 763).

3.1.5.4 Worship:

It was proposed that the Westminster Directory of Faith be accepted as exhibiting generally the order of public worship and the administration of Sacraments in the new Church (Dalziel, 1956, 673).

3.1.5.5 The name of the New Church:

The Basis of Union proposed that the name of the United Church be the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, and that the Supreme Court of the said Church be the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (Dalziel, 1956, 673ff).

It also recognised the existence of other churches or denominations that held the same type of doctrine and church form of government as the church to be formed and proposed that there be a readiness to have them associated with the new church should they wish to do so. The mention of the Westminster Standards did not necessarily mean that those who did not regard them as the subordinate standards, though reflecting consensus of Reformed Confessions would be excluded (Dalziel, 1956, 674).

3.1.5.6 Constitution, Jurisdiction & Co

The Church to be formed was to be multi-racial with European and Native congregations coming together. These were congregations of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church Presbyteries and any congregations or churches in the colony which would want to enter the union.

It was proposed that the Church should have two Committees, a Colonial and a Mission Committee. This was characteristic of the nature of uniting parties as one was indeed first and foremost missionary with the other, colonial. The Colonial Committee was deemed important in order to keep a link with the Home Churches "with a view to arouse their interest and secure their help in the development of a Colonial Church" (Dalziel, 1959, 675). The same committee would be necessary to hold colonists together by prompting the life, cohesion, and extension of the Church among them while the Missionary committee would do the same among the natives. The Mission Committee would work with the Foreign Missions Committee of the Home Churches "with the view of securing their continued interest and help in the development of the Native Church" (Dalziel, 1959, 675). The Church to be formed would have two components or concerns which was a reflection of her background.

3.1.5.7 The exercise of discipline

It was clear that the committee that compiled the Basis of Union was more concerned about keeping the missionaries and the colonists together at all costs. The section on discipline reflects a concern to avoid causing ill feelings to neither the missionaries nor the ministers of the colonial presbyteries. They would at any rate have the right of appeal from the decision of the Synod in as far as questions affecting their life or doctrine (Dalziel, 1959, 675). The right of appeal was to be a temporal arrangement valid only during the Church's transitional period (Dalziel, 1959, 675).

3.1.5.8 Financial Relationship with the Mother Churches.

It was proposed that financial assistance should continue as before with missionaries and other agents supported by their various Home Churches. This would guarantee that they continued to enjoy the rights and privileges extended to them by their various Mission Boards or Committees before the union. However such rights and privileges would be channelled through a Financial Board elected by the new Church whose composition would be as follows:

“two members from each Presbytery – representing the Free and the United Presbyterian Churches respectively – and a General Treasurer who shall receive and distribute the funds received from Scotland and correspond with the treasurers at Home” (Dalziel, 1959, 676).

With regard to:

1. any creation of new stations
2. abandoning of work already started
3. transferring of missionaries to new areas
4. or any decision that would affect what was previously the arrangement of one or the other Church prior to Union,

Consultation will first take place between the Synod and the managing body in Europe with the decision of the said body being final in the case of appeal (Dalziel, 1959, 677). All new work started after the union would be free from home control.

This "Draft Basis of Union" was sent down to Presbyteries and congregations for criticism and comments. Congregations that responded were concerned about the relationship between the new Church and the Mother Churches. They all reflected a concern that the new Church was not ready to assume responsibilities that go with being a church independent of any other body.

Organic union was rejected by some congregations in favour of a Synod under the Churches in Scotland (Dalziel, 1956, 678). The Synod would encourage co-operation amongst Presbyteries and congregations of Presbyterian background with all other issues, be they disciplinary or financial, left entirely to the Home Church.

The number of congregations opposed to the union continued to increase. In 1884 it was clear, to members of the conference, that there were two sections within the negotiating group, one favouring continued connections with the Home Church and the other wanting an independent South African Church (Dalziel, 1956, 679). Kirk Sessions of the Presbyteries concerned as well as the independent congregations involved in unity discussions were requested and encouraged to modify the Draft Basis of Union. Trinity Church, Grahamstown, submitted her contribution. It was, along with the Draft Basis of Union, sent to congregations and discussed (Dalziel, 1959, 679). Their submission favoured a united Synod that would guarantee one's right of appeal to the Home Church in as far as questions of finance, discipline or any other issue at stake. The Home Church was to take into account the action of the united Synod in the country. Consensus was difficult to reach.

We must bear in mind that the above discussion was between the mission Presbyteries and a few independent congregations under the United Mission Council. Nowhere in their Draft is there a convincing reason for becoming a Church independent from the Churches in Scotland. There is no doubt that there were

reasons that necessitated the formation of a body that they would all be accountable to. However, at this stage it was doubtful if such a body would be competent to deal with all that an autonomous body would be required to deal with. This attempt did not yield any good results but helped those who kept the ideal of a united Church alive with tools to work harder on it. Questions raised made them more aware of the nature of the problem thus helping them to seek solutions.

3.2 The Federal Council and the formation of the PCSA.

There was another level where unity talks took place. Within the Presbytery of Cape Town the Rev John Russell's commitment to a union led to the formation of the Federal Council which met for the first time at Kimberly in 1892 (Minutes of the first Federal Council, 1892, 1). John Russell, like ministers and congregations who contributed in discussions under the United Mission Council, was convinced that it was time to gather all Presbyterian Presbyteries and congregations under one umbrella. The Kimberly meeting was poorly attended but a commitment to meet annually was expressed. This resulted to the Basis of Union being drawn up in 1893 (Minutes of the third Federal Council, 1894, 1).

John Russell was concerned about all Presbyterian Churches and Mission stations in the country. During this time there were seven Presbyteries in South Africa. Four of them were directly connected with the Churches in Scotland and they were the Presbytery of Adelaide, the Presbytery of Kaffraria of the United Presbyterian Church, the Presbytery of the Transkei and the Presbytery of Kafraria of the Free Church. Three Presbyteries were independent. These were the Cape Presbytery, the Presbytery of Natal and the Presbytery of Transvaal (Minutes of the fourth Federal Council, 1895, 1). Attempts on uniting all these Presbyteries were under the Federal Council. The mission Presbyteries that had attempted their union under the United Mission Council joined these discussions. There is no evidence that the United Mission Council was dissolved because of the formation of the Federal Council. It is, however, clear that they reported what happened at this level to their Presbyteries and congregations.

3.3 The Draft Basis of Union.

For two years there was no substantial progress. In 1895, during the fourth meeting of the Federal Council, in East London, real progress was made (Dalziel, 1956, 684). Attendance was good. A proposed Basis of Union was presented for discussions. After revision the Constitution of the proposed united Church was adopted and sent down to Presbyteries and congregations for adoption. The Home Churches, viz. the established Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of England and the Presbyterian Church of Ireland were informed of the outcome with copies of the proposed constitution of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa sent to them.

The constitution underlined the desirability of Organic Union among Presbyterian congregations and Presbyteries. Such a union was deemed necessary for church growth and was seen as encouraged by the Churches in Scotland.

The Church to be formed was to take the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testaments as the supreme Rule of Faith and Practice. It would adhere to the system of Doctrine contained in the Confessions of the Reformed Church, hold the Westminster Confession of Faith as the Subordinate Standard, and accept the Twenty-four Articles of the Faith adopted by the Presbyterian Church of England as a statement of the fundamental doctrines taught therein. The Presbyterian form of church government was to be accepted as founded on, and agreeable to, the Word of God. Membership in the new Church was to be based on an intelligent profession of Faith in Christ, and a life consistent with such profession (Dalziel, 1959, 686).

It was proposed that the new Church would have the General Assembly, whose decisions in every case would be final, as the Supreme Court. This was an important step in the right direction as it guaranteed some autonomy from the Churches in Scotland. Those ministers already ordained would

“have a right of appeal to that Church by which they were appointed to South Africa, subject to such conditions and under such rules as

the General Assembly shall hereafter from time to time fix and determine" (Dalziel, 1959, 687).

There would be four Synods that would make up the General Assembly:

- 1) *The Synod of the North (Presbyteries of Natal and Transvaal)*
- 2) *The Synod of Transkei (The two Presbyteries of the Transkei of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church)*
- 3) *The Synod of the East (the Presbyteries of Kaffraria, Kafraria and Adelaide)*
- 4) *The Synod of the West (the Presbytery of Cape Town and the congregation of Port Elizabeth)* (Dalziel, 1959, 687).

There were fifty-five congregations involved in these talks, thirty colonial and twenty-five with a native membership. Ministers and congregations in Native areas registered their disapproval due to reasons that can be summarised as follows:

- (1) A concern that support for Missions would be put in danger as relations with the Home Churches would have to change. The Home Churches will no longer be dealing with their own missions but with an established, autonomous, South African Church (Dalziel, 1956, 701). These ministers wanted assurance that there will be continued support for their work. This was a genuine concern taking into account the fact that Natives may not have been ready to maintain their congregations financially. One assumes that there was no way these native congregations would compare with the independent congregations.
- (2) Fears that once the united Church was formed it may not be in a position to be really self-supportive. Andrew Smith noted what Presbyterianism had achieved in general and argued that self-government and independence from the Home Churches would result to the Church in South Africa descending the level Presbyterianism maintained throughout the rest of the world (Minutes of the third Federal Council, 1894, 2). These reservations had to be dealt with.

- (3) The question of property and its transfer to the new body created misunderstandings. It was, however, a question of doubting if the Churches in Scotland would willingly transfer all mission property to the South African Presbyterian Church (Dalziel, 1959, 696).
- (4) There were doubts if the new Church would be competent to deal with disciplinary issues, let alone the willingness of European ministers to subject themselves to that kind of exercise where, Natives whom they regarded as incompetent judges, would have to judge their cases (Dalziel, 1959, 697).

A rather detailed response was presented containing important observations. The Church to be formed should have jurisdiction and authority over everyone, Native and European, with decisions that are binding and with no appeal. Church property to be vested not in the individual congregations, as the constitution had proposed, but in the entire Church. This implied that the Home Churches would have to transfer all properties to the new Church forthwith. The document underlined doubts that independent congregations would have to be prepared to surrender their titles, churches and manses to the body to be formed. The issue of property and discipline was seen as very crucial as is reflected in the document:

"If the relation of the Church to property is weak, it is equally so in respect of government and discipline. Were there any serious case affecting the position, the doctrine, or the character of a missionary, would he accept the decision of this Church as final, or would he carry the case by appeal to the Home Church? That is not a doubtful question, and what then becomes of the authority an independent Church ought to have, when one half of its ministers are missionaries" (Dalziel, 1959, 696).

The fear of Native majority was expressed. It was feared that it would lead to them controlling the new Church thus creating a problem. The document argues that:

The control of the Native Ministry, when it comes to be in a great majority, will be the real difficulty in the Church. This is nothing new in the history of the Christian Church. The Episcopal system in fact was introduced to meet the irregularities, the ungovernableness, and

downward tendency in semi-civilised or half-educated communities. Its supposed Apostolic sanction was evolved long afterwards to give it its authority. We are not safe from a tendency in the early stage of a Native Church to kick at authority and to be carried away by plausible innovations" (Dalziel, 1959, 697).

This is followed by a lengthy motivation against the idea of a united Church on grounds that a native majority would necessitate that there be ways of making sure that the constitution prevents them from taking control of the new Church. The argument is based on the imperfect education that Native ministers received.

It was noted that the united Church would have limitations in providing as well as controlling the theological education of the Natives. At the time the Free Church of Scotland was responsible for it. The document proposed, as an alternative, that:

"The Church may be contented to call itself the Synod of the South African Presbyterian Church, and remain for a period connected with the Church at Home, till it can assume the responsibilities- financial, ecclesiastical, and religious – which it cannot now do. Other Churches have waited. The Presbyterian Church may well wait for a time" (Dalziel, 1959, 699).

Among other things, advantages of maintaining a close connection with the Home Church were to be the power of ordination to the ministry, and of discipline over the ministers, office bearers and members. There would be financial advantages in the sense that support in the form of grants for Native ministry and Native Institutions would be continued. It was argued that there would be no financial support coming from the Colonial Church should a union take place.

"Were the Church to declare itself independent, the Home interest in it would wane, and by and by certain persons, unaware of the real state of matters, and misled by the phrase – independent Church, would demand the withdrawal of these sums, and seek to devolve of the Colonial Church responsibilities which it is utterly unable to undertake" (Dalziel, 1959, 696).

The emphasis on the benefits Natives would enjoy should the connection be kept intact leaves a lot to be desired.

"The loss to the Native Church would be great were the link broken which binds it to the Home Church. Since the withdrawal of the London Missionary Society from the Native Churches here, they have fallen into a miserably weak state in every sense." (Dalziel, 1959, 701).

"It will be said, on the idea of having an independent Church that difficulties in the future can be left to be met when they arise. That does not warrant the precipitate taking of a step which is absolutely irretrievable – the setting up of a self-dependent Church, which is so in name, but not in reality. By a course of action in accordance with the actual state of matters the grave objections of many would be removed, and the Union might be carried out with absolute unanimity." (Dalziel, 1959, 702).

The relationship between Native and European congregations within the proposed united Church was a great concern. Whilst it is evident that Natives were in the majority, they were regarded as new in the faith. It was doubtful if their contribution would mean much in the courts of the new Church. The fear of one section absorbed by the other was great and was expressed by those that were vocal against a union. In spite of these fears it was acknowledged that a union was very necessary. Andrew Smith argued that "it is out of character to have isolated Presbyterian congregations without general government or combined action, as well as to have Churches divided in separate folds, with no real difference between them" (Minutes of the third Federal Council, 1894, 1). However, uniting Presbyterian work proved to be a tough and difficult exercise.

3.3.1 The Question of Salaries.

It is evident that Ministers were, among themselves not happy about the disparity in allowances and income. The Home Churches determined salaries. Andrew Smith remarks that "the eminent contributions to ecclesiastical literature by a leisured few, and the great incomes of the higher clergy in a splendidly endowed Church of

England, cloak this comparison and create an erroneous impression" (Minutes of the third Federal Council, 1894, 1). How would Native congregations compare with the European ones?

It is sad that in this whole debate there is no clear word from the Natives themselves. All we read is what those who spoke on their behalf thought was good for them. It is difficult to guarantee purity of intention on the part of the anti-unionists.

Dalziel observes those ministers in Native Presbyteries "wanted to ensure that the Church would be controlled by the European until the Native had progressed sufficiently to be allowed an equal share. These men, among other objections, were anxious to avoid a Native controlled Church and so voted against Union" (Dalziel, 1959, 703). It must be noted that the reasons forwarded by missionaries, in these Presbyteries, for not joining the Union leaves one with questions. The impression given is that they did not trust the intentions of ministers from the independent white congregations. Mistrust characterised all these negotiations. Those who would always warn that such negotiations require that parties apply a hermeneutic of suspicion would agree that it is applicable where parties have no reason to trust each other. The history of relationships between black and white Christians makes it difficult for blacks to take their white brothers and sisters seriously sometimes. It is in times like these, of such vital talks, that trust becomes very crucial in determining what could be embraced and what risks should be avoided. The formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, to be discussed later on, was in fact a statement that black and white could come together. It was, in a way, a denial of the effect and relevance of the power of God in destroying barriers based on the experience of black and white relations. It was a vote of no confidence in any Christian solidarity as long as it implied embracing those across the colour line. If Christians had not been faithful in doing justly with each other concerning very little things how would they be able to handle an even bigger responsibility of accepting one another as equals in a united Church?

In spite of all these problems it was necessary to bring all Presbyterian work together. A lot of effort was needed in making sure that such a united body would in deed serve the interests of all members. It is doubtful if it would have brought real unity of all concerned. The Natives were suffering economic and political exploitation. They were not regarded as equal partners with white colonial Christians and this is evident throughout the deliberations. Even at this stage of negotiations there was a serious lack of theological reflection, a lack of a commitment to finding out who the negotiating partners were in the light of the gospel demands. There was a great need for a theological reflection that would help respond to questions relating to:

1. The inferior position in which the Natives found themselves in as reflected in all discussions on their level of education.
2. The future of Native congregations as regards their economic position.
3. The fear of a Native majority in a united Church.
4. Issues relating to the exercise of discipline.

It is easier to see how wrong things are than to be committed to making them right. A question could be raised as to how different was the attitude of the negotiating parties towards the Natives from the rest of the white colonial power. There is no evidence that there was any sense of belonging to one another that really made them feel members of each other and of the same body of Christ. There is no concrete commitment to identifying with them in a real way and improving their economic and political situations. There is equally no way one could prove beyond any reasonable doubt that the Native had a full participation in the deliberations leading up to the formation of the PCSA.

3.4 The Historical Event

Having now dealt with the various movements and events in the colonial context which led up to the formation of a Presbyterian Church in South Africa, the story of the historic event of the First General Assembly will be narrated.

The first General Assembly of the PCSA met in Durban on the 17th of September 1897 (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 4)

3.4.1 Presbyteries and congregations represented

The following Presbyteries were represented at the meeting:

- * The Presbytery of Cape Town. (4 Congregations)
- * The Presbytery of Kaffraria (United Presbyterian - 9 Congregations)
- * The Presbytery of Natal. 11 Congregations and one Mission Station)
- The Presbytery of the Transvaal. (7 Congregations and 1 Mission Station)
- And the congregation of Port Elizabeth (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 4).

The list of those present reflects that there were no native representatives. Only ministers and elders of overseas origin were in attendance (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1897, 47).

It is important to note that the majority of missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church entered the new Church. Those of the Free Church, after a consideration of the implications of such a Union, argued that the united Church was not in the interests of African mission work nor was it advantageous to its development (South African Outlook, November 1893, 2). They favoured, on the whole, a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating African Church. These were three Presbyteries representing twenty congregations. Seventeen of them were native congregations under the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church (Olgive,

1925, 234). Gordon Balfour notes that the decision to unite was a large instalment of the desired union and that it was a sincere regret that the Adelaide and the two Transkei Presbyteries had to be left out for some time. He further observes that the union, however partial and imperfect, put fresh life into the uniting Churches and inspired them with a firm determination to care for the little groups of Presbyterians scattered over the vast territory for which they have made themselves responsible (Balfour, 1899, 291).

Ogilvie argues that the refusal, on the part of the native, to join the new colonial Church was the fear of losing the connection with the Church in Scotland (Ogilvie, 1925, 234). The Churches in Scotland nevertheless were strongly in favour of the union and a totally independent Church in South Africa.

The Federal Council having completed its business was dissolved and became the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. The minute to that effect reads as follows:

"Whereas negotiations for Union among the Presbyterian Churches in South Africa have been carried on for a period of five years, and full opportunity has been enjoyed for considering and discussing the various questions and interests concerned and involved in such proposed Union; and, Whereas now, in the Province, and by the Grace of God, in the judgement of the brethren now assembled, the time has arrived, when with advantage to all concerned, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa may be formally constituted and inaugurated; and, Whereas four of the negotiating Presbyteries, viz.: the Presbytery of Cape Town, Kaffraria, (U.P), Natal, and Transvaal, together with the Church and Congregation of Port Elizabeth at present not attached to any Presbytery, have declared their readiness to enter into, and become constituent parts of an United Church on the Basis adopted at the meeting of the Federal Council at King William's Town in July 1897, (a copy of which is appended hereto; and, Whereas these four Presbyteries have appointed delegates to this meeting of the Federal Council with authority on behalf, and as their representatives, to conclude the proposed Union, and to become members of a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. Therefore, it is hereby agreed, in humble dependence on the blessing of Almighty God, and with a deep sense of the importance of the step now taken, and of the responsibilities attaching to it, and

seeking the glory of God, and the furtherance of the cause and Kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ. Our Lord and Saviour,

- (1) *To resolve this meeting of the Federal Council into the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, in terms of resolution adopted at last meeting;*
- (2) *To declare the four Presbyteries above-named, together with the Church and Congregation of Port Elizabeth, to be constituent members of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa;*
- (3) *That the delegates from these Presbyteries, ministers and elders, be the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa" (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1897, 1ff).*

The Chairman of the Council, the Rev. John Smith was elected First Moderator of the PCSA. The Rev John Laing of Addington Church, Durban was appointed first Clerk of the General Assembly with Mr. George Roger of St Andrews Church, Durban as first Treasurer. The First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa was constituted with prayer. A communion service for all Christian friends was arranged for the Sabbath afternoon (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1897, 5).

Correspondence from the Free Church Synod of Kafraria (Presbytery of the Transkei and the Presbytery of Kafraria of the Free Church) stating their reason for staying out of the Union was read:

"While this Synod recognises the desirability of Union among the various branches of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, and hopes that existing obstacles may be removed in course of time, they are unable to enter into the proposed Union at present, in consequence of the want of acquiescence on the part of several of the Native congregations in the two Presbyteries, and in view of discussions which have arisen among Europeans on the subject of the Native vote in Church Courts.

The Synod agree to indicate two directions in which some modification of the arrangements contemplated in the United Church is necessary in order to remove these obstacles. First, that some method be devised of adjusting the balance between Colonial and Mission Churches which shall be satisfactory to both races, e.g.; that a majority of white, and a majority of black, separately and conjointly, be necessary to pass a proposed measure into law; or, that in

view of future eventualities, the proportion of votes of both races in the General Assembly be strictly defined and preserved. Secondly, that there be a final Court of Appeal in certain questions to be carefully defined, say, to a Board at Home, representative of the Presbyterianism of the British Isles, or even of wider range, such as the Pan-Presbyterian Council could easily furnish.” (Proceedings the First General Assembly of the PCSA. 1897, 15 &16.)

Having appointed a Committee to prepare a reply to the Synod of Kafraria, the General Assembly adopted it after compilation and agreed to send it to the Synod. It contained the following observation:

- (1) “That the application of Presbyterian principles will obviate difficulties as to the balance between Colonial and Mission Churches; and,
- (2) That the matter of a Final Court of Appeal in Certain questions has been adequately dealt with in the paragraph relating to this point which was submitted to Presbyteries and Congregations in the draft Constitution, and which has now been adopted by the General Assembly as part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa.”(Proceedings the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 16)

The General Assembly, nevertheless, extended an invitation to the Synod to send their representatives to their next seating if they so wished. The Moderator of the General Assembly was requested to visit congregations that were involved in negotiations for a union, but did not join it, with the hope of persuading them to do so. It was agreed that Presbyteries should send one-half of their ministerial members, together with an equal number of elders to the General Assembly (Proceedings the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 34). Eight members, comprising both ministers and elders, providing that they belong to at least two Presbyteries shall form a quorum of any meeting of the General Assembly (Proceedings the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 36). Standing committees of the General Assembly were appointed. These were the Church Extension, Mission, Statistics, Church Magazine, and Arrangements Committees. It was deemed necessary to look into the feasibility of providing means for ministerial training by the Church. Consultation with already existing Colleges seemed to be

the logical thing to do. Funds would be raised for this purpose. In 1898 it was felt that:

"The PCSA might enter into correspondence with the Faculty of the Dutch Reformed Theological Seminary a Stellenbosch to ascertain whether it would be possible and expedient to have our ministers trained there. Our students could attend the class-lectures. But inasmuch as they might not be sufficiently conversant with Dutch to profit by them their studies might proceed rather by directed reading and examination than in ordinary way. A professor might be appointed and maintained by our own Church, should the number of students warrant the expenditure, who could, in conference with the other professors, take oversight of the students. The advantage of this arrangement would be that the students would be in an academic atmosphere, within easy access to a good library of theological literature, be guided in every way by men accustomed to teach and train students, and they would attain during their course, in all probability a working knowledge of Dutch which would be extremely useful anywhere in South Africa."(Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 90-91)

Twenty members, 10 ministers, 8 elders and two associates attended the First General Assembly of the PCSA (Proceedings the First General Assembly of the PCSA. 1897, 47). Statistics in 1898 reflect the following information about the composition of the PCSA during its second year of formation:

European		Native
Congregations	24	10
Stations	-	114
Elders	101	100
Managers	208	-
Members	2,961	3,778
Evangelists	49	-
Adherents	3,046	1,394 (Candidates)
S.S Scholars	2,196	Day Scholars 2,921
Teachers	228	86
Bible Class	98	Baptisms 967
Schools		47

Collections	£6,224	£93
Subscriptions	£3,369	£417
Seat Rents	£1,053	-
Total income	£10,703	£1,494
Value of property	£85,200	£8,990
Debt on property	£18,573	(Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 101)

The Church grew with very limited financial resources. This remarkable step of the formation of a South African Presbyterian Church did not appeal to every Presbyterian in the country especially because there were still other Presbyterian bodies outside the union. The newly formed Presbyterian Church of South Africa was not happy that some sections involved with them in unity negotiations did not join. However, the agreement that the Synod of Kafraria should send representatives to the General Assembly of the PCSA was adhered to. Churches in Scotland were generally very receptive to the union. This is reflected in the correspondence received by the 1898 General Assembly of the PCSA whereby the idea of union is not only welcomed, but also encouraged, "as it would be to the mutual advantage of the mission and the colonial congregations to be united in the Church (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 75)".

In 1898 the PCSA looked at the possibility of becoming a member of the Alliance of Reformed Church (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 61.). Presbyteries and congregations continued to join the new Church. Congregations such as St Andrews, King William's Town, East London (East), East London (West), United Congregations at Alice and Fort Beaufort, formerly connected with the Free Church Presbytery of Kaffraria were formed into a new Presbytery of the PCSA in 1898. Later on congregations such as Indwe, Sterkstroom, Cyphergat, and Molteno joined (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 104). The new Presbytery became the Presbytery of King William's Town (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 62-63). A congregation in Bulawayo requesting to be admitted as constituent member of the

PCSA was joined to the Presbytery of the Transvaal (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 70). The Mission Committee committed itself to:

“take advantage of any opportunity that may present itself for facilitating the incorporation of the congregations and Missions not yet embraced in the Union, and offer their services in investigating and adjusting any difficulties that may from time to time arise in connection with any of the mission charges” (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 76).

The Mission Committee of the PCSA laboured in developing new stations but believed that they could also be of great support to the Synod of Kafraria. This Synod had work that was also in the developing cities like the Johannesburg Native Mission (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 72). The PCSA Mission Committee thought it would be better to have some of this work handed over to them. The 1898 General Assembly of the PCSA put into record that:

“The General Assembly regrets that the missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland, having labouring in South Africa, still remain outside the Union of the Presbyterian Churches. The General Assembly declares its conviction that the hands of Missionary brethren would be greatly strengthened, and their work among the heathen materially helped, and especially, that the troubles and difficulties which have arisen in some quarters could be dealt with by the General Assembly in an intelligent, sympathetic and helpful way.

The General Assembly rejoices to know that the Free Church of Scotland has expressed its desire that the Missions in South Africa should be embraced in the Union, and hereby records its opinion and belief that it would be to the mutual advantage of the Mission and the Colonial Congregations to be united in one Church.” (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 74ff)

The PCSA General Assembly resolution number 4 of 1898, on Missions, could be seen as the beginning of what would later be a greater involvement of the PCSA among urban blacks. This resolution reads as follows:

“To commend to the special attention of the Committee the urgent need that exists for providing for the wants of the natives in the large towns,

and specially, the native Christians coming from the stations to the towns, and authorize the Committee to give such help as may be in their power in the way of enlisting the sympathy and co-operation of members of the Colonial Churches in this work, and raising the funds that may be necessary for such work.” (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 76)

Whilst this arrangement may have been specifically for the PCSA native members it also absorbed Native Presbyterians from the stations and congregations of the Synod of Kafraria thus becoming members of the PCSA in towns, but retaining their membership in the stations and congregations back home.

3.5 Summary

This union of Presbyterian congregations in South Africa was received with enthusiasm. Union was seen as very essential especially for Churches with same doctrines and similar forms of church government. The Moderator of the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church wrote to the second General Assembly of the PCSA that:

“We have heard with unfeigned pleasure that God has so blessed your efforts on behalf of the Presbyterian cause that you have been enabled to form yourselves into a General Assembly embracing all the English speaking Presbyteries and congregations in South Africa. We assure you that, as Presbyterians, we welcome with great satisfaction the progress of your Church, which, in matters of faith, worship and government is one with ours.

The Dutch Reformed Church owes a debt to the Church of Scotland for having in time past supplied it with faithful and devoted men to take upon themselves the pastoral care of its widely scattered members, - men, who loyally served the Church, whose names continue to be honoured amongst us, and whose influence upon the morals and spiritual life of our congregations remains to the present day. We assure you that the Dutch Reformed Church will only be too glad in case of your need to show similar kindness to you.

We regret with you that for the present, it is impossible to have that union which ought to exist between Churches which are so entirely one, and whose difference is that they worship in separate languages” (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1899, 98).

Union with the Congregational Churches was also discussed and left in abeyance (Proceedings the second General Assembly of the PCSA, 1898, 106.). What is crucial for our attention is the fact that there was an interest in having churches united. This commitment to the search for unity was to occupy the minds of those who longed for it over many years. They regretted the refusal of Free Church dominated congregations and stations to join the union. Their refusal was undoubtedly based on their experience of race relations irrespective of religious affiliations. Christians were just as bad in treating those of other race groups. They had not learnt to love across the colour line. Some were more concerned about self-preservation and an accumulation of wealth at the expense of the natives. No doubt some of them hoped that these brethren would change their mind but they, instead, formed another Presbyterian Church, the Bantu Presbyterian in 1923. The PCSA as formed in 1897 claimed the Word of God as contained in the Old and New Testaments as the supreme Rule of Faith and Practice in the Church (Proceedings of the First General Assembly of the PCSA, 1897, 2). What that really meant would be tested by events in the history of their existence. It is doubtful if this Church really wrestled with what God required of her regarding black experience. Such theological reflection necessary to be true to the Gospel demands was lacking. Their commitment to a fight against injustice intensified after a long time of just watching many black men, women and children suffer as a result of apartheid policies.

As early as 1934 attempts were made to join the two Churches with no success (Hope, 1981, 53). Over the years the PCSA has moved toward being a truly multiracial Church. A number of congregations remained segregated on racial lines (Hope, 1981, 53)

Hope and Young observe that the PCSA was for some time not very firm on their condemnation of racial segregation. Their statements on racial policy were far less frequent and less forceful than those of the Catholics, Anglicans, Congregationalists, or Methodists (Hope, 1981, 53). The General Assembly of 1960 records the PCSA's stand against discrimination on the basis of colour, race, class, or cultural background. Such discrimination was deemed as irrelevant to "Christianity in any fundamental way" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA, 1960, 117).

During the Soweto uprisings of June 1976, sparked by the forced introduction of Afrikaans in schools as the medium of instruction, the PCSA condemned the government calling for Black-White dialogue. They rejected the homeland policy and called on the government to support the rights of conscientious objectors (Hope, 1981, 123).

The PCSA and the United Congregational Church were involved in unity negotiations for over ten years when they both agreed in 1979 to join each other in any new ventures such as establishing new congregations. They agreed on a mutual eligibility of ministers, which meant that ministers of both Churches would be eligible to receive calls to congregations of the other on meeting certain conditions. This would be possible without losing his/her status in own Church (PSCA Constitution, Appendix E(6)). These negotiations came to a halt in 1986 due to fears that white Presbyterians had of a black majority in a united Church (de Gruchy, 1991, 218). The United Congregational Church was itself 90 percent black (Hope, 1981, 124). There were, however, some members of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa who were very actively involved in civil disobedience. One such person was the Rev. Rob Robertson whose witness Hope and Young document very well (Hope, 1981, 124ff). He worked as secretary during the 1959-1971 round of talks between the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in South Africa. He made an invaluable contribution in word and in deed.

The history of the PCSA presents a mixed picture on race relations. There was racial segregation, prejudice and paternalism in a country where racial injustice had to be condemned at all costs. Congregations were racially separated since the formation of the Church in spite of the fact that the denomination itself was multiracial (Bax, 19). This was a fact that raised lots of questions among members of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Reflection on this Church's role in her support of or fight against apartheid policies was unavoidable as they continued to talk with the Bantu Presbyterian Church.

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CHAPTER 4

PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS AND THE FORMATION OF THE BANTU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

4.1 Presbyterian Missions and the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church

The chapter on the beginnings of Presbyterianism in South Africa throws much light on the existence of two sections of Presbyterian witness. Work start in 1820 by John Bennie and John Ross developed into a major mission work in South Africa. In 1897 when the Presbyterian Church of South Africa was formed the United Presbyterian Church missionaries generally favoured a multi-racial church. They joined the Presbyterian Church of South Africa while retaining their connections with Scotland. Their ecclesiastical body was the Presbytery of Kaffraria (Walker, 1987, 71).

The Free Church missions created a local court, a Synod, the Synod of Kafraria, but their Assembly still remained the Assembly of the Free Church in Scotland (Walker, 1987, 71). The missionaries of the Free Church did not join the Presbyterian Church of South Africa favouring an autonomous African Church. It is very clear that the race issue was a problem. What would be the position of the Native in a united Church? In a union the number of black representation to General Assembly would be smaller. Walker observes that it was necessary, as far as the Synod of Kafraria was concerned, to devise some method of adjusting the balance between colonial and mission churches, which would be satisfactory to both races. For example, that a majority of white and a majority of black, separately and conjointly, be secured to pass a proposed measure into a law; or that, in view of future eventualities, the proportion of votes of both races in the General Assembly be strictly defined and preserved (Walker, 1987, 293). The colour problem was ignored by some. They who went ahead and formed themselves into a union.

In 1900 the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland combined and formed the United Free Church of Scotland. This meant that the new Church had a mission in South Africa in two sections, one of which was an integral part of the South African Presbyterian Church, and the other was distinct with a large measure of local self-government (South African Outlook, Nov, 1923). That great

union in Scotland, therefore, did not bring the Scottish Missions in South Africa together.

The question of incorporating the Free Church missions into the existing Presbyterian Church of South Africa became an issue for discussion. The Mother Church in Scotland was reluctant to decide the future of these missions, but was inclined to the view that there should be one Presbyterian Church in South Africa consisting of both Europeans and Africans serving in one and the same Church and on equal terms. However, a decision had to be made only by the missionaries and the Africans on South African soil (The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa: A Brief Historical Sketch).

Whilst the opinion of the Africans on this question remains unclear, the Free Church missionaries strongly held that separation of the two sections in religious matters would be the best line to adopt for the proper development of African work in South Africa. In 1904 Dr James Stewart was invited to attend the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh. In his address he,

- (1) challenged those who wished the Free Church Mission to unite with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa to think again.
- (2) appealed that the conference should bear in mind that there is a world of human thought, action and feeling, and of social relations amongst Africans that had to be taken into account.
- (3) argued that without a credible Christian witness with changes in real life any imposed union would have no appreciable effect.
- (4) warned that those who have lived in South Africa and really knew the relations between Africans and Settlers should reflect on their own experience as to the probability of a mixed church proving either a harmonious or a vigorous one (The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa : A Brief Historical Sketch).

His argument was that should the native element assert itself there would be a collision of views due to differences of education, or race and various other causes. If it did not assert itself, it would be merely an appendage to the wealthier white section abject, inert and lifeless and without any of the spirit necessary for its right vocation (The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa: A Brief Historical Sketch).

With the brief historical background on race relations and cultural diversity in this country in the first chapter, one would agree to some extent with Dr. Stewart's argument. However, the consideration of the centrality of the Christ event in such discussions becomes very crucial. Here exclusion as well as putting a dividing wall in place, between black and white was justified. This was to maintain the status quo. Is it impossible to talk union or oneness with Christians from diverse backgrounds? To what extent can the Blood of the Lamb cement people from different backgrounds and make a people of God truly united to God and to one another?

Whilst approving the ideal of a multi-racial church, the United Free Church (UFC) did not compel the Free Church of Scotland Missions to join the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (South African Outlook, February 1, 1958, 21). Talks between the Free Church missions and missions of the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) began. At this stage UPC missions were constituent members of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa under the Presbytery of Kaffria and the Presbytery of Mankazana. Any agreement to unite would require the consent of the PCSA before such union takes place. A committee was appointed to look into possibilities of a union with an objective to form a self governing Native Church.

In 1920 two Scottish deputies of the Scottish Church, the Rev. Frank Ashcroft, foreign Mission Committee Secretary from the Foreign Mission Committee, and Mr Andrew Houston, a prominent member of the Foreign Mission Committee, visited a number of missions in South Africa (Reports of United Free Church, 1921,17). They were sent to deal with the future of Scottish Missions which had grown to be the largest of all mission work of the Church in Scotland, growth which had serious implications regarding financial support (Shepherd, 1940, 341).

They attended the 1920 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, an experience which left them convinced that it was not a suitable court for "native matters". They noted that the differences of language and social condition were considerable. They sympathized with the irritation of the African Native ministers in being there at the consideration of business entirely connected with the colonial Church. "An authoritative Supreme Court of their own is needed, aware of the real needs of the African native Church, and in which the African Native ministers and elders shall have a real voice" (Reports of, U.F.C. 1921, 17). On the other hand the existence of two missions was working incalculable harm. The area covered by the two Churches was homogeneous and had to be under one church

body. A united Church, strong enough to undertake the evangelization of the whole area was required.

One practice and procedure was essential for the practical administration of the various agencies. However, this was impossible as long as the Churches were separate. The deputies urged that a union of the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana with the Synod of Kafraria on equal terms, even if it involved a sacrifice on the part of the former United Presbyterians of an ideal with which they had themselves a good deal of sympathy, be considered. The tie with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa did not have to be completely broken by a formation of a Native Church. The deputies were encouraged by the sympathetic resolution of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa *"to give the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana full power to decide on the question of Union with the Synod of Kafraria"* (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1920, 20).

The deputies met the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana and the Synod of Kafraria in conference at Blythswood on October 20, 1920 urging them to unite (proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA 1920, 20). Some older members of the said Presbyteries were reluctant to join the proposed union whilst the whole synod desired it. In the end the two organizations approved of a self-governing African church. This could be seen as victory for the Free Church representatives who stood for an independent African church controlling its own affairs, free of white control, with a federal connection with the Home Church. On return to Scotland the deputies placed their report and recommendations before the Foreign Commissions Committee urging the committee to;

(a) *"To note the growth and development of the Native Church with its well trained Native ministry and eldership anxious to take an increasing share in the evangelising of their own people, and to approve of the control over the evangelistic work hitherto regarded as under the care of the Mission Council passing to its ecclesiastical courts, the location of Missionaries remaining with the Mission Council;*

(b) *To approve of the policy that the Missionaries should gradually diminish and the Native Church be encouraged to undertake the more thorough evangelising of the district from which congregations are drawn;*

(c) *To approve of the South African Field being regarded as one to which new Missionaries should only be sent under exceptional*

circumstances, the mission districts being rearranged with a view to the mapping out, as opportunity offered, of parishes suited to the capacity of the average Native minister;

(d) To agree with the deputies that the desire of the leading Native Christians for more independence ought to be generously met, but to intimate also that withdrawal of a Missionary from a district must be conditional on the ability of the Native Church to find an adequate substitute;

(e) To approve of the policy of disposing of the farm lands for the benefit of the community" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1920, 20).

On South African soil a commission was set up to speed up the process. Dr. James Henderson, the Principal of Lovedale was appointed chairman with Rev P. L. Hunter of Gillespie assisting him from time to time. Rev John Lennox was appointed secretary (Shepherd, 1940, 343). Rev. Holford Mama was an indispensable member of the Commission on the Union of Presbyterian Missions in South Africa. Lovedale was the centre for meetings of the Commission which dealt with matters such as;

- (a) Uniting sections of the mission work of the United Free Church of Scotland;
- (b) the name of the proposed new Church;
- (c) membership within the Courts of the Church
- (d) the relationship between the new Church and the Presbyterian Church of South Africa;
- (e) the date of a union (Minutes of the Commission on the Union of Presbyterian Missions in South Africa).

4.1.1 Uniting Sections of the Mission Work of the United Free Church of Scotland:

The following missions agreed to unite, and were adequately represented on the Commission as well as forming the First General Assembly of the New Church.

FROM THE FORMER PRESBYTERY OF MANKAZANA:

Somerset East
Fort Beaufort
Glenthorn
Adelaide
Tarkastad

FROM THE FORMER PRESBYTERY OF KAFFRARIA (UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH):

Burnshill.
 S. A. Native College, Alice.
 Lovedale District Congregation.
 Gooldville, Sibasa.
 Lovedale.
 Pirie.
 Donhill, Mamabolo's, Pietersburg.
 Weirdale, Thabina.
 Macfarlan.
 Stuartville, Molsgat.

FROM THE FORMER PRESBYTERY OF THE TRANSKEI:

Blythswood, Butterworth
 Cunningham, Ndabakazi
 Rainy, Umtata
 Kidston, Emjanyana
 Ross, Umtata
 N. Cunningham, Nqamakwe
 Duff, Idutywa
 Cala-Ugie;
 Somerville, Tsolo
 Mabetshe, Ngqeleni

FROM THE FORMER SYNOD OF KAFFRARIA (FREE CHURCH):

Columba, Kentani
 Gillespie, Mt. Ayliff
 Miller, Elliotdale
 Paterson, Mbulu
 Mt. Fletcher
 Buchanan, Sulenkama
 Tutura, Butterworth
 Ncisininde, Nqamakwe
 Springside, Matatiele
 Balasi, Qumbu
 Mbonda, Mt. Frere
 Riet Vlei, Umzimkulu.
 Malan, Idutywa
 Emgwali, Dohne

FROM THE FORMER PRESBYTERY OF NATAL:

Gordon Memorial, Umsinga

Maritzburg

Polela, Bulwer

Impolweni

New Scotland, Maritzburg

Dundee

Ladysmith (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923, 10-12).

Members of the Presbytery of Mankazana and Kaffraria who wanted to join the new Church were furnished with disjunction certificates by the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa 1923, 8). A decision not to discontinue grants to missionaries in the Presbytery of Mankazana was taken. The mission committee retained the right to revise and alter these grants from time to time. Title-deeds for properties affected by this process would be arranged to fit the new situation (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1923, 6).

4.1.2 The Name of the proposed new Church:

Difficulties were experienced by the commission in deciding the name of the new Church. Advice by the Foreign Missions Committee that the name of the new Church be considered in consultation with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa was ignored. A meeting at Lovedale in 1921 agreed that the name of the new body be the United Presbyterian Church of South Africa. This name which was later changed to be the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa at the request of the General Assembly of the PCSA (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923, 10-12).

4.1.3 Membership within the Courts of the Church:

It was agreed that the composition of membership within the higher courts of the Church shall be

- (a) the ordained ministers of the Church;
- (b) the ordained missionaries of the United Free Church of Scotland, who minister to or are associated with the new Church. These shall have seats in the higher courts of the Church and their position was defined

as that of giving advise and assistance leaving the conduct of the business as far as practicable to the natives;

- (c) ordained Professors of Theology of the Church and;
- (d) appointed representative elders from congregations and missions. It was further agreed that there should be one elder to each minister from a pastoral charge or congregation.

Clarity was given that each mission church would fall under a Presbytery. The recommendations were put before the first General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church and were adopted (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923, 24).

4.1.4 The Relationship between the New Church and The Presbyterian Church of South Africa:

It is quite clear that the Presbyterian Church of South Africa was concerned about the relationship that would exist between the two Churches. A proposal from this Church that there be a federal relationship and that one Church should send representatives to the higher courts of the other was referred to the First General Assembly.

4.1.5 The Date of the consummation of union:

The appointed date for the formation of the new Church was the 4th of July 1923. It was agreed that Lovedale should be the venue. Imvo claims that this was the crown of a long cherished hope and victorious end to the struggle by some of the Free Church of Scotland brethren for an independent African Church in South Africa, controlling its own affairs and becoming ultimately free of white control. *"What is about to be established is new to South African church life, and it will be looked upon with keen interest by a large number of people representing many differing interests and many shades of opinion. We believe the new Church is creating widespread interest among the Natives themselves. It will be the earnest desire of every well wisher of the South African Native peoples that the new Church from its inception, and right through its history, may have the blessing of God resting upon it"* (South African Outlook, June 1, 1923, 128).

4.1.6 Convocation:

At Lovedale on the evening of Wednesday the 4th of July 1923 a convocation on the union of Presbyterian Missions in South Africa met under the chairmanship of the Rev. B. L. Hunter. Rev John Lennox gave a survey of the historical background and reports from various missions were presented and discussed (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1923, 7ff).

a. PRESBYTERY OF KAFFRARIA (UNITED PRESBYTERIAN)

The Synod resolved to hand over to "the Church about to be formed" all its interests, and in particular its minute books and other records, and the balances standing to its credit, namely, "General Account, £192 10s. 2d. less salaries due for the quarter ended 30th June, 1923; Evangelists' Fund, £45, and Old Age, Widows' and Orphans' Fund, £244 8s. 6d."

b. THE SYNOD OF KAFRARIA (FREE CHURCH):

The Clerk tabled the disjunction certificates of the missionaries, pastors, assistants, sessions and congregations under the Synod with the exception of one, the Rev. John Lundie of Malan. There were 26 congregations involved (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1923, 12).

The certificates of disjunction in favour of the Presbytery from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa were also tabled.

c. PRESBYTERY OF MANKAZANA

This Presbytery tabled its disjunction certificate. 5 Congregations were represented (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1923, p.10).

d. MISSION COUNCIL OF NATAL

According to a report presented by Rev. M.J.C. Matheson the council of Natal failed to meet but promised to report after its meeting (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1923, 8).

The Rev David Vukutu Sikhutshwa notes that, despite the dissenters, the lack of punctuality, and the reticence in the case of some Presbyteries or missions about disjunction certificates which were most necessary for the proper consummation of the union, the Commission did not seem to be disturbed or hindered in any way from proceeding on its way to union (Sikhutshwa, 1946). Even the dissenting members did not show any spirit of antagonism to union. Some elders contributed very largely, commendably, and bravely towards the consummation of the union.

He further observes that elders in the Presbytery of Mankazana were particularly remarkable in encouraging those who walked to the union with hesitating steps thus creating much hope for the future of the new Church. The unanimity, and promptness, and readiness on the part of the Synod of Kafraria in coming to the union were noted with great satisfaction. The most difficult and essential part of the union came to a happy conclusion, when the uniting parties showed what they were doing by deeds and not by wordy orations which almost always led to disaster and disappointment. The Commission had in its hands tangible evidence which bore testimony to union, happily consummated in a warm welcome by the anxious Home Church which had continually for many years been praying to the Almighty God for the establishment of such a purely African Church (See Sikhutshwa, 1946).

e. ELECTION OF A MODERATOR:

The Rev. William Stuart of Burnshill was elected as the first Moderator of the new Church (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923, 9). He was one of the senior missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland. He was at Burnshill for almost a lifetime as an active member of that Church. He was held in high esteem by both those inside and outside the church who regarded him not merely as a minister of souls, but also a defender of the African cause. The history of Presbyterian missions in South Africa provides sufficient evidence that the Bantu Presbyterian Church owed him a great debt of gratitude for his actions before and at the time of its formation.

f. THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

In the presence of a large number and representative company of Europeans and Africans, the first General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa (Reformed Presbyterian Church in South Africa) was constituted on Wednesday the 4th of July 1923. D.V. Sikhutshwa reports that during this eventful

meeting a deep slow thunder seemed to shake the very foundations of the large hall in which the company had gathered. There was no sign of fear or startled alarm on the faces of the audience, but a flash of glad smiling and renewed attention which ran through the hall (Sikhutshwa, 1946).

g. CLERKS OF ASSEMBLY:

Rev. John Lennox, theological tutor at Fort Hare, was appointed first senior clerk of the Assembly. In 1926 he was succeeded by Rev. R.H.W. Shepherd, the Missionary of Main congregation, Tsomo who served until 1932. Rev. Holford Mama then became the first African to serve as senior clerk, a post to which he stuck until 1941. In 1941 Rev. Mungo Carrick, theological tutor at Fort Hare, was asked to take over. He was succeeded by Rev. Africa Nzimande, a young African minister who was appointment senior clerk in 1945. From 1955 to 1967 Rev D.V. Sikhutswa served the Church as senior clerk (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1967). It is worth noting that it was during his time in office that unity negotiations between the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa and the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa began in 1959. He was succeeded by Rev G T Vika whose contribution to the negotiations was remarkable. He worked as senior clerk until 1976 (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1976).

h. RECEPTION OF DEPUTIES AND CHIEFS:

There were fraternal delegates from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, Methodist Church of South Africa, Church of the Province of South Africa, Baptist Union of South Africa, and the Presbyterian Church of Africa. The Native Affairs Commission, the Cape Provincial Department and the British and Foreign Bible Society also sent deputies. A number of paramount chiefs were also present to congratulate the Presbyterian Missions on the step they had taken and to stimulate the newly formed Church to greater and nobler efforts for the spiritual uplift of the African races. Some of these chiefs, like Chief Jojo of the Amaxesibe tribe and Chief Regent Mangala of Enyandeni, Western Pondoland, had travelled hundreds of miles to attend. These were afforded the opportunity to address the General Assembly and gave it their blessing (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923, 14).

i. NAME OF THE CHURCH:

The General Assembly, as well as the Commission on Union, had no easy task in settling the name of the new Church. The confusion was largely due to the existence of a number of small churches that had broken away from Presbyterian Missions and had retained in their name the designation "*Presbyterian*". There were proposals that the new Church be the United Presbyterian Church of South Africa. After lengthy discussions "the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa" was adopted as the most suitable name for the Church (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1923, 15).

It was noted that the name of the Church was not racial nor exclusive just as the Scotch Church is not confined to the Scots or the Anglican Church to the Englishmen. The Bantu Presbyterian Church claimed to be:

"a true Church of Christ with no barriers with colour or race, though from the circumstances of its place and service its membership will be predominantly of people of the Bantu races" (Wilson and Perrot, 1973, 390).

j. CHURCH TREASURY.

Rev. Tiyo Burnside Soga of Tutura, Butterworth and Mr D A Hunter of Lovedale were appointed first joint treasurers of the Church. Mr Soga held this position until his death in 1938. Rev. Mdani Xaba, of Balasi, was the next treasurer. He carried on until 1947. His time of office as joint treasurer with Mr James Maloyi an elder of Balasi Mission marks the establishment of the Malihambe Scheme which came into being in 1945. This scheme proved very successful as it sustained the work of the Church in very critical times (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church)

k. CREED AND FORMULAE:

An agreement on the question of the creed and formulae could not be reached. Paper work that had been prepared on the subject was presented and at the request of the convenor of the committee on Creed and Formulae it was agreed to send the report to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions for consideration.

At the time of its formation the Bantu Presbyterian Church could not present a satisfactory statement of Constitution, Creed and Formulae. It was agreed that the new Church should accept, for some time, the Practice and Procedure of the United Free Church of Scotland.

Time after time committees were appointed to draw up a statement but failed. In 1944 the General Assembly appointed another committee to undertake the task. It was ten years later that its work was sent down to Presbyteries and congregations for approval (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1954, 27). In 1955 the draft was unanimously approved by congregations and in 1958 the first publication was circulated (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1955, 25).

I. RELATIONS WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA:

The delegation from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa proposed that there be a Federal relationship between the two Churches. Although it was deemed necessary to maintain Christian relations between the South African Presbyterian Church and the new Church and was seen as in the best interests of both Churches the proposal was rejected by the BPC in favour of "a special relationship". Jabavu editor of *Imvo* observes that the word "federal" meant different things to different people (Imvo, Aug 7, 1923). The General Assembly modified and adopted the proposal as follows; "That the Bantu Presbyterian Church should have a special relationship with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa...". (Proceedings of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1923, 20).

It was agreed that each Church should send six delegates to the Highest Court of the other as associate members.

m. MEMBERS OF THE HIGHER COURTS OF THE CHURCH:

The membership of the Higher Courts of the Church was another very delicate and difficult question facing the Assembly. As the new Church was being handed over by the Home Church to African congregations, a decision had to be taken on the role of the missionaries in the new Church. They had started work in various part of the country and were still willing to carry on with their work. A plan of Union drawn up by the Home Church was adopted. It contained a proposal that those who should have seats in both Presbyteries and Assembly should be the following:

- (a) Ordained Ministers of the Church with pastoral charges.
- (b) Ordained Missionaries carrying on pastoral duty as the Court may deem advisable.
- (c) Foreign Missionaries of the United Free Church of Scotland clerically ordained, who minister to, or are associated with, a congregation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa in accordance with the policy stated in the Plan of Union of the United Free Church of Scotland (section on the Administration of Missions, paragraph 6), which reads: Each Mission Church shall be governed by a Presbytery (and where necessary a Synod) in which the European Ordained Missionaries shall have seats with the view of giving all necessary advice and assistance, but they shall leave the conduct of the business as far as practicable to the Native members.
- (d) Ordained Professors of Theology of the Church.
- (e) Duly appointed elders representing congregations or missions, on the basis of one elder to each minister or missionary in the principal charge of a pastoral charge or mission (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1923. 24).

n. PRESBYTERIES:

The Church was divided into 7 Presbyteries for congregational administrative purposes. These were;

The Presbytery of Mankazana
Presbytery of Kaffraria
Presbytery of Transkei
Presbytery of Umtata
Presbytery of Griqualand East
Presbytery of Natal, and the
Presbytery of Zoutpansberg.

In 1932 due to a decline in membership within the Presbytery of Mankazana which at the time had two ministers and four elders, the General Assembly agreed to have it joined with the Presbytery of Kaffraria. The Presbytery of the Ciskei was thus

formed and the number of Presbyteries was reduced to six (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1931, 42).

The name of the Presbytery of Zoutpansberg was changed to the Presbytery of Transvaal in 1938. In 1954 the Presbytery of Matatiele was formed as a result of three congregations, Mafube, Mpharane and Paballong, joining the Bantu Presbyterian Church. To these three congregations another two, Tsekong and Springfield of East Griqualand were joined (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1954, 28).

On the 12th of November 1949 the Presbytery of Cape Midlands and Western was formed at Adelaide. There were five congregations, Tiyo Soga (Cape Town), Port Elizabeth, Somerset East and Uitenhage and two ministers, Rev W P T Ndibongo and Rev J Y Hliso during its formation. These had been members of the Ciskei Presbytery (Unpublished Minutes of the Cape Midlands and Western Presbytery, 1949).

In 1962 a proposal that was presented to the General Assembly of 1961 on the Union of East Griqualand and Matatiele Presbyteries was accepted (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1962 Minute 3464). The two Presbyteries were to be known as the Matatiele East Griqualand Presbytery (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1962, 25).

o. COMMITTEES:

A number of Assembly Committees were set up to make business for the General Assembly a little lighter. These were; Life and Work, Finance, Board of Trustees, Welfare of Youth, Education, Training of Theological Students, Evangelists, Temperance, Statistics, Publications, Creed and Formulae, Presbyterian Hostel Fund, Relations with the Mission Council of Kaffraria and Natal, Committee works amongst Lepers, Committee on standing orders, Business committee, Purity Committee etc (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1924, 5).

Their number was largely determined by the need to address a variety of subjects that confronted the life and work of the Church. It has sadly been noted that reports presented by these committees in most cases represent only the opinion of the

convenor. The Business committee has largely been accused of deciding on behalf of the Church even without a mandate to do so. This Committee has for good or for ill shaped the thinking of the Church. It has been accused of dealing with matters that could have waited for General Assembly. It is necessary to note how its powers and limitations have been amended from time to time. In 1943 the Business committee was expected to;

- i. to review the steps taken by the Senior Clerk and other officers of assembly in carrying out the business agreed upon by the Assembly;
- ii. to suggest how business agreed upon by the Assembly can be furthered in the best interest of the Church;
- iii. to consider how any powers vested in the Committee by any Assembly may be used;
- iv. to review business which has risen since the previous Assembly, and to suggest possible procedure with a view to efficient preparation of such business for the forthcoming Assembly;
- v. to prepare the agenda for the forthcoming Assembly and to make all necessary arrangements in connection with the meeting of assembly;
- vi. to perform such other duties as the Assembly may require of it; in particular, to bring recommendations regarding the appointment of missionaries; to prepare for approval and keep up to date a book on the Practice and Procedure of the Church; to consider questions affecting relations with the Mission Council and to represent the Church in its relations with Mission Council (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1943, 19). (The effect of this paragraph is to do away with the necessity for the committees on Appointments, Law, Practice and Procedure and relations with Mission Council. The Business Committee has a fuller and clearer picture of the business usually handled by these committees than any other group of members of Assembly)

On the limitations of its powers it was noted that;

1. the committee shall not regard itself as a court of the Church and assume the functions and duties of Presbyteries and Assembly, except that the Committee shall have the right to exercise any power given to it by the assembly for any particular case.
2. The Committee shall not pass judgement on the merits of any business which has risen since the previous Assembly, or on the merits of any business which is or shall be under the review of the courts of the Church (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1943, 19-20).

In 1971 the functions and powers of the Business committee were reviewed, and documented as follows;

- (1) It shall act as an Executive of the General Assembly and as an Executive shall:
 - (a) deal with all matters of urgency affecting the Church in any way which may arise between Assemblies, and which cannot be held over for the next meeting of the Assembly, subject however to the following limitations:--
 - (i) a full report of such matters so handled shall be submitted to the next meeting of the General Assembly.
 - (ii) the duties and functions of the Presbytery are excluded from the powers of the Committee.
 - (b) review business which has arisen since the previous Assembly and suggest the procedure to be followed, with a view to efficient preparation of such business for the forthcoming Assembly;
 - (c) make all necessary arrangements in connection with the meeting of the Assembly, to prepare the agenda for the forthcoming Assembly;
 - (d) perform such other duties as the Assembly may require of it (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1971, 43-44).

p. FINANCES:

The financial position of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa has never been satisfactory. A number of attempts and provisions were made from time to time since its formation to better the situation. In 1929 at Somerset East the General Assembly approved a finance scheme which urged;

1. Congregations to pay their ministers encouraging them to become self supportive.
2. Congregations to contribute towards the general expenses of the Church nationally paying towards Assembly expenses, publications, pension funds, etc..
3. Stronger congregations to assist weaker ones through a central fund (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1929, 29).

It was hoped that a central fund to which congregations as well as missions under European missionaries would contribute 85% of their quarterly offerings would be established. In the scheme the African ministers would receive as stipends from their congregations £80 each per annum. Ministers would be paid a stipend of £108 to £140 per annum, according to the size and strength of their congregations (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1929, 29). The proposed central fund was only implemented in 1982.

In 1935 a pension scheme for the aged and infirm ministers was proposed and adopted in 1936. The scheme was for a long time faithfully supported solely by the Women's Christian Association, a women's organisation within the Church. In 1936 a new finance scheme was suggested which was much fuller than the previous one (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1936, 42) and the two, being welded together, produced the 1937 Finance Scheme which seems was generally accepted as the scheme of the Church. Year after year little additions and amendments to the scheme have been made. The noticeable weakness of the Church was its failure to enforce its provisions effectively. Some congregations were not at all faithful and loyal in supporting the scheme and this attitude caused serious problems forcing the Church to make special annual contributions and appeals for donations to sustain it.

q. SCHOOLS:

The Church took a great interest in the education of the Black people in the country. A dialogue was therefore inevitable between the Church and the education departments. There was however a shortage of able churchmen to manage the schools which were inadequately equipped. Various education departments such as the Cape and the Transvaal contributed to the belief that black people were not capable of managing schools. In Natal, however, this was not the case as some schools were successful under Black management appointed by the Church (Sikhutswa, 1946).

4.2 CONCLUSION

These are the historical beginnings of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Both this Church and the PCSA have Scottish origins. I am convinced that the intention was never to form two Presbyterian Churches. It happened as a result of devoted, God-fearing men taking their opinion very seriously on what they thought was good for most people on South African soil even without a serious reflection of the implications in terms of the credibility of Christian witness.

Many Presbyterians have asked the questions about the existence to the two Churches. Most people could hardly give an explanation. This history does not live us without questions. How can the church be truly an expression of the mind of God for humanity? How can the church resist the temptation of being dictated by the world in trying to live out the Christian faith? A constant reflection on the Word of God does not always yield the required results as we too often disagree on its interpretation. However, we've got to do this unceasingly until we find consensus.

As has been mention the foundation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was accepted with mixed feelings. Whilst some welcomed it with great joy and expectations, it was seen as an unnecessary event by others (Shepherd 1940, 243). Some had hoped that African Presbyterians who belonged to the missions of the Church of Scotland would be incorporated into the Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

As we have just witnessed what actually happened, those hopes were not realized. Instead the Bantu Presbyterian Church was formed. The two Churches existed side

by side. The rise of Afrikaner and Black Nationalism (Chapter 1) encouraged divisive attitudes. The two Churches grew away from each other by the day. The laws of the land made it impossible to consider any coming together. These laws were seen as unchallenged by most white Christians within the PCSA. Instead there was a commitment to persuade the government to modify some of them to accommodate the Church. The government was not in a position to do this and the Church could not risk identifying with blacks in any real way. In the Chapter that follows we shall look at the inconvenience caused by the co-existence of the two Presbyterian Churches.

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CHAPTER 5

TALKS ABOUT A POSSIBILITY FOR UNITY

1923-1959

5.1 Introduction

When the PCSA was established in 1897 some had hoped that all Presbyterian missions would be a part of the one Church body. The formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in 1923 was a real disappointment. Presbyterian work was becoming more fragmented. Churches were divided on race lines. The need for closer relations was expressed throughout the discussions that led to the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. In these discussions both Churches were involved. The PCSA was involved because some African congregations belonging to her wanted to join the new Church. These were African missions of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland that had become part of the PCSA in 1897 when this Church was formed. The majority of these were under the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana.

The quest for unity necessitated a series of attempts at uniting the two Churches. These attempts failed many times and have been resumed again and again with no success. The history of our country made it even more difficult for those involved.

In 1923, at the constitution of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, a proposal from the PCSA that there be representation from the PCSA whenever the General Assembly of the BPC met was adopted. The same would be expected of the BPC in PCSA Assemblies. These delegates would be associate members. However, the arrangement was not always adhered to. Rob Robertson notes that all down the history of contact between the two Churches this ideal of some kind of union is reiterated but never really put into effect (Robertson, 1994). Relationships between the two Churches were characterised by constant conflict especially where work overlapped.

The problems created by the existence of a fragmented Presbyterian family forced those in whose hearts burnt the spirit of a united Church to think beyond just the BPC and the PCSA to also embrace even the Dutch Reformed Church. This is reflected in the minute of the General Assembly of the PCSA of 1929, that:

“the General Assembly realising the need of closer fellowship and co-operation between the Sister Presbyterian Churches in this land, for the promotion of the Gospel and the maintenance of the truths and principles which they hold in common, empowers the Committee on Privileges to approach the Federal Council of the Dutch Reformed Church with the proposal of Associate Commissioners to the Supreme Courts of the two Churches” (Proceedings of the PCSA 1929, 270).

As a result of a continuing action reaction between the BPC and the PCSA a commission was set up in 1932 to define spheres of interests. In 1934 a Special Committee of the PCSA expressed their hope that some day there will be one Church (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa 1934, 47). The same committee noted their recognition of the essential unity of the two Churches.

In the same year a decision of both the BPC and the PCSA proved very difficult to keep. The agreement was that the Bantu Presbyterian Church should not develop into the cities but leave all work to the PCSA. Likewise the PCSA was to remain in the cities refraining from establishing churches in rural areas where only the Bantu Presbyterian Church had the sole right. The agreement actually meant that members of the Bantu Presbyterian Church would be members of the PCSA as long as they were in the cities selling their labour. Only when they returned to the rural areas either for holidays or retirement would they render service to their Church, the Bantu Presbyterian Church. The implications of this arrangement were difficult to put into practice. There were serious financial problems for members of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in supporting two Churches. The arrangement put the PCSA at a great advantage. Members of the BPC would support this Church for most of their time working in the cities. There are, to date, Black Presbyterians that are PCSA members in the cities and RPC members in the former homelands. This dual membership is to say the least very confusing especially to the ordinary person who

does not at all understand the reasons for the existence of two Presbyterian Churches.

5.2 Practical problems experienced

Problems started with the Cape Town congregation that had been part of the PCSA. Members of the Bantu Presbyterian Church requested the Rev P Matshikwe, who was their PCSA minister, to furnish them with disjunction certificates. They appointed a representation that was sent to Somerset East, the nearest BPC congregation to Cape Town at the time, to request that they be admitted into the BPC under the supervision of the Somerset East Kirk Session (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 28). The General Assembly was obviously divided on how the issue should be dealt with. Some members felt the arrangement had been irregular in the first place. Some felt it was important to have the matter amicably settled with the PCSA. Some did not understand why there were black people within the PCSA. Representational of such an opinion was the Rev W.P.T. Ndibongo who had a motion that:

"In view of our people working in big centres craving for their church, the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and to preserve or maintain peace and harmony between the two sister churches, I beg to move that the Bantu Presbyterian Church Assembly should respectfully ask the Presbyterian Church Assembly to meet each other half way, by peacefully handing over all their Native congregations to the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and that the Minister or Ministers of the Presbyterian Church in charge of the Native congregations be a member or members in the Bantu Presbyterian Assembly as it was in the then Mankazana Presbytery" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 29).

The last part of this motion refers to the fact that when the Bantu Presbyterian Church was formed in 1923 there were congregations and ministers who had been members of the PCSA but given disjunction certificates by the PCSA to join the Bantu Presbyterian Church at their request. This transfer of ministers and congregations was seen by some as implying that certain areas were recognised as areas of a specific Church. There were territorial boundaries. Any disregard of

these was a potential for conflict (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 50).

In the attempt to solve these problems the General Assembly of the PCSA of 1934 sent a statement to the BPC. The PCSA noted that:

"It has been brought to our notice that a certain degree of misunderstanding has been caused by those who in their zeal seem to be sowing and reaping in a field which properly belongs to another (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 47)."

Members argued that there were no recognised boundaries, or clearly defined areas where the BPC should not operate. However, the PCSA reminded the BPC of an agreement whereby:

"The PCSA would be responsible for mission work in Cape Town and the western area of the Cape Province, in Port Elizabeth District, in Durban, in the area embraced by the Orange River Native Presbytery, on the Witwatersrand and in Pretoria. Work in the Northern Transvaal was to be continued by both Churches each in its own sphere, and development there was to proceed according to opportunity and success, each Church being careful not to intrude upon the area occupied by the other or to interfere with the natural growth of each other's work (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 47)."

The Cape Town group was, nevertheless, given recognition as a congregation of the BPC and the matter left to the Presbytery of the Ciskei to finalise. The Somerset East congregation, through which the Cape Town congregation applied, was under this Presbytery. The General Assembly appointed a Joint Council *"whose duty would be to advise both Assemblies as to the best suitable methods to carry on their work in the most effective and harmonious manner"* (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 37).

At the end of its deliberations the BPC committee on the Cape Town issue emphasised the need to strengthen and develop co-operation between the two

Churches. The Committee encouraged the two Churches to look forward to the time when they would be united (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 54). It had become obvious that it was necessary to form one Church to be able to respond to some of the challenges. They also expressed the need for a committee or a council:

"on which both churches shall be represented and which shall be charged with the duty of reviewing the whole field, and considering how the available forces of the two Churches can be best distributed so as to make the most effective contribution to the work of the Kingdom of God" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1934, 54).

There is no doubt that caution was exercised. Full and friendly consultation with the PCSA was seen as paramount to maintain good relationships. In 1934 a Joint Committee, sometimes referred to as the Joint Council, was in place (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa, 1934, 37). It unanimously agreed that the two Churches needed to agree on an organic unity. This was seen as the only solution to disputes and action reactions. A report presented to the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church by this Committee in 1935 underlines the commitment to the principle of organic union with the PCSA. The recommendation to approve of this principle was adopted by the General Assembly. The Committee further requested the General Assembly to appoint a Committee that will specifically look into the question of the union (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa 1935, 36). However, this seems to have been contentious as some members registered their dissent. A missionary, Dr Arthur Wilkie, who was already nominated as Moderator for the following year (1936) entered his dissent:

" to the decision of the Assembly in regard to Union with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa as I consider such decision to be contrary to the mind of Christ and that it violates principles of the most fundamental kind" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1935, 37).

He, along with members like R.W. Shepherd and Mr. C. D. Zulu (an influential figure within the BPC), resigned from all official appointments including serving in Assembly Committees. Another appointment was made for a Moderator designate. What the latter part of Dr Arthur Wilkie's dissent really meant is difficult to understand. Was it our particular South African context that made union of Black and white contrary to the mind of Christ? Was it the way the Churches went about it? What were the "principles of the most fundamental kind?" The occasion underlined the fact that there was resistance within the Church to any union with the PCSA.

The PCSA General Assembly of the same year was enthusiastic about the proposal for union with the Bantu Presbyterian Church. The Assembly registered her appreciation of the support given to the proposal by the Joint Committee. The Committee was re-appointed to continue the work given to it in 1934. The 1936 General Assembly reiterated this commitment to a search for a union of the two Churches (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA 1936, 38). The urgency to bring the question of the union of the two Churches to the centre of discussions in the Supreme Courts of both was clearly expressed by the convenor of the Committee on relations with the BPC. He further observed the need to discuss difficulties experienced in areas where the two Churches come into contact stating that a friendly solution be sought. Misunderstandings and poor communication characterised relationships as is reflected in a report that reads as follows:

"The first information received by your Convenor was that no Committee had been appointed by the Bantu Church to co-operate with the Assembly's Committee. At a later stage word was forthcoming that such a Committee had been appointed. Your Convenor, therefore, communicated with the Convenor of the Business Committee of the Bantu Church, suggesting that a meeting of the Joint Committee should be held, for the reasons above stated. Action was, however, delayed owing to the illness of the Rev. H Mama, the Convenor of the Bantu Church Committee, and the double bereavement which fell upon him. For these reasons it was not until August that a communication was received suggesting that a meeting of the Joint Committee should be held" (Proceedings of the PCSA 1936, 134).

Another problem was that of Committees doing work just to meet Assembly deadline for them to submit their reports. It is not to suggest that this was the case with the PCSA Committee at this time but the last paragraph of the Convenor's report suggests that the committee did not meet because it would anyway not report to General Assembly. If this is not the case one is left with questions as to what is implied. His report continues:

"Very regretfully, your Convenor felt that, the Bantu Church Assembly meeting before our own, it was too late to hold such a meeting."
(Proceedings of the PCSA 1936, 134).

The PCSA Joint Committee reported in 1937 that it was working on a Basis of Union through a sub-committee. They presented only the Preamble. The Basis for Union had not been fully discussed presumably even by the Joint Committee. The BPC Assembly did not get any report about the Basis of Union instead a concern over a problem that had arisen within the Tarkastad congregation was the only issue involving the PCSA. A group that had refused discipline left the BPC to join the PCSA. Both Churches tried to settle the matter in an amicable manner. However, nothing could be done except requesting the PCSA to look after the Tarkastad congregation. This incident re-enforced the commitment of both Churches in working together. This is evident in the BPC Assembly message of "renewed friendship with the PCSA" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the BPC 1937, 39).

A similar incident had occurred. In this case members of the PCSA at Buffelspoort left the PCSA and joined the BPC without any disjunction certificates. A BPC congregation received them. However, this irregularity was rectified by the BPC General Assembly and an apology sent to the PCSA (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1937, 47). There were many similar cases that needed the attention of both Churches from time to time. The BPC Assembly Committee was urged in 1939 to prosecute to a successful conclusion the negotiations with the PCSA and bring about closer co-operation (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1937, 47). These were

practical problems that were making Presbyterian witness rather dubious. The two Churches needed a solution to these problems especially where work overlapped.

While the need for closer work relations was encouraged, enthusiasts were deterred from really going out of the way to embrace members of the PCSA. The Rev W Mpamba of the BPC within the Presbytery of the Transkei went around preaching that members of the two Churches should unite. This may have implied a grassroots approach of a closer work relationship, nevertheless it had not been sanctioned by the General Assembly as far as the Rev T. B. Soga was concerned (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1939, 52). This action was not welcomed.

Rob Robertson observes that in 1938 the BPC had apparently begun to retreat. Indeed the convenor of the Joint Council reported that the BPC Committee had not met to discuss the Basis for Union due to “*deaths and ill-health*” (Robertson, 10). Instead they concentrated on problems experienced by congregations in Cape Town, on the Reef, in Tarkastad and Glenthorn. There seemed to be difficulties in resolving problems created by co-existence. A detailed account of this confusion follows as reflected in a recommendation, by the Rev H Mama who at the time was Senior Clerk of the BPC General Assembly and Convenor of the Joint Committee, that:

“1. It be understood that where one of these sister Churches first occupied a field as in these specially affected localities the Ministers of that Church be allowed to take charge of the work for the Church which entered the field later, i.e. that the Bantu Presbyterian Church congregations in Cape Town, Tarkastad and Glenthorn be under the supervision of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa Ministers who may be already labouring in the said localities, and on the distinct understanding that they will have a separate and a distinct organisation from that of the P.C. of S.A. Congregation, and shall be known as Bantu Church Congregations.

2. That these Bantu Church congregations worked by the P.C. of S.A. Ministers will have the same status as all Bantu Church Congregations and be responsible to the Bantu Church Assembly and abide by its constitution.

3. *That contributions received from such Bantu Church Congregations be remitted to the Bantu Church Assembly for their disposal and having due regard to the necessity of meeting the expenses of the Presbyterian Church of S.A. Minister.*

4. *That in large centres of labour such as Johannesburg, which permit of many Churches this procedure shall not apply.*

5. *The congregations already formed by the Bantu Presbyterian Church be allowed to continue under the direct ministration of the Bantu Presbyterian Church Ministers and in that case it would be advisable for the Presbyterian Church Assembly to hand over the empty buildings in those areas for the use of the Bantu congregations, and the Presbyterian Church continue to do its work on the Rand as before.*

This suggestion about the work in Johannesburg is made in view of the fact that we have already an old and a large Mission Field in Northern Transvaal which may easily be coupled with our work already begun in Johannesburg.

6. *We would further remark as the Rev.J. Y. Hliso is working the Bantu Presbyterian Church Congregation at Port Elizabeth, the work of the Presbyterian Church of S. A. there could be placed under his supervision with the same privileges as those applicable to the Presbyterian Church of S. A. Ministers in charge of work under the Bantu Presbyterian Church as in the case of Cape Town, etc.*

In our view an agreement on these lines will result in the settlement of the present conflict in the field and provide the basis of harmony in the future" (Proceedings of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, Assembly 1938, 20).

This recommendation presents us with a developed version of the agreement that the work of the two Churches should not overlap. This proposal, by Rev H Mama, was received favourably by the PCSA Committee on Relations with the BPC. The General Assembly of the PCSA referred the proposal to the Joint Commission for consideration and reporting to next Assembly (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA 1938, 52). The same Court urged members of both Churches in localities ministered by both to co-operate in a spirit of Christian brotherhood (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA 1938, 52).

In 1939 the Presbytery of Port Elizabeth of the PCSA appointed a Minister to New Brighton. There was already a BPC minister in the area. This was seen by the BPC General Assembly as adding to the complications experienced in the cities

(Proceedings of the BPC Assembly 1939, 24). The Assembly, desiring to see closer co-operation between the two sister Churches, again resolved that the suggestions by Rev H Mama be further explored by the Joint Council (Proceedings of the BPC Assembly 1939, 24). A recommendation from the Business Committee that the Basis of Union be further explored was recorded (Proceedings of the BPC Assembly 1939, 31). Earlier on, during the proceedings of this General Assembly, fraternal delegates from the PCSA expressed their wish that the relationship existing between the two Churches be maintained for the advancement of the cause of Christ in the sub-continent (Proceedings of the BPC Assembly 1939, 18). On the 3rd of May 1939 the Joint Commission met at Fort Hare to discuss, inter alia, Rev H Mama's letter. It became very clear that there was a lot of disagreement on how the two Churches should relate as they seek to witness to the Good News.

Rev WPT Ndibongo of the BPC had not changed from his previous position and conviction. This comes out clearly in his proposal

"that the Sister Church, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, should act as the mother Church did and be a helper in building up and strengthening the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa by handing over all the native congregations under her charge to the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1939, 149).

Another view, still within the Bantu Presbyterian Church was that:

"both sister Churches should be given liberty to work in harmony in all affected places and that both Assemblies encourage their ministers to do so" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1939, 149).

Both proposals did not find supporters. The latter indeed encouraged the unnecessary competition the Churches were attempting to discourage in the cities.

A compromise entertained by the delegation of the PCSA was difficult. It was suggested that members of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in labour centres be under PCSA ministers on a separate roll. This implied that in places such as Cape

Town, Tarkastad and Glenthorn, where there were serious problems arising from co-existence, ministers of the PCSA in these areas were expected to take charge of two congregations, maintained as distinct organizations (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1939, 149ff). As the report rightly observes this situation, the implication of such a proposal was that the PCSA would receive the financial contribution of the members of the BPC working in cities while BPC ministers would be responsible for dependants in rural South Africa. It was suggested that;

"after paying the ordinary expenses of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa minister, one-fourth of what remained should be transmitted to the Bantu Assembly, the remaining three fourths being retained to augment the stipend of the minister in-charge" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1939, 150ff).

Strangely enough this Fort Hare meeting agreed to recommend the implementation of this proposal. This arrangement was far from offering a solution to the problem. BPC members in the cities wanted ministers of their own Church to minister to them. Nothing short of that would appeal to them. The struggle continued and things worsened in areas that were affected.

It is evident that the Bantu Presbyterian Church from now on did not take the union seriously. The Joint Council did not meet for a good number of years. Rob Robertson notes the appointment of the Rev W. P. T. Ndibongo as member of the BPC section of the Joint Committee in 1939 and that he reiterated what he had stood for in 1934 that the PCSA hands over all its African work to the BPC (Robertson, R Unpublished paper, 1994). The Rev D.V. Sikhutshwa's article in the South African Outlook in 1939 was the last straw on the attempt to unite the two Churches before 1959. He was an influential figure within the BPC who later became General Secretary of the Church. He argued that a union was an *"absolute impossibility"* (Sikutshwa, South African Outlook; 1939).

The appointment, previously referred to, of a minister of the PCSA to New Brighton by the Presbytery of Port Elizabeth was according to the BPC a violation of what the

two Churches had agreed on. The Assembly report of the Bantu Presbyterian Church read as follows:

"The Assembly receives the report of the Joint Council with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa and regrets that in spite of the suggestions herein contained it is reported that the Port Elizabeth Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa has added a fresh complication to an already complicated situation by placing a minister in New Brighton which was vacant when the Joint Councils suggestions were agreed upon" (Proceedings of the PCSA 1939, 23).

An explanation by Dr. Kerr, Convenor of the PCSA section of the Joint Committee, added more frustration. He agreed that indeed the New Brighton Charge of the Presbyterian Church was vacant at the time of the report of the Joint Commission. However, he stressed the point that

"The Presbyterian Church of South Africa had occupied that field for many years before it was entered by the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and that therefore the resolution of the Bantu Presbyterian Church Assembly animadverting upon the Presbytery of Port Elizabeth had been passed under a misapprehension" (Proceedings of the PCSA 1939, 23).

It must be noted that what this really implied was that very few congregations, if any, in the cities would be BPC as it was obvious that the PCSA had had an earlier presence. What would the Bantu Presbyterian Church's next move be? The PCSA wanted more information on whether Rev D V Sikutshwa's opinion expressed in the December issue of the South African Outlook that a union was an impossibility was representing the opinion of the Church or of a bigger section of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Whilst there was not clear response to the question it is obvious that Sikutshwa's observation was not very far from the truth. The BPC delegation made it clear

"that though the proposal for organic union had originated from one of their members and had been adopted by the Joint Commission, their Church was not in a position to proceed with the discussion of any scheme for corporate union between the two Churches" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1940, 93).

A proposal by Dr Kerr that a federal form of union should be sought by the two Churches, and that the constitution of the federal court necessary to be set up should receive the attention of the two Churches without delay was rejected” (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1940, 83).

He had clearly expressed himself in an article in the South African Outlook where he argued:

“I have never been able to understand why, when the needs of the work are so great and the resources so slender, there should be conflict. But the fact unhappily remains that there is conflict the experience of which has led the Joint Committee to suggest that no satisfactory mode of solving such difficulties will be found without a closer association than exist at present between the two. The nature of that closer association must obviously be the subject of rigorous discussion but of necessity nothing will come of such discussion unless parties agree to look at the non-Christian situation as a direct challenge to them to set their house in order for the purpose of tackling it. I believe that problems of organization will take their proper subordinate place when the Church braces itself to its chief work, but I also believe that the evangelization of the people is being hindered by problems arising from defective organization of the Christian Church and that these, by goodwill and improved organization, might be prevented from arising at all” (South African Outlook, 1939, December 1).

A long period of no substantial work on unity negotiations followed. However there were attempts to revive the work. Problems and conflicts between congregations continued to force both Churches to talk. Some congregations, it seems, were founded on the basis that they be places of worship for members of both Churches as in the case of Glenthorn (Proceedings of the BPC General Assembly 1947, 24). It is also clear that the attitude of individual ministers largely determined the way these disputes were handled. Indeed attitudes coloured the whole process and more on this will be said later. Agreements on co-operation had to be reviewed from time to time.

It is worth noting that the shortage of ministers compelled both Churches to seek each other's help. It was indeed a luxury that the Churches could not afford to have

two ministers in an area where they could have one. In extreme cases the Bantu Presbyterian Church showed preparedness even to appeal to other denominations of the Reformed tradition to assist as it was the case in Cala. This congregation, in the Transkei, did not have a minister and the Church could not afford to send one. An appeal was made to the Dutch Reformed Church to supply it with a minister. In 1937 the care of Cala congregation was handed over to the Dutch Reformed Church for a period of five years. At the end of the five-year period the Bantu Presbyterian Church was ready to resume oversight of Cala. However, the people of Cala, sadly refused to return to the Bantu Presbyterian Church requesting that the Church property also be handed over to the Dutch Reformed Church. The General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was divided on how to respond. Whilst it is clear that most members sympathised with the request there seemed to be no agreement on what would happen to the property (Proceedings of the Bantu Presbyterian Church Assembly 1942, 17). This highlights the fact that there was preparedness to share the limited resources and manpower. This could have been easily exploited had there been real commitment to the quest for a union.

Since the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, as it has been noted, the history of both Churches has been marked with an interest and a commitment to union. This quest for union was also necessitated by frustrations caused by coexistence and what seemed to be a betrayal of the Gospel imperative to seek to break barriers. Individual ministers experienced the worse especially in areas where work overlapped. In some areas Christian witness was seriously affected. Churches were more concerned with fights and conflict between them. Demands made by affected congregations had to be met. In 1955 the report of the African Missions Committee of the PCSA states that relations with the Bantu Presbyterian Church on the congregational level were, for the most part, unfriendly.

"It is further noted that "in Sidney Road, Durban, the source of the trouble is now admitted to be the desire of some members, including some office bearers, to see a branch of the BPC established there" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1955, 70).

The report also notes that it was not a one way traffic kind of situation. There were those who would want to join the PCSA from the BPC as was the case in the Far North where a minister of the BPC requested admission into the PCSA with a congregation of over 700 members.

The exercise of discipline contributed to disputes. It was common practise by members of the two Churches to change Churches whenever they had to face up to discipline. There are few examples of this as in the case of Edendale Congregation where an elder took with him the whole congregation into the PCSA because he did not accept the decision of both the Presbytery and the General Assembly to have him disciplined. Sometimes BPC workers would be accepted into the ministry of the PCSA without the knowledge of either the BPC General Assembly or the Joint Committee. One such case is reported to the 1955 General Assembly of the PCSA where a BPC evangelist was appointed to the Tarkastad congregation without the BPC knowing (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1955, 70).

The flow of ministers and officials of the Bantu Presbyterian Church to the PCSA in search of greener pastures, as some of the ministers of the BPC negatively put it, was detested by those who remained within the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Unfortunately it was, in most cases, the better qualified ministers like Molefe and Jolobe, who were admitted into the PCSA leaving the BPC very bitter. The PCSA arrangement to accommodate retired Scottish missionaries who had served the BPC was also unpopular to African ministers of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Since the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church the PCSA continued to work with the missionaries who served the PCSA as ministers in vacant charges or as interim moderators to some congregations. Missionaries of the Bantu Presbyterian Church could minister to European Preaching Stations of Congregations of the PCSA. They could be appointed as Assessors and Acting-Moderators of Sessions in the Presbyteries of the PCSA.

It is common knowledge that all the missionaries, who did not go back to Scotland, preferring to remain in South Africa would retire to the PCSA. Very few if any, of

those who served the Bantu Presbyterian Church, had their children baptized in the Bantu Presbyterian Church by their black colleagues. Their white colleagues in the PCSA baptized them. This never escaped the attention of concerned African Christian ministers within the Bantu Presbyterian Church who were prepared to have their children baptized by the missionaries who would not allow the same to happen to their own children.

5.3 Summary

We have noted that the ideal of a united church has characterized the history of both Churches but has never been really close to realization. Although attempts which were made are highly commendable, these never really shook the fundamental reasons for resisting a united Church. There has been indeed, a serious confusion as a result of the existence of these two Churches. The chapter that follows will take this fact a step further. It is sad, however, to note that those mandated by the higher courts of the Churches to negotiate a union sometimes find themselves maintaining co-existence by spending more time on how these Churches should co-operate in the work situation. That is not the mandate.

The fact that black members of both Churches have been finding it easy to change to the other should they refuse discipline by the other has been the biggest joke and embarrassment to both Churches. This has been the case partly because indeed the two Churches represented the two sides of the same coin historically and theologically.

The view expressed by the late Rev. W.P.T Ndibongo that all black people and missions should be incorporated into the Bantu Presbyterian Church was a view that the majority of BPC people held. They did not understand why there were black people within the PCSA. They believed that those in the PCSA were an unhappy lot. The Rev G.T. Vika dismisses this as unfounded (Vika, interview at Tsolo). He admits that they had problems that were not insurmountable but were generally

happy. They were in favour of a union which in their opinion would have added to the voice of black Presbyterians in the Courts of a Church that was white dominated (Vika, interview at Tsolo).

The Chapter that follows will look at unity talks in details. It must be borne in mind that there are two levels through which these talks could be understood. The first level is the official one, where things happened as planned by the Committee on negotiations. This involved meeting, sub-committees, reports to Presbyteries and General Assemblies. At this level were the actual discussions as shaped by those expected to keep the Churches informed and progressing with the talks, whose brief was to reach agreement and have the two Churches united. The other level is that of what took place outside meetings. It is about what one section of the negotiating team thought of the other, which in a way was, representational of what some members of the represented Church felt. The chapter that follows looks at these meetings and attempts to measure their success. However, before we do that, let us look at the nature of union the two Churches wanted.

The 1937 Faith and Order Conference in Edinburgh accepted three models or forms of church unity. These were:

1. Co-operative unity, whereby churches co-operate for the purposed of common witness without any violation of conscience.
2. Mutual recognition: involving a regular and mutual sacramental sharing.
3. Organic union, a union that makes it possible that all members get equal recognition and opportunity to witness, a union which takes and preserves in one beloved community all the varied gifts of the Spirit which God has give Christians in their separation (Best, Living Today Towards Visible Unity, Faith and Order paper No, 142 WCC Geneva, p30).

4. Both the BPC and the PCSA considered organic union as the most desired and significant union they should work for. This would be a commitment to the discovery of a form which represents unity in diversity, achieving a fellowship in which authentic unity and communion is experienced. Organic union assumes the importance of common structure and order. It implies common accountability and enrichment in teaching the faith and in fulfilling Christ's mission in the world.

Organic unity demands that those churches that seek it offer their separate or distinct identities to the larger wholeness of the body. It involves a death and rebirth of many forms of church life as previously known. It does not deny what churches had done in their separation existence prior to a union to build God's kingdom, but harness those gifts and talents for the benefit of the church thus formed. It appreciates the diversity evident in churches, denies their divisive nature and harmonises them for the benefit of credible witness instead. Organic unity is about the unity of humankind in a particular place. It creatively embodies memories of the past, realities of the present and expectations of the future and preserves in one beloved community all the varied spiritual gifts which God has given us in our separations (Best, *Living Today Towards Visible Unity*, Faith and Order paper No, 142 WCC Geneva, p30).

The challenge was to see union in the context of the struggle for the liberation of the oppressed who needed their freedom desperately before they could form unions and maintain such unions as equals with their oppressors. It was necessary to seek this union in South Africa so as for the church to witness as members of God's family. This would have brought a strong sense of credibility in a country where the church was also instrumental in dividing communities. A union would have created space and a forum for Christians to learn to speak and act together. This would have led to defiance campaigns against policies meant to assault the dignity of the individual.

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A union was possible. It was necessary in order that both blacks and white Christians stand united not only as regards ecclesial matters but also as a united front against apartheid. Some members of the BPC were not convinced that a united church would help them towards this goal. They wondered if it would not add to their suffering. Sadly, those who held this view won. The people of God, the church, had to wait for politics to dictate how they should do things. What follows is the story of the actual negotiations.

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Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, 1928

Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, 1929

Proceedings of the General Assembly of The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, 1930

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CHAPTER 6

SERIOUS UNITY TALKS BEGIN (1959-1973)

6.1 Introduction

At the heart of Presbyterian Christian witness was a thorn that needed both Churches to talk if such witness was to be credible. The years 1956 and 1957 were characterised by a strong desire to talk unity. Proposals were put before the General Assemblies of the two Churches and proved unacceptable. Some were suspicious that each Church had vested interests in the work of the other. The Bantu Presbyterian had at this stage been influenced by those who wanted all African congregations and missions of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa incorporated into the Bantu Presbyterian Church. If given credence such a proposal would have meant that unity talks would only take place between the BPC and the Black section of the PCSA with the exclusion of Europeans. This opinion summarises the mind of a strong section of the BPC on considerations for union. A view from the PCSA was that the Bantu Presbyterian Church should be approached for discussions on her preparedness to accept the PCSA Book of Order and especially their Chapter on Missions (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1958, 31). This view was seen as representing the mind of the African Missions Committee and was later rejected by the PCSA. All African work within the PCSA was under a committee on African Missions. Initially the PCSA wanted unity negotiations handled by this committee. To deal with the BPC under the Chapter on Mission was seen, by the BPC as well as by some PCSA members, as treating the BPC as a mission field of the PCSA. This was unacceptable.

In 1958 the PCSA General Assembly agreed to have this arrangement changed. A committee was appointed. Deliverance 6 of the African Missions Committee of 1958 reads;

"The Assembly directs that negotiations for union with Bantu Presbyterian Church be entrusted to Assembly's representatives on the Joint Committee, that these representatives meet the representatives of the Bantu Presbyterian Church with a view to discussing the basis of such union and report to the next Assembly" (Proceedings of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa 1958, 94).

This meant that unity talks could begin. However, nothing happened. No meeting and therefore no negotiations took place until 1959 despite attempts to convince the General Assemblies of the two Churches.

On the 30th January 1959 Rob Robertson wrote to the Rev DS Robertson, convenor of the PCSA African Missions Committee and its half of the Joint Committee:

"Here I am making a nuisance of myself again. Has any step been taken yet on our part to implement Assembly's latest decision regarding negotiations with the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and to arrange a meeting with them? I ask this because they seem to be still under the impression that we have laid down the minimal terms, viz. The Book of Order and the Chapter on Missions especially, and they are preparing a reply to those terms. Indeed a letter should go to them withdrawing those terms, which were submitted before Assembly had approved them, and informing the BPC of our real attitude to the Union negotiations. Their Committee is due to meet in March sometime and it would be a pity if they were not informed well before that date" (Robertson, R, unpublished letter 30 January 1959)

The Rev DS Robertson replied that he had not received any response from the BPC and was *"inclined to let sleeping dogs lie etc. However I shall see if they will agree to a meeting sometime in May"* (Robertson, D. S. unpublished letter of 21 February 1959).

Contact was made with the Rev DWM Matheson, the then General Secretary of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, and a meeting was convened for the 8th May 1959. The BPC proposed a union on a "Federal basis" with one General Assembly as the supreme court of the Church, but separate Synods, Presbyteries and congregations for European and African work (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May 1959).

An investigation by the Rev Rob Robertson, on the history of negotiations, in preparation for an envisaged meeting, did not yield any good results. Such lack of written information on what had already been done resulted to members elected to serve in the negotiations committee relying on information circulated by word of mouth. This oral information had its own distortions to say the least. As DS Robertson puts it there were no records of any past discussions.

"I have looked for them and found nothing. I doubt if they would be illuminating even if they were extant. You see there is no great difference of principle between us that needs delicate handling. The difference is quite obvious, the desire of the African to run his show and the refusal of the European to clear up the mess of the African's contriving. The African naturally wants to have a shot of the bicycle, the European says, you'll fall off, break something and we'll have to pay for it. Wait a bit. So the African says give me an old bicycle and let me try" (Robertson, D. S. unpublished letter, April 30, 1959).

The need for a united Church was, as has been said, among other things, dictated by the experience of many ministers who were directly suffering as a result of the existence of two Churches side by side. A letter of the 9th of July 1959 to the Convenor of the African Missions Committee of the PCSA, Rev Donald Robertson, from Rev Joe Nel of Pietersburg, reflects a deep concern for this division. He wrote:

"I am truly alarmed at the confusing situation that has arisen as a result of the existence of the two Presbyterian Churches in these parts. Union is not only desirable but absolutely essential. I spent a few days in the Don Hill area trying to solve an argument in connection with church properties and sites about which Rev. Robertson wrote me from Rhodesia. Your letter arrived just in time for me to pulse the feeling of the African people at the preaching stations in the area. I am convinced that the rank and file desire only one Church, and the scandalous propaganda that has been made to keep them apart is to be deplored. If our General Assemblies can agree on union, I am sure there will not be much difficulty in getting the people to fall in line.

Last year I had the occasion to make enquiries about sites we had applied for at five preaching stations. The Native commissioner advised us in writing that we had been granted sites. It subsequently transpired that the sites had been granted to the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Department of Native Affairs admitted that it was not

aware that there was a Bantu Presbyterian Church as well as a Presbyterian Church of South Africa. At one place where the Bantu Presbyterian Church maintained they had a site, it was discovered that the site was in the name of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

At Boshega the people built a Church in 1907 when they were still under the Free Church of Scotland. It was then not necessary to obtain a site, the permission of the Chief being sufficient. Later this Church became the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Although the granting of sites became law in 1936, the Bantu Presbyterian Church did not apply for a site until 1952, which they got. In 1954 the whole congregation went over to the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. They are now practically rebuilding the whole Church on a site owned by the Bantu Presbyterian Church. At Madikgetlo the people under the Bantu Presbyterian Church built a Church on a site granted by the Chief. In 1954 the entire congregation signed a petition to join the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. By law neither the Bantu Presbyterian Church nor the Presbyterian Church of South Africa owns a site here, but the Church must now be moved to another area specially set-aside for this purpose. The good iron roof is the only thing that can be moved, but the question now arises who's property is it, as 16 members have since 1954 broken away again and rejoined the Bantu Presbyterian Church. As investigations continue even worse instances may be unearthed, but I think it is enough to prove that something must be done immediately" (Nel, Joe, Unpublished letter on 9th July 1959).

There were many examples of a real need for a united Church. All these were arising from ministers directly involved in areas where worked overlapped. There were instances where a minister of one Church would have to do a lot to cover a wide area rendering service to more than thirty outstations when there was a minister of the same Presbyterian family looking after just one station. This was common within the BPC. Some congregations in this Church had a principal station in the urban area with many semi-urban and rural outstations attached to it. A letter from a PCSA minister of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Dundee reflects on this state of affairs.

"I called on Zulu (Rev Zulu was a minister of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in Dundee) yesterday to put myself a little more in his picture. I am astonished at the area he covers and at the little he is able to do for his 35 stations. It occurred to me to suggest that I might occasionally visit his stations as opportunity allowed (i.e. on Sundays, going with him to a service). This would mean being absent from my own morning

service. What I am after, therefore, in asking you for information, is ammunition for a request to the Session to give me this leave of absence once or twice a quarter to begin with" (Trinity Presbyterian Church, Dundee, Unpublished letter 22 July 1959).

In 1959 the Bantu Presbyterian Church proposed that the two Churches unite under one General Assembly with two Synods, one completely African and the other completely European and Presbyteries redefined into separate African and European Presbyteries under the two Synods (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May 1959). This meant a separation of the race groups at all levels except at the top. The proposal, indeed, was an attempt to incorporate all African Missions and congregations of the PCSA into the Bantu Presbyterian Church. It was argued that such a union would solve the language problem, the difficulties of translation and the leadership problem at Synods and Presbyteries. It guaranteed, as far as its proponents were concerned, certain autonomy of the two race groups, making sure that one did not dominate the other.

The representatives of the PCSA in sharing what they understood to be the position, opinion and desire of their Church, on the subject, pointed out that it would be rigidly opposed to anything that resembled an absorption of one Church or a portion of it by the other. Their understanding of the proposal suggested by the representatives of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was not far from, as it would appear, that all African work of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa be absorbed by the Bantu Presbyterian (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May, 1959). They further argued that:

"separation of the kind that would follow on these proposals would weaken and impoverish the life of both African and white congregations" (Joint Committee, unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May, 1959).

They pointed out that to separate the races at Presbytery level would be destructive to the measure of co-operation which had already been achieved in the PCSA and proved to work well. Suffice to say such an arrangement would play into the hands

of the proponents of Apartheid opposed by both Churches doctrinally (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May, 1959).

A good deal of time at this meeting was spent on conflict arising from the problems caused by congregations. The problem created by the PCSA Sydney Road congregation in Durban, that left for the BPC was discussed. Apparently they had already been admitted into the BPC. There were also problems at Donhill where a congregation of the BPC had joined the PCSA but was still using the buildings belonging to the BPC for worship (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May, 1959). Solutions were needed. The Joint Committee could not avoid dealing with these issues as they continued to sour relations between the two Churches.

Union only at Presbytery level, for a period of five years, seemed to be the best compromise for some representatives. This proposal implied that there would be no union of General Assemblies until such time members of the two churches had learnt to work together at the level of Presbytery (Joint Committee, unpublished minutes, May 8, 1959). This underlined the lack of trust that characterised relations and discussions. There had to be a period of learning to build this trust and confidence in one another. There was a lot of uncertainty as to what organic unity would mean for both Churches. The above proposal meant that there would have to be a re-delimitation of Presbyteries.

Another proposal was that there be an immediate union of the two Assemblies, an amalgamation and re-allocation of Presbyteries on lines that were suggested. This did not find much support among members of the Joint Committee at this meeting (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee, May 1959). The former proposal was more acceptable but in a meeting of 1960 following this one it was noted that:

1. *Union at Presbytery level would involve a lot of adjustment by one or both Churches. It was questionable if it would be worth it to go into that kind of Presbytery dislocations for an arrangement with no guarantee of permanency beyond five years.*
2. *Presbyteries would have to duplicate work for presentation to two separate General Assemblies.*

3. *Presbyteries would sit with a lot of work from two sets of Assembly Committees with a considerable number of Presbyters of one Church in the dark about matters discussed by members of the other.*
4. *Adequate handling of many matters would be impossible where one Church had smaller representation at Presbytery.*
5. *In the event of a complaint or dissent to Assembly what happens if the complainant found favour in one General Assembly and not in the other. Which Assembly would be the final decision maker?* (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1960).

These were genuine doubts as to the practicability of united Presbyteries with separate General Assemblies. Underlying this was the real fear and reservations evident on both sides as the discussions progressed. It was agreed that due to a consideration of the problems above, the previous recommendation of a five-year trial period, be replaced by a union of the two General Assemblies (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 31 March 1960). This implied an amalgamation and re-delimitation of Presbyteries at the same time as presented to the Assembly of both Churches in 1959. The five-year trial would cause so much confusion and problems as to guarantee that no union of the two Churches ever happened.

The desire for a speedy coming together of the two Churches was expressed in a number of General Assembly meetings that followed. However, there were areas that required special attention before any union could take place and these were:

1. The presentation of Presbyteries on a United Assembly and the creation of Synods.
2. The book of Order, Law, Practice and Procedure.
3. Relations with the Mission Council of Scotland
4. Name of the united Church
5. Status of charges
6. Reconstruction of Assembly and Presbytery Committees.
7. Standard of Stipends
8. Amalgamation of Funds, in particular the Pension Funds
9. Training of Ministers and Evangelist

10. Organizations of the Churches
11. Service Books.-
12. Readjustments of smaller congregations in overlapping areas
13. Joint Moderators in Presbyteries and Assembly.
14. The Credal Basis of the united Church. (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 31 March 1960)

Almost ten years were spent on studying and attempting to arrive at agreements on the above areas of great concern. These were contained in a document called the Draft Basis of Union and will be discussed below. A final Draft is included as Appendix IV. As far as the question of language in Presbyteries and Assembly was concerned, it was agreed that in Presbyteries the local predominant language be used with translation when required. At Assembly level English would be the official language with commissioners reserving the right to speak their own language with translation (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, March, 1960). This position never changed. It would have become the official policy had union taken place.

6.2 Representatives of Presbyteries:

The two Churches, the PCSA and the BPC, differed on how they were represented at Presbytery. The BPC commissioned all ministers and one elder from each congregation to the General Assembly. Congregations paid all expenses incurred (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960). In the PCSA the practice allowed each Presbytery to send a number of persons equal to the number of congregations in the Presbytery in such proportion that there were equal numbers of ministers and elders sent from each presbytery. Expenses were paid from Assembly funds made up of money raised from assessing each congregation according to its income (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960). In both Churches representatives were ministers and elders (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960).

Considering what would happen in a united Church, it was felt that a reduction of representation to Presbytery and General Assembly meetings was necessary. The creation of Synods was considered for this purpose and to reduce the load of work at Assembly level. This meant that a number of Presbyteries would be grouped together to form a Synod. They were hoping that such a forum would involve all ministers and Presbytery elders. Synod would meet at least once a year (unpublished report of the sub-committee investigating the organisation of synods in a united Church). Synod would have to deal with some of the business usually done at Assembly level thus setting the General Assembly free for very important issues affecting the whole Church (unpublished report of the sub-committee investigating the organisation of synods in a united Church). It was noted that such an arrangement should not interfere with the Presbyterian system, in other words, Presbyteries would still have an important role in Church governance (unpublished report of the sub-committee investigating the organisation of synods in a united Church). A committee comprising of Revs H.H. Munro, Convenor, J. J. R. Jolobe and T.L. Clarke of the PCSA and Revs J.Y. Hliso and J. S. Summers of the Bantu Presbyterian Church continued to work on the idea of the creation of synods (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 1 March 1961). The terms of reference were:

1. To present detailed proposals as to the powers, functions and organisation of the Synod in a united Church.
2. To suggest detailed proposals as to how the area served by the united Church could be divided territorially into Synods (unpublished report of sub-committee investigating the organisation of synods in a united Church).

After consultations, discussions and amendments on a few drafts the Committee completed its work (see appendix II & III). The idea of the creation of Synods was in principle approved by both Churches with very few questions relating to a synod in the Transvaal that would have been made up of four Presbyteries (see minutes of

the Committee on Union Negotiations, 6 & 7 March 1962). The existence of synods would have been a new thing for both Churches. It is difficult to tell what it would have meant for the day to day running of church affairs. However it is clear that a lot of confusion would have arisen not as regards synod meetings and procedure or even the issue of territorial bounds but around her functions. A lot of what synods were supposed to do was what Presbyteries had always been doing. In the minutes of the negotiating team it is suggested that among other things synods would hear and dispose of appeals and complaints from Presbyteries (unpublished notes on synods). These relate to matters of doctrine, worship or censure of ministers or elders (unpublished notes on synods). Synods would handle cases relating to methods of administering financial affairs of various congregations within her bounds. This to be done in consultation with Assembly Committees especially when there are funds received from any such committees. It was advised that all such issues would from time to time need legal advice (unpublished notes on synods). The idea of the creation of synods was an interesting one, however, one wonders if it would have worked out without conflict or duplication of the work of both the Presbyteries and General Assembly.

There would have been four synods of the United Presbyterian Church:

1. Synod of Rhodesia: This synod would consist of three Presbyteries of Salisbury, Bulawayo and Lusaka.
2. Synod of Transvaal and Orange Free State: Presbyteries of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Zoutpansberg and Orange River.
3. Synod of Natal: BPC Presbyteries in the Transkei and all PCSA work in the Transkei plus all work of both Churches in Natal.
4. Synod of the Cape: BPC work in Ciskei and Eastern and Western Cape and the PCSA Presbyteries of Kingwilliamstown, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. (see appendix II & III)

6.3 Book of Order.

A new Book of Order was required for a united Church but not necessarily before a union. There were no serious differences between the Book of Order of the PCSA and the Manual of Law, Practice and Procedure of the BPC. A committee comprising of Revs D. McRae, convenor, and J.R.D. Robertson of the PCSA and the Revs D.V. Sikhutshwa, W.P.T. Ndibongo, and J.A. Anderson of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was appointed to harmonise the two manuals (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). It was later agreed that a delay by the Committee on this issue would not prevent a union (unpublished notes by Rob Robertson). It was agreed that existing books would be used for an interim period with a supplement produced by a committee (unpublished notes by Rob Robertson).

The committee recommended that the name of the book for a united Church be called the Manual of Law, Practice and Procedure of the United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 8 & 9 August 1962). The report of the sub-committee on Law and Order of August 8, 1962 notes that the Book of Order of the PCSA was accepted as the most detailed one. This acceptance meant that any amendments would be based on incorporating all previously agreed amendments into the PCSA Book of Order (unpublished report of the sub-committee on Law and Order, 8 August 1962).

The acceptance of the PCSA Book of Order as an interim manual could have resulted to serious problems in a union. Ministers and congregations of the BPC would have had to struggle to understand it with PCSA members calling them to order from time to time. This would have led to feelings of absorption by the PCSA. Consideration of accepting both manuals as the standard and judging every minister on the basis of a manual familiar to him or her for a specified period or until such time that the two books were harmonized, would have been a better solution. In 1962 the Rev. D. McRae resigned as convenor of this committee. Rev. D.W.M.

Matheson of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was appointed convenor (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 18, 19 & 20 June 1963).

6.4 Relations with the Church of Scotland.

The Bantu Presbyterian Church could not own land in White areas and in such cases land was held in trust by the Church of Scotland through the Mission Council (minutes of a sub-committee, 16 June 1960). The Mission Council was also responsible for the appointment of personnel to the BPC at her request. It did not only appoint them but also maintained them financially. The process of transferring land from the Church of Scotland to the Bantu Presbyterian Church was slow and had to be done with caution. It was envisaged that fresh agreements would be made with the Church of Scotland should a union take place especially in the areas of:

1. Property
2. Missionary Personnel
3. Funds

The Church of Scotland favoured the move to unite the two Churches (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, March 1, 1961). Clarity was needed as to the kind of support the Church of Scotland would give to a united Church. It was noted that in other countries where a mission church of the Church of Scotland united with another, support for missionaries was never withdrawn by the Church of Scotland (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). It was expressed and recorded in 1962, that the new Church would appreciate the continued support of the Church of Scotland. This was communicated to the Council in Scotland (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 8 & 9 August 1962).

A response from the Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee noted the desire of the Committee on Union Negotiations desire to have properties transferred to the BPC but warned that properties were most secured if vested with the Church of Scotland until such time that there would be no doubts regarding ownership rights.

He assured the Committee on Union Negotiations of a commitment to continue to send missionary personnel to the united Church as long as they continued to receive offers of service. He underlined their intention to continue with financial commitments as long as money was still available and there was no other development of church work some where else (Foreign Mission Committee, unpublished statement).

Rob Robertson notes that a statement from the Church of Scotland by Secretary for Africa and Jamaica Missions, Mr. N. C. Bernard, welcomed the proposed union. Mr. Bernard further underlined the need for co-operation between the two Churches at all levels, noting that "union will only be a reality if people at the congregational level understand the implications and understand them gladly" (unpublished statement received by the Senior Clerk of the BPC from the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland).

6.5 Name of the new Church.

To reach consensus on the name of the Church was not a problem as agreement was on recommending that it be the United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (unpublished notes by Rob Robertson).

6.6 Status of Charges

In the Bantu Presbyterian Church there were three categories of charges, or congregations.

1. A full charge was a congregation with Presbytery/Assembly representation and a right to call a minister (a right of call).
2. There were congregations without a right of call but with representation to Presbytery and Assembly. These were congregations with small members of less than a hundred in most cases.

3. Some congregations were referred to as outstations. These were under existing congregations with no right of call and no representation to either Presbytery or Assembly (unpublished minutes of a sub-committee 16 June 1960).

The PCSA had congregations that were:

1. Full status charges with Presbytery representation and a right of call.
2. There were Church Extension charges and these had Presbytery representation without a right of call.
3. Permanent Preaching stations were linked to existing congregations but had Presbytery representation.
4. Preaching stations were under existing congregations or a Presbytery Committee with no representation to Presbytery (unpublished minutes of a sub-committee, 16 June 1960).

It was necessary to redefine the status of congregations prior to a union (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 31 March 1960). A union would have implied that some smaller congregations would become bigger as they would just form one congregation in areas where work overlapped. However, the negotiating Churches agreed that in a union, congregations should have the same status as they possessed in the own Church prior to a union (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 6 & 7 March 1962).

6.7 Reconstruction of Assembly and Presbytery Committees.

A union would necessitate new committees at both the levels of Presbyteries and General Assembly. The Bantu Presbyterian Church had no committees at Presbytery level. All members of Presbytery shared the responsibility of doing all work referred to the Presbytery (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union

Negotiations, 16 June 1960). Presbyteries of the PCSA varied. Some had committees that were regarded as of paramount importance such as Church Extension, Youth and Sundays School. However, some had none. At Assembly level both Churches had committees with the same or similar functions. In some cases only the names differed. These were:

PCSA

Executive Committee
Overtures
Bills and Business
Church and Nation
Church Extension
Book Room and Publications
Education for the Ministry
Finance
Judicial Procedure
Life and Work
Selection
Statistics
Sunday School/Youth
Loyal Address, etc.

BPC

Business Committee
“
Board of Trustees
Temperance
Church Extension
Publications and Order of Services
Training for the Ministry
Finance
Law, Practise and Procedure
Life and Work
Nominations
Statistics
Youth
Loyal Address, etc. (unpublished minutes of

the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960).

There were two Church Extension Committees within the PCSA. One was for Europeans and another one for Africans. Work done by the Publications and Order of Services Committee in the Bantu Presbyterian Church was in the PCSA done by two committees, the Book Room and Publications and the Public worship and Aids to Devotion. Whilst all work relating to finances was under one committee in the PCSA there was a committee looking into pensions within the BPC, the Pension Funds Trustees. There were also the Evangelists and Appointments Committees in the

BPC that were more or less doing the work that would otherwise be under the Church Extension Committee in the PCSA (unpublished minutes of the Negotiations Committee, 16 June 1960).

The PCSA had committees that the BPC did not have. These were the Chaplains, Coloured Missions, Indian Missions, Children's Home, Admissions to the Ministry, Ecumenical Relations and the Leader. Committees that were only in the BPC were Education, Bible School, Relations with Mission Council and the Young Men's Christian Guild (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960).

The concern to reconstruct Assembly Committees did not pose any serious problems. It was only necessary to revisit the terms of reference for these committees and find a via media. The BPC made sure that Presbyteries were represented in these Assembly Committees whilst the PCSA encouraged that members of each committee should be from one Presbytery (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes). A committee was appointed to suggest the names of new committees, propose the amalgamation and to define the functions. These were the Revs. J.P. Whyte (Convenor), and S.P. Lediga of the P.C.S. A. and the Revs. J.A. Anderson and B.M. Molaba of the B.P.C. (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961).

6.8 Stipends

Comparing stipends showed serious discrepancies. These are recorded as they were on a monthly basis.

	<u>PCSA</u>	<u>BPC</u>
African Ministers	R30	R40
African Evangelists	R20	Not fixed
European Ministers	R100	

(minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960)

There were other allowances that individual ministers received and congregations reserved the right to decide how much they wanted to give to the minister in addition to the minimum stipend (unpublished report of the sub-committee on stipends for ministers). In the Bantu Presbyterian Church ministers in urban areas were better paid compared to those in rural areas (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). The argument being that rural congregations had land that they could cultivate to supplement the minister's income. The work of the sub-committee on stipends reflects that its mind was on maintaining these differences between rural and urban minister's stipends (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on stipends for the ministers, report No.3.). Whilst it is not reflected how much the missionaries were getting from the Church of Scotland, the concern in the unity discussions around 1960 was more about putting them at the same level as European ministers of the PCSA than putting everyone at the same level. The Minute reads as follows:

"It was noted that in the event of union arrangement would have to be made with the Church of Scotland so that the stipends of their missionaries bore a reasonable relationship to the European stipend prevailing in the United Church" (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June 16, 1960).

The Church of Scotland paid all the expenses of Scottish Missionaries (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). There were no grants to the Bantu Presbyterian Church for personnel, buildings or pensions. No comparison of African and European stipends was recorded except to mention that they were "roughly in the proportion of 2 to 1 (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 8 & 9 August 1962). Instead, much of this comparison is between African and African. A stipend of R80 for African ministers and R60 for Evangelists was proposed as the target of a united Church, with an immediate increase to R50 and R34 respectively (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1960, 47). This amount would exclude children's allowance, as was the practise in the PCSA. The PCSA also had the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) which was a government design to compensate for the inflation. The BPC

did not pay any Cost of Living Allowance as was the case with some employers (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes). The sliding scale of White-Black salaries was typical of South African society. Blacks were generally poorly paid.

It was noted that stipends in both Churches were derived from a levy upon the membership. The General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was actually finding it difficult to subsidise all congregations unable to meet their requirements in paying stipends to church workers. In spite of all this the BPC felt that congregations unable to pay a sufficient living wage should not be assisted by the General Assembly (Minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960). The practice of members of the Church paying a common levy to help pay stipends was discouraged by the negotiating team. They recognised that it would be necessary to continue it in a united Church but advised that it be an intern measure.

The eventual quality of minimum basic stipend for all church workers of all race groups was the accepted goal of a united Church (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 8 & 9 August 1962). In order to achieve that goal it was recommended that there be no increase of the European minimum without a greater proportional increase in the African minimum until parity was reached. This reflected an earlier agreement that the equality of minimum stipends should be achieved by a levelling up rather than a levelling down (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960).

Other attempts were made at improving disparity as far as stipends were concerned. The sub-committee on stipends proposed that:

1. A Central Fund be consolidated with all congregations sending money on a monthly basis.
2. Ministers send all money raised as marriage, baptismal and funeral fees to the Central Fund.

3. Congregations to contribute a certain amount of their budget to help African congregations (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 8 & 9 August 1962).

By 1968 stipends in the BPC had not changed. No increase had taken place. In his report, Mr Galloway, an accountant appointed in an advisory capacity reported that a sum of R21, 366 per annum would be required to raise BPC stipends to the level of the minimum stipend of African ministers of the PCSA. It was estimated that it would take about 8 to 10 years to close the gap. The implications would be a long period of very little or no increase in the minimum stipends of former PCSA African and European ministers (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 14 March 1968).

6.9 Amalgamation of Funds.

The Business and Finance Committees of the two Churches continued to work on the amalgamation of funds as requested. The Bantu Presbyterian Church was admittedly a poor Church. African Presbyterians sometimes find themselves unnecessarily concerned that this characteristic of their Church will eternally keep them away from proposed unions. They turn to be apologetic about it sometimes. However this needs to be made very clear that the fact that the PCSA was a richer Church was nothing her members could boast about. They knew why the Bantu Presbyterian was a poor Church. They, therefore, would not want to make the BPC feel bad about her financial problems.

There was hope that through the disposal of properties of the Church of Scotland in South Africa, a considerable capital would be injected into the Bantu Presbyterian Church. A huge capital was needed to help put the BPC pension fund at the same level with that of the PCSA. Was this possible? Something had to be either done or said. There were a few concerned PCSA Christians who argued that any union with a poor Bantu Church would render them poor, a position that was difficult to embrace. The possibility of appeals to other funding bodies was from time to time

mentioned with no success (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, March, 1, 1961).

Contributions in the Bantu Presbyterian Church were channelled into their Pension, Widows and Orphans Fund. Ministers paid R10 annually into the fund. Congregations also contributed R2 per 100 members. A sum of R4 a month was all that pensioners received. A numbers of ministers were not up to date with their payments, putting the fund at a bad state. The Fund excluded the Evangelists. There was one rate of R40 pension for all that joined the fund before the age of 50. European Ministers of the PCSA were expected to pay R48 per annum, with African ministers and Evangelist contributing R24 and R12 respectively. European Evangelists paid R36. Congregations paid a certain amount and the General Assembly contributed a quarter (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, August 1962).

No mention was made of how much PCSA ministers were paid at this stage (1961) except a report that they were receiving a "correspondingly higher" pension. It was further noted that:

1. *"a large disparity exists between the capital funds from which pensions are derived in the two Churches. This disparity is reflected in the difference of the pensions paid to African ministers of the two Churches.*
2. *In order that African ministers in the joint Church will receive an equitable pension, consideration should be given to levelling up the standard of premiums and capital funds. It is suggested that urgent thought on the part of the BPC be given to augmenting the Pension Scheme so that parity might be achieved between the two pension schemes"* (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June, 14, 1961).

In 1962, a report from the PCSA Finance Committee was presented to the Negotiating team. It highlighted the concern that the united Church Pension Fund would need a large injection of capital to maintain in a united Church the level of annuities paid in the PCSA. The other alternative was to allow things to remain as they were with each pensioned minister receiving what he would had, anyway,

received in his Church before a union. New people joining the ministry would come under the PCSA pension fund regulations. Another proposal was that;

"it would be required to have a uniform system of contributions and reimbursements in the united Church but to take into account disparate contributions made by individuals to their own Church's pension funds before union. To effect this it would be necessary at the time of union to reckon in the case of each man what pension was due to him in and then add to that what he accumulates during service in the united Church. This would achieve equity and would affect the capital amount that would be required to make the new level of payment in a united Church equal to the present rate in highest of the uniting Churches (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, August 1962).

Further investigation was referred to Messrs McPhail and Fraser, the appointed Actuaries, to consider what would be best for a united Church and the amount of money needed as capital increase to the BPC to make the scheme viable. It was agreed that the united Church shall adopt the rules governing the Pension Fund of the PCSA at the time of union as the rules of the united Church Pension Fund for ministers, evangelists and for their widows and dependent children (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, August 1963).

The gap between the two Churches continued to widen. Both funds were under the same Actuaries. The PCSA pension fund was better off with the BPC fund short of good support from members and largely failing to enforce the payment of premiums. Sometimes the Bantu Presbyterian Church had to appeal to the national Women's Christian Association of the Church for assistance. In 1968 it was noted that the capital amount required to enable members of the BPC to receive benefits at the PCSA rate was R90.000 (unpublished letter by J.A. Carson & Partners, 11 March 1968). Much more was needed to assure ministers of the PCSA that a union would not result in them and their dependants suffering serious reductions in pension benefits.

6.10 Training of Ministers and Evangelists.

Both Churches had matriculation and three years of theological training for all African ministers as a requirement for joining the ordained ministry (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960). There were no stipulations for Evangelists in the BPC. In the PCSA, a junior certificate and three years training was required (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 16 June 1960). All candidates would be accepted into the new Church on regulations of their own Church at the time of a union (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 31 March 1960). Entrance requirements for training of ministers and evangelists would be a subject of discussion only in a united Church.

A committee on ministerial training was appointed with the Rev. J. S. Summers as convenor, and Rev I Njoloza representing the B.P.C. team. Revs J. J. R. Jolobe and Rev. H. H. Munro represented the P.C.S.A (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1962). In spite of the fact that all discussions of training of ministry seemed to be around the training of African ministers the committee was specifically mandated to look at the training of all ministers (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1962).

In 1963 discussions on the subject of ministerial training reflect the inferior position black people were given. The sub-committee proposed that qualifications for entry into ministerial training should be a Senior Certificate or its equivalent for blacks, whilst it would be matriculation for whites. It was further proposed the that minimum qualifications for admission into the ordained ministry be a Diploma in Theology for blacks and a Degree or its equivalent for whites (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 18, 19 & 20 June 1963).

The work of the Evangelists was key to Church Extension as the Rev. Matheson observed in his letter to the convenor of the sub-committee on Evangelists in 1961 (unpublished report of the Sub-Committee on Evangelists, 1961). He felt it was very necessary for the Church to invest in the training of such men. These were tried,

trusted and experienced men whose ministry was very crucial because of the need for outreach and evangelism. The shortage of ordained ministers made the need to have them even urgent (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on Evangelists). However, the training of Evangelists posed a problem especially as it concerned African Evangelists. The PCSA ordained Evangelists (Minutes of the General Assembly of the PCSA, 1958) were men trained to plant new churches mostly in developing areas. They could preach the Word and administer the Sacraments. After training they were expected, by the Church Extension Committee, to work for about 12 years before any congregation could call them to perform duties as a minister. The majority of BPC ministers were opposed to the ordination of Evangelists (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on Evangelists). In the BPC the Evangelist was more like an ordained elder with some special duties that excluded the administration of sacraments. Such duties would include conducting revival services, burials and any other duties as assigned by the minister and the session under which he worked (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on Evangelists). This was also the status of the unordained evangelists in the PCSA.

There were suggestions that instead of having training for ministers and evangelists be only training for ministers with the same entrance requirements. A special course for those who would later do the work of evangelists could be part of the one programme for ministerial training (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on Evangelists). This was never really done. There is no doubt that both Churches were very appreciative of the work done by evangelist as they were key to church development.

In 1963 the BPC had 52 paid evangelists (Blue Book, 1963,46) while the PCSA had 34 ordained evangelists and 13 unordained evangelists (1963 PCSA unpublished report on church workers). In 1962 a sub-committee on Evangelists was appointed with the Revs. J. Y. Hliso and D.V. Sikhutshwa representing the B.P.C. Rev. W.M.J. Lund and Rev. J. J. R. Jolobe represented the PCSA. Rev. W.M.J. was appointed convenor. The PCSA had established an Order of African and European Ordained Evangelists but the BPC rejected a proposal to have this established in the United

Presbyterian Church (unpublished report of Sub-Committee on Books of Law and Order 2 March 1961).

Evangelists of the PCSA were trained at Morija or at Sweetwaters whilst those of the BPC went to Lovedale (minutes of the sub-committee on stipends 14 June 1961). Due to the closure of Lovedale it was agreed to have training of Evangelists of a united Church at the centres used by the PCSA. It was deemed necessary to consider having same entrance requirements for all as well as one college where all ministers of a united Church would receive their training. There was undoubtedly a need to challenge apartheid structures that separated Blacks and Whites. All arrangements regarding training go on as before a union as a temporal measure until a solution was found (unpublished minutes of the sub-committee on Evangelists).

6.11 Organizations of the Church.

Both Churches had Women and Girls Associations. Only the European section of the PCSA had an organised Youth Fellowship but did not have an Association for men. Both the African section of the PCSA and the BPC had a Young Men's Christian Association known as the PYMA in the PCSA and the YMCG in the Bantu Presbyterian Church (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 16 June 1960). The European section of the PCSA and the Bantu Presbyterian Church had a Boy's Brigade (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 16 June 1960). It was felt that a coming together of these organizations would not be difficult. This was definitely a grave mistake largely because of undermining the strong sense of identity and crucial role that these organizations play in the life and work of individual congregations. Both Churches were, nevertheless, urged to study each other's constitution and rules with the view of assisting make the necessary adjustments. This would be done through the General Assemblies of the two Churches who would encourage their organizations to forward copies of their constitutions and to receive and study those of the other Church (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). It was agreed that in the event of agreements on church organizations steps to have them amalgamated would be taken. These

would include setting up a joint committee representative of the central authorities of such organizations, to prepare detailed proposals for their amalgamation, including a common constitution and arrangements for amalgamation of funds. Recommendations would go to a Standing Commission, which in turn would present them to the General Assembly for approval. The organizations would be amalgamated by General Assembly resolution (Revised Draft Basis of Union)

6.12 Service Books.

A Xhosa version of the Church of Scotland "Inkonzo zamabandla" was used within the Bantu Presbyterian Church. The PCSA was using the "Service Book and Ordinal" which was, at the time, out of print (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 16 June 1960). A suggestion that the latter be translated into suitable African languages and be used in a united Church was acceptable. It was also suggested that a BPC team joins the PCSA Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion and compile a joint Service Book (unpublished notes by Harold H Munro).

In 1968 a Committee was appointed to list, as far as possible, all service books and hymnals in use or under preparation, to note the content, availability and otherwise and to make proposals for future co-ordinated action in respect of reprinting, further preparation and/or consolidation (unpublished report on the Service Book).

6.13 Readjustment of smaller congregations in overlapping areas.

As it would have been necessary to merge some smaller congregations it was felt that it could still be done without much difficulties. Presbyteries of the united Church were expected to undertake the task of readjusting congregations even after a union (minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 31 March 1960).

6.14 Joint Moderators in Presbytery and Assembly.

Before the Committee on Union Negotiations was a resolution of the Executive Commission of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa that a paragraph on the above question be added at the end of their Book of Order. It reads as follows:

"Where more than four African Ministers are members of a Presbytery that Presbytery shall elect an African and European as Joint Moderators of the Presbytery. Where such an appointment is made the European Moderator shall be responsible for social and legal duties, from which at the moment Africans are debarred. The African Moderator shall have primary responsibility in relation to African congregations and in Presbytery the two Moderators shall preside at alternative sessions of Presbytery. Whenever possible the Joint Moderator who is not presiding shall sit on the right hand of the presiding Moderator. In Presbyteries where the conditions for the election of a Joint Moderator do not pertain, it is nonetheless permissible for these Presbyteries to avail themselves of these provisions from time to time" (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June, 16 1960).

The implications of such an arrangement was that African Moderators would take second place and play a very insignificant role. The response of the BPC team to the resolution was that of interest in why it was necessary to really go into such trouble making provisions that clearly stated the inferior position that African Presbyterians were expected to prepare themselves for. An explanation given by a member of the PCSA negotiating team that the resolution was a temporal measure

"until such time as the necessary confidence had been achieved between the various sections of the Church and until changes in the law of the land made it possible to work without this provision" was less appealing (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June, 16 1960).

It must be noted that the proposal made was already in use in the PCSA to bring Africa ministers more into the experience of moderating Presbyteries. The Rev. Goerge Molefe had already been sole Moderator of the Port Elizabeth Presbytery as far back as 1953. However, appointments of Africans into such positions were not

common. It was not welcomed. Moderators, as church officials, signed for acquiring property and the law of the land prohibited Africans from exercising this role in respect of properties in white areas. The PCSA was also powerless, at the time, to defy the law. The Bantu Presbyterian Church avoided conflict with the regime by letting its property be held by the Church of Scotland through the Mission Council.

Presbyterianism was stuck in a web of racial segregation. Most African Presbyterians watched with great disbelief the preparedness of some White Christians to wait for the law of the land rather than speak out and live out the Christian Gospel in defiance of apartheid laws. The PCSA felt powerless to change the laws of the country. Black Presbyterians expected more than just towing the line. This proposal, in favour of dual moderators was also rejected by the PCSA at the strength of the BPC protest

A lay person could hold the office of Moderator in the PCSA. Such a practice was foreign and unacceptable in the BPC. An agreement was reached that:

It would be wise to revert at the time of union to the more traditional practice, and that the united Church, once established, could later make up its mind on whether it would desire to have lay people as Moderators of General Assembly" (, unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June, 1960).

6.15 Credal Basis.

A competent committee was desirable to respond to the need of a credal basis of a united Church. No serious differences were anticipated at the time negotiations began (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 16 June 1960). The PCSA held as subordinate standard, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Twenty-four Articles of Faith of the Presbyterian Church of England. The BPC held the Westminster Confession (Manual of Law Practice and Procedure in the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa 1958,123). No objection was made regarding having these statements of Faith as the credal basis of a united Church

(unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1 March 1961). We need to note, however, that in 1969 the Draft Basis of Union include the Gallican Confession, the Scots Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism to the above mentioned subordinate standards (see Proposed Revised Draft Basis of Union, Appendix V).

6.16 Contact between the Churches:

To facilitate the work of the Negotiating Team, it was desirable that members of the two Churches be informed about progress. There was danger of the Committee proceeding with what was solely its business. The Secretary of the Committee on Union Negotiations was urged to keep contact with Presbyteries and encourage joint meetings for:

- (a) *Discussion of the union proposals or of other material of mutual interest prepared in advance.*
- (b) *Discussion of the possibility of arranging for the organizations of the Churches to meet at Presbytery level for discussion, worship or social fellowship together.*
- (c) *Joint services of worship or Communion between the Presbyteries concerned with local congregations also being invited to attend.*
- (d) *Inviting members of the union negotiations committee to address the joint meeting (of Presbytery). A complete list of the members names and addresses shall be supplied to each Presbytery Clerk (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, November, 1961).*

6.17 Properties:

Legal advice was necessary on the question of property. A union would have meant an Assembly with an African majority. Clarity was needed as to how a Church thus composed could legally hold property in European areas. Both the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church were known to have black majority. Nevertheless, they managed to register properties as bodies belonging to white groups. European

Churches could hold property anywhere including the areas designated for Africans and the self-governing territories.

The Committee on Union Negotiations considered making use of facilities that were offered by the Institute of Race Relations on such matters (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 November 1963). Consultation with the Congregational Union, as they were also wrestling with the question of holding property in a proposed union of the Congregational bodies, was also considered (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1963). Also under consideration was a practise within the PCSA of having the Finance Committee as multi-racial as possible in order that each member could be eligible to sign for property in the area of the race group he represents (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1963). A member of the Committee on Union Negotiations advised that:

“in view of the Group Areas Act and the formation of self-governing African territories, it appears that the General Assembly of a united Church may have to appoint European trustees to sign for properties in European areas and African trustees to sign for property in African Areas” (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June, 1963).

Legal advisors considered it impossible to operate with members of different races on the Finance Committee signing documents to suit the racial grouping under which various properties might fall (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 17, 18 & 19 March 1964). They advised that co-operation with the Methodist, Anglican and Congregational Churches be taken seriously. This to be done with a view to approach the government to “*modify*” some of the provisions of the Group Areas Act as applied to church property (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 17, 18 & 19 March 1964).

Discussions on vesting property were rather very crucial for unity negotiations. Both Churches were very suspicious of one another’s attitude to the laws of the land. The

issue of properties was very crucial for the BPC. It had to be thoroughly discussed before any union takes place.

On the 14 March 1963 the Rev Harold Munro expressed his doubt about the BPC's commitment to a union when he wrote that;

"the feeling is becoming I think stronger - at least more vocal - in our ranks that the BPC have no intention of uniting, but every intention of talking until we all get tired of it" (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 14 March, 1963).

The Rev JY Hliso of Cape Town's Tiyo Soga Congregation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church was a strong known opponent of the union. His argument against the union was based on the Laws of the Land. He strongly felt that apartheid was practised within the PCSA whilst in fact condemning it. He argued that true Christians could not accept apartheid as a policy. For him there was no way that those who are under the power of the Master's love could practise apartheid. He argued that without a life subjected to Christ we turn to love and associate with those that we like and are of our colour (Hliso, J. Y., unpublished letter, October, 28 1963).

He feared that congregations in the united Church would naturally be formed that way. He warned that to impose the idea of a union on people would militate against what they strongly believed and practised, apartheid, and would have disastrous effects (Hliso, J. Y., unpublished letter, October, 28 1963).

Rev JY Hliso's conviction was that the PCSA had to be openly and concretely more involved in the struggle against oppression (Interview with Rev. G.T. Vika, Tyeni, Tsolo). This was, however, not an easy thing to do. The majority of European elders in the PCSA were feared conservative as Rob Robertson noted in his letter of 3 September 1962 to Mr Harold Munro. (Robertson, Rob, unpublished letter to Harold Munro September 1962). The Rev Rob Robertson worked hard for a realisation of a united Church. He sometimes found it hard to accept the frustrating procedures of

the General Assemblies. Referring to sending matters to Session under the Barrier act he argued explained his position at the time:

"I will have to explain to you why I consider Sessions would reject union proposals. Maybe my faith in Sessions is not very great, but my experience has been that they are in the present day largely conservative and even reactionary bodies. But this particularly applies to the issue of union between a predominantly European Church and two totally African Churches. Our ministers, with theological and Biblical training and usually with a spiritual attitude to race relationships, can see the significance for the Church of Christ of such a union as this. Our Presbytery elders, with their experience of multi-racial presbytery meetings, can visualise the possibility of such a union being successful. But our average elder is greatly dominated by the prevailing attitude to race relations in this country" (Robertson, R., unpublished letter, September, 3, 1962).

Rev Hliso failed to understand the point in advocating that there be a union whilst it seemed acceptable to have Presbyterians racially separated by Law (Hliso, J. Y., unpublished letter. October, 28).

In 1964 the Rev JS Summers, who was at St Columba's College, Alice, communicated the BPC Assembly's decision on the Draft as follows:

"The suggestion in the draft basis of Union, that the property of the United Church would be vested in the name of different groups within the Church, is not acceptable to the Assembly. A scheme must be worked out whereby the property is vested in the United Church as a whole." He further notes that "this resolution which I know will be disappointing to you, may under God have its value. There is desperate need to have this issue of property thoroughly worked out. I suppose the answer is that it is impossible, but it may bring to the understanding of some of the whites in this land that deep sense of grievance that remains with the Africans. It's not that property is the B-all of existence, but it is in an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual truth, and if it's not handled together then that is an outward sign of not joining together (Summers, J. S., unpublished letter, October, 3, 1964).

The Rev JS Summers highlighted what was really the very truth of what was to happen for a number of years. It seems to me that the huge amount of money spent

on these negotiations did not matter. Even those who were against a union valued the process of negotiating only for what it afforded participants, the opportunity to express their grievances with the hope that they will be heard.

There were serious frustrations experienced by those in the negotiating team. In 1964 Harold Munro was giving up. It seemed very clear that negotiations were just dragging unnecessarily. Munro admitted his frustration when he wrote that:

"This gambit has finally convinced me that the BPC do not want union, and that we can consequently forget it as practical politics" (Munro, H., unpublished letter, November, 12, 1964).

There was another opinion on the cautious response of the BPC to the proposed union that throws some light on how others felt.

"Their trouble is an inferiority complex which makes them think they must keep the "white Church" standing on the doorstep a little bit. This property objection they realise to be not our fault but the fault of the law of the land. So they do this to try to make the white men feel as they feel about the law of the land" (Robertson, Rob, unpublished letter, November, 14, 1964).

Indeed sharing the pain that they experienced as black Presbyterians was part of it. There was no other forum that allowed this to take place. These negotiations offered them the needed opportunity. It seems some white Christians in general did not understand or want to understand fears that Black Presbyterians had. Black fear was wrongly articulated as is reflected in the Presbyterian Leader of August 1964. An article published in the Christian Leader of January 1973 by a minister of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (TPC), Appendix VI, does throw light on the general situation of Black and White relations. This may well have influenced Black thought on unity talks.

As negotiations dragged, participants sounded a note of impatience especially concerning the BPC's response. In another letter to Rob Robertson, Harold Munro wrote:

"It is not clear to me what can be done until the BPC puts its own house in order for these negotiations, i.e. replaces Finca by somebody who is fit to negotiate. It is also still a question in my mind whether they want to go on. J.P. Whyte feels that our course ought to be to send a firm letter saying that so far as can be seen the property business is at the hands of the Government's discretion, not ours and if they are not prepared to consider the suggestions put forward they had better forget the whole thing" (Munro, H., unpublished letter, May, 19 1965).

J.P. Whyte obviously felt there was no need for the PCSA to continue to challenge the Government on its racist laws. He expected the BPC to just accept things as they were. Rob Robertson, however, understood and warned that the issue cannot be left like that. He, nevertheless, agreed with J.P. Whyte that a letter be sent to the BPC with terms and a clear indication that the BPC's failure to commit itself to a union may force the PCSA to drop the negotiations. It was not in the interests of the BPC to have the negotiations cancelled. For them it was nice to continue to pose a challenge to white people about what concerned them, hoping that the PCSA would take the plight of the oppressed seriously. Rob Robertson noted that the Rev Summers was of the same opinion.

"He reckons what they want to see is that the "European Church" is prepared to try for a better law and will be satisfied even if the effort fails" (Robertson, Rob, unpublished letter, May, 22, 1965).

By the 5 July 1965 relationships between the BPC and the PCSA were becoming sour on the informal level. Harold Munro wrote

"I found the Tsonga Presbyterian Church as a whole rather impatient with the BPC, and asking whether we cannot go ahead without them. There is a general belief that the BPC are simply wasting time for its own sake. On the other hand the leadership of the TPC who know the inside story, are fed up because the BPC leadership has just made another under the counter approach to them to have a two-way union with them, omitting us. I do not think there is any doubt that this approach has been made, though I did not ask by who. We should not, I think spend any more time trying to placate a BPC leadership which is certainly dishonest, whatever may be the views of the BPC as a whole. I think they must be given a clear offer to come in or stay out now" (Munro, H., unpublished letter, July, 5 1965).

He further noted in a report to the PCSA General Assembly that:

"It is our belief that the present attitude of the BPC is either based on a misconception of the situation, or on premises which are quite unknown to us. We therefore believe that every effort should be made to clarify their attitude at the forthcoming BPC Assembly, in the hope that thereafter the examination of the Draft Basis may proceed by the three Churches as originally intended. On the other hand, should the BPC Assembly again decide not to take the enabling Resolution, we feel that the union movement cannot be held up indefinitely on grounds which we have difficulty in accepting as legitimate" (unpublished report of the Committee on Union Negotiations to the PCSA Assembly 1965).

There were very influential individuals within the BPC just as it was the case in the PCSA and the TPC who could have taken the whole Church into a union if they so wished. In the case of the TPC Harold Munro noted:

"My own feeling is that if the decision to go ahead without the BPC is to be made it will be essential to have Tsanwisi present. If he is there and says yes, that will be the end. If he is not there, however cordially the others discuss the matter, in the end they will go home and ask Tsanwisi what they must do" (Munro, H., unpublished letter, October, 19, 1965). (*Tsanwisi instead of Ntsanwisi is wrong spelling by Munro*)

Ntsanwisi was the Moderator of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church Synod, the General Assembly of that Church in PCSA or BPC terms. He later became Prime minister of the Gazankulu homeland government. As far as Harold Munro was concerned, whilst it would have been regrettable not to have the BPC in a union, it would have been easy to convince the PCSA membership for a union only with the Tsonga. He does not, however, explain why though one could imagine that a union of the two would have had no serious implications for some white Presbyterians as the united Church would have had a white majority anyway.

Mr R.S. Welsh, a legal advisor, in a detailed document to the Negotiating Committee wrote in 1967 that:

"The Group Areas legislation has recently been consolidated in the shape of the Group areas Act, No. 36 of 1966, which came into force

on the 26 October, 1966. For the purposes of this legislation not only human beings but all associations of persons, whether corporate or incorporate, are classified into racial groups. A person or an association of one racial group may not, for instance, without a permit, buy or hire land from a person or an association of another racial group, or own or occupy land which is part of a group area proclaimed for persons of another racial group. Associations of persons are brought into the net by the definition of the expression "company" in section 1(1)(v), which includes "any corporate or incorporate association of persons, and any registered or unregistered corporate body, other than a statutory body" (Welsh, R. S., unpublished letter, April, 10, 1967).

This definition meant therefore that if the PCSA and the BPC united, the Church thus formed would be an association of persons. It would not be a statutory body unless declared to be such by the State President, exercising his power as in Section 1(1)(xxvi)(c) of the Government Gazette. Mr Welsh explained that the law required that the racial composition of the new Church would determine its legal position.

"in the case of an association of persons a controlling interest therein shall be deemed to be held by a person of the same group as the majority of members thereof. From this it follows that, for the purposes of legislation, the race of the moderator and the ministers and the office-bearers of the United Church is irrelevant. What matters is the racial composition of the membership of the Church. The majority of the members of the United Church will be African. The United Church will therefore be in the same legal position, as regards the ownership and occupation of land, as a company having a majority of African share-holders, or, indeed, as an individual African" (Welsh, R. S., unpublished letter, April, 10, 1967).

It was obvious that such a situation would create enormous problems and disadvantages for the united Church. The fact that the Church was to be legally African meant that even if separate boards of trustees were formed to hold property for each of the racial groupings that would be a useless exercise. The Church was to be the owner and it was to be a black owner. To form multi-racial associations or boards of trustees with the hope that each race group would sign for property as required by the law would in itself defeat the purpose of going into a union. Mr Welsh observed that:

"The basic problem is that the Group Areas Act makes no concession at all (apart from the system of granting permission at the discretion of the Government) to multi-racial associations like the Church. In my opinion there is no way in which the Church could adapt itself to this legislation without impairing, and indeed destroying, its own multi-racial character. The Church would have to disintegrate into several separate associations, each of which would consist predominantly of members belonging to one racial group only" (Welsh, R. S., unpublished letter, April, 10, 1967).

He advised that the constitution could be altered to have property registered in the name of individual congregations. He noted the loophole in that such a policy would make things easy for some congregations to secede. It was also quite clear that the Churches would find it very difficult to accept that suggestion. Indeed there would be no visible union in the sense that most black congregations were BPC and all white congregations were PCSA. This meant that the ideal of an organic union between a predominantly white church and a church whose membership is entirely African was legally impossible. He concludes by arguing that:

"unless the permits necessary under the group areas act can be obtained from time to time from the government there is no means of dealing with this problem under the constitution of the United Church, short of provisions which will have the effect that the United Church is not in truth a single association of persons at all but each of the congregations is in truth a separate and distinct association of persons" (Welsh, R. S., unpublished document, April 10, 1967).

The Church of the Province was already one Church since the 1870's. It comprised of different racial congregations and was a member of the white group. This was the case with the PCSA and the Methodist Church. For these Churches to acquire property in an African or Coloured or Indian group area was never a problem. Permit was always granted. The problem was just that the United Church would be a black Church.

There were also costs involved in any transfer of property. It seems it would have cost the uniting Churches a lot of money to have all their properties transferred to the proposed Church. This would be necessary if there was change in persons, stamp duty and the legal charges for drawing documents, registration of deeds etc. If the

uniting Churches wanted property invested into the newly formed Church, there would be a change in persona, and there would have to be transfer. It was clear that the only solution would be to constitute the united Church in all other respects, but leave all immovable property as was vested before the union without any transfers. Mr S N A Crawford wrestling with the problem even suggested that the Cabinet Minister concerned be approached and requested:

“ to include a provision in the next General Law Amendment Act to the effect that when ownership in immovable property passed from one religious body to the other, no stamp duty should be payable and that ownership should pass by endorsement of title deeds, and not formal transfer. This could be done relatively at little cost, but one does not know if the minister would entertain such suggestion. I feel before action the heads of all Government departments should be consulted (Crawford, 1967).

A report presented by the Convenor of a Committee on Properties states the nature of the problem very clearly. He admitted that the prospects of having the law compromised to accommodate the Church were rather remote acknowledging that the question of vesting property in the united Church was a complicated one. He thought it would be possible to consider the following:

- (a) *Donate property to each congregation, and draw up a constitution which shall apply to all congregations with a clause or clauses to the effect that in the event of the dissolution of the congregation or if it ceases to function as a congregation within the United Church, the property shall be sold and the proceeds revert to the main body. Relevant clauses would have to be inserted in the Constitution of the main body.*
- (b) *Alternatively, what in business terms might be termed “companies” in particular group areas might be instituted by the main body i.e. groups of persons who could control the property in particular areas be they White, Black, Coloured or Indian. These would be liability companies more or less in line with the Companies’ Act. This would give some measure of control over an individual congregation. Certain clauses would of course have to be written into the Constitution of the United Church in this respect (unpublished a report by Mr. Whyte, 1967).*

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), which was less than a year old, founded in 1967, was approached for advice. This was a union of three bodies:

1. The Congregational Union of South Africa (a multi-racial Church).
2. The London Missionary Churches (African).
3. The Bantu Congregational Church.

Mr Wing, then General Secretary of the UCCSA, addressing the Committee on Union Negotiations, admitted that their union was held up at the last moment due to the amount of money required by law for the transfer of property held by the individual uniting Churches to the united Church. This was a sum of R150 000.(unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 12, 13 & 14 March 1968) This transfer was necessary since the Church to be formed would be regarded by law as a new "persona" (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 12, 13 & 14 March 1968). To avoid this the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA) and the Bantu Congregational Church were, reduced to being merely property holding bodies and the American Board properties in the control of that body with appointed Trustees of the United Church as the Trustees of the three bodies mentioned (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 12, 13 14 March 1968). Mr. Wing noted that:

- (a) *They had experienced no difficulties in extending properties held by the new CUSA "holding body".*
- (b) *the "permissions to occupy" in African areas held by all three Churches had been submitted to the Bantu Administration Department and had been endorsed with the new name of the United Church without difficulty or expense.*
- (c) *documents for the acquiring of property by the United Church in Coloured areas for the use of Coloured congregations had already been signed.*
- (d) *the United Church had not yet had the occasion to acquire new property in White areas, but expected no more difficulty that the former CUSA with its non-European majority had experienced* (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, March 1968).

The only possible way by which the union of the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church could avoid transfer costs would be to accept the PCSA constitution as the basis of the Constitution of the united Church. The PCSA would change to a new name.(unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 12, 13 & 14 March 1968) This in actual fact meant that the BPC could be regarded as having joined the PCSA or the new Church that would be the legal body for vesting property (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 12, 13 & 14 March 1968).

A meeting of July 1968 agreed to adhere to the method used by the Congregational Churches when they united. The property section of the Revised Draft Basis of union was referred to Messrs Duthie, Douglas, Stuart & Co. Of Johannesburg who represented the Congregational Churches in their union. The PCSA agreed to meet the financial implications of this process. Advice was particularly needed on:

1. Whether the uniting Churches should obtain a ruling from the Chief Registrar on the admissibility of the provisions proposed or to go ahead without any reference to him.
2. Whether there should be a change in the Clause "shall become the properties of the united Church" to read "shall be dealt with".
3. What amount would be required as fees on effecting transfers
4. Whether it would be advisable to include vesting in the united Church.
5. Whether it should read that "The officials of the BPC shall be appointed by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 23 & 24 July, 1968).

In 1970 decisions reached regarding property were that all property of the uniting Churches would become properties of the united Church in the following manner:

1. Free hold properties in terms of Schedule D of the Draft Basis of Union.

- 2 Permission to occupy sites in Black townships and other areas shall be registered or re-registered in the name of the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. Properties vested in the Church of Scotland would continue to be so vested (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, April 1970).

6.18 Drastic change for one or the other Church would relate to:

Representation to the Presbytery of a united Church would be through one elder instead of two as the BPC book suggests. Only ministerial members were to be eligible to moderate in the courts of the Church be it Presbytery, Synod or General Assembly. It was agreed that permission could be granted by a minister to an elder to preside over a Session, as was the case in the PCSA. Representation at Assembly would be decided from time to time as changes within Presbyteries would demand.

The use of the term "Adherent" was contested (unpublished report of sub-committee for on Law and Order 8 August 1962). In the BPC adherents were people attending Church services and sometimes making contributions but were not necessarily in full membership. Adherents were not allowed to bring Children for baptism on their own and in fact could not have their children baptised before they themselves were in full membership with the Church. Some rights, such as concurring in a call to a minister, were extended to them. The Bantu Presbyterian Church did not keep a roll of adherents as the PCSA did. This issue became a strong point of divergence of opinion.

The question of how vacancies would be filled was addressed and a recommendation to this effect was that:

"Any minister of the Church wishing to be considered by a vacant congregation is entitled to submit his name to the Inter-Moderator of the vacant congregation, who will be bound to place the name before the Vacancy Committee for their consideration. The interim-Moderator may not himself be

a candidate for the vacancy" (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1962).

Both the PCSA and the BPC did not ordain women as elders. It was agreed that any congregation wishing to elect a woman as an elder might do so on the following grounds:

1. The Church should take into consideration the circumstances with which it has to deal from age to age. In Biblical times the status of women was that of a child to that of men. It was in consideration of this that the Apostle Paul wrote, "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent." It is under the providence of God that today women hold positions of authority along with men.
2. In view of the predominance of women in the Church and the vital part that they play in its life they should be made eligible for election as members for all the courts of the Church.
3. At the present time in the majority of Presbyterian Churches women are now eligible for election as elders.
4. For practical purposes the carrying out of the work of the Session in some congregations would be more effective if women were available as elders (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, Statement on Woman Elders).

The acceptance of women was influenced by the fact that in rural areas the TPC depended on women elders as many men were working in urban areas.

6.19 The Draft Basis of Union.

A Committee comprising of the Rev. J.Y. Hliso of the BPC and Rev. H.H. Munro of the PCSA was given the task to prepare a draft Basis of Union (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1962). In November 1963 the composition of this committee changed. Members appointed to serve in it were the Revs. B.M. Molaba and A. Makgahlele of the BPC with Revs. H. H. Munro and S.A.

Lehari of the PCSA (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 November 1963). Their aim was to have the first draft prepared by June 1964 (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 6 & 7 March 1962). It would test the opinion of both Churches on a wide variety of subjects already discussed above. It would give the Churches the opportunity to examine in detail a comprehensive scheme of union. Agreement on issues contained in the Draft basis would lead to a union. By 1963 this document was ready for presentation to the Assemblies of the two Churches. By producing this document the committee made an invaluable contribution to unity discussions. In fact they laid the foundations on which future talks could be based.

The issue of how Churches would deal with the Draft Basis was left to them. Each Church had to make internal arrangements in line with her constitutional procedures. It was hoped that opportunities would be enough for the examination of the document with the necessary amendments that needed to be made (unpublished report of the Committee on Union Negotiations presented to the General Assembly of the PCSA 1963).

Rob Robertson recalls that the BPC Assembly met in Alice. On his way he stopped, at Berlin, for an African hitchhiker who happened to be a BPC minister, the Rev. N Katiya (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes, 1994). During this trip, from East London to Alice, Rev Katiya made it very clear that the BPC was not keen on union (Robertson, Rob unpublished notes 1994). In reality two Presbyteries, the Cape Midlands and Western Province and the Matatiele East Griqualand showed no interest in the union. However, three Presbyteries were in favour with one Presbytery without any response. The General Assembly was so undecided on the issue that there was fear that should the majority vote be implemented, the minority would secede. The BPC was not ready for this. Members would rather wait and have everyone, especially those that had a lot of influence buy into the idea of union.

The Rev Harold Munro was supposed to present the first Draft Basis to the General Assembly of the PCSA that met in Salisbury in 1964. He, however, excused himself

the reason being that he was the Secretary during that General Assembly. He requested Rob Robertson to do it. What is of interest is a request he makes to Rob in a letter he wrote that an African be asked to second the report.

"I imagine Jolobe would be the most competent. Lehari is a better speaker in English but has come so recently into the conversations" (Munro, H., unpublished letter, May 26, 1964).

The letter referred to above underlines the commitment to have the Draft Basis of Union taken through the General Assembly without any hiccups. Rob Robertson reiterated the same concern to Harold Munro. In his letter he wrote:

"I wanted to bunk this Assembly but guess I can't. It is a terrifying honour to present the report at this stage because so much depends on what our Assembly does this year. I'll do it and ask Jolobe to second, and I agree that we must ask a few people like Bob Orr to be ready to take part" (Robertson, Rob, unpublished letter, May 28, 1964).

Obviously there was need to rally support for the success of the debate on union. This was not unique to the PCSA. Those who desired the coming together of these two Churches did the same in General Assemblies of the BPC. The white Scottish missionaries within the Bantu Presbyterian Church did not want to be seen as pushing the BPC into a union. In a letter to Rob Robertson, George McArthur wrote:

"My feeling is that the Business Committee might take the matter up, but were it to be raised by Finca it would carry a little more weight than being raised by John or myself" (McArthur, G., unpublished letter, May 18, 1965).

Rob Robertson recalls that the union issue was:

"the greatest I ever handled at Assembly. Perhaps it was the greatest organisational issue to be decided since the formation of the PCSA in 1897" (Robertson, R., unpublished notes, 1994).

The General Assembly voted in favour of union. The BPC Assembly which met in Port Elizabeth at the same time as the PCSA found the alternative proposal for

vesting property, if the law of the land made unified vesting impossible, unacceptable. The proposal was that should unified vesting be ruled out by the law “the property of the united Church should be vested in the name of different groups within the Church” (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 19, 1964). Even the convenor of the committee on negotiations was unable to move the acceptance of the Basis of Union. This was a real problem within the BPC that the convenor and members of the committee on negotiations failed from time to time to push decisions of the negotiating team through their Assembly. In fact they lacked the necessary commitment to do it.

In 1964 a major step was taken by the PCSA General Assembly to approve the general principles of the Basis of Union (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1964,233). The BPC did not approve due to problems around the issue of property. The Assembly resolution reads as follows:

“The suggestion in the Draft Basis of Union that the property of the united Church should be vested in the name of different groups within the Church is not acceptable to the Assembly. A scheme must be worked out whereby the property is vested in the united Church as a whole” (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1964,19).

Their representatives made it impossible to have any committee meeting for two years that followed (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes). The PCSA team was heart and soul in pushing for the proposed union. During the 1964 General Assembly of this Church, Rev. H. H. Munro pleaded that:

“The Assembly appointed us to find a means of union, and along the road it has from time to time encouraged us; it is now quite essential, as we hand this task back to the Church with our part done, that the whole Church press on, through whatever changes in detail, with the goal of union firmly in its mind and heart. To fail of that goal now is least of all the loss of five year’s labour, which would greatly matter: it is more importantly something which would weaken and discourage all manner of moves towards Christian unity in Southern Africa, where it is so urgently needed. And because no one, in these days, can live in his own compartment, our failure now to go forward to the union we have

contemplated would be a depressing thing to the Christian conscience everywhere” (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1964,232).

Rob Robertson records that 1965 was a difficult year within the PCSA with folks tending to tell him that they told him that a union with the BPC was practically impossible. He also felt that the Rev. T.P. Finca, convenor of the BPC side of negotiations was not at all co-operating and that he had become very non-committed in every thing regarding the proposed union. Rob Robertson reports that:

“I pleaded then to know what his section of the Negotiating Committee would say to their next Assembly. No reply. I asked a date to see him in Umtata, and if he would like another full Negotiations meeting. “No” to both requests.” (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes, 1994).

By this time the PCSA was already sounding a note of disappointment at the way negotiations were going. At the PCSA General Assembly of the same year Munro put through a resolution to the effect that if the BPC failed to approve the general resolution on union, it must be ignored and union with the TPC pursued (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1965,42). At the 1965 General Assembly of the BPC the Rev. G. T. Vika moved that the Church unites with the PCSA. He did this against the committee Resolutions (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes 1994). The Rev. W. P. T. Ndibongo, a member of the Negotiating team had suggested that unity should begin at the levels of both the congregation and the Presbytery first (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes 1994). The Rev Rob Robertson writes that the Rev. J. Y. Hliso, who was Moderator at the time:

“Started using the Chair to defeat Vika’s motion. Then he left the Chair to say that he did not want to join a Church that practises apartheid” (Robertson, R., unpublished notes, 1994).

However, the 1965 General Assembly of the BPC resolved to send down the Draft Basis of Union to Presbyteries and congregations for discussion and comment (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1965,29). It was reiterated that full use should be made of members of the negotiating committee who must make themselves available during this process. Presbyteries were urged to do everything in their power to promote the intentions of both the Draft

and the committee (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1965,29). Rob Robertson argues that he had hoped that the BPC would at least remember that during its formation there were congregations, especially those that were under the Presbytery of Mankazana, that were given freedom to choose if they would want to join the new Church. This they did with disjunction certificates given by the PCSA. He thought the BPC would be considerate enough to allow those congregations who wanted to join the union the freedom to do so. He later admitted that:

"I know a little more about African affairs now and the importance they attach to "solidarity". They would never have given such freedom to their people and no congregation would have dared to take it" (Robertson, R., unpublished notes, 1994).

There were, however, many voices attempting to encourage the BPC take these talks seriously. The Rev Robert J. D. Robertson of the PCSA remarked that:

"We are sometimes tempted to think that the way would be simpler if we were to go forward as a "Bantu" Church. It would be easier. But the way of Christ is not the easy way; the way of Christ is the way of reconciliation, and this is always difficult. The committee believes that to reject this way forward would be to fail in our reconciling task as a part of the world-wide Church, and that this course would in the end invalidate our claim to be a part of the reconciling Church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ "(Leader, November, 1966).

In 1966 the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church approved the general principles contained in the Draft Basis of Union (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1966,34). Rob Robertson recalls that:

"I heard so many depressing statements from "observers" that I was prepared to make a great plea that they agree unanimously although I had no hope of that. When the time came it went through with the general cry of "Agreed" – not a dissident voice! Amazing!" (Robertson, R., Unpublished notes, 1994).

A request to have the Draft basis of union translated into Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi, or Sotho and Venda was made (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1966,34). It was agreed that they be circulated as widely as

possible to Presbyteries who would consult with all Sessions within their bounds and take account of the opinions expressed when returning their decisions to the General Assembly (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1966,34). The composition of the Negotiating committee had by this time changed. Both Rev. J. Y. Hliso and Rev. W. P. T. Ndibongo were out. The Rev. B. M. Molaba, who was in favour of a union remained. He believed that union was a must and of paramount importance:

“not only for our BPC, but for the whole of Presbyterianism throughout Southern Africa and as a witness to the whole world” (Robertson, R., unpublished notes, 1994).

He argued that the church was faced with the challenge of fighting imposed barriers of race (Robertson, R., unpublished notes, 1994). Both Churches had to send the Basis of Union down to Presbyteries for study and approval. In 1967 it reached the Presbyteries of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. Out of seven Presbyteries four accepted it one rejected it. A report presented by the Rev BM Molaba, convenor of the BPC negotiation's team claimed that the relationship between the two Churches was a happy one (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1967,52).

In the same year, 1967, the General Assembly of the PCSA called for a revision of the Draft Basis of Union with detailed provisions regarding the financial, pension fund and property implications of the union (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967). A process was suggested regarding how to go about checking public opinion on the proposed union. A resolution of the PCSA Assembly of 1967 to this effect reads as follows:

“The Assembly enacts that when any document relevant to the conversation is sent down to Presbyteries in terms of the Book of Order, Presbyteries shall be required to consult all Sessions within their bounds. Sessions shall be required to arrange for congregational meetings to discuss and make known their opinions on such documents. Whenever a Session formulates its own opinion it is required to hear and to take account of the opinion of the congregations. Whenever Presbyteries consider their own decisions

they are required to hear and to take account of the opinions of Sessions” (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967).

It is evident that there was a disturbing ignorance of what was happening about the union among the general membership of both Churches. This was made clear through discussions, interviews as well as contributions made to Church papers such as the Leader. Presbyteries together with the Union Committee were urged to note the importance of keeping people fully informed on this matter. A motion that:

“Assembly, believing that this Union is the will of God for the Church, is gravely concerned at the ignorance on this subject among the general membership of the Church, which recent discussions have revealed, and urges on Presbyteries and the Union Committee the importance of informing our people more fully on this matter,” (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967,52) was adopted.

The possibility of producing a brochure dealing in popular terms with the historical background, the reasons for and the implications of union including the financial, pension fund and property implications were looked at (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967,52). A good number of PCSA Presbyteries affirmed the principle of union thus enabling the 1967 PCSA General Assembly to go ahead with the proposed union. This General Assembly urged that the Basis of Union be revised and that the clauses on Property be looked at (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967,52). The BPC Assembly of 1967 approved the principle of uniting, with four Presbyteries in favour, two with no prepared responses and one against (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1967,19).

A revised Basis of Union came to the General Assemblies of both Churches in 1968. It was sent down to Presbyteries for comments and amendments. This time it aroused a lot of interest in some quarters of the PCSA with Port Elizabeth and Kokstad taking the lead in voicing their dissatisfaction. Kokstad congregation of the PCSA was not happy that in the event of Presbyteries restructured it would fall under East Griqualand (see Appendix 11). This would have meant that it would be the only white congregation in a black dominated Presbytery. They preferred to be under the

Natal Presbytery and the Presbytery supported this desire (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1967,227). The Leader reported on Rev Jack Adam's violent attack on the proposed union. He was a vocal anti-unionist who succeeded in getting racial amendments proposed by the Presbytery of Port Elizabeth for the 1969 PCSA General Assembly (The Leader Vol. XLVII No. 11 November 1969). Interviewed by the SABC Mr. Adams made the remark that:

"I simply do not think our black Brethren are able to administer an institution the size of the Presbyterian Church in this country. I am perfectly sure that if this union plan goes through, it will mean a complete split in the Church, with several congregations breaking away from the parent body. It would also mean a loss to the congregations of many of their influential members "(SABC Broadcast House, notes on the Leader).

His intention was to maintain some degree of parity between European and African members in a united Church. This, however, did not receive the backing and support of the PCSA. It was rejected. The 1969 General Assembly further agreed to send the Revised Basis of Union to Sessions through Presbyteries to evaluate the opinion of various congregations on the subject and to report to the Executive Commission by 31st March 1970.

The Printing and distribution Committee was appointed and given the tasks of:

1. Completing the final Drafting
2. Obtaining quotations for printing 2,500 copies from Lovedale Press and Jarvis Printing Co. (Durban), and to estimate the cost of duplicating the Basis from stencils.
3. Make a final decision on the manner of printing and to proceed therewith.
4. Submit for copy and examine proofs.
5. Obtain firm orders from the uniting Churches for the number of copies each will require.
- 6 Attend to distribution and payments (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 28-30 April 1970).

There is no record of how the actual distribution was done but it is clear that copies of the Basis reached most Presbyteries of both Churches. Most congregations were very ignorant of what was happening. A lot stopped at the level of the Presbytery.

Between September and October of 1970 both General Assemblies met. The Basis of Union was accepted by the BPC. It was suggested that the final Draft be sent to Presbyteries. The Right Rev. J. Y. Hliso entered his dissent (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1970,45).

The General Assembly had approved of the Basis of Union, however, it feared that secession was inevitable. Something had to be done. The matter was referred to the Business Committee (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1971,34). The Business Committee recommended that two commissioners visit every congregation to ascertain their views before the next General Assembly. The Rev. G. T. Vika was appointed to do the job with the clerk of each Presbytery visited. The Rev G.T. Vika visited BPC congregations. The Rev. J.Y. Hliso was visiting the Presbytery of Natal at the same time the Rev. G.T. Vika visited congregations to seek their opinion on union. It seems he had been informed that congregations within the Umtata and Transkei Presbyteries were strongly against a union. A letter he wrote to the Rev. G.T. Vika clarifies his position on the proposed union:

"I am very thankful to God that he has put it to our Transkei and Umtata congregations to state clearly that they want no union with the P.C.S.A. Indeed it is no union for the European friends have clearly manipulated the whole thing to their advantage and to the detriment and suicide of the Africans who may be hoodwinked into that Trap called Union. I know that some lazy ministers who have made no success and no sacrifice for their people do what they think will be a union, for selfish ends. Travelling here I have found only one minister strongly for this, an African from Cunningham. He is being hoodwinked by some Europeans in Pmb. (Pietermaritzburg) who help him here and there. The rest are only paying lip service to this Union, and they admit that their congregations know nothing of this and if informed of the implications would never agree. In Glen Bain I had to stop the Elders who openly criticised the Church for these negotiations and demanded to know from me why. I said I could not engage in controversial

matters and the Senior Clerk was coming on behalf of the Church and they should give him their views... The African Church must be consolidated and must seek union with others of their kith and kin and voice the pinion and prayer of the Africans. Going into Union with such cunning people, without knowing all the facts, would be like making an alliance with the Devil who would see to it that in that alliance you are bound hand and foot to serve him till the end of your life and then have no option beyond (Hliso, unpublished letter, 5 November, 1971).

In 1971 the Bantu Presbyterian Church General Assembly met at Lovedale (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1971,15). Among other things, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the commencement of missionary work in South Africa by the Scots (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 28-30 April 1970). The Moderator was the Rev. J. Y. Hliso. Of the seven Presbyteries of the BPC four Presbyteries had responded with a "yes" to the Basis of Union. These were Ciskei, Natal, Transvaal and Umtata. Matatiele-East Griqualand wanted some more work done. Cape Midlands and Western wanted the proposed union delayed for a year. The Transkei Presbytery reported that Sessions or congregations did not respond (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1971,33). Rob Robertson recalls that when the Rev J. Y. Hliso realised that those against the union were not speaking convincingly enough:

"he got out of the chair and said that those who wanted to be with the "white Church" should leave the BPC and join it, and that if the union took place he would not be in it" (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes, 1994).

Rob Robertson remarks that he had never been in a meeting charged with such agony,

"not even when our Assembly debated leaving the World Council of Churches. Perhaps the greatest agony was mine, having toiled so many years for this" (Robertson, Rob, unpublished notes, 1994).

The majority of the congregations voted in favour of the union. He, however, observed that in most cases their opinion was that of their minister. Those against the union threatened to secede. The General Assembly agreed not to unite but

continue to negotiate with a reduced representation on the Negotiating Committee. Meanwhile the PCSA had approved the Draft Basis of Union and was ready for a union with a resounding majority in favour of uniting with the BPC. Eight of the eleven PCSA Presbyteries voted in favour. These were the Presbyteries of Cape Town, Mashonaland, Natal, Orange River, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and North West Transvaal. Two Presbyteries, the Presbytery of King William's Town and that of Matabeleland were against. There was no response from the Presbytery of Zambia (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1971,264).

In 1972, at Giles pie, the General Assembly of the BPC met in camera and rejected a motion by the Rev B.M. Molaba that the Church goes into union "now" if favour of a motion by the Rev H.M.Mtwa that:

"the Assembly re-affirms its desire to seek union, but feel unable to enter union at present in view of failure to reach unanimity after the commission's report. Assembly resolves to continue negotiations for union with a reduced number of committee representatives, that contact with other churches be made at congregational level (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1972, 26)."

Unity talks were called off keeping further negotiations as an open possibility. The Churches involved were urged to maintain and extend areas of contact at local, Presbytery and Assembly level. A reduced committee of six members was appointed to keep the link (Proceedings of the Bantu Presbyterian Church 1973, 12). In June 1973, a joint committee met in Johannesburg for a post-mortem on union negotiations and encouraged the churches to keep the possibility of union open (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, June 1973)

This is the level where real work took place. Role players got to know one another and the more they rubbed shoulders the more some realised that the hope for a union was a far fetched one. They had spent all their energies in the hope of a United Presbyterian family. It did not take place not because of the white Church but because of the BPC's hesitation and fear of secession. This is summed up in

statement by the PCSA to the BPC General Assembly that:

"...We greatly regret that we do not yet meet as the united General Assembly of one united Presbyterian Church.

We wish to say we do understand some of the reasons for your reluctance to unite with us. We understand the hesitations of those who fear that even in a united Church the White members will show prejudice and discrimination against, or paternalism towards, the Black members. We understand the doubts of those who fear that the White members will assume an automatic right to all the real power in a united Church and refuse to share it fairly with Black members.

We confess that there is ground for these fears because our Church and we who are White in it have not been free of these faults in the past" (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1973,80).

It was very necessary that such an admission be made. The statement made the claim that a union would have been a great opportunity for Black and White to learn to live together "as true brothers and sisters upholding one another's freedom and dignity as the sons and daughters of God (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly 1973,80)

The laws of the land were a major obstacle in the way of a union. A black person was a no-body before the law. A united Church would have become a black Church before the law. Laws had serious restrictions for black people and this would have created serious limitations for black people even within a united Church. These laws made theological reflection rather a useless exercise in the sense that what was said in the name of God had already been found wanting. Those who strongly believed that in Christ there was no separation of black and white could not say it without the challenge presented by the contradiction as reflected in the laws of the land. The challenge was more than just talking about what Scriptures say. It was about the day to day witness of the South African Churches. Where white South Africans willing to live out their convictions that blacks and whites are equally created in God's image and therefore would not be discriminated against in a united Church?

Due to memories of the past suspicions were inevitable. There was real lack of trust evident throughout the years on negotiations. This is reflected in a number of

documents that we have read as references in this chapter. There was also a serious problem of inadequate information on the negotiation process. A lot of congregations were totally unaware of what was happening. Indeed some ministers made decisions on behalf of their congregations and never really informed them of what was happening. With the change of the face of our country better channels of communications will be opened. However, there will remain a problem regarding access to information on these talks. Some ministers within the Bantu Presbyterian Church may have found it useless to even take the Basis of Union to the general membership. How many members would have understood the issues at stake? We would need to make sure that our members at grass root level understand what a union would entail. A union at the top would be a futile exercise.

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CHAPTER 7

CHURCH ORGANIZATIONS AND TRADITIONS

Somehow, the exclusion of thousands of members in negotiations may be understood as most of them would not have even worried themselves about issues discussed. Some of the issues may not have been deemed as directly affecting them even by some participants in the negotiation process. However, the majority of black Christians belong to church organizations who turn to be the back bone of black congregations. This paper would be incomplete if it does not recognize this group and on their behalf bring to the attention of the two Churches the fact that they cannot be ignore if any union is to be a success.

Let us not concern ourselves so much about the history of the various church associations. Rather let attention be paid to the fact of their existence, the invaluable contribution they make in shaping the life and work of the Church, and the challenge this existence poses for unity negotiations. I will concentrate on the work done by these church organizations from the angle of the RPCSA, however, what they do is basically what is done by organizations in the PCSA. It must be noted that structural differences between organizations of the two Churches do not pose a serious problem. However, over emphasis on the use of uniforms sometimes contribute to an unnecessary contest of signs and symbols. This contest can derail any attempts on union if full attention is not paid to it especially at the grass root level. Every denomination, in South Africa, with black Christians would have church organizations such as the Women's group, the Men's Association, the Girls Association and the Youth Fellowship. Reasons for their existence, their aims and objectives and the uniforms they wear differ from denomination to denomination. Mia Brandel-Syrer observes that members of these organizations believe that uniforms have an essential quality not just associated with it as a symbol, but inherent in the uniform itself and thus conferred upon the individual who wears it (Brandel-Syrer, 1962, 49). It has a theological significance and this theology is from below and by that is meant the fact that it is the people's theology. Many members of the WCA in the RPCSA

would, for example, be very happy with the PCSA constitution as it is, with very few amendments if any but not wearing their uniform without serious compromises.

7.1 The Women's Christian Association

A brief look at the early days of the WCA in the Bantu Presbyterian Church reflects that in fact it was known as the Women's Association. A record of the meeting of July 1924 in Pietermaritzburg shows that it was a coming together of a number of societies that were in existence at the time. It is recorded that:

"the aim of the Association shall be to organize and combine in one General Association the Societies at present working in the various congregations of the Church, for the uplift by Christian methods of the Bantu women of this land" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1924, 71).

The Women's Association adopted the badge used by the Gillespie Society (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1924, 70). Mrs. Dewar was the first honorary president with Mrs. Hunter being the president. These were Scottish women whose husbands were missionaries in South Africa.

In forming themselves into one Association these societies started by accepting all rules as laid down in their respective societies, endorsing that they be binding to members concerned. Societies were urged to leave all matters of discipline in the hands of their Sessions and abide by decisions made. They noted that as time goes and needs arise other rules might be added. No doubt this approach did not put pressure on members to come with solutions to the problem of diversity in a short time. They, instead, were accommodative enough to continue and tolerant enough to sort problems out as they arose.

The leadership of the WCA was in white hands until 1936, with Mrs. Njikelana taking over. The WCA became the strongest organisation within the Bantu Presbyterian

Church. From Presbytery reports presented to the Annual Conferences of this Association the life and work of the WCA is clearly told.

From time to time the WCA had to deal with conflict situations. When congregations experienced problems, the Annual Conference of the WCA would, on an unofficial level seek ways of defusing conflict. They had a peace-making role that, in most cases proved very successful. Complaints about how Presbyteries of the Women's Christian Association handled some issues were brought before the Annual Conference and in most cases dealt with and parties reconciled. Ministers' wives were encouraged to attend the Lovedale Bible School to equip themselves for a better carrying out of the work of the women.

7.1.1 Financial Assistance to the work of the Church

Year after year the Women's Christian Association rendered their financial support to the denomination. Support was given to the following concerns:

1. The Evangelist's Fund
2. Pension Fund
3. Christmas Comforts for the Lepers at Emjanyana.
4. Erection and repairs of Church buildings.
5. Theological Students education.
6. Sunday School work.
7. Women Empowerment through skills training and bursaries.

This support and the indispensable role women played were also acknowledged by the PCSA. Addressing the General Assembly in 1925, and thanking women for their support in respect of the Fort Hare Hostel and the Native Mission Fund, the Convener of the Native Mission's Committee remarked that:

"Too many congregations leave to the Branches of the Women's Association the whole responsibility for their support of this essential part of the Church's business. This is not said in any disparagement of the efforts of the Women's Association, to which the Committee are deeply indebted for the extent of their interest and for the loyalty of their response to the request of the Central Executive that the Mission Fund be made one of the special objects of their work. The Church has reason to be, as the Committee is, deeply grateful to the many branches of the Association that have so generously helped

our fund. Without this help the position would have been much worse (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the PCSA, 1925, 133).

It has become a tradition of the RPCSA to give time to the WCA during General Assembly meetings, to address the Assembly and make official presentations of financial support to various schemes and projects that the Church as well as various congregations are involved in. This has been a symbolic moment that goes with the dignity it commands, a concrete witness to the caring ministry of the Church. The WCA lays much emphasis on doing things instead of talking about them. This is evident in their own schemes, apart from their support of undertakings initiated by the General Assembly.

Independent congregations also benefited greatly from the generosity of the WCA. They would send their requests through their various Presbyteries appealing to the Association for financial assistance. Very few of these requests were turned down. This vital aspect of Christian witness has never escaped the attention of those who appreciate a concrete way of showing love, care and concern. Building grants, even small amounts of money, are still received by many congregations in the Church.

The WCA has strong links with international women groups and organizations. They observe the World Day of Prayer and the Prayer Union Day on the first Wednesday of May each year. Representatives have been sent to international women's gatherings. The challenge women pose and their active involvement at all levels of decision making are indeed felt in the RPC.

Women at congregational level were encouraged to make contributions for the smooth running of the Church. Their active involvement, unwavering commitment in supporting the Church with all that they have in terms of resources underlines the fact that they cannot be ignored as far as decision making is concerned. The employment of Miss I.N. Mlungwana as full-time worker in 1958 bears witness to the WCA's commitment to making its work a success. She also had to assist with work related to the Girls Christian Association and the Sunday school. At the recommendation of the Business Committee she started as a member of staff of

Emgwali institution where there was ample scope for Christian work among the students (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1957, 46). Mrs. B.B. Mdoda replaced Miss Mlungwana and carried on with the work amongst women.

Whilst there may have been earlier applications for the ordained ministry by women, that of Miss R.Z. Sobuza of the Umtata Presbytery was one example that women also wanted to serve the Church as ministers. The General Assembly of 1957 responded by advising the Presbytery:

“to inform Miss. Sobuza that, while the Church appreciated her intentions, there were no Theological bursaries for women, and that at present the Assembly could not guarantee employment” (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1957, 48).

7.1.2 The use of uniforms

There are differences that exist between the two Churches regarding uniforms used. These differences are sometimes very minor, but even if it is about the colour of buttons, it can be an important fact for group identity. Below are the similarities and differences:

RPC SA Member:	PCSA Member:
1. Black Skirt	Black Skirt
2. White blouse & belt	White blouse with a black under-collar white belt or girdle
3. Black shoes & stockings	Black shoes and stockings
4. Black hat	White hat
5. A badge (WCA)	A badge (WPA) (See unpublished constitutions of the RPC WCA & Unpublished constitution of the PCSA WPA)

A minister’s wife in the RPCSA wears a black jacket in addition to the uniform and is given an elevated position. She is required to be the president of the Women’s groups in the congregation her husband serves as minister. At Presbytery as well as

at the Annual Conference only minister's wives are appointed to executive positions. This is not the case in the PCSA. In his address, in 1956, the Right Rev TP Finca remarked that:

"one is sometimes tempted to feel as though too much emphasis is placed on the colour of the uniform an association is using, and not on the amount of work it has done, particularly that of saving souls"
(Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1956, 39).

The scandal of a divided and fragmented Christian witness is glaring and evident in black townships on a Thursday afternoon. This is a day when women of all Churches gather for prayer in their different denominations. They wear uniforms that are different and distinct from one another. These uniforms can sometimes be explained theologically as to what they signify. For this reason they have been a serious stumbling block to a union.

The danger is, however, to be over critical about the use of uniforms. One has to seriously question what they represent and mean to those that wear them. There are members who see the uniform merely as clothes that one would wear when on duty. In that case, it becomes a constant reminder that they are soldiers of the cross. It reminds them of their commitment to make disciples and to exercise their ministry of caring. Uniforms are so important to some that they would find it difficult even to take communion without it or a part of it. A member who has forgotten her badge remarked, after communion, that she felt like someone who had not attended service as she could not really feel comfortable without her badge. The uniform represents Presbyterianism (ubuRhabe) itself. Without it nothing makes sense. A change of uniform could equal a tempering with the Church and the sacred heritage.

The WCA like most church organisation is known for music that has been adapted to African sound and rhythm. Western hymns are sung in adapted tunes. The uniform, the music, the way of preaching and of approaching God in prayer can be very distinct. An outsider has to be a very special person to appreciate the manner in which these organizations do things. It is very unique as well as strange to an

observer. This is especially true of those that are just observing during any act of worship.

The ability of the WCA, the GCA and the YMCG to present themselves and effectively appeal to people at grass root level is what makes it almost impossible for any minister in any congregation to ignore and openly criticise the work these organizations do. It is true to say they are not necessarily created or supported by ministers, they exist irrespective of how ministers feel. This ability to communicate the Gospel to grass root people which they possess needs to be taken seriously. What could be done to convince these organizations of the Gospel imperative to take Church unity seriously and persuade them to plant the seed of a united Church that will have to keep uniting?

People believe one another more than they are ready to believe officials. Any word that comes from one of them about unity would carry more weight than what a member of the Executive Committee on Presbyterian unity may say. Seminars that are as inclusive as possible will be very necessary as people are very suspicious of anything that lacks transparency. Members could be requested to be more involved in ensuring the success of these talks, and this will not happen unless they are also convince that it is the right thing to do.

The question of church organizations and their use of uniforms are always raised during discussions on unity negotiations pointing to its importance. It is an issue that cannot be ignored as it could lead to schism in the Church. These organizations are very aware of the indispensable role they play in planting new churches. They are usually the first to go into new developing areas and work towards starting new congregations. This underlines the important role they play in the life and work of the Church as a whole. One would therefore hope that they would not be left out in any discussion that relates to the very core of church life. However, there is no record of any involvement of the church organizations in unity talks. The call to do so is made as is also reflected in a letter from the Rev. T. Schneider that:

"Our Women Associations and our Groups of Madodana (with badges, uniforms, constitutions etc...) should prepare for amalgamation, as

indicated in the Draft Basis; this too should be tackled very diplomatically. In all these matters, local collaboration along the lines suggested above should be made mandatory by Presbytery resolutions. Our people should know officially, and from the highest quarters, that this is now part of our negotiation" (Schneider, T., Unpublished letter November 3, 1967).

To leave them behind as we wrestle with the proposed union would be fatal. The General Assemblies of both Churches has from time to time encouraged co-operation and a closer work relationship between the two Churches. This is not happening as it should. There is a lot of talk and publicity about very little that is actually taking place. We tell lies. We know we are not doing it. We are equally very aware of the threat it poses to church unity.

I would like to suggest that it would be better to persuade these organizations to forgo the use of uniforms. However, the subject cannot be taken lightly.

7.1.3 A competitive and divided witness

New work in developing areas is started with serious competition between the two Churches. Sometimes the organizations find themselves in one township actually preaching side by side. It is difficult for a lay person to explain the difference, except to say the one is related to a white church and the other to a black church. As previous chapters have highlighted, the problem dates back for many years. Indeed, when South Africa was still a Union the Right Rev N P Makaluza, addressing the 1948 General Assembly, remarked that:

"The Union is large enough to make room for both Churches, but unfortunately they are working in irritating rivalry in several places. The Bantu Presbyterian Church's main strength lies in the rural districts of Natal and the Cape Province, and all its available manpower is needed to minister to its people there. But there is a constant exodus of its members to the wage-earning districts of the larger cities and especially to the Rand. The Bantu Presbyterian Church has felt it necessary to establish congregations there, even though it meant drawing members out from congregations of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa to which they had already become attached. In certain districts of the Cape Province, on the other hand, the Presbyterian Church of South Africa has taken the

place of long-established congregations of the Bantu Presbyterian Church. That situation cannot continue without detriment to both Churches" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa, 1948-49, 41).

In an address to the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, the Moderator, the Rev TP Finca observed in 1956 that:

"the Christian army is divided into many regiments with different leaders with no link sometimes that joins them to show that they are fighting a common foe" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1956, 39).

He further remarked that:

"the older Churches realize that our differences weaken our course, and attempts are being made for closer co-operation. Some Churches have succeeded in forming unions. Some are working up co-operative schemes, like the Christian Council of South Africa, where leaders of different Churches meet and plan their campaigns together. If our attack is going to succeed we must by all means sink the differences that divide us" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1956, 39).

The work of the Women's Christian Association started as a response to the social and economic problems that women were faced with. The pioneers were wives of Scottish missionaries who devoted much of their time teaching women Christian ways, right dealings and right relationships. This involved bringing up children which was crucial as men worked as migratory labourers spending most of their time away from families. It involved assisting women to take seriously the sanctity of marriage life in a country where the disruption of families posed the greatest temptation. Indeed some yielded to adultery and promiscuity.

The Women's Christian Association also concerned itself with teaching women skills to help augment their husbands' income. Sewing classes were more common, with the emphasis on reading and interpreting Scriptures. Women played a very important role in supportive ministry. They were the first to go to situations where the minister was needed, such as visiting the sick and the bereaved. They ministered through prayer, preaching, music and a mutual sharing of suffering and

pain. They would tell their stories and experiences and how they manage, with God's help, to overcome day to day problems. Prayers were a strong support for those that worked away from home especially mineworkers. They would pray "imigodi ime" which means that the mines would stop falling. Widows were cared for and taught how to lead a Christian life and cling to Christ who is "indoda yabahlolokazi", the husband to the widows.

7.2 The Girls' Christian Association

The work of the GCA, as it is commonly known, has always been under the Women's Christian Association. Girls were expected to lead a clean Christian life. The minutes of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa reads as follows:

"that girls who had fallen into sin (pregnancy) should after conversion be allowed to rejoin the WCA, and if at all they feel like rejoining the Manyano (GCA) must neither put on the Girls nor the Women's uniform" (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1952, 49).

In 1954 they become autonomous, and yet they still operate very much under indirect supervision of the WCA. Members of the GCA are too often also members of the Youth Fellowship.

7.3 The Young Men's Guild:

Records reflect that this organisation started as the YMCA. This is the case even in the PCSA. There is very little that appears in the proceedings of the General Assembly in spite of the fact that there was a YMCA Assembly Committee. The Committee's existence was questioned by some members of the General Assembly probably because of its limited success in doing its work within the Bantu Presbyterian Church. There was even an attempt by the Business Committee to suspend the Committee (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1946, 20).

The first constitution of the Young Men's Guild appears in the blue book of 1958. After many years of requests that it be compiled, the Rev JY Hliso, Convener of the YMCG Assembly committee presented it. In the same year there was an Overture before the General Assembly of the PCSA calling for the recognition of the Young Men's Association in that Church (Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly, 1958, 14).

7.3.1 Reason for existence.

The aims and objectives of the Association are:

- (a) To advance the Kingdom of God.
- (b) To deepen the spiritual lives of young men and to promote the study of Scriptures and the intellectual, social and physical well being of the youth.
- (c) To foster loyalty to the Church (see constitution of the YMCG).

The YMCG encouraged its members to be of good conduct as believers. Members who failed to live up to the standard set in the constitution could find themselves under discipline, which means in most cases, exclusion from any involvement in YMCG work. Poor attendance in prayer meetings, defaulters in paying dues, breaking the promise and pledge of loyalty and unsatisfactory conduct could lead to discipline (see constitution of the YMCG).

It is interesting to note that in 1948 the YMCG Committee, among other things, urged the General Assembly to ask the Association to consider limiting the membership of local branches to those who are under thirty-five years of age (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1948). Most members of the YMCG are older than that with some in their late 60s. Bridging the gap between the young and the not so young has always been a problem. However, it is African to think young men have to learn from senior citizens "ingwevu", what life is all about. A change of name is desirable though.

Congregations and Presbyteries were encouraged to start YMCG groups and these operated at the level of the congregation, related to the Presbytery and later to the Annual Conference. Their link with the General Assembly has always been through an Assembly committee appointed by the General Assembly's Nomination's Committee each year. Members of the YMCG are expected to assist Deacon's Courts, Presbyteries and the denominations with development work (see constitution of the YMCG). They have, in a very limited way, done this.

Their strong point is evangelism and bringing non-Christians to the faith. Their method of doing this "uhlaselo" (attack) has been subject of criticism for some time but has stood the test of time. Amadodana, as they are commonly known are too often the first school for preachers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This fact demands that the organisation be taken very seriously and be assisted in shaping the quality of not only preachers but also of deacons and elders in the Church. The African Missions' Committee reporting to the PCSA General Assembly of 1958 notes that:

"their function in the Church is to rouse interest and hold revival meetings. Such preachers will be all the better of being trained in what the Faith is. Only so will the Church benefit from their efforts"
(Proceedings of the PCSA General Assembly, 1958, 14).

However, this should not be an assumption that leaders come only from this group as all other groups do their part in leadership development. All church organizations have produced leaders of great caliber. In his address as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in 1974 the Rev G.T. Vika reminded the Church that it is not only the clergy that need training for the work of the Church. Lay men and women should be taken seriously (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1974, 54). Any attempt to help church organizations understand why a union is crucial for Christian witness can only benefit the two Churches. This can only be achieved through education.

The work of the YMCG was reportedly growing in 1961 and actually it is at the Pietermaritzburg General Assembly that the first financial contribution from the YMCG to the General Assembly is recorded. It is also interesting that this first donation is made for Youth work. What these men do, is what members of the

equivalent organisation are doing in the PCSA, to engage in a supportive ministry and help wherever they can.

7.3.2 Uniform

Their uniform is also similar and different in the following way:

	RPCSA YMCG Member	PCSA Member
1.	White jacket with white buttons	Black jacket
2.	Black trouser	Black trouser
3.	White waist coat with black binding & buttons	White waist coat
4.	White shirt and a black tie	same
5.	Black shoes and black socks	same
6.	A badge with the letters YMCG	Badge with the Letters PMA (constitutions of the YMCG of the RPCSA and the PMA of the PCSA)

Does the one organisation absorb the other or should they look for a totally different uniform? As is the case with all organizations in both Churches great emphasis is laid on the colours black and white. Without these colours nothing can be truly Presbyterian. Is this true and can something be done about it?

The Congregational Presbyterian Union is a success story in some parts of the country and especially amongst race groups other than black. Its limited success in black areas has been largely due to the problem of uniforms. In spite of attempts to find common ground, some members would stick to the uniform of the Church they

belonged to before the formation of a united congregation. The subject needs great sensitivity.

7.4 The Youth Fellowship

The PCSA has a long history of organised work among the youth. The Youth Fellowship did not come about as a result of a concern about the gap that exists between the Sunday school group and other church organizations such as the WCA, GCA and YMCG, as most people want to believe. It was a response to what the Church viewed as evil practises among the youth, such as European dance, use of intoxicating drinks, gambling, etc. Youth organizations were started for the up building of character, the inculcating of moral and social responsibility and the combating of indolence, vice and crime among young people. More than anything else the reading of the Scriptures was encouraged.

The Bantu Presbyterian Church General Assembly appointed a Youth Committee for the first time in 1948. A brief look at the report presented by this Committee in 1950 reflects serious confusion regarding their scope or area of work. The report recommends that the Youth Committee be responsible for Sunday School work, to offer help to the Girl's Association, to approach Principals of all Presbyterian Institutions and arrange visits, to explore the possibility of establishing an organisation for teachers within the Church (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, 1950, 19ff). Perhaps this is what caused a very slow start in the field of Youth Work within the BPC. Work was left to individual congregations and Presbyteries until 1979.

The Youth Fellowship has developed into a recognisable organisation in the Church. Youth groups of both Churches have their different uniforms. There is no record, as is the case with other organizations, of their involvement in unity negotiations during the period in question.

The organizations of both Churches such as the Young Men's Christian Guild, the Women's Christian Association, the Youth Fellowship and the Sunday School could

be organized in such a way that they play an informative role and serve as antennae on public opinion regarding union. Lay persons are in the leadership in these organizations. One would hope that such leadership would be encouraged to wrestle with the scandal of our divided witness. It must be noted that these organizations have for good or ill provided many lay persons with a sense of identity. Uniforms, traditional music and freedom of worship create a sense of oneness among worshippers. Anyone who is not like them is not and cannot be one of them. These are issues that could be dealt with by a keen listener.

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CHAPTER 8

DEALING WITH CULTURAL DIFFERENCES, PREJUDICE AND BIASES: A REAL CHALLENGE FOR ANY CHURCH UNITY

8.1 Cultural diversity, a problem for union:

Any mention of culture brings to mind a number of things such as a people's world view, understanding of reality, root values and attitudes as well as basic drives and goals (Luzbetak, 1989, 279). As Luzbetak puts it a world view is most clearly revealed in a peoples religion which as its chief functions helps to provide answers to problems beyond human experience, legitimize the social order, instil and support group solidarity and identity and to provide support to the individual and the community in times of perplexity, crisis and tragedy (Luzbetak, 1989, 280). We have seen what harm Christianity has done in South Africa since the early days of missionary expansion. This does not attempt to negate the good work done. As Onwu puts it Christianity has often been charged with being an instrument of African domination, oppression, exploitation and under-development (Onwu, 1991, 147). The tendency has been to look down upon the African world view. This lack of empathy for anything 'African' characterized relationships between Black and White. The Gospel message failed to appeal to some Africans because it did not take their real needs into account. Doubts about what a union of Black and White Christians would achieve were based on the experiences of Black and White relationships. The idea of White racial superiority was implicit in the laws of the land and in the religion of White people. Christians conducted themselves in way that left much to be desired. The viewpoint and attitude which white people in general adopted towards politics, economics or social issues were largely influenced by their cultural or religious heritage. The challenge is how we help Christians allow the Gospel not only touch their lives but also allow it to counter culture when it is necessary.

Unity of black and white Christians in South Africa was an attempt to unite two different worldviews. The two existed and developed side by side in the political, social and economic realms. White South Africa was associated with power and wealth and Blacks were symbols of poverty and powerlessness. The sense of power that white people had, distorted their understanding of themselves as members of the same Body of Christ with their black brothers and sisters. The struggle for an adequate understanding of the message of the Word of God, of the Gospel, of the church, of its witness, of the meaning of a union in a racially divided society led, in a perilous way, to the reluctance of the black church to enter into a union with a white dominated church (Bilheimer, 1989, 99). The call to a total submission to Christ and to love other Christians of colour as we love ourselves proved very difficult for some South African Christians. Prejudice and biases between the two Churches were a result of the race problem.

The elevated position of the white person in general went along with a lot of power. Some white Christians were less aware of the danger this fact would cause for the unity of the Body of Christ. Indeed, it became rather difficult sometimes for some white Christians to disassociate themselves with the unjust laws of the country. Instead they were willing beneficiaries of an evil system. As Emil Brunner warns

"it is only that mind which would rather suffer injustice than do it which is willing to "overcome evil with good," which is capable of resisting the temptation even of great power. The greater the power, the greater the temptation of being godlike. Against this temptation no education or culture can prevail. The "demonism" of power is overcome by Jesus alone " (Brunner Emil, Christian Responsibility in a world of power, Amsterdam, Volume 4, 1991).

No one can, in his or her own right mind, doubt the sincerity of some white Christians as they continued to practise what they thought to be what God required of them. However, it was a world of the oppressor and that of the oppressed, the have's and the have-nots. For most Christians, especially members of the two Churches, reconciliation of the two worlds was wishful thinking. Blacks had witnessed how those who attempted to raise their voices against the powerful ended

up in prisons and in untimely deaths. Some white Christians demonstrated their acceptance of the status quo through their way of life as it is clearly stated in Appendix 4.

These varied experiences and encounters deepened the divisions that existed. Christianity tended to endorse these divisions and to encourage co-existence. Many black Presbyterians of the RPC talk of how they suffered in places of work under white Presbyterians of the PCSA who strongly demonstrated their feeling of superiority over the black person to the extent that they (blacks) never wished for a united Church. Many white Christians, in the NGK, recall sermons, in some white Churches, about the “swart gevaar” (black danger), “As daar ‘n swart man in die straat loop met ‘n aktetas dan moet julle weet dat die tas vol kommunistiese dokumente is! Dit sal ons vernietig!! Wees gewaarsku!! the Rooi gevaar,” terrorists whose commitment was to the overthrowing of the government and the danger of Roman Catholicism. Needless to say these Christians genuinely believed that a black person is by creation inferior to a white person, and for that reason must be kept subordinate. This, however, may not have been typical of the PCSA or most English Speaking Churches but it was talked about and associated with white Christians. John Macquarrie observes that the effect on theology can be said to consist in the fact that no one can escape sharing in the mentality and intellectual climate of his own culture (Macquarrie, 1966, 13). He admits that even word usage in our vocabulary is rooted in culture.

There were times when Black Christians could tell before attending a service that the sermon would be on the struggle of the black person under the white pharaohs of the day. Indeed, James Cone’s “God of the oppressed” and other theologians who spoke against oppression appealed to most black Christians. These experiences widened the gap between those that found identity in their own group. However, they served as a reason to fight for a better country to those whose understanding of God was all embracing. There were many instances of blacks that were refused entry into white churches for worship. One would read in the papers that Synods had refused blacks the right to have Holy Communion with white Christians and

many other very unfortunate exclusive attitudes. The Church showed reluctance to openly condemn many of these practices.

This seemed to be a problem even with the most pentecostal and charismatic Christians. My first response to an experience with a Baptist minister who was a very dynamic preacher of the Word was that of shock and disbelief about how he treated black Christians that stayed with him in his house. He and his family had different food from that given to black people. Accommodation facilities for those that worked for him were deplorable. He would never sit with a black person as he drove around doing God's work, preferring to be alone and have the black Christian at the back alone on a cold winter morning. Most people who do not believe in Christ find what Christians do more appealing than what they say. Actions speak louder than words. There was a big gap between what Christians professed and what they practised especially in so far as race relations were concerned. Black experience made them doubt if a union would really bring about mutual respect. Some of those that spoke against a union felt that at least they needed a break from being treated like nobodies. It is sad that white Christians did not realize the damage that racial segregation was causing. We must admit that culture shapes the human voices that answer the voice of Christ and it is the context of our witnessing. However, culture must continue to change in conversation with other cultures. It is true that the Christian faith destroys some aspects of culture, transforms culture and creates totally new elements in culture (Gregorios, 1988, 365).

8.2 Destroying barriers and building bridges.

Black people from those that preached the word of God to them experienced inconsistency and disappointment, be it in Malawi, Zimbabwe or South Africa. There has always been a separation of **us** from **them**. The dividing wall has never been really destroyed. This led to the use of divisive language and a reference to **our** churches and **their** churches. **We** had our schools, and **they** had their schools and this was true for everything. Language used was exclusive. There was separation from birth to the graveyard. Senior ministers in the Reformed Presbyterian Church

remember with embarrassment being refused coming closer to the grave of a white colleague during a funeral they attended. These African Christians also believed that if the gospel is an invitation to human beings to believe and be united in Christ who is Son of God and Son of humanity, then all those so believing in and united to him have by necessity to be united with each other (Gregorios, 1988, 365).

Unity talks were handled by people who had gone through bitter experiences and sadly enough experience has taught us that the church sometimes takes longer to forgive. Is it possible that black and white Presbyterians in this country would come together and form a truly united Church? Do we have anything new to proclaim? Yes. We need to begin with an acknowledgement of what we have done wrong. This will lead to forgiveness and a new way of life. A new way of life will of necessity mean a Christlike life, right dealings and right relationships. This is about the transformation of persons, societies and the country of our witness. Proclamation by word and deed is as central as ever it was for a world in want of sanity and hope.

A great concern is that the Church failed to be a sign of hope for many on the deep end of a fragmented society. What black Christians wanted, was a concrete condemnation of the injustice practised by the Government. The church of Jesus Christ was identified with the perpetration of oppression and suffering. There were individual white people who were loved and trusted by blacks but not the Church as an institution. Relationships between the PCSA and the RPCSA were characterised by suspicion and mistrust. That mistrust is still evident between members of the two Churches. Something needs to be done to have it eradicated.

It seems clear that Christianity failed many South Africans at a very crucial time in the history of our country. Faith, confidence and trust in one another are needed for the reconstruction and development of new theological thinking and praxis. Unfortunately it is clear that change or conversion will come quicker in the secular world than through the church. The political, social and economic realms are such that all South Africans can participate on equal terms. With the advent of democracy South Africans have no choice but to learn to live together and to learn

more about each other. The apartheid system made people indifferent to one another causing serious racial tensions. That is the past. Something is happening and it is shaping the future of our country for the better. Integration is taking place at all levels of our society. Much is done in sport, business and education to address this. Sport had to integrate to get international acceptance. Programs are developed for a successful integration. In spite of serious setbacks especially as a result of action reaction among sport administrators the spirit of most South Africans and most sports men and women is high. Tennis South Africa is a good example with athletics, soccer, swimming, rugby and cricket really making a huge contribution in cementing the South African society.

In schools and places of higher education integration is given the priority it deserves and programmes to address these concerns are relatively successful. In the business sector integration cannot be ignored. Seminars on cultural diversity and managing diversity are events of the day. As our country continues to affirm the dignity of the individual and self worth, the acceptance of one another is becoming less of a problem. What is the church doing to address these problems?

The church must educate her members to be more accommodative and open to other cultural expressions of the Christian faith. There is a tendency among Christians of thinking that we should strive to do things together, to learn to work together for the good of our economy but at least on a Sunday be left alone to worship God our way. Christianity is a way of life. The Word of God as contained in the Scriptures poses a challenge to our contentment as things are. It is not a question of proclamation by word of mouth. The church must learn to walk the talk. To affirm the Lordship of Christ over the church and the world is a Gospel demand. It should not be just another theological proposition or a mere expression of some subjective religious experience. It must be evident in life lived. It must lead to the transformation of our society, a society wrestling with the implications of post apartheid Christian witness. This can be done, among other things, by seeking ways of reconciliation and unity of those that were racially separated.

The South African context presented problems. Differences of race, culture and language put pressure on the loyalty of the Churches to the Gospel message. The vision of a united Church in a land of serious contradictions was far in the background. These contradictions rendered the Christian witness weak. Whilst these differences of race, culture and language are now not anymore seen as serious at the work place, in church they still pose the most serious problem of oneness.

At Mgwali, for example, there was a church for the Africans and just down the road one for the families of the missionaries and a few whites in the area. In Alice it was the same. There may be more other examples of such differences that only become too much of a problem when God is to be worshipped thus keeping the church divided. These barriers may have been deemed necessary for different race groups to be able to fully and freely worship God. However, a question could be asked as to whether it was necessary to create barriers that actually prevented or kept away even those that would have loved to cross the racial line as they had no language problem. What could be done to make people as free and happy as possible in the midst of what God has created different, our rainbow nation? Or rather, should it be seen as a regulation that people of different race groups should worship separately from each other? I think something more has to enter into people's hearts, minds and spirits which displaces a commitment to what keeps God's flock divided as would a body which rejects an alien organ during transplant. A union would in itself be a statement that it is well, it is good for God's children to be together. The decision regarding what to do and where one would worship should be left to the individual Christian. Ours is to place an open door before our fellow Christian not a closed one. As John Macquarrie puts it the work of theology needs to be done again and again because its formulations are culturally conditioned and therefore need reinterpretation in order to effectively respond to changing cultural demands (Macquarrie, 1966, 14). As face of our country is changes, a new culture will emerge. No theological statement can be culture free and for that reason theological formulations must be judged by their faithfulness to the demands of the

Gospel and the relevance with which they apply its message in a particular cultural setting.

8.3 A sharing of impressions about one another

A friend spoke of his experience in a black church that it could be a dissonant experience. Summed up it seems like a jolly charismatic get together that is based on mass emotional hysterical behaviour. Coming from a white church the black church seems to be:

1. Unorganised and very free, with people coming and leaving as they want at random.
2. Very noisy and not sacred.
3. Highly emotional and at times hysterical.
4. Very loud and sloppy singing. The singing less sacred in expression.
5. Praying very emotional and as if it is done to make everyone else cry.

He further remarked that his experience of a white church is that a member of the congregation would rather stay outside than come in late. Coming late can be seen as disrespectful towards God, the minister and the congregation. Adhering strictly to the order of service with the minister as the only one to preach is still common practise. As a rule, no member of the congregation is allowed to enter the pulpit. Children talking to one another in church are removed from the service.

He observed that in a black church many people contribute during the service sometimes without prior arrangement with the minister. The more singing, dancing and clapping there is, seems to be the criterion by which a good service can be judged. Emotions are not suppressed and sometimes seem necessary to experience something. In a white church emotions are controlled and one dare not show any emotions. The emotional expressing of feeling is in privacy and certainly not in church.

In a white church music is based on western church music and not on secular music. The basis of all church music is the great master of music. The singing of hymns is based on musical rules, which places a different accent on i.e. God, Jesus, Son etc. It is not sung homogeneously as in black churches. Black church music seems to be at one volume (very loud). When people dance and clap one wonders what is going on. He summed up his observation by admitting that all this may be culturally bound with no explanation to the onlooker. It may be very strange to a white person because he does not understand what is happening. Ignorance of a culture causes great confusion and within the South African context some whites were brought up to look down upon anything black people do. Even what happens during worship is sometimes judged against that background. For white Presbyterians it may be difficult to be part of worship in black congregations as it would indeed be a culture shock. The question can be raised as to what to do about cultural differences? Should cultural differences be allowed to stand on the way to a union? If there is nothing impossible with God it is obvious that cultural differences can be harmonised. The church in South Africa has a very important role to encourage a coming together of people who have been separated from each other by racist laws.

Against this background we must be warned against the tendency to attach absolute value to our own activities, whether personal or corporate. We must avoid the assumption that the way we do things is the only way things should be done and that the tradition we are familiar with has an inherent authority extending to its smallest details from which it is blasphemy to depart. The right way to sing in church, the right way to pray, the right way to express one's faith, the correct performance of certain acts may assume such importance that attention is no longer on the meaning of worship but the means. If Christ is the revelation of self-giving love, the body of his followers must be expected to exhibit a unity in which the members, across the colour line, are bound to one another by the ties of mutual self-giving love (Wainwright, 1980, 122).

8.4 Christian identity and culture

We need, first and foremost, to accept the diversity of our cultural heritage. This is in many circles seen as a very good and positive thing about our country. It adds to the richness of our rainbow nation. What has always been a problem is the negative tone that theological training has had on what is not Western. Indeed theological training has rendered those in training alien to their own culture, to such an extent that it has been seen by some as a tool for the invasion of African Culture and world view. This is a problem with no easy solutions. The invading culture becomes more familiar to those undergoing theological training in such a way that at the end of the training they have joined the ranks of those that are critical of any other approach which is not Western.

On completing theological training young ministers too often find it difficult to adjust within the most traditional congregations whose life and work centres around the most traditional organizations such as “amadodana noomama bomanyano”. Robert Schreiter observes that:

"indigenous leadership can be so socialised as to render their situation worse than it was under expatriate leadership" (Schreiter, 1996, 39).

Black churches have always been struggling with how to present the Gospel by using traditional tools. The approach of the missionaries was that of bringing Christ into the African situation rather than finding Christ in the situation. With this attitude, one cannot discern Christ in a culture. It presupposes a culture without Christ, a distortion of the incarnation. This indeed a subject on its own which would need a lot unpacking.

Having said this we must admit that culture is not static. It continues to develop new forms. This reality is comforting, as it is evident that even in our country there is a new culture that is emerging, which is neither African nor Western but very unique to South Africa. It is more of a Rainbow culture. Urbanisation has largely contributed

to this. One hopes that this emerging culture will provide us with new ways of worship and presenting the Gospel. Robert Schreiter warns that:

"in some parts of the world that have been part of Christian history for centuries, Christianity has come close to dying out because its theological expressions and symbolic performances have not continued to listen to cultural change" (Schreiter, 1996, 40).

Culture determines understanding of community or any understanding of community is cultural. In any culture there are forces that shape identity. The church must attempt to express the identity of a believing community constructively and help it deal with the social change that comes upon the affected community. Why is the secular world, especially in South Africa, so concerned about cultural diversity? Why is it that the private sector and industry spend so much money on seminars on this subject? It goes without say that if our economy is to be sustainable, people of diverse cultural backgrounds would have to identify and acknowledge differences and attempt to discover that which cement of bring them together for better production and performance.

What makes us who we are and them what they are? What gives distinction to a group? What are the bonds of commonality? How are these bonds sustained? Theology should offer more solution rather than creating more problems of identity. Identity is formed by marking boundaries and the role or the status of the individual within that group is he/she dead or alive. In some settings these group boundaries can be vague, as is sometimes the case if one compares an urban setting with a rural setting. Sometimes they have to be vague in order that individuals within particular groups may gain Christ. New situations should prompt new reflections on the Gospel. These should include conversion as constituting a new situation. Change in the laws of the land should demand a restructuring of groups, organizations, societies and congregations that had grouped them in line with South Africa's oppressive laws.

People can stay culturally identified and share a common service but this cannot be imposed just as it cannot be condemned. To encourage cross-cultural dealings and relationships should be the goal of the church and should seek to do this from below.

8.5 A new identity in Christ

There were undoubtedly other pressing issues than a cosmetic arrangement that would have no concrete meaning on real life and death issues in South Africa. Blacks were very reluctant to believe that in a united Church they would be respected as created in the image of God and be treated as such. Will Christians, in a united Church, be responsible and accountable to one another as Christ demands of His followers?

Any mention of the word "Christians" brings to mind, among other things, people of all race groups, languages, and backgrounds gathered together and worshipping God who created them different. This becomes possible with loyalty to Jesus Christ. Lives of different men and women begin to reflect their acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour. That acceptance shapes their lives and destroys barriers that could stand on the way of credible witness across colour, language and cultural restrictions. Their very identity takes shape in and through Jesus Christ. All human history past, present and future is under the Lordship of Christ and the church bears witness to this.

If anyone is in Christ, he/she is a new creation. Behold He makes all things new. Church history, among other things, bears witness to culturally identified individuals and communities that could not resist a Christological challenge. This left them never the same, transformed and having assumed in real ways a new identity. When one become a Christian, his/her life is assumed and sanctified and returned back to him/her to live for Christ. So is culture. The incarnation must be understood as concerned about individuals and their environment. The incarnation cannot

exclude one's culture. If we believe that culture stays the same that would suggest that one would become a Christian without noticing it. A new culture of loving, caring and dealing justly with the neighbour is instilled by Christ and must characterise the post apartheid United Presbyterian Church.

Churches need a rediscovery of their identity, a deep spiritual awakening to who they are and why they exist. A rediscovery of the essential oneness of the church which adds flavour to her being the salt of the earth. Churches must listen to the voice that calls them to turn toward each other and consent to being gathered together by Christ the Lord.

Fears based on our experience of the past and the present make it difficult to imagine what the future would be. It is not human to be content when future realities are in doubt. However, Christianity presents us with a great challenge, new realities that go with a new life in and through Jesus Christ. Christian witness is rescued from the triviality of mere denominational differences and loyalties.

As Christians we need to realise that we are, by grace, in a special tension with the world. After the 1994 democratic elections in our country, churches reminded Christians of the need to have a critical solidarity with the government. One hopes that the church will remain the conscience of our society. Indeed, white Christians, by and large, tended to be more loyal to the State than to the Gospel demands. It stands to be seen what the role of the church will be now.

Cultural differences must be acknowledged and appreciated. These should not pose a problem for unity. Congregations within the RPCSA are as diverse in their expression of faith as the number of ministers in the Church. Worshipping communities themselves should determine how they should approach God. There is always a reason why a particular group gathers itself together for worship. In most cases there are similarities and things common between members of such a group. These may be just experiences that the members concerned have gone through. South African history with its divisive past has far reaching possibilities of bringing

different race groups together. There is a commitment among fellow South Africans of finding one another and learning more from each other.

Bitter experiences of the past have intrinsic possibilities for cementing relationships between those who had been enemies. If this is impossible then the reconciling power of the Gospel is in vain. The Gospel offers black people the opportunity to forgive and unless they do so God cannot forgive them. The church is a living witness of men and women who have themselves found forgiveness and peace from God through Jesus Christ and who maintain that witness by practising forgiveness. White South Africans need to acknowledge their sin and seek forgiveness. Indeed God is faithful and just to forgive if we admit that we have sinned. The Church must cease to be merely a club of those unwilling to change, but rather a community and a school of holiness. Only then can the Presbyterian witness manifests itself to South Africans as the Body of Christ.

St Paul's chapter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 12:4) on the diversity of Spiritual gifts could have been on cultural differences in the church. I am tempted to think that he would have handled the subject in the same way as he handled the problem of diverse Spiritual gifts. The vital and important thing for the church is to realize herself, to be aware of her own need and to make a decision for Christ or against Him. This begins with the individual. Mere contemplation of theological issues, the appeal to memories of the past, the argument of differences are unrelenting efforts to conceal crucial decisions that we have to make behind a web of wholly secondary and invalid arguments.

We must focus our energies on the real issues that affect our witness. There are those, who, without any serious thought on the subject under discussion, believe that the challenge the new South Africa poses will help overcome all obstacles and that a united Church will emerge as some imagined evolutionary process. Such thinking is doomed to wishful thinking. We must compel men and women to consider unity talks as something concerned with that which is vitally relevant to Christians and their call to make disciples. We must push Christians to the point of

disillusionment and dissatisfaction with a conservatism that cherishes that which is trivial and external to unity discussions and compel them to take cognisance of the scandalous nature of our divisions and demand that a decision be made.

8.6 Acknowledging work done

Foundations have been laid. There is no doubt that a lot of time and energy was invested in the attempt to unite the two Churches. The minutes of the negotiation's team and the proceedings of the General Assemblies of the two Churches testify to this fact. Letters as well as telegrams to individuals also bear witness to the commitment and frustration that went with these negotiations. They convey different messages and attitudes at different stage of the process. However, we need to appreciate that their task was done in spite of the BPC's reluctance to embrace the union. Appendix 1 provides a clue as to how witness together would have begun. It would have been better to have considered continuing with the many suggestions made on co-operation at grass root level even though a union at Assembly level had failed. Had the scheme for re-allocation of Presbyteries been adopted and implemented the two Churches would have tried to do things together even if this was to be the case only with one or two Presbyteries. This could have involved the following:

- 1) Holding united services especially during Holy Week, at Easter, Pentecost, etc.; there is a tendency to assume that joint services wouldn't work. These services could be held on special occasions to start with. Most ministers are so used to being congratulated after services that they fear attempting anything that is likely to fail. This residual fear of what would happen, for example, should a white congregation decide not to have an Easter service of their own, join a black congregation, or vice versa, must be addressed. It is unbelievable but an effort must be made. Churches need the courage to take the initiative in the attempt to bring race groups together. United Services offer people the opportunity to widen their horizons thus getting to know others better.
- 2) Attendance at funerals in each others' churches; This presupposes that a relationship would exist between the churches as a result of congregations

meeting occasionally. People would attend a funeral of a person belonging to a family or a group known to them.

- 3) Pulpit exchanges; Some black Christians would refuse to listen to a white preacher, the same could be said of white Christians. We are products of a polarised society. The pulpit exchanges would hopefully strengthen reciprocal relationships between churches. It must not be a one way traffic type of relationship.
- 4) Assistance by ministers who have Marriage Licences to those who do not;
- 5) Combined Women's Association meetings and weekend gatherings;
- 6) Support of local Women's World Day of Prayer services;
- 7) Support of local Sunday-School services, outings, etc.;
- 8) United youth meetings, rallies, etc.;
- 9) Support of local ministers' fraternals and / or regular meetings between local ministers for mutual support, planning, etc.;
- 10) Joint training sessions for elders / deacons / treasures / youth leaders / Sunday School teachers, especially where advantage can be taken of resource person, training manuals, etc., provided these are acceptable to both sides.;
- 11) Participation in bilateral or ecumenical evangelistic outreach in local area;
- 12) Participation in bilateral or ecumenical service projects in a local area;
- 13) Combined meetings of small groups for Bible Study / fellowship / teaching of languages etc.;
- 14) Joint responses to crises in the local community, e.g. housing, health services, education, unnatural disasters etc.;
- 15) Co-operation, especially of ministers, in ongoing problem areas requiring reconciliation or mediation.

This would be much better than creating a link at the top hoping that congregations would accept Assembly decisions without question. The two churches must allow growth from below which in fact always been taking place unnoticed and without the

blessing of the two Churches. It was vital that the two Churches seek, proclaim, participate and promote local expressions of unity whenever necessary. These can be co-operative ventures such as local ecumenical projects. They needed a commitment to establishing task groups to continually search for better ways of expressing visible unity as well as promoting increased interaction between individual Christians congregations and Presbyteries including a consideration of collaboration in regional initiatives. Both Churches needed to be challenged never to do what could be done together. The above suggestions are very relevant even after a union. A viable structure would have to be in place to make sure that there is a health relationship between Christians in the new Church. A united Church would need to help members understand and interpret the life and meaning of a union. This can be done through the acceptable constitutional channels of the Church. The future is full of opportunities because the laws of the land have changed.

It is clear, as mentioned before, that the BPC needed a forum where they could express their deep frustrations with the laws of the land. Unity negotiations offered both black and white the opportunity to really wrestle with an issue of great concern. Unfortunately an opportunity was missed. However it is not lost.

Churches are very quick to talk and very slow to implement decisions. It is very easy to make the soundest deliberations with absolutely no plan of putting it into action. It is much easier to just get things done and ask for forgiveness for having done things than ask permission from Assembly to do anything. It usually takes a very long time to have the permission granted and is usually given to the wrong people to have it implemented, those who take absolutely no interest in having it implemented.

A critical review of and a reflection on what both Churches could discard or build on would only be possible if programmes and activities are in operation within an officially established link. It is when people begin to engage in some activity that the negotiating team would be able to assess the possibility of long term working relationships. We must guard against unrealistic hopes that we could take congregations into a union without having exposed them to what the demands and consequences of agreeing to unite would be. There is a great need for the creation of an official link where lay persons would take part in discussions as a priority, a

forum where people can engage in activities that would inform the negotiating team whether unity is possible. Refresher courses for ministers, retreats and seminars for everyone could help build relationships. Physical contact must be encouraged where people will be helped to discover their true identity as a people of God. Committees of the General Assembly in both Churches must be appointed with great wisdom. We must have the right person in the right committee.

During an interview Rev. Rob Robertson (personal communication, may 1993) remarked that it was evident in the process of negotiations that some members had other concerns that were more important than unity talks. He recalled an observation by the Rev. Munro that if any one wants anything done he/she must not request the Assembly to do it because it will never get that. One should rather request permission from the Assembly to do it. In the Bantu Presbyterian Church team only two representatives were keen on union, Rev. G.T. Vika and Rev. B.M. Mobaba. The Rev. W.P.T. Ndibongo thought that a union would not make much difference within the Umtata Presbytery where he was minister. This kind of attitude usually leads to complacency with ministers and congregations thinking that union or no union, it does not matter. Unity talks were frustrated by those who had no time for meetings. A team of committed persons who are heart and soul in unity talks is needed.

Criticism is not always acceptable. But without any free play of criticism the truth which in Christian terms is to set humanity free is obscured and evaded. Hard questions were avoided by the Negotiating Committee. Some members of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa feared that union with the Bantu Presbyterian Church would render the united Church poor. Realistically this would be inevitable should a union take place. But the question of salaries and pensions in particular would need the most urgent attention of the Negotiating team as it has been effectively misrepresented by those anti-union. Advice from Churches such as the United Congregational Church would be of help. A way of dialogue is needed, which will require commitment to a Union. The process must start with a critical analysis of where we've been and recognition of the work already done.

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CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

Problems that derailed the 1959-1973 round of unity talks between the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa have been presented and discussed. These were:

9.1 The laws of the land

It is clear that the discriminatory nature of the laws of our country posed a problem for a union. There were many voices of protest against inhumane treatment of black people. It was impossible to address the subject of church union without addressing the race issue. It was further made complicated and confused by mistrust and misunderstanding. This was obviously due to the fact that different race groups did not really understand one another as they never lived together. Very few had confidence that a union of churches would even attempt to address the problem of racial divisions. An insignificant but vocal minority in the PCSA strongly objected to a union on grounds that it was unheard of, in this country, that a black person would rule over a white person (Leader 1963, article by D.R. Bruce). The World Church through the World Council of Churches visibly stood on the side of the oppressed masses whilst at the same time encouraging the church to fight against any form of racism. The challenge posed by the World Council of Churches did not fall on deaf ears in South Africa. However, attempts to unite the Bantu Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in South Africa failed in 1973. The BPC withdrew from the negotiations fearing secession as some members thought a union would mean white control at a time when such control was detested and challenged. It is evident that a change of the laws of the country was crucial for a serious consideration of a union. A statement issued by the Negotiations Committee in June 1963 that Christian fellowship is based ultimately not on negotiations, agreements or laws but first and last on trust, brotherly acceptance and love is very true. However these were fruits of conversion that black South Africans wanted to see in the lives of White Christians and the question was whether they would only start accepting and loving blacks only

after a union. Blacks wanted them to practise this conviction before talking them into a union. Whilst Blacks wanted to really join hands with white people in challenging the laws of the country it was obvious that the white Church preferred to negotiate with the Government for the bending of some laws to accommodate the need for the creation of a united Church. Discussions on properties for example tended to advocate for an approach that would seek to convince to South African Government to amend the law regarding the vesting of property just to accommodate a union. Blacks were not concerned about exceptions to the rule, they wanted a complete change of the laws of the land. Suggestions that different race groups be elected just to accommodate the demands of the laws of the land were unacceptable. (For practical problems caused by the laws of the land see pages 103, 113, 126ff, 129ff, 144)

9.2 Lack of theological reflection

Records of the negotiating team point to the fact that there was little theological reflection done during the negotiation's process. The first chapter in this thesis presents us with the work of the World Council of Churches and the impact it had on the World Church. It provided Christian communities with tools to respond to very difficult situations by reflecting on the Word of God. What does Scripture say? What is our understanding of the Word of God in our different situations? Doing theology in the South African context was not an easy exercise as it has been argued. It is obvious from research done in this paper that a lot of discussion centred around issues such as Properties, Stipends and Pensions, the Training of Ministers and Evangelists, the formation of Synods and Presbyteries and many others. These were very important issues to deal with and in most of them the two Churches reached consensus. All these were dealt with in forums that were created specifically to meet the need. It was, however, equally necessary for the two Churches to have a forum where theological debate could be encouraged. We need to note, though, that this does not mean it did not at all take place. It took place outside the constitutional forums that were recognised by the two Churches. Individual participants published contributions in the Leader on their understanding of what they thought God wanted of the two Presbyterian Churches. Theological reflection is always necessary to help us check where we are in relation to what the

Gospel demands. Throughout the whole history of unity negotiations there was very little done to help members reflect theologically the implications of a divided church. Work done in this regard did not even reach the ordinary member.

9.3 Suspicion and lack of trust

South African history is a story of conflict between Black and White dating back to the frontier wars. Missionaries have been accused of collaborating with imperial powers in colonial conquest. Mistrust has characterized relationships between Black and White for centuries. This did not exclude Christians. This research makes it clear that there was a general feeling of mistrust between members of the BPC and the PCSA. This made members feel comfortable in their different Churches rather than embracing a union. Members of both Churches were polite but beneath the politeness they were afraid and suspicious. There were mutual fears of losing the very character and autonomy once a union took place. There were those who were concerned about who would be Moderator in a union. This thesis makes it clear that there was a real fear of absorption. There were concerns in the PCSA that those in the BPC who wanted a union were doing so for reasons of bettering their financial situation. Some felt they had nothing to gain in a union. It was very necessary to deal openly and honestly with one another's doubts and fears. This was also not easy in a country where free dialogue could have been seen as engaging in politics. (Regarding problems caused by suspicion and lack of trust see pages 107, 151. 153 ff)

9.4 Inadequate or lack of information on the negotiation process

It has been argued that the general membership of both Churches was in the dark about unity negotiations. These negotiations were at the top and assumed a top-down approach. There was no emphasis on inter-communion from below. Attempts to involve everyone were unsuccessful. This could only be attributed to ministers and representative elders. It has been argued that congregations tended to adopt the opinion of the minister on the issue. It is not a far fetched conclusion that some may have felt there was no need to share and to workshop their congregation on this

issue. We note that a decision of the 1961 BPC General Assembly, that recommendations on unity negotiations, be sent to Presbyteries and Sessions for consideration and comments, was never really taken seriously. The reports of the Committee on Negotiations reflect that congregations did not participate in these discussions. In other words, the people as represented by congregations did not have any say in the attempt to amalgamate the two Churches. It is regretful that even during the 1994 round of talks this issue has been neglected and can be a recipe for conflict. People need to be made to feel really involved in what concerns their future. A strong link at the top with members of the constituent congregations in the dark about a union can create serious problems. If the ordinary member of the Church feels he/she had no say in this union it will take a very long time to learn to accept it as a reality. This is likely to show in a continuous reliance on the practice and procedure of the Church the ordinary members have always known rather than embracing the new dispensation.

9.5 Another attempt on union

The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa was in 1982 renamed the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA). Talks about uniting the two denominations resumed again in 1994. This was after a decision of the RPCSA Minister's Retreat at Umtata in 1990 which led to the 1990 resolution of the Assemblies of both denominations in which the basis of Agreement was drawn up.

The basis of Agreement included:

1. Acknowledgement of the common roots of the two Churches.
2. Mutual recognition of the failures and errors of the past as well as the good relationships and co-operation that had existed and
3. A mutual resolve to rebuild relationships and to promote the fellowship and co-operation. To this effect, practical suggestions and guidelines were drawn and referred to Presbyteries and Congregations

(unpublished report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the RPC).

In 1994 the General Assembly of the RPCSA mandated the Ecumenical Relations Committee to resume unity negotiations with the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa. The PCSA was also seeking a close working relationship with the RPC whose Presbyteries were urged by the General Assembly to engage in bilateral talks with the PCSA (Proceedings of the RPCSA General Assembly 1994, 43).

The first meeting was at Lovedale on the 15th of July 1994. Issues, which had, in the past, divided the two Churches, were discussed with frankness and honesty. Differences of approach and perceptions were overcome in a spirit of reconciliation and dedication to work together. All representatives made a commitment to learn to forgive. There was a realization that the church had been overtaken by secular society in its willingness to forgive past wrongs (unpublished minutes of the Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPC and the PCSA 15th July 1994,2). It was noted that resistance to the previous attempt on Unity was largely due to racial problems in the Country (unpublished minutes of the Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPC and the PCSA 1994,2). With the passing of time and the changing face of South Africa, Black South Africans had undergone a kind of liberation thus helping them see a Union of equals as a possibility.

There was a recognition of the effects of the 1994 General Election and Presidential inauguration as having challenged white thinking among members of the PCSA. It was felt, by PCSA delegates, that this change of leadership in the country might even cause those who had been against a union to be more open to it (unpublished minutes of Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPC and the PCSA 1994,3).

There was a sense of urgency in dealing with the subject of union this time, especially from the RPC side. It is important to note at this stage the RPC was undergoing a serious change within the ranks of its leadership. They had an interim Senior Clerk, an interim Junior Clerk and an interim General Secretary (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the RPCSA, 1994) Consensus was reached on learning to do things together at Presbytery and congregational levels and establish personal

relationships. It was further noted that ministries had an important role to play in shaping the attitude of the general membership towards union. This would also help create confidence and optimism towards union and would be realized through regular contact between ministers of the denominations and encouragement from the General Assemblies (unpublished minutes of the Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPCSA and the PCSA 1994,3). It was hoped that in doing so the proposed unity would be the product of renewal of fellowship between the two Churches and not a superimposed form of unity. It was felt that union should reflect not only God's acceptance of us but also our acceptance of one another (unpublished Report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the RPCSA 1994). This forum hoped that a union would be achieved by 1997.

Task forces were deemed necessary to deal with various aspects of church life, such as the Manual, Finances, Church property etc. This time it was strongly felt that church organizations should talk to each other about the issue of Union (unpublished minute of Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPC and the PCSA 1994,4). These task forces were just another name for the various committees as appointed in the previous round of talks.

A meeting which followed, at Lovedale on 23 November 1994, recognized that a union was long overdue, and the need to do all in its power to avoid anything that might derail this process (unpublished minutes of the RPC and the PCSA November 1994,2). At this meeting an important development on the PCSA side was that their General Assembly had already appointed a team to negotiate union with the RPCSA (unpublished minutes of the Ecumenical Relations Committees of the RPCSA and the PCSA November 1994, 2).

In January 1995 the RPCSA had drawn a digest on why it was necessary for the two denominations to unite. This covered a number of issues and in short emphasized the following:

1. That God has created men and women for fellowship with God and with one another. For that reason the church cannot be an end in itself.

2. That in a divided society, separated by law into racial, language, cultural and political groupings a united Church would be a valid witness to the power of reconciliation.
3. The fullness of Christian Truth and Worship between the two Churches can only be truly expressed in unity.
4. The need to ignore all external factors and denominational labels that keep denominations apart and concentrate rather on the call to make disciples of all nations.
5. The relatedness of the two denominations, that they have the same origins and are two branches of the one Church.
6. That it was time to seek unity as equals as we are so regarded now before the law.
7. As an act of obedience to the Gospel demands (unpublished paper by the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the RPCSA 1994).

In June 1995, the Ecumenical Relations Committee of the RPCSA was replaced by a committee appointed specifically to look at the unity issue. Committees on Ministry, Finance and Property, signs, symbols and Uniforms, Liturgy and Worship Manual, Christian Education were in place. The PSCA team apologized for their failure to report on the appointments of members to serve in these various Committees. Rev DM Soga of the RPC and Rev DR. MJ Masango of the PSCA were appointed joint Chairmen of the Negotiations process (unpublished minutes of the Joint Meeting June 1995,2).

There was definitely a lot of enthusiasm and commitment to a union. It was even more important to note that the RPC had taken the first initiative and was pushing it all the way. The Basis of Union of 1970 (Appendix V) was revised with some modifications. It is important to note that the proposed name of the united Church was "The Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa" (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee on Union June 1995,5). Both Churches were urged to do all in their best to educate their members so that both Assemblies could be asked to approve a union in 1996 (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee on union June 1995,6).

These initiatives led to a number of meetings that followed. It must be noted, however, that there was a serious lack of information reaching grass-root people. Attempts to have some of the work produced translated into other languages failed. A significant number of members of the RPCSA would have needed such help to understand issues involved in negotiations. In February 1996 during a meeting of the Joint Committee at St Paul's, East London, a detailed report on revising the 1970 Basis on Union was presented. It was hoped that this document would be ready for presentation to the 1997 General Assemblies, sent down to Presbyteries as a formal remit asking Presbyteries to vote for or against Union or propose specific amendments (unpublished minutes of the Joint Committee February 1996,7).

At the beginning of 1997 a lot of work had been done and the Basis of Union was ready for presentation to the General Assemblies. Both General Assemblies adopted the Basis of Union in 1998 (Proceedings of the General Assembly of the RPCSA 1997,51 & Proceedings of the PSCA 1997,406 of 1998) and all preparations for the consummation of union started. This Basis of Union had approved the setting up of a Special Commission. This was a Joint Commission appointed by both General Assemblies, in terms of Section 6(b) of the Basis of Union. It was composed of 30 members, 15 elected by each Assembly to make sure that a union takes place and all the necessary preparations for the smooth running of all business relating to the first General Assembly of the Uniting Presbyterian Church. The first meeting of the Special Commission on Union met in Port Elizabeth on the 20-22 October 1998. These attempts led to the formation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa on the 26 September 1999 in Port Elizabeth. The negotiations of 1959 to 1973 had agreed on the United Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa as the name of the new church, largely because discussions at the time involved the three major Presbyterian churches in South Africa with the exception of the Presbyterian Church of Africa. The adoption of the name Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa acknowledges that union is a process and suggests that other Presbyterian denominations still outside this union would be most welcome to be part of it.

This time around all was easy in as far as the laws of the land. They had changed making black people rise with confidence and share their honest opinions on matters raised. Theological reflection was done only at the level of negotiations without really

taking congregations on board. Suspicion and lack of trust still prevails. There were sessions that were very tough during negotiations where it became evident that mistrust was a problem that will haunt us for some time. There has been very little information about union at grass root level. Most people know about the union that has taken place but cannot say anything about it nor are they aware of what the implications are. Until such time that we have made it everyone's business to find one another and to learn to witness together the world will find it very hard to believe that in Christ there are no divisions.

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APPENDIX I

Proposed Procedure in dealing with the Draft Basis of Union on its presentation to the Churches.

1963

1. The Draft Basis of Union shall first be submitted to the supreme Court of each of the negotiating Churches at their meetings in 1964.
2. The Supreme Court of each Church shall be invited to take a resolution in the following terms.

The General Assembly (Synod) of the (full name church) resolves that it accepts the general principles of the Draft Basis of Union: agrees to unite on the terms of the Draft Basis of union, subject to such modifications in detail as may hereafter be proposed as amendments thereto: and resolves to take such steps as its constitution requires to secure the approval of the (full name of Church) to the Basis of Union.

3. Should any one of the supreme Courts find that it cannot take such resolution of acceptance in general principle, subject to the right to propose amendment to detail, it shall refer the Draft Basis of Union back to the Union Committee of the three Churches, together with a statement on the matter of principle on which it desires alteration or further negotiation. In this case no further steps shall be taken by any of the Churches until a Televised Draft can be submitted to the supreme Courts on which a resolution on the lines given above can be taken by, all three supreme Courts.
4. Should the resolution given above be taken by all three supreme Court's, each supreme Court shall determine, in terms of its own constitution or of a decision taken at the time, the method it shall follow in submitting the Draft Basis of Union to the church, When any one of the supreme Courts takes the operative resolution, it shall also determine on the above steps on the assumption that

unanimity shall be reached, but its implementation of then shall be stayed until it is known that all three have adopted the resolution.

5. When it has determined in terms of its own constitution or decision, the subordinate Courts, committees, or meetings to which the Draft Basis of Union shall be sent for ratification, the following shall be the procedure.
6. The Draft Basis of Union shall be sent down, together with all supplementary documents, and with such comments, instructions, or explanations as the supreme Court may see fit to add.
7. Each subordinate body to which it is sent down shall be invited to make affirmation in terms of the resolution taken by the supreme Court, and thereafter to examine the Draft Basis of Union in detail, and either to adopt a resolution accepting the Draft Basis of Union as it stands, or to propose specific amendments.
8. Provision shall be made by each Church for such resolutions and amendments to be returned in time for them to be considered by the Supreme Court at its meeting in 1965. The Tsonga Presbyterian Church shall be requested to make provision for such consideration, either by an additional meeting of Synod in 1965, or by empowering the Synodical Commission to deal with the matter in that year.
9. All proposed amendments from any source in each Church shall be forwarded to the Clerk of the supreme Court of the Church concerned, who shall at once forward a copy to the secretary of the Union Committee for information.
10. The Supreme Court of each Church shall consider the returns on the Draft Basis of Union at its meeting 1965. and shall determine, in terms of its constitution, which of such amendments shall be forwarded to the Union Committee for further consideration and negotiation. Amendments may include addenda to the Draft Basis of Union.

11. It shall be the duty of the Union Committee, in consultation with the executive bodies of the supreme Court of each Church, to secure agreement on proposed amendments, so that a final Draft Basis of Union may be presented to the supreme Court of each Church by its meeting in 1966.
12. When Agreement shall have been reached on the Draft Basis of Union in detail, the supreme Court of each Church shall proceed to a formal resolution adopting the Draft Basis of Union, and shall proceed to appoint its Commissioners to the Standing Commission as provided in the Draft Basis of Union (unpublished minutes of the Committee on Negotiations, 1963).

APPENDIX II (1959)

Suggested scheme for the re-allocation of Presbyteries in the Bantu Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa:

PRESBYTERIES		COMPOSITION		CHARGES OR STATIONS				LANGUAGE	
NO	NAME	PC OF SA	B P C	P	C	S	A	BPC	TOTAL
				E		A	C & I		
1	Cape Western	Cape Presbytery	Cape Town & Worcester	12	1	1		2	16
2	Cape Eastern	P E Presbytery	Remainder of Cape Midlands & W P + Adelaide	8	4	1		5	18
3	Border	King Presbytery less Umtata	Ciskei Presbytery less Adelaide	8	2	1		9	20
4	Transkei	-	Transkei Pres.	-	-	-		14	14
5	Umtata	Umtata	Umtata Pres.	1	-	-		7	8
6	E Griqualand	Kokstad	E Griqualand & Matatiele Pres.	1	-	-		10	11
7	Natal South	Howick & Southwards	Impendle, Impolweni & Southwards	10	1	1		6	18
8	Natal North	Ladysmith & Northwards	Jokweni Estcourt & Northwards	4	-	-		7	11
9	Orange River	O R Presbytery	-	6	7	-		-	13
10	Transvaal S	Tvl Presbytery less Pietersburg & Far North	Rustenburg East Rand & Western	24	10	-		3	37
11	Transvaal N	Pietersburg & Far North	Remainder of Tvl Presbytery	1	2	-		7	10
12	Rhodesia	Rhodesia Presbytery	-	7	3	-		-	10
			TOTALS	82	30	4		70	186

Note: Possible division of Transvaal South into South East (Johannesburg, Vereeniging, and West Rand) and South West (Pretoria and East Rand)

* **E** = **EUROPEAN**
 A = **AFRICAN**
 C & I = **COLOURED & INDIAN**

(see unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1959)

APPENDIX III

THE SYNOD (1964)

SECTION 1 - CONSTITUTION

1. The Synod is the court of the Church immediately superior to the Presbytery.
2. A Synod is formed by the General Assembly, which fixes its name and specifies the Presbyteries, not being less than three, which are to come within its province.
3. The General Assembly fixes the time and place of the first meeting of a Synod, and appoints a Minister within its bounds to constitute such meeting.
4. The members of a Synod are:-
 - (1) All persons, both Minister and Elders, who are on the rolls of the several Presbyteries within its bounds, and
 - (2) such Ministers and Elders, as may have been duly appointed and commissioned as members by contiguous Synods.
5. The General Assembly may add to a Synod any Ministers or Elders, or both, from other Synods as assessors for specified purposes, and for such purposes and for the term of their appointment such assessors have all rights and privileges of members of such Synod.
6. The commission from a Kirk Session, which constitutes an Elder a member of Presbytery, also constitutes him a member of Synod during the period for which his commission is valid, but no Elder may take his seat in Synod, unless the Clerk of Presbytery has certified to the Clerk of Synod that his name has been placed on the Roll of Presbytery, or his commission in proper form, showing that he has been duly elected to represent the Kirk Session on the Presbytery and on the Synod, has been produced to and sustained by the Synod. A commission must therefore show that the Elder has been elected to represent the Kirk Session both on the Presbytery and on the Synod.
7. It is the duty of clerks of Presbyteries to send to the clerk of their Synod, not later than three months after the close of the last preceding meeting of the General Assembly, a list of the names and addresses of Elders, whose commissions have been received and sustained by their respective Presbyteries; and to advise the clerk of their Synod without delay of any changes in the personnel of representative Elders, which may subsequently occur. A synod may call for the production of the commission of any Elder, if it sees cause.
8. A Synod may receive and sustain the commission of a representative Elder from a Kirk Session, or of a member from a contiguous Synod, at any of its meetings, whether such meeting be ordinary, or adjourned, or in hunc effectum, or pro re nata.

9. A synod is entitled to appoint not more than one Minister and one Elder as members to each of its contiguous Synods. Such members must be Ministers and Elders within the bounds of the Synod approving them; they must be furnished by their Synod with commissions in due form, which upon being presented to and sustained by the Synod to which they are commissioned, constitute them members of such Synod for the period to which their commissions extend; and they must report their diligence on the commissions to their own Synod.
10. A Synod may associate with itself in its deliberations, pro tempore, any Minister or Elder of the Church, who may be present at its meeting, and any Minister or Elder so associated may speak, but may not vote, on any question before the court.
11. At its first constituted meeting, and thereafter at its first ordinary meeting after the last previous meeting of the General Assembly, the first business of a Synod must be (a) to examine and adjust its roll of members, and then, (b) to induct from among its members a Moderator to preside over its meetings and to discharge such other duties as may be assigned to him either by these rules or by the Synod.

The duties of the moderator are, to constitute and conclude each meeting with prayer; to preserve the order; to take the vote; to announce decisions; to instruct the parties at the bar; to administer rebukes and admonitions; to call on members to state their views, or to discharge any function which may have been assigned to them; to see that business done has been duly recorded; to sign the minutes; and in general to speak and act officially in the name of the Synod according as it authorises.

12. At the ordinary meeting of Synod next before General Assembly, there shall be appointed a Moderator Designate of Synod for the ensuing year.
13. A member of Synod is not ineligible for election as Moderator merely on the grounds that he has already occupied that office.
14. During his term of office the Synod may appoint its Moderator to visit various charges within its bounds with a view to giving them advice and/or stimulating their interest in the life and work of the Church. He must report his diligence in that regard to Synod.
15. A Synod shall appoint one or more clerks, one of whom shall be Senior clerk, to take its minutes, to keep its records, and to perform such other duties as it may assign.
16. A Synod is entitled to assess the congregations within its bounds for the funds necessary for it to carry out its duties, such assessment to be based on annual income of the congregation.

17. A Synod appoints a treasurer to take charge of its funds and to report to it thereon when required, and one or more auditors to audit such funds and report thereon.

SECTION 11 - FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES

18. A Synod cannot legislate, but it can handle, order, and redress all things omitted or done amiss in the courts below it, which come regularly before it, that is to say, which are brought up by such courts or by parties, or which appear in Presbytery records.
19. Subject to the provisions of the preceding paragraph, a Synod has authority to deal with the following matters:-
 - (1) The general supervision and promotion of the life and work of the Church within its bounds.
 - (2) The supervision of Presbytery records, but this power to supervise does not entitle a Synod to re-open any matter which has become final or to require the production of any other papers for examination in that connection; it does, however, entitle the Synod to censure the proceedings recorded.
 - (3) The visitation of congregations by Presbyteries:
It is the duty of the Presbytery to report on the results of all such visitations within its bounds to the Synod. If the Presbytery finds itself unable to report satisfaction with the state of a congregation, it may, if it see fit, withhold its report for a period not exceeding one year, in order that it may itself by renewed visitation remedy the situation. At the end of this period, if it is still unable to report satisfaction, it must report on the whole situation to Synod. It is the duty of Synod whenever a Presbytery reports dissatisfaction, to appoint a Commission of Synod (a) to make further enquiry in consultation with Presbytery, and (b) to take such steps as it deems necessary to remedy the situation, and (c) to report back to Synod.
 - (4) Care of the Schemes of the Church:
The Synod exercises the supervision over Presbyteries in regard to the maintenance of the Schemes of the Church, and Presbyteries are required to report to Synod their diligence in stimulating support of such Schemes within their respective bounds.
 - (5) The Synod has jurisdiction to adjudicate on matters affecting delimitation of areas within its province, which are brought before it by motion, complaint or petition and its judgement is final, but it cannot by its judgement alter its own bounds.
 - (6) Appeals and Complaints:
The synod may hear and dispose of appeals and complaints brought before it from Presbyteries, subject to the right of appeal to the General Assembly against its decision in cases involving doctrine, or worship, or censure of a Minister or Elder.
 - (7) Change in method of administering the financial affairs of congregations:

The Synod has authority to dispose of all cases in which congregations within its province desire to change the method of administering their financial affairs, provided that where grants are being received or sought from Assembly Committees, no actions shall be taken without the approval of such Committees, and provided further that no action shall be taken until legal advice has been obtained that the proposed change is not in conflict with the trust deeds or other legally binding documents of the congregations concerned.

- (8) Appointments to Standing Committees of the General Assembly.
The Synod makes such appointments to the standing committees of the General Assembly as that court may provide for in its standing orders.
- (9) Activities of Assembly Committees:
The synod is entitled to receive at its ordinary meetings reports from Assembly Committees on their activities within its province. To that end it may invite the convenors or other members of such Committees to attend its meetings, and to report to it on their activities within its bounds, and it may make to such Committees such recommendations as it may deem fit.
- (10) Transmission of Overtures:
The Synod transmits to the General Assembly all overtures, whether originating in itself or transmitted to it from or through Presbyteries.
- (11) Presbytery Records:
The Synod calls for Presbytery records at such times as it may fix for examination and attestation, and for such action thereon as it may deem expedient. The attestation of Presbytery records must be signed by the Moderator and Senior Clerk of Synod.
- (12) Assembly Review
The Synod must submit its records to every meeting of the General Assembly for examination and attestation.
- (13) Report to Assembly:
The Synod shall report to each ordinary meeting of General Assembly on the following matters:-
 - (a) the name of its Moderator;
 - (b) the time and place of its ordinary meeting(s);
 - (c) changes in the ministry within its province during the period under report;
 - (d) the establishment, reduction and/or dissolution of charges within its bounds during the period under report;
 - (e) the creation of new charges within its bounds, either by establishment, or by the union or amalgamation of existing charges;
 - (f) any matter arising in any of its Presbyteries, which requires to be dealt with by General Assembly;
 - (g) references of cases to the General Assembly for advice or judgement, and appeals against decisions of the Synod in matters in which the Synod is not the final court of appeal;
 - (h) the names of Licentiates, Ministers without charge, and Ministers from other Churches, who have been received by any of its Presbyteries during the period under report under any law of the Church, and

- (i) any other matters upon which the General Assembly directs it to report.

No other matters than those above specified shall be dealt with in the Synod's report.

- 20. A Synod has the right to call upon its Presbyteries to report to it on any matters, upon which it is required by these rules or otherwise to report to the General Assembly.
- 21. It is the duty of the Senior Clerk of Synod to forward its report to the Clerk of General Assembly at least six weeks before the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly.
- 22. If a Synod desires to bring before the General Assembly any matters not covered by its report, it does so by overture or petition.
- 23. No Presbytery within the province of a Synod has access to the General Assembly except through its Synod, provided that a Presbytery can submit direct to the General Assembly its commissions appointing its representatives to be members of that court, and its returns of Assembly remits.

SECTION 111 - MEETINGS AND PROCEDURE

- 24. An ordinary meeting of the Synod is held either by direction of the General Assembly or by appointment of the last preceding ordinary meeting of the Synod.
- 25. A Synod shall hold an ordinary meeting at least once annually not later than 31st Many in each year.
- 26. A Synod may meet in hunc effectum, and the rules governing such a meeting are the same as those applicable to Presbyteries.
- 27. The Moderator of a Synod may, either on his own authority or on a requisition from at least a quorum of Synod, convene a meeting pro re nata to deal with any business which has arisen and which appears to call for immediate decision.
- 28. At a pro re nata meeting of Synod the first business is to approve or disapprove of the action of the Moderator in convening the meeting. If this action is disapproved no further business can be transacted at the meeting. If his action is approved no other business than that for which he convened the meeting can be transacted.
- 29. If the Moderator has ceased to be a member of the Synod, his duties and responsibilities in convening a pro re hata meeting devolve upon the Senior Clerk.

30. If the Moderator, or Senior Clerk, refuses to convey a pro re nata meeting after receiving a requisition in proper form to do so the whole circumstances of the matter must be brought before the Synod at its next ordinary meeting for its judgement.
31. Fourteen days' notice must be given by the Senior Clerk of all meetings of the Synod, to all its members, and in the case of meetings in hunc effectum and pro re nata the business to be transacted must be stated in the notice.
32. A quorum of the Synod consists of at least five members, representing at least two Presbyteries, at least three of which members must be Ministers.
33. A quorum being present, the Moderator constitutes the meeting with prayer and failing him, an ex-Moderator or the senior Minister present constitutes the meeting.
34. The Synod is an open court and therefore it meets in public, but it may sit in private if it deems it necessary or expedient to do so.
35. Every session of a Synod shall be opened and closed with prayer.
36. A Synod may appoint such committees as it may deem necessary to deal with and to report upon matters within its jurisdiction, including a Business Committee to submit recommendations regarding the arrangement of its agenda and the method of disposing of matters to be brought before it.
37. The Synod appoints a Record's Committee to examine and report upon the records of Presbyteries within its province. The Synod prepares and submits to the next ordinary meeting of the General Assembly a return showing its findings on its examination of presbyterial records, and on the visitation of congregations by Presbyteries within their respective bounds.
38. Any business proposed to be brought before a meeting of Synod, including notice of proposed overtures, must be intimated to the Clerk at least three weeks before the date of the meeting; and the text of any overtures of which notice is given must appear on the notice calling the meeting. All documents and papers, in connection with any business to be laid before Synod, but be in the hands of the Clerk at least ten days before the date of the meeting.
39. A Synod is responsible to the General Assembly for the keeping of its records, which must be sent up to that court for examination and attestation at each ordinary meeting of the General Assembly, and which must be in the hands of the Clerk of General Assembly not later than the first day on which that court sits in its ordinary meeting.

SYNOD BOUNDS:

After full discussion of various alternative proposals put forward by the sub-committee, it was agreed to recommend to the uniting churches that the bounds of Synods in the United Church should be as follows:

In the light of the draft rule as to the number of Presbyteries in each Synod, certain possible sub-division of Presbyteries are indicated, but the union committee has not considered Presbyterian bounds in detail, and consequently these should be regarded as an indication of possible administrative bounds rather than as definite proposals. The only definite proposal at this stage is Synod bounds.

1. Synod of Rhodesia

to consist probably of three Presbyteries, centred in Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Lusaka.

2. Synod of Transvaal and Orange River

to consist probably of five Presbyteries, the four envisaged in discussion with the Tsonga Church (vide B.B. 1960 pp 34-5) namely Johannesburg, Pretoria, Zoutpansberg, and Selati, and the Presbytery of Orange River.

3. Synod of Natal and Transkei

to consist of the BPC Presbyteries in the Transkei, all PCSA work in the Transkei, plus all the work of both churches in Natal. The number of Presbyteries is at present uncertain since both amalgamation and sub-division of Presbytery bounds may be necessary in this area.

4. Synod of the Cape

to consist of three or four Presbyteries, covering BPC work in the Ciskei and Eastern and Western Cape and the PCSA Presbyteries of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Kingwilliamstown. It is possible the same re-arrangement of Presbytery bounds may be desirable in the Eastern Cape, resulting in three Presbyteries in that area.

For the information of Assembly, the main factor in determining Synod bounds is the allocation of existing work in the PCSA Orange River Presbytery. The BPC has no work in this area, and it therefore cannot of itself constitute a Synod. Rhodesia is an obvious geographical and social unit; and as noted in the Tsonga Church discussions the Transvaal is capable of constituting a Synod of itself. The Orange River must either go with the Transvaal, or with one of the coastal Synods. Various possibilities were examined. To join Orange River with the Cape Town and Port Elizabeth Presbytery areas would result in a geographically unmanageable area with no central meeting place and relatively poor communications. To join Orange River with the Port Elizabeth and Ciskei areas would isolate the Western Cape, which could neither from a Synod on its own or readily link with any other. To combine all these areas in one Synod would give an even more unmanageable unit than the first proposal. It would be possible to combine Orange River with Natal and to create a separate synod of the Transkei. The BPC representatives felt that an almost entirely African Synod would not be in the best interests of the United Church and from the

point of view of the very small units of the PCSA in the Transkei it would be equally unsatisfactory. In addition to these negative factors, there is the positive factor that the Orange River probably has better communications to the Transvaal, and is socially and commercially more closely connected with it, than with any other area. The suggested Synod bounds will also provide a better balance of Presbyteries, and of numerical strength and resources in the United Church than any other. (**see minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations 1963**)

APPENDIX IV (1972)

Rev. E.F. Mashava, Letter published in the Leader of January 1973

Let me start by borrowing the words of the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa in his circular letter no. 40/72 Min addressed to all ministers of the said Church. In the last paragraph of his letter he says: "what we in the PCSA are surely called to do is to search our hearts before God and to ask ourselves what it may be in us or about us which evidently makes it difficult for our brethren of the BPC to move into a new United Presbyterian Church with us. Such heart-searching, accompanied by intent listening to what our BPC friends are saying, might well under God, lead to painful but healthy discoveries which may be indispensable the prerequisite to the unity in Christ which we seek."

Secondly may I borrow the dangerous weapon of generalisation, which I think I need at this time of heart-searching.

Thirdly, as indicated above, this is a personal opinion, neither answering for the BPC nor the whole African People. But I am bringing this little contribution as an African person and Christian interested in the Unity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Hesitations

Definitely, there are hesitations, doubts and fears which lead to this reluctance on the part of the Black people towards this union which involves Black and White South Africans.

Leaving aside the fact that the Church came to South Africa unintentionally divided, although this fact of history should not be brushed aside too easily, we shall proceed to highlight some of the aspects which cause this reluctance towards union on the side of the Black people in this Country.

It will be noted also that the PCSA is predominantly white, the BPC 100% black.

Afraid

May we emphatically say that the Black people are afraid of the White people because the White people want to boss everywhere. This comes from the fact that the White man is the one who has brought Western civilization and Christianity to the Black man. Thus the White man feels that he is superior. Down through the centuries that the white man has been in contact with the black man, the White man has always felt, assumed and even adopted a superior position in all his dealings with the Black man.

To this date the attitude is still the same even after centuries of educating, civilizing and Christianizing the Black man. Jesus said : No pupil is greater than his teacher. But every pupil, when he has completed his training, will be like his teacher." This has not yet come in this country between White and Black in their Christian teaching.

When it comes to leadership, the White man feels and believes that he is the only one who can lead efficiently. This fact was sufficiently illustrated by some hot hours of Negotiation debates, that the African members who refuse union are those who are leaders in their small churches and they are afraid that when union comes, they will be nowhere. Why should they be nowhere? We ask! And when we answer, we say to ourselves: Because the White *man* will never allow himself to be led by the Black man.

RECEIVING

Another difficulty which is also *in* the consolidated mentality of the White man in this country and which regrettably has conditioned the mind of the Black man, is that an African is and Must remain on the receiving end in all his dealings with the White man. This mentality has grown also from the fact that the White man has brought Western civilization and Christianity, has brought technology, Economics and all the know-how.

In short the White man has brought light into the dark continent. This mentality is not only dangerous but makes our Christian relationship to be non reciprocal. Our discussions are usually non-dialogue. The relationship between Black and White in -this country is a one way traffic kind of relationship and this kind of relationship is unchristian. It is the White man who always has the right to baptize the Black man but never a Black man to baptize a White man. It is the White man who can and must always preach to the Black congregation and be interpreted but never a Black man to preach to the White congregation and be interpreted, although this may not be necessary on the part of the Black man because the Black man can learn three languages at the same time! It is the White man who can receive and accommodate the Black man in his house but never a Black man to receive and accommodate a White man in his house.

It is the White man who is to give orders and instructions to the Black man. It is the White man who is to earn the higher salary in the -same Church of Jesus Christ. I could go on, but I think this will be enough to illustrate this dangerous mentality of one way traffic kind of relationship and the mentality of perpetually placing an African on the receiving end. This is racism at its best!

RELUCTANT

Now the Black people who are reluctant to union, are constantly asking themselves such questions like this: Are these things and mentalities going to change in **the** United Church or is the White man still going to treat the Black man the way he has been doing down the centuries since his contact with the Black man in **the** Christian Church?

May I at this stage make it abundantly clear that I am speaking in and within the walls of the Christian Church which is said to be here to make us free from prejudices and bondages of all kinds. I say so because for some people I may appear to be mixing church and politics, but I don't apologize for that. We the Black people are very much aware of the position in which we are placed by the powers that be. And the powers that be happen to be White.

But the Church of Jesus Christ which brings Black and White together should be very much aware of these things which mar our Christian relationship. -

What perhaps is of relevance to us at this juncture, which should be made very clear is that what is done by White people to the Black people in the fields of industries, firms, factories and other businesses, is not very much absent in the Church of Jesus Christ, the very Church that Preaches brotherhood in Jesus Christ. The White man because of his education, knowledge, technology, money, skin pigmentation etc. feels that he is boss everywhere even in the Church of Jesus Christ.

FELLOW CHRISTIAN

We know that some Whites with whom we have to unite and form one church, only know an African as a garden boy or a kitchen girl or a washer woman, but never as a fellow Christian with whom he can sit under the same roof and worship the same God! Yes, who can sit with his slave at the same table! What is painful is that this kitchen girl or garden boy is the only one who is allowed into the premises of his/her boss, but never his or her child even if it is for a short time during the holidays.

I know that an answer to this will always be that there are certain things which the Church can do and other things which the church cannot do. But these things go on marring our relationships as Black and White Christians in the same Church.

TRAGIC

On the other hand, I would like to contradict myself at this stage, by saying that I am very much aware of the fact that it is equally tragic for the Church of Jesus Christ, in this country, to fail to achieve organic unity which our Lord has, for so long wished that it should have taken place. I say it would be tragic because it would be considered victory for the proponents of segregation and separation. But it is equally true that the position of the Black man in this country today is very precarious and very much a vicious circle.

The Black man has come to a stage where he is perplexed as to which is the lesser evil of the two: Unity or Separation (Division). Nevertheless, the Black man, through reading the Scriptures, has come to understand that he has his own dignity and freedom which have been given to him by God. He would like to be treated as such, especially in the Church of Jesus Christ. Is the United Church promising a room for such treatment?

PAINFUL

It is very painful indeed that our venture for union comes at a very dangerous time, the time when Black and White are being legally divided and separated. May be our

hope lies in the fact that Whites are not being divided and separated. Worse still Black and Black are being divided and separated. From without, we must take cognisance that our venture for union is up against a very strong current.

South Africa as we know it, is a land that emphasizes things that divide people more than things that unite them. We know that by nature man is a divided being, and why for goodness' sake emphasize the very things that are there to divide us. In South Africa we tend to emphasize such things as Pigmentation, Culture and Language. There is nothing wrong with these things, but there is definitely something wrong if we start making them the foundation of our Christian relationship and brotherhood.

SIGNIFICANT

I am aware of the fact that I am now speaking of things which some will consider as being outside the jurisdiction of the church in this country. But I also will maintain that these are the very things which sometimes play a very significant role in our relationship in the church.

And this is what an honest African would not like to see in the United Church. He would not like to be bullied and bossed, around in the Church as he is so treated every day in the other spheres of his existence in this country. The Black man thinks that the White man he is meeting in the other spheres of his daily activities will be the same man he will meet in the United church.

Is the White man prepared to share all that he has, education, knowledge, technology, money and all the know-how with the Black man instead of making these things to enslave the Black man? Is the White man prepared to pick up the Black man where he is and bring him to where the White man is if the Black man is not acceptable as he is?

Can these help in the search of hearts as mentioned by the General Secretary of P.C.S.A. on their side? I valued his statement very much. I know that all the things mentioned in this paper are not new but are they not worth reflecting at this stage? May be some of our White friends who will read them will say to themselves that these things are so minor that it does not call for much effort to squash them with one stroke of reasoning. Some will think I need more explanation as I show lack of knowledge in some of the things I have mentioned. May I say right away that I don't need any of those things. I was attempting to contribute to this new or not so new thought raised by the General Secretary of the P.C.S.A. The Heart-searching Reflection

1. The Black man is afraid of the White man in the United Church because the White man will boss him and bully him!
2. The White man has developed a superiority mentality, because he has brought everything to the Black man who lived in the dark Continent for many years!

3. Can the "pupil" be equal or like his teacher in the United Church?
4. What about the leadership In the United Church?
5. What about the mentality of placing the Black man on the receiving end in all his dealings with the White man?
6. Reciprocal Relationship or
One-way traffic kind of relationship!
7. Which is tragic at this stage in this country: To unite or to separate?
8. Do the Whites know the Blacks well enough to contemplate organic union with them or do they know him as a garden boy or kitchen maid only?
9. Is the White man in the United Church prepared to share with the Black man all his gifts and acquisitions like education, knowledge, technology, money etc.
10. Are our White friends sure and sincere that they can unite with the Black man in this country and accept him fully as brother and fellow Christian in the United Church?
11. How can a Black man be sure that the White man he is going to meet in the United Church will not treat him as he is being treated daily in all the other spheres of industry, firms, factory and other businesses? is this asking too much before union? But what can the poor Black man do in front of the big, powerful and rich White man??!!
12. The Black man is afraid of the White man because all powers are in his (Whiteman) hands in this country. Political Powers, Social Powers, Judicial Powers, Economic Powers, Financial Powers, Educational Powers, Military Powers and how less are the Religious Powers especially in the Christian Religion!! They that have power must search their hearts as well as those that have none!!
13. All these are for people who are in the Church of Jesus Christ!!

Revd E.F.C. Mashava,
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APPENDIX V

PROPOSED REVISED DRAFT BASIS OF UNION (1970)

Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa.
Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa.
Tsonga Presbyterian Church.

Preamble. The Churches proposing to unite do so in the belief that it is God's will for them: that such union of Churches holding the Christian Faith and practicing the Presbyterian Order in Southern Africa will be a strengthening of their witness to the "Word of God and also a material contribution to the cause of wider Church union in Africa and in the world.

The following is placed before the Churches by the Joint Committee negotiating union as a Draft Basis of Union (se note re. various amendments incorporated).

1. The Name of the Church shall be the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.
2. The Faith of the Church. The United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (hereinafter referred to as 'the Church') holds the Faith which the one holy catholic and apostolic has ever held in Jesus Christ, the redeemer of the world, in whom men are saved by grace through faith. In accordance with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the Church worships one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Church acknowledges the Word of God as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only final rule of faith and life.

The Church accepts the historic Creeds of the undivided Church, commonly called the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, as witnessing to and safeguarding the Faith which was first committed to the disciples of our Lord, and which is continually confirmed by the Holy Spirit in the experience of the Church.

Similarly the Church accepts, as witnessing to and safeguarding Faith, the following major Confessions of the Protestant Reformation: The Gallican Confession (Shorter Recension), the Scots confession, the Second Helvetic Confession, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism; and with these the Twenty-four Articles of the Faith of the Presbyterian Church of England (with the Appendix as amended by the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa).

The church affirms its right, subject the Word of God and in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, adopt, modify and interpret supplementary doctrinal statements; always in agreement with fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

The Church recognizes liberty of conscience on all points of doctrine which are not fundamental to the Faith; the Church nonetheless retaining the right in every case to judge what falls within this description.

3. The Polity of the Church. The Presbyterian form of Church government is held to be founded upon, and agreeable to, the Word of God. The polity of the Church shall be determined in all matters by a book to be styled 'The Manual of Practice and Procedure of the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa'. This Manual shall be the 'Book of Order' of the P.C.S.A. at the time of union, as amended by the Commission referred to in Section 5, in consultation with the Union negotiations Committee. (See Schedule A)

4. Status of congregations, ministers, elders and members.

(a) Congregations. All three Churches recognizes congregations which have full status, and congregation which do not. All congregations of each Church shall enjoy in the United Church the status which they held in their own Church prior to union, and their development and status thereafter shall be constitutionally determined in terms of the Manual of Practice and Procedure.

(b) Ministers and elders. In conformity with Presbyterian polity, the ruling authority of all ministers and elders is equal, and the teaching authority of all ministers is equal, under the Word of God. This shall apply in the United Church to all ministers and all the elders of the three uniting Churches. After union, the rights and duties of all shall be determined in terms of the Manual of Practice and Procedure. Within twelve months after the meeting of the uniting Assembly, the former Tsonga Presbyterian Church congregations will meet to elect and ordain elders to form Sessions.

(c) Members. All members of the uniting Churches shall have equal rights and obligations of membership in the United Church.

An official list of congregations, indicating their status, and of ministers and other full-time paid personnel in each Church, will be published by the Commission referred to in Section 5, in consultation with the Union Negotiations Committee, in time for the uniting Assembly.

5. The Government of the Church. The Church shall be governed by Courts at four levels; General Assembly, Synods, Presbyteries and the Sessions. In the management of the temporal affairs of congregations the church recognizes alternative forms: the Board of Management, the Consistory, the Deacons' Court, the Committee of Management. The detailed powers and duties of these Courts and Committees are not as set out in the Manual of Practice and Procedure.

The official language General Assembly shall be English, in which language its records shall be kept. Any member of Assembly shall have right to address Assembly in his own language and to have into English. Motions to be voted upon, shall be announced in whatever language may be requested.

Each Presbytery and Synod shall have the right to determine what shall be its official language, in which its business shall be conducted and its records kept. Presbytery and Synod proceeding shall be interpreted, if requested, into one other language.

The official list of congregations to be published by the Commission will also indicate the groupings of Presbyteries and Synods.

When the Supreme Court of each Church is in a position to resolve on Full acceptance of the Basis of Union, it shall at that time appoint twelve Commissioners whom it shall empower, acting jointly with those appointed by the other Churches, to make all final arrangements for the consummation of union in the name of Churches.

The negotiating committee for union shall call the First meeting of the Commission: the chairman of the negotiating committee shall preside and constitute, and the secretary of the negotiating committee shall act as clerk.

The first duty of the chairman shall be to conduct an election of chairman, and of secretary or secretaries, of the Commission, who shall thereupon take office.

The Commission shall draft regulations for its continued existence, and shall submit these for approval to the first General Assembly of the United Church.

The Commission shall have power to finalize all arrangements, shall receive reports on matters to be finalized from the Union Committee, and shall have the power to retain the Union Committee as an advisory body, and to discharge it when this seems appropriate. Inter alia, the Commission shall be charged with arranging that a meeting of the Supreme Court of each Church be held at the same time and in the same centre for the celebration of union; and shall also be charged with the selection of the first Moderator of the United church: it shall also for that year only, act as both Business Committee and Selection or Nominations Committee for the United Church, though it may delegate these functions to sub-committees appointed by it. the secretary of the Commission shall act as Clerk of the uniting Assembly until such time as a permanent appointment has been made by the Assembly.

The uniting General Assembly shall consist of all the members of the General Assemblies (and Synod) of each of the uniting Churches. The proposed Standing Orders of this Assembly shall be determined by the Commission referred to in this section, and thereafter approved by the United Assembly. In the year following, the General Assembly shall be composed of commissioners from Presbyteries in terms of the Manual of Practice and Procedure, the basis of representation being one minister and one elder for every three charges in each Presbytery. Where the number of charges is not divisible by three, another minister and elder shall be commissioned if the remainder is two charges, but not if it is one. Thereafter the basis of representation shall be as determined by General Assembly from time to time.

The duty of this Commission shall be to arrange, under authority of General Assembly, for the first meetings of all Presbyteries and Synods of the United Church. All Presbyteries shall be required to meet within three months of the uniting Assembly, and all Synods within six months of the uniting Assembly. The first

meetings of Presbyteries and Synods shall be summoned by the Commission in consultation with the former Presbytery officials in each Church. At each first meeting there shall be present at least two members of the Commission, appointed by the Commission on the authority of Assembly to constitute the Court. These two members shall at this first meeting act as Moderator and Clerk respectively. It shall be part of their duty, after constituting the Court, to ensure the election of a Moderator and Clerk, and before the Court adjourns, to induct the Moderator. Thereafter these Courts shall function in terms of the Manual of Practice and Procedure.

6. Relationship to other Churches. The United Church shall assume whatever relationships its constituent members may have had with other churches at the time of union, and shall thereafter determine and develop such relationships in terms of its own policy and decisions as a united Church. Note is taken in this connection of conversations with a view to union which may at that time exist between:-

The uniting Churches and the Church Unity Commission.
The B.P.C. and the Presbyterian Church of Africa
The T.P.C. and the Presbyterian Church in Mozambique.

In particular, it is affirmed that the continuance of special relations which have existed between some of the uniting Churches and other churches, will be welcomed, namely between serving the Church of Scotland and the B.P.C. and between the Protestant Churches of Switzerland and the T.P.C.

A statement on the future relationship between the Church of Scotland and the United Church forms Schedule B to the Draft basis.

A statement on the future relationship between the Protestant Churches of Switzerland and the United Church forms Schedule C to the Draft basis.

7. Employment of personnel. All ministers serving in congregations of the uniting Churches shall remain in the employment of the United Church in the congregations in which they were serving at the time of union. Their future employment by the Church shall thereafter be determined by the appropriate Courts in terms of the Manual of Practice and Procedure. For a period of five years from the date of the uniting Assembly this will include an alternative to the Call system, at the request of the T.P.C.

No stipends shall be reduced as a result of union, but shall remain at the level at which they were in the uniting Churches prior to union. It shall be the task of the appropriate committee of General Assembly of the United Church to establish minimum stipends in the shortest in the uniting Churches. Minimum stipends shall thereafter be determined by General Assembly from time to time.

The aim of the Church shall be to secure parity of minimum stipends for ministers of all races, in pursuance of which no increase shall be made to minimum stipends of European ministers without proportionately greater increases to minimum stipends of ministers of other races, until parity is reached. There shall be no difference in minimum stipends as between urban and rural areas, and any lands (glebes)

possessed by congregations and previously used by ministers shall be administered by the appropriate body controlling temporal affairs.

It shall be the aim of the Church that in time the same conditions and qualifications shall apply to all candidates for the ministry of all races. At the time of union the following conditions apply: African, Coloured and Indian candidates shall possess Senior Certificate or its equivalent, with the proviso that candidates with a lower qualification may be admitted in exceptional circumstances of recommended by Presbytery. European candidates shall have Matriculation. The minimum qualification for African, Coloured and Indian ministers shall be the Diploma, or its equivalent. The minimum qualification for European ministers shall be a degree with theological majors, or its equivalent.

All ministers trained at the Church's expense shall be required to serve a period of ten years in the Church, or to refund a portion of the money spent by the Church on their training in proportion to the part of ten years not served, provided that the Church shall have no claim against the estate of a minister who has died before the completion of ten years' service.

All administrative officials and lay employees of the three uniting Churches shall be retained at their present salaries by the United Church, but shall be at the discretion of the Standing Commission mentioned above to vary or modify their spheres of duty and responsibility in the interests of the United Church. Whenever any such administrative post falls vacant by death, retrial or transfer of the incumbent, the General Assembly shall determine whether such post shall be filled or abolished.

Personnel seconded to work in the United Church by the Church of Scotland and the Protestant Churches in Switzerland, and paid by them shall continue to be paid at the rates, and on the conditions, determined by these Churches, though this may be the subject of subsequent negotiations between the United Church and these Churches.

8. Property and investments.

This section of the Draft Basis will be sent down as soon as it is finalized by the legal advisers in whose hands it is at present.

9. The worship of the Church. The Church adheres in general to the traditional forms of Presbyterian worship. All congregations shall have the right to continue the forms of worship to which they have been accustomed prior to union. All Service Books, Hymnaries, and other literature used in worship which have been sanctioned for use in each of the three uniting Churches are sanctioned for use in the United Church. Such literature shall thereafter be authorized by the General Assembly as it may see fit.

10. Pension Funds. (a) With effect from the first day of January of the year the year following the date of the uniting Assembly, the Presbyterian Ministers' Pension Fund and Widows' and Orphans' Fund and the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa Pension, Widows' and Orphans' Fund shall be amalgamated; and the members of the Swiss Mission Africa Pension Fund and of any other pension fund of

the Tsonga Presbyterian Church who become ministers or evangelist of the United Church, shall be transferred to the amalgamated fund.

- (b) The scheme for amalgamation shall provide that the basic benefits for service before the date of amalgamation shall, for the members and pensioners of each fund, be based on the assets of that fund at that date.
- (c) Arrangements shall be made for the amalgamation of any provident fund for employees of the uniting Churches with the Presbyterian Staff Provident Fund and for the admission and transfer to that fund of other eligible employees.
- (d) Personnel seconded from the Church of Scotland and Protestant Churches in Switzerland for service in the United Church shall not be required to become members of the Pension Fund, but may do so if they wish in accordance with the rules of the Fund

11. Custody of Records. The records of the various Courts and Committees of the three uniting Churches at the time of union shall thereafter be deposited and held as follows:-

(a) Assembly Records. The records of Assembly of the B.P.C. and of the P.C.S.A. and of the Synod of the T.P.C. shall become the property of the General Assembly of the United Church, and shall be in the custody of the Senior Clerk of Assembly at the Central Office of the Church.

(b) Synod Records. The records of Synod from the time of their first meetings shall be in the custody of Synod Clerks.

(c) Presbytery Records. The minute books in current use in each Presbytery of each of the uniting Churches shall become part of the records of the Presbyteries of the United Church which are their successors, and shall be in the custody of the Presbytery Clerks. Where a Presbytery of one or other of the uniting Churches is divided between two or more Presbyteries in the United Church, the Standing Commission on constituting such Presbyteries of the United Church shall determine which Presbytery shall have custody of the records involved. Letters and other documents referring to the period covered by such minute books shall also be in the custody of the Presbytery Clerks concerned. All Presbytery records prior to those mentioned above all be housed for safe keeping with the General Assembly, and shall be in custody of the Senior Clerk of Assembly at the Central Office of the Church. Each Presbytery of the United Church, on being constituted, shall open a new Minute book. Thereafter, in respect of minute books retained at the time of the union and of all subsequent minute books of Presbyteries, when a new minute book is opened the previous minute book be retained in the custody of the Presbytery Clerk, but on the expiry of not more than five years the former minute book shall be forwarded by him to the Senior Clerk of General Assembly for safe keeping.

(d) Session and Congregation Records. The records of the Sessions and congregations and of their committees and agencies, in each of the three uniting Churches, shall remain the property of these congregations in the United Church, and shall be in the custody of the appropriate office bearers. It is desirable that old

records of Session and congregations be deposited with the Senior Clerk of Assembly for safe keeping.

(e) Records of Standing Committee. All records of Standing Committee of the Supreme Court in each of the three uniting Churches shall form part of the records of the Standing Committees of Assembly in the United Church which are their successors, and shall be in the custody of the convenors concerned. The same practice shall be followed with regard to Standing Committee which is discontinued at any time shall be lodged with the clerk of the Court which appointed it, or of its successor.

12. Church Organisation. (a) All congregational organisations and agencies existing in each of the three uniting Churches at the time of union shall be recognized as congregational organisation in the United Church.

(b) All organisation recognized on a church-wide basis by each of the three Uniting Churches (through central committees, conferences etc.) shall be so recognized by the United Church.

(c) Where such organisations have similar membership and objects, steps shall be taken for their amalgamation as follows. Within three months of the uniting Assembly the Standing Commission shall provide for the setting up of joint committees representative of the central authorities of such organisations, to prepare detailed proposals for their amalgamation of funds. Such joint committees shall, as soon as possible, present such proposals for the approval of the organisation in terms of their separate constitutions. As soon as such proposal shall have received the approval of the organisation concerned, the joint committees shall present them to the Standing Commission, which in turn shall present them to the General Assembly of approval. The organisations concerned shall then be amalgamated by resolution of General Assembly in terms of the proposal approved by Assembly.

The proposed means by which this Draft Basis of Union shall be presented to, and dealt with by, the General Assemblies and Synod of the three uniting Churches forms Schedule E to the Draft Basis of Union.

SCHEDULE A.

This Schedule is sets out alterations to the Book of order of P.C.S.A. in order that it may become the Manual of Practice and Procedure of the United Church. In view of the present revision of the Book of Order this schedule is not present Revision of the Book of Order, and consultation with the Committee on Revision if the Book of Order, and before the time of union, a revision of this schedule will be published.

SCHEDULE B.

This contains the statement of policy toward union by the Church of Scotland. It remains unchanged and is not reprinted in this draft. It will be included in the find draft sent down for approval.

SCHEDULE C.

This contains a similar statement of policy by the Protestant Churches in Switzerland, and the same applies as in B above.

SCHEDULE D.

This contained a specimen 'attenuated constitutions' of the three uniting Churches in connections with the holding of property. If this is still required by the present proposals, it will be circulated together with Section 8 of the Draft Basis of Union.

SCHEDULE E.

1. The supreme Court of each of the negotiating Churches shall send down the Revised Draft Basis of Union, together with all supplementary documents, and with such comments, instructions or explanations as each Supreme Court may see fit to add.
2. Each subordinate body to which it is sent down shall be invited to examine the Revised Draft Basis of Union in detail, and either to adopt a resolution accepting the Revised Draft Basis of Union as it stands, or to propose specific amendments.
3. Provision shall be made by each Church for such resolution and amendments to be returned in time for them to be considered by the Supreme Court at its meeting in 1969. (Note: This has been done. The present procedure in the P.C.S.A. is an additional consultation of Presbyteries, Sessions and congregations)
4. All proposed amendments from any sources in each Church shall be forwarded to the Clerk of the Supreme Court of the Church concerned, who shall at once forward a copy to the secretary of the Union Committee for information.
5. The Supreme Court of each Church shall consider the returns on the Revised Draft Basis of Union at its meeting in 1969, and shall determine, in terms of its constitution, which of such amendments shall be forwarded to the Union Committee for further consideration and negotiation. Amendments may include addenda to the Draft of Basis of Union. (Note: This has been done, and the amendments to be forwarded by our Assembly are those incorporated in this present draft.)
6. It shall be the duty of the Union Committee, in consultation with the executive body of the Supreme Court of each Church, to secure agreement of proposed amendments, so that a final Draft Basis Of Union may be presented to the Supreme Court of each Church at its meeting in 1970.
7. When the Final Draft Basis of Union has been presented to the Supreme Courts of each Church, each such Court shall take such steps as its present constitution may require to obtain the approval of the Church as a whole.

8. When agreement shall have been reached on the Final Draft Basis of Union in detail, the Supreme Court of each Church shall proceed to a formal resolution adopting the final Draft Basis of Union, and shall proceed to appoint its Commissioners to the Standing Commission as provided in the Final Draft of Union. **(see unpublished minutes of the Committee on Union Negotiations, 1970)**

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