THE IMPACT OF REFORMED MISSIONS ON THE ORIGIN, GROWTH AND IDENTITY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA (1905-2000)

JACOBUS VAN ZYL

Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch

Promotor: Prof. CM Pauw

March 2001
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 at any university for a degree.
ABSTRACT

Mission work was done consecutively by two Reformed missionary enterprises in Kenya and led to the establishment of the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA).

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC), which established congregations amongst South Africans who had come to Kenya from 1905 onwards, played an important role during the phase of church-planting: initially through a spontaneous congregational outreach towards the local people of western Kenya during the 1930s and subsequently through formal missionary action which began with the calling of BB Eybers as a full-time missionary in 1944. Thus the foundations were laid for the establishment of what is today the RCEA. Before Eybers left in 1960 three congregations had come into existence under the auspices of the DRC. The second phase of the missionary endeavour began in 1961 with an agreement between the DRC and the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands (RML) whereby the latter was asked to continue the work started by the DRC.

The Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) was formally instituted in 1963. Despite almost a century of activities, a thorough investigation of the history of the founding of this Church has not yet been done. Due to the fact that information regarding this topic has been widely dispersed to different parts of the world, and that it was written in several languages, there is a real danger that such information may be lost or become irretrievable.

Considering this situation, the aim of the study was to investigate the history of the RCEA and to determine the influence of the two missionary enterprises on the current identity of the RCEA. The mission's objectives, policies and methods implemented by the South African DRC until 1961 were compared to the objectives, policies and methods used by the Netherlands RML as from 1961 until the present day. The study then attempted to determine what effect these two enterprises with their respective and varying emphases had on the formation and development of the RCEA. An identity analysis of the RCEA was undertaken to determine the influence of the two missionary enterprises on the current identity of the RCEA. In various respects this identity reflects the influence of the DRC in South Africa and the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands on the RCEA.
It appears that the impact of the Missions is evident in a variety of aspects of the church life of the RCEA. The ecclesiastical model introduced by the DRC and continued by the RML remained dominant in the RCEA. The fundamentals of Reformed theology (sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide), the church concept (proclamational), the style of communication, the worship and the liturgy reflect the lasting influence of both missions on the RCEA.

The findings were evaluated from a critical missiological perspective to indicate what the effect of the dual involvement of the two Missions was on the RCEA. Still, the RCEA is no carbon copy of either of these missionary enterprises. The identity of the RCEA developed within the culture and context of the people of Kenya amongst whom it was established and, as such, formed a Church unique in its own right.
OPSOMMING

Die ontstaan van 'n inheemse gereformeerde kerk op die ewenaar, die Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), was die gevolg van sendingwerk wat opeenvolgend deur twee gereformeerde sendinge in Kenia gedoen is.

Die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika (Ned. Geref. Kerk), wat sedert die begin van die twintigste eeu gemeentes onder Suid-Afrikaners gevestig het, het 'n belangrike rol gespeel gedurende die kerkplantingsfase. Dit het aanvanklik plaasgevind deur 'n spontane gemeentelike uitreik-aksie na die plaaslike bevolking in Wes Kenia gedurende die 1930s. Dit is voortgesit deur formele sendingwerk wat in 1944 begin het toe BB Eybers as voltydse sendeling beroep is. Gedurende Eybers se dienstyd is die grondslag gele Vir die kerk wat vandag bekend staan as die Reformed Church of East Africa. Voordat Eybers in 1960 weg is, het drie gemeentes onder die toesig van die Ned. Geref. Kerk ontstaan.

Die tweede fase van die sendingaksie het in 1961 met 'n ooreenkoms tussen die Ned. Geref. Kerk en die Gereformeerde Zendingsbond in Nederland (GZB) waartydens laasgenoemde gevra is om die werk oor te neem. Die Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) het in 1963 tot stand gekom. Alhoewel die vroeë geskiedenis van die RCEA byna 'n eeu gelede begin het, is 'n deeglike onderzoek aangaande die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van die kerk nog nie gedoen nie. Weens die feit dat inligting oor hierdie onderwerp oor verskillende dele van die wêreld verspreid is, en in verskillende tale geskryf is, bestaan die gevaar dat hierdie inligting verlore kan raak.

In die lig hiervan was die doel van die studie om die geskiedenis van die RCEA na te gaan en te bepaal watter invloed die twee sendingaksies op die huidige identiteit van die RCEA gehad het. Die sendingdoelstellings, -beleid en -metodes van die Ned. Geref. Kerk tot in 1961 word vergelyk met die doelstellings, beleid en metodes van die GZB vanaf 1961 tot en met 2000. Die studie probeer bepaal watter effek die twee sendingaksies met hul onderskeie aksente op die ontstaan en ontwikkeling van die RCEA, gehad het. Die bevindinge is geevalueer vanuit 'n kritiese missiologiese perspektief. Dit was nodig om 'n identiteitsanalise van die RCEA te doen ten einde die invloed van beide die Ned. Geref. Kerk in Suid-Afrika en die Gereformeerde Zendingsbond in Nederland op die
kerk te bepaal.

Die navorsing het getoon dat die impak van die twee sendingaksies die identiteit van die RCEA inderdaad in 'n groot mate bepaal het. Die ekklesiologiese model wat eie is aan die Ned. Geref. Kerk en deur die GZB voortgesit is, is ook kenmerkend van die identiteit van die RCEA vandag. Die grondslae van die Reformasie (sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide), die kerkbegrip (verkondigingsmodel), die kommunikasiestyl, die erediens en die liturgie weerspieël die voortgaande invloed van beide sendingaksies op die RCEA.

Hierdie bevindige is geevalueer vanuit 'n krities-missiologiese perspektief om aan te toon wat die effek van die invloed van die sendingaksies op die RCEA was. Nogtans is die RCEA nie 'n blote deurslag kopie van een of beide van hierdie sendingaksies nie. Die identiteit van die RCEA het ontwikkeld binne die kultuur en konteks van die mense van Kenia onder wie dit gevestig is. Sodoende het 'n Kerk met 'n eiesoortige karakter ontstaan.
FOREWORD

It is with much gratitude that the results of this study are hereby presented. It would be impossible to mention every single body or individual who at some stage or other had rendered assistance. Still, a few instances should be singled out.

In the first place, to my promotor, prof. CM Pauw sincere thanks is due for patience, help and guidance rendered, particularly as this involved communicating over long distances. Likewise acknowledgement is due to my co-promotor, prof. P Coertzen, for his valuable input in finalising this work.

Acknowledgement is also due to the Synod of the Reformed Church of East Africa, to the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands and to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa for permission to consult a wide variety of documentary materials housed in the Archives of the Reformed Church of East Africa in Eldoret, the Staatsarchief in Utrecht and the Staatsargief in Cape Town.

I also thank the four congregations, Bredasdorp, Mossel Bay, Rondebosch and Suider-Strand for seconding me and my family to serve the Lord in East Africa for five years.

Finally I thank my heavenly Father for enabling me to complete this study. It is sincerely hoped that this work will be of value to the study of the Church in Africa.

Eldoret, Kenya
June 2000
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration i
Abstract ii
Opsomming iv
Foreword vi
Table of Contents vii
List of Abreviations xix

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1. Motivation for study 1
2. Aim of study 2
3. Delimitation of area of research 3
4. Nature of research 4
5. Hypothesis 5
6. Motivation and purpose of the research project 5
7. Research procedures and methodology 6
8. Value of research 8
9. Proposed layout of thesis 8
# CHAPTER TWO

## INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF KENYA

1. Early history of East Africa
   1.1 Early visitors to East Africa
      1.1.1 Islam
      1.1.2 The Portuguese
   1.2 The scramble for East Africa
   1.3 Slave trade in East Africa

2. Geographical review of Kenya

3. The people of Kenya

4. Economical development of Kenya

5. Constitutional development in Kenya

6. Christian missions in Kenya
   6.1 The Portuguese and the spreading of the Gospel
   6.2 The first protestant missionary to East Africa
   6.3 Other Protestant missions
   6.4 The Roman Catholic missions
   6.5 Cooperation between missions and churches
   6.6 From mission to church
CHAPTER THREE

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION IN KENYA

Introduction 31

1. Brief historical survey of the Dutch Reformed Church mission enterprise 33

1.1 Early beginnings 33

1.2 Private initiative 34

1.3 Missionary societies 35

1.4 The Synod of 1824 and mission work 36

1.5 The Mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church 37

1.5.1 Initial mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church 37

1.5.2 The Mission policy of 1935 38

1.5.3 The founding of separate mission congregations by the DRC 41

1.5.4 The Mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church and apartheid 42

2. South Africans prepare to leave for East Africa (1902-1908) 44

2.1 Anglo-Boer relations during the 1800s 44

2.2 Reasons for leaving 46

2.2.1 Political motives 46

2.2.2 Invitation from East African Governments 47

2.2.3 Agricultural purposes 47

2.3 South African settlers to East Africa 48

2.4 The spiritual needs of the South Africans in East Africa 49

3. The Dutch Reformed Church in Kenya since 1905 50

3.1 Dutch Reformed congregations in East Africa 50
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1</td>
<td>The Meru congregation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2</td>
<td>The Vergenoeg congregation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.1</td>
<td>The founding of the &quot;Vergenoeg&quot; congregation</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.2</td>
<td>Progress through difficulties</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.3</td>
<td>The first minister of Vergenoeg arrives</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.4</td>
<td>Vergenoeg and oecumene</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.5</td>
<td>Vergenoeg and ecclesiastical ties</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2.6</td>
<td>The Vergenoeg congregation ceases to exist</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3</td>
<td>The Loubser congregation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4</td>
<td>The Nairobi congregation</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Other South African Reformed Churches in Kenya</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>The Reformed Church in South Africa</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2</td>
<td>The Dutch Reformed Church of Africa</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>The Dutch Reformed Church and the Mau-Mau</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>The Dutch Reformed Church and the African people</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>A &quot;whites only&quot; Church</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Misconceptions within the RCEA on the DRC in Kenya</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>The Dutch Reformed Church and East African politics</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>DRC Mission activities in Kenya before 1944</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Dutch Reformed ministers and mission work</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>The contribution of Rev. MP Loubser</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2</td>
<td>The contribution of other DRC ministers between 1908-1944</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>The South African farmers and mission work</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>The first steps</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 The first service
4.2.3 The first church building
4.2.4 The initial enthusiasm fades
4.3 The need for a full-time missionary
4.3.1 Missions on the agenda of the Vergenoeg congregation
4.3.2 A missionary called
5. The period of formal mission action (1944-1961)
5.1 Rev. BB Eybers and the Mission
5.1.1 Background and education
5.1.2 The missionaries arrive
5.1.3 BB Eybers inducted at Broederstroom
5.1.4 The initial Mission policy
5.1.5 Evaluating the new field
5.1.6 Kiswahili as medium of communication
5.1.7 Printed literature in Kiswahili
5.1.8 Training
5.2 The Bwana Loubser Mission
5.2.1 Relationship with other churches and missions
5.2.2 Bwana Loubser Mission and medical work
5.2.3 The initial stages of a Women's League
5.2.4 The Mission policy during the 1950s
5.2.5 Bwana Loubser Mission and Reformed doctrine
5.2.6 Financial support of Bwana Loubser Mission
5.2.6.1 The early years
### CHAPTER FOUR

**THE REFORMED MISSION LEAGUE IN KENYA**

1. **The Reformed Mission League and its mission enterprise**
   1.1 Historical survey of the Netherlands Reformed Church Mission enterprise (1602-1901)
   1.2 The founding of the Reformed Mission League
   1.3 The Reformed Mission League and the Netherlands Reformed Church Constitution of 1951
   1.4 The relationship between the Reformed Mission League and the Netherlands Reformed Church Mission Board.

---

### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2.6.2</td>
<td>The budget</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.6.3</td>
<td>Financial crisis before transferring the work to RML</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Vergenoeg and the Mission</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>Vergenoeg ministers and mission work during this period.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.1</td>
<td>Rev. PL Olivier</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.2</td>
<td>Rev. LJ Loots</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1.3</td>
<td>Rev. JP Theron</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2</td>
<td>Further outreach by the congregation</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Meru, Loubser, Nairobi and mission work</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The Dutch Reformed period comes to an end in 1961</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Why the South Africans left Kenya</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Rev. and Mrs. BB Eybers leave East Africa</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The Bwana Loubser Mission transferred to the RML</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 The Mission policy of the Reformed Mission League

1.5.1 Theological principles underlying the Mission policy of the Reformed Mission League

1.5.2 Towards a policy on mission

1.6 The Reformed Mission League and missions by 2000

1.7 Conclusion

2. A new field in Africa investigated

2.1 Delegations to South and East Africa

2.2 Transfer of the work from the DRC Mission to RML

3. Commencement of the RML Mission in Kenya

4. RML and a comprehensive approach in mission

4.1 The relation between kerygma and diaconia

4.2 Education

4.2.1 Brief historical survey of education in Kenya

4.2.2 Primary education

4.2.3 Secondary education

4.2.4 The Kenyan government and religious education in schools

4.2.5 Africanization

4.2.6 Conclusion

4.3 Medical work

4.3.1 Brief historical survey of health care in Kenya

4.3.2 Health policy of the RML

4.3.3 Health care at Plateau and beyond

4.3.4 Training

4.3.5 Finances
CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS REFORMED CHURCH IN EAST AFRICA

Introduction 151

1. Early beginnings in the history of the RCEA 152

1.2 The involvement of the local people 152

1.1.1 Daniel Kimurgong 152

1.1.2 Joseph (Sengerut) Cheserem 153

1.2 Three Dutch Reformed Mission congregations in East Africa 155

1.3 The three congregations adopted by RML 157

1.4 Ministry during the early years 157
2. The RCEA and autonomy 159
   2.1 Self-government 160
      2.1.1 The ministry of the first ministers of the Bwana Loubser Mission 160
      2.1.2 The first Synod of the RCEA (1963) 161
      2.1.3 The Conference of Missionaries (1962-1971) 161
      2.1.4 The Joint Meeting (1972-1980) 162
      2.1.5 From Joint Committee to Executive Committee (1980) 165
      2.1.6 Structural development during the 1990s 167
      2.1.7 Constitutional development 170
      2.1.8 Relationship between Church and State 171
      2.1.9 The RCEA and Oecumene 172
      2.1.10 Conclusion 173
      2.1.11 Theological education in the RCEA 174
         2.1.11.1 Evangelist training 175
            Conclusion 179
         2.1.11.2 Own training for ministers in the RCEA 180
            Conclusion 184
         2.1.11.3 RCEA and St. Paul's United Theological College 188
         2.1.11.4 Scholarship programme 190
            Conclusion 191
         2.1.11.5 Lay training 191
            2.1.11.5.1 Lay training during the 1970s 191
            2.1.11.5.2 Theological Education by Extension 192
            Conclusion 195
2.2 Self-support 197
2.2.1 Stewardship programme 201
2.2.2 Conclusion 203
2.3 Extension (self-propagation) in the RCEA 204
2.3.1 Early attempts 205
2.3.2 Extension to the North 206
2.3.2.1 The Pokot-Turkana Committee 207
2.3.3 The Church Extension Committee 207
2.3.4 The Evangelism and Extension Committee 208
2.3.5 The Reformed Evangelistic Team 211
2.3.6 Conclusion 212
2.4 Final conclusion 214

CHAPTER 6
IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF THE RCEA

Introduction 216
1. The context of the RCEA 218
1.1 Geography 218
1.2 Demography 219
1.2.1 The RCEA comprises of different ethnic groups (tribes) 219
1.2.2 Patterns of numerical growth and decline in the RCEA 222
1.3 Culture 224
2. The Church and its resources 225
2.1 Properties 225
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

1. The missionary context
2. Missionary experience
3. Theology
4. Comprehensive approach
5. The mission and the autonomy of the Reformed Church of East Africa
6. Geography
7. Periods of transition
8. National assistance
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACTEA</td>
<td>Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Algemeen Diaconaal Bureau (General Diaconal Council of the NRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AEB</td>
<td>Afrika Evangelisie Bond (Africa Evangelistic Bond)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td>Africa Inland Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIM</td>
<td>Africa Inland Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLM</td>
<td>Bwana Loubser Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBHC</td>
<td>Community Based Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCK</td>
<td>Council of Churches of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAK</td>
<td>Christian Health Association of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHW</td>
<td>Community Health Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMS</td>
<td>Church Missionary Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORAT</td>
<td>Christian Organisation Research Advisory Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSM</td>
<td>Church of Scotland Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Dutch Reformed Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>Evangelism &amp; Extension Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKN</td>
<td>Gereformeerde Kerken in de Nederland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GKSA</td>
<td>Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Reformed Churches in South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GZB</td>
<td>Gereformeerde Zendingsbond (RML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HKOA</td>
<td>Hervormde Kerk van Oost-Afrika (RCEA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBEAC</td>
<td>Imperial British East African Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCO</td>
<td>Interkerklijk Coordinatie Commissie Ontwikkelingsprojecten (Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRDP</td>
<td>Integrated Rural Development Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANU</td>
<td>Kenya Africa National Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAU</td>
<td>Kenya Africa Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KECHN</td>
<td>Kenya Enrolled Community Health Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMC</td>
<td>Local Mission Commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LMS  London Missionary Society
MCH  Mother and Child Health
MCS  Medisch Coordinatie Secretariaat (Secretariat for Medical Co-operation)
NCCK  National Council of Churches in Kenya
NIP  Nutrition Improvement Program
NGK  Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (DRC)
NGZV  Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereeniging (Netherlands Reformed Mission Society)
NHK  Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Reformed Church of Africa)
NMS  Netherlands Missionary Society
NRC  Netherlands Reformed Church
NZG  Nederlands Zendelings-Genootschap (Netherlands Missionary Society)
PSK  Plaaslike Sending Kommissie (Local Mission Commission)
RITT  Reformed Institute for Theological Training
RCEA  Reformed Church of East Africa
RiM  Reformed in Mission
RTCEA  Reformed Theological College of East Africa
RML  Reformed Mission League
RTCEA  Reformed Theol College of East Africa
SAMS  Southern African Missiological Society
SIL  Summer Institute of Languages
SMA  Sinode van Midde-Afrika (Synod of Central Africa)
SZC  Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties (Cooperative Mission Corporations)
TSC  Training & Staffing Committee
TEE  Theological Education by Extension
VNZ  Vereenigde Nederlandse Zendingscorporaties
VOIC  Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compangnie (United East Indian Company)
CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION

1. Motivation for study

Mission work was done consecutively by two Reformed missionary enterprises in Kenya and led to the establishment of the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) (Van’t Veld n.d.: 169-175). The research problem deals with the question of the effect this dual involvement had on the history and identity of the RCEA.

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRC), which established congregations amongst South Africans who had come to Kenya during the early decades of the century, played an important role during the phase of Church planting: initially through a spontaneous congregational outreach towards the local people during the 1930s (Cronje 1981: 283-303) and subsequently through formal missionary action which began in 1944 with the calling of BB Eybers as a full-time missionary (Meiring 1979:48-50). Thus the foundations were laid for the establishment of what is today the RCEA. Before Eybers left in 1960 three congregations had come into existence under the auspices of the DRC. The second phase of the missionary endeavour started in 1961 with an agreement between the DRC and the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands (RML) whereby the latter was requested to continue the work initiated by the DRC (Minutes:Local Mission Commission Vergenoeg, 1959).

The Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA) was formally instituted in 1963. Despite almost a century of activities related to the Reformed Church of East Africa, a thorough investigation of the history leading to the formation of this Church has not yet been done. Due to the fact that information regarding this topic is widely dispersed in different parts of the world, and written in several languages, there was a real danger that such information would soon be lost or would become irretrievable.

A brief survey of the available resources underlines the need for a study of this nature:

- After 10 years of mission work (1954) the Bwana Loubser Mission published a Festschrift, *Lig oor Afrika*, which contains 11 pages of information on the subject.
Rex (1967), in an unpublished licentiate thesis on the work of Rev. MP Loubser in Kenya and Tanzania, wrote about eight pages on his role concerning mission work.


Cronje (1981), in his work *Aan God die dank*, wrote nineteen pages on the mission work of the DRC in Kenya, which is the largest volume of information on this subject compiled by any researcher in one document.

In Cronje's (1982) work, *Born to Witness*, the only published resource in English, six pages can be found on the topic.

Bisem (1983), in an unpublished research as part of a diploma in Theology, gathered 10 pages of information on this history (in English).


Van den Ham (1992), a missionary from the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands working with the RCEA, also compiled six pages on the subject in an unpublished paper as part of his preparation for ministry in Kenya (also in English).

These resources indicate the paucity of written materials on the subject. Only a few resources were written in English, the majority of these records were written in either Afrikaans or Dutch.

2. **Aim of study**

Considering this situation, the aim of this research was to investigate the history of the RCEA and to determine the influence of the two missionary enterprises on the current identity of the RCEA. The mission objectives, policies and methods implemented by the South African DRC until 1961 (Gerdener 1951:75-97) was compared to the objectives, policies and methods used by the Netherlands RML as from 1961 until the present day (Valkenburg 1978:32; GZB (RML) Beleidsnota 1989). The study then attempted to determine what effect these two enterprises, with their respective and varying emphases, had on the formation and development of the RCEA. The findings were evaluated from a critical missiological perspective (Bosch 1991:368-510).

The research problem hence concerns the question about the effect this dual involvement of respectively a South African and a Dutch Mission had on the establishment, growth and ecclesiastical
development of the RCEA and how this reflects upon the history, nature and identity of the RCEA today.

The term *identity* refers to faith and values, the worldview, symbols, style and story which shapes the unique identity of a church (Hendriks 1992:164).

3. **Delimitation of area of research**

In tracing the history of the Reformed Church of East Africa, the question to be considered was where to start: in 1944 when the first full-time missionary was called by the DRC, or in 1932 when the South African farmers started reaching out to their laborers for the first time, or, in 1963 when the Reformed Church of East Africa was formally instituted as an autonomous church.

The work which led to the founding of the Reformed Church of East Africa started as a result of a congregational outreach of the Vergenoeg congregation in Eldoret. The Dutch Reformed Church did not go to East Africa with the primary intention of an outreach towards the local peoples on the Uasin Gishu Plateau. The work developed in due course as a spontaneous outreach.

In order to understand the historical background, the study will begin with the coming of the South Africans to East Africa shortly after the Anglo-Boer War ended in 1902. Questions such as the following will be addressed: What is the Dutch Reformed Church? Who were these people from the South that eventually settled in Eldoret? What were the actual reasons for going to Eldoret? What was the motivation behind the eventual outreach to the local people? The study will conclude with the situation by 2000 when the RCEA had limited contact with the DRC, while continuing its collaboration with the RML.

The following phases in the history of the Reformed Church of East Africa can be identified provisionally:

- The arrival of the South Africans in East Africa at the beginning of the twentieth century up to 1932 when mission work was started by private initiative. In due course this initiative came to be known as the "Bwana Loubser Mission" in recognition of the particular interest taken in the work by one of the Dutch Reformed Church ministers, Rev. MP Loubser.
• From 1932 - 1944 the spontaneous outreach by DRC members continued in an informal way.
• The calling of a full-time missionary in 1944 in the person of Rev. BB Eybers and his ministry up to 1960.
• The continuation of the work by the Reformed Mission League in 1961 and their role in the RCEA up to the present day.
• The RCEA as autonomous Church since 1963.

4. Nature of research

The researcher worked mainly in a deductive way (a clear hypothesis guides the analysis and interpretations throughout the study [Mouton 1996:82]), a descriptive (accurately describing the work of the two missionary enterprises in Kenya [Mouton 1996:169]) and an explanatory way (explaining the current identity of the RCEA [Mouton 1996:192-193]). Since the study involves drawing conclusions mainly from the missionary impact of two enterprises, the researcher was aware of the problem of reductionism (the tendency to reduce complex social phenomena to a single cause [Baker 1994:104]).

Due to the wide scope of the study (historical; sociological; cultural), multi-disciplinary insights relevant to the study, from the fields of secular history, anthropology, sociology as well as church history and church growth will be utilized.

As stated in the aim of the study, the research was basically undertaken as a missiological study, involving the aims, motives and methods (Verkuyl 1978:176-204) of the two distinct reformed missionary enterprises which partly helped to shape the RCEA. Due to the fact that the RCEA developed out of this mission work, a close relationship exists between missiology and ecclesiology. The impact of culture ("who we are and the world we created to live in" - Ammerman et al 1998:78) and the process of indigenisation or inculturation (Bosch 1991:447-457) played important roles in the development of the RCEA. These too are important missiological themes (Hesselgrave 1978:96) which came into play in this study.
5. **Hypothesis**

Although the mission work by the Dutch Reformed Church from South African was constitutive in laying the foundations for the RCEA, the impact of the Reformed Mission League from the Netherlands upon the RCEA over the last three to four decades has been more decisive in the development of the RCEA. Hence the RCEA can in certain respects be expected to differ from churches established by South African based DRC Missions in other parts of the African subcontinent, notably in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique.

The hypothesis with which this study works is that the current wrestling of the RCEA in terms of developing an understanding of its role and identity within the context of modern-day Kenya, should be assessed in terms of the specific historical processes that the RCEA went through. An analysis of the particular missionary approaches and church political views of the two role players concerned, will provide answers explaining this search for self-identity within the RCEA.

6. **Motivation and purpose of the research project**

The researcher was a lecturer at the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT) in Eldoret, Kenya from 1995 - 2000. RITT is an institute of the Reformed Church of East Africa responsible for Theological Training in the Church, including the training of pastors and evangelists as well as Theological Education by Extention. A course offered by the Institute since 1996 is "History of the Reformed Church of East Africa". Due to the researcher's ties with the DRC and interest in this history, he was appointed to teach this course. A matter of immediate concern was the discovery of how little material was available within the RCEA on the subject. After a brief investigation into the available resources, the root of the problem became clear.

One of the main reasons why the history of the Reformed Church of East Africa has not been written, is the problem of the accessibility of material on this subject. For a Kenyan to attempt such a work would be a difficult task due to language barriers. The meetings of the Vergenoeg congregation, as well as those of the Local Mission Commission, were recorded as Minutes in the Afrikaans language. The researcher who is not conversant with the Afrikaans language will therefore be severely limited in his/her attempts to trace the history from the initial stages up to the 1960s. The annual reports of the RML also contain valuable information concerning developments and important decisions taken.
over the years. These are recorded in the Dutch language. Hence, the ideal person to write such a history would be either an Afrikaans-speaking or Dutch-speaking person who is also fluent in English. Due to the fact that the medium of communication used in the RCEA is mainly English, almost no relevant sources can be found in Kiswahili.

7. **Research procedures and methodology**

Methodologically the research endeavoured to obtain access to relevant information on the subject, to systemize and critically evaluate this material and present it as a comprehensive historical study of the Reformed Church of East Africa.

To determine the current identity of the RCEA the investigation was carried out in the form of an identity analysis (Hendriks 1992: 164-179) in two phases. Although it is not possible to make a clear distinction between the two phases, the first will be mainly descriptive and the second more explanatory.

Due to the nature of the study the emphasis was on the first phase in which the history (story) of the RCEA was traced. To ensure a disciplined and systematic procedure in data collection the method of Ammerman et. al. (1998) was employed.

**Phase I**

The following methods were employed to determine the influence of the two missionary enterprises on the RCEA.

i) **Documentary sources and literature**

A thorough literature exploration was done which included mainly unpublished written and recorded material: original correspondence; synodical minutes, resolutions and reports; annual reports; periodicals; and news-letters. Indispensable for a study of this nature was an archival document analysis to determine the most valuable material for the research. The researcher was aware of the fact that data-gathering is not part of the culture of the RCEA, which could have had the result in the fact that not all the necessary information would be found. The survey therefore required a
methodology whereby the literature exploration needed to be supported by semi-structured interviews.

ii) Interviews

The researcher was aware of the interview as complex social encounter and the temptation to dominate and influence the context in which the interview takes place. Bearing this in mind, semi-structured interviews (planned questions around specific issues, but also retaining the liberty of an unstructured approach) played an important role in gathering information on the subject. The fact that several ministers (local and foreign) who served in the RCEA during the period 1944-2000 had already passed away, emphasized the urgency of this method of research. In correspondence with the focus of this investigation, at least three groups of people came into play: a) retired DRC ministers who served in Kenya during the church planting phase (including Rev. J Theron who handed over the work to Rev. JJ Tigchelaar of the RML); b) RCEA ministers, especially those who worked together with Rev. BB Eybers (for information on the ministry during the 1950s and 1960s); c) RML ministers and missionaries serving in the RCEA since the 1960s (including Rev. JJ Tigchelaar, the first missionary pastor from RML to RCEA).

Phase II

This phase endeavoured to come to a final conclusion on the identity of the RCEA by means of the remaining elements of an identity analysis which involved traditions, world view, symbols, rituals, demography and character of the church (Hendriks 1992:164-179). These elements furthermore elucidated cultural, sociological and anthropological aspects (Mbiti 1992&1994) of life in East Africa. Although the emphasis is on identity, relevant elements of contextual, process and resources analysis (Ammerman et al 1998) also came into play.

i) Participatory research

As lecturer at the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT) since 1995, the researcher found himself in the position of doing research according to the method of participatory observation. This method has advantages such as knowledge of the culture, processes, resources and ecology. The researcher was also aware of the weaknesses of the method whereby insiders are bound by their
perspective and therefore could be blind to other perceptions and realities.

ii) Questionnaires

Focused questionnaires were applied as another survey method in this phase of the investigation. Due to the character of the RCEA, which is mainly a rural church, it was not possible to apply questionnaires on congregational level with great effect.

To avoid accidental sampling by selecting only literate members of the congregations, a stratified sample was used. It was conducted by theological students and ministers of the RCEA, which ensured a representative sample of the church as a whole.

To ensure valid and reliable results and to avoid especially subjective research effects the researcher intended to prove the hypothesis by means of systematic constructive replication. This was done by indicating from different perspectives, such as literary sources, interviews, questionnaires and participatory observation, that two reformed missionary enterprises played a role in shaping the current identity of the RCEA.

8. Value of the research

The study made available historical missiological information which was either unrecorded or largely inaccessible. Various parties will benefit from such a project. Not only will it be valuable for the RCEA to have this history of missions recorded, but also for the DRC, who started the work as well as for the RML, which has worked with the RCEA for the past 37 years. It will also contribute a valuable and thus far unwritten chapter in the history of the church in Kenya.

9. Proposed layout of thesis

The actual writing of the dissertation could only begin during a period of study leave during January to March 1999 in South Africa. The last phase of full-time involvement in the RCEA from April 1999 to June 2000 was used to finalize the collection of material and the last part of 2000 to systematize it.
The findings are presented in seven chapters. In the first chapter, the problem statement and goals of the thesis are set forward. The second chapter is of an introductory nature, giving a geographical and historical survey of East Africa as well as Kenya. This is followed by a brief historical review of missionary organizations working in Kenya.

The church planting phase is dealt with in chapter three. The South Africans came in search of a new home and a new life after the Anglo-Boer War rather than with the purpose of reaching the unreached in British East Africa. South Africans were invited by the British East African Government to settle in Kenya with promises of fertile land and cheap labor. The possibilities sounded endless. These, as well as other reasons which will be discussed, brings the period prior to 1902 into the picture. Time will be spent briefly surveying the Dutch Reformed Church in East Africa, especially in relation to the missionary work that started spontaneously as a congregational outreach in 1932 and as a deliberate missionary action in 1944. During this year BB Eybers was called as a full-time missionary. The work was started in line with the Dutch Reformed Mission policy of 1935 of which the relevant aspects will be addressed. The strategy was to send trained men as teacher-evangelists to out-posts where they had to preach the Gospel to their own people and then start with the training of local ministers. The chapter further deals with the DRC's vision of eventually establishing an autonomous, indigenous Church in Western Kenya based on the Reformed tradition of the DRC in South Africa.

In chapter four the Reformed Mission League (RML) comes into the picture. The League's position as missionary organization within the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) forms the introduction to the chapter, followed by the initial contact with the Bwana Loubser Mission, and also how the RML officially started their ministry in Kenya on 1 July 1961. The last paragraph of this chapter deals with the comprehensive approach followed by the RML in their mission work in Kenya. Due to the strong influence they had on the policies and strategies followed by the RCEA, the relationship between the Mission and the Church are surveyed in this chapter.

Chapter five recounts the 'story' of the RCEA. In correspondence to the research problem of the study, this story is evaluated from a missionary perspective and especially how it influenced the identity of the RCEA. This refers to the very beginning in the 1920s and traces the origin and early development of the RCEA. The voice of the local people and eventually the ministry of the first local ministers played an important role in the commencement and expansion of the work and helped to lead the Dutch Reformed Mission Church towards autonomy. The ministry of the first ministers is
discussed, followed by the arrival of the Reformed Mission League in 1961 which started a new era in the history of what would eventually become the Reformed Church of East Africa. In 1963 a Synod with its own constitution was formed and the Church became known as the Reformed Church of East Africa.

Guided by the research in the previous chapters, chapter six is an identity analysis of the RCEA. This is followed by a final chapter in the form of a conclusion which indicates how the research problem is answered satisfactorily.

The study takes into account the fact that events take place within a certain historical setting with its own unique tendencies, ideologies and questions. It is therefore especially important to keep this fact in mind when evaluating a history which goes back a whole century. This history often seems to be obscure and unrealistic when viewed through the glasses of the developments of the last one hundred years.
CHAPTER TWO
INTRODUCTORY SURVEY OF KENYA

1. Early history of East Africa

In a way it is difficult to decide where to start relating the history of African countries, and Kenya is no exception. Does one start in 1895 when the British East African Protectorate was established or even before that with the activities of the Imperial British East African Company? Another possibility is to start with Independence in 1963.

The history of Kenya forms part of and is inseparable from the history of East Africa. Although we know very little about life in Kenya before the arrival of the Europeans, a study of early East African history could result in a better understanding of the early history of Kenya.

1.1 Early visitors to East Africa

The fact that the early invaders of West Africa from overseas came from Europe, and those of East Africa from Asia, is explained by the close connection of the study of history to that of geography. The map of the world shows that the Sahara Desert was an obstacle in the way of an overland route from Europe to Africa south of the Sahara. Another obstacle that prevented access to East Africa was the Nile sudds which blocked the river in the Southern Sudan.

Although there were a number of difficulties facing the traveler in reaching East Africa by land, it was reasonably accessible by sea. Before the Suez Canal was cut, the traveler from Europe had to undertake a journey of 8000 miles to reach the East Coast of Africa, but from Bombay to Zanzibar it is only 2500 miles. Furthermore, due to the direction of the monsoon winds, visitors from Asia were in a fortunate position traveling to East Africa by sea. These winds start to blow from the north-east in December and from the south-west in March. The monsoon obviously provided a way of traveling south to East Africa in December and a few months later being driven back by the same wind when it changed direction. It was the monsoon that enabled the Hindu and Arab traders to come to the coast of East Africa. Although we do not know much about their early voyages, it is certain that they did come to trade here (Marsh 1957:3 & Ochieng 1985:10).
1.1.1 Islam

The early visitors traded beads and cloth for spices, ivory and slaves. For centuries Africa was the source of the slave trade. One of the focal points was the East African coast which resulted in the development of a number of coastal settlements (Ochieng 1985:10-12). In these settlements the influence of Arab, Indian and Persian traders may have spread the Muslim faith. By the fifteenth century almost 40 towns had developed along the coastal strip between Kilwa and Mogadishu. Shortly before the discovery of the route around the Cape to the Far East these towns were at the height of their prosperity (Marsh 1957:4).

In the centuries following the death of Mohammed the influence of Islam also reached East Africa. During the first eighty years after the death of the prophet the Muslims conquered Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and Egypt and spread the empire right through North Africa (Mbiti 1969:242-243). The Arabs entered Egypt in 640 and conquered all of North Africa by AD 670 (Parrinder 1964:18-19) before the Sahara desert stopped the rapid expansion towards the south temporarily (Omondi 1996). At the head of the Arab empire was the Caliph (or successor) of the Prophet and soon disputes broke out as to who was the rightful Caliph. This issue divided the Arab Empire, "and caused some of those who had been on the losing side to take refuge on the pleasant coast of East Africa, with which trade had already made them familiar" (Marsh 1957:5). The Somalis in Kenya were converted to Islam during the first two hundred years. The Coastal Somalis today claim to be of the Quraysh tribe, the tribe of the prophet Muhammad.

A flourishing slave and ivory trade was established between Zanzibar and the interior of the African continent. New routes were opened and trade was the first priority, but Islam followed soon. A very important landing place on the East African coast was Lamu (Omondi 1996). The cosmopolitan character which distinguished the people at the coast from most of the Africans in the hinterland, was due to the Persians and the Arabs who settled on the coast of East Africa (Marsh 1957:5-6). On the coast the Arabs and Africans intermarried and this resulted in the birth of the Swahili people, who shared the faith of Islam and much of the Arab way of life. The life on the coast was dependent on slaves who had been captured in the interior (Marsh 1957:8). Nearly all of Eastern Africa's Arab population are of Yemeni origin (SIL 1994). The Coast of the Indian Ocean provided a platform for Islam's penetration into the hinterland. Two routes were used for this penetration, one gave access to lake Victoria, the other to Lake Tanganyika which continued to the country of Congo. Many
Muslim communities were established along these routes, but for the most part the population of the hinterland retained their traditional religious beliefs. The first Mosque built in Kenya is on Lamu Island and dates back to 910 AD.

Islam was well established along the Coast of Kenya by the Middle Ages. It is noteworthy that Islam never had the ambition of converting some of the central tribes. The Arabs were not keen to propagate their religion among the black people whom they regarded as people without religion. On the other hand, Africans did not want to join the religion of slave traders (Ochieng 1985:41 & Omondi: 1996). The opening of the interior of East Africa by the Imperial British East African Company and Christian missionaries brought Islam to the interior. Many Muslims served as porters. The building of the Uganda railway enabled the Muslims to trade with the interior. Some Asians working on the railways were Muslims who settled as businessmen or railway workers. Arab traders also traveled from the coast to towns like Nairobi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Eldoret and Nyeri and built mosques wherever they went (Omondi: 1996). Omondi states that there were Muslims in the area of Mount Elgon prior to the first Christian missionaries who came to East Africa. This is confirmed by Ochieng's reference to Swahili and Arab traders entering the interior before the arrival of the missionaries. Missionaries concentrated their activities in the Southern part of Kenya where the Mombasa-Kisumu railway offered transport. In the north-eastern part of the country, however, the Somalis converted the tribes near them and towards central Kenya (Ochieng 1985:38 & Omondi: 1996).

1.1.2 The Portuguese

After a bad reception in Mombasa Vasco da Gama arrived in Malindi in 1498. He was eagerly welcomed by the people of this prosperous town. Da Gama returned to Portugal in 1499 where he related his great discoveries. This triggered the conquest of the east coast of Africa by Portugal. Ten years later she had conquered the coast. This was the beginning of a period of approximately 200 years of Portuguese rule in East Africa (Ochieng 1985:55-56).

By the end of the sixteenth century the first English ships, which were the forerunners of the British East India Company, were seen in the Indian ocean. The Portuguese hold on the coast was weakening and the possible interference with their trade monopoly in this area was not welcomed at all (Ochieng 1985:62). By this time the years of the Portuguese Empire in the East were also
numbered. After they were driven out of Oman, the ruler of Oman responded to an appeal from his fellow Muslims on the east coast of Africa and finally drove the Portuguese out of East Africa in 1699. This date is usually counted as marking the end of Portuguese rule in East Africa north of Mozambique (Marsh 1957:15-16).

1.2 The scramble for East Africa

In 1875 the coast and the interior of East Africa were in theory the dominion of the Sultan of Zanzibar. This was the area between Warsheik in the north and the Rovuma river in the south (Marsh 1957:93). In 1876 Sultan Barghash requested the help of the British in the development and civilization of Africa. The request was virtually for a British company to colonize the Sultan's East African dominions. This did not happen and the time of the scramble, specifically for East Africa, was approaching. Competitors were coming into the area in increasing numbers (Marsh 1957:95). There were Belgian (1877-1884) and French (1878-1881) expeditions to East Africa. The stronger influence in the area came from Britain and Germany and in 1886 these two countries agreed on the division of the area between the rivers Rovuma and Tana. The result was that the area known today as Kenya and the former Tanganyika became German and British spheres of influence (Ochieng 1985:84-85).

Attempts towards development in the British and German spheres of influence were not undertaken by the governments of these countries, but by companies. In 1888 both the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) and the German East African Company came into existence (Marsh 1957:105). A further agreement between Britain and Germany concerning territory were made in 1890. Among other arrangements a British protectorate over Zanzibar was recognized and German political extension to the north was restricted. With this the scramble, as far as East Africa was concerned, ended (Marsh 1957:108). The work of the Imperial IBEAC terminated towards the end of the nineteenth century. The administration of the Company's territories was therefore taken over by the Foreign Office. What is now Kenya became the British East African Protectorate on 15 June 1895 (Ochieng 1985:87-88).

1.3 Slave trade in East Africa

The European slave trade across the Atlantic started during the sixteenth century and was abolished
at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In comparison to the Arab slave trade across the Indian ocean this trade continued over a relatively short period. The Arab trade started before the Christian era and did not stop until the end of the nineteenth century. The British involvement in slave trade was of such an extent that by 1770 half of the slave trade of the Atlantic was carried by the British. It was, however, the British who took the first steps in abolishing slavery. On 22 June 1772 slavery in England was legally stopped. The next step was to attempt the abolition of the slave trade and slavery in the rest of the British Empire and eventually all over the world (Marsh 1957:38-40).

In East Africa, Zanzibar was the main market of the slave trade (Marsh 1957:24). So important was Zanzibar in this process that the saying was: "When they whistle in Zanzibar, people dance on the shores of the great lakes" (Ward 1971:1). Seyyid Said, the ruler of Oman who ruled from Zanzibar, would be the major obstacle in Britain's way in demolishing the slave trade in this part of the world. Part of the problem was that good relationships were established between these two countries since the start of the nineteenth century. The slave trade, together with the export of tusks, were the main sources of income and Said did not welcome the British plans. However, in 1822 he signed the Moresby Treaty which did not have a great effect on the continuation of the slave trade with the Sultan's dominions in Oman, which were the main market. Said was pleased to think that in exchange for this concession the British had recognized his claim to overlordship in East Africa (Marsh 1957:24). The relationship developed even further when he signed the commercial treaty with her in 1839. Said was aware of the dangers of other European countries, especially France, and was prepared to pay a high price for British friendship. The price Britain asked was his support in putting an end to slavery in East Africa. In 1845, with the Hamerton Treaty, Britain forced the Sultan to take further steps in attaining this goal and "by the time Seyyid Said died in 1856, the slave trade had been very much restricted, although slavery itself was still unchecked " (Marsh 1957:29).

It was during these years that David Livingstone undertook his great expeditions through Africa (1853-1856; 1858-1864; 1866-1873). He saw the slave trade in action in the African interior, and his vivid descriptions gave a new impetus to the abolitionists' efforts in East Africa (Marsh 1957:59-61). On 5 June 1873 Barghash, the sultan of Zanzibar at the time, signed the treaty making the slave trade illegal between all his ports. The most important step came in 1897 when a decree abolishing the legal status of slavery on Zanzibar and Pemba was signed by the Sultan (Marsh 1957:46-48).
The end of the slave trade was the beginning of a new era in East Africa. "It changed the country within a generation from a land of wars and insecurity, into a land of comparative peace where development was possible" (Marsh 1957:47). This happened mainly as a result of the British abolition movement.

2. Geographical review of Kenya

Kenya is a country of roughly 582,646 square kilometers of which 2.5% are lakes: Lakes Naivasha, Nakuru, Baringo, Bogoria, Turkana and partly Lake Victoria. It lies astride the equator in eastern Africa between the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria, part of which is within its boundaries.

From the coast to Nairobi a gradual altitude rise of 1660m takes place. From Nairobi to the west the 100-150km wide Rift Valley, which lies 600-900m below the surrounding land, is found. Further towards the west to the Eldoret area the altitude rises up to 2200-2800m. The highest mountains are Mount Elgon (4321m) and Mount Kenya (5195m) (De Blois 1971:57). Kenya is linked to both Tanzania and Uganda by a railroad and fairly good roads and to the rest of the world by the port of Mombasa, the second largest city with a population of more than 400,000, and the international airport in Nairobi. Within the country the railroad and a network of roads centring on Nairobi tie the capital to the areas of major population concentration. Nairobi has a population of more then 1,800,000 with an urbanization rate of 20%. Other highly populated urban areas are Kisumu, Nakuru and Eldoret (Davies 1997:101). Kenya's largely rural population is growing at an annual rate of around 3%. By 1994 the population was officially estimated at 29,292,000 (Morgan 1996:500). The high rate of population growth has imposed major strains upon the economy, in terms of public expenditure, as well as threatening social stability (Van Buren 1996:513).

The country is divided into nine distinct areas and one sub-region (see map 1). One of the country's major problems lies in the limits of arable land imposed by inadequate rainfall. About 75% of the population is confined to 10% of the land area (Davies 1997: 101). Near Lake Victoria, in the highland areas of South and Central Kenya, and in a narrow strip along the coast a combination of good soils and reliable rainfall permits the cultivation of a fairly wide range of crops (Van Buren 1996:507). The northern three-fifths of the country and large stretches of the southern section, however, are suitable only for ranching of nomadic herding or provide only a meagre and uncertain livelihood for cultivators. Some 75 per cent of the population is confined to 10 per cent of the land.
area as most of the country is classified as semi-arid or arid (Davies 1997: 101)

Throughout its history, Kenya was inhabited by farmers and nomads. This situation remained basically the same: almost every Kenyan is a farmer by heart. An individual might be a shop-owner, teacher or minister, but in the countryside he owns a piece of land where his actual home can be found. The money he earns elsewhere will usually be invested in the farm as a matter of provision for old age (De Blois 1971:23).

The high population density exerts pressure on land resources. Due to the fact that land owned by a family is divided among the children from generation to generation, the land owned by families is getting smaller and smaller. Kenya’s continued development, relative stability and, in particular, the growth per capita income is to some extent jeopardized by the rapid increase of the population and by natural restrictions upon the availability of land (Davies 1997:101).

3. The people of Kenya

The Kenya region was inhabited long before the beginning of the Christian Era. Four thousand years ago hunters lived on the plains reaping a harvest from what must have appeared to be unlimited wild game. They were click speakers. A few remnants like the Sandawe and Hadza in central Tanzania, remained (Jacobs 1973:40).

Peoples of four distinct language groups (Afroasiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Nilotic and Bantu) are found in present-day Kenya. About three millennia ago the southern Cushitic (Afroasiatic), who farmed and tended cattle, came from the North. It is most likely that they were the first "settled" people. They had a highly sophisticated religious system, which had a profound effect on those who were to arrive later. During the centuries following the birth of Christ the first Bantu came from the region south-west of Kenya. At about the same time the Nilo-Saharan and Nilotic peoples moved into the area from the north and occupied the expansive land areas which they required for their great herds of cattle (Ochieng 1985:5-9 & Esterhuysen 1998:21).

The early ancestors of the country's present African population started arriving in the first millennium A.D. Arab elements of the present-day multiracial society also settled along the coast during the first millennium. During this time there was a very active trade going on at the coast with Asian countries
like Saudi-Arabia, Persia and even China (De Blois 1971:35-36). Some major ethnic groups entered the region no more than 200-300 years ago (Dobert 1976:11). The Kikuyu, the nation's largest ethnic group, have no legends of having come from outside Kenya, and their oral histories claim that their ancestors originally came from north-east of Mount Kenya in a migration that was probably under way by the mid-1400s (Dobert 1976:14).

Except for some mixing in border areas and large cities and towns, each ethnic group is located primarily in a specific area, to the physical characteristics of which it is, in general, well-adapted. In part because of this adaptation, relationships between ethnic groups in the pre-colonial period were limited. Their ways of life were so different that there was no significant competition for territory, or they were too far apart to interact, in hostile fashion or otherwise. There were some exceptions, however. The Kikuyu and the Masai, for example, alternated between conflict and exchange based upon the different agricultural practices (Dobert 1976:3).

4. Economical development of Kenya

As previously mentioned, the abolition of slavery was the beginning of a new era in East Africa as well as in Kenya. Another event that had far-reaching consequences on the history of Kenya, was the construction of a railway. "It has been said that Kenya was conquered by a railway, and its modern history may well be said to have begun in 1901; for the railway has been the basis for subsequent development" (Marsh 1957:162).

The strategic importance of Uganda for Britain made the improvement of communication with the area an urgent matter. Uganda dominated the northern and western shores of Lake Victoria and held almost the only exit to Lake Albert and Edward and thus controlling the headwaters of the Nile. The apparent obstacles in the way of the construction of the railway were progressively cleared. Parliament agreed to meet its cost, and labour was imported from India. In 1898 the number of Indians in Kenya rose to just over 13 000. In 1936 the original 572 miles of railway lines had grown to 1625 miles. These extensions included the branch line from Nakuru to Eldoret which was a forerunner of the later extension to Uganda.

Indian traders had been established along the coast for centuries. "With the coming of the railway the Indians penetrated inland into the present-day Kenya for the first time." The Indian community
was active in developing the early trade of Kenya. On the side of developing the natural resources of East Africa they were not so concerned (Marsh 1957:162-163).

Sir Charles Elliot, the Commissioner for the East Africa Protectorate, recommended that European settlers should be encouraged to take up land in East Africa in order to develop these natural resources. The need for settlers became more urgent as it was realized that the railway was not paying. Every train ran at a loss and drastic steps needed to be taken to improve the situation. It was believed that the answer was to attract European settlers who would also help the indigenous population by introducing the ways of western civilization. The British Government was anxious that this should not mean that any Africans were dispossessed of their land (Ochieng 1985:103-105).

In 1901 the East Africa (Lands) Order in Council was issued. It defined Crown lands as land not already occupied by Africans and arranged the terms on which it could be purchased (Marsh 1957:164-165). To attract settlers Sir Charles Elliot now ensured that South Africans were informed on the possibilities of East Africa. The Anglo-Boer War was at its end and the unsettled situation in the country might cause South Africans to look into the opportunities offered in East Africa. "The good response surprised the Government, who allowed insufficient time for defining unoccupied land available for settlement. This was the beginning of the clash between European and African claims on land which was to extend over a much wider area." (Marsh 1957:166). In order for Europeans to settle on what became known as the "White Highlands", reserves were suggested for certain tribes and they were moved accordingly (Marsh 1957:166). The highlands were cooler and the Europeans felt more comfortable to settle in these areas.

The British East African Protectorate was financially partially supported by Britain up to 1912. Ever since that year until the State of Emergency in 1952, the country cost the British taxpayer nothing. The increasing prosperity of the country in general, and the railway in particular, enabled it to do without help from Britain (Marsh 1957:166). During the 1920s the British East African Protectorate became a Colony and also became officially known as "Kenya" (De Blois 1971:38). The First World War put a great strain on the development of the country. Many Africans were recruited and more than half of the European population, which counted 3000 in 1914, joined up during the war (Marsh 1957:175). This resulted in widespread poverty at the end of the war. Veterinary services were so involved in keeping transport animals alive for war purposes, that services apart from that were almost non-existent. Rinderpest reappeared in 1916 and drought as well as famine had by 1918
wiped out what had been built up over many years of hard work prior to the war. The years after the war were difficult ones and by the 1930s depression again set in. All over the world the mid-1930s were characterized by poverty and unemployment.

Towards the Second World War the economical situation in Kenya improved. Due to the production of vitally needed foodstuffs, the country flourished by the end of the war (Marsh 1957:177-178). During the 1950s the idea of land tenure was developed. Especially in the Kikuyu districts people came to understand the "immense economic advantages of land consolidation and individual tenure of land" (Marsh 1957:179). This revolution in land tenure was recognized by the Kenya Legislative Council towards the end of the 1950s. By this time proposals were introduced whereby ownership of land in the Highlands would no longer be based on race. Settlement schemes were introduced "to help Africans purchase and develop land in the scheduled areas which had previously been restricted to Europeans" (Marsh 1957:179). Considerations like economic use of land, sound agricultural development and good husbandry were now taken into account. The land Registration Ordinance of 1959 and the Registered Land Act of 1963 were used to achieve individualization of tenure among the African peoples (Kibwana 1990:238). Agriculture continues to dominate Kenya's economy and the principal cash crops, tea and coffee, ranked second and third respectively behind tourism as sources of foreign exchange in 1992-1995 (Van Buren 1996:507). Food crops are in great variety but most important and widespread are maize, sorghum, cassava and bananas (Morgan 1996:500).

5. Constitutional development in Kenya

In the late 1800s when Great Britain undertook the task of unifying the area, there was no central government in Kenya. Kenya's indigenous political structure was one of small, independent units linked by kinship ties (Dobert 1976:11). These units functioned as local governments who ruled within limited areas. Councils of elders were usually the ones to see to it that customary laws were obeyed.

The British Government took over from the IBEAC in 1895. England was thinking of the East African Protectorate as an entity and as a collection of separate tribes. The area had therefore to be administered as a whole. During 1902 "The Village Headman's Ordinance" became law. It was difficult for the government to choose headmen wisely and cases of oppression of the African people by headmen and police were reported. In 1908 the more reliable government servants were
appointed as chiefs and given authority over wider areas (Marsh 1957:182-184). In 1923 there were 10 000 Europeans, 23 000 Asians and about 3 500 000 Africans living in the country. The representation in government though, looked as follows: eleven Europeans, five Asians, and one missionary to represent the African community (De Blois 1971:38). A major step forward was the Local Native Councils which were introduced in 1924 (Marsh 1957:182-184). The African population in the country became more and more displeased with the governmental state of affairs and in 1929 Jomo Kenyatta left for London to negotiate the situation in Kenya with the British government (De Blois 1971:38).

Stoneham (1953:38) lists a few of the issues on Kenyatta's agenda in his book on the Mau-Mau:

- Abolition of the Kibpande system, which restricted freedom of movement and facilitated efforts to keep them in a state of slavery.
- Removal of restrictions on the growing of Arabian coffee in reserves.
- Guarantee that locals should not be compelled to leave their homes to work for Europeans.
- That natives accused of crimes should be tried by native juries.
- That natives should be allowed to own shops for the sale of intoxicating liquor, or that, if they were not so allowed, then people of every color should be prohibited from selling drink and all places for the sale of liquor should be abolished.

These issues reflect the dissatisfaction of the local people with the current situation and give a limited indication of the state affairs in the years of struggling for independence.

Many years later political progress was made by Africans in Kenya by organizing themselves into a body whose members were drawn from different ethnic groups and who formed the Kenya African Union (KAU) on 1 October 1944. KAU provided nationals with their only political outlet (Murray-Brown 1972:226). After leaving Kenya on 17 February 1929 Jomo Kenyatta returned to Kenya from Europe on 24 September 1946 after an absence of 17 years (Murray-Brown 1972:227).

As from 1948 the "Mau-Mau movement" started to make its presence felt in Kenya. The name purportedly belonged to an underground terrorist movement "pledged to kill every white person in Kenya" (Murray-Brown 1972:241). With the capture of Dedan Kimathi in 1956, the movement
ceased to exist. By that time 32 European civilians and more than 2000 African civilians had been killed (Marsh 1957:189).

During October 1952 the Emergency proclamation was signed and the state of emergency started. On the evening of 20 October 1952, Jomo Kenyatta was arrested. Towards the end of 1952 Europeans became the targets of the Kikuyu reaction. On a few occasions European families were found murdered on their farms. "These savage deeds revived in the minds of Europeans deep-laid fears about the supposed primitiveness of Africa. The settlers were suddenly made terrifyingly aware of their isolation and small numbers. Most of them lived alone with their families at considerable distances from each other and from police assistance, and generally without telephones" (Murray-Brown 1972:260).

On 3 December 1952 the trial of Jomo Kenyatta started (Murray-Brown 1972:260). Kenyatta was in the end sentenced to seven years imprisonment with hard labor, to be followed by indefinite restriction (Murray-Brown 1972:276). On 14 April 1959, Kenyatta completed his prison sentence and on 14 August 1961 he was released (Ochieng 1985:142). In 1960 KAU became the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU). The party consisted mainly of the two major tribes of Kenya, the Kikuyu and the Luo (De Blois 1971:38). On 14 May 1960 KANU nominated the absent Kenyatta as their President and on 12 December 1963 Kenya received independence (Ochieng 1985:142).

Regarding cooperation between the East African countries there were already talks of a federation before the Second World War. Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda shared many problems which were wasteful to consider separately. Since 1926 there was a conference twice a year between the governors of the three countries, together with the British Resident of Zanzibar. It had no authority and its decisions could be carried out only after they had been referred to the various governments. During the Second World War the need for this co-operation was felt more clearly and an East African High Commission was set up. In 1948 the East African Central Legislative Assembly was created to provide a means of discussion of the common interests of the three countries. In December 1961 the High Commission was reconstituted as the East African Common Services Organization. Up to this point the association had been primarily an economic one. A statement issued jointly by Dr. Nyerere, Mr. Obote and Mr. Kenyata in June 1963 indicated the possibility of co-operation also in other fields. The idea of establishing a federation was mentioned (Marsh 1970:234). Discussions in 1967 led to the signing of the Treaty of East African Cooperation which
established the East African Community. In 1977 the break-up of the East African Community resulted in a vast economical loss for Kenya (Orwa 1993:225). Mr. Kenyatta died on 14 October 1978 and the vice president Daniel T. Arap Moi took over the government and remained in this position until the present day (Olumwullah 1993:89).

6. Christian Missions in Kenya

Due to the fact that the Dutch Reformed Church Mission was officially started only in 1944, the major flooding of different missions into Kenya at the turn of the century did not affect the ministry of the DRC to a great extent. When the mission work was actually started, the only two Churches with which the Mission rubbed shoulders and which are mentioned by Eybers, was the Roman Catholic Church and the Africa Inland Mission. The only reference to the Roman Catholic Church was the fact that they treated the teacher-evangelists trained by Eybers in an arrogant and hostile manner. The missionaries of the Africa Inland Mission cooperated with the DRC farmers during the 1930s before the arrival of Eybers, assisting in baptism as well as in catechism classes.

In this section attention is paid to the coming of Christianity to Kenya. A very brief overview of Churches and Missions in Kenya is given.

6.1 The Portuguese and the spreading of the Gospel

In the Portuguese plan of expansion especially as far as trade is concerned, they had an enemy - Islam. Privately there was a desire to spread the Christian faith in Africa and especially on the East African Coast, but mainly as a way of counter-acting Islamic faith. The Christian faith would have a civilizing effect as well (Nthamburi 1991:1).

After Vasco da Gama confirmed the possibilities of the East African Coast, Francisco d' Almeida was sent to the Coast in 1505. He did not make any attempt at evangelization. When d' Almeida left, two Franciscan friars stayed behind to conduct the mass, but it was understood that they were chaplains to the Portuguese soldiers only and were not necessarily there to spread the Christian faith amongst the people of the land (Nthamburi 1991:2). In 1506, it was reported that at Kilwa, 40 people wanted to become Christians. The Portuguese captain had them baptized "much to the consternation of the Muslims" (Nthamburi 1991:2). Apart from this report little was done to spread the Gospel. The main
reason for this was due to the Muslim hostility. It was "considered unwise to introduce Christianity at Malindi since such an attempt might antagonize and offend the allies thus jeopardizing chances for further rapport". The only religious ritual which was allowed, was for the Portuguese residents to bury their dead according to Christian rites (Nthamburi 1991:2). The local people were not attracted to the type of Gospel which was not manifested in human relations. It is important to keep in mind that the majority of the Portuguese on the East Coast were traders and soldiers who were not the best representatives of their people. Unfortunately Christianity was judged by this standard (Nthamburi 1991:3).

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the situation changed. In 1599 it was reported that a Church building in Mombasa was nearly completed and that evangelization was in progress. "By 1624 there seems to have been four established worshiping places in Mombasa." These were the Augustinian Cathedral, the Misericordia Church, the Igreja Matriz (Mother Church) and a Chapel inside Fort Jesus (Nthamburi 1991:4). Especially during the seventeenth century the contest on the East Coast was not so much between Islam and Christianity as it was a contest for dominance between the Arabs and the Portuguese (Nthamburi 1991:5). Once the Arabs regained control over the East Coast during the early stages of the eighteenth century, the traces of Christianity became rare. The interests of the Portuguese were mainly commercial as well as on political supremacy. The Portuguese missionaries baptized many people, but no attempt was made to indigenize the Church and to integrate it within the indigenous culture. When the missionaries left, the Church quickly disintegrated.

Christianity had an opportunity during this period, but through a lack of commitment towards spreading the Gospel and as a result of lifestyles which did not correspond with Christianity, an opportunity was lost for the church to root itself in this area. When the modern missionaries came, there was no trace of Christianity in East Africa (Nthamburi 1991:5 & Ogutu 1993:85).

6.2 The first Protestant missionary to East Africa

Ogutu (1990) calls the above-mentioned Portuguese presence at the coast the first phase of the history of Christianity in East Africa. The second phase came in the first half of the nineteenth century. The Church Missionary Society initially sent Dr. JL Krapf, a Lutheran missionary, to Abyssinia (the present Ethiopia). After some difficulties with the authorities in this area, he asked
the Church Missionary Society to send him to the Coast of East Africa. He arrived in Mombasa during 1844 with the ambition to establish a chain of missions from East to West Africa (Ogutu 1990:85).

Krapf was joined by J Rebmann in 1846. Between 1847 and 1849 Krapf and Rebmann visited the Chagga people of Tanzania and the Kamba people of Kenya; Krapf himself went as far as Gikuyuland (Bahemuka 1982:21). He was not accepted by the Akamba people of the Ukambani area. It was only after 1851 after he had translated the Gospels of Matthew and Mark into Kikamba that some of the people became more receptive towards the Gospel (Bahemuka 1982:22). When John Rebmann arrived in 1846 Krapf had already translated most of the New Testament into Swahili. The two men moved from the coast fifteen miles inland and lived in the midst of the Mijikanda people. They built a church and invited people to worship with them (Anderson 1977:2).

6.3 Other Protestant missions

The first missionary of the United Methodists Free Church was Thomas Wakefield. Krapf came back to East Africa from Europe in 1862 to help Wakefield establish a mission station at Ribe. More mission stations followed at Ganjoni, (Mazeras), Jomvu and Chonyi. Especially the establishment of a mission station at Jomvu in 1878 was a daring venture since it was in the midst of a Muslim community. "The Arab-Swahili slave owners were a constant threat to the existence of meaningful Christian presence" (Nthamburi 1991:8-9).

The Africa Inland Mission was established as a "faith mission" on a similar basis to that of the China Inland Mission or the Sudan Interior Mission. It began its ministry in Kenya in 1895 under the direction of Peter Cameron Scott (Nthamburi 1991:12-13). The mission was interdenominational "comprising many Baptists, some Methodists, Presbyterians and Anglicans" (Oliver 1969:171).

The partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference had effects on the pattern of missions. Missionary Societies tended to follow their national flag in missions (Nthamburi 1991:10). In this respect the director of the IBEAC, Sir William Mackinnon, encouraged the missions to extend their work into the interior, especially where the company could ensure their safety. Being a Scotsman himself, Mackinnon encouraged the establishment of the East African Scottish Mission. The man who eventually accepted the challenge of establishing this mission was James Steward, which resulted in
the building of a mission station at Thogoto for work amongst the Kikuyu. The mission station was completed in 1899 under the leadership of Thomas Watson.

Other factors which had an influence on the missionary movement in East Africa was the establishment of the British East African Protectorate and the building of the railway between the East Coast and Lake Victoria. The railway provided a safe and cheap way of crossing a thorn-scrub country inhabited by the warlike Akamba and Masai. This resulted in the coming of many missionary societies to the interior.

The Church Missionary Society, which had already established themselves in Taveta by 1890, had Kikuyuland as their other primary target. This brought them in conflict with the Church of Scotland Mission and a division concerning "sphere of influence" was needed to ease the tension. The Society of Friends from England started an industrial mission at Pemba which did not grow much. In 1902 the American Friends, with WR Hotchkiss as leader, organized the "Friends Africa Industrial Mission" with a center at Kaimosi (Nthamburi 1991:11). The Gospel Missionary Society (GMS) was a Pentecostalist element in the Africa Inland Mission which constituted itself in 1902. The GMS remained a small mission and ceased to exist during the 1940s. During 1905 missionaries from the USA started the Church of God in Western Kenya. The proclamation of the Gospel went hand in hand with social services such as educational and medical services. Furthermore, this Church endeavoured to produce local evangelists and missionaries to extend the work of the Church in outlying areas. Another Church that concentrated their mission work in western Kenya was the German Seventh Day Adventists. They started their work in Mwanza (Tanganyika) towards the end of the nineteenth century and came to Kenya in 1906. In 1910 the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) began work in Kenya and subsequently was supported by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). The work grew rapidly, particularly among the Luhya in Western Kenya and Nairobi. The well-known Evangel Publishing House which publishes Christian Literature, belongs to them (Nthamburi 1991:12-13). The Salvation Army established themselves in Kenya in 1921. It opened a number of stations including Nairobi, Thika, Malakisi and Embu. The Wokofu African Church split from the Salvation Army in 1966.

One of the later groups to start mission work was the Southern Baptists who started their ministry in Kenya in 1956. With their large staff they were in a position to expand to many areas simultaneously (Nthamburi 1991:12-13). The Kenya Assemblies of God was established in 1968 and
by 1973 counted 12,000 members in 212 congregations (Barrett 1973:168&183). By 1993 the Church consisted of about 90,000 members in 900 congregations (Johnstone 1993:330).

The non-denominational Revival Fellowship (Bretheren) in Kenya which consists of membership of all the major Churches also need some attention. The publishing of the New Testament in the major spoken languages in Kenya resulted in the emergence of the independent churches especially during the decade 1920-1930. Barrett (1973:111) states that the "soil was being prepared for a new and genuine type of African Christianity". Stimulated by visits in 1937 and 1938 from the first envoys of the revival in Ruanda the Revival Fellowship was established in Kenya. Its membership grew rapidly after World War II, particularly in the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. The Brethern hold that they have no theology distinct from that found in the mainline churches. The whole history of the Revival has been closely bound up with these churches (Barrett 1973:119-117).

Kenya has been called a haven for missions. There has been a conglomeration of many small missions in recent times who feel that they have a mandate to communicate the Gospel. There are also a large number of interdenominational para-church organizations which established themselves in recent years1 (Nthamburi 1991:12-13).

6.4 The Roman Catholic Missions

The Roman Catholics started their activities in Kenya later than the Protestants did. A French congregation of the Holy Ghost began the Roman Catholic Missionary outreach in East Africa. A permanent station was established in Zanzibar in 1863. In 1889 a mission station was opened at Mombasa. Immediately after the railway was finished in 1899, the Holy Ghost Mission moved to Limuru, west of Nairobi (Inkelaar-de Mos 1988:3). They received assistance from the Consolata Fathers, an Italian Society of Turin. The first of these Italian Fathers arrived in 1902 and they began to work in Kikuyuland. The Mill Hill Roman Catholic missionaries came to Kenya via Uganda in 1903. A mission was established at Kisumu and with the posting of Father Matthews van den Bergh to that area the work progressed rapidly (Barrett 1973:31-33)

---

1 For a summary of the vast number of missions as well as interdenominational para-church organizations which entered Kenya in recent years see Barrett 1973:183-188; 225-287 & Nthamburi 1991:7-13.
6.5 Cooperation between missions and churches

The stream of churches and mission organizations from different countries and ecclesiastical backgrounds started arriving in Kenya at the end of the 1800s. Initially these organizations started their ministries close to one another, but each one worked in a certain area. Soon the situation changed and the ministries and areas started to overlap which resulted into a complex ecumenical question. Problems occurred especially in the Nairobi and Kisumu areas which were both densely populated. During 1908 and 1909 the problems were discussed at two conferences in the mentioned areas.

In 1913 a fully pledged conference took place at Kikuyu close to Nairobi where it was decided that a federation of Churches and organizations would be formed with the ideal of one common Church in future. Only Europeans attended the conference and it was well attended by the Anglican Church Missionary Society, the Scottish Presbyterians, the Methodist Mission, the African Inland Mission, the Seven Day Adventists and the American Quakers (De Blois 1971:73). The federation developed into an alliance whereby cooperation took place more on a practical and social level than in ecclesiastical affairs (Nthamburi 1991:21-22). By 1924 so many other Churches and organizations joined the alliance that a new way of cooperation became necessary. The situation resulted in the establishment of the Kenya Missionary Council which in turn became the Christian Council of Kenya in 1943.

No longer was there an ideal for an united or super church, but the council provided the opportunity for churches, mission organizations, Christian groups and institutions to negotiate and plan together. In 1967 the name was changed once again to the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK) (De Blois 1971:74). The mission of the NCCK by 2000 was to "facilitate the united mission of the Christian Church in Kenya in the proclamation and demonstration of the holistic witness of the Church through corporate activities and by enabling community programmes" (NCCK 2000). The Council states that their core business falls into four parts: Theology (promoting holistic witness); Advocacy (lobbying for positive change); Development (improving people's welfare) and capacity building (NCCK 2000).
6.6 From mission to church

The early 1960's signaled the start of the autonomy of indigenous churches in Kenya. This was inevitable since the nation was in the process of becoming independent.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) was one of the few churches which became autonomous before the independence of Kenya. The PCEA who seems to have set the stage for autonomy came in 1956, but did not have local leadership until 1961 when Charles Muhoro became the first local moderator. John Gatu was elected as the first General Secretary in 1964 (Nthamburi 1991:24).

The African Inland Mission (AIM) became the African Inland Church (AIC) in 1943. In 1945 the first local minister, Rev. Benjamin Watuma, was ordained. In 1972 a new constitution was drawn up, giving this Church autonomy and jurisdiction over the mission work (Bahemuka 1982:26).

A gradual process characterized the autonomy of the Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican). In 1921 the first diocesan Synod drew locals and Europeans together to discuss the ministry of one Church (Karanja 1999:100). The local bishops of the Church were consecrated since 1955. In 1960 the Anglican Church in East Africa became a province and incorporated Anglican dioceses in Kenya, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. It was in 1970 that the province was divided into two and the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) came into existence with Festo Olang' as first Archbishop of Kenya (Nthamburi 1991:25).

The Methodist Missionary Society became the Methodist Church in Kenya in 1955. The Church remained to be an overseas district of the British Conference. It became autonomous when the Deed of Foundation was signed in January 1967, thereby inaugurating the new conference. It was not until this time that indigenous leadership took over the general administration of the Church (Nthamburi 1982:3-4). The first presiding Bishop was Ronald Mn'gong'o with Lawi Imathiu as the Secretary of the Conference (Nthamburi 1982:141).

Catholic dioceses can never be described as autonomous in the same sense as other Churches. Still, it is possible to speak of autonomy in the sense that the bishop of a diocese makes decisions that affect his diocese and is responsible only to the Pope. It is in this respect significant to trace the
numbers of local bishops in relation to the numbers of their European counterparts through the years. Although the first local bishop, Maurice Otunga, became assistant Bishop of Kisumu in 1957, it is notable that by 1968 there were still nine white bishops compared to two local bishops. By 1973 there were seven white bishops and six local bishops in the thirteen dioceses in Kenya. In 1971 Maurice Otunga succeeded John McCarthy to the post of Archbishop of Nairobi (Nthamburi 1991:25-26).

In summary it can be said that Christianity has clearly been adopted as their own religion by the majority of Kenyans. It has been introduced with remarkable success in Kenya and an estimated 82.1% (Johnstone 1993:330) of the population claims to be Christian. Humanly speaking, the expansion of Christianity in the country has been largely an African achievement due to African initiatives. The contribution of local believers during the establishment of Christianity in Kenya is clear (Barrett 1972:36-39). But especially since the early 1960s the initiatives of local leadership in the formation and development of national churches were inevitable towards the growth of Christianity in Kenya.

David B. Barret (1973) states that statistics show that although the first seed in the planting of the Christian faith was originally a foreign import, Christianity in Kenya cannot be thought of as a foreign transplant. The expansion of Christianity has not been due primarily to external forces (foreign missions, colonial pressures, Western education or civilization); internal forces within the African churches themselves ensured this expansion. "In almost all areas and at almost all periods, growth has sprung directly, and measurably, out of the Christian community itself." Christianity in Kenya can be viewed as an indigenous plant from the very start. "What this means is that the startling growth of the churches in Kenya - and across the whole of Black Africa also - is a sign of the arrival of the Kingdom of God in Africa in genuinely indigenous form." Christianity has been accepted by Africans from the earliest days as a true African religion, with roots firmly in African soil (Barrett 1973:169-170).

The Reformed Church of East Africa grew out of the missionary enterprise of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Against the background of the foregoing introductory survey of the growth of Christianity in Kenya, the following chapter deals with the Dutch Reformed Church and its Mission enterprise in Kenya.
CHAPTER THREE

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH MISSION IN KENYA

Introduction

It is true that many Europeans who came to East Africa, and for the purpose of this study, especially to Kenya, did not always come with the vision to develop the country for the sake of the country. Quite often personal gain and benefit were the motivation behind the settlement of expatriates. This happened especially during the initial stages of this century.

The motives of the first South Africans to come to British East Africa (Kenya) were not any different. Driven by matters which will be dealt with in par. 2.1.1 of this chapter, the first "Afrikaners" (South Africans) left the South to look for land in East Africa. Agriculture was the main objective of these people. The development and progress that took place wherever they went, was of course beneficial to the country, but not the driving force behind their coming. The relationship between the farmers and their employees, the status of an African in the eyes of a white man in those days and the role played by the concept of racial segregation influenced the early history of the Reformed Church of East Africa. Even up to almost a century after the South Africans came to Kenya some of the pastors still recall how they and their families were not allowed to sit on the chairs in the house of the South African missionary. They had to sit on the floor. Horror stories are told of the harsh punishment meted out to farm workers by their employers. It should be noted, however, that these attitudes were not found only amongst the South Africans, but they were common to all the colonialists and settlers. For instance, as one pages through Mbiti's book (1969:216-228), one becomes aware of the unacceptable treatment of African people all over the continent, as some of the African feelings and emotions towards this era are reflected.

When recalling the coming of the South Africans to Kenya, it would be an inaccurate account of history if the white-black relationship influenced by the emerging ideologies, attitudes and probable incidents mentioned above, were ignored. This should also be taken into account when interpreting the development of the Reformed Church of East Africa, although the scope of this study does not allow to go into it in great detail. The attitudes of the South Africans towards these matters...
influenced the decisions that were made and the actions taken by them. These in turn influenced the early history of the Reformed Church of East Africa and therefore cannot be ignored.

The Colonial era was a period in history of which the Western World can not be proud. Not only from a political point of view this is the case, but also in many respects from an ecclesiastical and missionary perspective. When considering the brief history of the South Africans (and more specifically the Dutch Reformed Church) in Kenya, it is clear that the West and the South Africans made dreadful mistakes. On a more positive note, the study recognizes the fact that if the South Africans (and with them the Dutch Reformed Church) had not come to British East Africa, the Reformed Church of East Africa would never have come into existence on the Uasin Gishu ("streams of cows") Plateau in the Eldoret area.

In an article in the East African Standard on the South African ties with Eldoret, John Kituy writes: "the bond for both is the church that was initiated in the Uasin Gishu by the Boer immigrants who left South Africa after losing the Anglo Boer war" (Kituy 1997:7). Although many South Africans returned to the South before and after Uhuru (independence), a vital part of the history of the Church of the Lord Jesus was written. The Dutch Reformed Church played a role in God's plan with the people of East Africa.

In establishing a Reformed Church on the equator in East Africa a combination of work done by individuals and circumstances led to the foundation of a unique missionary outreach which started on the Uasin Gishu Plateau in Western Kenya. Several contributing factors led to this outreach towards the African people in the Eldoret area. The encouragement of the Dutch Reformed ministers, especially that of Rev. MP Loubser toward mission work, together with a call coming from the African people themselves to preach the Gospel to the nationals in the area, resulted in the outreach by a few farmers towards their local employees in the 1930s. Throughout this initial attempt the Church Council of the Vergenoeg congregation realized that mission work could no longer be ignored at a formal level. This eventually led to the calling of a full-time missionary to the Vergenoeg congregation in 1944.

Several factors contributed to the calling of a full-time missionary in the person of Rev. BB Eybers. So did the fact that the farmers became quite prosperous during World War II. It is uncertain to what
extent the controversial situation in which Rev. and Mrs. Eybers left Malawi\textsuperscript{1} had an influence on him accepting the call as full-time missionary to Vergenoeg. What is of more importance is that these two missionaries played a significant role in God’s plan in the founding of the Reformed Church of East Africa.

1. **Brief historical survey of the Dutch Reformed Church mission enterprise**

1.1 Early beginnings

The Reformed Church of East Africa developed out of a missionary outreach by a Dutch Reformed congregation in East Africa. The roots of the 1935 mission policy of the DRC, which guided the congregation in this outreach, goes back many centuries. For a better understanding of the missionary endeavour of the Vergenoeg congregation in East Africa, the DRC and its mission enterprise should be considered.

Through the initiative of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East Indian Company)\textsuperscript{2} the first Europeans started settling at the Cape in 1652. As a trading company with mainly commercial objectives, religious purposes were not of the top priorities of the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOIC). Still the company did not forget the spiritual well-being of the people working for them (Van der Watt 1975:2-3). From these early days caregivers were provided for Jan van Riebeeck, the commander at the Cape and his helpers. These were the so-called sick-comforters who read the evening prayers as well as the sermon on Sundays. The first sick-comforter was Willem Barentsz Wyland, followed by Pieter van der Stael and Ernestus Back. The sacraments were only administered when there happened to be a minister on one of the passing ships (Boeseken 1985:35).

In 1658 500 slaves arrived from West Africa. Christianity and the pagan world came increasingly into contact. If a non-European accepted the Christian faith, he was taken up into the Christian community. At this point in time it was impossible to launch a organized missionary action. Still, the

\textsuperscript{1} See personal file BB Eybers (Nyasaland) in DRC Archives, Cape Town.

\textsuperscript{2} From 1602-1798 this company (United East Indian Company) did mission work on behalf of the Church in the Netherlands. See Tigchelaar (1997) pp. 34-42 for the vast impact of this company on missions.
sick-comforters played an important role in the incorporation of the above mentioned believers and as such became missionary pioneers at the Cape (Van der Watt 1975:6). During these initial years Jan van Riebeeck, commander at the Cape, asked the VOIC to send a minister to the Cape. Only after thirteen years, in 1665, Joannes van Arckel was sent to take care of the ministry at the Cape and in the same year the first congregation was established (Van der Watt 1975:7-8).

During the second half of the 16th century Reformed Protestantism found its way to different countries in Europe. As a result the Church that was established in the Netherlands, became known as the "Gereformeerde" (Reformed) Church. Sometimes it was also referred to as the Dutch Reformed Church to indicate from which country it came. By so doing, the Church merely used the name of the Calvinistic Church in France "l'Eglise Reformee". For almost two centuries this was the only name used for the Calvinistic Church and religion in the Netherlands. This was also the name of the Church in the Cape. From 1842 the Church in South Africa officially became known as the "Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk" (Dutch Reformed Church). The official name became necessary after 1806 when the British annexation of the Cape took place. With British rule, many English Churches were established at the Cape. To distinguish themselves from these Churches, the Afrikaners added the geographic and linguistic distinction of their Dutch origin (Van der Watt 1976:10-11).

1.2 Private initiative

From 1652 to 1800 missionary work by the Dutch Reformed Church was basically done through private initiative. The missionary challenge at the most southern tip of Africa was therefore initially taken up, not by the Church, but by individuals. During these early years sick-comforters, like W Wylant tried to minister to the Khoi Khoi (called Hottentots by the settlers) on the Cape peninsula, but was discouraged by the little progress he made. The local ministers also realized the spiritual needs of the unreached and Rev. P Kalden even went as far as trying to learn the difficult Khoi Khoi language (Van der Watt 1975:47-48). During the time of Wylant's successor, P van der Stael, the first positive result of the approach to the Khoi Khoi came about. "A young Hottentot girl named Krotoa became a servant of Commander van Riebeeck's wife. She and her husband took special interest in the girl's spiritual progress. On 3 May 1662 she was baptized as Eva - the first indigenous person to become a Christian in South Africa" (Cronje, 1982:12). Apart from the ministry among the Khoi Khoi, the slaves at the Cape were also a missionary challenge. This proved to be a much more fruitful
ministry than the above-mentioned one. When a slave became a Christian, he/she was allowed to claim freedom, which resulted in the sacrament of baptism being misused at times.

These initial attempts at missionary work were not crowned with great success. The Church first needed a missionary vision in order to realize the opportunity at hand in the Cape (Van der Watt 1975:47-48). Especially two ministers played a significant role in establishing such a missionary vision at the Cape. HR van Lier (1786-1793) arrived from the Netherlands in 1786 and was ordained as minister in the Cape Town congregation. In his ministry he emphasized the importance of proclaiming the Gospel to all people as the primary task of the church. Although Van Lier died after a short ministry of only six years at the Cape, his encouragement resulted in a fresh interest in missions among many people. These efforts were strengthened and stimulated by MC Vos (1794-1818) who left the Cape for his studies in the Netherlands and returned to the Cape one year after Van Lier’s death. After being ordained as minister at Roodezand (Tulbagh), he started encouraging church members towards outreach to slaves and Hottentots, which soon resulted in religious education for servants twice a week. Owing to his efforts family devotions, which included slaves and servants, revived in many homes and members spontaneously started doing mission work.

As a result of a letter of Vos to the Netherlands to ask for missionaries, the first missionaries from the LMS arrived at the Cape. Furthermore, he also played a significant role in the establishment in 1799 of the South African Missionary Society (SAMS) (Crafford 1982:22-24).

1.3 Missionary societies

It was only with the missionary awakening towards the end of the eighteenth century that missionary societies arrived in South Africa from abroad. This awakening was preceded by the Moravian missionary movement almost a century early. Georg Schmidt of the Moravians was the first to arrive in 1737. The London Missionary Society followed much later in 1799 with the arrival of Dr. JT van der Kemp. Many other organizations came during these years, each with its own spirituality, policy and methods³ (Van der Watt 1976:48-53).

At the Cape Christians had been greatly inspired by the earliest missionary societies in England and

³ Also see par. 1.5.
the Netherlands and the desire was awakened for the founding of a similar society in South Africa. Hence the South African Missionary Society (SAMS) was founded in 1799 (Cronje, 1982:18-19).

Missionary Societies played a significant role in the mission history of the DRC. The SAMS and other organizations working towards the same goal stimulated the missionary interest in the DRC to quite an extent. The societies strengthened the idea in the DRC that different groups needed separate, specialized approaches in order to win them for Christ. In the long run this resulted in the establishment of separate churches for different cultural groups. Furthermore, the societies also played a significant role in the incentive for church mission in the DRC. A number of SAMS-congregations came into being and were later carried over to the DRC (Crafford, 1982:28). It was only after the first Synod in 1824 that the Dutch Reformed Church started organized missionary work. This led to a new chapter in the missionary history of the Dutch Reformed Church (Van der Watt, 1976:48-53).

1.4 The Synod of 1824 and mission work

Prior to 1824 several factors played a restrictive role in the Dutch Reformed Church Mission enterprise. When Pauw (1980) evaluates the attempts by the DRC, he refers to three issues which restricted the development of the work during these early years: Firstly, the role played by the Church in the Netherlands whereby the autonomy of the DRC was not fully recognized and the interference of the State in Church affairs. Secondly, the shortage of ministers to serve the increasing number of congregations which hampered the ministry. Thirdly, "the antipathy generated amongst many colonists by the actions and attitudes of certain foreign missionaries, notably of the London Missionary Society" (Pauw, 1980:44-45).

The first Synod played a significant role in the future mission activities of the Church. Mission would no longer be practiced through independent and individual efforts, but became part of the official ministry of the Church. The most important decision taken by the Synod was the fact that missionaries could in future be ordained exclusively for the task of mission work. The office of missionary, in distinction of that of ministers, officially came into existence at this point (Van der Watt, 1980:110).

The first missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, Leopold Marquard, was ordained in 1826. With
his ordination, a ministry focussing exclusively on mission work was launched (Cronje 1982:22). With the introduction of the office of missionary, reaching out to non-Europeans as a separate group became common practice. The seed for separate Churches was already sown at this point. In practice a separate ministry began to develop whereby Coloureds assembled on their own for prayer meetings and public worship (Van der Watt 1980:110).

During the Synod of 1857 a decision of historic significance was taken when a commission was appointed to investigate the possibilities of foreign missions (Van der Watt 1980:113). A few years later the first missionaries were sent to Northern Transvaal where the work began in 1863 at Soutpansberg and in 1864 at Saulspoort in Western Transvaal. In 1865 SJG Hofmeyr was placed as a missionary at Saulspoort and became the first DRC foreign missionary (Cronje, 1982:41). From Saulspoort the work was extended into Botswana at Mochudi in 1877. "This was the beginning of an extensive Foreign Mission enterprise of the Dutch Reformed Church which soon extended its work into Malawi (1888), Zimbabwe (1891), Zambia (1899), Mozambique (1908), Nigeria, in Tivland (1911) and Kenya (1944). The work in Nigeria was eventually handed over to the Christian Reformed Church of the USA in 1963 and the work in Kenya to the Reformed Mission League in 1961" (Pauw 1980:48).

1.5 Mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church

1.5.1 Initial mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church

During the first two centuries of church-planting at the Cape, Europeans and non-Europeans were, irrespective of colour and cultural background, incorporated into the Dutch Reformed Church. Ministry to non-Europeans especially during the nineteenth century, started to develop along separate lines (Van der Merwe: 1967:18). The missionary task among people of other races continued to remain a priority on the agenda of the DRC Synods during the years following the first Synod in 1824. Congregations were kept well-informed and encouraged for the missionary task which awaited the Church (Van der Watt 1980:110).

As early as the 1820's an ambivalence within the mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church became noticeable. On the one hand there was the established practice of incorporating converts into existing European congregations, on the other hand provision was now also made for separate
ministry to non-Europeans. At the Synod of 1829 a decision was made on the joint partaking of the sacrament of Holy Communion by Europeans and non-Europeans. The Synod unequivocally decided that no distinction should be made between church members.

Practical ministerial arrangements in the years to come, especially at the Synod of 1834, eventually led to a decision by the Synod of 1857 to permit the separate administration of Holy Communion to people from a non-Western background. This was in fact not a new mission policy laid down by the Dutch Reformed Church. On the one hand the Synod made use of the practice of assimilation whereby slaves and locals were, since the early years, incorporated into the congregations at the Cape without any distinction. The Synods of 1829, 1837 and 1842 underlined this practice within the DRC. On the other hand the practice of differentiation, whereby arrangements were made for instruction in separate places of worship, especially for slaves (Van der Watt 1980:112) was also a practical arrangement of the DRC ministry (Van der Merwe 1967:18).

1.5.2 The Mission policy of 1935

Although BB Eybers' approach towards mission work reflected paternalistic notions, his strategy should be evaluated in the context of the policy of Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church at the time of his ministry in East Africa.

After almost a century of mission work among Coloureds and Africans, the DRC eventually developed a mission policy. After discussions, which lasted a few years, the Council of Dutch Reformed Churches produced an official statement of policy in 1935 (Gerdener 1951:82-84). "This policy was to form the basis of the Mission enterprise of the Dutch Reformed Churches for years to come." (Pauw 1980:49).

With regard to the theological foundations of the 1935 policy, Gerdener (1951) states that in line with the theology of Calvin, the policy is based on the fact that God reigns. Secondly, it accepts the authority of Scripture. Concerning the expansion of the Kingdom of God, Gerdener states that the Dutch Reformed Church always held this principle in high regard. Thirdly, the Biblical principle of Acts 1:8 guided the Church in its policy on mission. (Gerdener 1951:75-77).

According to Gerdener the policy was based on Scripture on the decision, promise and command of
God (Gerdener 1951:85). The mission policy of 1935 stated the following: The aim of Mission was the proclamation of the Gospel to pagans (Crafford 1994:128). The Church had the conviction that the proclamation of the Gospel and the gathering in of souls for the Kingdom of God was the only healthy premise for effective mission work. Closely connected to this conviction was the goal of establishing churches and of their edification so that they would develop into a self-supporting, self-governing and self-expanding church and hence become a completely autonomous church.

Other methods such as education, medical, agricultural and other forms of aid and activities to be implemented where necessary were seen as auxiliary methods to open the hearts of non-Christians to the Gospel. The desire for upliftment among the heathen should not be discouraged, but in fact should be supported and assisted in appropriate ways. Proclaiming the Gospel should not result in de-christianization. Christianity should not spoil the language and culture of a people. Instead, those customs and traditions which do not contradict Christianity should be appreciated, preserved and purified. The mission field of the church was determined through Scriptural guidance from Acts 1:8. Unless work was established and carried out in an appropriate way on the home front, expansion of the work to foreign fields should not be considered. Concerning relationships with other churches, organizations and governments it was stated that open cooperation with recognized churches as well as governments should be pursued. These ties should be encouraged and maintained without sacrificing any principles laid down by the Church. In cooperating with non-recognized Protestant and other religious bodies the DRC would act according to the Spirit of Christ, led by the particular circumstances.

As far as education and teaching were concerned the policy left room for the Church to be involved in secular education offered by the State, as long as there was opportunities for religious input. In educating people, their language, history and culture should not be held in contempt. These elements should rather be enhanced to prepare a person for better citizenship and to take his/her place as full member of his/her own society. It was recognized that each nation had the right to its own identity. In addition efforts were to be made to assist and equip people in their economic struggle.

The 1935 policy also reflects the traditional fear of the Afrikaner concerning the equalization ("gelykstelling") of black and white. This fear has its roots in the rejection of the idea of mixed races. The Church dissociated itself completely from racial integration in its mission policy, while at the
same time pursuing the concept of each person developing to their highest possible social status (Gerdener 1951:85-92).

GBA Gerdener, together with J du Plessis (1932), had a strong influence on the above-mentioned Mission policy and practice in the Dutch Reformed Church. As clearly reflected in the Mission policy of 1935, Gerdener often used history as well as the practical demands as foundation in his approach to missions. Although he tried to mediate between the different approaches within the DRC, he personally preferred differential ("eiesoortige") development, which in practice might bring separate churches for different races, but he opposed the idea of systemizing this concept in a dogmatic system (Van der Watt 1991:678).

When Pauw (1980) evaluates this policy he points out that this policy "was not purely Reformed in the narrower sense of the word". From at least three quarters the DRC was influenced from various sides in shaping its policy:

- **German Lutheran concepts.** "From this quarter the concepts of 'Volkskirche' or 'Church of and for the people,' as well as 'Volkseigentumlichkeit', in which the cultural identity of a people and the indigenisation of the Church was emphasised." These ideas were reflected in the DRC Mission policy in its emphasis on "national identity and preservation of cultural and national qualities of a nation and the erection of national Churches" (Pauw 1980:51-52).

- **Anglo-American concepts.** The ideas of Henry Venn, through his formula of self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending churches, are reflected strongly in the 1935 policy "and in practice could be said to have become virtually a criterium for granting autonomy to young Churches".

- **Mission Societies.** Many independent societies operated in South Africa and a strong pietistic element characterized their ministry. This emphasis on an inner, personal faith, together with the saving of souls, resulted in a weaker emphasis on Church planting and edification (Pauw 1980:51-53).

"The sum total of these influences as regards the DRC policy on Mission is threefold: Firstly, there can be found an emphasis on soul-winning and implanting an individual faith. Secondly, there is an
emphasis on planting a church which must grow towards autonomy through a long process of being guided by the parent body in becoming self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending... Thirdly, one finds an emphasis on nation-centred Church planting." (Pauw 1980:53-54).

Whether indigenization was the real priority when the DRC reflected on the initial mission policy or whether this concept was used to create a missiological foundation for the greater priority of separate Churches remains a question. Van der Watt (1991) is not convinced that the German concept of indigenization was really adopted into the mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church. He argues that the idea of ecclesiastical distinctiveness never became a priority in the DRC. The "daughter church" particularly became a blueprint of the "mother church". What happened in practice was that the DRC evaluated the indigenous practices negatively (Van der Watt 1991:676).

Another question to be raised concerns the matter of "autonomous" Churches and whether it was the ideas of Anderson and Venn or German Missiology that had in this respect the strongest influence on the mission policy of the DRC. Warneck (1892-1903: Vol I:13ff) understood mission as a pedagogical process. In this process the sending Church is called as parent in guiding the young Church. In the mission policy of the DRC this idea was emphasized by Gerdener. The conviction that the European was called to uplift the non-European in Africa was also reflected in this policy. In this respect the "mother church" had an obligation of supervision in her relationship to the "daughter church". This concept was constitutionalized by Gerdener whereby the authority over a Church ("daughter church") was put into the hands of another Church ("mother church") (Van der Watt 1991:677).

This notion was clearly reflected in the mission work done by the Bwana Loubser Mission in western Kenya. The implementation of the 1935 policy, not only as mission policy but also as a reflection of the context within which it was established, raised many questions in the minds of the indigenous peoples of East Africa.

1.5.3 The founding of separate mission congregations by the DRC

Due to the fact that three separate Mission Churches was established by the DRC Mission in Kenya, it is necessary to reflect on this practice in the DRC. By the middle of the nineteenth century Missionary societies in Southern Africa had done evangelism among the Hottentots, slaves and
Africans. Separate buildings were erected for this purpose and services conducted in the mother tongue. At this point in time, converts from the indigenous people enjoyed full membership with Europeans in DRC congregations. Separate services for slaves and others had also been introduced (Cronje 1982:22-23). At the point where ministers were ordained only for mission work, the move towards a separate ministry towards Non-Europeans started, resulting in "Mission congregations" for the indigenous people (Van der Watt 1980:110).

The above-mentioned ambivalent notion in the mission policy of the DRC resulted in the concept of a separate ministry to people of other races which gradually emerged and "which would eventually lead to the formation in 1881 of a separate church organization for believers of the Coloured population. This concept of creating what was to become autonomous, independent church bodies amongst believers of various racial groups within South Africa and also in its spheres of work elsewhere in Africa, became one of the mainstays of the mission policy of the Dutch Reformed Church" (Pauw 1980:47).

By 1881 these arrangements led to the founding of a separate "mission" church for people of colour. "Church leaders who supported this decision, then and even up the present time, pointed out that:

• It was only a matter of sanctioning an already existing practice.
• Many Coloured people felt more at ease in their own congregations and some of them even asked for a separate ministry.
• In their own Church the possibilities for assuming leadership were far greater for Coloured members than in an integrated Church with Europeans." (Cronje 1982:22-23).

During the early stages of the DRC mission work, they concentrated on the Coloured population, some converts from the Xhosa and other tribal groups joined the congregations of the DRC Mission Church. As a result of linguistic differences this practice did not prove very successful. As a result of the gradual infiltration of African labour into the Cape Town area a separate ministry was started to meet their spiritual needs (Cronje 1982:45).

1.5.4 The mission policy of the DRC and apartheid

Due to the fact that the ministry of the DRC in East Africa reflected the principles of separate
development, it is necessary to consider such principles in the mission policy of the DRC and its ties with the system of apartheid. Although apartheid only became official policy of the National Party in 1948, its roots were established long beforehand. During the process of establishing this political system, the DRC did not escape the influence of the ideology behind it (Crafford 1994:124).

Kgatla (1989) goes as far as stating that the policy of "apartheid" which was "officially accepted by the DRC in 1935 as its mission policy, had been 'born' in the womb of the DRC" (Kgatla 1989:532). Although the DRC had strong ties with the policy of apartheid, it can, however, never be said that the Church formally accepted it as policy. Still, the basic principles underlying the policy of apartheid had been accepted by the DRC. Within the framework of apartheid the 1935 Mission policy clearly stated its views on education, society and economical affairs.

Prior to the establishment of the 1935 mission policy of the DRC a certain ambivalence is noticeable in several documents. On the one hand there was the complete rejection of mixing between black and white, while on the other the whites were to do everything in their power to help Africans to develop to their full potential as people created in the image of God and therefore as also having rights (Crafford 1994:124).

In the mission policy of 1935 the same ambivalence is present. "The traditional fear of the Afrikaner for 'equalisation' ("gelykstelling")] between black and white was born of his rejection of the idea of mixed races. The Church dissociates itself completely from such mixing and anything that would contribute to it. On the other hand the Church does not wish to stifle the ability of the African of reaching his potential social status. Hence, where the Church dissociates itself from social equalization in the sense of playing down racial and colour distinctions between black and white, it encourages social differentiation and spiritual and cultural segregation to the advantage of both groups" (own translation) (Gerdener 1951:91).

Because of this point of view, the Mission Council of Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa requested the government on several occasions between 1942 and 1944 to introduce apartheid laws. By 1950 the Church saw apartheid as a Biblical justified policy and pleaded for complete segregation in social, economical and political spheres (Crafford 1994:125). These elements surfaced clearly in the ministry of the DRC in East Africa. When the question of the training of African ministers appeared on the agenda of the Vergenoeg congregation for the first time, "the traditional fear of the
Afrikaner of 'equalisation' (gelykstelling) between black and white" was the first objection tabled against such a development.

It is also noteworthy that the three African ministers never attended the meetings of the Local Mission Committee of Vergenoeg while Eybers served as missionary in East Africa, but were invited to attend the meetings after Eybers had left. (Vergenoeg LMC 30/06/60). Also, no Kenyan attended a service of the Vergenoeg congregation in Eldoret. The first time nationals were allowed to attend a service was when the Church was handed over to the Africa Gospel Church in 1975 (Labuschagne 1996:224). Bisem's interviews with RCEA members who were part of the Bwana Loubser Mission before independence, reflect the negative impact of certain aspects of the ministry of the DRC during these years (Bisem 1983:7-9).

It falls outside the scope of this study to evaluate the full consequences of the DRC Mission policy and its ties with the system of apartheid. For the purpose of this study it is sufficient to point out that whatever racial issues surfaced during the ministry of the DRC in East Africa, they did not occur in isolation.

2. South Africans prepare to leave for East Africa (1902-1908)

Due to the fact that the South African history up to 1902 and specifically the relationship between the "Boers" and the British Colonial rule directly influenced the coming of the South Africans to East Africa, it is necessary to consider this relationship briefly.

2.1 Anglo-Boer relations during the 1800s

The Dutch colonial rule over the Cape came to a final end during the Battle of Blouberg against the British in 1806 (Kotze, 1985:120). Since 1822 the British enforced a policy of Anglicisation in the

---

4 The English translation for the Afrikaans word "boer" is farmer. Due to the predominant farming community that settled in East Africa (and elsewhere) the South Africans were referred to as "boers". Kenyans used the word "Kaburu" which is derived from "boer" for South Africans.

5 Through this process the English language as universal language was enforced by the British which evoked strong negative feelings from the South Africans.
Cape (Kotze, 1985:131). As time passed the Afrikaners experienced more and more dissatisfaction with the British government which resulted in the "Groot Trek" (Great Trek) (1834-1854). Through this movement many Afrikaners moved further away from the Cape Colony with the hope of governing themselves free from British interference. This ideal became a reality when Britain accepted the independence of the first "Groot Trek" Republic (Transvaal) in 1852. The second Trek Republic (Orange Free State) came into existence in 1854 with the signing of the Bloemfontein Convention (Muller 1985:181). In April 1877 Britain declared the Transvaal, British territory (Du Plessis 1985:272). This action led to the first war for freedom in which the Afrikaners defeated the British during the battle of Amajuba in February 1881 (Du Plessis 1985:279).

The Second "War of Independence" (1899-1902) is significant for this study. As a result of this war, in which the British defeated the Boer Republics, many South African Boers decided to leave the country. Some wanted to move yet further away from British rule while others were driven by economical motives. Many South Africans moved to East Africa to find a new life.

The war started in May 1899. Towards the end that year, 10 000 British troops were on their way to South Africa. The British defeated the Boers during a period of thirty-two months. Both sides suffered great losses. Agriculture in the Transvaal and Orange Free State were brought to a complete standstill and the country in these areas was left in ruins (Pakkenham 1991:580-581). Not only was the land affected but the Afrikaner nation was divided. When the Transvaal and Free State lost their freedom many Afrikaners surrendered to the British. These "hands-uppers" were viewed as weaklings by the rest, but were still accepted. On the contrary the attitudes towards the "Joiners" ("National Scouts") (Van Zyl 1985:374) was completely different. They had joined the British and helped them against the Afrikaners during the later stages of the war. This group was completely rejected by the Afrikaners. They no longer felt at home with the others in one Church building and with the help of the British they worshiped separately (Van der Watt 1980:178-188). Because of this rejection some "hands-uppers" and "joiners" decided to leave with others for East Africa. It is difficult to determine what percentage of those who moved to East Africa was handsuppers or joiners. What is significant is the fact that the majority of the Boers who left came from the Eastern Transvaal, especially the districts of Ermelo-Bethal-Middelburg, which

---

6 Also see Van Wijk 1987:14 and Changuion 1975:3.
7 This was also the area where the "Scout" Church were established in 1903.
was the area from where the majority of the National Scouts came (Changuion 1975:23).

When the future of the Afrikaner people hung in the balance, their Church suffered with them. It was during these years that the Dutch Reformed Church became deeply involved with the affairs of the Afrikaner people. During the war the Church followed the believers to the battlefield. After the war the Church played a key role in the redevelopment programme, as well as in the process of reconciliation between its members (Van der Watt 1980:201).

2.2 Reasons for leaving

The South Africans did not leave their country with a view to the christianization of the indigenous peoples of East Africa, but as believers who were taking their Christian faith and lifestyle with them. Eventually the South Africans did play a significant role in the christianization process of African peoples, especially in the Western part of Kenya through a formal missionary action.

The inclination to move from one place to the other ("trekgees"), the adventure of discovering the unknown, religious motives and many other reasons could be given for the coming of the South Africans to East Africa. But, when the historical situation together with the specific needs at that time both in South Africa and East Africa are considered, it becomes clear what the actual reasons for their coming were. The Government of the East African Protectorate perceived the need of establishing settlers in East Africa. The South Africans were looking for a better future than what seemed likely at that time in their own country. However, it is important to remember that these reasons did not influence the decisions taken in isolation. They all worked together in the decision-making process. Political motives, the invitation from the East African Governments to settle there and the agricultural potential of the area thus all worked together to convince 1300 South Africans to settle in East Africa between 1902 and 1914.

2.2.1 Political motives

On the 31st of May 1902 the peace treaty at Vereeniging was signed. The Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) came to an end. The two "Boer Republics" lost their freedom. The war cost Britain 20 000 lives and 200 million pounds (Pakkenham 1991:580-581). It cost the Boers even more: About 20 000 Africans and 34 116 Boers died of whom 3990 were Boers who died, on the battle-field. The rest were mainly women and children who died in British concentration camps where they had been
placed during the course of the war (Changuion 1975:7).

Many Boers did not feel comfortable living under British rule and therefore decided to leave. Interviews with Afrikaners formerly living in East Africa indicated that political motives had the strongest influence on the decision to leave South Africa. In fact, 90% of the people interviewed indicated that the main reason for leaving was the fact that their ancestors were not prepared to live under the British flag (Changuion 1975:10). They immigrated to Argentina, East Africa, South-West Africa (Namibia) and to the United States. German East Africa was chosen because the South Africans preferred German rule to British rule. Due to conflict between the South Africans and the German government, many eventually left for British East Africa. Cronje suggests that they were probably more willing to live under British rule outside South Africa (Cronje 1981:283-285).

Another motive mentioned in the literature on the Afrikaner in East Africa is the fact that "joiners" and "hands-uppers" of the Anglo-Boer War also were part of the group that left for East Africa.

2.2.2 Invitation from East African Governments

Just after the turn of the century Germany and England started with campaigns whereby they invited Settlers to East Africa. To make the railway from Mombasa to Kisumu viable, the East African protectorate believed that it was vital that Settlers should establish themselves in the area. It was believed that the Africans "would never be able to supply enough traffic without assistance" (Marsh 1957:165). The Commissioner for the East African Protectorate "hoped that the unsettled, poverty-stricken state of the country at the end of the Anglo-Boer War might mean that the South Africans might be tempted by the opportunities offered in East Africa" (Marsh 1957:166).

2.2.3 Agricultural purposes

At the right time in South Africa Sir Charles Elliot, the Commissioner for the East African Protectorate, advertised the agricultural potential and available land in East Africa, (Marsh 1957:166). The majority of the South Africans that came to East Africa were farmers. The post-war depression and the terrible state of the land after the war, together with the possibility of cheap, fertile
land and available labor in East Africa, tempted many farmers to consider moving to East Africa (Cronje 1981:286).

2.3 South African settlers to East Africa.

The first scouting expedition or "Voortrekkers" (pioneers) who left South Africa for East Africa arrived in the country in 1903. This group, under the leadership of General Pieter Joubert, were the first "Afrikaners" to travel through the interior of British East Africa (Loots 1958:17). They were followed by the Large Commission ("Groot Kommissie") in 1904, a second scouting expedition who also went to East Africa to investigate the possibilities of this distant land (Cronje 1981:286).

Quite a number of groups moved to German East Africa (Tanzania), but the majority eventually settled in British East Africa (Kenya). The first South African immigrant to British East Africa arrived in Mombasa on a ship called "Africa" on Saturday 17 October 1903. He was WJ (Bon) van Breda. He and his two brothers, Piet and Dirk, were probably the first Afrikaners to settle on the Uasin Gishu Plateau. Each one of them received a large portion of land from the government for farming purposes. Bon van Breda's short stay in British East Africa ended when he was killed by members of the Elgeo tribe in 1907. Together with the Van Breda's, Frans Arnoldi and his son also explored the area. He went back to Middelburg to collect his family and returned with them to Nakuru. Frans Arnoldi, who later moved to the Uasin Gishu, played a key role in the establishment of the Vergenoeg congregation in Eldoret.

The largest group to British East Africa arrived in 1908 under the leadership of Mr. Jan van...
Rensburg. Huxley (1959) described Jan van Rensburg in her book as "a modern Joshua leading his people to the Promised Land on the last of the treks of the Afrikaner people" (Huxley 1959:237). In 1907 he made arrangements for the immigration of about 70 families from South Africa (Loots 1958:19). Before 1908 many Afrikaners had already settled in British East Africa. However, at that time only the brothers van Breda and Mr. John de Waal had reached the Uasin Gishu. During 1909 and even after that, more parties arrived. The Von Maltitz group arrived in 1909, from the Orange Free State. The De Waal party also arrived in 1909, the Cloete party in 1911 and some families between 1912 and 1914 (Cronje 1981:288).

2.4 The spiritual needs of the South Africans in East Africa.

The Dutch Reformed Church usually moved with its people. Wherever the "Voortrekkers" went, the Church followed\textsuperscript{12}. The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa ("Kaapse Kerk") took the responsibility of establishing Churches for the Afrikaners who moved to Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), South-West Africa (Namibia) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

The Foreign Missions Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church investigated the circumstances of the Afrikaners in Rhodesia in 1890. The result of this investigation was the founding of the congregation of Bulawayo on 16 September 1895. The Bulawayo congregation was the first Dutch Reformed congregation north of the Limpopo river (the northern border of South Africa) and was founded with 100 confirmed and 250 baptised members. In later years, after the Parish of Meru dissolved, Dutch Reformed Church members in East Africa were placed under the Parish of Bulawayo.

In South West Africa the first Dutch Reformed Church congregation was founded in 1902 and in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) in 1919 with the founding of the congregation of Lusaka.

The Church also moved with the people when they crossed the Limpopo to German East Africa and British East Africa. In this area it was the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (Nederduitse Hervormde Gereformeerde Kerk van Suid-Afrika [Transvaalse Kerk])\textsuperscript{13} which took the initiative.

\textsuperscript{12} See Van Wijk (1987:6-11) "Roepingsbewustzijn bij de Zuid-Afrikaners" (Awareness of vocation of the South Africans).

\textsuperscript{13} See Rawlins 1980:7.
This involvement eventually led to the founding of the congregations of Meru in German East Africa (Tanzania) and Vergenoeg, Loubser and Nairobi in British East Africa (Kenya).

From time to time requests came from the South Africans in East Africa to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa to do something to meet the spiritual needs of their people in that part of Africa. The first of these requests were recorded in 1906 (Loots 1958:21-22) when Mr. W van Aardt wrote a letter requesting the Church to assist the believers in East Africa (Retief 1987:45). Mr. JM Bezuidenhout wrote a similar letter. He drew the attention of the DRC in South Africa to the isolation of its people far away from home, requesting them to send a minister to East Africa. This request was tabled at the 1906 Synod meeting of the Church in the Transvaal. In the same year Rev. N Theunissen visited the believers in East Africa, but did not establish a congregation. He was still uncertain about where the majority of members would settle (Van der Walt 1980:153). Two years later, in 1908, Rev. Theunissen went back to East Africa with Rev. JM Louw (Loots 1958:21-22).

3 The Dutch Reformed Church in Kenya since 1905

3.1 Dutch Reformed Church congregations in East Africa

Mission work was not done through spontaneous congregational outreach in and by the Vergenoeg congregation only. After 1944 the other congregations of the classis of Meru (Meru and Loubser) also undertook mission work in conjunction with Vergenoeg from which the initiative mainly came. Eybers not only visited the other congregations frequently, but also trained evangelists who were posted to these regions. Apart from missionary activities by the Bwana Loubser Mission in the DRC congregations, the other South African Reformed denominations were also involved in missions through the activities of the DRC.

3.1.1 The Meru congregation

Meru was the first of the four Dutch Reformed congregations to be founded in East Africa (Rawlins 1980:43). On 30 September 1905 the congregation of Meru (Tanzania) was founded by Rev. AP Burger who visited the area from Middelburg (Transvaal). The congregation included the whole of Tanzania. For most of the time it was served by the relieving pastor from Kenya or by temporary visiting ministers.
In 1906 the congregation faced a major crisis. Many South Africans left German East Africa for British East Africa. The exodus started in January 1906. Most people's eyes were set on the new "Canaan" in British East Africa, the Uasin Gishu Plateau. Unfriendly treatment by certain German officials, together with the fact that a number of Afrikaners could not obtain suitable farms, influenced their decision to leave (Rawlins 1980:50). The Afrikaners who stayed behind in German East Africa were further mistreated by the Germans. At that point they were still British subjects. They experienced a great deal of hardship especially during World War I. Amongst other things they lost all their animals during the war (Loubser 1921:256).

The reason why this congregation initially did not call a full-time minister, was caused by the events as from 1906. The new Minister of Colonies in Germany was against what he called the exploitation of German East Africa and its inhabitants to the advantage of white settlers. A further conflict with the government arose when the Boers were accused of indiscriminate hunting. Bad harvests and livestock diseases were the final reasons resulting in two thirds of the South Africans leaving German East Africa for British East Africa in 1906 (Cronje 1981:287-288). The congregation waited many years before their first full-time minister arrived. In 1927 Rev. J de la Rey Conradie was sent to Meru on a temporary basis for about two years. It was only on 14 April 1945, forty years after the congregation was established, that a student pastor was called to the congregation. AH Malan accepted the call and after his ordination at Ngare Nanyuki became the first-full time pastor of the congregation. The congregation consisted of 187 confirmed members and 153 baptised members, divided into six preaching posts (Meru Church Council 14/4/1949). In 1954 the church building was completed and Rev. PAM Brink was ordained in March 1955 (Rawlins 1980:264).

Because so many members left for British East Africa the congregation was small. As a result missionary work in the area was severely limited. Nevertheless, when Rev. BB Eybers was called to British East Africa an attempt was made towards missionary outreach due to his encouragement. The congregation also helped with the salary of the missionary (Cronje 1981:287-288) Through the years the congregation continued to have a lively interest in missions and at some point church funds were used to clear the synodical missions deficit. On the other hand there was also a reaction against missions. When Eybers asked permission from the church council to start with the training of African ministers it was given, but accompanied by a great deal of dissent (Meru Church Council 23/4/1949).

On 22 August 1965, after 60 years, the existence of Meru as a congregation came to an end and it
became a part of the Loubser congregation (Meru Church Council 22/8/65).

3.1.2 The Vergenoeg Congregation

"De Heer geve die gemeente genade, niet te leven als uitgewekenes, maar als uitgezondenden!". (God grant the congregation grace to live not as refugees, but as missionaries!) (Loots 1958:16). This was a slogan used by Mr. Bokkie von Maltitz in 1916 to describe the task of the Dutch Reformed Church in Kenya. To what degree this obligation was realized will become clear as we page through the history of this Church in Kenya from the beginning of this century to the early 1960s when their missionary Rev. BB Eybers and the last full-time minister of the DRC returned to South Africa.

3.1.2.1 The founding of the Vergenoeg congregation

During the visit of Rev. Theunissen and Rev. Louw in 1908 on the farm of Mr. Arnoldi outside Nakuru the congregation of Vergenoeg was founded on Saturday, 29th August 1908. Rev. JM Louw announced this at a congregational meeting and named the congregation "Vergenoeg" which means "far enough" (Loots 1958:22-23). He asked the people why they kept on travelling further and further. He said that the people had travelled far enough from the mother Church in South Africa and suggested that they named the congregation accordingly (Cronje 1981:289).

This was an important day in the history of the Vergenoeg congregation in Kenya (Theron 1958:22-23). The borders of the congregation were the borders of British East Africa (Kenya). The classis connection would be settled by Rev. Louw in cooperation with the executive body of the DRC (Vergenoeg Church Council 1908:2).

On this trip Rev. Louw tried to visit all the Afrikaners in the country. He returned to South Africa with the following statistics (Theron 1958:23).

- Nederduits Hervormde of Gereformeerde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church): 193 members, 417 souls.
- Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church in South Africa): 56 members, 116 souls.
- Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (Dutch Reformed Church of Africa): 38 members, 90 souls.
3.1.2.2 Progress through difficulties

After his visit in 1908 Rev. Louw was convinced that only a few Afrikaners were happy with their circumstances. He was of the opinion that many of them would end up on the Uasin Gishu Plateau. Many longed to go back to the Transvaal (Theron 1958:23). By this time the situation in South Africa was changing. The Transvaal and Free State received self-government in 1906 and 1907. Soon afterwards, on 31 March 1910, the Union of South Africa came into existence. All of a sudden the future of the Afrikaner did not look so bleak any more and the economic situation changed for the better (Van der Watt 1980:153). Due to a lack of finances only three families returned to South Africa (Theron 1958:23).

Before World War I about one thousand Afrikaners lived in East Africa. Of these, 300 lived in German East Africa and the remainder in British East Africa (Loubser 1921:256). The Afrikaners had a hard time adjusting to the new and difficult circumstances. They were very poor and had to build their farms from scratch. They lived in a country of tropical diseases and their first doctor only arrived in 1910 (Cronje 1981:289). The Spanish influenza of 1918, which took many lives, was an unknown disease in the area and the doctors were powerless to help in such cases (De Wet 1958:6). Of the South Africans 90% were farmers, while more or less 6% were active in construction and 4% worked in the mining industry (Rawlins 1980:255).

Although the members of the congregation were very poor during these initial years, it did not stop them from taking up the challenge of building a church. At first the church services were held on farms and later in a small bamboo church building ("bamboeskerk"). Situated between all the farms, the town of Eldoret was proclaimed in 1909 next to the Eldore river. In this town the first Dutch Reformed Church building in East Africa was erected (Cronje 1981:289). On 14th May 1921, the corner stone for a church building was laid by Rev. MP Loubser and a few months later it was completed. It was dedicated on 16 December 1921. At this historical occasion Rev. Loubser again stressed the importance of presenting the Gospel to the unreached local peoples in the area (Loots 1958:23-26). Unfortunately, more than twenty years would pass before mission work formally commenced amongst the African people. This was partly due to the poverty of the congregation.
3.1.2.3 The first minister of Vergenoeg arrives

Rev. MP Loubser who came in 1909 was the first full-time minister of the congregation. He was called to Meru and Vergenoeg congregations and was declared a member of the Presbytery of Lydenburg (Rawlins 1980:76). His first period of ministry in the congregation was from 1909-1912 (Loots 1958:23-26). Apart from his ministry in the immediate Eldoret area he also visited South Africans in Nairobi, Nakuru and Kitale (Rawlins 1980:104). Bad health, which was a problem throughout his ministry, forced Rev. Loubser to return to South Africa in 1912 (Van der Watt 1987:45). At the end of this period of his ministry he became the Missions Secretary of the Church in the Transvaal (Rawlins 1980:104). After this Vergenoeg congregation was vacant for about six years. Several visiting ministers served the congregation during these years. It was only in 1918 that the next full-time minister was sent from South Africa. Rev. HC de Wet stayed for two years after which Rev. MP Loubser was recalled to Vergenoeg congregation. He arrived with Rev. GJ van Zyl, who was the first full-time minister of the Vergenoeg congregation only.14

Loubser returned to Vergenoeg in 1925 but bad health ended his ministry in East Africa in 1935 and forced him to retire in the same year (Van der Watt 1987:45). He passed away in 1942 (Scholtz 1947:196). Fourteen ministers15 altogether served in the Vergenoeg congregation.

3.1.2.4 Vergenoeg and Oecumene

Loubser writes in “Die Kerkbode”16 in 1933 that towards the 1930s an ecumenical movement emerged in Kenya striving to unite the different Protestant Churches. They wanted to be united in the "Church Union in East Africa".

Loubser states that the Dutch Reformed Church was willing to co-operate with these Churches and

---

14 Before this time the Vergenoeg minister was responsible also for DRC members outside the borders of the congregation.


16 The Official Newspaper of the DRC.
organisations, but were not prepared to join them. About seven Protestant groups were involved: Church Missionary Society, Church of Scotland Mission, United Methodist Mission, African Inland Mission, Friends Africa Mission, Gospel Mission, Seventh-Day Adventists. Other churches involved were the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian Church as well as the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk), the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa (Hervormde Kerk) and the Reformed Church in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerk) (Loubser 1933:1194).

The Christian Council of Kenya came into existence in 1943\(^1\). After an initial unwillingness to cooperate with this body, the Vergenoeg Church Council consulted with the DRC in the Transvaal and in 1947 became a member of this Christian body. This membership was especially meaningful as far as the missionary activities of the congregation were concerned.

The relationship with the sister South African Reformed Churches was good. In 1936 a minister for the Reformed Church of Africa (NHK) arrived and in 1948 a minister for the Reformed Church in South Africa (GKSA) started his ministry in Eldoret (Rawlins 1980:225-227).

3.1.2.5 Vergenoeg and ecclesiastical ties

Vergenoeg initially fell under the Classis of Lydenburg. The Synod of Central Africa came into existence on 1st July 1957. The second meeting was held in 1959 and the third in 1963 (DRC Synod of Central Africa 1957:84; 1959:10-11).

3.1.2.6 The Vergenoeg congregation ceases to exist

The last full-time DRC minister who served in the Vergenoeg congregation was Rev. A Driescher. He stayed less than two years and left in 1965. At this stage many South Africans had already left Kenya (Kruger 1996). The Classis of Meru (Vergenoeg, Loubser and Meru) was dissolved in 1965. By 1966 the Vergenoeg congregation consisted of 57 confirmed members and 41 baptised members. During the same year the church hall at Kitale was donated to the RCEA. The Vergenoeg rectory in Eldoret was sold to the RCEA in 1968 (Rawlins 1980:344-336). Up to the mid-seventies the congregation was then ministered through several visits by Rev. AS Labuschagne from Malawi.

\(^{17}\) See Chapter 2 par. 6.5.
Between 1964 and 1975 he visited DRC members in Kenya three times (Labuschagne 1996:215). At this stage only a few church members remained in the Eldoret area. Up to 1988, more than ten years, the congregation had no minister. During these years pastors from the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands conducted services from time to time for the remaining members of the DRC in Kenya. Since 1988 the ministry for the Dutch Reformed members in Kenya was assigned to the DRC Synod of Central Africa and Rev. Frans Maritz of Harare in Zimbabwe continued the ministry. He tried to visit the members every six months (Kruger 1996).

It was a sad day for the members of Vergenoeg when the congregation was dissolved on Sunday 19 January 1975. Rev. AS Labuschagne led the service. At the close of the message he handed the church building and plots over to the Africa Gospel Church on behalf of the congregation (Labuschagne 1996:224). Rev. Labuschagne then asked the congregation to close the service with the same hymn that was sung at the inauguration of the church building in 1921 (Hymn 34 in the current DRC Hymn book: "O God of Bethel...") (Kruger 1975).

3.1.3 The Loubser congregation

The Loubser congregation, named after Rev. MP Loubser was founded on 28 April 1945 at Ol Kalau with a total of 350 confirmed members. The congregation had two church schools, one at Ol Kalau and one at Nakuru. There was a hall suitable for services at Ol Kalau, about 32 kilometers from Thomson's Falls (Nyahururu). Thomson's Falls became the centre of the congregational activities. A student pastor named JH Louw was called to the congregation in 1945 and ordained as minister of Loubser by Rev. PL Olivier from Vergenoeg on 12 October of the same year. He stayed in the Loubser congregation until 1960, a period of 15 years. He administered the sacraments in Thomson's Falls, Nakuru and Nairobi. They borrowed the Presbyterian Church in Nairobi one Sunday a month for a service. Services were also held at Nakuru and Thika, close to Nairobi. The Northern part of Kenya and Mombasa were visited once a year. Thomson's Falls and Nairobi were the two main centres within the borders of Loubser where services were conducted. In 1951 Rev. C Murray was called to the congregation as a colleague for Rev. Louw. Murray stayed in Nairobi to take care of the ministry in this area named after Rev. MP Loubser. The Missions Committee played an active role in the missionary vision of the congregation and was often visited by Rev Eybers (Rawlins 1980:335-238).
Rev. DJJ Dannhauser was the last full-time minister of Loubser. The communicant members of the congregation decreased from 240 to 30 during the years before and after independence. During the last months of Rev. Dannhauser’s ministry he jointly served Loubser and Meru before he returned to South Africa in 1964. After he had left East Africa, Meru tried to get ministers from Zimbabwe to continue the ministry in the area as the Tanzanian government did not recognise South African passports and these ministers had British passports. Rev. A Driescher remained as the only Dutch Reformed Church minister and unsuccessfully attempted to get a visa to visit Meru in Tanzania (Rawlins 1980:323-324).

3.1.4 The Nairobi congregation

On 31 October 1958 the separation of Nairobi from Loubser took place. It became the fourth Dutch Reformed congregation in Kenya. On 2 April 1962, after less than four years, the congregation was dissolved (Rawlins 1980:325-328).

Although the South African community in East Africa once had numbered about 4000 souls, the situation changed drastically during the years to come (Scholtz 1947:205).

3.2 Other South African Reformed Churches in Kenya

Three different denominations within the Reformed tradition moved from South Africa to East Africa: the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk); the Reformed Church of Africa (Hervormde Kerk van Afrika); and the Reformed Church in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika). The two latter Churches separated from the Dutch Reformed Church during the 1850s.

When the "Groot Trek" took place from the Cape to the northern part of South Africa, the DRC followed these pioneers and who had no intention of breaking ecclesiastical ties with the Church in the Cape (Van der Watt 1977:24). This relationship changed with the arrival of Rev. Van der Hoff from the Netherlands as minister for the DRC members in the Transvaal. The Church in the Transvaal

---

18 From the early 1960s the situation in the four congregations changed as follows: 1961: 763 confirmed members and 494 baptised members; 1962: 559 confirmed members and 480 baptised members; 1963: 377 confirmed members and 217 baptised members; 1964: 181 confirmed members and 71 baptised members (Rawlins 1980:325-328).
now indicated that they no longer wanted to be part of the Cape Synod and in 1853 a separate Synod of the DRC in the Transvaal was founded. Shortly after this date a new denomination known as the "Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk" (Dutch Reformed Church of Africa) came into existence and the name "hervormd" referred to the religion and Church of the Transvaal (Van der Watt 1977:73). A few years later another schism took place within the family of Reformed Churches.

Before 1814 only psalms were sung in the DRC during public worship. In this year "Evangelische Gezangen" ("Gospel hymns"), which were already being used for seven years in the Netherlands, were introduced into the service of worship in South Africa. In general, congregation members were in favour of the singing of these hymns during the service of worship. However, some members were opposed to this move and refused to sing anything but psalms during public worship (Van der Watt 1977:27). When Rev. Dirk Postma who was also against the singing of evangelical songs during public worship, arrived from a church in the Netherlands the DRC members who shared this view tried to get him as their minister. He was determined to put an end to the singing of hymns during public worship. Church members in favour of only singing psalms stated that the real reason for the secession from the DRC was not the issue of hymns in the first place, but the treatment by certain ministers and ecclesiastical meetings over many years. The issue of the singing of hymns forced the secession and resulted in the establishment of yet another Reformed Church, the "Gereformeerde Kerke" (Reformed Church in South Africa) during January 1859 (Spoelstra 1992:68).

3.2.1 The Reformed Church in South Africa

The Reformed Church in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika) came into existence in 1859. The first local Church in Kenya of this denomination was established on 13 August 1909 in Eldoret at Kisumu road, near Hill school, on the Ndalat road. The congregation had to wait 24 years before their first minister arrived in 1934. He was Rev. AL Aucamp who preached his first sermon at Eldoret on 24 September 1933 (d'Assonville 1984:54). From 1909 to 1964, the congregation was ministered by four ministers, with long intermittent vacancies. Excluding the first 24 years, periods of up to ten years elapsed without a minister for the congregation. The four ministers were: Rev. AL Aucamp (1933-1937), Rev. LJ Buys (1949-1952), Rev. ZC Grobler (1952-1954), Rev. P Opperman (1959-1961).

In 1964 when the South Africans could not maintain the church properties any longer, these were
transferred to the Africa Inland Church\(^\text{19}\) (d'Assonville 1984:54). On January 1 1962 Rev. Paul Opperman left the congregation as the last full-time minister and on 16 February 1964 the congregation ceased to exist (d'Assonville 1984:100).

### 3.2.2 The Dutch Reformed Church of Africa

The only church building of the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa north of the equator is situated in the northern part of Eldoret near the airfield, an area formerly known as Rensburgrust. The church building currently belongs to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Mans 1960:74). In 1910 Rev. JJ Kuhn from Krugersdorp visited the members of the Dutch Reformed Church of Africa who moved to East Africa. On 2 November 1910 the congregation Rensburgrust was established on the farm of Mr Jan Janse van Rensburg. At that stage the congregation consisted of not more than fifty members. As time passed more and more members were added to the congregation as more people from South Africa arrived. During these years several ministers also visited the congregation.

The first minister of the congregation was Rev. A Brandt who was welcomed in the congregation on 23 May 1936 and stayed until 1940. The congregation was without a minister for about eight years until Rev. DJ van Staden arrived on 1 September 1948. He stayed until January 1955. The third full-time minister, Rev. CJ Mans, stayed from 1955-1958. By 1958 the congregation consisted of 250 members who were spread all over East Africa from Mombasa in the East to the then Belgian Congo in the West. During this time the last full-time minister of the congregation, Rev. JH Breytenbach (1959-1962), arrived in East Africa.

In contrast to the 1930s when congregation members were very poor, the situation improved dramatically after World War II. Better roads and a market for products resulted in many farmers becoming prosperous by the 1960s (Mans 1960:75). Although the congregation flourished financially, the Afrikaners perceived the local people's desire for independence as a threat to the future of the Afrikaner in East Africa. Many Afrikaners returned to South Africa because of the increasing violence and the activities of the Mau-Mau movement. By the 1960s only a few members remained and the Reformed Church of Africa finally ceased to exist in Eldoret in May 1963 (Mans 1960:76-77).

\(^{19}\) See Chapter 2 par. 6.6.
3.3 The Dutch Reformed Church and the Mau-Mau

During the Mau-Mau period (1952-1955) ministerial activities in the three Dutch Reformed Churches continued quite peacefully. Although "Uhuru" (independence) did not influence to a great extent the ministerial activities of the Loubser congregation at Thomson's Falls, it was affected more than at Vergenoeg. Loubser was closer to the areas where Africans assembled for political meetings, while Vergenoeg was quite isolated from these activities. The only incident involving South Africans recorded during the Mau-Mau period was an attack on a family's farm while they were out (Rawlins 1980:255-257).

3.4 The Dutch Reformed Church and the African people

3.4.1 A "whites only" Church

The local people in Kenya saw the church activities of the South Africans in a completely different light than the South Africans themselves. Bisem writes as follows on the issue: "Of course these were purely white services as the Boers discriminated (against) the Africans on their farms on racial basis, such that they could not dare worship together. The question of reaching out to these people with the gospel was unthinkable" (Bisem 1983:7). Bisem is probably right in his observation regarding discrimination during this period, not only by the South Africans but in all European colonies. Still, it should be kept in mind that it was indeed the South African farmers who started preaching the gospel to their employees as early as the 1930s.

3.4.2 Misconceptions within the RCEA on the DRC in Kenya

The fact that the South Africans worshiped in an exclusive "whites only" way even led Bisem to conclude wrongly that the three South African sister Churches, based on the Reformed tradition, split in Kenya because of their different views on the status of Africans. These Churches were the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk), the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk) and the Reformed Church in South Africa (Gereformeerde Kerke). He writes on the matter as follows: "In the process of establishing the Church, there arose a split amongst themselves as the status of the Africans were raised. The problem arose when some
members of the Dutch Reformed Church felt that a Mission to the African labourers should be started. The hardline racialists even went to the extent of declaring that an African seems not to have a soul, but instinct, and so he does not need salvation. But the other group, who can be described as evangelicals insisted that the African like any other fallen man needed salvation. Rev. Tini Loubser, who was their pastor, did not only advocate the extension of the gospel to the Africans, but led the way in reaching out to the African laborers on the settler farms" (Bisem 1983:8).

The following explanation by Bisem continues to illustrate why he and other locals interpreted the division in the three South African Reformed Churches as a division on racial issues in the first place which took place in Kenya. He writes in his brief summary of the Dutch Reformed Church in Kenya the following: "His (Rev Loubser's) actions was not well received by all his Dutch members. So a confrontation of views ensued which led to the division in places of worship." He continues by referring to one of the sister Churches called the "Hervormde Kerk" (Reformed Church in Africa) as the extremists. "The extremists had their own Church and the moderates their own. It is said that the three Dutch congregations were run on separate stands. For example those who could not dare think of worshipping or even preaching to an African had their own Church at 'Kambi ya ndege', near the airfield in the Northern part of Eldoret." (Bisem 1983:8).

He refers to the other sister Church called the "Gereformeerde Kerk" (Reformed Church in South Africa) also as racial hardliners who "also had their own Church at Kisumu road, near Hill school, on Ndalat road presently belonging to the African Inland Church." (Bisem 1983:8). The third of the sister Churches, "the one at Pioneer across Sosiani river", to which he refers, is actually the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde kerk) and the Vergenoeg congregation. "It was from the Christians in this Church that the gospel was spread to the African labourers in the settler farms" (Bisem 1983:9).

This was and probably still is a misconception within the RCEA of the actual reasons for the split in the three South African Reformed Churches long before they arrived in Kenya. Even so, it gives an indication of how the situation was perceived by the local people. In his paper Bisem (1983) strongly criticises not only the fact that the three sister Churches differed in their way of perceiving...
the status of an African, but also the fact that it was not allowed for an African to join a service in one of these Churches.

The General Secretary of the RCEA in 1997 states in a newspaper interview with the East African Standard that when the South Africans left "the local church followers did not want to inherit anything associated to the Dutch. In the process, many church properties and buildings were taken over by other churches." The "Hervormde kerk" (close to the Law courts in Eldoret) were given to the Presbyterian Church of East Africa. The "Gereformeerde kerk" (near Rivatex on Kisumu Road) went to the Africa Inland Church and the Africa Gospel Church received the Vergenoeg church building. The Reformed Church of East Africa received Immanuel local Church building which was the mission church, as well as the property and plot where the Conference and Training Centre was built in later years (Kituy 1997:7)

3.5 The Dutch Reformed Church and East African politics

Towards the end of the 1950s the South Africans became uncertain of what to expect of the future. The Classis meeting of the four congregations in 1959 was held with the view to the constitutional conference the next year in London. This conference would decide on the future of the British colonial areas in East Africa. The result of these political negotiations was the fact that both Kenya and Tanganyika would be granted independence systematically over the period of a few years.

Obviously these developments had an influence on the Church life of the Afrikaners in East Africa. Uncertainty concerning the future and stories about what might happen scared many people. The time before and after the independence of Tanganyika (Tanzania) on 9 December 1961 and Kenya on 12 December 1963 resulted into the depopulation of the Dutch Reformed Church congregations in East Africa. The statistics of the Parish of Meru tell the story: in 1958 the congregation members of the four congregations counted 2242, by 1960 the numbers had dropped to just under 500 members.

The result of these events was that congregations were linked together in different combinations: firstly Nairobi-Loubser and later on Meru-Loubser. Due to the fact that only 252 church members remained in East Africa, the Classis of Meru did not assemble after 1965. As was mentioned above, the last two congregations, Loubser and Vergenoeg ceased to exist in 1975 (Van der Watt 1987:50).
From 1959 the DRC congregations of East Africa (Meru, Loubser, Nairobi and Vergenoeg) no longer fell under the Synod of the Transvaal. Instead they were now placed under the newly formed DRC Synod of Central Africa which included Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Kenya (Cronje 1981:299).

4. **DRC Mission activities in Kenya prior to 1944**

4.1. **Dutch Reformed ministers and mission work**

From the literature on the South Africans in East Africa it is clear that during the initial years evangelization was not a priority for all the DRC members (Loots 1958:33). However, it is encouraging to note that some of the DRC ministers took this call seriously. Following in the footsteps of Rev. MP Loubser they emphasized the unfinished task of reaching the various groups of indigenous people in western Kenya with the Gospel.

4.1.1 **The contribution of Rev. MP Loubser**

The person who was known as the spiritual father of the South Africans during the early years in East Africa was Rev. MP Loubser. He was significant, not only for his ministry and influence on the South Africans in East Africa, but especially for his notable contribution towards the outreach to African people by the DRC in East Africa.

Marthinus Petrus Loubser was born at Koeberg close to Cape Town on 16 September 1871. After completing his high school education in Cape Town he was trained as a teacher and taught at several schools before he felt called to full-time ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church. He completed his studies at the Theological Seminary of the University of Stellenbosch in 1908 and was ordained in 1909 (Rex 1967:i). During the same year he arrived in East Africa as the first minister of the Vergenoeg and Meru congregations (Rex 1967:20-21).

Loubser was the man who encouraged mission work amongst the peoples of East Africa. He continually asked the members of the DRC why they had come to this region. He stressed that the Lord had sent them with a purpose to this part of the world (Loots 1958:28). He viewed every South African family as a small mission station in its own right (Loots 1958:33), each South African family
had a few workers on their farm. The God-fearing family should become a real blessing to their employees. The worship of God and Christian fellowship within the family were to create an interest and need within the heart and mind of the African worker. This situation should then create an opportunity for the South African family to become involved in a kind of presence evangelism. This in turn should lead to the verbal proclamation of the Gospel to farm workers (Rex 1967:135).

Loubser stressed however the importance of the religious life of the South Africans becoming firmly established in the first place. As a former teacher, he also saw the education of the children of East Africa as a priority. Once these aspects were established, a fruitful outreach to the African people would be possible (Rex 1967:134). Loubser argued that if the congregation members built on the right foundation, the South Africans in East Africa would have a great future ahead of them. He was of the opinion that the establishment of the South Africans in East Africa would be permanent and that they would not return to South Africa. The church members would be instruments in God's hand to christianize the various people groups living in their area (Rawlins 1980:129).

During the historical occasion on which the corner stone of the Dutch Reformed Church building of Vergenoeg was laid in Eldoret, Loubser again stressed the importance of preaching the Gospel to the unreached people groups in the area (Loots 1958:23-26). He was of the opinion that, while it was good for a congregation in South Africa to be mission-minded, a congregation living amongst unreached people should be even more so. There was a ready-made mission field amongst the people living on their farms and working in their houses. Since the congregation members daily worked closely with the locals, they would get to know their culture well. This would place them in an ideal situation to reach their employees. This situation was an opportunity which was not to be ignored (Rex 1967:135). The South Africans should express their gratitude to God by carrying the Gospel to those in need and not to keep it to themselves (Louser 1933:1057). Loubser practiced what he preached. He illustrated by his own example what he meant by his encouragement of mission work. Mr. AJ Mouton was one of the church members who took mission work seriously. He recalls a day in the late 1920s when the grass in the churchyard needed cutting. Many farmers brought their workers to help. After the work was done, Loubser called the African workers together for prayer and a short message which was translated into Elgeyo by Mouton. A few weeks after this Loubser asked Daniel Kimurgong to join him as interpreter. They then went to the African township in Eldoret where he preached the Gospel to the people. From the records this seems to be the first
attempt made by the South Africans to present the Gospel to the nationals in Kenya (Cronje 1981:290-291).

Loubser who in later years realized the importance of trained evangelists, wanted to obtain some land from the Elgeyo Reserve where he aimed to build a mission station for such training. He planned to put a farmer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Boshoff there to start the work until a full-time missionary could be called. Unfortunately he was unable to secure the land (Mouton 1956:6)

The ministry started by the South African farmers in the 1930s, as well as the construction of a first Church building for Kenyans, gave Loubser great joy. In the "vestry" of the first church building of what would later become the Reformed Church of East Africa he once prayed a moving prayer in gratitude to God. He thanked the Lord that this work had started and that he had the opportunity of experiencing the initial stages (Rex 1967:57).

Loubser returned to South Africa after an initial period of ministry in East Africa. He received a call as mission secretary of the DRC in the Transvaal and in that capacity was able to continue to live out his missionary vision on the home front. It is most likely that bad health played a major part in his decision to leave East Africa (Rex 1967:57). He was to be remembered by the members of the RCEA as the man who had laid the foundation of an outreach towards the African people in the Eldoret area. Many farmers had started to minister to their workers. This eventually led to the calling of a full-time missionary to Eldoret (Cronje 1981:292). Loubser was commemorated for his contribution to mission work when the DRC mission station was named the Bwana Loubser Mission Station in his honour.

4.1.2 The contribution of other DRC ministers between 1908-1944

Even as early as 1908, when Rev. N Theunissen and Rev. JM Louw visited East Africa, South Africans were made aware of the very big missionary task which faced them in East Africa. Rev. Theunissen stated that very little missionary work had been done among the African people up to that point. In the years to come a vital contribution was made by the DRC when the Meru congregation as well as the members in British East Africa, began to take their calling seriously (Rawlins 1980:69). Although Rev. Theunissen never served as a minister at Vergenoeg, it is significant that the need for work among the unreached peoples in this area within the reach of the
DRC members, was already in focus. This was the case even before the Vergenoeg congregation was established.

Rev. GJ van Zyl who served the Lord as minister in the Vergenoeg congregation from 1921-1924 saw the open doors for missionary work. He believed that the South Africans were led by God to East Africa to become witnesses of the Gospel to other inhabitants in the country. At that stage the congregation had almost no missionary vision. This was due to the fact that they were still in the process of establishing themselves and trying to make ends meet in a country which did not treat them well during the initial years (Rawlins 1980:136).

During the ministry of Rev. J W Dednam (1935-1940) the work started by the South African farmers in the Eldoret area found a firm foundation. Although the congregation was not in a position to call a full-time missionary yet, the matter was placed on the agenda of the Vergenoeg Church Council during his ministry in Kenya as needing attention (Mouton 1954:7).

During Rev. BJ Brits’s (1936-1944) ministry a very important decision concerning mission work was taken. He declared that the most joyful moment of his ministry in Vergenoeg was when the decision was taken to call a full-time missionary to serve the indigenous people groups in the Eldoret area. The farmers had become quite prosperous towards the end, as well as after, the Second World War when Kenya produced grain for the Allied forces. They were then in a position to look further than their own needs. The Macedonian call from the African peoples was answered in 1944 with the arrival of BB Eybers (Brits 1958:12).

4.2 The South African farmers and mission work

Van der Merwe (1967) states that the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) resulted in much hardship and pain. However, a positive outcome regarding missions was noticeable. In many Boer prisoner of war camps revival movements broke out. Many Boers were drawn to the Lord and filled with a love and desire to spread the Gospel to the heathen. Factors like the hardship of the Afrikaner nation during these years, the isolation, the realisation of paganism in other parts of the world, the ministry to prisoners of war by certain DRC ministers and the emphasis on mission contributed to an open-mindedness towards the mission enterprise of the Church (Van der Merwe 1967:17). Van der Merwe further states that God prepared the DRC for its mission task by turning people to himself through
difficult circumstances. This resulted in a vision for God's wider mission field (Van der Merwe 1967:17).

Similar factors were also at work amongst the South Africans in East Africa. During the initial years of establishing themselves in a foreign country, the memories of the war and the harsh travelling conditions on the way to their different destinations drew them closer to their Creator. Even when they were settled on the land their struggles were not lessened. Heart water killed 97% of the sheep during 1917, adenitis killed all horses, East Coast fever started decimating cattle on the Plateau. People had to start all over again. Under these circumstances many turned to Christ and signs of a spiritual awakening were present in the Trans Nzoya (Kitale) region around 1920 (De Wet 1958:6).

4.2.1 The first steps

In addition to these factors the example of Rev. Loubser made a deep impression on the South African farmers. A number of them realized the importance of this task and during the 1930s some of the farmers started to proclaim the Gospel to their employees.

Early in 1932 the "Afrika Evangelisasie Bond" (Africa Evangelical League) conducted a number of services in the Vergenoeg church building. They were conducted by a Mr. Hancke and a Mr. van Staden two members of the organization. This took place under the auspices of the Church Council. After these initial services in April 1932 missionary work was started on a more regular and organised basis (Mouton 1956:5-6).

4.2.2 The first service

Many farmers began to feel the need to preach the Gospel to their African farm workers. It was announced that on a certain Sunday afternoon in April 1932 a service for Africans would be held at the bridge on Mr. Bokkie von Maltitz's farm. Hancke delivered the message and Mouton translated. Mouton remembered his struggle to interpret. His knowledge of the local language was still weak and he was more familiar with farming terms than with preaching. Some of the other farmers helped to explain the message (Mouton 1956:5-6). The good attendance indicated that the people were keen to hear the Word and a follow-up service was planned for the next Sunday. This was held on the farm of Mr. HP van Heerden. Here Van Staden preached the Gospel and once again the people
turned up in large numbers.

After the service on the farm of Van Heerden, men like JN Boshoff, OA Storm and AJ Mouton started with services on the farm of the late Pieter Mouton. Mrs. Freda van Heerden continued with these services (Cronje 1981:291-292). At first the services were held near the river. Usually about seventy people attended (Mouton 1956:5-6).

4.2.3 The first church building

After the rainy season started, a church building was constructed. It consisted only of long poles and a grass roof. The Kenyan laborers helped with the construction and everything was done in the cheapest way possible. On the day the church building was dedicated, many Europeans were invited. The Kenyans turned up in such numbers that many of them had to sit outside on the grass.

During the next week the walls of clay and stones were constructed. By building an inner wall, they made a vestry separated from the rest of the building. Here the farmers prayed before each service. The farmers also received some printed Gospels and a few hymn books from the Africa Inland Mission, all in the Elgeyo language. Not many people could read and write, but they learned quite a number of songs by heart. Mouton writes that quite often tears rolled down their cheeks when they heard the Africans singing to God in their own language (Mouton 1956:5-6).

4.2.4 The initial enthusiasm fades

During these years the farmers who took part in the mission work contacted the AIM whose members also worked in the area. They usually joined together for confirmation and baptism. As time passed on the need for a full-time missionary became more evident (Cronje 1981:292).

After some time the curiosity of the people about these new teachings by the white people was satisfied and the numbers of those attending the services declined. From seventy people at the beginning, the numbers decreased to twenty and later to ten on Sundays and five or six during the Wednesday evening meeting. After some time it was no longer possible for Mr Boshoff and Mr. Storm to continue with the work. Mouton then continued working on his own. As time went on the local people began requesting Mouton that he should teach them to read and write. Being a farmer
he did not have the time to do so. He therefore recommended that they should contact the Africa Inland Mission to help them since they were already involved in this kind of ministry. Most of them did so. As a result the work started by these farmers at the small church next to the river came to an end. The church remained standing for some time, but was later destroyed by a fire (Mouton 1956:6). This does not mean that farmers stopped proclaiming the Gospel on their farms. Eybers states that the first teacher-evangelists trained by him, came from the farm workers' community who met the Lord through the mission work done by farmers (Eybers 1946:13). Even after a full-time missionary was called, farmers did not neglect the responsibility of presenting the Gospel to their employees. A certain farmer, Mr. Keese, had two evangelists working on his farm. He took the responsibility upon himself to pay the salaries of the two men (Eybers 1947:26).

Mr Boshoff also built a meeting place on his farm about one mile from the first church. He was assisted by a certain Miljie, who worked for him and who learned to read and write through the AIM. The missionary of the AIM conducted some services at this place and some of their evangelists helped with the work. Later the missionary stopped coming, the local people who attended the work moved elsewhere and the work ceased.

Mouton mentions that a full-time missionary was essential if the work was to continued. He also realized, however, that the financial difficulties in which the Vergenoeg congregation found themselves made this impossible. They were struggling to pay their own minister, Rev. Dednam, a salary of £ 25-0-0 per month (Mouton 1956:7).

4.3 The need for a full-time missionary.

4.3.1 Missions on the agenda of the Vergenoeg congregation

The Vergenoeg Church Council discussed local missions for the first time in 1936 during the ministry of Rev. JW Dednam. Church members interested in missions were asked to stay behind after the preparation service for Holy Communion. Later that year a missionary fund was established and the matter was referred to the local missionary group ("sendingkring"). The "sendingkring" developed into the Vergenoeg Missions League ("Vergenoeg Sending Bond") in 1941 and the Church Council

---

21 No other names could be found in the available literature.
approved a proposal whereby permission was granted to Mr. and Mrs. P Smit and Mr. J Prinsloo to do the work. The Church Council was not in a position to officially appoint them as the congregation's missionaries (Cronje 1981:292).

During the 1930s the poverty among the farmers due to the depression, restricted this work (RML Annual report 1962:129). Although the Vergenoeg congregation indicated a concern for missions during the years prior to the calling of a full-time missionary, they lacked the funds to undertake such an enterprise at the time. Missions was such a high priority on the agenda of the Church Council of Vergenoeg, that when the slightest indication of financial prosperity appeared, a missionary was called (Eybers 1944:3).

### 4.3.2 A missionary called

The need for a full-time ordained missionary became more critical. When the school for South African children at Broederstroom was closed during the early 1940s the buildings were made available for use by the Church. They were not allowed to sell the buildings; as they were to be used for religious purposes. The minutes of the Vergenoeg Church Council meeting of 8 October 1943 stated that Rev. Loubser, who had recently died, left £ 220-0-0 to be used for mission work by the Vergenoeg congregation, thus underlining the missionary vision of this great man (Cronje 1981:292).

During the Church Council meeting of 21 January 1944 several important decisions were made regarding missions. They would call a missionary to Vergenoeg immediately. His salary would not exceed £300-0-0 a year. The old school buildings and compound at Broederstroom were to be used as a mission centre. It was the responsibility of the "Sendingwerkkring" which acted as a mission committee to take further action. This body consisted of JH Davies, FJ Smit, HF Keese, AJ Mouton and WB Steyn. At a historical meeting held on 8 July 1944 they decided that the name of the "sendingwerkkring" would be "Die Sendingwerkkring Vergenoeg van die Ned. Geref. Sendingkerk van die Transvaal" (The Vergenoeg Mission Fraternal of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of the Transvaal). In future this meeting would be referred to as the Local Mission Committee (LMC) (Vergenoeg LMC 08/07/44).

---

A South African farmer Mr. Philip Malan donated this piece of land for a school for South African children. Today it is known as the Plateau Mission Hospital.
Rev. (Eerw.) WJ Wentzel was the first to be called, but he did not accept it. He worked from 1919-1922 as teacher and as a co-worker in the congregation, but not as missionary. It then became known that Rev. (Eerw.) BB Eybers was leaving Nyasaland (Malawi) where he had served for sixteen years. The congregation decided to call him as full-time missionary to Vergenoeg (Cronje 1981:292). If Eybers were to accept the call he had to go to Eldoret directly before going on leave to South Africa a year or two later (Vergenoeg LMC 08/07/44).

A letter and a telegram were received from Eybers in which he accepted the call to begin the next phase of his ministry in Eldoret. Unfortunately he could not go to Eldoret immediately after leaving Malawi. He and Mrs. Eybers first went back to the Union of South Africa. They left South Africa on 9 October 1944 and arrived in Eldoret on 28 October 1944 (Eybers 1944:1). This event brought Mr. AJ Mouton great joy. He remembered how often he and others prayed for this day. Earlier he had prayed many times with the nationals in the little mission church near the river for a full-time missionary. Now their prayers were answered at last (Mouton 1956:7).

5. The period of formal mission action (1944-1960)

5.1 Rev. BB Eybers and the Mission

5.1.1 Background and education

Benjamin Beaumann Eybers was born at Beaufort West (South Africa) on 6 September 1901. After completing standard eight at Beaufort West, Eybers went to the Mission Institute in Wellington (South Africa) for five years to be trained as a missionary (Eybers 1927). He completed his studies there in 1927 (Wilcocks 1927).

Eybers started corresponding with the Mission Secretary in Cape Town, Rev. AC Murray, in 1927 regarding the possibility of foreign mission work. This took place when Eybers was at the end of his studies at the Mission Institute at Wellington (Eybers 1927). By the end of 1927 he was accepted as missionary for Nyasaland (Malawi) (Murray 1927) and was ordained in early 1928. He left for Nyasaland shortly afterwards where he met his wife to be, miss. J de Villiers who had gone to Malawi as a missionary in 1920. They got married in 1929 (Eybers 1929). The principal of the Mission Institute, Rev. David Wilcocks, described Eybers as being physically strong and having a healthy
mind. Although he was an individualist doing things his own way, he would not ignore other opinions (Wilcocks 1927).

5.1.2 The missionaries arrive

With the call of Rev. (Eerw.) and Mrs. Eybers as full-time missionaries to East Africa, definite steps were taken. The above mentioned mission station established at Broederstroom where Loubser built the first school for the South Africans was the place where Eybers would start his ministry (Loots 1958:34).

The missionaries travelled for three weeks before reaching their destination in East Africa. It was 1944 and before the end of the Second World War. This greatly limited their transport options as it was impossible to travel by car, boat or airplane. The only option was overland, using trains and busses. They took a route through Zambia, the Belgian Congo (Democratic Republic Congo) Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Uganda to Kenya. They also had cross to Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria. At the end of their journey they had travelled over 4000 miles through the heart of Africa (Cronje 1981:292). On 28 October 1944 they arrived at their destination and were received by a member of the Vergenoeg congregation. They stayed on his farm until the necessary preparations at Broederstroom were completed.

The couple realized that mission work was of major concern to the Vergenoeg congregation. At the reception of Rev. and Mrs. Eybers members of the congregation praised the Lord that their prayers

Prior to 1962 a missionary in the Dutch Reformed Church was referred to as "eerwaarde" (Reverend). This form of address distinguished him from the minister who was referred to as "Dominee" (Reverend) (Rawlins 1980:ii). The offices of missionary and minister in the Dutch Reformed Church had been separated during the first Synod of the Church in 1824 (Van der Watt 1980:110). The reason for this distinction concerns a difference in training. Missionaries who had not received full ministerial training and were ordained to the teaching of the Word in a mission context, were addressed as "eerwaarde". Since 1877 missionaries were trained at the Mission Institute in Wellington. They were called "eerwaarde" (Reverend), but graduates of the DRC Seminary in Stellenbosch were called "dominee", even if they became missionaries. Only "dominees" could serve in DRC congregations. Following a decision taken by the DRC General Synod of 1962, the missionary was also addressed as dominee. The distinction between the two was repealed and only the term "dominee" was applied to both groups. This also meant that the former Wellington graduates could henceforth be called to, and serve in DRC congregations (DRC Acta Synodi 1962:157-159).
or a full-time missionary had been answered and that their vision had become a reality (Eybers 1944:3).

5.1.3 Rev. Eybers inducted at Broederstroom

A new pastor, Rev. PL Olivier was called to Vergenoeg to replace Rev. BJ Britz who left for South Africa in 1944. Rev. TF Cronje from the Classis of Lydenburg (under whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction the DRC in East Africa fell) visited the congregation in April 1945 to induct Rev. Olivier as the new pastor. On 25 April 1945 Cronje also inducted Eybers into the Mission Church ("Sendingkerk") at Broederstroom.

Some Church members were concerned about the fact that the name, Bwana Loubser Mission Station, might be confused with the congregation at Thomson's Falls, newly established on 28 April 1945, since it was also called "Loubser" congregation. After some discussion the name was accepted (Cronje 1981:295).

5.1.4 The initial Mission policy

The Mission Policy of the DRC, which was formulated in 1935\textsuperscript{24} by the Federal Mission Council of the Dutch Reformed Churches and approved by the four Synods (Crafford 1994:124), formed the foundation of the policy followed in East Africa by the DRC (Rawlins 1980:274). During a church council meeting on 19 January 1945 Eybers explained the policy to the members. In line with the Mission Policy of the DRC the centrality of the proclamation of the Gospel was emphasized. The Church Council agreed to safeguard this priority (Cronje 1981:295). Subordinate to this priority, but also important was the goal of raising the standard of living of the people. Once again the 1935 policy was used as a guideline. Initially the missionaries would emphasize literacy teaching, followed by health instruction, moral instruction and agricultural instruction (Cronje 1981:295).

The matter of numerous traditional religious practices in the area, was referred to the Christian Council of Kenya. They were to use their influence with the government to take steps to curb these matters (Vergenoeg LMC 29/06/46).

\textsuperscript{24} See par. 4.1 for a detailed discussion of this policy.
5.1.5 Evaluating the new field

The missionaries found that about 100 000 Africans lived on the "White Highlands". About 5% were christianized (Cronje 1981:296). The missionaries were shocked at how little outreach to the local peoples living on the Uasin Gishu had taken place. Eybers found some Christians as a result of the work started by farmers in the area (Eybers 1944:4) The follow-up of these converts was a problem. They were usually sent to other missionary organizations for further education and follow-up (Loots 1956:38). Eybers tried to compare the work in the Eldoret area with that done at that stage by the DRC in Nyasaland, but such a comparison was impossible because the work done in the Eldoret area amounted to almost nothing. A virtually fallow field with unlimited challenges and opportunities, as well as problems, awaited them (Eybers 1944:4).

5.1.6 Kiswahili as medium of communication

The first hurdle to overcome in their new field was the language barrier. Eybers found that, apart from the mother tongue, basically all Kenyans were able to speak Kiswahili. Eybers was described by the principal of the Missionary Institute at Wellington as somebody gifted in learning languages (Wilcocks 1927). He and his wife learned the Chichewa language in Nyasaland (Malawi) and before that Eybers knew some Xhosa and Sotho which helped him in outreaches during his student years (Eybers 1927). Hence, language learning was a pleasant challenge to them and they learned to speak Swahili fairly quickly. While learning the language they also investigated their new situation (Eybers 1958:38-39).

5.1.7 Printed materials in Kiswahili

Within a few years the missionaries were ready to start preparing literature in Kiswahili (Eybers 1958:38-39). As early as March 1945 Eybers informed the meeting of the Vergenoeg Local Mission

---

25 The regions where Europeans settled especially for agricultural purposes during the colonial era were usually high above sea level (cf Uasin Gishu and Nanyuki) and were therefore referred to as the "White Highlands".

26 Eybers stated that the nationals on the Plateau coming from the Reserves spoke a Kiswahili which differed from "Mombasa-Swahili". The employees working on the farms for a long time were familiar with this Kiswahili and could not understand the Mombasa-Swahili (Eybers 1946:22).
Committee (24 March 1945) that he wanted to translate the three Forms of Unity as well as the Catechism book. The methods and procedures used by Eybers corresponded with what had been done in Malawi and what the DRC did in other areas where it was involved in mission work. This is reflected in translations done by him into Kiswahili from materials used by the DRC in his former mission field, Malawi. Although the first translation work by the missionaries were not without mistakes, they soon completed some material (Van't Veld:175). By 1945 the translation of the "Katekisima" ("Kort Begrip") was completed (Eybers 1946:22 & 1949:24).

On 27 June 1948 the hymn-book they had translated into Kiswahili was taken into use. From this point onward the people were able to sing about God's grace in their own language. After the hymn-book they translated the Old Testament history followed by the history of the New Testament. From this time on, the missionaries were able to teach the Bible more systematically. The people's knowledge increased greatly as a result (Eybers 1958:38). The work now also spread to places like Kitale and Thomson's Falls (Cronje 1981:296).

5.1.8 Training

It was physically impossible for two people to cover the whole area of 300 x 250 km. adequately. The missionaries decided therefore to follow the same strategy as in Malawi by establishing outposts (schools) at central points on farms. At such posts teacher-evangelists were placed where they taught the Bible to their people, conducted services, taught Sunday-school and taught people to read and write if necessary (Cronje 1981:296). In this way the missionaries started training the first evangelists. Eybers saw the calling of the Church as a call to missions, hence he regarded the training of only evangelist-teachers as insufficient as ministers should also be trained. He believed that a people would best be ministered to by individuals from their own group. As mentioned previously, the vision of the church council of Vergenoeg was to lay a foundation through its mission work so

27 This was a common DRC Mission strategy. Not only in Malawi, but also in Zambia and Zimbabwe (Van der Merwe 1981:73-76), DRC missionaries followed the same strategy. "The ideal was a network of out-stations surrounding the mission so as to have a school within easy reach of each village within the district around the mission" (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:51). Also see Steytler, JG 1939. Educational adaptation with reference to African Village Schools.

28 On other mission fields of the DRC it was usually necessary for the Mission to get permission from the chiefs or headmen to open schools in an area (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:51). In Kenya the Bwana Loubser Mission was dependent on the South African farmers to grant permission for the establishment of such schools.
that a mission church could evolve into an autonomous Church, based on the Reformed tradition with an own synod (Rawlins 1980:252).

5.2 The Bwana Loubser Mission

5.2.1 Relationship with other churches and missions

Eybers and his wife had a healthy interest in the missionary activities of other Churches and organizations. On their way to East Africa they made contact with several Churches and missionaries from the Roman Catholic Church, the Church Mission Society and the African Inland Church in the Belgian-Congo as well as Uganda (Eybers 1944:2-3).

During the meeting of the Meru Classis of 24 March 1945, where Eybers explained the mission policy of the DRC to be followed in East Africa, they decided to pursue positive relationships with other churches and missions. They stipulated that Dutch Reformed doctrine and policy should not be undermined in the process. In doing so, the mission policy of the DRC was strictly observed by Eybers (Vergenoeg LMC 24/03/45).

The other organization that was involved in mission work in the Eldoret area was the Africa Inland Mission (Rawlins 1980:259). This Mission which started its work in Kenya in 1895 and penetrated the Nandi in 1906 (Gration 1974:35), followed more or less the same methods as the DRC on its own mission fields. They realized that missionaries alone would never accomplish the task of evangelism and therefore used the assistance of national evangelists (Gration 1974:26). During the early years church and school were practically synonymous and, like the DRC, teacher-evangelists were used in spreading the Gospel (Gration 1974:156). The relationship with this Mission was as good as it had been during the time when the farmers started the mission work in the 1930s (Rawlins 1980:259).

Unfortunately the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, which was also actively involved in missions on the Uasin Gishu, was not very good. From 1948 the mission received a lot of opposition from the Roman Catholics. Eybers mentioned incidents such as the work of evangelists in schools

---

29 The AIM worked in the reserves amongst the Nandi close to the area in which the Bwana Loubser Mission did their work.
being disrupted. The Roman Catholics even went so far as to confiscate Bibles from Reformed members (Eybers 1958:38-39). The Vergenoeg Church Council reported to the Classis of Lydenburg in 1954 that it even became necessary to close down a number of out-posts due to Roman Catholic opposition.

Although the Mission pursued a policy of openness towards other churches and organizations, the LMC of Vergenoeg was very hesitant about cooperation with just anybody. When cooperation with the Church of Scotland Mission in the Eldoret area was tabled at a meeting of the Committee, they decided to first ask for the permission of the Church in South Africa. The Committee made a clear decision on the missionary organizations they would co-operate with. They decided not to allow members from the following organizations to join the Bwana Loubser Mission: The Congregational Church ("Independentiste"), Friends, Salvation Army, and members of the International Mission ("Internasionale Sending") (Vergenoeg LMC 08/01/49).

From the beginning the Bwana Loubser Mission was involved in the activities of the Council of Churches of Kenya. Eybers usually attended the meetings in Nairobi on behalf of the Mission (Vergenoeg LMC 06/04/46).

5.2.2 Bwana Loubser Mission and medical work

The first time medical work was mentioned in the minutes of the Vergenoeg Local Mission Committee was when a decision was taken that medication would be provided free of charge at the mission station (Vergenoeg LMC 04/01/46). Eybers (1949) reports that medical work as diaconia did not function properly. People were coming for medical treatment, but did not come to church (Eybers 1949:28).

During the early years of Eybers's tenure a clinic was built by the South Africans and a general practitioner, Dr. Barnard, assisted with the work. She visited the clinic at the Mission station once a week and took care of the medical work free of charge. Many people were drawn to the station as a result (Eybers 1958:38-39). When Dr. Barnard returned to South Africa at the end of 1952, she was not replaced. A constant struggle to get medical personnel followed. Up to the early 1960s when

---

30 Although Vergenoeg only joined the CCK in 1947, members of the Vergenoeg LMC attended meetings before this as observers.
the RML took over the work only temporary help was available (Vergenoeg LMC 25/09/52). Mrs Eybers's concern for the clinic, medical work and African personnel on the mission station is mentioned regularly in the minutes of the Local Mission Committee. Through her encouragement a nurses home was built for the medical personnel (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59).

5.2.3 The initial stages of a Women's League

During 1951 the "Bwana Loubser Vroue-Sendingvereniging" (Bwana Loubser Women's Mission Union) was formed. The aim was to reach out to women, young girls and children (Cronje 1981:296).

5.2.4 The Mission policy during the 1950's

At the Meru classis (Meru, Loubser and Vergenoeg) meeting of 1955 the policy for the future was determined. It was decided that apart from the Mission Committee of each Local Church Council, a Mission Committee for East Africa would also be established. The Mission Committee of the Synod would keep an eye on the internal arrangements (Rawlins 1980:267).

The concept of an autonomous indigenous Church in the future was once again confirmed by the meeting. Each local congregation would contribute towards the work according to its own ability. The Classis of Lydenburg would also be asked for financial support (Rawlins 1980:267).

The Bwana Loubser Mission was still treated as a home mission field of the DRC in South Africa. The need to change this in the light of the reality of it being a mission field in East Africa, was placed on the agenda as a matter of urgency by some of the Mission Committee members, especially Eybers. (Vergenoeg LMC 12/01/54). At a special meeting of the LMC of Vergenoeg held on 16 February 1955 Eybers stated that being treated as a home mission field was no longer satisfactory or practical. He pleaded with the Committee to consider the possibility of an East African mission field. He explained that for administration purposes more and more material was being printed in Kiswahili. The communication between the Union of South Africa and East Africa caused many difficulties. The Committee felt that such a step would be necessary eventually, but that it should not be hurried. The majority of the members felt that it was not the right time to declare the Bwana Loubser Mission a foreign mission field.
Even though no final decision was taken, the Committee made the following statements (Vergenoeg LMC 16/02/55):

- Due to problems of language, government, distance etc., the Committee was moving towards becoming a foreign mission. This was important with a view to future development.
- The Committee decided that the first step would be to found a church. The necessary steps in terms of church polity would be taken immediately.
- The Committee decided that the Three Forms of Unity would be translated into Kiswahili.
- The Committee aimed at developing an autonomous indigenous church based on the Reformed tradition and in line with the autonomous daughter churches in South Africa. This could only take place if the necessary funds were raised.

South Africans were now beginning to leave East Africa. During August 1958 a new policy program for missions was suggested by the Classis Mission Committee. According to this no doctors, nurses or white teachers would be employed from that time onwards. No further training of indigenous ministers would take place and no more land would be bought or accepted as gifts for the extension of the work.

5.2.5 Bwana Loubser Mission and Reformed doctrine

At the meeting of 10 February 1959 of the LMC the translations of the Church law ("wette") and the Three Forms of Unity ("formuliere") done by Eybers, were discussed. Eybers was in the final stages of preparing the material for printing. The minister of the Vergenoeg congregation at that time, Rev. JP Theron, undertook to get the materials ready to be set in book form (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59).

As previously mentioned, a catechism book was used by the missionaries for Sunday-school. Before this translation the missionaries investigated the possibility of using translated materials of other missions, but due to a lack of sound, Biblical doctrine they decided to translate material themselves (Eybers 1946:22). The Mission hesitated to use material from other missions or denominations. This was because they wanted the Mission and its members to strictly adhere to Reformed teaching. When

31 The Three Forms of Unity are the Doctrinal Standards of Reformed Churches and consists of i) the Heidelberg Catechism, ii) the Netherlands Confession of Faith and iii) the Canons of Dordt.
the government approached the LMC about using another "international catechism book", the meeting decided against the suggestion and continued translating their own material (Vergenoeg LMC 06/01/50). The Bwana Loubser Mission felt so strongly about Reformed doctrine that they wanted outsiders working with the Mission to conform to it.

The government was willing to provide well-qualified (T4) teachers for schools on some of the South African farms. Due to the fact that the Mission made use of evangelist-teachers trained by the DRC in schools on the farms, the LMC set certain guidelines which they expected the government to observe:

- A teacher in the service of the Mission will be a member of the DRC Mission and would be employed and discharged by the LMC.
- Even if a teacher came from an organization with a similar doctrinal background as the DRC, he would still need to become a member of the DRC Mission.
- When a teacher's duties were terminated by the DRC Mission, the government may not re-employ such a teacher without consulting with the Mission.
- Everybody had to follow the syllabus of the Mission (Vergenoeg LMC 10/06/50).

The high standard for registered schools set by the government in later years as well as the removal of unqualified teachers (usually teacher-evangelists) indicates that the above mentioned guidelines were not strictly observed by the government.

5.2.6 Financial support of the Bwana Loubser Mission

5.2.6.1 The early years

During the initial stages of the mission work the financial responsibility rested completely with the Vergenoeg congregation. When the three congregations in Kenya (Vergenoeg, Loubser and Nairobi) together with Meru congregation in Tanganyika, formed a classis, the Bwana Loubser Mission became a project of this Classis.

Before this happened, the congregation sought financial support for the Mission in South Africa, but during the 1940s the Transvaal Synod could not afford to take responsibility for a new field. Instead
a one-time donation of £ 600-0-0 was made. After the next Synod meeting this contribution was set at £ 200-0-0 per year. The synod later learned that the average contribution for mission work by the Vergenoeg congregation members was £ 8-00-00 per member. This open heartedness to missions led the Synod to increase the contribution in 1957 from £ 200-0-0 to £ 300-0-0 per year (Cronje 1981:298).

5.2.6.2 The Budget

From the first year after Eybers's arrival in Kenya until he left in 1960, the gradual increase in the financial demands for mission work was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 July 1945 - 30 June 1946</td>
<td>£ 680-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 July 1953 - 30 July 1954</td>
<td>£ 1 560-0-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 July 1959 - 30 June 1960</td>
<td>£ 3 613-0-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The budget for the last financial year (1st July 1960 - 30 June 1961) before the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands took over the work, was £ 2 817-0-0 (Vergenoeg LMC 30/06/60). The income from the indigenous people came through school fees, offerings and special fund raising (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59). Contributions by the people were usually very low. At a LMC meeting held on 29 September 1953 the Committee set standard fees for baptism at one pound and for confirmation as well as marriage on two pounds each (Vergenoeg LMC 29/09/53). The compulsory contribution of all Kenyan Christians as from 1959 was set at ten shillings per person and that of members in baptism class at eight shillings (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59).

Although the people were very poor, they were encouraged to contribute towards the work. When the first three ministers were ordained the Mission urged the people to contribute towards their salaries and learn to take care of their own ministers. They decided that the African ministers would be paid £8-0-0 per month. The Vergenoeg congregation would be responsible for £6-0-0 and the Mission congregation for the remainder. The salaries were increased every two years. The indigenous people were encouraged to take responsibility for the increase. Furthermore, African church members would be encouraged to contribute more so that the input from the Vergenoeg congregation would decrease. In this way the "Mission Church" would become more and more autonomous until they would eventually pay their own ministers fully and built their own churches (Vergenoeg LMC
Towards the end of the 1950s the Vergenoeg congregation struggled with a growing deficit in the missions budget. The Church Council could only contribute £ 1200-0-0 for mission work instead of the necessary £ 1500-0-0 during the financial year of 1958 to 1959 (Rawlins 1980:279).

Each congregation within the Synod of Central Africa was required to set aside one offering each year for this work. The three congregations Meru, Vergenoeg and Loubser were allowed to use their obligatory synodical contributions for mission work in the area (Rawlins 1980:279). The decreasing financial support for mission work and the increasing expenses of the ministry became a matter of great concern for the Church Council (Rawlins 1980:274) The situation became so serious that the LMC decided at a meeting held on 13 November 1959 to cut the budget, which had already been approved, by £ 700-0-0 (Vergenoeg LMC 13/11/59). Eybers’s retirement was also influenced by this matter. He retired in 1960 due to poor health. However, an additional contributing factor that influenced his departure was the financial crisis of the Bwana Loubser Mission (Vergenoeg LMC 20/01/60).

5.3 Vergenoeg and the Mission

5.3.1 Vergenoeg ministers and mission work during this period.

5.3.1.1 Rev. PL Olivier

Rev. Olivier states that one of the fondest memories he has when he thinks back on his ministry (1945-1951) at Eldoret, is the mission work done by the congregation (Olivier 1958:14). He and Eybers started their ministry together in Eldoret. The congregation could no longer close their eyes for the mission task. The Gospel needed to be proclaimed to the unreached people in the area. The growth of mission work through the input of Eybers was remarkable. He encouraged his former congregation in a festscript in 1958 by stating that God had given them a mission task to the unreached people of East Africa and that they should not become disobedient to this call (Olivier 1958:14).
5.3.1.2 Rev. LJ Loots

Due to the work of Rev. Eybers the Bwana Loubser Mission congregation consisted of 200 members in 1956. Towards the end of the ministry of Rev. Loots (1951-1957) difficult years approached. The financial support for the work was no longer sufficient at the end of the 1950s. Although the congregation as well as the Church in the Transvaal contributed what was expected of them, more funds were needed for mission work. Still, one of the most important events of the DRC's ministry in Kenya took place during the ministry of Loots. This was when the first three ministers of what would eventually become the Reformed Church of East Africa were ordained in 1956. Loots writes in "Die Koningsbode" that since the arrival of the DRC in western Kenya the desire to preach the Gospel to the unreached people in the area burned in the hearts of a large number of members of the congregation. The eventual ordination of three African ministers on 16 September 1956 stands out as a highlight in this missionary outreach which was started in the 1930s by the Vergenoeg congregation. Loots, who was one of the lecturers and assisted Eybers in training the three students, realized that much money was spent on the training of these ministers (Loots 1956:38). In spite of the fact that the congregation was experiencing a financial crisis, he encouraged and supported the Vergenoeg Church Council to continue the missionary activities to the best of their abilities (Rawlins 1981:275).

5.3.1.3 Rev. JP Theron

Rev. Theron served in the congregation during 1957-1961. This was during the difficult period when Eybers left East Africa and mission work remained the responsibility of the LMC without the guidance of a full-time missionary. It was also during this time that the funds for mission work dried up almost completely. All activities were taken care of with the assistance of certain individuals in the congregation. The name of Mr. AJ Mouton should be mentioned. Paging through the minutes of the LMC of Vergenoeg it becomes clear why some of the Reformed Mission League (RML) members claimed that mission work was in the hands of Mouton after Eybers left and before Rev. Tigchelaar (RML) arrived. Mouton took a lot of initiative. At the last meeting of the LMC before the RML took over the work, they decided to give the remaining £250-0-0 in the Committee's

---

32 See Chapter 5 par. 2.1.1 & 2.1.11.2.
account to Mouton. The members emphasized that the congregation was not in a position to pay him for his services, but that this was a gift as a sign of appreciation for his outstanding contribution (Vergenoeg LMC 26/01/61).

5.3.2 Further outreach by the congregation

The priority of mission work on the agenda of the Vergenoeg congregation once again surfaced when the Church Council decided to extend the work of the congregation to the northern part of the country. During 1951 the LMC commissioned a delegation consisting of Eybers, a Turkana evangelist called Stefano Lowoto and a congregation member, Mr. van Wyngaard to visit the "land van die Turkana" (land of the Turkana) in north-west Kenya (Eybers 1952:359). Turkana borders on Sudan and Ethiopia in the north and Uganda in the west. It lies in a valley which forms part of the Great Rift Valley (De Blois 1971:101). At the time of Eybers's visit the people there were still unreached.

This first journey was undertaken at the request of Stefano who pleaded with the congregation to take the Gospel to his people in Turkana. He maintained that there were no Christians in the area where he came from. This request resulted in a journey of 500 km past Lodwar to Lokitaung which is situated very close to the Sudan border in the north and a few kilometres to the west of Lake Rudolph (Lake Turkana). Eybers stated that they preached the Gospel to a large number of people at Lokitaung. It took place on 29 August 1951. According to him, this must have been the first Gospel message to the people of this region. Eybers and his delegates also met the District Commissioner who requested them to come back and evangelize the whole area. Evaluating the situation, Eybers said that the evangelization of the Turkana would not be an easy task, because of their nomadic lifestyle. They travelled all over the north-west region (which stretched into both Uganda and Sudan) in search of grazing for their cattle.

On 24 June 1952, Eybers reported to a meeting of the LMC of Vergenoeg on discussions he had had with the BCMS and AIM during a meeting of the Council of Churches of Kenya. These

---

33 The Anglicans were the first to try to establish a church in Turkana in the early 1930s but without success. The Turkana District was then closed to missionaries until 1960. In this year the AIM began working in Lokori and the Catholic Church began famine relief close to Lodwar in 1961 (Shingledecker 1982:19).
organizations were also thinking of commencing with mission work in Turkana. After discussing the viability of the Bwana Loubser Mission working there, the Committee decided that it would not be wise to start with ministry in Turkana at that point in time, but rather to leave it to these organizations (Vergenoeg LMC 24/06/52). The matter was raised again in 1954, but this time the lack of finances prevented involvement in Turkana (Vergenoeg LMC 12/01/54). In the 1970s the RML did begin to reach out with the Gospel to the Turkana.

5.4 Meru, Loubser, Nairobi and mission work

These congregations viewed missions in a serious light. This is best seen by their generous donations to the mission budget. (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59). It was especially true of Loubser congregation. They invited Eybers in 1947 to visit their congregation for a few weeks to discuss mission involvement (Vergenoeg LMC 23/01/47). As a result of this visit, two evangelists were posted to the Loubser congregation (Vergenoeg LMC 08/01/49). By 1955 the Loubser congregation requested four more evangelists to come and work within the borders of the congregation (Vergenoeg PSK 29/01/55).

Rev. JP Theron reported to the LMC's meeting of 10 August 1959 that another investigation on the mission situation in Loubser congregation had been launched. This resulted in the request for an evangelist to work with Mr. Hoffie Retief who had come to the country as a teacher and had later bought land and began farming. Eybers responded that it was only possible to fulfil the request after the necessary written arrangements concerning the salary, food, place of assembly or church and travelling expenses of the missionary or minister had been made (Vergenoeg LMC 10/08/59). As a result of this investigation teacher-evangelists were posted in the Thomson's Falls (Nyahururu) area under the supervision of the missionary (Vergenoeg LMC 20/01/60).

Shortly before the mission work was transferred to the Reformed Mission League, the three congregations of Meru, Vergenoeg and Loubser increased their support when their obligatory synodical contributions too were allocated to the missionary work in the area (Rawlins 1980:279).

The other South African Reformed Churches in Kenya also showed an interest in missions. During

34 Their names could not be traced in the available literature.
a meeting of the Local Mission Committee of Vergenoeg held on 25 September 1952, it was minuted that Rev. Grobler of the local Reformed Church in South Africa ("Gereformeerde Kerk") was interested in mission matters. The Committee decided to invite him to future meetings (Vergenoeg LMC 25/09/52). Grobler attended the next meetings where he expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to join the meetings of the LMC (Vergenoeg LMC 24/01/53). The Mission Committee also decided to invite Rev. Van Staden of the local Dutch Reformed Church of Africa ("Hervormde Kerk") to join the meeting (Vergenoeg LMC 24/01/53).

The "Gereformeerde Kerk" followed this up by applying for evangelists from the Bwana Loubser Mission in 1954 for their own missionary outreach (Vergenoeg LMC 12/01/54).

6. The Dutch Reformed period comes to an end in 1961

6.1 Why the South Africans left Kenya

As stated previously, many South Africans started leaving Kenya from the late 1950s. Bisem states the reason for their departure as a "fear of independence" (Bisem 1983:12). This is probably correct. However, it is necessary to say more concerning the influences that resulted in the South Africans leaving their homes and farms at that stage.

Rev. Piet Grobler ministered in the Vergenoeg congregation from 1962-1963. It was a time when a large number of South Africans left Kenya and returned to South Africa. Grobler gives the following reasons for this large scale exodus (Grobler 1991):

- The bloodshed in the Congo in 1961 resulted in trains full of white refugees passing through Eldoret on their way to Nairobi.
- The expected lowering of education standards in Kenya.
- The Africanization process which forced farmers to sell their farms to the government at low prices if they refused to accept Kenyan citizenship
- Compulsory Kenyan citizenship to retain land and occupation.
- Fear for tribal clashes and the revival of the Mau-Mau.

35 It refers to school education of children of South Africans at a number of private Afrikaans schools in Kenya. Also see Goen (1972) pp. 149-163.
The attractiveness of returning to South Africa after it became a republic.

Returning to South Africa appeared to be a better economic proposition.

Rev. B Driescher, was the last DRC minister to be granted a work permit in Kenya (Grobler 1991).

The question remains as to what might have happened if the South Africans had stayed on in Kenya after independence. Grobler is of the opinion that the South Africans should have stayed to contribute even more than they had done up to that point. The answer to this question is, according to him, to be found in the fact that the South Africans who stayed in East Africa, are still living peacefully and happily in the country.  

6.2 **Rev. and Mrs Eybers leave East Africa**

Johan Ludwig Krapf who arrived in East Africa in 1844 had a vision of establishing a chain of missions from East to West Africa (Bahemuka 1982:22). One hundred years later Rev. BB Eybers would become a link in this chain as he started preaching the Gospel to the unreached peoples in western Kenya. He, in turn, also had a vision to connect, as a golden thread, the Christian church from Cape Town to Addis Ababa (Rawlins 1980:252). He played an important role, as pioneer in preaching the Gospel to the lost on the equator, in fulfilling this vision.

By the end of the 1950s the Vergenoeg congregation faced financial problems. At the same time, as indicated earlier, Eybers raised the possibility of retirement. In his report to the Classis of Meru in 1959 Eybers painted a bleak picture regarding the future of Europeans in East Africa. He stated that the region had become quite insecure and that many farmers were leaving and returning to South

---

36 Mr. Ernst Kruger with his wife Lenie stayed on in Kenya after independence. After Ernst's death his son Fanie took over the farm. He still lives on the farm with his wife Carol and their two children. He established himself as a top class farmer to such an extent that today he is recognised as one of the main wheat producers in the country. His brother Tinie Kruger also still lives in Kenya. Mr. JJ du Toit and his wife Liz are also farming about 18 km north of Eldoret not far from the Krugers. JJ's grandfather was the owner of Farm 64 where the town of Eldoret was established. The town was initially called "Sixty four". Mr. Piet Steenkamp stayed behind in the Eldoret area, but eventually moved to the Kitale district where he lived on his farm until he died in 1997. Two of his sons, Frans and Frikkie, are still living on the farm. Mr. Hoffie Retief from the Malindi area at the coast died at the beginning of the 1990's. His son Renaldo and his wife Jill still live in Kenya. Renaldo's mother remarried Rev. Jos Theron who was a minister in Vergenoeg congregation from 1957-1961. They are currently living in South Africa.
Africa (Meru Classis: 1959). Soon after this, in 1960, Rev. and Mrs. Eybers decided to leave for South Africa. The Church Council agreed to pay the missionaries a cash cheque of £1400-0-0 in two payments - one payment immediately and the other six months later. They would also receive a full salary until the end of May 1960. On 27 March 1960 he preached his last sermon and received his demission. On 30 March 1960 Rev. and Mrs. Eybers said their farewells to the Mission at Plateau. They had served there for sixteen years (Vergenoeg LMC 16/03/60). The next day they greeted the congregation at Eldoret and returned to South Africa on retirement.

6.3 The Bwana Loubser Mission transferred to the RML

The future of the Bwana Loubser Mission was a burning issue. With the departure of so many people to South Africa it was clear that the Classis of Meru would not be able to keep up the mission work (Cronje 1981:299). Due to the decrease in the membership the Church Council of Vergenoeg was not in a position to call another missionary. They decided that the mission work would be transferred to another acceptable missionary agency (Cronje 1981:300).

During 1953 Rev. and Mrs. Eybers went on a study tour through the Middle East and Europe while a retired missionary from Nyasaland (Malawi), Rev. JA Retief, Father of Hoffie Retief, took care of the mission work (Eybers 1958:39). On this tour the missionaries visited the Netherlands and made contact with the Reformed Mission League (RML) of the Reformed (Hervormde) Church in the Netherlands. The RML assured Eybers that due to the problems the League was facing in Indonesia, East Africa would be given high priority on their mission agenda (Eybers 1956:3). During 1960 a follow-up of this initial contact between the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the Reformed Mission League in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands took place (Info Bulletin, HKOA:1). The Reformed Mission League was looking for a new mission field on the African continent. A delegation of the RML visited South Africa in 1960. After a meeting with the Mission Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal, vital decisions concerning the future of the Bwana Loubser Mission were taken (Cronje 1981:300). The result was that the work was officially transferred from the Bwana Loubser Mission to the RML in 1961.
hand it is also true that Eybers's style was not always evaluated positively by the nationals. Bisem (1983) evaluates the work of Eybers as follows: "There were a lot of negative attitudes already built up against anything European because of the bad mistreatment of the Dutch farmers on the labourers". Through interviews Bisem learned that "even Rev. Eybers himself showed Dutch-settler tendencies which made the people to see no distinction between him as a pastor and the settler as a colonizer." (Bisem 1983:10). Moreover, not all Afrikaners were positive towards the mission work done by Eybers and his wife. Cloete (1999) writes that the members of the Vergenoeg congregation did not always appreciate the missionary efforts of the Eybers'.

A sensitive matter concerning the establishment of the work was Eybers's paternalistic notions. This is still remembered and often referred in conversations about the pioneer work of the DRC Mission in East Africa. This issue, however, should not be considered as an isolated case.

Regarding other Missions in Kenya in this respect Gration (1974:208) argues: "Though Kenya never adopted the term that has emerged from South Africa's racial policy, 'apartheid' does, however, accurately describe the political, social, and economic situation of Kenya during the colonial period." The British colonial government secured the interests of Europeans above that of nationals. "European farmers were granted many other economic benefits not available to their African counterparts" (Gration 1974:211).

The AIM cooperated with the government in not admitting any negro missionaries to Kenya. "The British Government wished to avoid the embarrassment of declaring Negro missionaries prohibited immigrants by governmental decree." The government needed the co-operation of the missionaries societies in this. "Though several official statements concerning the Mission's non-discriminatory policy with reference to the appointment of missionaries have appeared in the latter part of the colonial era, the fact remains that no Negro missionaries were accepted by the AIM. during this period" (Gration 1974:82).

This was also the case in other parts of Africa where the DRC works. Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982) refers to the relationship in the church planting phase between the DRC mission and the national Christians in Zambia as "a parent-child relationship". Missionaries were addressed with an honorary title which in its literal sense meant chief or Village headman. Teachers and evangelists had to obey the orders of the missionary-in-charge. "The missionary was part of the dominant white colonial
society" (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982: 105). “Often we find references to Africans as children and not yet able to drink more than the milk of the faith. The missionary had to be a strict but just father to his children...”(Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982: 106). She continues by saying that this view was not exclusive to the DRC missionaries. This view was also held by certain British officials "an interpretation well in line with views of social and biological evolution current in late Victorian England..."(Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982: 106).

Even though much legitimate criticism can be brought in against Eybers and his methods, it should once again be noted that the DRC Mission was not unique in this respect. The whole colonial era was characterized by Missions being guilty of such settler tendencies (Mbiti 1969:216-228).

While recognizing the fact that many mistakes have been made in establishing a church in a foreign country, the South Africans must be acknowledged as being the ones who brought the Reformed tradition to West Kenya. Rev. Eybers had the vision of establishing an autonomous Reformed Church in West Kenya and strived to achieve this until he left in 1960. In this respect Cloete (1999) states that Eybers and his wife were the most hard working couple she ever knew. Nothing could stop them from preaching the Gospel to the lost - not even the Mau-Mau. Although he was a child of his time, Rev. BB Eybers should be honoured for the pioneer work he had done in East Africa.

Many legitimate questions can be raised on why the farmers only started an organized outreach to their local employees after a period of almost thirty years. One needs to keep in mind that the South Africans who came to East Africa had lost everything they owned in their home country and had come to a foreign land in search of a new future. In addition, many of them were also forced to leave German East Africa due to bad treatment by the Germans. Hence, the establishment of a new home and trying to make ends meet became their priorities. Furthermore, the Vergenoeg congregation struggled to pay the salary of their own minister during the 1930s. These factors combined made it impossible for them to call a full-time missionary during these early years (Mouton 1956:7).

The spontaneous congregational outreach came during the 1930s. It is significant that the outreach towards the local people on the Uasin Gishu Plateau was launched during the years of hardship following the depression. Because it was a congregational outreach, there was initially no official financial support from the Synod in the Transvaal. The whole enterprise was the responsibility of the Vergenoeg congregation. Although the decision to call a full-time missionary did come as a result
of financial prosperity at the time, it was still a major project for a Dutch Reformed congregation in the 1940s.

While the DRC Mission played an important role during the phase of church planting, the Reformed Mission League (RML) guided the young church towards autonomy in 1963. In the years to come the RML would have a significant effect on the development of the Reformed Church of East Africa. The influence of the RML on the growth and development of this young church will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE REFORMED MISSION LEAGUE IN KENYA

To understand the position of the Reformed Mission League (RML) in the Netherlands as an organization and still doing mission work on behalf of the congregations and of the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC) as a whole, requires closer explanation. The complicated relationship between the NRC and the RML as organization outside the structure of the Church requires special attention. The history of the NRC, especially its moving away from the Reformed confessions, was a decision for the refusal of the RML to transfer its missionary responsibilities to the NRC in 1951. For this reason it is necessary to consider the history of the RML in close relation to that of the NRC and above all, the events that had a direct influence on the above-mentioned decision by the RML in 1951. It is followed by a survey of the RML’s investigation concerning a new mission field in Africa, the transfer of this work from the DRC and the commencement of the work. The diaconal involvement of the League receives attention in the fourth paragraph. For the RML the mission activities (werksoorten) resorts under three basic categories: i) the up-building of the congregation and extension (preaching), ii) theological education (teaching), iii) diaconal involvement (healing). The first two will receive attention in chapter five, the third category will be reviewed and discussed in the final paragraph of this chapter. Of the different auxiliary services which will be discussed in this paragraph, the RML is the financial supporter of only the medical department.

1. The Reformed Mission League and its mission enterprise

1.1 Historical survey of the Netherlands Reformed Church Mission enterprise (1602-1901)

In historical perspective the Netherlands mission enterprise can broadly be categorized into three different periods:

- Mission work done by the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East Indian Company) from about 1602-1795 ("Compagniezending");
- Mission work done by societies (from the founding of the Netherlands Missionary Society until the establishment of the Mission Board of the Netherlands Reformed Church) from 1795-1951;
Mission work done by the Church from the establishment of the NRC Mission Board in 1951 until the present ("Kerkelijke zending").

Although this outline is helpful in the sense that it gives a brief overview of the Dutch mission, it is important to keep well in mind that mission work done by societies continues until the present. The RML as well as other para-church organizations fall in this category. Secondly, "kerkelijke zending" (mission work done by the church) was done by the "Evangelische Broedergemeente" and the "Gereformeerde Kerken in de Nederland" (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) long before the Netherlands Reformed Church took a decision in this direction in 1951 (Jongeneel 1997:225).

Mission work undertaken by the New Protestant Government of the Netherlands Provinces goes back to 1602 as it was done by the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compangnie (United East Indian Company) since this time. In accordance to article 36 of the Netherlands Confession of Faith the government was responsible for promoting the proclamation of the Gospel. Direct mission work was therefore not done by the Church during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The VOIC took over the complete task of church and mission in places administrated by it (Van den End 1997:2). During this period the church got so alienated from its missionary task that when the VOIC ceased to exist the work was not continued by the church, but by missionary organizations (Tigchelaar 1997:34).

The NRC became more involved in missions with the founding of the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap (Netherlands Missionary Society) in 1797. The establishment of the society on 19 December 1797 is traditionally referred to as the start of the modern missionary era in the Netherlands (Bieshaar 1926:10). The founding of the Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap (NZG) was strongly influenced by developments on the missionary front in England and was founded along the footsteps of the London Missionary Society (1795) (Tigchelaar 1997:44).

During the first half of the nineteenth century the NZG was the only mission corporation in the Netherlands (Bieshaar 1926:10). The reaction against the spirit of modernism in this society led to the exploration of new ways along which mission work could be chanelled (Tigchelaar 1997:45). The one society who wanted to do mission work on the foundation of the confession of the Reformed Church was the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereeniging (Netherlands Reformed Mission Society) founded in 1861 (Tigchelaar 1997:46). In 1892 the society united itself with the Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches in the Netherlands (Bieshaar 1926:12). The NRC realized that certain
missionary organizations moved closer to one another (Valkenburg 1978:14), which eventually resulted in cooperation between them in the "Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties" (Cooperative Mission Corporations) (Van den End 1997:13). At the same time these organizations were getting more and more out of line with the Reformed tradition. These developments led to the founding of the RML in 1901.

While missions in the Netherlands as well as on the Dutch mission field were characterized by a non-ecclesiastical ("niet-kerkelijk") character during the nineteenth century, it more and more became a ecclesiastical ("kerkelijke") endeavour by the twentieth century (Van den End 1997:23). Requests came for a closer relationship between the NRC and mission work. Where the Gereformeerde Kerken in de Nederland (GKN) already recognized mission as the task of the Church in 1896, the NRC waited until 1951 before following their example.

1.2. The founding of the Reformed Mission League

Although the Reformed Mission League (RML) does not belong to the group of missionary organizations dating from the nineteenth century, Van den End (1992) refers to the founding of the RML as the last phase in the process of the splitting up of the Dutch Missionary Enterprise during the nineteenth century (Van den End 1992:59). According to approach and confession the RML was meant to be a continuation of the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereeniging. People did not feel that they left this organization or became unfaithful to it, but that they were robbed of the opportunity to continue their mission work through the Society (Tigchelaar 1997:47). These people belonged mainly to a stream ("richting") in the NRC which refers to themselves as "Hervormd-Gereformeerd" (double reformed). They organized itself in 1901 as a Reformed Mission League (Van den End 1992:57-58).

The RML wanted to move away from organizational mission ("vereenigingzending") and wanted to carry out mission work as the task of the church founded on the Three Forms of Unity. The League was of the opinion that the other corporations accepted "vereenigingzending" as normal and that in the missiological reflection of the Samenwerkende Zendingscorporaties (SZC) the classical confessions of faith and the Reformed theology no longer functioned as norm (Van den End

---

1 The founding of the RML took place at a time when most of the "Reformed" organizations grew closer to one another in the form of the SCZ.
96
1992:59). It was through this close link with the Reformed confession that the RML wished to be distinguished from other corporations (Plaisier 1993:41).

When the RML came into existence, the idea was not to stand in opposition to the other mission organizations in the country, but to fill the gap left by the Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Zendingsvereeniging (Valkenburg 1978:14). After the Doleance of 1886 this society was no longer an option for people who wanted to stay "Reformed" in the real sense of the word. The Reformed Mission League came into existence in Utrecht on 6 February 1901 (Bieshaar 1926:9) and was founded by orthodox members who did not leave the Reformed (Hervormde) Church with Abraham Kuyper in 1894 (Van den End 1985:5). The establishment of the RML came from the desire to preach the Gospel to the unreached (Van den End 1985:5). Initially the name was only "Reformed Mission League", but, due to the fact that the organization does mission work on behalf of congregations of the NRC, "in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands" was later added to the name (De Waarheidsvriend 1976:3).

In correspondence to RML's vision of wanting to be a League of congregations whereby the responsibility for mission work was not to be taken away from the local church, the first missionary was ordained and sent by the congregation of Veenendaal followed by congregations like Huizen, Zeist and others (Valkenburg 1978:32). The Classis of Harderwijk was the first classis to become involved when in 1925 they decided to cooperate with the RML (Valkenburg 1978:33).

Within the framework of the NRC the RML has the structure of an organization and therefore does not fit into the mission system of the NRC in the ordinary sense of the word. There are more organizations whose leadership or membership comes completely or partially from within the structure of the NRC. The difference between these organizations and the RML is that they do not view their work as "kerkelijk" (church mission work), whereas the RML does. Hence, the RML functions as an alternative mission of the NRC. Its management functions in a certain sense as a synod and council in one, with its own personnel and bureau (Valkenburg 1978:32). The position of the RML, which wanted to be involved in missions as an organization, necessarily was ambivalent as it was an organization which wanted to do church mission (Van den End 1985:4).

The complex development of the Church in the Netherlands since the Reformation does not stop with
the division between different denominations. Within the Reformed Church itself different streams can be identified. One of these streams which wanted to adhere to the Reformed confession, was the Reformed League which was founded in 1906 and is referred to as the right wing of the NRC. The Reformed League wants to be theologically a continuation of the Reformation (Calvinism) and the "Nadere Reformasie" (Rasker 1996:262-264).

Although a number of management members and former management members of the Reformed League were involved in the establishment of the RML, the latter refused to identify itself with the Reformed League and therefore no official relation exists between the RML and the Reformed League. It appears that a large percentage of the congregations supporting the RML also related to the Reformed League (Plaisier 1993:45-46).

The first missionary from the RML in the person of Rev. Van de Loosdrecht of the Netherlands Reformed congregation in Veenendaal was sent to Indonesia in 1913 (Valkenburg 1978:29). The land of the Toraja people came under the authority of the Dutch government in 1906 which opened a door for the RML to reach out with the Gospel to the local people (Valkenburg 1978:27). The work was started on the island Sulawesi with the Toraja people (RML Info Bulletin:1989). In 1916 two more missionaries were sent in the persons of J Belksma and H van der Veen (Valkenburg 1978:35).

Towards the 1960s, due to the strive for independence, the situation for the RML missionaries in Indonesia towards the 1960s became quite problematic. During this time the League began to seek for a new mission field and decided to start working in Kenya (Valkenburg 1978:101).

1.3 The Reformed Mission League and the Netherlands Reformed Church Constitution of 1951

The Constitution of 1951 of the NRC was to play a significant role in the future mission of the Church. Article VIII dealt with mission. It stated that the Church as community of faith confessing Christ as Lord has been placed in the world to bear witness of God's promises and commandments to all people and powers, in the expectation of the Kingdom of God, fulfilling her apostolic

---

2 For a detailed explanation of the different streams see Rasker 1996:253-254 & 358.
commission in particular through 1) her dialogue with Israel, 2) mission work (het werk der zending) 3) the spreading (verbreiding) of the Gospel and the continuous labour in the christianization of society in line with the Reformation (Van den End 1992:61).

The constitution of 1951 was an improvement on the former constitution as far as the mission of the Church was concerned. Hence, many in the NRC wished that after the acceptance of the new constitution of 1951, the RML would be incorporated into the mission structure of the NRC (Van den End 1992:61). It is therefore understandable that the continuation of the RML as an organization outside the NRC resulted in negative reactions from the corporations who became part of the mission structure of the NRC. The RML, however, was not satisfied with the constitution. Although the NRC mentioned the Three Forms of Unity in the new constitution, the RML was not convinced that the Church was in reality committed to these confessions (Van den End 1992:61). Regarding article X the RML among others felt that reference to the confession by being “in community with the confession of the fathers” in stead of “in obedience to” was too vague. The advisory commission of RML admitted that a constitution is no confession, but maintained that what was supposed to be stated clearly in this article, namely: “in obedience to the confession of the fathers”, was absent (Tigchelaar 1997:58).

The new constitution was accepted by the NRC on 1 May 1951. On 28 June 1951 the Verenigde Nederlandse Zendingscorporaties (VNZ) transferred their work over to the General Synod of the NRC, which executes their mission work through the Mission Board ("Raad voor de Zending") ever since. The RML remained a missionary organization outside the NRC. At the same time the RML wants to execute its work as church mission. Two regulations ("overgangsbepalingen") in the new constitution no. 161 and 162 determined the position of the RML: The mission work of the NRC, as it is done by the RML, remains the responsibility of this League until it is willing to transfer this work to the General Synod (Tigchelaar 1997:59). According to the regulations this arrangement would be reconsidered after a period of ten years. But ten years later the RML once again responded negatively for the same reasons as mentioned above. Still, the RML asked for the extension of regulations 161 and 162 to sustain contact with the NRC Mission Board. Furthermore, a suggestion for a work group ("werkvergadering") between the two bodies was tabled by the RML. The Mission Board even went a step further by suggesting joint missionary action through which they anticipated that the dogmatic differences between the two missionary entities would appear less relevant. RML responded positively to this suggestion and since the late 1950s cooperation on the mission field
became a reality between the RML and the Mission Board (Van den End 1985:693-695).

The concern of the RML regarding the direction of the NRC and her general relationship to the confession, is currently not less than it was in 1951. The possibility of the RML transferring the responsibility of its mission work to the General Synod has not become stronger since 1951 (Tigchelaar 1997:60).

1.4 The relationship between the Reformed Mission League and the Netherlands Reformed Church Mission Board

In 1951 mission work was freed from the ghetto of being the work of “mission friends” and received its proper biblical position as task of the church. Although this occurrence became visible throughout the churches in the Netherlands, the RML continued its mission work as an organization (Enklaar 1968:47-48).

Mission work of the NRC is seen as being essentially a church responsibility. It was thus carried out under the leadership of the Synod. The Synod is assisted by a Mission Board which has the task of advising the Synod and carrying out policy as far as mission work is concerned. (Van den End 1992:57). The difference between RML and the Mission Board rests mainly on two issues, namely the ecclesiastical character of the mission organization and the connection of the mission work to the three Forms of Unity. Regarding the first point, the RML was unable to realize this ideal in practice. The organization’s work in the period before 1951 was characterized mainly as that of societal mission (“verenigingzending”). Local congregations and parishes were not as such represented in the management of the RML. Furthermore, due to the NRC, mission work was done by missionary ministers without official status (Van den End 1992:60-61).

Even before 1951 efforts towards attaching the RML’s missionary activities to the Synod, by the NRC can be traced, but these efforts were unsuccessful. This, however, does not mean that the RML was

---

3 For detail on confessional differences between RML and the NRC Mission Board also see: Character and place of RML 1977:20-21; Van Velden 1978:8.

unwilling to cooperate with the Mission Board⁵. At the root of all these differences between the RML and the NRC lay the fact that the League believed that although the Reformed confessions still play a role in the NRC, the exclusive and normative elements of this confession were removed from it (Character and place of RML 1977:19).

The RML refers with regret to its own unbiblical position as an organization within the Church, but lays the blame for this situation on the NRC. At the same time the RML views this situation as an appeal to the NRC (Character and place of RML 1977:20-21).

In conclusion it can be said that what initially was an advantage to the RML regarding church mission, became a disadvantage with the developments during the 1930s and 1940s. Secondly, that the reason for the refusal of the RML to be incorporated in the mission of the NRC, is to be found in the fact that the League was not convinced that the NRC was a Reformed Church in the true sense of the word. The confession of this Church was for the RML more important than ecclesiasticization of mission ("verkerklijking van zending"). Thirdly, it is clear that it will only be possible to incorporate the RML in the mission work of the NRC if the Church becomes willing to truly bind itself to the confessions. The parties of double reformed persuasion ("Hervormd-Gereformeerden") have strong feelings on this issue and this should be considered if the "Samen op weg" (together on the way)⁶ process wishes to work in a meaningful way towards integrating the missionary organizations of the three participating Churches. (Van den End 1992:61).

1.5 The Mission policy of the Reformed Mission League

The principles which guided the RML during the times of major transition in the RCEA evolved over a period of about 90 years and were eventually formulated by the League in the "Beleidsnota" (Policy) of RML in 1989. Apart from other minor documents on policy, the Beleidsnota was the only comprehensive policy of the RML in existence which can be related to their work in Kenya. It lies outside the scope of this study to evaluate the RML's policy of mission in any detail. Attention is paid

---

⁵ See Van't Veld 1978:11.

⁶ According to this movement the Netherlands Reformed Church (NRC), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church is in the process of uniting as the United Protestant Church in the Netherlands.
to only a few of the relevant issues in the Beleidsnota as the policy during the 1980s and the 1990s when the RCEA became more autonomous. Where necessary, reference will also be made to "Heel de Wereld", the current mission policy of RML. Although no fundamental differences can be identified between the policies of 1989 and 1998, the policy of 1989, which guided the RML during the last decade of this century, will be taken as point of departure in evaluating the work of the RML in Kenya.

1.5.1 Theological principles underlying the Mission policy of the Reformed Mission League

The Reformed Mission League states that it has a clear and permanent calling to God's mission in the world and wishes to fulfil this task by basing it on the foundation of Scripture and the Reformed confessions of faith. The RML wants to relate the above-mentioned foundation to relevant times and contexts. Apart from the great task abroad, the RML is committed to not neglecting their responsibility at home. Mission and evangelism are viewed as being essentially a unity. The organization take their own country as well as the whole of the Western world to be a mission field (Beleidsnota 1989:4). Essentially the RML views its involvement in mission work to be the building of the Congregation of the Lord Jesus (inwardly and outwardly) which he gathers Himself through Word and Spirit, but in which He engages human beings. (Beleidsnota 1989:6).

At the core of the work of the RML and as point of departure operates the concept "Missio Dei". The League understands this concept in a Theocentric-Triune way which means that the Triune God takes a position at the center of everything. He takes the initiative in missions and sustain it. God as Creator has authority over his creatures and does not give them up (Beleidsnota 1989:6). No deeper source for mission can be found than the merciful heart of the Father (Heel de Wereld 1998:5). Above all, God revealed Himself as Father in sacrificing His only Son. In the mission of His Son God reveals Himself in a unique and exclusive way.

---

7 This policy contains the vision and plan of the current mission enterprise of the RML formulated for the period 1998-2002. At the basis of this policy is the following "mission statement" (own translation): In obedience to the great commission of Christ (Mathew 28:19), the RML as missionary organ in the NRC in service of the Church and congregations, together with other congregations of Christ in whatever culture, wants to work towards the winning and the equipping for service of people in the Kingdom of God so that the house of the Father will fill and the end will come in which God will be all for all and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord" (Heel de Wereld 1998:3).
From the core of the Gospel the fullness of the salvation of the Lord is proclaimed in the world. To share in this salvation personal conversion and personal faith in the Lord Jesus is necessary and indispensable. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father except through Him. The Holy Spirit, sent by the Father into the world, introduces the work of the Son to the world. Through conversion and faith the Holy Spirit brings about the participation in the treasures and gifts of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the mission work of the Spirit the congregation of the Lord received a special place and calling. The congregation is the dwelling and working place of the Holy Spirit. He provides the congregation with gifts according to the will of Christ and equips her in order to live as witness in the world. Through the work of the Holy Spirit love towards God, the neighbour and the world is expressed with the consequences it has for Church, society and political life. This love is received through fellowship with the Lord Jesus (Beleidsnota 1989:6-7).

In conclusion it can be stated that the missionary goal of the RML is in line with the reformed tradition namely: "salvatio, plantatio and glorificatio" (Voetius). It concerns the conversion of lost souls, the planting of Churches, but eventually it is all about the glory of the triune God as first and last purpose of mission (Heel de Wereld 1998:32).

1.5.2 Towards a policy on mission

By the time the RML formulated a policy in 1989 the League stated that it was no longer possible to suffice with an ad hoc policy whereby decisions were taken from situation to situation without the foundation of clear policy statements (Beleidsnota 1989:5). The RML’s point of departure is to be found in the Articles of association of 1901\(^8\) and a Mission Constitution in 1913\(^9\). The League in due course laid down certain mainlines concerning their mission work.

The principles that differentiate the RML from other mission corporations are to be found in the above-mentioned articles of association of the organization (Van den End 1985:3). Bieshaar (1926)

---

8 These articles were revised by 1909. Also see Van den End 1985:69.

9 The Mission constitution was revised in 1938. For details see Van den End 1985:96-102.
states that in the name of the organization it was already clear on what principle the organization built its ministry (Bieshaar 1926:14). In article 2 of the Articles of association (statuten) of the organization it states that its point of departure is the principle that the Bible is the Word of God which contains the full counsel of God as it finds expression in the Three Forms of Unity of the Reformed Church (Articles of association RML:1). Through this article the RML accepted the Reformed theology as norm.

The purpose of the organization as stated in article 3 of the Articles of association:

- In obedience to the commission of Christ and believing in his promise through the presentation of God's Word, the organization aims to do mission work mainly outside the Netherlands.
- The organization strives to realize this goal through cooperation with younger churches and the sending of missionaries (Articles of Association RML:1).

Due to the unique position of the RML within the NRC their policy in this respect needed to be clear right from the start (Valkenburg 1978:32). The RML wanted to be a league of congregations (Van den End 1985:4). It was not the intention of the League to take the opportunity as well as the responsibility to be involved in God's mission away from the local Church. The League does not send out missionaries themselves; missionaries are ordained and sent by the local churches of the NRC (Valkenburg 1978:32). The RML views mission work as a task of the church and church planting as the fruit of mission work (Van den End 1985:5). A newly founded church should receive not only God's Word and the Apostle's Creed, but also The Three Forms of Unity in their own language (Van den End 1985:73).

The focus for RML was not on individuals but on the christianization of nations as a whole. The fact that the heathen was without knowledge of the truth and needed conversion was emphasized by the League. Part of the vision of the organization was that the planted churches should grow towards autonomy. The formulation of a constitution and confession were viewed as important elements of mission work (Plaisier 1993:46). It was also the strategy of the RML to implement and carry out their work in such a way that they would become superfluous as soon as possible and carry over the responsibilities to the newly established church (Valkenburg 1978:32).
The RML does its mission work through the proclamation of Christ as "Kurios". This means that not only the personal, but also the communal and cosmic aspects are not to be removed from the authority of Christ. His authority as king over all should also be applicable to medical work, education and development work (Heel de Wereld 1998:28). He does what is right and demands righteousness. From the perspective of reconciliation all unrighteousness and discrimination against people, all corrupt structures and bad treatment of creation, is of Satanic nature (Beleidsnota 1989:9).

In the mission work of the RML the religious, cultural and social contexts are important. Elements of these contexts must eventually become of service in the proclamation and coming of the Kingdom of God. Each context ought to be filled and governed by the authoritative Word of God. The exclusiveness and radical nature of the Gospel is non-negotiable (Beleidsnota 1989:9-10).

The RML states that the Reformed confession as such maintains a certain attitude towards culture in that it has an eye for the good in it, but also that it has a critical function towards it, based on the realization that the Christian is not of this world, but enroute to God's future. In view of the tradition of the Reformed confession the RML sees it as part of its task to assist the young churches towards an own contextual confession (Heel de Wereld 1998:10).

The conviction of the need of a comprehensive approach demands the setting of priorities. The RML states that deeds on behalf of Christ should not be isolated from words on behalf of Christ. Regarding the relationship between kerugma and diaconia the RML tries to guard against two possible one-sided perspectives. On the one hand kerugma should not be over emphasized in such a way that other activities become only a springboard to kerugma. On the other hand the emphasis can be to such an extent on activities that proclamation of the word becomes a subordinate activity (Van den Velden 1978:8). The theological contribution to and equipping of congregations should not be dominated by numerous diaconal and development programs. Still, diaconia as well as development should not be seen as addenda, but as part and parcel of proclamation (Heel de Wereld 1998:26).

According to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the particular need of the situation either the Word or the deed will receive priority, but both are focused on the Redeemer and on the totality of his salvation. The proclamation of the Word should not be neglected at the cost of diaconia or vice versa (Beleidsnota 1989:8-9).
In establishing relationships, the RML’s goal is to make contact with churches and organizations which, on Scriptural basis, want to be obedient to their apostolic calling and which show a willingness to cooperate with the RML in this respect. Obviously the League would give preference to cooperation with churches of Reformed confession. This does not mean that the RML is unwilling to cooperate with other Protestant churches. This kind of partnership, however, would be subject to the central factor on which the policy of the RML is built, namely, that Scripture is given highest authority in doctrine and practice\(^{10}\) (Beleidsnota 1989:15-16).

### 1.6 The Reformed Mission League and missions by 2000

Apart from its involvement in numerous activities in the Netherlands itself, the extended missionary enterprise of the RML can be seen from its involvement in mission work with many countries in different parts of the world: Asia (nine missionaries in different areas in Central Asia, one missionary in Southern Asia as well as nine missionaries in eight other Asian countries); Africa (32 missionaries in thirteen countries); Latin America (seven countries); Europe (ten missionaries in five countries); Mid-East (eleven missionaries in four regions) (RML Annual report 1998:49-52). In this respect the RML visualizes a balanced regional spreading of its work all over the world (Heel de Wereld 1998:36-37).

This mission work is supported by approximately 40,000 members. On a broader level the League is supported by 450 Reformed congregations through prayer and finances. The expenditure in 1990 was about 7,000,000 guilders and increased to about 10,000,000 in 1997. For the period 1998-2002 the RML strives towards an annual income increase of 3.5%. The policy of the RML concerning fund raising is to encourage congregations by means of spreading information of the work and equipping members toward involvement to such an extent that they will remain committed towards financial support of the League's work (Heel de Wereld 1998:36-37).

---

\(^{10}\) See conclusion below.
The objective of the above-mentioned regional spreading of the work is reflected in the following expenditure pattern (Heel de Wereld 1998:36-37):

- Africa (37.00%)
- Latin America (25.00%)
- Asia (15.00%)
- Extras (2.00%)
- Mid East (9.00%)
- Europe (12.00%)

1.7 Conclusion

The position of the RML in the NRC is one which does not reflect the idea of mission work by the church ("kerkelijke zending") in the true sense of the word. During the period 1901-1961 the relationship between the RML and the NRC was characterized by two factors, namely, that the RML wished to support the idea of church mission work, but did not trust the (Reformed) Church to carry out the mission task.

In contrast to other "Reformed" mission organizations, the RML recognized the fact that mission was primarily the task of the church. In its constitution the RML states clearly that local churches are encouraged in the first place to become members of the RML, that missionaries should be sent from the local church and that classical mission committees should be established.

Although the RML recognized the importance of the local church in missions, it revealed the character of a societal organization ("vereenigingssending"), in other words, as a mission organization next to the church (Van den End 1985:40). This character surfaced especially in the fact that the voice of the local church in general and the sending congregation in particular were largely limited. They were also not represented in the management committee of the RML. Secondly, the position of the missionary, specifically that of the missionary minister, was viewed differently from what the case would be in a purely congregational mission enterprise. The management of the RML seemed to be in a position hierarchically above the missionary. The missionary minister’s right to administer
the sacraments was only operational on the mission field, but not in the Netherlands. In this respect he was viewed as a missionary servant of the Word ("missionaire dienaren des Woords"), a position distinguished as subordinate to that of the servant of the Word in the church in the Netherlands.

The contradictory character within the RML was due to a lack of confidence in the NRC. Primary to mission work for the RML is the fact that it is based on the foundation of Scripture, the Three forms of Unity and the confessional character of mission. They believe that this would not be safeguarded in a missionary enterprise launched by the NRC. For this reason the RML refused the offer by the classis Rotterdam to take over a missionary post from the League. The RML also refused the possibility of the church province of Gelderland taking over the work of the League as a whole in Celebes in Indonesia (Van den End 1985:41-42).

The confessional point of departure determined the identity of the RML. As a result they did not join the Verenigde Nederlandse Zendingscorporaties in 1946 who carried over their work to the NRC Mission Board in 1951. At the same time the conservation of the League’s own identity should never become a purpose in itself. Mission work is the task of the Church and the RML should look forward to the day when their work will become the responsibility of the Church. The League should ask itself repeatedly whether, on the basis of the church character of mission, the time has not arrived to give up the autonomy of the organization and move in a direction where the church character of mission comes to its right in a more sound, biblical way.

2. **A new field in Africa investigated**

The need of the RML to look for a mission field outside Indonesia came, among other reasons, as a result of tension between the Netherlands and Indonesia, especially after 1949 concerning the transfer of New Guinea.

Discussions on the possibility of a mission field in Africa took place at more or less the same time within the Mission of the Netherlands Reformed Church, the Reformed Mission League, the Mission of the Reformed Churches ("Gereformeerde Kerken") and the Dutch Bible Society. There were also some connections to be found. The Reformed (Hervormde) Synod asked the NRC Mission Board (Raad voor de Zending) for advice on the possibility of the RML starting work in South Africa. The
"Hervormden" informed the "Gereformeerden" on their plans in Cameroon and try to get the RML involved in the work in this country (Schaaf 1997:201-203).

By the end of the 1950s the NBG (Dutch Bible Society) began preparing to extend their activities to the African continent by sending a minister to Cameroon with the task of establish an autonomous Bible Society for Cameroon (Schaaf 1997:203-207). At more or less the same time, in 1958, a decision was taken by the General Synod of the NRC to start mission work in West Africa and shortly afterwards they started sending missionaries to several countries (Schaaf 1997:207-213). In the 1960s mission work was also started by the "Gereformeerden" in Ruanda (Schaaf 1997:217) where they cooperated with other denominations in the Protestant Council of Ruanda ("Protestantse Raad van Ruanda") (Enklaar 1968: 225).

During 1953 the issue of a second mission field, other than the one in Indonesia, was raised for the first time by the management of the RML. Although it was possible to send missionaries to Indonesia again from 1965, the emphasis of RML's ministry was from that time on in Africa (Van den End 1985:48). By 1985 the RML had relations and cooperative activities in Africa in Kenya, the Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe (RML Annual report 1985:37). By the end of the millennium Malawi, Mozambique and Namibia were added for a total of seven countries in Africa in which the RML was involved in mission work (RML Annual report 1998:22-27).

2.1 Delegations to South and East Africa

The Reformed Mission League's oldest contact on the African continent is Kenya (RML Annual report 1993:32). In RML's Annual Report of 1959 the organization reports that it was looking for a new missionary responsibility. They made it clear that the idea was not to neglect the work in Indonesia as a result of a new responsibility, but that the investigation about a new field came due to the growth and commitment of members. This enabled the RML to do more than it could in previous years (RML Annual report 1958:7).

During the years 1960 to 1961, serious attempts were made by the RML to investigate new possibilities for spreading the Gospel in unreached areas. The RML in 1960 stated that through this investigation several possibilities were considered, but that a concrete offer concerning a mission
field came from South Africa. They could, however, not decide on what action to take. It was suggested that mission work in South Africa was almost impossible due to the policy of Apartheid. At the same time the RML was encouraged towards a positive decision by noting the possibilities of taking over such a responsibility. To get greater clarity on the real state of affairs the management of RML decided to send a delegation to investigate the situation (RML Annual report 1960:5).

The Chairman and the Director of the RML left the Netherlands for South Africa on 9 March 1960. The objective of the mission was to negotiate the possibilities of reaching out to some of the South African "homelands" within the borders of the country. The delegation in the persons of Revs. Meijers and De Lange had time to make a thorough investigation and spent time in Natal and Zululand to investigate a potential mission field among the Zulu's. They also visited relevant institutions, especially those of the Reformed Church in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Potchefstroom. With the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk) they had contact in Cape Town and Stellenbosch where they also met Prof. Gerdener.

A potential mission field became possible after negotiations with the Council of Labour among non-Christian peoples ("Raad van de Arbeid onder de niet-Christelijke volken") of the Nederduitsh Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (Dutch Reformed Church of Africa). This council was willing to transfer their work in Natal among the Zulu's to the RML (RML Annual report 1960:6).

The delegation also had negotiations with the Missions Board of the Dutch Reformed Church in the Transvaal and it was here that they learned that the mission work of the DRC in Kenya was being made available to be taken over by another church or missionary organization. The delegation was referred to Kenya to investigate the possibilities of continuing the work of the DRC in the area of Eldoret. On their way back to the Netherlands the delegation visited Kenya. (RML Annual report 1962:128-129).

By the time the RML delegation reached Kenya, Rev. JP Theron of the Vergenoeg congregation in Kenya was on visitation to the Congo. It was possible for them later to trace him to Thomson's Falls where he informed them briefly about the situation concerning the Bwana Loubser Mission. The work started by the Vergenoeg congregation expanded to such an extent that help was needed. The congregation would be grateful to hand the work over to a Reformed Church or organization. With the news of the above-mentioned possibilities, Natal and Kenya, the delegation arrived back in the
Netherlands on 7 May 1960. The delegation presented a report on their investigation to the RML Board and the two possibilities were both in principle accepted by the RML Board on 16 June 1960 (RML Annual report 1960:6). The NRC Mission Board was positive about the plans, but was concerned about the policy of Apartheid of the South African government. The chairman confirmed that the RML would be in a position to work without being involved in politics.

During this meeting it was suggested to support the management concerning the prospective work in Africa, but that the RML should continue to assist in Indonesia. The chairman reacted by reassuring the meeting that the work in the Celebes would not be neglected in future. The meeting approved of the plans and confirmed that arrangements for work in Kenya and Natal should continue (RML Annual meeting 21/09/60:2-3 Utrecht). By this time JJ Tigchelaar already had offered to start working in Natal and arrangements with the Synod of the Reformed (Hervormde) Church concerning his ordination as missionary minister was already in process. The RML wanted to send Tigchelaar to South Africa in 1960 where he would become involved in language and anthropological studies in Pretoria for one year before departing to the mission field in Natal. Mission work in Kenya had to wait until a decision was taken by the DRC Synod of Central Africa in October 1960. Negotiations would only have been possible after approval of the plans by this Synod (RML Annual report 1960:7).

An unexpected development took place regarding the plans for mission work in Natal. Due to the fact that the Reformed (Hervormde) Church in the Netherlands, following the advice of the NRC Mission Board, was not willing to call Tigchelaar as missionary minister to South Africa. The reasons were related to the policy of Apartheid in South African politics and because of the fact that the sending of a Reformed (Hervormde) minister to South Africa would result in disaster as far as the work of the NRC Mission Board's work in West Africa was concerned, as they would not accept the involvement of the NRC in South Africa (RML Annual report 1961:7). Thus the efforts by the RML to realize the possibility of mission work in Natal failed. The RML therefore turned their attention to the other option of taking over the work started by the DRC in Kenya.

2.2 Transfer of the work from DRC Mission to RML

The matter of transferring the work of the Bwana Loubser Mission to the RML was discussed by the Local Mission Committee (LMC) of the Vergenoeg congregation for the first time on 30 June 1960.
(Vergenoeg LMC 30/06/60). Following the discussion by the RML on 21 September 1960 on the possibility of taking over this work as well as the positive response, the Parish of Meru also approved of this development during the same month. The Vergenoeg congregation felt that in this way the work they did for 35 years would be transferred to 'family' in the Reformed tradition (Cronje 1981:300).

At a LMC meeting of the Vergenoeg congregation held on 7 December 1960 the chairman, Mr. Johannes Barnard, presented a letter of approval that he had written on behalf of the Committee to the RML. Some significant points of the letter appeared in the minutes:

- That the Mission Church would be responsible for the salaries of their personnel.
- That each Dutch Reformed Mission congregation separately gives permission that they would in future be under the care of RML.
- That written permission concerning the transfer was given by the ministers and evangelists of the "Mission Church".
- That all properties would be transferred to RML free of charge on condition that RML would be responsible for the transfer costs.
- That the future policy would be determined by RML.

The letter was approved by the Committee (Vergenoeg LMC 07/12/60).

During January 1961 the RML paid a second visit to Kenya. This visit was requested by the DRC Synod of Central Africa with the purpose of arranging the transfer of the work. The RML also used this opportunity to determine the needs of the new mission field (De Lange 1961:10-11). The delegation from the RML, once again consisting of Revs. De Lange and Meijers, attended the Vergenoeg LMC meeting of 18 January 1961. Concerning the transfer of the work to the RML the Committee was informed that as from 1 July 1961 the financial support of the mission work would be the responsibility of the RML (Vergenoeg LMC 18/01/61). The new missionary would be assisted by an Advisory Committee appointed by the Church Council (Cronje 1981:300).

The three mission congregations were visited by Revs. De Lange and Meijers of the RML and Mr. Barnard and Mouton of the DRC. The three Church Councils and congregations decided

---

11 Not all the conditions were observed afterwards. This is especially true of point nr 1.
unanimously to be adopted by the RML (Cronje 1981:299). The delegation states in a letter to the Netherlands during this second visit to Eldoret that the present developments were experienced with great joy by each of the parties involved. The Vergenoeg congregation was grateful that the RML was willing to take over the work started by them and at the same time the "young church" welcomed an organization which would continue where the DRC had left off. At the same time the RML was grateful that they had found a second mission field apart from Indonesia (De Lange 1961:10-11). After negotiations with the Classis of Meru and the Church Council of Vergenoeg, the mission work of the Bwana Loubser Mission was formally handed over to the Reformed Mission League on 20 January 1961. A further arrangement was made whereby the League would take over the work completely after the arrival of the first missionary from RML in Kenya (RML Annual Report 1962:129). In RML's Annual report of 1961 it is stated that Tigchelaar who made himself available for the work in Natal, was appointed by the management to start mission work in Kenya on behalf of the RML (RML Annual report 1961:7).

The first missionary from the RML, Miss G Stuurman, a nurse, arrived one month before Rev. JJ Tigchelaar who arrived in Eldoret on 25 October 1961. From 1 November 1961 the Reformed Mission League took full responsibility for the work. During a church service of the Vergenoeg congregation Tigchelaar accepted the responsibility for the mission work and the properties from the DRC on behalf of the RML. At this stage the Vergenoeg congregation were still in a position to support a full-time minister. The transfer of the mission work to the RML took place about one week before Rev. Theron returned to South Africa12.

Within a year there were two ordained missionaries, one doctor and two nurses from the RML working in Kenya (RML Annual report 1962:129). During the first year of the RML's involvement in Kenya most of the work was concentrated in Eldoret and Plateau. Rev. Tigchelaar and his family stayed in Eldoret from the beginning, while Rev. CJP Lam and his family moved to the mission station at Plateau during 1962. Further investigations in the Kitale area still needed to be done before work in this area could be continued properly (RML Annual report 1962:134).

---

12 Two more full-time ministers followed Theron in the Vergenoeg congregation. They were, Revs. PJ Grobler (1962-1963) and B Driescher.
3. **Commencement of the RML Mission in Kenya**

Van den Ham (1993) states in a paper presented to the Hendrik Kraemer Institute that a new dimension was given to the mission work when the work was taken over by the RML. The mission and vision of the DRC was to reach the labourers on the farms of the Vergenoeg congregation members. Due to the continuous changes that occurred within the farming labour population, real congregation-building was very difficult (Van den Ham 1993: 19). The mission work of the DRC took place mainly in the districts of Eldoret and Kitale. The result of this was that the RCEA was established mainly among the members of the Kalenjin-community. The other main tribes were the Kikuyu and the Luyia (De Blois 1971: 88).

The RML took over a ministry from the DRC which served a community of dislocated people. At this point people from the Kikuyu tribe mainly belonged to the Presbyterian Church, the Nandi to the Africa Inland Church and the Luyia to the Friends (Quakers). The more developed people traditionally belonged to the Anglican Church. The poor and undeveloped people found a home in the Reformed Church of East Africa (Enklaar 1968: 223). The RML expected a strong, growing congregation in Eldoret, but the first missionaries were strongly disillusioned by the reality. Instead of fulfilling a role of assistance and advice, intensive groundwork in establishing the ministry was necessary (RML Annual report 1963: 130).

The missionaries and ministers joined hands in the training of evangelists. The training of evangelists started in September 1962. The population was spread out over a vast area, which meant that mission outposts were necessary. A higher number of evangelists were required to help at schools as well as to minister to the parents of the children in schools. In due course a joint training programme was started whereby the two missionary ministers Revs. Tigchelaar and Lam, were assisted by Revs. Lugumira and Tibanga, as well as by evangelist Festo Okoyene and a teacher. Subjects like Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology were taught by the missionaries (RML Annual report 1962: 132).

4. **RML and a comprehensive approach in mission**

The “comprehensive approach” of the RML in Kenya represents the second phase of the missionary endeavour of the two Reformed missions' involvement in the RCEA. At this stage the phase of church planting was done through a spontaneous congregational outreach by Vergenoeg and
especially through formal missionary action between 1944 and 1960. Since 1961 the RML continued with this work. Although a lot of ground work in leading the young church towards autonomy was still required, an emphasis towards a comprehensive approach in mission gradually developed which would result in vast investments in different auxiliary services.

4.1 The relation between kerygma and diaconia

Mission work can never be limited to the preaching of the gospel or the building up of the church, nor is it only a matter of the political, social and economic engagement of Christians. It is a combination of all these issues. David Bosch (1991) states that "one's theology of mission is always closely dependent on one's theology of salvation; it would therefore be correct to say that the scope of salvation - however we define salvation - determines the scope of the missionary enterprise" (Bosch 1991:393).

Bosch holds that salvation in Christ "is salvation in the context of human society en route to a whole and healed world". In a world "in which people are dependent on each other and every individual exists within a web of inter-human relationships, it is totally untenable to limit salvation to the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. Hatred, injustice, oppression, war, and other forms of violence are manifestations of evil; concern for humanness, for the conquering of famine, illness, and meaninglessness is part of salvation for which we hope and labor" (Bosch 1991:397). The integral character of salvation demands that the scope of the church's mission be more comprehensive than has traditionally been the case. Salvation is as coherent, broad and deep as the needs and exigencies of human existence" (Bosch 1991:400).

Referring to the concept of evangelism, Bosch states that where the church does not address herself to these issues, she is not addressing herself to the concept of evangelism as biblically understood. Therefore he would not call evangelism and social action separate components or parts of mission, but dimensions of the one, indivisible mission of the Church (Bosch 1985:81).

In this process it is unnecessary to emphasize social salvation at the expense of personal salvation. There is also no need to present kerygma and diaconia as opposites. "Kerygma is important, for the gospel must be proclaimed, but diaconate is equally essential, for the gospel must be demonstrated" (Kritzinger 1984:38). Bosch states that a creative tension exists between the evangelistic and serving
dimensions of the Church's involvement in the world. These two dimensions are not the same, but neither can they be separated (Bosch 1985:82). In missionary circles today the mediating of "comprehensive", "integral", "total", or "universal" salvation is identified increasingly as the purpose of mission (Bosch 1991:399).

The RML states that mission work in the form of a multiple approach can be realized through activities such as Church growth and extension, assistance in theological education, diaconal activities as well as personnel and financial assistance (RML Policy 1989:17). With such a holistic approach in missions the RML is convinced that priorities should be determined from within the organization's own purpose (RML Policy 1989:17).

The RML intends to emphasize programmes which will result in better living conditions for the poor. In correspondence with Scripture the RML views proclamation and service as a unity and therefore the organization wants to promote the well-being of people in the deepest sense of the word in all social programmes. In policy discussions concerning the above-mentioned social programmes the RML wants to stimulate the idea that the well-being of the poor should receive priority, but to such an extent that these groups would eventually find themselves in a position of supporting themselves and taking part in the process of development. The diaconal component of the RML's work should in general take place through well-defined programmes and projects with a time limit and clear goals (RML Policy 1989:19). The social involvement also includes rural development and programmes for the marginalized in the big cities, like assistance for addicts, single mothers and food for the hungry. An important principle in this respect is to assist to such an extent that the programmes do not exceed the ability of the church to continue with the project (RML Policy 1989:19-20).

The various "auxiliary services" aimed at supporting the evangelizing and up-building of the church will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Regarding these mission endeavours, the initial emphasis of the RML was on education and medical work. As the League phased out the RML "sponsored schools" which eventually became the responsibility of the government, the Church by and large lost its influence over these schools. The medical work started by the RML remains to a certain extent dependent on financial support from the League and finds itself at the cross-roads regarding its support in future. Apart from these two departments several others financially supported by the RML, which ceased to exist when the League withdrew its support by the 1990s, will also be considered.
4.2 Education

4.2.1 Brief historical survey on education in Kenya

The history of education in Kenya developed through three overlapping phases: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. Brief reference will be made to the first two, regarding the establishment and development of mission schools, with more emphasis on the third phase during which the RML started establishing schools in Kenya.

The pre-colonial phase was in the first place characterized by traditional education with the objective to prepare young people to fit into society. Secondly, this phase included Islamic education, especially along the coast, to instruct children of Muslims, as well as those of local and Swahili converts, in the Islamic principles and practices. In the third place European missionaries introduced Western, formal education to the local people. The first mission school was established by Krapf and Rebmann of the CMS at Rabai, Coast Province, in 1846. It was only during the initial stages of the twentieth century, with the completion of the Uganda Railway, that missionaries were able to extend mission schools to the interior and the rest of the country (Ochieng' 1993:145-148). These mission schools were regarded as an important aid in carrying out the missionary task and were intended to draw people into contact with the Gospel. One of the missionary goals in setting up schools was to offer the first converts a very basic training as catechists/evangelists so that they could assist in evangelizing their own people. They were then stationed at outposts where, in turn, they offered very elementary education, with the accent on biblical instruction (Kritzinger 1984:59). Gradually, the colonial government began to part in the educational activities in the country. Numerous Educational Commissions in Kenya since the beginning of the twentieth century recommended that the colonial government should be involved in the education of the local people as well. The colonial administration's main concern was, however, in the education of the children of the European community. They left local education in the hands of the missionaries. This resulted in the establishment of a Department of Education by 1911 as recommended by the Frazer Commission. The Education Commission (1918), the Phelps-Stokes Commission (1924), as well as the Beecher Commission (1949), all recommended that the colonial government invest more in the education of the local people (Ochieng' 1993:149-151).
4.2.2 Primary education

The schools under the Bwana Loubser Mission founded by BB Eybers, counted ten in total (Meijers 1961:28&51). These were primary schools (grade one to four) which fulfilled the basic educational needs of the people. By the early 1960s the need for extending this to grade five to eight became urgent. The RML made arrangements for the erection of two school buildings even before the League took over the work in 1961. The idea was that some of the students who had finished grade four by the end of 1961 could enroll for grade five by the beginning of 1962. The idea was to eventually select the best of the students finishing grade eight to train them as teachers (Meijers 1961:35).

Thus, by the early 1960s two new intermediate schools had already started. One in Trans Nzoya (1962) and one at the Former Bwana Loubser Mission at Plateau. At a few places schools were renovated, extended and the number of teachers increased. A number of schools were opened to ensure the gradual extension of the work. The RML experienced major problems. Teaching staff needed to be transferred regularly. On occasion some had also to be dismissed. Attaining land for schools also proved problematic. The distributing of agricultural land between the people was still in process and the League needed to be very careful in the investments they made in this respect (RML Annual report 1962:133).

Another problem for the League was the selection of teaching staff for the “unaided schools”. Those in possession of a standard eight certificate were qualified to be employed as teachers. Due to the high unemployment rate, a large number of people attempted to be trained as teachers by the Mission. Hence, the RML needed to be very careful in selecting student teachers (RML Annual report 1963:129-130). By 1965 the quality of teachers was still very low. Due to the good school buildings, as well as housing facilities for teachers, the RCEA received some of the best teachers. Personnel who could teach in the secondary school was not yet available (RML Annual report 1965:124-125). Due to government policy, the plans of the RML to establish a training institute for teachers looked unrealistic. The government wanted to decrease the number of institutes by closing smaller ones and extending bigger ones. Following this policy the teachers of the future generation could be controlled more effectively (RML Annual report 1966:130).

By 1963 there was a full Primary School at Plateau and, after completion of the course, graduates
could be trained by the Mission either as teacher or evangelist (RML Annual report 1963:129-130). By 1964 the RML was responsible for seventeen schools of which ten were unaided schools and fully supported seventeen teachers. The work was in the hands of Rev. Tigchelaar from the RML, assisted by a very able local school overseer, Mr. Charles Etale. During the same year a boarding school for boys, which accommodated thirteen boys was completed. The Mission considered a similar boarding school for girls, but, due to the parents' lack of interest in the education of girls, it was not erected. The RML spent a lot of time and energy in building, renovating and maintaining schools, but viewed it as only a small contribution towards the spiritual development of the people and the up-building of the country (RML Annual report 1964:88). After about three years, in 1965, the schools counted eighteen with 2000 students and 69 teachers and Tigchelaar was still supervising the schools (RML Annual report 1965:124-125). In 1965 PC Hoogerdijk, an expert on education, came from the Netherlands to take over the responsibility from Tigchelaar (RML Annual report 1966:135).

As indicated above, schools in Kenya were regarded as the responsibility of the church and were usually built on land belonging to the church. At places where congregations were not able to build churches, schools were used for services (RML Info bulletin 1). After some years the matter of financial autonomy of the young church became a matter of concern to the RML. In the field of education, a new policy in this respect was adopted by the RML since 1969. Where new schools needed to be built or an existing school to be extended, the League would require a 50% contribution from the local people. In these projects the head master fulfilled a key role to arrange fundraisings to speed up the process (RML Annual report 1969:21-23).

A commission for primary school affairs was appointed in 1969 to discuss common interests as well as to find ways and means to channel the influence of the church in the schools as effectively as possible. The commission consisted of two members of the Synod, two missionaries and the school supervisor. By this time the government was taking over more and more schools from the mission which meant that the financial responsibilities became that of the government. The spiritual well being of the students and the teachers remained the responsibilities of the Church and the Mission (RML Annual report 1970:28-29).

Meanwhile serious attention was still being paid to the growing educational demand. New schools were continuously opened and extended (RML Annual report 1967:16-17). By 1971 40 primary schools were under the supervision of the RCEA. Mr. Joshua A Okwiri was faithfully carrying out
the supervision of the primary schools on behalf of the Church. Twenty-six of these schools were subsidized by the government which meant that the government was responsible for the salaries of the teachers.

In accordance with the policy of the management of the RML, schools were gradually transferred to the Kenyan government since 1971. By 1973 45 schools were under the supervision of the RCEA of which 34 were subsidized by the government and one partly subsidized by the city council of Eldoret. Ten schools were therefore still supported by the mission of which five were in Turkana. The number of students attending these schools counted 1175 with about 70 teachers and 30 evangelists responsible for religious education (RML Annual report 1973:15).

The Mission also extended its work to Turkana. The first school started by the mission in this area was in Lokichar in 1970 (RML Annual report 1970:28-29). By 1974 only five of the 45 schools under the supervision of the RCEA remained the financial responsibility of the RML. All these schools were in Turkana with a student number of about 500 (RML Annual report 1974:11).

4.2.3 Secondary education

Four kinds of secondary schools were eventually to be found in Kenya: National schools, Provincial schools, District schools and Harambee schools (RML Info bulletin 2). The first three types of schools were government schools. The government was responsible for the salaries of the teachers as well as for equipment. The fourth type, the so-called Harambee schools, were started through the initiative of the local population. When too few students of a certain area are considered for one of the government schools, the parents, local authorities and churches cooperate in the establishing of such a school. In later years the Mission and the Church sponsored mainly these schools (RML Info bulletin:2).

The educational system in Kenya, following the English model, introduced a so-called 4-4-4 educational system (four years primary, four years intermediate and four years secondary education) recommended by the Beecher Commission of 1949 (Ochieng' 1993:151). This system was later changed to the 7-4-2-3 system. This meant seven years primary education, four years secondary, two years higher and three years university education. Although English and Kiswahili are both national languages, more attention is paid to English. At secondary level all subjects are taught in
English (RML Info bulletin:3). Due to the high birth rate in Kenya the school attendance increased year by year. More and more children needed to suffice with primary education (RML Info bulletin:2). These graduates from primary schools became a major problem for the Church and the Mission. About 85% of them had no future study or employment opportunities. The primary school education was not focused on preparation for society, but was actually an introduction towards further education (RML Annual report 1965:124-125). The government addressed this problem only in 1985 when the educational system was changed with effect from January 1986. The old system of 7-4-2-3 was replaced by the so-called 8-4-4 system which now included eight years primary education with a practical emphasis. This restructuring of the educational system came about through the recommendations of yet another educational report, the Mackey Report of 1981 (Ochieng 1993:153-154). Some of the implications of the new system were that during year seven and eight the students received practical lessons in the area of agriculture, wood-work and metal-work. It was also compulsory that the student build a hut within a small group context. After completing primary school by sitting for a national examination, those who have achieved a specific mark were considered for secondary education (RML Info bulletin:2).

Since the years that the RML started with mission work in Kenya, secondary education remained a major problem. Through the initial years the Mission struggled to make this form of education a reality (RML Annual report 1966:135). After starting classes in a classroom of the primary school in 1967, secondary school education moved to the new building during 1969. The demand for secondary education remained very high and many prospective students were turned away at the new Nundoroto Secondary School (today Wareng). By this time the school was rated as one of the top five unsubsidized schools in the province (RML Annual report 1969:21-23). It was hoped by the Church and the Mission that some of these graduates would eventually be in a position to serve in the RCEA as ministers, doctors and teachers. Although not all students were from the RCEA, they showed a lively interest in church activities and regularly attended the evening services. It was clear that as long as this school was not subsidized by the government, it would only be sustained by means of aid from the Netherlands (RML Annual report:1970:28-29).

By 1971 no further extension of the school at the expense of the mission was planned. The first steps had been taken in transferring the school to the Kenyan government (RML Annual report:1971:18-19). The RML requested the government to take over the financial responsibilities of the Nundoroto Secondary School, a request which was partly fulfilled by 1973. Since then the mission was only
responsible for the expenses of classes three and four. The management of the school remained the responsibility of the church, while the board of governors consisted of the parents of the students (RML Annual report 1973:16). The Wareng Secondary School has been since 1975 almost completely supported by the government. From a financial point of view this development meant a major relief to the budget of the Joint Committee. The Mission was only responsible for the salary of the teacher of religious education. A number of poor students were still supported by the General Diaconal Council of the Netherlands Reformed Church. The fact that the school was no longer financially supported by the Church and the Mission did not imply that the Church's involvement ceased. A few members of the Synod were represented on the school management and were in a position to influence school affairs in this indirect way. Especially through the important matter of appointing teachers for the school the Church would still have a voice in school affairs (RML Annual report 1975:25).

By 1979 the RCEA had three “sponsored” schools with a total number of 1000 students. Of these schools only Wareng was subsidized by the government. The other two, Tembelio and Nangili, fell under the category of Harambee schools, supported by the local population as well as the mission and the Reformed World Diaconate (RML Annual report 1978-79:36-37).

4.2.4 The Kenyan government and religious education in schools

Missions had a strong influence on schools in Kenya up to the 1960s, but by 1964 it became clear that the government had different plans for the future. Shortly before independence the colonial structure had been largely modified. The local people were expected to take in future important leadership positions in the social, economic and political affairs of the country. In this process education was regarded to be the key to a better future. The KANU Government sought to resolve the educational difficulties arising from the implanting of an alien system by making this relevant and appropriate to a developing country (Otiende 1993:152). The recommendations of the first post-independence Education Commission, the Ominde Commission of 1964, have had a strong impact on national educational policy since the mid-1960s. The commission made 160 recommendations for “tailoring, planning and relating education to Kenya's needs and aspirations especially with regard to high level manpower training, so as to initiate and realize economic development, rational equal distribution of national income and the integration for fostering national unity. In essence the commission spelt out Kenya's national educational goals or objectives, emphasizing respect for the nation's culture,
enhancing social equality, bringing about national development and minimizing the extent of a competitive spirit in Kenyan schools" (Otiende 1993:152-153). Education was to become a government concern and religious education to be taught from a scientific perspective. Up to this point it was possible to appoint Christian teachers whereby it was possible to reach the family by means of the child. In this respect the evangelist also played a vital role (RML Annual report 1964:88). The RML feared that the future plans of the government regarding education would limit church influence in subsidized schools and therefore emphasized the importance of keeping the religious education in the hands of the evangelists of the church (RML Annual report 1966:130). But, by 1965 the government was still uncertain about its future education policy. They wanted to take it over completely, but due to finances it was impossible to do so. This lack of a clear government policy brought problems. Schools were often closed and sometimes groups of teachers were dismissed. In these instances the church could assist where necessary. Due to their assistance in the building of schools and with supervision, the Church and the Mission were still allowed to be involved (RML Annual report 1965:124-125). By 1967 it was still possible for evangelists to take care of religious education. It looked as if this arrangement would continue in the future as long as the religious education was taught in correspondence to governmental guidelines (RML Annual report 1967:16-17).

Although the government became much more involved in the management of schools since 1968, churches and missions remained in a position of sharing in management affairs. This was due to the major contribution by churches and missions through the years. The task of churches and missions mainly involved the field of religious education which meant that the young church was still in a position to teach religious education (RML Annual report 1968:27-28). This arrangement made the transfer of schools to the government the ideal towards the future, because the many schools became too heavy a financial burden to the Church and the Mission (RML Info bulletin: 1).

By 1978 the RCEA had supervision over 62 primary schools and three secondary schools with about 17,000 students. The number of students increased rapidly during this time and the schools were attended by an average of 400 students (RML Annual report 1978-79:36-37).

The rapid change in education in Kenya since the 1960s had a major impact on the African society. Due to the fact that education never stands on its own, Western education had since the beginning resulted in alienation from the traditional educational system and left students who were leaving
school with major questions concerning the future (Mbiti 1969:227). Although this was a weak point in the educational system right from the start, it took the Kenya government a long time to change the system towards a better preparation of students leaving school, especially after primary education.

4.2.5 Africanization

The process of Africanization regarding education was also taken seriously by the RML and received more and more attention during the 1970s. The appointment of the experienced Mr. Joshua A. Okwiri to the Education department was of a great advantage to the education department of the Church. He became especially involved in the organization of seminars for student teachers (RML Annual report 1968:27-28). A very important step towards Africanization was taken when Okwiri, as the education assistant of Mr. Hoogerdijk, took over the task of school supervisor at the beginning of 1970 (RML Annual report 1970:28-29). Africanization continued with the agreement between Church and Mission that PC Hoogerdijk would retire as director of the Nundoroto School by 1973. Mr. PK Waweru became his successor (RML Annual report 1973:16).

During the early 1980s the supervision of the work was finally transferred from the Mission to the Church. The last missionary for the Education department of the Church and the Mission arrived in 1978 from the RML in the person of Mr. M Aleman (RML Annual report 1978-79:36-37). He worked in the department until 1983 when the supervision of education was transferred to Rev. D Muhia (RML Annual report 1983:18). Towards the 1990s the RCEA was involved with 40 nursery schools, with a total of 1500 students, 80 primary schools with 24 000 students and seven secondary schools with a total of 1200 students (RML Info bulletin:2).

The work in the Education department after the RML missionaries ceased to head this department was done by the educational secretary whose salary was still the responsibility of the RML. Part of the responsibilities of the education secretary was the following: to see to it that Christian religion was taught in the RCEA sponsored schools; involvement in policy matters, which included "explaining Church policy on education to headmasters and District Education Boards"; explaining governmental educational policy to the Church; and attending to the spiritual well-being of both students and teachers through regular seminars and workshops with the help of the Christian Churches Education Association (CCEA) under the NCCK. He also visited schools on a regular
basis which involved prayer and fellowship with National Examination Candidates just before examinations (Muhia 2000:1). It was also expected of him to make available Christian literature and Bibles at schools and institutions. Muhia held the position of education secretary up to 1995 when the work was transferred to Mr. Samuel Ngigi. By this time the RML was no longer sponsoring this department and the work at synodical level basically came to a standstill (Ngigi 1999).

4.2.6 Conclusion

The vast investments towards education made by the RML right from the start indicated that education appeared as a priority on the agenda of the League (RML Info Bulletin:1). By the time the RML was still only investigating the possibility of starting with mission work in Kenya, the matters of the extension of education as well as a training institute for teachers were already raised (Meijers 1961:10). Schools played a major role in the initial mission strategy of the RML. The opening of new schools ensured the extension of the mission work by the organization (RML Info Bulletin:1). This close relationship between school and evangelism which the RML established, remained for just more than a decade as part of their mission strategy. By this time the government started taking over the responsibility for schools and by 1977 the complete change in education was very plain to see. Initially the organization of the Church was centered on the schools. The first Christians, who became the teaching staff in schools, were of major assistance in the mission work of RML. The management as well as the financial responsibility for the schools were more or less completely transferred to the Kenyan government (RML Annual report 1977:22-23). The only direct interaction from the side of the Church was a lesson in religious education once a week by the minister or evangelist and the pastoral care of the students. In the bigger schools this arrangement became almost impossible with the result that at some places the minister or evangelist no longer continued with this weekly appointment. In secondary schools religious education was still by this time compulsory and remained a subject for examination purposes (RML Annual report 1977:22-23). Hence, the supervision of the Church over these schools was only in theory. In reality this meant that the Church still had a voice in the policy of the appointment of teachers and in the religious education of the students (RML Annual report 1978-79:36-37).

Although the Church remained involved in religious education in schools, the office of the education secretary remained in name, but his ministry in schools disappeared almost completely when the RML withdrew its financial support from the Education department in 1995.
4.3 Medical work

4.3.1 Brief historical survey of health care in Kenya

Modern health care was introduced in Kenya by European missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century. In addition to the mission stations, biomedical facilities were established at these centres. In 1889 the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) established health facilities at Kikuyu, Kiambu and Tumutumu and at the same time the Church Missionary Society (CMS) set up health units at Mombasa and Rabai. In subsequent years other churches put up hospitals in different parts of the country. With the establishment of the central colonial government in 1901, a formal medical department was created. The early medical facilities were far removed from the local populations. The Imperial British East African Company facilities were restricted to employees and church-supported hospitals were few (Sindiga 1990:133). The policy of the Medical department was to extend government health services to remote areas, but funds were lacking to implement it. By 1950 efforts to develop a comprehensive health centre service began. Towards the 1960s a number of rural health centres had been constructed and a recognized nurse training school was established in Nairobi for the training of local medical personnel. Still, at the end of the colonial rule modern health facilities were physically far removed from the people. Facilities were unevenly distributed and mainly concentrated in towns (Sindiga 1990:137-139).

The new government planned to remove the inadequacies in the health care system. To improve access to health care the government withdrew user fees for out-patients in 1965 (Sindiga 1990:139). The Medical Training Centre at Kenyatta Hospital was expanded to train, apart from nurses, also public health officers and pharmaceutical technologists among others. By this time various provincial and certain district hospitals also trained nurses, while the Medical School at the University of Nairobi was established in 1967 to train doctors (Sindiga 1990:140). During the 1970s there was a massive construction of health centres to reduce the health centre/population ratio. However, many completed health projects suffered from a lack of equipment, staff shortages and inability to meet recurrent expenditure. The quantitative increase in health facilities did not result in access to modern medicine for the majority of the rural population. Government health programmes had not met their objectives by the 1980s. Not only were the health service delivery points too few, but they were also located far away from where people lived. Although health workers, including doctors, have increased considerably since independence, over 75% of them live and work in urban areas where
only 20% of the population resides (Sindiga 1990:141).

In recent years the Kenya Government was forced to alter its policy. The country has adopted the World Health Organization resolution of Health for All by 2000 by which the emphasis will move from curative to preventive and promotive services. This approach will require investments in small-scale preventive and promotive programmes at the district level and lower administrative units. The primary health care approach of the World Health Organization discourages over-reliance on doctors and seeks to promote health education and preventive health care in which both community and traditional health practitioners participates (Sindiga 1990:141-143). There are some obstacles to be considered in the way of implementing this programme. A major problem is that it relies so strongly on health centre service that it might become very expensive to take health care to all citizens. Other problems relate to the logistics in involving the community in the provision of primary health care and the participation of traditional health workers which has not been clarified (Sindiga 1990:143).

4.3.2 Health policy of the RML

Medical programmes are stimulated by the RML through guidelines by the Secretariat for Medical Co-operation ("Medisch Coordinatie Secretariaat") (MCS). Priority is given to preventive care and therefore communities are motivated toward primary health programs. In this process the RML takes the local context seriously. Where basic health care is operative within a local structure and where a partner is able to take co-responsibility for the work, the League considers supporting such work. Together with preventive work the pastoral aspect also receives consideration in the form of e.g. AIDS-programmes. The input of missionaries are usually directed towards the above-mentioned areas (Heel De Wereld 1998:30).

Due to the fact that the RML established medical work extensively in the RCEA and basically sustained the complete structure, the issue of co-operating as partners became a difficult matter. The RCEA is by the year 2000 still not in a position to take over the financial responsibilities of running the Medical Department. As financial support from RML declines, services in remote areas were in the process of being closed down. The extensive Medical Department, established and extended mainly through assistance from the RML, arrived at a cross road by 2000. An urgent need for medical care exists in the RCEA, but the Church is unable to provide it without foreign assistance.
The initial strategy of the RML regarding the provision of health care was by building and utilising outposts. This was a very expensive and labour intensive enterprise. During the second half of the 1970s this policy was no longer a viable option and cheaper ways of assisting people needed to be explored. By this time new developments took place. Many requests came from different areas for medical assistance. In correspondence with developments in tropical medicine theory, the local population was to be involved in health care.

Regarding the medical policy of RML, three matters needed attention by this time: continuous Africanization, training of own staff and starting with work in “community health”. The latter included the involvement of the local population in caring for their own health situation which resulted in a commission appointed for this work. The motto of “community health” became: “health for the community by the community” (RML Annual report 1978-1979:38-39).

All these factors combined resulted in the strategy of community health projects. The establishment of such projects took place in the following way. When a request for medical assistance came from a particular area, a meeting was held with the elders of the area as well as with the representatives of the Church. During such a meeting it was explained clearly that the local population would eventually be responsible for their own health care. At this point the community was advised to appoint a local health care committee (RCEA Medical department, Annual report, 1979:2). Subsequently a place had to be found for the MCH clinics (clinics for mother- and child care). Sometimes it was possible to use a classroom or farm buildings left by European farmers for this purpose. Additional building projects were always needed, the cost of which were covered by means of a "harambee". By the time the community had their own dispensary a group of ten volunteers with a twofold task was appointed. Firstly, they were to assist at the MCH clinics, and secondly, they were responsible for instructing the local population. As preparation for this task they received training in the form of a short course which included among other matters instruction on feeding and hygiene as well as training for the MCH clinics (RML Annual report 1978-1979:38-39).

The fruits of this shift in policy soon became visible:

- It became possible to take precautions when it was found by antenatal examination that complications might occur.
- When children were underweight, arrangements could be made to improve feeding.
- A high percentage of children died of measles and whooping cough. Vaccination could
prevent this.

- A high percentage of children slept on the ground which could become quite cold. Through instruction on how to prepare a simple bed, bronchitis in children could be prevented (RML Info Bulletin, Medical work 1979:2-3).

By the beginning of the 1980s the medical advisor of the RML, Dr. J Breetvelt, launched an investigation for the League in Kenya which resulted in a new agreement between the Church and the Mission. The report formed the foundation of a discussion on the future of the medical work of the Church and the role of the RML in the work. The report was discussed in 1983 with the Medical, Social and Executive Committees of the Church. Some of the recommendations made were that no further extension of the hospital at Plateau should take place. An extension would lead to higher cost which would make the hospital too dependent on foreign aid. Instead of extension, the report pleaded for a certain degree of decentralization whereby the health centres under Plateau would become more autonomous and independent. A shift would then be possible in the direction of primary health care whereby a stronger emphasis would fall on education and equipping people in the field of health care. This should then especially be taken care of in the congregations and communities in which the Church felt herself called to minister. This would involve the cutting of local as well as missionary staff members (RML Annual report 1983:16-17). The Breetvelt-report confirmed the above mentioned shift towards Community-based health care. Additionally it emphasized the importance of a policy shift toward less dependency on outside aid for medical work.

A medical policy to guide the Church towards the end of the millennium was formulated in 1993 and four areas were identified (CORAT 1996:43:

- Integrated health care to be provided at village level as a priority service.
- Medical work to be part and parcel of the development of the Church in general and the medical department to be a functional part of the Church.
- Qualified staff with a Christian calling and motivation will be recruited to work at community level in all Church health facilities and programmes.
- Relationship between the RCEA and medical work to be characterized by mutual understanding and encouragement).

Through the years the RML's medical policy corresponded with the government policy of creating
access to health care for more people. By doing this, the League operated in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health of Kenya. By the end of the 1990s this tendency was clearly reflected in the medical policy of the RCEA.

4.3.3 Health care at Plateau and beyond

The medical work at Plateau started by Mrs. Eybers during the 1940s came to an end when she left with her husband for South Africa in 1960. The first nurse, Miss G Stuurman, arrived in Kenya in 1961 to address the urgent medical need (Stuurman 1961:34-35). Stuurman started the medical ministry in Kenya by first of all observing the way in which medical work was approached in the capital, where she spent two months in preparation of her work in western Kenya. After this she worked in the dispensaries in remote areas at three different places: in Maseno (CMS), Mukaa (AIM) and at Tenwek with the World Gospel Mission. The idea was to see how these dispensaries functioned with only one nurse in the service of that particular Mission. This was done through the assistance of the secretary of the Protestant Churches Medical Association which worked in cooperation with the Christian Council of Kenya and of which the RML became a member. By August 1961 another nurse, GC van den Hoof, left the Netherlands for Kenya (RML Annual report 1962:131).

The clinic built by the South Africans was renovated and on 26 February 1962 it was re-opened with a message by Rev. H Tibanga. At the beginning an average of about 25 patients were treated, a number which increased as time passed (Stuurman 1961:53-54). With the arrival of Dr. E van Riessen of RML the work expanded to quite an extent. After one year, three of the five RML missionaries in Kenya, belonged to the medical department (RML Annual report 1962:131). Dispensary was opened at Ainabkoi in 1962, at Lessos in 1963 and at Ndalat in 1965 (RML Annual report 1963:128 & 1965:126).

After about six years of the RML's involvement in medical work in Kenya, the local medical staff consisted of five local midwives, six male patient attendants (PA's) and four female student patient attendants (RML Annual report 1968:30). There were usually about two sisters from the RML working at Plateau, including one midwife (RML Annual report 1972:21-22).

The number of clinics at outposts were extended with the emphasis on preventive care. The local population were involved in this extension of the work by taking certain responsibilities such as
buildings, furniture and administration staff for their own account (RML Annual report 1978-1979:38-39).

By the end of the 1990s the Medical department of the RCEA still consisted of its oldest and largest health facility, Plateau Hospital, as well as health centres at Lokichar (Turkana) and Amolem (Pokot). As far as grants and supervision are concerned these two centres function independently from Plateau Hospital. A much larger area is served by means of eight static health units which are satellite units of Plateau Hospital13 (CORAT 1996:45). By 1996 the hospital, health centres as well as dispensaries were characterized by over-staffing with inadequately qualified personnel and understaffing of qualified personnel. Apart from this the Medical department lacked proper strategic planning whereby measurable, realistic short and long term goals were guiding the department towards the future. The different health units and particularly Plateau hospital operated without adequate systems of internal control (CORAT 1996:57). By 1999 the Joint Meeting expressed its concern regarding the future viability of the medical work in the RCEA. It was agreed that between 20 to 24 unskilled medical staff will be laid off before the end of 1999. Another decision taken was that dispensaries with very few patients will be closed down and qualified personnel will be transferred to locations where they were urgently needed (Joint Meeting 1999:62).

4.3.4 Training

Since the early 1960s student nurses were trained by the missionaries at Plateau. Unqualified nurses were appointed at outposts, which was also part of the policy of involving as many as possible of the local people in this ministry (RML Annual report 1964:88-89). The high standards set by the government made it very difficult to find people with the required qualifications to enroll for the course (RML Annual report 1965:125-126). An important development occurred by November 1966 when part of the responsibility of the maternity clinic at Plateau was transferred to some of the local ladies who obtained their midwife diplomas in October 1966. This was a major step in the direction of Africanization and of uplift in the quality of the medical work. These women understood the situation and the people much better and would therefore be in a position to give proper assistance (RML Annual report 1966:137-138).

---

13 The satellite units were the following: Ainabkoi Dispensary, Ndalat Dispensary, Lessos Dispensary, Kipsaos Dispensary, Kapkitony Dispensary, Tugen Estate Dispensary, Maridadi Dispensary, Kocholwo Dispensary, Langas Dispensary (CORAT 1996:45).
Community-based activities expanded towards the 1990s. In 1987 three staff members of Plateau Hospital were trained as "Trainers of Trainers" (TOT). They worked in both the hospital and in the communities around Plateau and the outposts to train Community Health Workers (RCEA Medical Department, Annual report 1988:8). The TOT's also served on the Community Based Health Care (CBHC) Coordinating Committee consisting of themselves, representatives of the village and the hospital management where progress and problems related to community work were discussed. In the whole process of informing the public the RCEA worked in close cooperation with the Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK)\textsuperscript{14} (RCEA Medical Department, Annual report 1991-1992:9).

A registered nurse from Plateau Hospital has been appointed to work for 50% of her time in CBHC. Furthermore, seven nurses from Plateau Hospital were trained as TOT's by 1999. Through sponsorship of CHAK the TOT's trained 38 community health workers (CHW's) as well as 60 Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA's) (CORAT 1996:46-47).

Towards the year 2000, Community-based Health Care remains the main focus in the RCEA health services. The training programme at Plateau Hospital continued until 1996 in the form of an in-service programme which was not recognized by the government. The Church was advised several times to have patient attendants trained at recognized nursing schools. It was suggested that this would result in replacing inadequately qualified staff with competent staff members and help solving the over-staffing problem at the time (CORAT 1996:46-47). Since 1997 the training of attendants at Plateau Hospital ceased as the Nursing Council of the Ministry of Health does not allow such training any more.

Local personnel gradually replaced missionaries towards the year 2000. The last medical doctor\textsuperscript{15} sent by the RML left Kenya in 1994 and was replaced only in 1996 by a permanent local doctor. By 1999 the process of Africanization was complete when no more missionaries were sent from the RML to serve in the Medical department of the RCEA.

\textsuperscript{14} CHAK replaced the former Protestant Churches Medical Association, (PCMA), of which the RCEA was also a member, to bring important health issues to the attention of the public at large (RCEA Medical Department, Annual report 1991-1992:9).

\textsuperscript{15} Medical doctors serving in the medical department of RCEA: Dr. E van Riessen (1962-1967); Dr. CG Bout (1967-1971); Dr. JJ Goslinga (1971-1972); Dr. AE van Gulik (1972-1973); Dr. W de Visser (1974-1980/81); Dr. Soetekouw (1975 - temporarily); Dr. GJ van der Struys (1980/81-1984); Dr. J Mettau (1984-1994); Dr. P Choge (1996- )
4.3.5 Finances

The RML states that by 1966 the RCEA had not as yet made any financial contribution towards the medical budget. The work at Plateau and the four dispensaries were completely supported and maintained by the League (RML Annual report 1966:137-138). By the mid-1970s the medical department was in a relatively good financial position (RML Annual report 1976:32):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RML</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By this time the RML stated that the large medical department of the RCEA was for the major part a self-sustained unit. Due to the investments made in the past, this important work should be in a position to continue should the mission need to pull out of Kenya by this time. Income from patients grew from 60% to 68% in 1977. The contribution from RML decreased from 16% to 10%. The remaining contribution came mainly from the government via the Protestant Churches Medical Association (PCMA). As capital investment the RML made available KSh 250 000 by 1977 (RML Annual report 1977:23-25). This positive picture was soon to change when financial cares occurred in the Medical department by 1979 (RML Annual report 1978-1979:38-39). By 1980 no financial mismanagement was recorded, although the Christian Organizations Research Advisory Trust (CORAT) (1980:21) recommended that the financial control systems of the hospital could be improved substantially.

Since that time the financial policy remained a difficult one. The RCEA was not to remain too dependent on the West regarding their medical work. On the other hand the medical supplies from the West became very expensive and unaffordable for the less privileged. Free medical service too was also possible as the financial deficit would have had to be supplemented by RML and would have made the RCEA Medical department more dependent (RML Info Bulletin, Medical work 1979:4). During the 1980s grants from the government through the PCMA decreased gradually and ceased

---

16 PCMA was sponsoring the RCEA Medical department via the government before CHAK.
completely by 1990. From 1986 to 1988 RML was still responsible for a significant contribution of one third of the total budget of the Medical department (RCEA Medical department, Annual report 1988:3). This percentage remained the same well into the 1990s as the contribution from 1990 to 1994 averaged 34.9% of the total budget for this period. Financially the Medical department showed a loss during the first part of the 1990s. Without the contribution of RML, the medical services of the RCEA would collapse. In this respect another unhealthy trend is visible. As income from medical fees and drugs declined, grants have been growing and in the process replaced it as the major source of funds required to run the medical programme. The RCEA cannot support the medical programme at its present level with its own internally generated funds. CORAT states that there was no direct contribution during the period 1990 to 1994. The "Medical Sunday" introduced by the RCEA in 1995 was a step in the right direction, but unlikely to make a significant difference towards the future (CORAT 1996:52). By 1999 a decision was taken whereby the RML will start reducing its contribution between 2001 to 2005 by 10% per annum (Joint Meeting 1999:62).

4.3.7 Medical work and the Church

The objectives of the Healing Ministry of the RCEA, which forms an essential part of the missionary calling of the Church, are formulated as follows:

- To carry out functions of providing both physical and spiritual healing in the name of Jesus Christ by:
  a) Preaching and spreading the Gospel
  b) Providing appropriate medical services for prevention and treatment of diseases
  c) Training of paramedical and nursing staff
  d) Providing educational and medical services to meet the health needs of the community.

- To maintain the best possible standards within the limits of the local situation maintaining as minimum standards those acceptable to the Director of Medical Services to meet the health needs of the community (CORAT 1996:44).

Especially the "preaching and spreading of the Gospel", as part of the healing ministry of the RCEA, receives attention in this paragraph. The difference between the RCEA medical work and "neutral" health care is reflected in the morning devotions with personnel, the short message by the pastor or evangelist at the hospital or dispensaries, the meetings which are usually opened and closed with Bible reading and prayers as well as the work of the evangelist accompanying the medical team to outposts (RML Info Bulletin, Medical work 1979:6-7).

A hospital can as a medical centre, become an important centre for evangelism and diaconal work. The sick and suffering can as such be reached with the Gospel and love towards the neighbour can be illustrated (RML Annual report 1963:128). The importance of this dimension of the work was reflected right from the start when Rev. Tibanga on 26 February 1962 re-opened the clinic built by the South Africans with a message and prayer. Through health care an attempt was thus made to serve the neighbour through the diaconal task of the Church with the prayer that God might use medical treatment as signs of the coming of His Kingdom where there will be no more sickness (RML Annual report 1965:125-126). In August 1995 a graduate from RTCEA was appointed as Chaplain in Plateau Hospital. The Chaplain ministers to in- and out-patients, their relatives and sometimes bereaved. This takes place in the form of counseling, Scripture-reading, prayer and, where possible, home visitation. Staff and students are ministered to by means of morning devotions, Bible-studies, fellowships and visitation. The Chaplain also joins the staff when on visits with the mobile clinic. Visits to out-stations are also included in this ministry (RCEA Medical Department, Annual report, 1995:4).

4.3.7 Conclusion

By 2000 there were a number of concerns which hampered the efficiency within the Medical department:

- The need of a comprehensive plan whereby the aims and objectives of the Medical department are not only documented, but also operational. The RML played an important and vital role in the establishment and development of a strong Medical department within the RCEA. Although it is strictly part of the policy of the RML to conduct auxiliaries in such a manner that it will be possible for the national church to eventually take them over, it
proved by 2000 that the RCEA would probably not be in a position to take over the Medical department as part of the ministry of the Church. It is usually not possible for a Church to maintain such a ministry without vast foreign investment. The consequences of this was that by the year 2000 the Medical department of the RCEA face a crisis situation: grants from outside are declining, while the local economy is deteriorating. At the same time personnel has been cut and certain medical outposts are in the process of being closed down. The need for a comprehensive plan by which the present crisis situation is taken into account extensively, should be considered by the Medical department as a starting point\textsuperscript{18} for re-orientation towards the future.

- The lack of experienced, competent staff which resulted in high numbers of inadequate personnel. The RML played an important role in the introduction of training medical staff only for the purpose of serving in the RCEA. It is possible that this policy came as a result of the fact that many RML sponsored students who went to recognized institutions but who did not return to serve in the Medical department of the RCEA, had rather joined hospitals and medical centres which had more advantages and opportunities to offer than the RCEA.

- A financial policy looking at i) adequately utilized resources and ii) greater involvement of the community.

There are also a number of encouraging aspects regarding the Healing Ministry of the RCEA which can be pointed out.

- Due to the fact that most of the medical work of the RCEA takes place on village level, the policy of the Medical department, whereby health care at this level is emphasized and promoted, can be evaluated as a healthy policy. In correspondence with world trends in health care by the 1970s, this policy was accepted by the Church and the Mission. The RML through its medical staff made efforts to take health care to almost every area where the RCEA was involved in ministry. Health centres in Turkana and Pokot, dispensaries in remote areas as well as mobile clinics are examples of these efforts of the League in this

\textsuperscript{18} Also see "Future of the Medical Programme at RCEA" (CORAT 1996:57).
The RCEA's main focus by 2000 remains on Community-based Health Care, with the emphasis on the prevention of diseases and the promotion of good health. By emphasizing basic health services and primary health care the Medical department operates in line with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health. In correspondence with the policy of taking medical services to the people, the strategy of the medical programme to involve the local community in this process could result in an effective ministry on this level. In this also the RML played a major role in promoting Community-based health care as it was also reflected in policy shifts since the 1970s.

Above all it is important to note that the RCEA remained faithful to her calling and vision that through health care the "preaching and the spreading of the Gospel" (CORAT 1996:44) should be promoted. This aspect was taken care of since the early years. Ministers and evangelists in the area of health centres and dispensaries visit the patients to minister to them as well as to the medical staff. The appointment in 1995 of a chaplain exclusively for ministry within the Medical department of the RCEA is an indication of how essential the Church views this dimension of its ministry.

Following the Joint Meeting's resolutions on medical work in 1999, the RCEA was in the process of adjusting especially with regard to finances. In the light of the proposed annual reduction of 10% in financial support by the RML, starting 2001, expenditure was cut by means of salaries (staff reduction) as well as vehicles which proved to be the two main problems in the budget.

When one pages through the Annual Reports of the RML as well as that of the RCEA, it is noticed that the investment made by the RML in this department since the early 1960s was immense. It remains a question whether a small, poor church can be expected to take over these responsibilities. Other institutions or the government may be part of the solution in the current crisis of the Medical department.
4.4 Youth work

Soon after the RML started working in Kenya it was realized that the youth of the RCEA needed direction and that somebody needed to be sent specifically for this purpose. Subsequently Rev. WJ Bouw was sent to Kenya by the RML in 1967 with youth work as his main task.

Bouw started with youth leader seminars in 1967 and established a large number of new youth groups. By the end of 1967 the number of groups counted 23 with a total membership of 684. Another project which he launched during these initial stages of his ministry was a youth newsletter, already in circulation during 1967 with the name "Sauti ya Vijana" (The voice of the youth) written by the youth for the youth (RML Annual report 1967:14). Soon after this also a handbook for youth leaders were published (RML Annual report 1968:26). The spiritual up-building of the youth was the main objective of the Youth department of the RCEA. In this process the youth magazine and the handbook, published in cooperation with the Youth department of the National Council of Churches in Kenya, made important contributions (RML Annual report 1970:24).

Due to training sessions by the Kenya representatives, many of the youth groups joined the International Boys' and Girls' Life Brigade. This development did not suggest less involvement on local church level, but did put youth work in an extended context whereby the horizons of the youth were expanded (RML Annual report 1969:18). By 1970 the number of youth groups counted almost 50 (RML Annual report 1970:24). Bouw had also put in an effort towards establishing a strong Sunday school system in the RCEA in which donations by the RML played an important role. Donations from the Netherlands resulted in the extension of study material for Sunday-schools whereby teachers and youth leaders could be equipped with better teaching materials (RML Annual report 1967:14). By 1968 2300 children attended Sunday-school regularly (RML Annual report 1968:26).

During the 1970s it was realized that youth work basically takes place within the context of the local church and efforts were made to stimulate youth work on this level. This was done from synodical level by the youth secretary. Such efforts involved instruction on strengthening youth work on the
local level, fund raising on the local level, youth problems and how the youth can serve the church. Youth rallies, seminars for Sunday-school teachers and youth camps were some of the activities arranged on regional level (RML Annual report 1977:19-20). By the end of the 1970s 29 youth groups and 24 Sunday schools were registered (RML Annual report 1978-1979:36).

The activities of the youth department during the 1980s continued through the financial support of the RML. Music and drama competitions and festivals received more attention during these years (RCEA Annual Synod report 1984 Youth Work:3). The work continued well in the local churches and the ministers and evangelists were extensively involved in the ministry on this level (RCEA Synod report 1985:49). Other youth activities by this time were youth rallies, seminars, conferences, camps and training for Sunday school teachers. Especially the latter received strong emphasis even after the RML discontinued their support to the Youth department. By 1989 it was reported by Stanley Mungai, the youth secretary, that a Sunday schools exists in almost every local church of the RCEA (RCEA Synod report 1989:16).

The investments made by the RML since the formal commencement of youth work by the League in the 1960s resulted in strong youth activities on local church level. The RML's emphasis was on equipping youth leaders on this level as well as establishing a strong Sunday-school system in the RCEA. As a result of this foundation laid by the League, youth work in the RCEA developed spontaneously towards activities mainly on the local church level. Therefore, the tendency in the Youth department was more and more towards making the local church responsible for youth work (RML Annual report 1978-1979:36). This was a very wise decision by the RCEA. The positive results of this approach was plain to see when the RML discontinued their financial support to this department by 1995. Although there was limited assistance of the Youth department towards the year 2000, the Sunday school and youth activities on the local church level was flourishing. By the year 2000 this was still the case. Through the initiative of the youth leaders on local level the youth of the RCEA has not been neglected.

Hence, the Youth department is an example of a department whose activities did not cease to exist

---

19 See RML Annual reports 1967&1968.
after the RML withdrew its financial support. One reason for this was the fact that the ministry of this department is owned by the youth on the grass-roots level. By 2000 an untrained local youth secretary with limited resources was still in office. The basic activities which was formerly supported by RML, though on a much smaller scale, continued.

4.5 Home and family life

When the RML took over the work from the DRC, the responsibility for this ministry was initially taken care of by the RML nurses working at Plateau. Sister Stuurman started with women clubs where instruction in various fields were introduced. The idea was to eventually influence the home and family by means of the women as well as to uplift the position of women in society (RML Annual report 1962:134 & 1963:129). The Church viewed the family as at the core of society, especially in a developing country like Kenya and for this reason major attention was paid to it. In this work the RML followed the same ministerial strategy as in the medical, but especially, the education department. Mission work was done in the form of presenting the Gospel by word and deed to women in the first place, but with the purpose that the message will reach their homes and families. In the process the social position of the home and family life was uplifted. This was of utmost importance, not only for the whole community, but also for the Church (RML Annual report 1964:89).

Sister Stuurman started training by introducing sewing classes and classes on household activities as well as hygiene and child care. In all of these, Bible teachings took priority on the agenda of this ministry (RML Annual report 1962:134 & 1963:129). The importance of this ministry for the Church and the Mission surfaced when Sister Stuurman was released from the hospital for several months during 1964 for the development of this work (RML Annual report 1964:89).

Major shifts were taking place in the African society towards the 1970s, which was also true of the lives of women in Kenya. A strong need existed for education and development (RML Annual report 1968:31). By 1972 it became clear that the position of women was in a process of transition. This tendency surfaced time and again in the courses taught at Plateau. Some women were still unable to read and write. Especially the younger women were, however, determined to take a stand in society (RML Annual report 1972:20).
The process of Africanization took its course as early as 1964 when two local women assisted in this work and were especially helpful in overcoming the language and cultural barriers. (RML Annual report 1964:89). Wives of teachers, evangelists and others were also trained to become future leaders of local groups. The women work on the different outposts were strongly dependent on the locally selected leaders. A dynamic woman with primary school training would usually be trained through one of the (four-week) courses at Plateau with an additional course later to turn her into a good group leader. The idea was to assist women with the work in their homes, the education and health care of their children as well as advice on working in the field and garden. In this education the Bible and emphasis on the Christian family played an important role (RML Annual report 1967:20-21). A major step in the direction of Africanization was when Mrs. Florence Makaa took over the responsibilities of home and family life from Mrs. van Donkersgoed from RML since 1973 (RML Annual report 1973:14). Between 1980 and 2000 the women desk functioned with interruptions under the leadership of the wife of the first General Secretary of RCEA, Mrs. Rahel Muttai (RCEA Synod report 1983:32).

As this department is one of the few departments in the RCEA owned by the Church on the local level, the matter of financial support is important. The annual financial assistance by the RML of this department continued well into the 1990s. Mrs. Muttai (2000) remembers a time when women leaders at parish level received an allowance for coordinating this work on the local level. This kind of coordination ceased when RML no longer supported it financially. Evident by this time was the need21 felt in the groups to raise money to continue this work (RCEA Synod report 1984:57). The executive committee of the Home & Family life decided in 1987 that all parishes will contribute KSh 5000 towards this ministry (RCEA Synod report 1987:36). From 1990 to 1995 the department received an annual amount of KSh 100 000 (Muttai 2000). In 1989 an annual convention was started in 1981 (RCEA Synod report 1981/82:34). A registration fee of KSh 200 as well as a food contribution by the parish are the standard requirements for attendance. Any surplus funds remaining after the convention usually assists the department.

In 1996 the department became known as "Women's Fellowship". By the end of the 1990s self-support was still a problem. The co-ordinator stated that certain parishes still tended to think that this

---

21 See especially RCEA Synod report 1985:73-75.
work was supported by missionaries from outside (RCEA Synod report 1995:14). Still, the work at grass-roots level continues through local initiative. This is so because this ministry, as in the case of the Youth department, is owned by the women themselves.

4.6 The RML and literature work in the RCEA

Apart from a brief reference to literature work in the RML policy in 1989, the League stated their position for the first time on this ministry in an official policy statement in 1998. According to this policy all edification of members is based on the Bible in the mother tongue and is therefore committed towards support of Bible translation and Bible distribution. The League is also willing to support the production of theological literature for training as well as certain literature projects. This policy reflects commitment towards basic literature work in the context of the national church (Heel de Wereld 1998:27). Already in 1961, during the second delegation’s visit to Kenya, the RML planned to pay major attention to literature distribution. The work began by Eybers was to continue and the RML planned to identify somebody exclusively for this work in Kenya (Meijers 1961:59) In 1963 a linguist was sent in the person of Mr. H van't Veld (RML Annual report 1963:131).

4.6.1 Translation work and publications

One of the first projects initiated by the literature department was to publish a newspaper for the Church. A congregational newspaper to be distributed in the three congregations with the title: "Tuzungumuzie" (Let us talk to one another) was established. The first edition was distributed free of charge and according to RML reports it was widely read and appreciated (RML Annual report 1963:131).

Another project started by Van't Veld soon after he arrived was the revising of the existing catechism. During the visit of the delegation in 1961 the revision of the catechism was already mentioned. The "Katekisima", was revised and extended, and published in Kiswahili in 1963 (RML Annual report 1963:131&1964:89). The Kiswahili & English Catechism was the result of a reprint of the 1963 addition which appeared as an amplified addition of the Brief Catechism ("Kort begrip")

---

22 This was the "Brief Catechism" initially translated by Eybers in 1945. Also see Chapter 3 par. 5.1.7.
(RML Annual report 1970:25&1971:15). Besides the catechism, Van't Veld also finished his work on the hymnbook which included 25 psalms as well as 25 other evangelistic hymns. This publication was also used by the Africa Inland Mission (RML Annual report 1964:90). The church book "Ibada ya Kanisa" as well as a brochure for recruiting young men for ministry were printed in 1966 (RML Annual report 1966:136).

RML also tried to involve and prepare local people for service in literature ministry. Van't Veld was assisted by Mr. Mukulu who received more and more responsibility as time passed (RML Annual report 1965:126-127). Mr. Mukulu went for a course in journalism which contributed largely towards his growing share in the literature work (RML Annual report 1966:135). Due to family circumstances, Mukulu requested the department by 1967 to be released from office. He was replaced by Mr. Gideon N Mungai, an experienced man in Christian journalism (RML Annual report 1967:17).

Besides Kiswahili, several other languages like Kalenjin, Bukusu, Turkana and Pokot also received the attention of the Literature department (RML Annual report 1968:28-29&1975:24). By the beginning of the 1970s the first print of the "Katekisima" was sold out. It was decided to revise, simplify and to print the new edition in a bilingual (English and Kiswahili) form. In the new edition of the "Katekisima" the answers and questions were shortened, but increased in number (RML Annual report 1970:25&1971:15). In accordance with the plans to expand the existing hymn book of the Church a number of new hymns with African melodies were added to the hymn collection of which mainly psalms were sung in church. (RML Annual report 1970:25). The new hymn book consisted of 50 rhymed psalms, five psalms on African melodies and a number of additional evangelical hymns (RML Annual report 1971:16-17).

4.6.2 Literature distribution

Much was done on literature distribution, especially by evangelists. In 1964 there were 29 sales points (RML Annual report 1964:90). Twenty-one partly employed colporteurs were involved in door to door colportage, selling books and Bibles. More or less 10 000 Bibles, hymn books, portions of the Bible and other books were sold in this way. The poverty of the people is one of the reason why books were not sold in larger quantities. Evangelists, ministers, Bible-course leaders, Sunday-
schools, youth work and student evangelists were provided with books (RML Annual report 1965:126-127). Besides the sold literature, the Mission also distributed free literature to institutions and ministers (RML Annual report 1966:136).

Due to the fact that the Bible and other books reached so many homes and opened the possibility of further instruction and follow-up, the emphasis of the literature work by 1966 was on colportage. It was viewed as part of the work of the evangelist and for this reason Van't Veld was allowed to teach several hours on this topic at the evangelist training course. The number of colporteurs rose from 21 to 31 in 1966 (RML Annual report 1966:135). The emphasis on colportage soon paid off. Book sales increased by 46% from 1965 to 1966. By this time the literature bureau had reading materials of about 200 different titles available (RML Annual report 1966:135). By 1968 the number of colporteurs counted 35 of whom eight were fully employed (RML Annual report 1968:28-29).

As education in Kenya expanded an increasing number of people requested reading material. The free distribution of material remained an important part of the ministry. Christian newspapers, Biblical cards, tracts, Bibles for youth work, magazines and books for social work were some of the literature distributed in this respect (RML Annual report 1967:18-19). The literature bureau became the central supplier of Christian literature for church, youth and education (schools) ministry and was recognized as a bookshop. Purchases increased by 60% (RML Annual report 1968:28-29).

Further steps towards Africanization the literature department took when in 1970 Mr. GN Mungai was given full responsibility for literature distribution (RML Annual report 1970:25). At this stage Van't Veld's ministry in Kenya came to an end. Through his ministry a strong department has been established in the Church and several RCEA publications had seen the light. He also played a major role in the establishment of an effective and extensive distribution system of Bibles and Christian literature (RML Annual report 1969:19-20) to be replaced in 1970 by KF de Blois (RML Annual report 1970:25).

Through Mungai's guidance as director since 1972 of the department a gradual increase in distribution of Christian literature was visible by the mid 1970s. Book sales picked up and distribution took place with the assistance of ten colporteur-evangelists, two ministers, three full-time colporteurs and four bookshops. (RML Annual report 1975:24).
Although the Church could be grateful for the relatively good circulation of literature by the late 1970s, it appeared that running costs of the Literature department became too high to justify the number of book sales. It was necessary to look for ways towards the future whereby the vast area could be ministered to in a more efficient way as well as not depending so strongly on foreign assistance. The distribution by means of a vehicle also became more and more expensive. Another problem was to get people to read (RML Annual report 1977:21-22). A Bible kiosk, called the "Good News Bookshop" was built at the bus station in Eldoret from where Bibles and Christian literature could be sold from a very central point (RML Annual report 1978-79:36).

In 1989 the financial crisis of the department was evident. In the synod report of the same year the literature secretary, Francis Ondera, reported a "drastic fall in the profits" of the department (RCEA Synod report 1989:8). By 1991 a literature secretary was no longer employed by the Church and the department became the responsibility of the general treasury. The only remaining point for literature distribution was the Good News Bookshop in Eldoret which was by 1990 running at a loss, while competition from other bookshops became stronger (RCEA Synod report 1991:31). The closing of this bookshop in 1992 marked the end of the literature department.

4.6.3 Conclusion

From the brief historical survey it should be clear that the establishment of the Literature department by the RML in a relatively short period - mainly during the 1960s - was quite an achievement. Only two years after Van't Veld had arrived in Kenya, the Literature department already had 21 partly employed colporteurs in the field. After three years 200 different titles of reading material were already in circulation and by this time the number of colporteurs had increased to 31. Towards the end of the 1960s the book sales increased by almost 300%. This was especially the result of the work of a very skilled linguist who was sent by the RML. He set the stage for an effective ministry as long as the management (especially financially) came from a foreign source. Due to the fact that the department was meant to be an income-generating project of the Church, the survival of the department was in the long run built on the idea of marketing and sales as well as effective on management. Problems regarding these two factors led eventually to the demise of the Literature department.

---

Marketing and sales were more depending on the public in general than on RCEA members (RML Annual report 1972:27).
department which had been in the 1960s and 1970s an extensive and flourishing project of the Church.

4.7 RML and Rural Development

The RML usually started mission work in extension areas in Kenya by means of schools, medical work or evangelism. However, rural development and more specifically agricultural projects was initiated by the mission already in the 1960s.

Although the RML sent an agriculturist to Kenya in 1964 in the person of Mr. D Nauta, the plan towards agricultural education in this direction did not materialize. (RML Annual report 1964:85&1965:127). Due to a vacancy Nauta functioned after his arrival for almost two years in the building department. Meanwhile RML carried out an investigation on the viability of agricultural education for primary school graduates. The survey showed that this was not a viable option and Nauta left the service of the mission in 1966 (RML Annual report 1966:129). Surveys in this direction continued through the late 1960s (RML Annual report 1967:32).

4.7.1 Loyapat Rural Development Project

The Loyapat Rural Development Project was the first relatively successful agricultural attempt by the Mission in cooperation with the "Stichting Nederlandse Vrijwilligers". Loyapat lies on the border of West-Pokot, where the arch-enemies of the Turkana live. An irrigation scheme at the Malmalte River constructed by two volunteers, Mr. Hendriksen and Mr. Geluk, sent by RML in 1972, contributed to this success. The purpose of the project was to lead needy people towards the concept of becoming self-sustained in providing their own food. The vision was that the work at Loyapat would become an extension of church work and not remain a development project only. It was estimated that in accordance with the African concept of what sustainable living is, 6 000 families could live in Turkana. By then 60 000 families were living there. In times of famine, the long term solution would not be to provide aid via the church, mission or government, but to establish a food providing development project (RML Annual report 1972:26-27). The project started off with the cultivation of about 10 acres of agricultural land (RML Annual report 1973:17). By 1975 the project was extended to 20 acres and provided employment for 45 people (RML Annual report 1975:27).
Mr. IP Zandijk, an agriculturist from the Netherlands guided the project (RML Annual report 1977:26-27). He made a survey and recommended that the Interkerklijke Coordinatie Commissie Ontwikkelingsprojecten (ICCO) (Interdenominational Coordinating Committee for Development Projects) was to be approached for financial assistance. The ICCO agreed and from 1979 until the present day has been involved in the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP). The financial responsibility for agricultural development at Loyapat was therefore no longer that of RML alone. The ICCO channeled the finances through the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), while a committee of this body coordinated the project. By this time 50 farmers had already settled in the area. They grew maize, bananas, cotton and sunflowers. Agricultural instruction remained a problem as well as the corporative idea which is so important in irrigation activities. Apart from a clinic, also a primary school with 100 students was started at Loyapat. Evangelists were working in both school and clinic and a congregation was established by this time (RML Annual report 1979:39-41). Meanwhile, the name of the project was changed to Loyapat Integrated Rural Development Program (LIRDP) (Sitienei 2000: 1).

By 1983 a new phase in the project began. The vision of this project was rural development in Pokot and Turkana. During the first phase agriculture through irrigation was introduced and local farmers were encouraged to participate in establishing a cooperative structure. In the past the infrastructure of the project reflected management too much from the top. The local population was not effectively involved in the project. The people remained too dependent on the financial and material assistance by donors. During the second phase the emphasis would be more on informing people about their own situation in order to encourage them towards development. During this phase the RCEA itself became responsible for coordinating the project. An integrated approach to instruction, education and the improvement of living conditions was adopted. All three donors from the Netherlands (ICCO, ADB and RML) together would be responsible for communication with the RCEA (RML Annual report 1983:15 & 1984:28).

Mr. Ezekiel K. Sitienei was appointed as project coordinator in 1986. He was supposed to guide the project towards a smooth transfer to the local community. After an investigating into the situation he realized that the community was not prepared for such a step. By 1987 there was no other option than to hand the scheme over to an unprepared community with the Government Ministry of Agriculture as overseer. By the end of the 1980s the project came to a complete standstill.
never to be revived again (Sitienei 2000:3-4).

4.7.2 Integrated Rural Development Programme established

Due to the widespread rural poverty within the RCEA, the Church sought ways of assisting members and congregations to support themselves more adequately. The Synod of the 1985 thought that this problem could be solved by means of a rural development programme whereby especially farmers could be assisted towards the better production of crops (CORAT 1998:2). A survey was done towards this goal which resulted in the Agriculture Advice Programme (AAP) in 1986. The objective of this programme was to provide technical agricultural advice to small-scale farmers through the RCEA congregations in order that they may increase their food production. The Church hoped that through this assistance farmers would find themselves in a position to generate additional income to support their families and also to support the mission of the Church through faithful offerings and tithing. The programme was funded by the RML. The AAP was evaluated in 1988 and the success of the programme led the Church to start a comprehensive development programme. As a result the Integrated Rural Development Programme was started in 1989 (Sitienei 2000:5-6). By this time the ICCO took over from the RML as donor to support the project. The RML agreed to make Mr. G Noordham available as advisor to the IRDP for a further period of two years. When he returned to the Netherlands in 1991 the RML’s involvement with the IRDP basically came to an end (RML Annual report 1989:39 & 1991:33).

Although the RML’s involvement in agricultural programmes in the RCEA was not very successful, these initial efforts resulted in the establishment of the Integrated Rural Development Programme. Through the 1990s the project was mainly funded by Tearfund Australia and especially ICCO. By 2000 the future of this department became uncertain when foreign donors began to withdraw their

---

24 ICCO agreed to fund the programme for 3 years (1989-1991). This period is also referred to as the "first phase" of IRDP.


26 For a summary of the objectives, organization and activities of IRDP see the "Third Phase Proposal for IRDP (1997-2000) to ICCO, 1998."
financial support of the programme.

In evaluating the causes of the failure of development projects Burkey (1993) states that failures were mainly the results of plans and proposals which were compiled and developed by professionals far away from the target areas. A rapid diagnosis was usually followed by a master-plan often more rigid than flexible. He suggested a self-reliant participatory rural development programme (Burkey 1993:121). There was a tendency to speed things up by using more money. Allowances and incentives were paid to increase participation. However, not the organization’s money, but the enthusiasm of the people should be the driving force behind development. Some of the more common causes of failure Burkey mentions are insufficient involvement of change agents in the village investigations, as well as the fact that the major organizational and management work is taken care of by the project managers rather than by the people themselves (Burkey 1993:159-161).

Conclusion

The extensive efforts of the RML in regard to the different auxiliary services in support of the ministry of the RCEA are evident. Different ministries were established by the League and well maintained while the missionaries were still in control. When the Mission began to transfer the work to the leadership of the young church, it was a time both the Church and the Mission faced major difficulties. During the whole process of Africanization the major problem was to find the best method of handing over the different ministries to the RCEA. The eventual termination of the majority of these departments cannot be reduced to a single cause. A combination of factors hampered the appropriate handing over of these ministries to the wider ministerial context of the RCEA.

The RML did much to ensure the Africanization of the work in the RCEA, but perhaps this process became an end in itself. In other words, the process of Africanization was executed for sake of Africanization. Whether the transfer of the work to an African deputy eventually was appropriate to secure the effective establishment of the work in a particular context, was a question which actually ought to have been given much more reflection before the RML began transferring the work to the RCEA. The RML cannot be blamed in the sense that they neglected these important ministries during their involvement in Kenya. From their mission policy it is clear that the aim of the League
was effective establishment of these ministries in the RCEA, but, in practice, the opposite happened. This was due to the fact that the majority of these ministries were unconsciously established to be maintained by foreign assistance.

Pauw (1980:223) states that in the Reformed theology the "Comprehensive approach" should be delimited by the following twofold criterium: "Firstly it should always remain Gospel proclamation, and secondly it should not develop to such a scale that the young Church will be unable to take it over in course of time."

The position and identity of the RCEA as a Church\textsuperscript{27}, which never would have been in a position to take over the financial responsibilities of the different departments which the RML transferred to them in the 1990s, should have been considered to a much greater extent by the Church and the Mission. The years prior to 1995, when it was known to both the Church and the Mission that a number of departments was soon to be transferred to become the full responsibility of RCEA, would have been the opportunity for creative reflexion. What took place instead, was that the RCEA was grateful for a salary of a local employee which would be paid at least until 1995. The RML felt that the Church was given a reasonable number of years to prepare itself for these transfers.

In most of the cases in which the financial responsibilities of the departments in the RCEA was transferred from the RML to the Church, the activities were ceased. For the Church the issue at stake by that time was not how to make the department function properly, but where to get a salary for the employee formerly paid by the RML.

Vreeke (1997) reflects on the issue of the effective "handing over" of the different ministries from the Mission to the young church. Ministries established by a mission uphold structures and goals that reflect those of the mother church. As long as missionaries and mission money are extensively involved, these ministries will not change to take on the character and meet the need of the local situation. The mission should pull out of these internal ministries over a period of years and simultaneously provide enough time for the national church to become completely responsible for these ministries (Vreeke 1997:8). The RML pulled out of these ministries after a certain period of

\textsuperscript{27} See Chapter 6 on the identity of the RCEA.
time, but did not ensure that the national church was capable of taking them over. The practice was to pull out the missionary, hand the ministry over to a deputy and then to start to decrease the financial support. Eventually, when the RML’s financial support had dried up completely, the missionaries had been gone long ago, and the Church was left on its own to solve the problem on its own.

The RML cannot be blamed for the termination of these departments in the sense that they neglected these essential ministries during their involvement in Kenya. But the Reformed principle that a ministry should be established by a mission only to the extent that the young church will be able to take it over and properly maintain it, was defeated. This is clearly reflected by the ceasing of several departments during the 1990s as well as the crisis facing the medical department by 2000.

In the next chapter the establishment, growth and development of an indigenous Reformed church in East Africa will receive attention.
CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDIGENOUS REFORMED CHURCH IN EAST AFRICA

Introduction

The Reformed Church of East Africa exists today as a largely autonomous church with a Synod and four Presbyteries. The 36 parishes consist of a total of 186 congregations (local worshipping centers) with a total communicant membership of between 6000 to 8000 as reported in 1999. In the development towards becoming a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating church, the RML played a significant role. As indicated in the previous chapter, the RCEA still maintains links with the RML. These links are represented in certain agreements to supply personnel for services in certain programmes which are financially supported by the RML. The four programmes still supported by the League are the Evangelism and Extension Committee (EEC), the Medical Department, the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT) and the Scholarship Programme (theological students). All personnel supplied are fully under the control of the Synod, but they are seconded for specific service in the Church, decided upon in the Joint Meeting. Financial grants by RML to the RCEA are specified and is mainly for the support of the above-mentioned programmes.

In the development of the young Church towards autonomy a number of phases, closely related to the influence of the DRC and RML, are clearly discernable. The first phase, which can be referred to as the church planting phase and in which the Bwana Loubser Mission (BLM) played a significant role, resulted in the establishment of three DRC “Mission congregations”. During this phase, which formally lasted from 1944 to 1961, the work was still largely under the control and authority of the BLM. A next stage started with the transfer of the work from the BLM to the RML. The establishment of the RCEA as autonomous, at least in theory, became a reality during this phase. Although the indigenous Church functioned under its own leadership, with missionaries only in an advisory role, the missionaries unofficially determined the policy through the Conference of

1 Note the difference between the Joint Committee (1972-1980) and the Joint Meeting (joint body since 1980 consisting of delegates from the RML and the RCEA).
Missionaries. A new phase which was a step in the right direction, but still extensively controlled by the missionaries, was the establishment of a joint body (Joint Committee). Both local ministers and missionaries were represented in this body. This phase was supposed to be a brief period of transition, but it eventually lasted for almost a decade as the young Church and the Mission sought new structures in which the Church could, not only in theory, become autonomous. The final phase arrived when the Joint Meeting was replaced by the Executive Committee of the Synod in 1980. The final handing over of responsibilities to the young Church progressed through two decades since 1980.

In this chapter the influence of especially the RML on the development of the young Church towards autonomy will be traced through the various phases up to 2000. Three of the remaining programmes in the RCEA, which are supported by RML, deal with theological education. They are the RITT, the EEC and the Scholarship programme. Due to the continuous involvement of the League in this ministry and its tremendous influence on the Church, it will receive extensive attention in this chapter.

1. Early beginnings in the history of the RCEA

1.1 The involvement of the local people

It is important to bear in mind that apart from Rev. Loubser's encouragement towards mission work, the voice of the local people themselves was heard. Amongst many others, Joseph C. Sengerut and Daniel Kimurgong were involved in the ministry among their own people right from the start (Chemweno 1995:2).

1.1.1 Daniel Kimurgong

Daniel Kimurgong worked as a house attendant in the house of Mrs. Van Heerden who took care of Rev. Loubser. Kimurgong carried as a burden the conviction that the Gospel should be preached to his own people too. He was also involved in preaching the Good News to his people right from the start. When Loubser invited him as interpreter to preach the Gospel in the African township of Eldoret\(^2\), he had the unique experience of being the first local interpreter, as far as is recorded, in a

\(^2\) See Chapter 3 par. 4.1.1
message delivered to his people by a Dutch Reformed minister. Rev. Hosea Chemweno (2000) recalls that the older generation had told him that it had been people like Kimurgong and Sengerut who requested the DRC to call a full-time missionary to minister to their people.

1.1.2 Joseph (Sengerut) Cheserem

One of the three ministers trained by Eybers during the 1950s, was Mr. Hubert Tibanga. He was asked by Rev. JJ Tigchelaar to compile a brief history of the Reformed Church of East Africa. Tibanga's attempt appeared as a five-page unpublished document. He followed the line of events and his work is useful especially as it was a description from the local point of view. However, the facts and details of this history does not always agree with some of the primary sources.

Joseph (Sengerut) Cheserem who died in 1996, is quite often viewed as the father of the planting of the Reformed Church of East Africa. The moderator of the RCEA in 1997 responded to a question on Sengerut's knowledge of the history of the Church by stating that "he is the history of the Church." (Chemweno: 1996). In conversations it was clear that Joseph Sengerut is held in high esteem regarding the initial steps in the planting of this Church. It is therefore necessary to recount his life story.

One of the primary sources on Sengerut's history was Mr. AJ Mouton, the farmer for whom Sengerut worked. He told the story of Joseph Sengerut in "Lig oor Afrika" (Light over Africa), a festschrift on the first ten years of the Bwana Loubser Mission Station in East Africa, published in 1956. Sengerut started working on the farm as a ten year old boy about 1916. He was from the Elgeyo tribe and a very honest and reliable worker. When Sengerut's father died he left no livestock or inheritance for the family. According to tribal tradition he was, as the eldest son, supposed to take care of the family. Mouton allowed him to bring his family to the farm. Mouton and Sengerut were more or less the same age. They did almost everything together, they worked and played together and Mouton would talk to him more than with any of the other workers. He also preferred to work with Sengerut. One day during a break Mouton shared the Gospel with Sengerut. This sharing of

---

3 Sengerut was a nickname given to him by the Mouton family. The real name was actually an Afrikaans word “Vingerhoed” for “thimble” in English which was pronounced by him as “Sengerut”. He was given this name because he was so small and skinny, but also because Cheserem was so difficult for the South Africans to pronounce. Also see Mouton in “Lig oor Afrika” (1956:8-9) and interview with Cheserem’s daughter-in-law Mary (28/05/2000).
the Gospel was not planned. His friend understood the initial part regarding the fall in paradise, but not the part where God sent his Son to reconcile man with Himself.

Sengerut grew up and decided to get married in about 1925. At this time he left the Mouton farm in order to earn a little more elsewhere. His new home was unfortunately in a malaria-infested area and this disease affected him chronically. After some time Sengerut sent a message to Mouton asking if he could come back. Mouton visited him and was terribly shocked by his physical condition. He thought that Sengerut would not live much longer. The thought of what would happen to his friend after his death worried Mouton a great deal. Back at the farm all the available malaria medication was tried, but Sengerut did not improve. When passing Sengerut's house one day Mouton enquired about his health. Sengerut felt that the end was near. Once again the thought struck Mouton: "And what about beyond the grave?" (Mouton 1956:8).

He told Sengerut that there was no other option, but to ask God to heal him. This they did. Mouton continually asked God to heal his friend so that he will be revealed to Sengerut as the real God. A few days later they received bottled soda water from the spring at Lessos, south of Eldoret. Sengerut was given a bottle which he drank immediately but he became very nauseous afterwards. A week later Sengerut started to recover, and after a month he was able to do odd jobs. After two months he had more or less recovered completely from his illness. From that time onward Sengerut believed in the true God. Mouton says that this was the event in his life that convicted him of the fact that the South Africans had an obligation to preach the Gospel to their labourers.

The farmers started with services a few years later and Sengerut was amongst those that attended. Whenever he had the opportunity he asked questions about the Bible (Mouton 1956:8-9). Towards 1944 Sengerut was one of the local people, together with Kimurgong and others, who urged the DRC to call a full-time missionary to preach the Gospel to his people (Chemweno 2000). Although he never learned to read and write, he had a good knowledge of the Scriptures. For unknown reasons, the day of his baptism only took place many years later. It was carefully recorded by Mouton that Sengerut was baptized at the mission station on 5 July 1953 by Rev. JA Retief (Mouton 1956:8-9).
Joseph Sengerut, represented the voice of the African people challenging the South Africans to bring the Gospel to their people. His name will remain in the history books of the Reformed Church of East Africa.

### 1.2 Three Dutch Reformed Mission congregations in East Africa

The establishment of the three separate mission "congregations" in the Bwana Loubser Mission has its roots in decisions taken by the DRC many years prior to 1959\(^4\), when three DRC Mission congregations was established in East Africa. The Vergenoeg Local Mission Committee (LMC) had in 1949 discussed the idea of establishing Mission congregations, but felt it was too early for such a step (Vergenoeg LMC 21/06/49). By 1955 the Committee felt stronger about the matter. The first step in this direction was to found a church instead of continuing with the concept of a home mission field (Vergenoeg LMC 16/02/55).

By 1959 the need within the Bwana Loubser Mission for an autonomous Church became acute and the LMC of Vergenoeg made the following decisions on 10 February 1959 regarding the establishment of three DRC Mission Congregations within the Vergenoeg missionary ministry ("Sendingwerkkring"):  

- The first congregation would be at the Bwana Loubser Mission Station where everything needed for such a congregation was already in place.
- Another congregation would be established at Eldoret-West. The Church and minister's house had recently been built.
- The third Mission Congregation would be established in Kitale. School buildings, a house for the minister as well as housing for teachers were in place already.

The LMC decided to forward this matter for consideration by the Parish of Meru (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59) who approved of the establishment of the three African congregations ("Sendinggemeentes") within the Bwana Loubser Mission.

On 27 August 1959 the first of the three Mission congregations was established. The Bwana Loubser

---

\(^4\) See Chapter 3 par. 1.5.3.
Mission Congregation came into existence at the mission station at Plateau with Rev. Jason Wamukota as its minister and the minister of Eldoret-West, Rev. Jeremia Lugumira, was appointed as the relieving minister (Vergenoeg LMC 10/08/59).

On 28 August 1959 at 11h00 the second congregation was established in Eldoret town. The name of the congregation was the Eldoret-West Mission Congregation (presently called the Emmanuel local church) and the minister from Trans Nzoya was appointed as relieving minister (Vergenoeg LMC 10/08/59). It was here where Rev. Jeremiah Lugumira started his ministry in Eldoret (Chemweno 1995:2).

On 28 August 1959 at 16h00 the last of the three mission congregations came into existence at Kitale. The congregation was called the Trans Nzoya Mission Congregation. The relieving minister was the one from the Bwana Loubser Mission Congregation (Vergenoeg LMC 10/08/59). Rev. Hubert Tibanga was sent to Kitale where he started his ministry on a farm in the district (Chemweno 1995:2).

The exact borders of the three congregations were decided on and minuted during the Local Mission Committee's meeting of 10 August 1959. The officiating classis of the three congregations was the Classis of Bwana Loubser (Vergenoeg LMC 10/08/59), while the Synodical ties were with the Synod of the Reformed Church of North Rhodesia (Zambia) (Rawlins 1980:279).

When the Reformed Church of East Africa came into existence, the Church was at first divided into three parishes using the boundaries of the above-mentioned congregations (Chemweno 1995:2). By the time the congregations came into existence the three ministers were already working in these areas (Cronje 1981:297). During these years the South African farmers became more and more cooperative. They constructed buildings on their farms to be used by ministers and evangelists during their visits to out-posts (Eybers 1958:38-39).

It can be said that the establishment of the three Mission Congregations was a highlight for Eybers and the LMC. The vision that there would be eventually an autonomous Church, based on the Reformed tradition, in East Africa, guided the policy of the Dutch Reformed congregations in East Africa. The RCEA refers to a classis which usually consists of a number of local congregations as “parish”. See Constitution of the RCEA, Article V (“The Parish”).
Africa (Cronje 1981:298). Now the vision was becoming a reality. Eybers came to East Africa in 1944 to begin the work. In 1959, only a few months before he left East Africa on retirement due to bad health (Vergenoeg LMC 13/11/59), he witnessed this highlight of his ministry in this area. The opening of an own bank account was a first step in taking responsibility for their own finances and operating more independently (Rawlins 1980:274). At this point no separate church was established, but the possibility within the policy of the DRC to form separate congregations and a separate ministry as an extension of the mission work of the congregation, was put into practice.

1.3 The three congregations adopted by the Reformed Mission League

The mission congregations were visited among others by Revs. De Lange and Meijers of the RML and Mr. Barnard and Mouton of the DRC. At a combined meeting the church councils of the mission congregations were informed on the procedures of handing over the work from the DRC to the RML. It was important for both parties that the local people themselves must decide on their own future.

The people themselves agreed unanimously to be adopted ("aangeneem te word") by the RML. As stated earlier, the work was formally handed over from the Bwana Loubser Mission to the RML on 20 January 1961 (RML Annual Report 1962:129).

1.4 Ministry during the early years

Unlike the high density of the population of the "reserves", the population density in the area where the RML worked, was very low. The low numbers in the church membership of the RCEA were a result of this situation. The wide stretched area also demanded a high number of evangelists which the RML tried to train as soon as possible (RML Annual report 1964:87).

Since 1965 this situation had begun to change when the big farms of settlers were divided into smaller

---

6 See Chapter 3 par.1.5.3.

7 The minutes of the meetings between the DRC, RML and the missionary congregations regarding the transfer of the work state that the congregations "...ge hiermee toestemming om aangeneem te word deur die 'Gereformeerde Zendingsbond' gevestig in Utrecht, Holland, en in vervolg onder die sorg en beaardiging van genoemde Zendingsbond te wees." (hereby gives permission to be adopted by the Reformed Mission League in Utrecht, The Netherlands, and to be under the care and ministering of the mentioned Mission League in future) (RML/DRC/BLM Special Meeting on 08/01/61).
portions through "settlement schemes" (RML Annual report 1965:123). These schemes were attempts by the government to establish a new agricultural structure whereby people could get land to make a living. The land used for this project was mainly in the hands of white settlers and was now returned to the local population (RML Annual report 1968:25). In this more permanent society the Church found itself in a position to play an important role in the lives of these communities. A large number of Kalinjen farmers were now streaming into the area to benefit from these arrangements. The Kaptagat Settlement Scheme was one of the areas in which the ministry of the Church took root very firmly (RML Annual report 1965:123).

From the beginning the ministry in the three congregations was taken care of by local ministers, evangelists and elders under the supervision of the missionaries. Negotiations took place on a regular basis between RML missionaries and the ministers, who faced several ministerial problems (RML Annual report 1962:132). During these years the ministry did not extend far beyond the area where the South African farmers had their land. The churches were very small and the church attendance were usually not very promising. By 1966 the bible knowledge of the average church member was still very little. Many of them have not been attending the church for a long time (RML Annual report 1966:129). Sunday-school was taught before the worship service on Sundays and after service the baptism class for adults and youth meetings usually took place (RML Annual report 1966:129-130). The ministry of evangelists consisted, apart from preaching on Sundays, mainly of attachment to one or two schools where they taught the Bible classes and prepared older pupils for baptism (RML Annual report 1966:130). Only the small number of people living at the center and in the area would attend the service on a Sunday. The roads were usually very bad and transport was not available. The congregations were very poor and could not pay their own minister.

The strategy during these initial years was to start a local church by the sending an evangelist to a certain area. He started his ministry by conducting services, did visitation and taught Sunday-school classes whereby the foundation for a new congregation would be established. A number of these local congregations formed a "parish" and each parish had it's own minister. The minister visited these local congregations occasionally, serving the sacraments and in this way built the parish with his evangelists. Whenever the local congregation was fit to select a church council, the evangelist would be removed to repeat the process somewhere else. The local church council together with the minister then took over the leadership from the evangelist. The minister got assistance from the Church and the Mission in carrying out his duties in the congregations. The different central
departments of the RCEA took care of the training and equipping of local church leaders such as elders and deacons (RML Info Bulletin, HKOA n.d:2-3).

Towards the end of the 1960s the membership of the RCEA grew quite fast. This growth could bring its own dangers and also result in the weakening of the existing congregations. This was one of the main reasons why the emphasis shifted more and more towards lay training by 1968. The idea was to strengthen the leadership as well as to equip congregation members for service. This slight shift in approach led to a course for elders, deacons and congregation members active in ministry which was taught in Eldoret twice a month in the form of a three-day seminar. The edification and extension of congregations was the goal behind these courses. "Bible weeks" were also held in local congregations. These courses included teachings of four to five days to make members more conversant with the message of the Bible. Refreshment courses for evangelists were also introduced (RML Annual report 1968:24-25).

2. The RCEA and autonomy

During the first part of the nineteenth century missionary efforts still concentrated on the conversion of individuals as the chief aim of missions. By the mid-1800s a shift towards plantatio ecclesiae as the focus of mission took place (Kritzinger 1984:33-34). The strength of the plantatio ecclesiae was the fact that the missionary task was reflected upon from an ecclesiological perspective. This was clear from the fact that it focussed on the existence and functioning of the planted church (Smith 1973:198). The autonomy of the planted church became the central theme in missionary circles. Through the writings of Anderson and Venn the “three-selfves” formula (self-government, self-support, and self-propagation) was introduced and practically became a notae ecclesiae in Protestant missions (Smith 1972:197). According to this concept one could refer to the young church as "church" in the real sense of the word when these principles had been established in the life of the church. The idea was that the young church would soon become equal to the sending church. "Reality turned out to be different, however. The younger churches continued to be looked down upon and to be regarded as immature and utterly dependent upon the wisdom, experience, and help of the older churches or mission societies. The process toward independence was a pedagogical one;
in the end, the self-appointed guardian would decide whether or not the moment for ‘home rule’ had come” (Bosch 1991:378-379).

By the time the RML started with mission work in Kenya the "three-selves" concept of Venn and Anderson was a widely accepted standard in Protestant evangelical missions. Although no formal mission policy of the RML existed before 1989, the missiological principles of the three-selves model was also accepted by the RML as standard on the mission field9 (RML Annual report 1965:124). The fact that the RML continuously evaluated their work against the standard of the British-American missiology will become clear in the following paragraph.

2.1 Self-government

The development process in the church government began when the Vergenoeg congregation called BB Eybers in 1944. The Presbyterian system of church government was informally introduced by the DRC and formally established by the RML when the RCEA became an autonomous church in 1963.

2.1.1 The ministry of the first ministers of the Bwana Loubser Mission

Due to poor handling of funds Rev. Wamukota was moved to Kitale and replaced by Rev. Tibanga at Plateau (Vergenoeg LMC 16/03/60). On 30 June 1960 the African ministers joined the meeting of the Local Mission Committee for the first time. Because Kitale was situated very far, only Tibanga and Lugumira attended (Vergenoeg LMC 30/06/60). Rev. Eybers had always been the only representative from the Bwana Loubser Mission at these meetings.

All three ministers attended the Local Mission Committee meeting for the first time on 7 December 1960. Rev. Lugumira reported on the progress of the work since Eybers had left. Although the three ministers had believed that the work would deteriorate, they could in fact report progression. At almost all the Church meetings the numbers were growing and in a certain place the numbers doubled. The work at the schools was also very promising and, according to Lugumira, in comparison to previous years there was greater success in examinations (Lugumira LMC 1960).

2.1.2 The first Synod of the RCEA (1963)

In contrast to other churches in Kenya who experienced their pioneer phases many decades prior to that of the RCEA and became autonomous churches in the 1950s and 1960s, the RCEA has had a relative short pioneer phase before becoming an "autonomous Church" in 1963 (RML Annual report 1971:11). Political reasons played an important role in the official autonomy. The properties transferred from the DRC Mission to the RML was still registered in the name of the DRC and not in the name of an organization in Kenya. The Church and the Mission feared that the new government could consider these properties as belonging to a foreign organization and that it could be nationalized. Both the Church and the Mission felt that under the circumstances it might be wise to establish an autonomous church as soon as possible.

In the Archives of the RCEA in Eldoret as well as the RML in Utrecht the earliest minutes of the Synod of the RCEA to be found are those of the Synod held at the Plateau Mission Station on 15 May 1964. Rev. JJ Tigchelaar, who attended the meeting in 1963 when the Reformed Church of East Africa was founded, states that no minutes were taken during the first meeting (Tigchelaar 1998).

In July 1963 the Church formed their own Synod and adopted a constitution. The Presbyterian system of church government was formally instituted by the Church with the constitution accepted by the Synod in 1963 having been basically taken over from the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). This was done under the guidance of the RML (Tigchelaar 2000). The Synod consisted of delegates from the Church councils of the existing congregations and as such formed the broader governing body of the Church. At that stage the Synod met several times per year to discuss ecclesiastical matters. The RML missionaries also attended the meetings in the capacity of guests and advisors (De Blois 1971:87)

2.1.3 The Conference of Missionaries (1962-1971)

During the years following 1961 the Conference of Missionaries were responsible for the policy
regarding ministry in the RCEA. Even when the RCEA became an autonomous church, the missionaries, through this body, unofficially had the final say in policy and decision-making. Decisions concerning financial matters needed to be confirmed by the missionaries before they could be finalized. This situation remained the same for more than a decade. The most important change that took place during these years was the fact that the Reformed Church of East Africa came into existence in 1963. Apart from the fact that the name Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was changed to the Reformed Church of East Africa, nothing else changed. About this situation the CORAT states that through these years the missionaries unofficially remained "the supreme governing body of the church" (CORAT 1991:3).

2.1.4 The Joint Committee (1972-1980)

The Joint Committee in which both missionaries and RCEA ministers served was established in 1972. Although this was a step in the direction, the composition of members of the committee still appeared to be missionary dominated. Initially it consisted of seven RML missionaries and five RCEA ministers. In 1975 this composition was changed to an even number of six missionaries and six RCEA ministers. The chairman of the committee was a RCEA minister and the secretary/treasurer still a missionary (RML Annual report 1975:20).

The Synod continued to consider the process of policy and decision-making as one controlled by the missionaries and that the RCEA leadership was not actively involved. The RML in their turn felt that the Joint Committee provided the forum for cooperation between the RML missionaries and the RCEA ministers, a forum where policy was made and decisions were taken. Still, the Synod experienced the situation as a process in which they are not being allowed room enough to determine their own policy.

Furthermore, a committee appointed by the Joint Committee to investigate the possibility of transferring the work to the Synod had not come up with a proposal by 1976. It appeared that it was

---

10 Also compare "Comprehensive approach" in Chapter 4 and programmes still supported by RML below for detail about activities introduced by the missionaries during these years.

11 Christian Organisations Research Advisory Trust (CORAT) is a non-profitable organisation with its African headquarters in Nairobi. The RCEA used the services of CORAT at several occasions with great success.
easier to point out certain problem areas than to find solutions for them. Once again the RML stated in their annual report that the organization was not convinced that the leadership of the Church was really prepared to take over the full responsibility involved in Synod activities (RML Annual report 1976:25-26).

The power of the Joint Committee became almost unlimited within the structure of the RCEA. It determined the policy of all the work done by the Church and the Mission (RML Annual report 1976:26). It was also through this body that the RML had the most contact with the Church on an organizational level. The Joint Committee soon became the most powerful committee in the RCEA. The Synod experienced this situation as one in which authority had been taken from them and that it was in reality in the hands of the missionaries of the Joint Committee.

Due to the fact that the financial dependency on the RML was still so strong, final decisions could not be made by different Church committees. The result was that a request often had first to be tabled at the meeting of the Joint Committee before the Church could make a decision. This Committee then in effect had the final say in the matter. RML reports that when a request was rejected, it was experienced by the Church that the RML took decisions arbitrarily (RML Annual report 1977:17).

Meanwhile the "Church Department" managed by the Church Committee came into existence in 1974 and consisted of three RCEA ministers appointed by the Synod and three missionaries appointed by the RML. This committee replaced the old Pastoral Committee consisting of all the RCEA ministers, but became too large to function effectively. The Church Department was a body involved in the well being of the local congregations by setting guidelines for the proper functioning of congregations (RML Annual report 1975:22).

From 1976 the membership of this committee consisted of five RCEA ministers and two missionaries. The chairman was a RCEA minister and the secretary a missionary. Apart from the fact that affairs concerning ministers, evangelists, elders and the different local congregations were the responsibility of this body, it also had ecumenical relations on its agenda (RML Annual report 1976:26-27). Furthermore, policy and decision-making concerning important matters such as theological training, new Church order and the position of the evangelist in the Church were also part of the mandate of this department (RML Annual report 1976:26-27). In addition to this the ordination, posting and
suspension of personnel also counted as part of the task of this department (RML Annual report 1975:21).

The power of the Joint Committee expanded to such an extent that its power even eliminated the proper functioning of the Church Department. Although the Church Department was the Committee that was supposed to deal with the day to day activities of the Church and in fact functioned as an "executive committee" of the Church, the Joint Committee dominated and still functioned as the body with the final voice in decision-making (RML Annual report 1977:17).

Towards the end of the 1970s the RML realized that something needed to be done and was looking seriously for a way of granting the RCEA more autonomy without being guilty of withdrawing from the young Church in an indifferent manner (RML Annual report 1977:16). It was during these years that, especially through a strong leader like Rev. J Muttai, the Church challenged the RML to grant them more responsibility. The RCEA requested the League to recognize and observe the realities of the constitution of the RCEA which have been undermined in the past (Bisem 2000).

When the Joint Committee replaced the Conference of Missionaries in 1972 the RML was of the opinion that the shift in emphasis to continuous clergy and lay training in the late 1960s would ensure why this period of transition would not have to last very long. It was thought that the leadership of the Church would soon be of such a nature that the Synod could take over full responsibility for policy and decision-making (RML Annual report 1972:17). In reality it took the Church and the Mission eight years to agree on a new structure, a period in which the Church would also in practice become more self-governing.

It appears that the Joint Committee was a mistake right from the beginning. Tigchelaar (1998) states that it soon developed into a struggle for power between the Church and the Mission. A further problem with the Joint Committee was the fact that the contact with the Church at grass-roots level was very limited. Talk of a split between "Church" and "Mission" was also heard during the last part of the seventies. The situation made both parties realize that a new structure concerning the determination of policy and church government should be found (RML Annual report 1980:34).
2.1.5 From Joint Committee to Executive Committee (1980)

After discussions, which took a number of years, certain suggestions were made and at the Synod of 1979 a new arrangement between the RCEA and the RML was accepted (RML Annual report 1978 & 79:30). In practice this meant that from 1 January 1980 the Church took full responsibility for the complete policy and ministry of the Church. This included the mission policy and work of the Church as well (RML Annual report 1980&81:30).

The new structure of the RCEA by 1980 was as follows (Info Bulletin, HKOA n.d:2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>85 Local Congregations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synod: 45 members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee: 14 members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Committee (1-2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Medical work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Women's league</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commission for Training and Evangelism (3-10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Church work (evangelism &amp; training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bible school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. CTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Building department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Agriculture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee for Extension (11-14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Pokot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Turkana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Loyapat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Missions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since 1980 each parish sends three representatives (two elders and the minister) to the Synod which together formed the highest authority of the Church. The Synod appoints members of the Executive Committee for one year and the moderator and general secretary for four years. The Executive Committee also appoints three sub-committees: Social Committee, Committee for Training and Evangelism, Committee for Extension (RML Annual report 1978&79:34).

Rev. JK Biboko became the first moderator of the RCEA. He was elected at the Annual Synod in November 1979 and kept the position from 1 January 1980 up to 1991 when a new executive committee was elected. Between 1980-1991 the moderator was a part-time officer (RML Annual...
At that time Rev. JM Muttai became the first general secretary of the Church and kept this position until 1990 (RML Annual report 1990:35). Through the head office (which is located within the compound of the Conference & Training Centre in Eldoret) with its different departments, the affairs of the Church were managed by this time. The head office functioned through the administration of the general secretary who dealt with the day to day administration, while the moderator provided overall guidance as far as church matters were concerned (CORAT 1991:5).

Further arrangements were also made between the RML and RCEA. A delegation of the Executive Committee of the RML would visit Kenya each year and from time to time a delegation from Kenya went to the Netherlands. An arrangement would be made every year regarding the RML's financial contribution to the Executive Committee. The RML missionaries continued to be the financial responsibility of the RML, but their discipline as well as responsibilities concerning duties were the joint responsibility of the two parties (RML Annual report 1978&79:34).

Another benefit, as a result of this new relationship, was the larger involvement of the different policy-making institutions of the RCEA with the complete work of the Church. Moreover, the areas which formerly in particular had been the responsibility of the missionaries, became part of the mandate of the RCEA. In the area of decision- and policy-making the missionary had only an advisory role (RML Annual report 1980-81:31-32).

Following these important changes in 1980, the decision-making process remained a problem for the RCEA. Before the new structure was introduced the Synod selected a local chairman which continued in the office of moderator. The treasurer of the Synod after 1980 continued to be a missionary in the person of the former executive officer (RML Missionary) of the Synod. The result was that the final decision-making was not in the hands of the Church, but was done by the RML via the treasurer. This situation once again hampered the process towards full autonomy for the RCEA (Bisem 2000). This reorganisation whereby only locals became heads of departments, was a step forward on the road to self-reliance and independence from foreign personnel and financial support. At this stage the RCEA still depended largely on the RML for financial support.
2.1.6 Structural development during the 1990s

After another 10 years the following structure was adopted by the RCEA (RML Annual report 1991:35):

160 local congregations (10 000 members)
17 parishes
Synod
Executive Committee
Committees

Committees
Posting Committee / Evangelism & Training Committee / Church Extension /
Social Committee / Parish Councils / Finance & Planning Committee

Sub-committees
Literature department / Education department / CTC / Youth Committee / Building
Department/Bible School / TEE / Scholarship Committee / Medical committee / Home
and Family / Agriculture / Local Church Councils / Loans Committee

In 1991 when a new executive committee for the church was elected, Rev. S Soett became the second moderator of the RCEA and Rev. HC Wanjala, who replaced the late Rev. JM Muttai temporarily in 1990, became the second general secretary of the Church (RML Annual report 1991:35). Within a period of just over twenty five years the Reformed Church of East Africa grew to a total of 160 local congregations in seventeen different parishes. The size of the local churches varied from 10 to 250 members. Each parish had its own minister who was supported by an assistant preacher (evangelist) (RML Annual report 1990:35).

The above-mentioned structure (1991) eventually appeared to be an awkward and ineffective system, especially when it came to the decision-making process. The structure slowed down the administration due to the numerous committees matters had to go through before being considered. Following the CORAT report (1991:6-7), the bigger committees direct under the Executive
Committee was abolished, and the committees previously called sub-committees were reinforced (Synod report 1992:10).

In 1995 a further development occurred in the structure of the RCEA when regional presbyteries were introduced. Initially the Church decided on the implementation of eight presbyteries. After investigating this possibility the Finance and Planning Committee indicated the inability of the Church of implementing the proposed presbyteries. On a mini-synod held in July 1995 a proposed amendment was endorsed which led the Church towards implementing four instead of eight Presbyteries. The inauguration of four presbyteries namely Northern, Western, Eastern, and Southern, took place during 1995 (RCEA Synod report 1995:15).

Due to a lack of funds a few programmes ceased to exist between 1991 and 1996: the building programme (1994), the education programme (1996), the stewardship programme (1996).

The four presbyteries of the RCEA consist of 186 local churches in 36\textsuperscript{12} parishes and extension areas, spread over eighteen administrative districts\textsuperscript{13}, namely Nairobi, Nakuru, Koibatek, Bomet, Uasin Gishu, Migori, Keiyo, Nandi, Trans Nzoia, Bungoma, Kakamega, West-Pokot, Mount Elgon, Turkana, Bureti, Kericho, Vihiga and Lugari. The concentration of congregations is the highest in Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia.

The Church consists of the following four presbyteries: Northern (7 parishes), Western (11 parishes), Southern (8 parishes) and Eastern (10 parishes).

|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

\textsuperscript{12} By 2000, when several parishes ceased to exist by being declared extension areas, the number of parishes in the Church by 2000 dropped from 42 to 36. Parishes declared extension areas were Kattilo, Pokot, Mount Elgon (Northern), Suna Migori (Western), Nairobi, Bomet (Southern).

\textsuperscript{13} See map 2 on administrative districts in western Kenya.
A parish in the RCEA usually consists of five to thirteen local churches. Preaching posts are established as a result of the extension work by the parish itself. The preaching post becomes a congregation when the church council consists of a minimum of five elders. The number of members in a local church can differ from 10 (Race Course) to 800 (Lokichar) members (Ondinga 2000).

The structure by 2000 looked as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>186 local congregations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36 Parishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Presbyteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synod &amp; General Secretariat / RITT / CTC /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth &amp; Sunday-school / Women Fellowship /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRDP / Medical Dept. / EEC / NIP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A clear development since 1980 was the different departments which was effectively limited to a manageable number.

---

14 Parish extension takes place within the parish in contrast to the work of EEC where extension takes place only in "new" (less-reached) areas.

15 The Nutrition Improvement Programme (NIP) is a project which was started in 1983 by the RCEA in Lokichar Parish in response to the poor food security situation in the district of Turkana which was aggravated by the 1979 and 1983 drought. By 2000 the main project activities of NIP were food security, primary health care, capacity building and disaster preparedness. Due to various setbacks no acceptable level of food security has been achieved in the project region. The financial support for the project is the complete responsibility of Dutch Interchurch Aid (Stichting Oecumenische Hulp - SOH (NIP proposal to SOH 2000-2003:4)).
2.1.7 Constitutional development

As indicated earlier, the first constitution of the RCEA was based on the structure of that of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). The forced autonomy of the RCEA in 1963 led the Church to act quickly and, under the guidance of Rev. CJP Lam of the RML, took over the basic constitutional structure of the PCEA.

A few articles in this constitution require some attention.

As far as the position of the missionaries was concerned, the constitution accepted the “Conference of Missionaries” as an independent body and the missionaries attended the Synod meetings as “advisors” (RCEA Constitution 1963: Appendix I,4). This advisory role did not limit the missionaries’ control over church affairs. In practice the missionaries participated in decision-making in the different church committees (RML Annual report 1974:9). As stated earlier, it was only when the Executive Committee of the Synod was established that the problem was solved to some extent. RML missionaries were not supposed to be active in the determination of policy, but would be involved through sub-committees in the life and work of the local churches. They were also not allowed to be in a majority in any of these sub-committees (RML Annual report 1978&79:34).

Another matter which was introduced in the constitution of 1963 and with which the church is still wrestling, was the creation of the post of general secretary. The idea was taken over by the RCEA from the PCEA. The function of the general secretary was meant by the RML to be that of an executive officer of the Synod. Since the time of the first general secretary of the RCEA, Rev. J Muttai, the function of this position corresponded much with the role of a bishop (Tigchelaar 2000). Pauw (1980:393) states that the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches always sought to avoid the possibility “for one person to hold a permanent, virtually legislative position of power in the Church”. A positive development in this respect took place during the RCEA ministers conference (Nakuru 2000) where the position of general secretary was discussed and a proposal tabled to change the post to that of an administrative officer employed by the Synod and with no voting powers in the Synod or Synodical Committees.  

---

16 Also see Pauw 1980:392-394 for the creation of the post of general secretary in the CCAP in Malawi.
Since 1963 the constitution has been revised twice. The first time was in 1966 when it was extended with more information on the Church's relationship to the RML, but with no fundamental changes (RML Annual report 1966:136). The next revision was in 1992 when an obvious, but clear, development was visible. While the presence of a Mission was still very evident in the 1966 constitution, with a complete chapter on "The Special Relation of the RCEA with the RML" as well as an extensive appendix regarding this relationship, the constitution of 1992 mentions missionaries in a very brief paragraph (RCEA Constitution: Article X).

The RCEA is currently busy with another revision of the constitution. The aim of this revision is:
- To make people understand the RCEA Constitution and to clear ambiguity
- To elaborate areas which are not clear
- Include the vision and mission of RCEA (RCEA Synod report 1999:7).

2.1.8 Relationship between Church and State

Apart from consultations with the government through the NCCK, there are particularly two areas in which the RCEA and the Kenyan government work closely together. The first concerns the matter of famine. Especially in a deserted area like Turkana, in which the RCEA is actively involved in ministry, the government and other organizations are often requested to assist in relief programmes (RCEA Synod report 1993:8). During the 1997 famine the Eldoret area was also affected and the government contributed, through the NCCK, food for the people in this area. Through this project the Reformed Institute for Theological Training also benefited (Ekitala 2000).

The second area deals with the continuous tribal clashes especially in the Turkana/Pokot area. Cattle rassling between these two groups leads to much insecurity which has a negative affect on the ministry of the RCEA, especially in Pokot. Before and after the 1992 elections the clashes between the different tribes in the country resulted in close cooperation between the government and the Churches in the country. Revs. S. Soett and S Akoru, as well as Mrs. R Barmasai of the RCEA, served in a "peace task force" of the NCCK which worked shoulder to shoulder with the government to restore peace in the country (RCEA Synod report 1993:9).

Tension between the RCEA and the government also occurred from time to time. In 1987 member churches of the NCCK resisted the change in election procedures whereby candidates would no
longer be elected through ballot-papers, but by means of public voting (RML Annual report 1987:44).

Another area which created tension was the government’s strict policy on the employment of foreign workers in Kenya. The involvement of RML missionaries in the ministry of the RCEA created tension with the government during the late 1980s (RML Annual report:1990:39). The cutting of RML personnel during the 1990s lessened the tension with the government regarding this problem.

2.1.9 The RCEA and Oecumene

By the early 1960s Missions and Churches cooperated in Eldoret through the work of the Bible Society where the RCEA was represented through the literature department (RML Annual report 1964:86).

By 1965 contact with other Churches increased where cooperation came through recruiting young people for theological studies. The contact which the Bwana Loubser Mission had with the Christian Council of Churches in Kenya was maintained and extended (RML Annual report 1965:124).

An important development for the RCEA was the fact that the Church became a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. For the first time delegates from the RCEA attended the meeting of the World Alliance. Four delegates attended the meeting held in Nairobi in 1970 (RML Annual report 1970:22).

By 1975 the Synod decided to extend their relationships and investigated the possibility of joining the Reformed Ecumenical Council (REC). Rev. Van Donkersgoed and Rev. Welime attended as observers the meeting of the REC in Cape Town in 1976 (RML Annual report 1975:22 & 1976:27).

Through the years the Church steadily built up relations with a number of bodies and institutions and maintained good relations with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, St. Paul's United Theological College, the National Council of Churches of Kenya and the Reformed Ecumenical Council (RML Annual report 1976:26-27).
In reviewing this paragraph it is to be concluded that the missionaries’ firm control remained basically unchanged up to almost 1980. Even though the Joint Committee was established on which local ministers served, and local leaders took more responsibility for ministry, the de facto position was that the oversight expatriate missionaries still remained in force. Still, this was not a unique process compared to other “mission” churches in the country. The process was basically the same as that of the other churches that became autonomous under the auspices of mission churches. In the Anglican Church an equally painful process developed as Karanja (1999:100) states. Although Africans were able to express their views in the Anglican Church through the pastorate committees and the African Council of Churches (ACC) they were excluded from the Missionary Conference which means that no genuine sharing in decision-making took place during the early years.

Similarities between the RCEA and AIC is also evident. Gration (1974:282) describes the process of the handing over from the AIM to the AIC in almost the same terms as that of the RCEA. In the process of granting the Church full autonomy a "joint board" composed of executive members of the Mission and Church was formed (Gration 1974:297-298). By 1966 the Church's general secretary expressed his gratitude for the fact that the AIC and AIM were not at war with one another (Gration 1974:303). The situation became so serious however that according to Gration (1974:306-307) "outside help" was considered at some point. By June 1966 the Church/Mission relationships was referred to as an "explosive situation" (Gration 1974:334). Eventually the Mission "agreed to become a department of the Church" and the name AIC would henceforth represent both the Church and the Mission (Gration 1974:336).

Regarding the actual process of handing over to local leaders similar patterns are also evident in other churches. Nthamburi (1982:141) states that autonomy for the Methodist Church in Kenya in 1967 was not the end of the missionary era. "The first Africans to be appointed to high ranks had to face not only the insecurity of rapid promotion, but they had to fight for a meaningful position in their congregations from Europeans who had run the Churches for many generations without consultation with the African and who, when faced by the prospect of working under an African boss, could not curb their usual loquaciousness and forceful personalities."

Becoming self-governing was an equally slow and difficult process for the RCEA. Although official
governmental independence from RML took place in 1963, RML still took the initiative in the practical administration and management issues. The political reasons which played a role in the sudden official autonomy of the RCEA contributed to the fact that it was to quite an extend a forced autonomy. The missionaries still needed to give major guidance to the young church and maintained this position until the late 1980's when CORAT declared that "RML policies were still influencing the management of the RCEA.", and the "decisions concerning Church affairs were guided by the Mission" (CORAT 1991:16 & 20). The slow progress in self-government in the period between the establishment of the Joint Committee to the founding of the Executive Committee possibly reflects a reluctance on the side of the missionaries to come to a point where the responsibility was handed over to the local leadership. As the above-mentioned events and phases indicated, the RCEA found itself in the final process of attaining "self-government" during the 1990s.

Another factor to be considered is the name of the Church. The Reformed Church of East Africa, did not always reflect what it stands for. East Africa did not represent the real picture of the geographic range of the Church. East Africa included Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanganyika (Tanzania) and Uganda. In reality the ministry of the RCEA was limited to a very small area in the western part of Kenya with a few thousand members (Lam 1964:123). As indicated before, two of the three ministers trained by Eybers was from Tanzania. The vision lived in the hearts of the Tanzanians to take the Reformed tradition back to their own country. Furthermore, it was the time the East African governments negotiating the East African Federation (Tigchelaar 1998). The idea to extend the Church eventually to Uganda was part of the plan of the Church right from the start (Biboko 2000). All these factors in combination resulted in the fact that this name was given. Since the beginning the name of the Church all along stood for a vision and it remains the same up to the present day. This is confirmed by attempts especially during the late 1980s (Chemweno 2000 & Biboko 2000) and early 1990s (Lichtendonck 1995) to extend the Church to Uganda, but without any success.

2.1.11 Theological Education in the RCEA

The 1935 Mission policy of the DRC states that the missionaries will initially take care of the pastoral duties in the young church. As the church develop towards autonomy, local converts should be

17 Also see Chapter 2 par.5
identified and trained adequately to take over full responsibility for this ministry (Gerdener 1951:87). In line with this policy Eybers immediately started training the first Evangelists and by the mid-1950s also with the training of ministers. Also the RML regard the training and preparation of ministers of the Word by the RML as being of utmost importance. Churches are assisted in theological education by means of personnel and financial support. The organization also wants to contribute in matters arising from the local context which demand theological reflection. Scholarships for theological studies are granted on request by churches abroad according to the scholarship policy of RML (RML Policy 1989:17-18). This policy was implemented in Kenya since the early years, at first through the training of evangelists and later through the training of ministers by means of a scholarship programme at St. Paul's United Theological College (SPUTC). When the RCEA started training its own ministers during the early 1990s, the program at St. Paul's continued along side the training at the institute of the RCEA, the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT).

Moreover, the RML is also committed towards equipping laity and clergy on the grass-roots level. In the RCEA this vision mainly resulted in a TEE program which began in the mid-1980s and became part of the ministry of RITT from 1997 onwards. The following historical review of theological training in the RCEA will indicate that this ministry remained mainly under the control of the missionaries. By 2000 financial support for theological training is mainly from the RML. A RML missionary is still director of the Church's only theological institution.

2.1.11.1 Evangelist training

As stated in Chapter three the training of evangelists started in the mid-1940s during the ministry of Rev. BB Eybers. During 1947 the first trained evangelists were sent out to spread the Gospel among their own people. This was the first step in the theological training of evangelists for the church, which was called the Reformed Church of East Africa eventually.

Rev. and Mrs. Eybers also wrote that four evangelists from Bukoba in Tanganyika joined the Bwana Loubser Mission towards the end of the 1940s. They were joined by others trained by the

---

18 See par. 5.1.5.

19 Only four Tanzanians worked with the Bwana Loubser Mission towards the end of the 1940s. One of them returned home and was replaced by another. This is confirmed by the minutes of the Vergenoeg LMC of 1947 and 1949. According to Rev. Joshua Biboko who joined the Mission during
missionaries and were eventually sent out to preach the Gospel (Rawlins 1980:233-234). The only other evangelist from Tanganyika mentioned in the reports of the Vergenoeg Local Mission Committee (LMC) from 1944 to 1960, came in 1952. He wanted to return to Tanganyika to work among his own people (Vergenoeg LMC 24/06/52). On other DRC mission fields the same strategy was implemented. During the initial stages of the work in Zambia "the African personnel of the mission had come completely from Malawi" (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:60).

As a result of the work of the Mission as well as the evangelists, the first converts were baptised on 22 June 1947 (Eybers 1958:38). Converts received education for a period of time. After that it was their turn to lead in Sunday-school, catechism class and the preaching of the Gospel. The Committee decided to make use of such members in catechism class as well as to use other able Christians in the ministry at out-posts. Due to the fact that sects were being established in the area and because of the influence of traditional religion, the LMC found it necessary to employ these temporary arrangements. Members still in catechism class received £ 8-0-0 per term and Christians received £10-0-0- per term (Vergenoeg LMC 29/06/46). The ministry was mainly centred on the mission station and the surrounding area. Outposts was visited by the missionary (Eybers 1946:14).

The standard of the education of evangelists during these years was not very high. Before they could be sent out they were required to be able to read and write up to standard two level. Moreover, they were required to be trained in teaching methods to enable them to at least teach others. Apart from teaching the syllabus they were also required to teach Bible and catechism classes (Vergenoeg LMC 13/07/45). The training of evangelists was given free of charge. Free food and accommodation were also provided (Vergenoeg LMC 24/04/45). The LMC set the salaries of evangelists at £20-0-0 a month with £1-0-0 extra for each grade above standard two which they had passed (Vergenoeg LMC 04/01/46).

By 1946 the length of the training of evangelists was reconsidered by the LMC. At a meeting held on 27 September 1946 Eybers informed the Committee that seven students had left the mission station. He felt that one year of training was too long for them. They therefore decided that students would no longer be trained for a continuous period of one year. Instead evangelists would be trained for only one term and then sent to the field for one term. This procedure would be repeated until the early 1960s, more Tanzanians joined the Mission by the end of the 1950s.
student had completed the course material. Concerning the posting to the field of evangelists it was decided that they would be sent to a different area every time (Vergenoeg LMC 27/09/46).

In agreement with the DRC Mission policy the concept of guiding the mission members to become an autonomous church appeared in the minutes of the meetings of the Vergenoeg Local Mission Committee from time to time. On the question of whether it would be wise to continue with the School for Evangelists while Eybers was on leave, they decided that the work could continue under the supervision of evangelist Jeremia Lugumira. This was in line with the vision of the Committee to eventually guide the mission members towards an autonomous church (Vergenoeg LMC 08/11/47).

At a LMC meeting held on 29 October 1954 the Committee was informed that the school where Eybers trained the evangelists was registered by the government as a "Teachers Training Centre". The Committee also decided that if other organizations wished the Bwana Loubser Mission to train their evangelists, the policy of the Mission would be implemented and other missions were expected to respect that (Vergenoeg LMC 29/10/54).

The government became stricter regarding the educational requirements of the teacher-evangelists during later years. Due to the fact that four teachers did not obtain teachers' certificates after duty of five years, the government terminated their employment. Four qualified teachers were employed in their place. Eybers also requested the South African farmers who had schools on their farms to consider upgrading the facilities to comply with the government standards for school buildings (Vergenoeg LMC 10/02/59).

This initial training took place at the place which is known today as the Plateau Mission Hospital, the...

---

20 He would later become one of the first ministers trained by Eybers

21 Regarding these schools Bism (1983) states the following. "According to arap Seng'erut, many of these schools did not offer adequate education, and as a result many African labourers decided to send their children to the native reserves for proper education." Bism comes to the conclusion that "Of course for the Boers, the standard of education was okay as they wanted the pupils to be only able to write and read so that they could work as milk-clerks on their farms. It was only after independence that there was improvement in the standard of education through government inspection." (Bism 1983:11). Bism is probably right in his observation of low standard education as well as the motives of certain farmers. Still, it should be added that the reason for the starting of schools on farms by the Bwana Loubser Mission was for nothing else but the spreading of the Gospel.
former "Broederstrooim. When the DRC handed over the mission work to the RML, the missionaries and local ministers joined hands in the training of evangelists. A higher number of evangelists were essential to help at the schools as well as to minister to the parents of the children (RML Annual report 1962:132).

The training of evangelists by the RML began in 1962 with a six months course (RML Annual report 1962 132&1963:130), followed by a second group enrolling for a one year course. Except for the three ministers there were 21 evangelists active in ministry in the RCEA in 1964. With an unemployment rate of 50% in Kenya during those years, hundreds of candidates applied for training as evangelists. Under these circumstances the Church was forced to employ a proper system of selection whereby the ones who felt truly called to ministry in the Kingdom of God, were selected for training (RML Annual report 1964:87).

In 1970 the one year course for evangelists was replaced by a two year course and the training center moved from Eldoret to the Plateau Railway Station area where the RCEA owned the "Big Hall" (built by the South Africans in 1938) as well as the surrounding land of about 51 acres. From the 1970s a new dimension in the training of evangelists developed in the RCEA whereby not only new candidates were trained, but the extended the training of evangelists in the field was emphasized too. The literacy and education level of the population rose each year and it was important for the Church that the leaders in congregations should not fall behind in this respect (RML Annual report 1970:23). During 1971 an additional two year course was added to the training of evangelists. The students stayed in the field and returned every eight weeks to the Conference and Training Centre for one week of training (RML Annual report 1971:15)

The need soon occurred for a real Bible School whereby evangelists could receive more thorough training (Van Beek 1978:269). In 1971 a Bible School course was started at Plateau on the compound which was by 2000 still referred to as "Bible School", but formally known as the "Reformed Institute for Theological Training" (RML Annual report 1973:13). After the first class completed the Bible School course from 1971 to 1973 several adjustments occurred in the theological training of the RCEA. The number of students increased drastically during these years (30 in 1974) and the course was now extended from two years to two and a half years which included one month practical work at two different occasions (RML Annual report 1974:7). When another group of 30 students was admitted in 1976, two groups of students were trained simultaneously for the first time.
Towards the end of the 1970s the RML re-evaluated their strategy of theological training. The urgent question which was raised was whether the RCEA, needed more evangelists or whether the Church should re-examine the assistant role of the evangelist. Fear was expressed that the three year period for studies away from the field could result in the alienation of the student from the important link to the grass-roots level. By 1977 it was clear that radical changes awaited the training of evangelists at the Bible School. (RML Annual 1977:18). During March 1979, 25 students finished their final examination and the Bible School was temporarily closed (RML Annual report 1978-1979:36). A contributing factor towards this move was the departing of both RML missionaries involved in theological training, Rev. Van Donkersgoed (1977) and Rev. Geuze (1978)(RML Annual report 1977:18). An important shift took place before the school closed. For the first time a local minister became principal when Rev. W Welime took over this responsibility from Rev. Geuze (Chemweno 1995).

The Bible School was closed from 1979 to 1986. During these years the buildings remained unused and the Church faced the danger of losing the complex to the government who had a shortage of educational training facilities. To avoid this, the Church appointed a committee to investigate the possibility of utilizing the buildings in the near future. As a result of this investigation it was decided that yet another Bible School course would be taught, but this time the approach and style would be different to the previous courses taught at the institution. The idea was to train volunteer parish assistants active in ministry in existing congregations and in need of further equipment to fulfil their task more effectively. For this kind of ministry it would be necessary for the individual to support himself financially and therefore a tent-making ministry was to be introduced (RML Annual report 1983:14). When the School re-opened Rev. H Chemweno became principal and introduced a course in tent making ministry (Chemweno 1995:1). The Former Bible School now became known as Plateau Technical Bible School. The RML contributed an annual amount of KSh 200 000 to the newly found institution (RML Annual report 1984:28).

Conclusion

The unclear official position of the evangelist in the RCEA resulted in uncertainty on which approach
to follow. During the initial years the evangelists saw themselves as an extension of the mission itself as far as their training, salary and posting were concerned. In later years the position of evangelist was removed from being an extension of the mission and placed directly under the Synod. This arrangement caused friction especially expressed by the evangelists themselves. Due to a shortage of funds in later years, the paying of salaries of such a large number of evangelists became a problem and the enthusiasm of many of them faded.

Related to this problem was the poverty in local churches which were more often than not unable to stand in for the complete salary of an evangelist. The training of so many evangelists for a relatively small church, resulted in an early saturation of evangelists. During the years up to 1979 a hundred evangelists were trained while the parishes numbered only twenty, with a total of 85 preaching posts. Some of these posts were very small and did not justify the posting of a full-time evangelist at that time (RML Annual report 1977:18). A very high number of evangelists were trained with the financial support of the RML without considering the financial consequences for the young church in future. All salaries of evangelists and ministers were paid by the RML. Since the late 1980s the RML started handing over the responsibility for these salaries to the RCEA. The young church now became responsible for salaries as well as for the accommodation of the high number of evangelists in the ministry of the Church. The result was that the Church was forced to terminate the services of 26 evangelists by 1986 (RML Annual report 1986:26). While the Church was still struggling with this matter, the training of evangelists was started once again with financial support by the RML during the same year.

Since the early years no contribution was expected from the Church for the training of ministers and evangelists. This had an influence on the ownership of theological training by the RCEA in later years.22

2.1.11.2 Own theological training for ministers in the RCEA

The training of ministers in the RCEA falls more or less into three different phases. The first was the training done by the DRC Mission (1952-1956). The second phase represents the training by St. Paul's United Theological College (SPUTC) from 1969 until the present day and the third started

---

22 See “Into the next Millennium” (1999:10-12).
with the founding of the Reformed Theological College of East Africa (RTCEA) in 1993. The first and third phases represent training within the RCEA and will be discussed in this paragraph. This will be followed by a paragraph on training at SPUTC as an ecumenical training institute.

Growth in the work of the DRC Mission by the late 1940s emphasized the need for the training of African ministers (Eybers 1958:38). As early as 1946 the possibility of using local ministers was recorded for the first time. The Vergenoeg Local Mission Committee (LMC) of 29 June 1946 decided that Eybers's work load was already very high and that he would soon be unable to handle all the work. (Vergenoeg LMC 29/06/46). After a number of years the Mission did receive applications from people for training as ministers (Vergenoeg LMC 21/06/49). They decided that Eybers should teach a part-time training course. He should follow this up later with the appropriate authorities and then apply for the examination to be written (Vergenoeg LMC 27/09/49). This training course was only started by the Bwana Loubser Mission in 1952 (Chemweno 1995:2).

Decisive action was taken in 1951 when the need for local ministers was emphasized once again. A letter was written to the Mission Secretary in Pretoria concerning this matter. Letters were also to be written to the congregations of Meru, Loubser and Vergenoeg to get permission for the training of three local ministers. Subsequently this matter would be tabled with Meru Parish while the permission of the Synodical Committee was sought. (Vergenoeg LMC 24/02/51).

The LMC sent a report to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in Transvaal. The Synod approved the training of ministers on the following conditions (Cronje 1981:297):

- The teachers must be approved by the Synod Committee.
- The syllabus must be in line with the standard of the School for Evangelists at Dingaanstat in South Africa (Stofberggedenkskool).
- The Synod would not take any financial responsibility for the project.

Two of the three applicants for training were from Tanganyika. A Christian named Daudi worked as a brick-maker on one of the farms. He was a convert of the German Mission in Bukoba in Tanganyika. Daudi bought some of the translated materials from Eybers and took it with him on a visit to his home country. He later returned with two other Christians called Hubert Tibanga and Jeremia Lugumirah. These two wanted to work with Eybers in the Mission (Cronje 1981:297).
Eybers stated that by the end of 1946 (minutes of the LMC states 1947) four Tanzanians had arrived and that some of them were trained as evangelist school-teachers together with Kenyans (Eybers 1958:38-39).

Bisem (1983) states that, by using these Tanzanians from the Lutheran Church it appeared as if Eybers took the same approach as used by the Dutch Reformed Church in Zambia, namely "using African personnel from Malawi at the start (rather) than the Zambians themselves" (Bisem 1983:10). By the time the course commenced, these two Tanzanians had already proved themselves and were accepted to enroll. The third student was the only Kenyan, an evangelist school-teacher called Jason Wamukota.

After receiving permission from the above-mentioned Committee training started on 29 January 1952 (Vergenoeg PSK 05/01/52). Eybers was assisted in this task by the Dutch Reformed ministers in Kenya at the time (Cronje 1981:297). The syllabus consisted of subjects like Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology, Ethics, Homiletics and historical subjects. To meet the conditions of the Synod, the syllabus was similar to that of the Stofberggedenkskool in the Transvaal (Rawlins 1980:233). During their studies the students would still be teaching and would receive a salary for their services. The ministers would be posted by the LMC after completion of their studies (Vergenoeg LMC05/01/52).

On 16 September 1956 the three African students were ordained as ministers after the successful completion of the theological course. The Commission for Examinations of the Transvaal Synod in South Africa travelled to East Africa to do the evaluation. Rev. JHM Stofberg, the Mission Secretary of the Church in the Transvaal and the Chairman of the Synodical Mission Commission, Dr. MW Retief, came as representatives of the Transvaal Church (Eybers 1958:38-39). A former minister of Vergenoeg, Rev. BJM Britz, as well as Rev. Eybers and Rev. LJ Loots attended the occasion. Four hundred nationals and two hundred Europeans assembled to witness this historic occasion (Loots 1956:39). The training of these ministers was an answer to an urgent need in the Church by that time.

Four decades passed before the RCEA would again train its own ministers in an own institute. In 1993 this became a reality with the introduction of a three year diploma course. This was the beginning of the Reformed Theological College of East Africa (RTCEA). The students enrolled for
a diploma programme presented by St. Paul's United Theological College at Limuru. After three years of training the student does one year of practical work in a congregation as a student minister and after four years the student is ready for ordination.

The first diploma graduates completed their course at the College at Plateau in July 1995. Of the eighteen students who enrolled for the course, 13 qualified for a diploma. Students who do not meet the requirements on diploma level may be considered internally by the Church for certificates in theology and become evangelists. The diploma course proved to be quite successful and students were trained constantly since the introduction of the course in 1993.

By 1997 theological training within the RCEA changed face once more. After the CORAT evaluation of the RML supported programmes and projects in 1996 it recommended the merging of the Reformed Theological College of East Africa (RTCEA), the Department for Theological Education by Extension and Correspondence (TEE) and some aspects of the Evangelism and Extension Committee (EEC) to a single institution (Joint Meeting 1996:3). As a result a new institution came into existence in the form of the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (RITT) (From Now to Two Thousand 1997:3).

The training for ministry at the RITT remained a three years diploma course as well as a fourth practical year. After successfully completing the course a candidate can be recommended for ordination. By 2000 a change in policy regarding the intake for the diploma course occurred. To ensure a properly spaced ordination of ministers in the Church as well as for marketing purposes of RITT, it was decided to have a diploma intake of six students every two years, instead of twelve every three years. (RITT Three Years Plan 1999:20).

Meanwhile, a one year course for training evangelists started at the RITT in January 2000. This course derived from a need for evangelists in parishes as well as from extension (less-reached) areas. A number of fifteen students enrolled for the course which was focused on practical skills for work in the congregation (RITT Three Years Plan 1999:22).

It should be noted that the St. Paul's syllabus which was taught at the RITT, did not contain important courses such as church growth and youth ministry. Although church growth was
introduced as an additional subject at the RITT by 2000, a course on youth work has not yet been introduced by the Institution.

Conclusion

The department in the RCEA which could by 2000 be evaluated as the finest in the Church, is the RITT\textsuperscript{23}. Considering the track record of the RCEA in respect of foreign donors, a major concern of the RCEA by 2000 should be that the success of RITT should not be mainly because of foreign support.

The RML has indicated that another missionary from the RML will not be sent to replace the present director when his contract expires in 2002. The historical pattern in the partnership between the RCEA and the RML in this regard shows that if the RML takes such step in a department, financial support usually decreases within the given period which is agreed upon in the Joint Meeting. The RITT is not ready for such a step in the near future. The Institution has not prepared itself for this, because important matters regarding the merging and establishment of a strong theological institution have received priority attention since the merging. In evaluating the first three years of RITT in 2000 it should also be kept in mind that this has been an implementing phase with certain priorities.

Still, it is significant to notice that almost all of the recommendations made by the merging task force in 1997, evaluated by RITT in 1999 as "not realized", concerns the matter of accepting ownership of the ministry of RITT within the wider ministry of the RCEA. An evaluation of the current situation at RITT, especially regarding self-support, could indicate whether the RML made certain adjustments regarding ministerial support to the young church. This becomes clear through a critical study of especially the documents "From today to Two Thousand (1997-2000)" and the RITT "Three Years Plan (1999-2002)".

The first matter concerns the payment of school fees by the RITT students. A decision taken by the merging task force in 1997 was that the "policy: 'no fees, no lessons' will be maintained strictly" (Task Force 1997:9). Due to the introduction of a "Bonding Document" by the RITT, whereby money could be recovered after a student has finished his/her studies, this policy was not implemented.

\textsuperscript{23} See "Achievements from April 1997 - September 1999" in the RITT Three Years Plan 1999:2-9.
This arrangement threatens the acceptance of ownership for this ministry on the local level in several aspects and the Institute should consider reviewing this policy.

In the first place it creates a reluctant attitude among students\(^{24}\) to make an effort towards raising school fees. The support of the parish which the RITT regards highly and which will possibly play an even more important role in future, could be limited through this arrangement. A student who knows that he or she can pay the fees later will have little motivation to approach the parish for support by means of harambees. This might take away the incentive of the home area to take responsibility of their own students at the RITT\(^{25}\). Hence, the implementation of the above-mentioned policy could contribute to help the Church in its stewardship problem on the local level.

Secondly, when the RML decreases financial support to the Institute, it is likely that contributions from students will have to be increased. Only eight of the 36 parishes of the RCEA were able to support their ministers fully by 1999, which means that this arrangement by the RITT will leave the minister with a heavy burden in later years. Thirdly, compared to other training institutes in Kenya, the above-mentioned arrangement should be evaluated as an unique one. Other schools in Kenya cannot afford this, because the running of a school depends upon the school fees of students. Because of foreign support it was not necessary for the RITT to implement the policy "No Fees - no lessons". As foreign support decreases, the RITT will become more dependant on local support, by then the implementation of this policy, like in other schools in the Kenyan context, might be indispensable. Finally, by reviewing this policy, RITT will be in correspondence with the CORAT report (1996) which recommended that students should be involved in raising funds for their tuition and "should do so from the nominating parishes" (CORAT 1996:41).

Another opportunity of establishing ownership of the ministry in the Church concerns the involvement of the Church directly in the activities of the RITT on grass-roots level. The merging task force states that "Relationships will be established with parishes. Even if the contribution of a parish is small, RITT will appreciate very much to be supported by all the parishes of RCEA" (Three Years Plan 1999:17). A major problem which an institution in the RCEA, mainly maintained by foreign

---

24 This notion was evident among the 1998 diploma intake. During the term January - March 2000, the College secretary indicated that only three students made payments against their accounts.

25 With the new approach of less students during annual intakes this problem might be solved through the personal involvement of parishes with their own students.
support, faces\footnote{This is especially true considering the history of RML and RCEA, see CORAT report (1991).}, is to persuade the average church member on grass-roots level to support that institution. Due to the fact that through the years theological training was continuously done and supported by missionaries, the issue of accepting ownership for theological training remains a problem in the RCEA. The consequence of this is that also the RITT is not "owned" by the RCEA yet. Although this remains a complex matter, RITT did not take deliberate action between 1997 and 2000 towards involving the Church on the grass-roots level in its activities (Three Years Plan 1999:17).

Closely linked to this matter is the recommendation that "relations with parishes will be maintained and they will receive regular reports about the progress of the students whom they support or other support that they are giving". This issue was also evaluated as "not realised" by the RITT Three Years Report (1999:12).

Another recommendation by the task force was that financially stronger parishes should be approached "to support one student for the full amount of a scholarship" (Task Force 1997:9). This opportunity of raising local support was not utilized by the Institution, instead, for the 1998 diploma intake foreign donors were once again responsible for additional scholarships (RITT Three Years Plan 1999:11).

The same task force suggested that "RITT will be advertised among churches with a Presbyterian/Reformed structure as an institution where their future pastors/evangelists could be trained" (Task Force 1997:9). No serious attempt was made by the Institute to realize this recommendation. The first opportunity to do so was with a new diploma course intake of fifteen students in 1998. Although the decision to advertise the course among other denominations was already taken almost two years before, no other denominations were represented in this class. A second opportunity was with the new evangelist course intake of fifteen students in 2000. Although the proposal in the RITT Three Years Plan once again stated that the course should be advertised "to other organizations", this was not done and all students were from the RCEA (RITT Three Years Plan 1999:22). This is also true of advertising the premises of RITT as venue for seminars.

The Institute views the advertising of its courses as indispensable for the future of RITT. By 1996 there were 25 ministers in the RCEA (CORAT 1996:37). Since then seven students have graduated...
from St. Paul's United Theological College and 5 were still in training by 2000. Meanwhile, thirteen graduates from the former RTCEA and the RITT have been ordained as ministers in the RCEA. By 2000 the RITT were training 15 students (including three ladies) and another intake of twelve students were planned for September 2000 to September 2004. This means that by 2000 the RCEA has 45 ordained ministers. By 2002/2003 the number will probably increase to 64 with at least 12 students at the RITT and also a number at St. Paul's. This number excludes one female graduate from the 1995 intake and the three ladies presently training at the RITT.

At the current rate of training ministers, it is likely that the number of ministers which the infrastructure of a very small church like the RCEA (relatively poor in material things with a stewardship problem among members) can accommodate, will soon reach the saturation point. While taking into account that not all students who finish their studies are ordained as ministers in the RCEA parishes (especially graduates from St. Paul’s), as well as that there is the occasional retirement of ministers, the number of students which can be accommodated in the RCEA, should be considered carefully by the Church. The implication of a high number of ministers in the Church very soon is that the RITT cannot survive as a training institute of ministers for the RCEA only.

The main reason for the founding of the RITT was theological education and the most important element of that is the training of ministers for the RCEA. The inevitable consequence of not starting a serious campaign to advertise the RITT can be that the Institute will become superfluous and for the RCEA impossible to maintain, especially if the RML will gradually withdraw its financial support. Considering the fact that since the establishment of the RITT in 1997 no student from other denominations could be drawn to study at the RITT, the question remains if such a need exists among the other denominations. All the other mainline churches of Reformed/Presbyterian background have their own training colleges.

The matter of becoming (partly) self-reliant in future should be considered seriously by the RITT. Regarding this aspect, the vision of the RITT is reflected in a statement like: "It is better to earn money than to receive donations!" (RITT Three Years Plan 1999:20) and quotations like: "The years have passed when schools were snugly and safely financed through Ministry grants" (RITT Task Force 1997:12). Probably the most valuable opportunity for RITT to become self-reliant in future

See Self-support below.
has been neglected by the Institute. As indicated above, the RITT has a compound of 51 acres. Although there are many institutional buildings on the campus, it consists mainly of agricultural land. The CORAT report appendixes (1991:17) indicated the potential of the RITT land to sustain the College. This potential was utilized earlier and proved to be very effective as an income generating project for the institution. No policy on or account of the utilization of this land can, however, be found in the RITT Three Years Plan (1999). This is yet another context related matter, because almost all ministers in the RCEA are farmers. Students can be involved and exposed to agricultural methods which can be extended to the local level.

Although not realized yet, the Institute also plans to introduce a "RITT Sunday" whereby all parishes are requested to contribute towards the work of the RITT (Three Years Plan 1999:17). Another positive step by the RITT was the introduction of a one year course for the training of evangelists. This also proved that parishes are in a position to support their students to quite an extent.

Finally, a number of strategically important shifts are presently taking place at the RITT. The Institution realized the importance of integrating certain important ministries as part of the training of the minister and evangelist. The shift taking place in the TEE department in 2000 is an example of deliberate action in this respect. The vision of the RITT to emphasize missiological aspects like church planting, church growth and evangelism, should be considered as a vital strategic change in the ministry of the Institute.

2.1.11.3 The RCEA and the St. Paul's United Theological College

The fact that the RCEA by 1967 did not yet have its own institution where ministers for the Church

---

28 Also see CORAT (1996:68).

29 Rev. D Muceru, principal of RTCEA from 1986-1992, states that from 28 acres 450 bags of maize (seeds) were harvested in 1991. The College had a vegetable garden from which the students were fed as well as 11 cows (Muceru 2000:interview). Also see CORAT appendixes 1991:17.

30 During the term January - March 2000, some students already cleared half of the fees for the full course.

31 See TEE below.
could be trained, highlighted the question of suitable training facilities (RML Annual report 1967:15). By 1966 there were still only three ministers in the RCEA (RML Annual report 1966:129). In view of the need for the training of ministers, the RML made a temporary arrangement with Scott Theological Seminary of the Africa Inland Mission at Machakos during 1966 (RML Annual report 1966:129). The year 1969 was an important year in the history of theological training in the RCEA. During this year the Synod decided to cooperate with St. Paul's United Theological College (SPUTC), an ecumenical theological institute at Limuru just north of Nairobi. The St. Paul's Divinity School was founded at Freretown by the Anglican Mission in 1903. In 1930 the school moved to Limuru. In 1949, after World War II, the Methodist Church in Kenya and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa also began sending their students to St. Paul's. Since 1955 the institution became formally known as the St. Paul's United Theological College. In 1969 the RCEA joined the other three churches and in 1995 the NCCK became the fifth sponsoring body (SPUTC Community Handbook 1995:5-6).

Three students of the RCEA were admitted in 1969 for training at the College. The College offered a four year training programme after which the student could be ordained as minister (RML Annual report 1969:129). The RCEA followed a policy whereby the academically stronger students following the evangelist training course were selected and, through a programme of self-study, were able to prepare themselves towards pastoral training at Limuru (RML Annual report 1967:15). Three more students were admitted to St. Paul's during 1970 and another was trained at Scott Theological Seminary. This meant that a total number of seven students were being trained as ministers by 1970 (RML Annual report 1970:22-23). This new relationship between the RCEA and SPUTC also resulted in the seconding of a lecturer from RML to St. Paul's College 1970. By the time the RCEA began to send students to St. Paul's College it was possible for them to follow any one of three four year courses:

- The standard course was a Certificate in Theology offered by St. Paul's.
- A more advanced course was a Certificate in Theology from the Makere University in Uganda. Study material and exams were set by the University and exams were taken in four subjects.
- A Diploma in Theology from Makere University. Study material and exams were also set by the University and exams were taken in ten subjects.
Except for the above-mentioned courses the students from the RCEA received additional classes of one to two hours per week in Reformed doctrine (RML Annual report 1971:14). Soon after RCEA joined St. Paul’s, Rev. Daniel Muceru became the first RCEA student to be sent abroad for studies. He joined the Oak Hill College in London in September 1973 (RML Annual report 1973:12). In 1978 St. Paul’s started a degree programme with the Association of Theological Institutions in Eastern Africa and in 1979 two students of the RCEA enrolled for the BD Degree for the first time (RML Annual report 1980:43-44).

In 1991 a new dimension in the relationship between SPUTC and RML/RCEA appeared when a lecturer did not come from the RML, but, for the first time, from the RCEA when Dr. Peter Bisem took up his position as lecturer at St. Paul’s. After completing his studies at St. Paul’s he received a scholarship from the RML for further studies at the University of Glasgow. In 1991 he became the first minister in the RCEA to complete a Ph.D degree (RML Annual report 1991:34).

2.1.11.4 Scholarship programme

Regarding the theological training of ministers, an arrangement exists between the RCEA and the RML whereby the RML is sponsoring RCEA students at St. Paul’s and the RITT by means of a scholarship programme. This arrangement resulted in the fact that theological training in the RCEA was through the past years and by 2000 still mainly funded by the RML. The main purpose of the scholarship programme was to provide qualified personnel for pastoral work and parish leadership. Between 1991 and 1995, eight people graduated from St. Paul’s (CORAT 1996:39), and since 1995 to 2000 another twelve (Ekitala 2000). Until 1997 the RML provided full scholarships for students at St. Paul’s which included student allowances. Since 1997/98 RCEA was expected to contribute 5% for a first year student, 10% for a second year student and 15% for a third year student until 2000 when the programme will be reconsidered (RCEA/RML Joint Meeting 1996). What happened in practice was that the required percentage by the student or his parish was usually deducted from the allowances which formed part of the RML scholarship (Maiyo 2000). By 2000 the RCEA still had five students in training at St. Paul’s with the support of the RML. At the RITT ten students received scholarships from the RML (and two from the Liberated Reformed Church in The Netherlands) of Ksh 60 000 per year. This meant that KSh 12 000 need to be raised by students themselves to meet the required fee of Ksh 72 000 per student per year.
Conclusion

Regarding the above mentioned purpose of the scholarship programme, the relationship with St. Paul's has not been very successful during the latter part of the 1990s. From 1995 to 2000 twelve students graduated from St. Paul's. Of the twelve there were by 2000 only two who served as ministers in congregations. The majority of these graduates are in ministry, but serve in institutions or organisations outside the RCEA.

The RML's provision of full support for RCEA students studying at St. Paul's led to limited involvement of the RCEA parish in the theological education of their students at St. Paul's. A scholarship, which even included an allowance for the student, made the student completely independent from the parish or local church from where he or she was seconded for studies. Following the CORAT (1996) recommendations, the League took a positive step towards ownership of theological training in the young Church when, for the first time since 1969, the Church contributed towards the school fees of their students at St. Paul's.

2.1.11.5 Lay training in the RCEA

2.1.11.5.1 Lay training during the 1970s

The building of the Conference and Training Centre (CTC) by the RML in Eldoret helped greatly in equipping members through seminars and short courses. The opening of this centre in 1972 not only served the RCEA in training their own members, but also created the opportunity for the Church to generate income by making the centre available for use by other Churches and organizations (RML Annual report 1972:19). In 1972 the building of the centre for training of evangelists at Plateau was also completed (RML Annual report 1972:18). Directed by a RML missionary, Mr. KA van der Jagt, the CTC offered different courses right from the beginning (RML Annual report 1972:19). A number of 34 short courses had already been taught by 1973, including courses for Youth and Sunday-school leaders (6), elders and deacons (6), untrained evangelists (6), refreshment courses for trained evangelists (10), school teachers (2), women and women leaders (2), and church conferences (1) (RML Annual report 1973:14).

Through different short courses the Church and the Mission were able to address relevant issues. An
important conference held in 1974 was on "Reformed Church in an African context". The RML also paid attention to the self-propagating aspect of the RCEA. Following "Lausanne 1974" a church conference was held at the CTC with the theme: "The edification and extension of the church". Topics like evangelism and the Holy Spirit, Christian involvement in society and Christianity and culture were addressed during the conference. Since 1975 short courses and seminars continued under the guidance of Rev. Daniel Muceru who became the first local Director of CTC (RML Annual report 1975:24-25).

Following the new structure introduced in 1980, the annual meeting between the RML and the RCEA decided in principle on training focussed on the upgrading of personnel at the local church level (RML Annual report 1982:19). The vision of the RML was that the equipping of congregations should receive a central place in ministry (RML Annual report 1983:14-15). It was during this period that Theological Education by Extension (TEE) was introduced by the RML especially to equip leaders at the grass-roots level.

2.11.5.2 Theological Education by Extension

Closely associated with the theological training of ministers is the support of programmes for equipping church members for their ministry. In this respect the organization wants to see church leaders as well as laity firmly grounded in faith and increasing their knowledge of Scripture.

Preparing and equipping church members for ministry receives high priority within the framework of the RML. The RML believes that the method of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) can be an effective program to equip people on the grass-roots level. (RML Policy 1989:17-18). In RCEA TEE was introduced during the 1980s with full financial support from RML.

Verkuyl (1978:207) states that theological education is an ongoing process. Theological educators should not become too firmly attached to one place or method, but must be ever ready to change and adapt as the situation may require. Theological education by extension thus has increasingly become the answer to the urgent need regarding theological education on the local level.

By taking theological education to the grass-roots level, lay persons started sharing the benefits of

---

32 See par. 2.1 below.
this form of education at home.

According to a decision taken by the Joint Meeting of the RML and RCEA in 1982, the equipping of leaders at the local church level was to receive more attention in future. Subsequently it was decided to introduce a programme of TEE. Compared to the institutionalized approach of equipping church members on the local level, the method of taking education to the people, appeared to be a more effective and on the long term a more cost effective way of assisting local churches (RML Annual report 1982:19).

Thornton (1999) argues that the greatest challenge is to make theological education accessible to people. "TEE has the potential for offering further studies to clergy and church workers on-the-job, to Christians who do not wish to leave their careers but would like to do some serious theological study, and to other lay people who want to equip themselves to serve the Lord better in a voluntary capacity in their local churches (Thornton 1999:6).

The objectives of TEE in the RCEA agree to quite an extent with the above-mentioned statement:

- Improvement of the work in the local churches. TEE wants to serve local churches by offering theological courses to the elders and members who are involved in preaching, teaching and guiding the congregations.
- Personal spiritual growth of church-members. By teaching people how to understand Scripture individual members are spiritually strengthened.
- A thorough theological training for members who otherwise have no opportunity. In RCEA quite a number of people do not meet the requirements of the course taught at RITT and St. Paul's. Still some of them are gifted to serve the church. TEE offers them an opportunity to get a Certificate in Theology which enables them to apply for a position as evangelist or worker in one of the RCEA departments (TEE Leaders Guide 1995:4).

The method currently used in TEE is to teach group leaders on local church level who will be responsible for organizing TEE groups. On the local level the program deals with lesson materials, weekly meetings and field experience in the form of practical work in the congregation. The

For a more extensive report on the methodology used in the TEE department see CORAT 1996:10-27.
department remains in contact with the leaders by means of correspondence and visitation. It usually takes a student seven years to complete a course. According to the TEE-co-ordinator, Stephen Wasike, a student has yet to finish a course under the new system. By 2000 a limited number of students had completed half of the course (Wasike:2000).

Seminars are frequently arranged for "old" as well as "new" group leaders. A number of 30 books were used for TEE work which was taught in the form of three different stages using ten books in each stage. The first stage was of an introductory nature, while the books for the next two phases were focused on growth towards maturity. In 1994 the number of books was reduced to 21.

Although the work grew during the initial years, a decline in numbers was evident by the mid-1990s. In 1993 the potential TEE groups were 85. A discouraging fact was that 46 groups had dropped out mainly due to the following reasons (RCEA Synod report 1993:30):

- Failing or inability to pay for the course
- Tribal clashes
- TEE group leaders who disappear with the students' money
- Lack of commitment to the course by the students.

By 1997 the number of TEE students declined from 243 in the first term to 95 in the third term. On the other hand the "Take and Read" Bible Study course which was developed by the TEE department and presented to the Synod of 1995 was doing extremely well. The number of students who enrolled for this course increased from 45 in the first term to 271 in the third term. The department stated that the factors which contributed to the popularity of this Bible Study method were the low price and the limited time that was necessary for preparation. By this time the main activities of the TEE department consisted of parish visitation and the training of "old" and "new" leaders through seminars (RCEA Synod report 1997:38). The 1998 Synod report states that the number of TEE students has again dropped considerably (RCEA Synod report 1998:17).

---

34 For a complete list of books used by the department by this time see RCEA Annual report 1991:18.
Factors which influenced the decline in the number of TEE students by the mid-1990s included a change in policy regarding payment for books. Henceforth it was no longer possible to enroll for a course and pay for the books at a later stage. Another factor which could have influenced the decline in student numbers, was the repeated change in the personnel during the 1990s.

Conclusion

When TEE was still in its experimental phase in the RCEA, the RML already pointed out that the input of ministers was essential for an effective TEE program in the Church. Apart from that the League stressed the fact that it was necessary that ministers view this work as part and parcel of their ministry (RML Annual report 1984:28-29). The TEE department also attempted to integrate the work with the parish ministry by encouraging parishes to share the responsibility of TEE work with the assistance from the TEE-team. Due to the fact that parishes did not view this work as part of their ministry, this method all along proved to be unsuccessful. The TEE department had been unsuccessful in involving RCEA ministers in TEE work. One reason for this was that ministers felt threatened by the fact that members were gaining increasingly in knowledge.

In this respect the TEE department took a positive step in 1999 towards creating ownership of TEE, within the wider ministry of the RCEA, by incorporating TEE as part of the syllabus of the RITT Diploma Course. By doing this, the department introduced a different approach to the integration of this work with the ministry of the minister on the local level. By mid-2000 the TEE department was moving from a group-oriented approach to a leader-oriented approach.

This approach, it is hoped, would be more cost-effective, but the success of the programme depends to a large extent on the commitment and ability of the group-leader.

A matter of concern in the ministry of the TEE department should be the popularity of the Bible


36 See RCEA Synod report 1992:34.

37 This approach was in line with the recommendation by CORAT (1996:17) that ministers “should be more participative in TEE work.”
Study course at the cost of the TEE course. This could lead the department losing perspective on its first calling. Considering the fact that TEE should mainly focus on equipping leaders on the local church level, together with the objectives of TEE in RCEA, makes it clear that this programme was introduced to focus on local leadership and especially to equip them for ministry.

Students in the RCEA are currently categorized in two groups: TEE students and Bible Study students. According to the TEE coordinater, Mr. S Wasike, the TEE courses are focused on training local leaders, while Bible Study, although also focused on leaders, is mainly for the personal enrichment of believers. In 2000 the majority of students are enrolled for the Bible Study course (314 in comparison to 232 for TEE). Although a definite mandate for equipping believers through Bible Study exists within the ministry of TEE (also as stated in the objectives of the RCEA), the Bible Study course should not become an alternative at the cost of TEE courses developed to equip leaders for ministry.

Another factor which might have caused the lack of commitment towards TEE work, could be the long period it takes to finish a TEE course. The department should consider a review of their methodology and introduce a shorter period than seven years for a student to complete a TEE-course.

The department states that the low cost and the little time needed for preparation for classes were the main reasons for the popularity of the Bible Study as compared to TEE materials, but the fresh, clear and relevant content was also a factor. Revision of the current material, with the purpose of introducing relevant material suitable for the situation within the RCEA, should be considered by the department.

It also appears that the merging of TEE and the RTCEA was the reason why little was done towards developing TEE work. At the time of the merging and also afterwards the department experienced a tremendous drop in TEE students. Priority was given to the building of a strong theological institution (and rightly so), but in the process TEE was neglected.


39 Also see CORAT 1996:14.
Thornton states that the educational pace-makers of distance and open learning far outstripped the church in the excellence of the courses they offer and the quality of their learning materials. She states that commitment to staff development and training in the principles and practice of distance education are important for a successful TEE programme too (Thornton 1999:6). As indicated above, it was especially in regard to these areas that a deficiency developed in the TEE department of the RCEA. The feeling of the majority of the RITT staff members by 2000 was that the TEE department does not operate effectively, and that something needs to be done.

2.2 Self-support

The Bwana Loubser Mission had financial problems before transferring the work to the RML and the League states that financial investment was necessary. By this time the financial contribution of the RCEA members was very little. The Church contributed only about 0,25% of the total annual budget during the 1960s, the rest was contributed by the RML (Lam 1964:122). This came especially through building projects (RML Annual report 1962:133). Even before the work was officially transferred to the RML, building projects were started at various places by the RML under the guidance of the local mission commission of Vergenoeg. These included two schools, a house for the nurse and renovations to a house for the missionary minister (Meijers 1961:27-28). After RML took over the work, further building projects were started immediately. Within a few months, by 26 February 1962 a dispensary at the former "Bwana Loubser Mission" was already a reality (Van den Ham 1993:18).

In the RML’s annual report in 1962 on the work in this area, it was stated that large amounts of money had already been invested in building projects like schools, dispensaries and houses for local labourers as well as for the purchasing of a few vehicles. It was also indicated in this first annual report that the money needed for these initial investments would be reduced after a certain period of time, but that the total expenditure for the work will increase in future due to the planned extension of the work (RML Annual report 1962:135). Although the year of "Uhuru"(1963) was an uncertain one, the RML once again invested large amounts of money in buildings via the building department.40

40 Since this time, vast investments have been made by RML through the assistance of builders sent by the League until 1984 and from then by means of a local builder until 1993 when the building department ceased to exist. Also see RML Annual reports 1962-1985, as well as RCEA Annual reports 1986-1993 for investments made by RML in this regard.
Houses for evangelists and teachers, school dormitories and a health centre were erected (RML Annual report 1963:128).

A lack of vision towards self-support remained a weak area in the ministry of the RCEA. (RML Annual report 1965:124). On this matter the RML reports year after year that the "financial contribution of the RCEA increases, but that it remains far below the expected amount" (RML Annual report 1974:9). Through all the years this matter remained of great concern to the RML and the League states that it remained a major obstacle in the way of granting (sic) the Church full autonomy41 (Bouw 1968: 168-172). The Church remained strongly dependent on the RML for church work and especially for the salaries of the ministers and evangelists (Bouw 1968:168-172). By the mid-1970s the situation remained basically the same as the RML was still contributing towards the salaries of ministers, evangelists and church work (Bouw 1975:5).

The spirit of sacrifice and stewardship has been emphasized but not really accepted by the church members by the mid-1970s. Financial stewardship by all church members became an urgent requirement, but to convince people of this was not an easy task (RML Annual report 1974:9). As the Synod was not in a position to take responsibility for the salaries of ministers and evangelists towards the future, it was decided that the Joint Committee would take temporary responsibility for the salaries of evangelists (RML Annual report 1975:22).

Towards the 1980s the RCEA was still almost 100% financially dependent on the RML. The following figures give an indication of the situation from 1975 to 1977:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total (KSh)</th>
<th>Percentage (RML)</th>
<th>RCEA (KSh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>1,950,000</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>2,312,000</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>47,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>2,434,000</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A survey done in 1977 indicated that the average church member in the RCEA contributed about 1% of his income to the Church (Van Apeldoorn 1977:10-13).

41 See par. 2.4 below.
By the end of the 1970s the problem of the financial dependence of the Church caused a lot of tension between the Church and the Mission. A number of ministers and evangelists was in favour of growing towards true autonomy in this respect as soon as possible. Others preferred to remain financially dependent on foreign assistance (Aleman 1979:5). Since 1979 the RML made attempts to reduce their contribution by 10% annually. The RCEA was to increase its own contribution by the same percentage. The idea was to continue this procedure until the Church become self-reliant. The result was that when the RML reduced their contribution by 10%, church activities dropped by 10% instead of the RCEA increasing their contribution by 10% annually (CORAT 1991:16).

An important matter in the development of the relationship between the RCEA and the RML, concerned the financial responsibility of local churches. At the beginning of the 1980s both parties agreed that the local churches should be exposed to the idea of stewardship. That the salary of the minister should be the responsibility of the local church was an issue to be addressed in the near future. The financial responsibilities of the different church institutions, like training centres, medical work, etc. also appeared high on the agenda of the church (RML Annual report 1980:31). As a result the Conference and Training Centre in Eldoret became self-reliant in 1982 when the last financial contribution from the RML was received (RML Annual report 1982:23). As a self-maintained unit since 1983 it remained an income-generating project for the RCEA (RML Annual report 1983:18). By the mid-1980s the centre was struggling financially, but kept up the services to the point that a total of 41 seminars was recorded by 1985 (RCEA Synod report 1985:56).

In accordance with the RCEA's policy of growing towards financial autonomy, the Synod of 1986 decided on the termination of financial support of twenty eight evangelists. The remaining thirty five evangelists supported by the RML continued their ministry. Fifteen of them assisted in pastoral work and twenty were involved in work in unreached areas (RML Annual report 1986:42). In 1990 a further development in financial independence took place when even more salaries of ministers and evangelists became the responsibility of the RCEA. Evangelism and the task of equipping church members and leaders for service remained the complete responsibilities of the RML. Scholarships for the RCEA students at St. Paul's United Theological College at Limuru were also still sponsored by the RML (RML Annual report 1992:34-35).

42 A ministerial shift took place by the end of the 1990s when the CTC was no longer able to maintain itself by means of seminars and short courses. To survive financially, CTC started providing accommodation to students. Also see RCEA Annual report 1999:29-30.
The following summary of the years 1987 to 1990 gives an indication of the assessments by the General Secretariat of the quotas payable to the Synod by eighteen parishes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (KSh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>140,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>148,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>198,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>181,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>668,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual receipts indicate that for the period 1987 to 1990 an amount of KSh 141,709 was received. This figure shows an average of KSh 1,968 per parish per year and an average of KSh 164 per month from each parish (CORAT 1991:32). The contribution by the parishes to the total budget to pay the salaries of ministers, evangelists, staff and carry out programme work, was only 20% (CORAT 1991:16). In 1991 about 80% of the annual RCEA budget was provided by the RML. This made RCEA basically a mission-supported Church. The result of this state of affairs was that the local church member of the Reformed Church of East Africa never really learned to contribute for the work of the church (CORAT 1991:16).

The following comparison shows how far behind the RCEA was, with regard to church offerings, to other churches in the area that were relatively new and under the leadership of nationals (CORAT 1991:16):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Church</th>
<th>Average annual offering per members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCEA (Presbyterian)</td>
<td>450 KSh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPK (Anglican)</td>
<td>450 KSh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God</td>
<td>400 KSh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Gospel</td>
<td>350 KSh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redeemed Gospel</td>
<td>260 KSh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43 At the average rate of KSh 72 to US$ 1.00 by 2000 it means that during this period the offering per parish per month was US$ 2.27.
In 1993 the capitalization arrangement made between the RML and RCEA, whereby the RCEA received a final financial contribution from the RML, was implemented. The arrangement provided that the RCEA deposited the amount into an account and use the interest on the deposit, as well as the church's own contributions, for the continuation of the church work. With the conclusion of this arrangement a new phase in the relationship between the RML and the RCEA came into being. As from 1994 the financial assistance from the RML concerned only certain projects and programmes. This arrangement set the RCEA on a new road of financial independence. (RML Annual report 1993:34-35).

The annual Joint Meeting of the RCEA Executive Committee and the RML delegation decided in 1995 that as from 1996 the meeting would only take place every three years. The main purpose of the Joint Meeting would be to evaluate the programmes and projects the RML is supporting and to see if there are any possibilities for other programmes. It was also decided that from 1996 the budgets of the Medical, Theological Education by Extension, Evangelism and Extension Committee and the Scholarship programmes for the next period of three years will be presented to the RML and discussed in the Joint Meeting (Joint Meeting 1995:1-3).

2.2.1 Stewardship programme

As indicated above, the matter of stewardship arose quite often as a problem area within the RCEA. To ensure that the RCEA would in future become less dependent on outside support, the matter of stewardship became a high priority on the agenda of the RML since 1967. The mentality of receiving that developed within the RCEA, became a strong threat towards the concept of responsibility and autonomy for the Church (RML Annual report 1967:15). By 1970 the RML reported that the financial contribution of the RCEA had improved, but still, the expected amount was not a reality yet. By this time the RML was diligently looking for new ways to lead the Church towards further financial independence (RML Annual report 1970:24). Although still a very small contribution, it was noted in the annual report of RML of 1971 that the contributions of the church members increased with 40% and that the Church had taken more responsibility for the salaries of ministers and evangelists (RML Annual report 1971:12).
By the early 1980s a large portion of the budget concerned the salary of the minister which was still to quite an extent the responsibility of the RML. It was the vision of the Joint Meeting that by 1990 the RML would no longer be responsible for the salaries of ministers (RML Annual report 1982:23). The Church was to a large extent still financially dependent on the RML. It remained a matter of major concern to the RML as well as the RCEA and was hampering the possibility of autonomy towards the future (RML Annual report 1982:23).

Stewardship and Christian giving have not been properly taught to members of the RCEA. Stewardship's emphasis on the fact that man is only a trustee of all God's resources, including his own life, time and money, was not taught to church members. To address this situation CORAT came with the following recommendation: "We strongly recommend that the RCEA embark immediately on stewardship training programmes at all levels of the church beginning with the clergy" (CORAT 1991:21). CORAT also suggested that a department of stewardship should be established at RCEA headquarters (CORAT 1991:22).

In April 1992 Rev. D Muceru was appointed as Stewardship Coordinator for the RCEA. He started on a three year development programmes (1992-1994) together with the Management Committee (team).

The objectives of the programmes were the following (RCEA Annual report 1992:28):

- To raise spiritual and financial growth
- To advice the RCEA on wise and cost effective use of available resources

The programme concentrated on workshops and seminars for youth and church leaders as well as on workshops on parish and local church level (Muceru 1993). Two years later, in 1994, this RML supported programme came to an end as an official programme in the RCEA in 1994.

By the early 1990s a lack of accountability had been disrupted the trust between the head office and the parishes on the one hand and the local churches and parishes on the other hand. "Accountability procedures are inefficient. Parishes accuse the head office that it does not give them feedback, especially on the utilization of parish contributions." These accusations were also coming from local church level where elders said that "parish meetings avoid quite often to account for the utilization of money". The result was that parishes and local churches decided not to contribute and when they
A lack of Christian commitment in the RCEA was observed by the CORAT investigation. They reported that members of the RCEA "do not understand clearly their faith and therefore have shallow commitment". This applied to ministers, evangelists, elders as well as laity and CORAT suggested the reviewing of the Church's spiritual growth programmes (CORAT 1991:22).

2.2.2 Conclusion

When the RML started working in Kenya, the membership of the Bwana Loubser Mission were still very low. This was due to the fact that the mission work taken over from the DRC was done among a "squatter community". The congregations had only a few hundred members, three ministers and a few evangelists. The average member was also very poor. The assistance from the RML was therefore considerable and the League claimed that there was no alternative. Verkuyl (1978) argues that self-support is emphasized so strongly in the "three-selves" theory that one would think it is "one of the distinguished features of a true church. But the New Testament nowhere accords it that position of honour. On the contrary, it resolutely calls the prosperous churches to aid without grudging or reproach the poorer churches who cannot yet support themselves." (Verkuyl 1978:188).

This danger as well as the calling of the church in regard to its supportive role in missions should be considered carefully by the sending church. At the same time it remains the obligation of the sending church to determine, on the one hand, to what extent material support is given in a responsible way and if, on the other hand, it creates an unnecessary dependency on the sending church. It is understandable that the vast financial investments by the RML since the early 1960s were accepted with great enthusiasm by the young church. The danger existed indeed that the young church could neglect their own responsibility in becoming self-reliant by depending too much on the support of a rich mission behind them. The RML continuously stated that their vision was to guide the young church to become self-supportive and that they should take full responsibility for all property, land and buildings (RML Annual report 1962:133). The organization also feared that the members of the young church may loose sight of the purpose of the RML's assistance, that is of leading the young church towards autonomy (RML Annual report 1964:87). Still, they continued to make vast
financial investments in the RCEA,\textsuperscript{44} which in the long run could not be maintained by the young church\textsuperscript{45}.

The problem did not originate when the RML commenced its work in Kenya. The Bwana Loubser Mission had already neglected the importance of a healthy policy for self-support in the young church during the church planting phase. Rev. Bouw confirms this by stating that part of the problem lay in the fact that the DRC paid too little attention to the issue of stewardship (Bouw 1968:168-171). The RML also paid the salaries of ministers, evangelists and church workers right from the start. Theological education was totally supported. The Church was not made responsible for fulfilling its own needs at the local level. This oversight complicated the development of the autonomy of the young church.

When the RML implemented their stewardship plan in 1979 by an annual reduction of 10\% in financial support, to be taken over by the Church, it was not only too late, but also too radical. It became clear that the RCEA was not ready for such a step. Without proper step by step preparation on local congregational level, such procedures should not to be considered. The historical roots of the Church would not allow it to make such adjustments in such a short period of time. Guidance in basically every field of ministry had come from the RML. The League had meant to do good, but had not prepared the RCEA, right from the start, to take up their financial responsibility. This in the end resulted in the fact that the church members never fully grasped the concept of church ownership.\textsuperscript{46}

2.3 Extension (self-propagation) in the RCEA

As indicated in chapter three, the Bwana Loubser Mission was during its formal missionary ministry

\textsuperscript{44} Apart from the large number of medical facilities established by RML, the Plateau Bible School (1971) as well as the Conference and Training Centre (1972) were some of the major buildings established.

\textsuperscript{45} Compare the closure of the Plateau Bible School in the 1980s, the ceasing of the different departments during the 1990s, especially the once extensive literature departure, as well as the financial crises of the medical department by 2000.

\textsuperscript{46} Also see CORAT (1991:20).
in Kenya mainly involved in church planting. Except for a brief visit to Turkana, no lasting extension work was established during this period.

Regarding church growth and extension the by the RML, the League states in its Mission policy of 1989 that the organization wants to focus on the establishment of congregations in cooperation with the particular denomination (RML Mission Policy 1989:17-18). Although this statement only became formal policy in 1989, this was emphasized all along.

Immediately after taking over the work from the DRC, the RML was looking for an additional missionary responsibility in the area. (RML Annual report 1962:134). It was, however, hard for the RML to motivate members of the RCEA to reach out to others outside the Church. The objective of the young church at this point was to work in their own context. The vision to reach out was still to be established (RML Annual report 1964:87). In this respect there were no signs of the missionary character of the church in the RCEA (Lam 1964:122).

2.3.1 Early attempts

The above mentioned lack of vision changed soon however. Since 1965 preparations were in process to send an evangelist to a less reached area and in 1966 the work was extended to the Bukusu in the Bungoma area close to the Uganda border (RML Annual report 1966:130). Evangelist Joshua Biboko was sent as the missionary to Bungoma, which was a giant step for the RCEA toward self-expansion. As the RML was supporting the RCEA, the Church was now taking responsibility for their own outreach at Bungoma. In support of this project half of the offerings on Sundays went towards the project (RML Annual report 1966:130). One year later, in 1967, this work had extended up to the point where the congregation started constructing a church building (RML Annual report 1967:14). Although the work in this area was an exciting development within the RCEA, the RML was concerned about the fact that the work was, unlike the rest of the ministry of the Church, limited to a specific tribe (RML Annual report 1967:14). Biboko (2000) states that since 1973 the RML had assisted them.

Rev. Hosea Chemweno (2000) states that also in the Kerio Valley (in the Great Rift Valley) the work had begun among the Kalenjins in this area through an outreach initiated by the RCEA during the early 1970s. The work initially resorted under the Kaptagat parish when a preaching post was
established in the area and opened a road to a more structured ministry. This was also supported by the RML in later years (RML Annual report 1974:7). By 1971 the work was extended to Mount Elgon on the Uganda border, as well as to the Cheringani hills (RML Annual report 1971:12). The RML states that edification and expansion in the local congregations took place simultaneously during the early years (RML Annual report 1966:129-130).

2.3.2 Extension to the North

It was only by 1969 that extension towards the Northern part of Kenya became a reality. The Turkana had not been exposed to the Gospel extensively and therefore arrangements were made to start a ministry in Lokichar in the southern part of Turkana (RML Annual report 1969:18). Turkana borders on Sudan and Ethiopia in the north and Uganda in the west. It lies in a valley which forms part of the Great Rift Valley. Work among the Turkana is not a simple matter. The nomadic people live in a stretched-out half-desert area difficult to reach. Due to long periods of no rain the area is often hit by famine (Info Bulletin 1979:5.).

In January 1970 the first two evangelists were sent to Lokichar. One functioned as an evangelist and one as a teacher. From the beginning the Bible classes held twice a week were attended by an average of fifteen students. In 1973 the first minister, Rev. Richard N'gisirey of the RCEA was sent to Turkana (RML Annual report 1973:12). Since 1975 Church services were held on Sundays at Lokichar, Katilo, Korinyang, Loyapat and Nakulumaet. By this time church attendance varied from place to place between 50-200 people.

In 1973 an investigation was launched towards reaching out to another less-reached area, West-Pokot47 in North Western Kenya, where approximately 100 000 people lived. The Gospel had not been heard widely here as an estimated 90% of the population had at that time not been reached with the Good News (RML Annual report 1973:12). Due to cattle theft between the Turkana and Pokot, a neighbouring tribe to the south, security was right from the beginning a threat to mission work. Still, by the end of 1977 the Gospel was already preached regularly at six different locations (RML Annual report 1977:27-28). The Pokot parish was officially founded in November 1977 and Rev

---

47 For a brief history of missionary activities as well as some background information on the Pokot see RML Annual report 1976:34-39.

Spontaneous expansion of the work by certain congregations in the RCEA were evident by 1975. These took place either through the witness and activities of evangelists, office bearers and members, or through requests by the local population and initiatives of the Synod (Bouw 1975:5).

2.3.2.1 The Pokot-Turkana Committee

In April 1979 the Joint Committee appointed the Pokot-Turkana Committee to coordinate the activities of the Northern areas. Rev. Solomon Soett was the chairman of this committee, while a missionary, H Visser, and later JJ van der Ham, served as secretary. The committee dealt with problems occurring in these areas, such as Western influence on the Pokot and Turkana due to the Sudan highway passing through these areas, drought and famine, high population growth, which did not correspond with economical growth, as well as questions on education, autonomy and the reformed character of local churches in Pokot and Turkana (RML Annual report 1978-1979: 42-43). Money for the work was received from RML without much difficulty and the committee worked in a sense independent from the head-quarters in Eldoret. The missionaries in this area dictated events to quite an extent and they developed into an autonomous group within the Church. JJ van der Ham who worked in the area from 1979-1988 states that during these years the Committee was almost as autonomous and powerful as the Executive Committee of the Synod of the RCEA. The grants towards the work of the Pokot-Turkana Committee grew while the financial support towards the Synod was cut. All these factors resulted in strong resistance from the Synod towards the Committee and by the early 1980s it dissolved to form the Church Extension Committee (Van der Ham: 21/03/2000).

2.3.3 Church Extension Committee

The above-mentioned Pokot-Turkana Committee was replaced by the Church Extension Committee (CEC) in 1983. Rev. Solomon Soett remained the chairman of the Committee and Mr. JJ van der Ham from the RML was appointed as the first secretary. The composition of the committee also changed. The number of missionaries serving on the Committee was reduced. It now became a Committee consisting mainly of local members. The feeling within the Church was that the
Committee should work more widely than only Pokot and Turkana. The general objective of the committee was therefore to focus on the extension work of the RCEA (Van der Ham: 21/03/2000). Target areas were Kisii, Southern Nyanza, Baringo, Uganda and Tanzania. The establishment of the Committee was necessary in order to survey and visit the target areas, to make contact with people and to advise the Executive Committee. The main responsibility of the CEC was "to go to the unreached areas to reach 'the unreached' and to extent the work of the RCEA in a holistic, comprehensive approach" (Van der Ham 1983:1). In addition to this the Committee accepted the responsibility of going to areas where they were invited by Christians and non-Christians at distances exceeding 90 km from existing RCEA parishes. RCEA parishes were encouraged to do extension work within a radius of 90 km from their parish borders.

During 1983 Baringo (Ribkwo location) in the eastern part of the Rift Valley province and Southern Nyanza (Suna Migori) close to the Tanzania border, were visited to investigate possibilities of extending the ministry of the RCEA into these areas. Follow-up trips to these areas in 1984 resulted in the establishment of a number of congregations in Southern Nyanza (Van der Ham 1983:1 & 1984:2).

2.3.4 Evangelism and Extension Committee

The programme of the Evangelism & Extension Committee (EEC) was established in 1986 and was a continuation of the Church Extension Committee (CEC). After the termination of the services of 28 evangelists in 1986 the RML granted the salaries of 20 extension evangelists. Since 1988 the work was co-ordinated by a local part-time coordinator in the person of Mr. Peter Masai. By the beginning of the 1990s the work was already established in Turkana, Pokot, Mount Elgon, Southern Nyanza, Molo, Kerio Valley and Nairobi, as well as at Tembelio, Nangili and Sitatunga Secondary Schools situated north-west of Eldoret (Masai 1991:41-42).

1992 marked the beginning of a new phase in extension work of the RCEA. From then onward the work was coordinated by a full-time missionary from the RML in the person of Mr. A Lichtendonk. By the time the new full-time coordinator took over the work, the 20 evangelists were deployed in the following areas under three different categories:

---

48 See conclusion on theological training.
The task of the new committee was described as "to help extend the RCEA service into new areas" (CORAT 1996:28). It served as the mission committee of the RCEA with the vision of reaching the unreached. EEC sees itself as a facilitating committee providing evangelists to new areas (RCEA Synod report 1995:39). The basic methodology of the committee was that once a local church was started in an extension area, the extension-evangelist posted there will lead the church towards spiritual maturity. After three years it would be handed over to a parish (CORAT 1996:7).

From the time the missionary took over responsibilities as full-time coordinator the department realized the necessity of strong cooperation between the EEC and the parishes. By this time it was stressed by the department that extension was not the task of a committee, but of the church (RCEA Synod report 1993:49). In this respect the Committee continuously stressed the fact that their task should not be direct involvement on local level, but more in a monitoring capacity (Lichtendonk 1995:6). By 1994 it was reported that extension evangelists who were working in extension areas within existing parishes, were fully accountable to these parishes. Evangelists working in new areas were still not properly attached to parishes by the Committee (RCEA Synod report 1994:37).

By this time the EEC was still 100% financially supported by the RML (Lichtendonk 1995:7-10). Due to this the relationships between the parish and the evangelist, and the parish and the EEC, remained complicated. Sometimes it happened that a minister in a parish was not paid his salary due to a lack of funds, while the extension-evangelist, paid by the EEC, did receive his (CORAT 1996:30).

In evaluating this department in 1996, the finding of CORAT that "EEC seems to have taken the role of evangelism from the mainstream of the Church", appears to be a correct observation. The report states further that the programme seems to have been instituted to "legitimize funding for the salaries
of the EEC evangelists." It was recommended that evangelism should be brought under the mainstream activities of the church whereby parishes and presbyteries should be responsible for evangelism. Areas identified as mission areas should be brought under adjoining parishes and presbyteries and support for ministers and evangelists should be availed from the Synod (CORAT 1996:7).

This recommendation was taken serious by the Church. According to a decision taken by the Joint Meeting of RML and the RCEA in 1996, the EEC was to work out a plan on "creating awareness about mission and evangelism in the RCEA as a whole" (Joint Meeting, 1996:1). This resolution was implemented successfully by the EEC during 1997 with an evangelistic course on presbytery level to ministers and evangelists (RCEA Synod report 1997:41). After this, a group of young people representing "RCEA in Mission" (RiM) were trained to teach the evangelistic course. This is a joint team consisting of members of the Reformed Evangelistic Team and students of RITT who was by 2000 teaching the course on parish and local church level in the RCEA. Secondly, the EEC was in the process of raising funds to send a RCEA missionary to the East coast and thirdly the Committee planned to use newsletters in creating awareness on evangelism within the Church (RCEA Synod report 1998:18).

Another decision taken by the Joint Meeting in 1996 was that the number of extension evangelists, financially supported by the RML would be phased out by one evangelist each year starting from 1997. This decision was taken as part of the plan of the Joint Committee to integrate this work as part of the ministry of the parish. The idea was that the attached parishes responsible for these evangelists would take over full support for the extension-evangelist (EEC Three Years Plan 1997-2000:10). By 1996 the number of extension evangelists was twenty (CORAT 1996:31). One year later the extension evangelists at schools were no longer the responsibility of EEC which brought the number of evangelists down to 17 (RCEA Synod report 1997:37). By 2000 the number of evangelists supported by the RML was down to fourteen (Verstoep 22/3/2000).

The committee viewed the phasing out of extension evangelists by one each a year starting from 1997, as too radical. A new plan was implemented to secure an average of twenty evangelists, but also to extend the work to new areas. According to this plan, 10% of the salaries of all evangelists

49 See par. 2.3.5 below.
and ministers working in extension areas will be required from the specific area.

The plan, whereby the required 10% of the salaries of the extension-evangelist or minister were to be raised from the parishes, were implemented from July 1999. From the beginning of 2000 the required amount to be raised by the parishes was 20%, with the vision to increase the amount with 20% each year. The EEC states that they would like to continue this for four years so that by 2004 the salary of the extension evangelist/minister would become the full responsibility of the specific parish (RCEA Synod report 1999:36-37).

Towards the end of the 1990s it was determined by the EEC that the fixed period of three years given to an extension-evangelist or minister to mature a local church, was not a good arrangement. It was suggested that according to annual evaluation reports by the extension-evangelist or minister, the EEC should decide how long they should be involved in an area before handing it over to the parish (RCEA Synod report 1999:36).

By 2000 a new structure for extension areas was introduced by the Committee. According to this structure extension would no longer be part of the ministry of the parish, but categorized under the wider ministry of the Presbytery. The Committee found that most parishes were so involved in trying to make ends meet within the parish itself, that it was impossible for them to also take responsibility for extension areas (Verstoep 2000).

2.3.5 **The Reformed Evangelistic Team**

Extension of the ministry of the RCEA which begun during the 1960s was characterized by outreach supported 100% by RML until 1996. Positive steps in the direction of becoming a self-propagating church was visible in the RCEA by the 1990s. An example of this was the establishment of the Reformed Evangelistic Team (RET).

The RET began as a shared vision of a group of young people in the RCEA which eventually led to

---

50 By 1998 ministers also started working under EEC when Rev. S Kosgei was posted to Bomet parish and Rev. E Barasa to Suna Migori parish (RCEA Synod report 1998:20).
the establishment of RET in April 1994. The first aim of the team\(^{51}\) was formulated as to "organise and carry out evangelistic work in the Reformed Church of East Africa local churches, parishes and Presbyteries, in conjunction with the pastors in charge and officials of the said places" \(\text{(RET Constitution 1996:2)}\). By 2000 the team was mainly involved in week-end missions to parishes which included teaching, preaching, door to door evangelism and open air meetings.

Due to the lack of a proper discipleship infrastructure on the local church level, almost no follow-up system existed in the RCEA as part of their evangelistic outreach. By 2000 this factor was still hampering effective evangelism through the ministry of the RET. A positive step towards changing this situation happened in 1999 when the EEC, in cooperation with the Reformed in Mission-group (RiM) decided to start with the teaching of a discipleship course on parish and local church level. The vision was to establish the lacking discipleship infrastructure, which would give the local church the opportunity to be involved in this ministry by means of a proper follow-up system.

RET was established as a result of the need, born in the RCEA, to reach out to people in need of the Gospel. Unfortunately, the RET also became unnecessarily dependent on the RML via the EEC, for financial assistance for this ministry.

Another positive development regarding self-propagation by 2000 was the plan of the EEC to phase out financial support from the RML for the salaries of ministers and evangelists in extension areas by 2004\(^{52}\) \(\text{(Three years plan - 2000-2002:2)}\).

### 2.3.6 Conclusion

For a very long time, mission work was viewed by the average church member as the responsibility of the EEC (which was associated with the RML) and not as part of the task of the Church. In assisting the Church in extension, the RML via the EEC, had alienated this responsibility from the Church to the extent that it was viewed not as part of the ministry of the Church, but as the task of the missionaries. Although the Reformed Evangelistic Team was born out of a need from within the RCEA to evangelize, it did not contribute on the local level towards the concept of ownership

\(^{51}\) For a complete list of aims and objectives of RET see RET Constitution 1996:2.

\(^{52}\) Also see Chapter 4 par. 6.3.
regarding this responsibility. The local church by the mid-1990s viewed evangelism as the task of EEC and RET. Due to the fact that evangelism and extension were taken care of and viewed as the mandate of outsiders since the early years, the concept of ownership of this ministry on the local level remains a problem.

The functioning of the mission committee of the Church as a committee which is not integrated, but which co-exists with the missionary activities of the parish, requires an adjustment in approach. This matter was addressed by EEC, especially since 1997 when RML started cutting the salaries of extension evangelists. This can be seen in the extremely ambitious plan of the EEC to have all extension-evangelists and ministers fully supported by extension areas by 2004. This step should, however, be evaluated as a positive attempt towards effective ownership of the work within the ministry of the RCEA. EEC's vision to integrate extension work into the life of the parish was a step in the right direction, but by 2000 the problems which hampered the creating of such a relationship remained. Hence, in an attempt to create ownership of this work on the local level, EEC decided to relate in future rather to the Presbytery than to the parish.

The decision to establish an evangelistic and discipleship course at parish and local church level was another positive step towards ownership of the work within the wider ministry of the RCEA. It is possible that part of the solution to the problem of effective ownership of the work might in future, be found partly in integrating this ministry firmly with the training of ministers and evangelists. The diploma course at RITT offers a mission course in the third year which includes a section on evangelism. By not establishing this ministry in the RCEA in the first place, and firmly via the ministry of the minister and the evangelist the church risks losing sight of the fact that the church exists primarily at the local level. The images used to describe the church in the New Testament apply in the first instance to the local congregation. The local congregation is missionary by its very nature and it is here on the grass-roots level where this ministry should be owned by the Church.

The evangelistic and discipleship courses offered by the EEC could be the first of the training programmes taught by the committee as an integrated part of the mission course at the RITT. This can ensure the ownership of the course by the RCEA. The EEC is also involved in the training of elders in extension areas. For continuity regarding the training of elders in the RCEA, a standard course in this respect could also be taught at the RITT as part of a short course programme. Another matter in training in which the EEC and the RITT could cooperate, concerns the subject of church
growth. A specific matter appears repeatedly in minutes and proposals of the EEC is that evangelists are not equipped in church planting, church growth and maturing the churches. This resulted in the sending of two evangelists, S Kiptum and P Kiriswe, for further training at the AIC Missionary College in Eldoret (RCEA Synod report 1999:36). It is significant to notice that, though this has been a matter of great concern for many years, church growth as a subject only in 2000 for the first time appeared on the syllabus of RITT. This could be another way to establish the concept of ownership of the work in the wider ministry of the RCEA.

By 2000 the financial support from the RML decreased through phasing out the salaries of extension evangelists. The work however, continued through local support. As partners the RML and RCEA thus had the opportunity to do creative planning on how to create ownership of the work within the wider ministry of the RCEA.

Although RML initially tried to create awareness towards outreach in the young church, their attempts was not very successful. It appears that RML accepted evangelization as being their task rather than that of the young church. Although this can be appreciated since it is, essentially, one of the purposes of mission work to reach the unreached, it presented the danger that the young church would become estranged from its own calling towards evangelization.

2.4 Final conclusion

As self-government, self-support and self-propagation in the RCEA have been discussed and evaluated above, a final word on the formula and the concept of autonomy remains.

The kerugmatic understanding of church-planting, emphasized the autonomy of the young church. This autonomy is mainly understood in administrative, structural terms. “The administration and structure which were grafted onto the young church, were, however, the administration and structure which had been developed in the older church, often for a long period of time” (Kritzinger 1994:19-20). Hence, western norms for autonomy became the standard for the young church also. The validity of these norms was not questioned, only the ability of the younger churches to achieve them. What is more important, is that missionary church planting is the opportunity par excellence for the older church to rethink its concept of the church and, therefore, not to enquire whether the young church has reached the standard of autonomy set by the older church, but rather what autonomy of
the church means for both the older and the younger church in this ecumenical age (Kritzinger 1994:19-20).

According to the Reformed tradition, the autonomy of the young church is to be found in its relationship to Christ. It is not something which could be granted to it by the sending church. The young church owns its autonomy as a spiritual inheritance from Christ. In this sense the "three-selves" formula cannot fully describe the autonomy of the young church, especially where it is applied as norm for recognizing the autonomy of a church. The young church should become autonomous in practice. In this sense the young church should be guided by the sending church towards self-government, self-support and self-propagation, these not as conditions, but as guidelines. The condition for autonomy set by the formula, binds the planted church to the planting church to the extent that independent functioning becomes almost impossible. The danger in this is of course that the planting of a mission church will be determined by the ecclesiology of the "sending" church.

In the final instance it should be noted that, except for the dangers created by the three-selves formula as condition for autonomy, the concept of autonomy as such raised problems. The church does not have as its highest ideal the realization of itself, but the realization of the incarnated Christ. Pauw (1980) argues that "from a Biblical point of view, no church can ever really become 'self'-governing or autonomous, the Head and Lord of the Church being Jesus Christ who leads his church through the guidance and the power of the Holy Spirit. It is relative also in the sense that no church can ever become 'independent' from other churches. Not only are there closer links with churches to which it is related confessionally and historically, but also in this ecumenical age all churches find themselves linked in some way to other churches and church bodies..." (Pauw 1980:283).

Then it is necessary both for the RCEA and its partners to rethink and redefine what the essence of being the church of Christ entails. Both in this relationships as churches in partnership and in the sense of all being part of the one ecumenical body of Christ, a new understanding of being church in mission is necessary.

In chapter six the current identity of the RCEA will be analysed to determine the effect of the two missionary enterprise on this identity.
CHAPTER 6
IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF THE REFORMED CHURCH OF EAST AFRICA

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to complete the picture regarding the dual involvement of the two missionary enterprises on the RCEA. Although the present identity of the RCEA was strongly influenced by the two Missions, other factors also played a role in shaping this identity. Hence, the identity analysis of the RCEA in this chapter is by no means an attempt to reflect in depth on all contextual and cultural influences that shaped the identity of the RCEA. Certain relevant issues are discussed, but the focus remains the missionary influence on this identity. Matters related to the identity of the RCEA, but already discussed in previous chapters, will not be repeated.

The theory underlying this analysis is based on the book “Studying Congregations” by NT Ammerman et al. (1998) which deals with a particular scientific method of studying congregations. The method involves, in addition to the task of data collection, a variety of ways of evaluating this information. The method of evaluation encompasses ‘frames’ or ‘lenses’ which offer particular perspectives on the gathered information. The frames are intended to help the researcher to evaluate the congregation clearly and to reorient thinking. The four basic suggested frames are the ecological (contextual) frame, the culture and identity frame, the resources frame and the process frame (Ammerman 1998: 13).

In studying the context of a particular church, Eiesland and Warner (1998: 43) refer to the fact that the church is, firstly, located in history (the date of its founding to the present), secondly, in a specific place in geography (the community), and thirdly, in the lives of its members. The contextual frame describes the congregation’s relation to its social context.

On the matter of the culture and identity of a church Ammerman (1998: 78) states that congregations are subcultures within a larger culture. They have distinct identities that can be seen in what they make and do together. Understanding a congregation requires understanding that it is a unique gathering of people with a cultural identity of its own. Culture includes all that a congregation does
together: its history (story), traditions, rituals, symbols and myths. To describe culture, one must describe the people to come to the unique identity of a congregation.

The frame of *resources* for understanding congregations has as its focus all the raw materials of congregational life - human, economic and capital, spiritual and reputational. "Resources are sometimes hard and countable (money, people, staff, and buildings), but they are also sometimes soft and relational (shared experiences of coming through difficult times, connections to other institutions, and the strengths of members’ commitment to the congregation)” (McKinney 1998:132).

The *process* frame describes how the organism, called “congregation” functions. It describes how the leadership is experienced, decisions are made, communication occurs and conflict are managed. A process frame analyses how a congregation operates, its dynamics of power and authority, patterns of relationship and the roles played by certain individuals and groups (Dudley 1998:105-108).

Schreiter (1998:24) emphasises the importance of the above-mentioned congregational analysis by stating that the fundamental purpose of a congregational study is to discover and grasp better the understandings of faith at work in a congregation. He refers to a number of reasons why it is necessary to “do theology” in the congregation in this way.

The congregation do theology in order to:

- understand their origin, their story, their identity;
- understand where they are going;
- understand their present mission and place in a broken world where they are continually confronted with new challenges and decisions;
- understand their problems and shortcomings in this ongoing struggle to become what they are in Jesus Christ and to work towards being his faithful followers.

The analysis of the RCEA in this chapter is done with this objective in mind. When a church clarifies and grasps these understandings, it can serve as a platform for doing many other things: affirming identity, dealing with change, and making decisions about the future (Schreiter 1998:24-25).
The analysis follows the basic outline of the congregational *identity analysis* (Ammerman 1998:78-104). Ammerman states that the various dimensions of the church's culture and identity need to be taken into account before a proper analysis of the identity is possible. She argues that one way of thinking about these dimensions is "to look at activities, artefacts, and accounts. Our sense of who we are is shaped by what we do, what we make, and how we talk about ourselves" (Ammerman 1998:84). Although the identity analysis will be used as point of departure, especially the contextual (Eiesland & Warner 1998:40-77) and resources-analysis (Mckinney 1998:132-166) will also come into play.

The methodology and research procedure¹ employed in data-collection were in the first place done by means of a thorough literature exploration. This was followed by semi-structured interviews with retired and serving RCEA ministers, retired and serving RML missionaries to the RCEA, as well as the DRC ministers working in Kenya until the 1960s. Apart from participatory research by the researcher since 1995, questionnaires were also used in the data-collection. The questionnaires² were completed by 26 theological students studying at the Reformed Institute for Theological Training in 2000, representing the four presbyteries as follows: Eastern (2); Northern (5); Southern (7); Western (12).

1. **The context of the RCEA**

The context of the RCEA has already been dealt with to some extent in the previous chapters. The origin and growth (Historical context) was considered in chapters three to five, and the wider geographical context in chapter two (Introductory survey of Kenya). In this paragraph a number of matters regarding the community and the members (geography, demography and culture) are considered to give a more complete picture of the immediate context of the RCEA.

1.1 **Geography**

The RCEA can be referred to as a rural church. Although the RCEA has parishes in towns like Eldoret, Kitale and Bungoma, Ekitala (2000) states that more than 90% of the RCEA local churches

---

¹ Also see research proposal in chapter one for details on methodology and procedures.

² See Appendix 1.
can be considered as rural. He argues that even some congregations in the urban ministry of the RCEA can be considered as an extension of the rural area as the loyalty of the church members to the congregation in the rural area remains. In some instances even a position in the local church can be maintained, while the person resides in an urban area (Ekitala 2000). This factor already says a lot about the identity of the Church. The majority of RCEA members are indeed farmers. Being from a rural area is an indication that people there are not rich in material possessions. RCEA members do refer to themselves as being poor. Furthermore, members in general have a low level of formal education, especially among the older generation.

1.2 Demography

The RCEA is situated in a context of particular people. Congregational life is often influenced by population changes in the community. This issue does not influence congregational life in the RCEA. Like in most traditional African regions, major population changes are rare (Mbiti 1969:216-217). In this section attention will be paid mainly to the different tribes in the regions where RCEA congregations exists and also to growth and decline patterns in the Church.

1.2.1 The RCEA comprises of different ethnic groups (tribes)

The Kalenjin tribe is the predominant one in the Church. Other tribes are the Luya, Turkana, Kikuyu, Luo, Kisii and Pokot.

The distribution of these tribes in the RCEA parishes looks more or less as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern Presbytery</th>
<th>Lokichar (Turkana), Kainuk (Turkana), Mwino (Pokot), Kapenguria (Pokot)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sinyerere (Luyia), Kitale South (mixed), Kitale North (mixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Presbytery</td>
<td>Racecourse (Kalenjin), Nangili (Luyia), Turbo (Luyia), Bungoma (Luyia), Elgon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West (Luyia/Sabaot), Chepsaita (Kalenjin), Ndalat (Kalenjin), Emmanuel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Kalenjin/Kikuyu), Wareng (Kalenjin), Milimani (Luyia), Namunyiri (Luyia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The name of the parish is followed by the predominant tribe in brackets. Only the predominant tribes are mentioned. Where another tribe is also numerically strong represented it is indicated. In many parishes other tribes may also be represented, but usually they are by far in the minority.
Apart from geographical reasons, there are also other reasons why the RCEA consists of a high percentage of the Kalenjin community. Through interviews with ministers from different tribes, it became evident that the Reformed tradition suits the Kalenjin tribe almost perfectly. Apart from the fact that traditionally the government of this tribe is based on the fact that the elders rule, the Kalenjin also feels at home in an environment where events follow an orderly procedure. The charismatic way of doing things does not appeal to this tribe (Bisem 2000). This tendency can also be seen in the fact that a high number of Kalenjins are members of the RCEA, Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church (Ekitala 2000).

It is estimated that about 60-65% of the RCEA membership is Kalenjin. Also significant is that only about 30% of the RCEA membership consists of men (TEE visitation program: 1998-2000), a fact which is related to the Kalenjin cultural background. In this culture a woman can not stand up and speak while men are seated. The possibility that the husband can be defeated by his wife is unacceptable. A former moderator of the RCEA and member of the Kalenjin tribe Rev. Hosea Chemweno, confirms this fact through his involvement in literacy classes in this tribe. The husband easily drops out of class at the slightest indication that his wife is performing better than himself. Chemweno also refers to the Barasa or public meeting where the chief addresses the community: "Until recently a woman was not allowed to stand up and speak in these meetings. If she wanted to express her view she was to stand on her knees and a man was to stand up on her behalf to enable her to speak" (Chemweno 2000). A husband can not be influenced by his wife. In the RCEA women often stand up during the Worship Service to address the sitting congregation. As women in the

| Eastern Presbytery | Kiplombe (Kalenjin), Kuinet (Kalenjin), Kaaboi (Kalenjin), Chepkigen (Kalenjin), Moiben (Kalenjin/mixed), Sergoit (Kalenjin/mixed), Livingstone (Kalenjin/mixed), Koitoror (Kalenjin), Tuiyoluk (Kalenjin), Kaptagat (Kalenjin) |
| Southern Presbytery | Ainabkoi (Kalenjin), Chemoibon (Kalenjin), Cheptiret (Kalenjin), Kerio Valley (Kalenjin), Kocholwo (Kalenjin), Metkei (Kalenjin), Rurigi (Kalenjin), Plateau (Kalenjin) |

---

4 See map of ethnic groups of Kenya.
5 Compare research paper done at RITT with evangelists and ministers during August 1999, as well as interviews with senior ministers in the RCEA.
RCEA are allowed to preach and teach the congregation, church activities in this culture, especially in the more traditional rural areas, are left to the women, youth and children (Ekitala 2000). This is also confirmed by the fact that traditionally women and children have the same status.

Moreover, the Kalenjin also has the tendency to determine "how he can benefit from a given situation especially in the form of material things" (Songog 2000). In this respect the church was not viewed as a viable option and was left to the women and children to attend. Another reason why Kalenjin men wanted their wives to attend church was ethically. Kalenjin men encouraged their wives and children to attend the church and its activities, because they want their families to be upright.

The Kalenjin parishes have become very strong in Christian giving in recent years. By 2000 the parishes in a position to fully support their minister and evangelists were mainly Kalenjin. The general view is that especially the Kalenjin community started to grasp the idea as well as the necessity of ownership. This is a very positive factor in the RCEA as a whole. At the same time there is a concern among members, especially from the Luyia community which forms about 20-25% of the RCEA, that the concept of ownership could also become problematic in the future. The concern is that if ownership of the church becomes synonymous with Kalenjin, the smaller tribes in the Church may be marginalised. In spite of this, matters such as Christian giving should be acknowledged as a very encouraging development in the RCEA in which this was a concern ever since the Church became autonomous.

The other tribes within the Church are also making valuable contributions, by the Luyia community extensively in the field of church leadership. However, for the first time in history no member of the Luyia community was elected as an office-bearer in the church leadership elections in April 2000. Regarding Christian giving and contributions to church leadership, encouraging tendencies are also evident from the Turkana and Kikuyu communities.

Three of the five moderators of the RCEA were Luyias. Also compare the number of Luyias in the Diploma classes at RITT (1995-2001).

Compare the contribution of the present general secretary of the RCEA, Rev. Samson Akuru, as well as the numerical church growth in Turkana.

Compare the election of Rev. David Muhia as the first Kikuyu ever as an office-bearer. Also compare the positive contribution of a relatively small parish such as Rurigi.
Regarding important changes in the RCEA, the lasting influence of secularisation and modernisation on Africa is evident in the Church. JS Mbiti argues that the African concept of time is mainly two-dimensional. He describes this concept by using two Swahili words, *Sasa* and *Zaman* which means that in traditional thinking the concept of future is almost non-existent\(^9\). One of the implications of this is that "human life is relatively stable and almost static" (Mbiti 1994:216) In these societies radical change is usually unknown and where change does occur it happens so slowly that it is hardly noticed. The changes that took place from the second half of the nineteenth century and which are still continuing everywhere in Africa today came as a great shock to these societies.

The traditional family life was deeply affected by this. "In traditional life the family is the nucleus of both individual and corporate existence, the area where a person really experience personal consciousness of himself and of other members of society. Now, the family is the most severely affected part of African life. Within one family or household may be found two totally different worlds coexisting: the children may be attending university studies, while the parents are illiterate and concerned mainly with cultivating their fields" (Mbiti 1994:218).

This is a reality still experienced in the RCEA by 2000. As mainly a rural church, children are being sent from these areas to attend good schools elsewhere as well as to study at teacher training colleges, medical schools, theological seminaries, etc. Apart from this, the family life is further disrupted by the fact that husband and wife are often separated for long periods of time due to employment or studies away from home. People often make a distinction between their house and their home. "Home" refers to the place where they come from and where they usually have their *shamba* (farm), while "house" usually refers to their place of employment (Muhia 1996). This is not only the case with theological students in the RCEA studying at RITT. Ministers and evangelists reside in the parishes where they are being posted, while their wives remain at home to take care of the "shamba".

### 1.2.2 Patterns of numerical growth and decline in the RCEA

A critical factor in the RCEA by 2000 was the decline in the number of church members which already became evident during the 1990s. Due to a lack of research on the numerical growth of the

---

9 See Mbiti 1993:22-25 for an explanation, and the implications of these dimensions of time in the traditional context.
Church, no reliable statistics are available of this growth in past years. Research carried out during 1999 indicated the numerical decline in the RCEA. This was received with tremendous shock by the Church.

Some published statistics of the time when the DRC was active in East Africa are available (Stofberg 1954:2 & Eybers 1958:38-39):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>1958</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicant members</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptism class</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday schools</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools at outposts</td>
<td>8 with</td>
<td>14 with</td>
<td>290 pupils</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the time when the first converts were baptized on 22 June 1947 up to the 1990s a steady growth in the numbers is evident. After that, it is clear that the RCEA declined in numbers. In 1962 the RML reports that the membership of the three DRC Mission congregations, Eldoret, Plateau and Kitale, counted five hundred baptized members (RML Annual report 1962:132). Since the RML took over the work, numerical growth became mere guessing as no proper survey was carried out. Statistics given by the RML missionaries, CORAT and the RCEA between 1970-1991 are not reliable, but the available figures for communicant members are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>6828(^{10})</td>
<td>(Van den Ham 1993:7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>(CORAT 1991:3).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the study of Van den Ham (1993) cannot be considered as scientific due to the lack of

\(^{10}\) RML Info Bulletin, HKOA n.d.:2 states that the RCEA membership by the end of the 1970s was about 7000.
reliable statistics\textsuperscript{11}, the numerical decline, as indicated through research by the RCEA in 1999, confirms the assumption that the RCEA was declining by the 1990s. During two different seminars in 1999, one for ministers and the other for evangelists, a survey regarding members in their parishes was held. The figures given by the ministers were rounded off to an estimated 4000 members. The evangelists indicated a number of 8000 as certain areas were served by evangelists only. The eventual figure indicated at the Synod of 1999 was an estimated practising membership of between 6 000 to 8000 (RCEA Annual report 1999:63).

As indicated before, the members of the RCEA are mainly women and young people. By 2000 an estimated 70% of the adults will be women and 60% of the total membership of the Church will be youth (Mayo 2000). Two major factors influence the decline in the numbers of youth in the RCEA. The first is the generation gap which is reflected in clashes between young people and especially the church elders. The second relates to a weak point in the proclamation model which probably lies in the soteriology. The one-sided emphasis on God's salvation in Christ is proclaimed in detriment to the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer (Hendriks 1992:23). This is a reality experienced by the RCEA at present. Numerical decline in the Church membership is due to Reformed youth going over to charismatic groups where the pneumatological aspect is better developed and receives more attention compared to what is the practice in the RCEA (Akuru 2000).

1.3 Culture

Okullu (1987:43) states that apart from corruption, tribalism can be referred to as "Africa's second devil". He argues that in East Africa "tribal loyalties have taken over from Christian loyalties and the evidence is not difficult to see". He argues that "tribal loyalty may mean a quick promotion" within a very short period of time.

By the beginning of the 1990s the matter of tribalism was experienced as a serious problem within the RCEA. CORAT (1991:23) observes that the "division that manifests itself in a form of tribalism is a threat to the unity of the church". People from a certain parish in a particular area want to have a minister who is from their tribe. "Whenever a clergy from a different tribe is appointed, the Christians boycott by simply refusing to contribute so that the pastor can starve and eventually leave."

\textsuperscript{11} See the estimation of De Blois in 1970 comparing to that of Van den Ham only two years later in 1972.
CORAT states that it is impossible for a Church to become self-reliant if it is not united. "Tribalism is a virus that kills the Church slowly but surely" (CORAT 1991:23).

Although it cannot be denied that the securing of a job opportunity for a relative in the Church is practiced in the RCEA, it should be noted that the difficult and sensitive matter of tribalism in the RCEA is undergoing change. Through interviews and questionnaires it became clear that members experienced the tribal relations within the Church as fairly good by 2000. Members from the Kikuyu tribe who was on the receiving end in the 1994 clashes between the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin, also experienced the situation as changing and that Eph 2:14-16 was being practised in the RCEA. This was confirmed by the fact that for the first time in the history of the RCEA a Kikuyu was elected as an office bearer when Rev. David K. Muhia was elected as deputy general secretary in April 2000.

2. The Church and its resources

As the financial matters of the RCEA has been dealt with extensively in chapter five (self-support), the matter will not be discussed again in this section. A good indication of the situation in the RCEA is that by November 1999 only eight of the 38 parishes fully supported their ministers. Financial problems in the Church is not so much a matter of a lack of money with members, as it is a symptom of the stewardship problem in the RCEA.

2.1 Properties

The number of medical facilities of the RCEA in different regions was indicated in chapter four. Of these the Plateau Mission Hospital compound is by far the largest. The Reformed Institute for Theological Training at Plateau with its 51 acres of land developed into a campus with the potential of becoming an income generating project for the RCEA. The compound of the Church head-quarters in Eldoret, with its administration block, numerous staff houses and the Conference and Training Centre is the most valuable property in Eldoret. Apart from these properties the Church also owns five residential houses in Eldoret of which two are rented, two occupied by missionaries and one occupied by the parish minister.
2.2 Increase in local churches

The three congregations which existed in 1963 were the first parishes of the RCEA. The work expanded into the neighbouring areas. By 1968 the number of congregations and preaching posts reached a total of 42 and in 1969 the number had increased to 53 (RML Annual report 1968:25 & 1969:18). By 1970 the Church consisted of the following five parishes: Ainabkoi, Eldoret, Kitale North, Kitale South and Plateau (De Blois 1971:85-87). The church work was at a stage of consolidation and extension. The number of preaching posts reached a total of 50 by 1970 and five more were added by 1971. The leadership of these posts were mainly in the hands of evangelists and RML reports that Church attendance increased (RML Annual report 1970:23 & 1971:12).

By 1973 the number of preaching posts counted seventy and the work extended to places like Turkana, Bungoma, Cherangani, Mount Elgon, Kerio-Valley and Baringo (RML Annual report 1973:12). Towards the mid-1970s the Church still expanded by the adding of new preaching posts, the established work was consolidated and the spiritual growth of Church members received attention (RML Annual report 1975:21).

By 1980 the number of local churches counted 85 in fifteen parishes. Ten years later, in 1991, this number had increased to 160 local churches in seventeen parishes and in 1999 to 186 local churches in 36 parishes.

2.3 Ministers in the RCEA

Regarding the number of ministers in the RCEA, the Church experienced a crisis by the end of the 1960s. As indicated before, the three ministers trained by Eybers did not serve in the RCEA for a very long time. The arrangement with St. Paul’s United Theological College by the end of the 1960s ensured a steady flow of ministers in the RCEA towards the mid-1970s. In a relatively short time the ministers increased to a total of sixteen in 1974.

In the more than twenty years between 1974 and 1996 the number of ministers in the RCEA increased from 16 to 25 (CORAT 1996:37). It is significant to note that in four years between 1996
and 2000 the number of ministers increased from 25 to 45 and 25 more are in training at RITT.

3. Towards an identity analysis of the RCEA

As indicated above the identity analysis of the RCEA will follow the basic outline suggested by Ammerman (1998:78-104) by looking at the activities, artefacts, and accounts of the Church.

3.1 The RCEA and its activities

Congregations create their culture through the things they do together. Whenever they gather, inside the congregation’s building or scattered throughout the community, they act within the boundaries of what their culture has established as normal. “The most visible - and the most invisible - of those activities are the congregation’s rituals” (Ammerman 1998:84).

Ritual

Rituals give shape to people’s common life together. The same is true of congregations. In this respect a distinction between rites of passage and rites of intensification is important. *Rites of passage* refers to transition events that mark changes in the individual’s life or changes in the life of the congregation. “The child passes into adulthood, the congregation passes from one pastor or rabbi to another, the member passes from this life to the next, the person being ordained passes from laity to clergy, and the visitor passes into full membership” (Ammerman 1998:86). These rituals are moments that mark passage from one status to another.

Some rituals focus on the group and have been called *rites of intensification*. “They intensify the group’s commitment to its shared beliefs and meanings” (Ammerman 1998:86). These rituals deal with matters such as the weekly worship service, annual feasts and celebrations (Hendriks 1992:177).
Rites of passage

Initiation

The customary practice in which the RCEA members were and still are involved in and in which the borders between Christian and traditional standard are not very clear, is tribal initiation. This practice, which is part of the education of young people, forms the bridge between youth and adulthood. The person is officially admitted into the next stage of his life which is socially more productive and in which he or she is authorized to play a full and active part, as an integral member of the community. The positive side to the practice of initiation is that of education. Mbiti (1994:102) refers rightly to it as "traditional schooling", and should, as such, be encouraged. Although the situation was changing by 2000, 90% of the students confirmed through the questionnaires that practices which do not correspond with Christian principles were evident in the initiation practices which they went through. The feeling of the majority of students was that there was a need to replace certain practices by a more Christian way of doing. Ntetem (1997:99) argues that if "through Christianizing of the tribal initiation, the essential identity of the Christian faith can be attained without losing its relevance, and at the same time relevance can be attained without the loss of identity, then indeed the Christian faith will be seen as it really is. Thereby every reality which touches the life of muntu (African man) would be embraced in Jesus Christ, the ancestor par excellence, the one who transforms these realities from within, in order to make them vehicles of grace."

Death/burial

Regarding the matter of death Mbiti (1969:159) states that "people view death as paradoxically: it is a separation but not annihilation, the dead person is suddenly cut of from the human society and yet the corporate group clings to him. This is shown through elaborate funeral rites, as well as other methods of keeping in contact with the departed... Death becomes, then, a gradual process which is not completed until some years after the actual physical death." Mugambi (1989:103) states that relatives of the deceased feel the loss both as Christians and as members of his or her family and community. "Although some African Christians may not conduct the traditional death rituals, such

13 Also see Verkuyl (1978:343).
as ritual cleansing, all continue to feel the presence of the deceased long after physical death." The average church member in the RCEA maintain quite a traditional perspective on death and funerals. Funerals are very important to attend. Apart from attendance as a final token of respect to the deceased, it is important to be seen by people at the funeral.

In the RCEA the influence of traditional customs regarding burial remains in the different communities in the Church. Some of these traditional customs concern the fact that the head should be put in the direction of the east, a practice which is true of the Kalenjin community specifically. This practice is related to the fact that the sun rises in the east and with the idea of new life. Sometimes the position of the body is also an important factor as some prefer to lay the body on the right shoulder in the coffin. Traditionally an open grave is unacceptable to people. The grave is dug to be completed more or less by the time the body should be buried in it. Another tradition is carefully observed is that the body should be taken to the place where it is to be buried the night before the burial.

The controversy surrounding the burial of the prominent Nairobi advocate, Mr. SM Otieno, illustrates the importance of this matter in the African context. Mr. Otieno, a Luo by tribe, who married a Gikuyu wife, moved away from his deep attachment to the Luo customs of his rural community. After Mrs. Otieno received legal permission to bury her late husband she announced that he would be buried on their farm just outside Nairobi. The deceased man's brother objected and the clan said that he should be buried in the traditional Luo manner in his ancestral home. The struggle following his death between Mrs. Otieno and her late husband's clan lasted five months and became top news in Kenya with newspapers giving the story extensive front page coverage. Following a decision by the Court of Appeals, the judges awarded the body to Mr. Otieno's clan for burial. According to Luo tradition, women and children had no say over funeral and burial matters and, therefore, the duty fell to his brother to bury the late Mr. Otieno. Not only tribal and religious factors, but also the contrast between customary law and common law in certain matters, played a role in the final decision. This confirms the fact that although the African situation is changing, one finds that during times of crises, especially deaths, even professing Christians revert to traditional beliefs and practices (Gehman 1993:15-17).
Posting/calling of ministers

Regarding matters touching the congregational life on a different level, the calling/posting of ministers is important. In the 1960s ministers were posted according to a system which was introduced by the Bwana Loubser Mission. The RML states that 1969 became an important year for the RCEA as far as development towards autonomy was concerned. During this year the training as well as the calling of ministers were arranged according to the constitution of the RCEA. In line with this decision a minister was called to a congregation whereby his full support became the responsibility of the congregation (RML Annual report 1969:17). Later this practice was changed again by the RCEA, a change which was evaluated by some as a step backwards as far as ownership of the ministry of the minister on the grass-roots level was concerned. When a minister is posted by the Staffing and Training Committee at the head-office, his salary gets paid (through the system of centralization) from the head-office and the minister is viewed as called by the RCEA. When he is called by a congregation, the congregation takes full responsibility for his well-being. It has happened in the past that the congregation did not accept the minister posted to them by the head-office. A system which would include both options was needed. According to such a system the congregation would be consulted regarding the posting of a particular minister and the posting done accordingly.

This suggestion was implemented by the Staffing and Training Committee (STC) in February 2000 by means of the following "Rules for posting" of ministers and evangelists:

- Each parish should receive a new minister within half a year of becoming vacant;
- A minister or evangelist will be posted to a parish for a period of at least four years;
- In case no minister is available, an evangelist should be posted to the parish within half a year after becoming vacant;
- Each parish (as soon as it becomes vacant) is allowed to indicate the names of three ministers from a list as requested from the STC, from whom the parish would like to receive its minister;
- The STC is not bound to post any of the ministers as requested by any parish to that particular parish.
- The STC will post ministers and evangelists as much as possible according to their wishes. The interests of the parishes however will have priority over the wishes of the ministers, chaplains and evangelists.
The Committee will not transfer anybody because of disciplinary problems. The respective courts of the Church will be advised to look into the matter and to act according to the Constitution (STC 2000:2-3).

The "Rules for posting" of the STC reflects the suggested compromise between the posting and calling systems. Due to problems in relations between parishes and ministers in the past, this should be considered as a positive policy to avoid repetition of such problems.

A major problem with regard to the ministry of ministers in the RCEA is that the ministers are actually only part-time in ministry. Most ministers in the RCEA own a shamba of a few acres which requires a lot of his time to ensure that especially school fees of children and other family members are taken care of. In order to enable the minister to be in ministry full-time a shift regarding ownership of this ministry on the local level may solve the problem to quite an extent.

Rites of intensification

The DRC's influence on the worship service, especially in the liturgical order and in the hymnology, was clearly evident in the development of the young Church and it remained thus. "This is confirmed by present practice. Liturgy and songs (melodies and texts, especially in Kiswahili) are of South African/European origin" (Van den Ham 1993:17). The first translations done by Eybers into Kiswahili were that of 60 hymns compiled in a hymn book to be used by evangelists in the Sunday Service (Vergenoeg LMC 24 March 1945). The liturgy and sermons correspond strictly to that of the proclamation model. The style of communication is cognitive and one way, that is from the minister to the sitting, listening congregation. Communication where the listener is more extensively involved, as in the body of Christ model (Hendriks 1992:26-27) is changing, but still not very common in RCEA congregations and reflects a style evident of an average DRC congregation up to a decade or two ago.

A number of other important rituals can also be identified within the RCEA. The Kenyan economic system is characterized by the practice of Harambee or fund raising. The principle underlying this

---

15 See par. 3.3.4 below.
system is that members of the community "are expected to co-operate with one another in order to enhance chances of survival for the majority" (Mugambi 1989:133-134). This popular practice is evident in the RCEA at all levels which provides a forum for Christian fellowship and assistance. The Harambee is possibly the most significant way in which the congregation members takes care of one another as far as material resources are concerned.

A very important rite of intensification is that of Mavuno or thanksgiving for the harvest. As a rural church the RCEA members are mainly farmers. Depending on the harvest time of a specific crop, thanksgiving for harvests takes place on the local church level. On a set date the parish will worship together for Mavuno. In the Uasin Gishu area where beans, maize and, to some extent, wheat are produced the occasion can repeat itself several times per year. A portion of the harvest is brought to the church as an offering by the members to thank God for it.

3.2 The Church and its artifacts

Ammerman (1998:91) states that buildings are perhaps the most obvious of a congregation's artifacts. "When we look at a living congregation, we do not have to use our imaginations quite so much, but the physical environment can still tell us a great deal about those who created it." This is particularly true of the RCEA.

In regard to the different buildings of the RCEA, the missionary influence is quite evident. All institutional buildings have been constructed by the missionaries. Examples of such buildings are those at the head quarters in Eldoret, the buildings of the Reformed Institute for Theological Training and the buildings of the Plateau Mission Hospital.

The different types of material used in constructing the church buildings of the RCEA reveals something of the identity of the Church. More than 50% of the students who completed the questionnaires, confirmed that their local churches in the rural areas were mainly semi-permanent clay structures. Only 20% indicated that they worship in permanent buildings built by missionaries (small red bricks), while the remaining 30% worship either in schools or permanent buildings built by the congregation members themselves (big stone blocks). The buildings used by the first three congregations were buildings constructed by the DRC. The RML continued building churches using a particular architectural form. In these buildings a big pulpit are also to be found. Throughout this
period members continuously constructed semi-permanent clay buildings. As missionaries more and more withdrew from building projects, the members themselves have taken responsibility in recent years for the construction of permanent buildings. This observation actually summarizes the story of the RCEA which is, as indicated before, a rural church strongly supported by missions, but in the process of taking over the ownership themselves.

3.3 The RCEA and its accounts

Ammerman (1998:92) states that the identity of a church is not only influenced by artifacts and activities, but also by patterns of language and stories (accounts). "Language is a basic social process, a way we relate to each other and a way of agree on what our worlds is and means. Whenever we share experiences, we talk about them, and in the talking we come to understand what the experiences meant in the first place" (Ammerman 1998:94). Concerning the accounts of the church, Ammerman refers to language (distinct words and phrases for their surroundings and activities), history, myths (stories that ground our history in something bigger), worldviews, symbols, images and metaphors as well as theologies. As the history of the RCEA figures strongly throughout the study and especially in chapters three to five, it will not be discussed again. The issue of myths, will also not be dealt with. As the RCEA consists of different tribes, each with its own distinctive myths\textsuperscript{16}, it is hard to recognize specific myths which influenced the identity of the RCEA.

3.3.1 Theology

Certain elements of the present identity of the RCEA fit more or less into the proclamation church model\textsuperscript{17} which was inherited from the missionaries and was introduced by the DRC Mission in Kenya. The Church receives Scripture "as the infallible Word of God and as its supreme rule of faith and life."(RCEA Constitution 1993:Article II, 2.2). Being characterized as "reformed" is very important to members of the RCEA. This is significant especially in contrast to other denominations in which, as reformed members believe, the Word does not have such a central position. In the words of a former moderator of the RCEA Rev. Hosea Chemweno (2000): "for more than any thing, the

\textsuperscript{16} See Bahemuka (1982:8-19) and Mbiti (1982:82-86) for the value and influence of myths in the African context.

\textsuperscript{17} See Hendriks 1992:19-24.
RCEA today is grateful for the fact that the South Africans brought the Dutch Reformed tradition to us”.

With regard to the relevancy of the Reformed tradition for Africa the RCEA refers to Acts 8:26-40 "about the first African believer, baptized before any European received the gospel". In a RCEA booklet with the title "What is Reformed?", the Church states that many people in Africa are interested in Christianity and the Bible, but many people "lack knowledge and understanding of the Bible". In the Reformed tradition the RCEA "wants to preach and teach in line with the message to the first African believer." (RCEA Booklet: What is Reformed?).

Regarding the confession of the Church the RCEA accepts the general confessions of faith. The constitution states that the Church "receives the historic confession of the faith known as the Apostel's Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasius Creed, as containing the sum and the substance of the faith of the Church". Concerning the Three Forms of Unity the Church adopted as a "subordinate and provisional standard its chatechism known as 'Katekisima' until such time as this Church shall exercise its right to frame its own confession of faith" (RCEA Constitution 1993: Article II, 2.3).

The Presbyterian system of church government whereby the elders look after the government of the church is characteristic of the proclamation model and was emphasized by both Missions since the commencement of their ministries in West-Kenya. Informally introduced by the DRC, the RML emphasized the Presbyterian system of church government in later years. The constitution of the RCEA states in this respect that "lest one Congregation shall not lord over the other, the one Office over the other, the one Office-bearer over the other, the government of this Church is Presbyterian..." (RCEA Constitution 1993:11). One of the basic principles of the Reformed concept of the church is that the local church is fully church. Due to the central role of the minister as theological expert and certain responsibilities being removed from the local level to the synod, the tendency in the proclamation church model is to develop into a synodocracy, which means that the synod governs the church. In correspondence with this general development of the proclamation model which is evident in many Reformed churches (including the DRC and NRC), the RCEA reflects the tendency of becoming institutionalized and more and more bureaucratic.

The ecclesiological theory underlying the church concept introduced by the DRC, and taken over by the RML, resulted in the fact that the laity was not involved in ministry in the RCEA as extensively
as in other denominations. In the charismatic churches especially this concept is extensively developed. Every believer has a ministry which has a positive influence on the identity of the church. Although the situation is changing, ministry in the RCEA in many respects reflects a passivity on the side of the believer who believes that it is the responsibility of the minister, evangelist and elder to take care of the different ministries of the Church.

3.3.2 Language

Certain keywords used among members of the RCEA provide additional proof of the outstanding aspects of the Reformed identity of the RCEA. Phrases like: “according to Scripture” and “the word of God says” are common language of members. With regard to preaching and biblical interpretation the Church members believe that they are superior to other denominations (Chemweno 2000).

3.3.3 Worldview

Individuals and congregations have characteristic ways of looking at the world and characteristic explanations for why things happen as they do. The four basic worldviews in which the individual or a congregation can be categorised are the optimistic-, romantic-, tragic- or rational worldview (Hendriks 1992:171-175). The questionnaires completed by theological students revealed that they view life as tragic. Phrases like “people accept the hard realities of life”, “tough times”, “hardship and trouble”, “poverty” and “people looking for the coming of God” represent the most prominent worldview of members in the RCEA.

3.3.4 Symbols

Symbols are explicit gestures and objects used by the congregation to signal to something beyond themselves, something that the congregation considers important (Ammerman 1998:97). The pulpit has significant symbolic value in the RCEA regarding its position as well as who enters it. The pulpit has a central position and is the focus point of the congregation. This corresponds with the proclamation model. Irrespective of theological training, all men are allowed to enter the pulpit. Women are allowed to preach in the RCEA, but are forbidden to enter the pulpit.

Regarding dress codes the influence of the missionaries, together with contextual influences, are
The dress codes of ministers are important for the ministers themselves as well as for the members. The pictures of Rev. Eybers and the first three ministers of the RCEA indicate clearly that the strict dress codes of the missionaries was taken over. Contextual influences can be seen in colourful robes as well as in the fact that such colors were not used by the first ministers (Loots 1959). The RCEA does not prescribe official clothes to be worn by the offices of elder and deacon.

Through the years the RCEA had a firm stand regarding the ordination of women. Women are not ordained to carry out pastoral duties in the Church. However, towards the end of the 1990s this matter remained high on the agenda in Synod discussions and the attitude in the Church is changing. A large number of young ministers are entering ministry in the Church and hold a different opinion to that of the older ministers. A RCEA minister, serving as deputy general secretary of the NCCK, urged churches publicly during March 2000 on behalf of the NCCK to ordain women as ministers (Makabila 14/3/2000:23). On the other hand, certain older ministers are threatening to leave the Church on the day that the Synod takes the decision to ordain women.

Choirs play a very important role in the congregational life of the RCEA. This is especially true of the youth who arrange choir competitions which have become a very popular event since their introduction into the RCEA during the 1970s. Different groups in the congregation usually have their own choirs. During the Worship service opportunities are usually given to these choirs to sing a number of hymns. Usually it is women or a youth choir. Older men seldom sing in choirs.

An integral part of Worship services are the opportunities given to visitors to greet the congregation or to give testimonies. These testimonies consist, apart from sharings from the heart, of a Scripture reading and/or a hymn to support the words shared with the congregation.

Love and care in the congregation are reflected through the standard intercessory prayer as part of the liturgy. The diaconal ministry are also evident in the RCEA. When a member needs urgent assistance, the need is addressed through sadaka maalumu or special offerings during the Worship service which is another way the love of the congregation is put into practice.

Certain taboos are evident. The drinking of beer and alcoholic liquor as well as the smoking of tobacco are prohibited for RCEA members. In Kenya these taboos are not found only in particular churches, but amongst Christians in general. Sexual practices only within the bounds of marriage are
not observed strictly. Although it is the ideal for a couple to get married in church, traditional weddings take place regularly. The difficult matter of polygamy is not accepted, but still practiced in certain rural areas and especially among the older generation.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to identify the lasting influence of the DRC Mission and the RML on the current identity of the RCEA. As indicated in the previous chapters, the impact of the missions are evident in many aspects of the church life of the RCEA. The ecclesiastical model introduced by the DRC and continued by the RML remained dominant in the RCEA. As indicated in this chapter, the historical theological points of departure (sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide), the church concept (proclamational), the style of communication (mainly one-way communication), the worship and the liturgy reflect the Missions' lasting influence on the RCEA. Still, the RCEA is no carbon copy of either of these missionary enterprises. The identity of the RCEA developed in the culture and context of the people of Kenya amongst whom it was established and as such formed a Church unique in its own right.

In the final chapter a number of concluding remarks and recommendations are made which could assist the church in its ministry towards the future.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The aim of this study was to investigate the history of the RCEA and to determine the influence of the two missionary enterprises on the current identity of the RCEA. The findings were evaluated from a critical missiological perspective. The following conclusions will indicate to what extent the research problem was answered satisfactorily and how the hypothesis provided answers towards the better understanding of the current identity of the RCEA.

1. The missionary context

In evaluating the work of the DRC Mission and the RML in Kenya, it should be kept in mind that both Missions started their work under fairly difficult circumstances.

To implement an effective strategy of posting teacher-evangelists to start schools on farms, Eybers was dependent on the cooperation of the South African farmers, not only in terms of requiring their permission to work on their farms, but also for the construction and upgrading of the school buildings on their farms. This cooperation was not always satisfactory. Furthermore, the background and identity of the people among whom the DRC Mission did their mission work were that of a dislocated community. They were usually individuals pushed out of the "reserves" by their tribes. Ministry among these dislocated people was not an easy task. Other Missions worked inside the "reserves" where the tribal connection provided the foundation for community. Among the dislocated people this attachment to one another was missing, instead they lived a solitary, lonely lifestyle. The Gospel had the power to become the binding factor for these people, but due to the continuous migration, this was a difficult group to reach with the Gospel and to have a consistent ministry (RML Annual report 1964:87). This situation demanded a large number of evangelists and complicated the ministry.

In this situation Eybers worked without the fellowship, interaction and support of other missionaries as was the case in Malawi. In other mission fields of the DRC the mission work usually developed to the point where other missionaries joined the pioneer. This never happened in the missionary
outreach of the Vergenoeg congregation. Eybers as the only missionary, worked under the supervision of the Church Council. Disagreement between him and members of the Vergenoeg LMC occurred occasionally which hampered the ministry.

The RML took over the work from the DRC in an equally complicated situation. The early 1960s was a very difficult period in the history of Kenya. This was especially true considering the future of missions in the country. On the one hand the colonial government was making preparations and adjustments for a smooth transition of responsibilities to the local government. On the other hand it was not certain what policy the new government would maintain towards foreign mission organizations in the future. Under these circumstances external factors played a significant role in the "forced" official autonomy of the RCEA.

2. Missionary experience

Another factor to consider in evaluating the work of the two Missions concerns the issue of experience. When the DRC Mission started a formal outreach towards the local people, the DRC had the experience of many years of missionary involvement in Africa behind them. Moreover, the missionary who formally started the work had missionary experience of sixteen years in Malawi. In contrast to this, Kenya was the RML's first experience of mission work on the African continent and the ministers from the NRC sent by the RML to begin the work were inexperienced as far as mission was concerned. They were involved in ministry in the Netherlands and lacked foreign missionary experience, especially regarding missions in Africa.

3. Theology

The strong point of both Missions was and still is the theological foundation underlying their different mission policies. In this respect the term *regnum Christi* (the reign of Christ) used by Calvin figures strongly. He viewed the church as the "intermediary between the exalted Christ and the secular order. Such a theological point of departure could not but give rise to the idea of mission as 'extending the reign of Christ', both by the inner spiritual renewal of individuals and by transforming the face of the earth through filling it with 'the knowledge of Christ'." (Bosch 1991:256). It was especially through the theology of mission of the Dutch theologian Gisbertus Voetius (1588-1676) that these two dimensions, which exercised a profound influence on the theory and practice of
mission, were held in creative tension. In comparing the policies of the DRC Mission and the RML it becomes clear that Voetius's formulation of the threefold goal of mission, *conversio gentilium* (conversion of the Gentiles), *plantatio ecclesiae* (the planting of the church) and *gloria et manifestatio gratiae divinae* (the glory and manifestation of divine grace), guided and still guides both Missions in their distinct outreaches to the world. The immediate aim of conversion which is subordinate to the planting of churches are both subservient to the glory and manifestation of divine grace (Bosch 1991:256-257).

As indicated in chapters four to six, the effect of the dual involvement of the two Missions on the RCEA with regard to the theological tradition they belonged to, is clear. The Calvinistic influence is evident in the doctrine (Article II, 2.1-2.4) and church government (Article II, 2.5) as reflected in the Constitution of the RCEA. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the two Missions complemented one another in this respect. Each had its own policy, emphasis and particular aims, but no significant change occurred during the period of transition from the DRC Mission to the RML as far as the theological tradition they belonged to was concerned

4. Comprehensive approach

Both missions strongly emphasised the idea of a comprehensive approach in mission. The 1935 mission policy of the DRC states that the DRC saw its essential task as the proclamation of the Gospel, which was undergirded by various auxiliary services. Especially at the outset, lawful and proved auxiliary methods had as aim the opening of the hearts of the local people to the Gospel. In this respect the church has found education and instruction as well as medical, agricultural, industrial and literary activities to be such agencies (Gerdener 1958:269-270). In due course the concept of auxiliary services was broadened to become part of what come to be called the comprehensive approach. These services "should concretise the Gospel proclamation and should draw people's attention to Christ." (Pauw 1980:223).

As indicated in chapter three, such services were established by the DRC. Regarding education the above-mentioned principles were closely observed by the DRC Mission. Education was a service which was seen as a means of facilitating the spreading of the Gospel. This was the reason why schools were founded on farms by the Mission and for no other reason was education introduced to
the people. Medical services, literacy work as well as a women’s group was also started to concretise the Gospel proclamation and draw people’s attention to Christ.

In correspondence with the DRC mission policy, the RML states that the proclamation of salvation in Christ, the call to faith and conversion, reconciliation and renewal of all creation, should be at the centre. Regarding the relationship between diaconia and kerygma the RML states that the "theological contribution and the equipping of people for ministry should not be overshadowed and surpassed by a vast number of diaconal activities and development cooperation. At the same time it is necessary to take care that the dimensions of service and development cooperation are not viewed as an addendum" (RML Policy 1989:17).

Through stressing the importance of auxiliary services as part of their policy, the two missionary enterprises extended their influence on the RCEA. This is clearly reflected in the fact that especially education for the DRC and both education and medical services for the RML, became an inseparable part of the mission strategy of both missions. The work established by the DRC Mission was developed and extended during the ministry of the RML. Chapters four and five of this study gives an indication of the powerful impact of these extensive auxiliary services on the RCEA. In this respect Article II, 2.7 of the Constitution of the RCEA on “Wholistic ministry” states that the Church “cannot confine itself solely to the preaching of the Word and administration of purely religious ordinances.” The Church commits itself “to undertake educational, medical, social and literacy work for the benefit of all who shall desire its help...”

5. The Missions and the autonomy of the Reformed Church of East Africa

It was concluded in Chapters three, four and five that for a long time the missionaries maintained a position of firm control over church affairs. Eybers followed the Mission policy of the DRC almost to the letter. Right at the beginning of his ministry he explained the policy to the Local Mission Committee of Vergenoeg and adhered to it throughout his ministry in Kenya. The mission work done by the Vergenoeg congregation was not viewed as foreign mission, because it was an outreach in a foreign country. It was viewed as local mission, because it took place within the borders of an existing DRC congregation. In accordance with the DRC mission policy, Eybers was convinced that the Bwana Loubser Mission should establish a church soon, which could develop into a self-supporting, self-governing and, eventually, a self-expanding Church. Already in 1955 he explained
other factors also played a role in the formation and development of the Church. A factor which influenced these processes to quite an extent was the geographical area in which it was established. But even in this the two Missions, and especially the DRC Mission, played a significant role. That the RCEA today mainly works in the western part of Kenya, has its roots in the coming of the DRC to the area. The RCEA Constitution states that the DRC “in obedience to the Word of God and mindful of the needs of the African labourers on the farms of its Members” (RCEA Constitution 1992 Preamble) established a ministry in order to reach the said labourers. As indicated before, the initial impetus that brought the DRC to Uasin Gishu was political and economical and not a missionary concern. Some of the best land in the country was given to them for farming. That led to them settling especially in the Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia area. The outreach to the indigenous people that followed later was limited to the labourers on the farms of the South Africans. This in turn determined where Eybers would establish his ministry. Apart from work in the DRC congregations in East Africa, as well as a visit by the DRC Mission to Turkana in 1951 with the intention of launching an outreach to the area, the Mission did not extend the work further than Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia. It was only with the coming of the RML that the work expanded initially to the North and later to other areas. Still, through the years the ministry of the RML was mainly concentrated in the same area as that of the DRC Mission. As indicated in Chapter five, the main concentration of the RCEA congregations and the headquarters remained in the area where the outreach originated many years before.

It was argued in Chapter six that the context in which the RCEA developed influenced the development of the Church. The fact that the Church was established on farms of South Africans in this particular rural area and remained there, impacted decidedly the historical development and current identity of the RCEA.

7. Periods of Transition

Regarding periods of transition in the RCEA, two main events dominated the scene. In the first place there was a transfer of the work from the DRC Mission to the RML, and secondly the RML missionaries handed over the different departments to the national leadership. Both periods were characterized by a lack of proper stewardship.
The first major transfer did not proceed smoothly. A strong indication of the fact that the transfer, at least from a financial perspective, lacked some suppleness surfaces when the budgets of the outgoing and incoming Mission are compared. The budget of the LMC of Vergenoeg at the time of transfer was £ 2871-0-0 (LMC Vergenoeg 1961). The budget for Kenya during the first year of the RML's involvement in this area was 263 352,51 guilders ( £ 25 081-0-0) (RML Annual report 1962:134). The transfer took place when the DRC Mission was facing a financial crisis. On the other hand the RML had money available for the work. They were in fact looking for a new field in Africa for which they had a budget. The effect of this transfer immediately became visible in the building projects, the different departments established and funded by the RML as well as in the salaries of ministers, evangelists and other employees of the RCEA.

The second period of transition did not take place during a specific period, but occurred almost continuously as the RML handed over specific ministries to the RCEA as part the Africanization process. This took place subjected to the RML’s discretion of the readiness of a specific leader to take responsibility for a specific task. The handing over was a difficult process, but as indicated in Chapter five, it was not an unique event in Kenya. By 2000 the RCEA is still struggling to find ways of effectively establishing these important ministries within the context of the Church. If the national church "cannot find the personnel or resources to maintain certain ministries, it might be better for these ministries to cease functioning" (Vreeke 1997:8).

8. National assistance

Although the two reformed missionary enterprises had a strong impact on the formation and development of the RCEA, the irreplaceable contribution of the local people in shaping the identity of the church should not be overlooked.

It was not only the encouragement of Rev. Loubser and others that led to the outreach of the DRC members to their employees. A Macedonian call from the African people to the Dutch Reformed Church also played a role at the beginning of mission work to the unreached peoples of western Kenya (Chapter five). The importance of this call showed in their willingness to cooperate, not to please their employers, but due to a desire to get to know the Mungu of the Bible, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.
Not only in Kenya, but also on other mission fields of the DRC, the assistance of the nationals was indispensable to the missionaries. Regarding the work in Zambia Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982:59) states that "the spread of the Gospel in the villages depended largely on the huge band of African teachers employed by the mission". This was also true of the mission work in Zimbabwe (Van der Merwe 1981:75&89). In Malawi "the policy was all along that local converts should be trained and sent out to surrounding villages to introduce the Gospel and to evangelise" (Pauw 1980:221). "Above all, it was the group of men known as teacher-evangelists who really performed the greatest task in evangelising their own people: These men were posted to the village schools which over the years proved the most fruitful method of evangelising." This conclusion of Pauw (1980) about the work in Malawi is also true of the mission work done by the Vergenoeg congregation in Kenya. Eybers who visited the outposts only once a term, could never have laid the foundation of the RCEA without the assistance of these men.

This is also true with regard to the extensive investments in formal theological and lay training by the RML. Although the training programme lacked proper planning regarding the number of evangelists and ministers to be trained, this ministry paid off. Apart from ministers and evangelists, mainly elders were taking care of the proclamation of the Word on the grass-roots level. The RML realised this and with the establishment of the Conference and Training Centre in Eldoret as well as the TEE programme, local leaders were better equipped to take care of this vital ministry.

9. **Ownership**

The main obstacle hampering the ministry of the RCEA concerns the matter of ownership. This is not only true of certain essential ministries still supported strongly from abroad, but also on the local level as far as the support of the minister and the evangelist is concerned. This is mainly the result of the fact that the RML did not consider the consequences of extensive financial assistance in mission work.

By the time the RML attempted means to guide the RCEA towards self-reliance as far as finances were concerned, it was too late to implement the process as just another project or programme. The financial dependency syndrome was already rooted very deeply and when the RML suddenly began to cut certain funds, the idea was perceived by the uninformed local Church member as punishment (CORAT 1991:20).
When one pages through the Annual Reports of the RML as well as that of the RCEA, the investments made by the RML in the different departments since the early 1960s were immense. The firm control over these departments by the missionaries led church members to think that the departments belonged to the missionaries and they still think so today (CORAT 1996:56). This can be traced to the fact that many departments supported by the RML disappeared during the 1990s when the financial support was withdrawn. Hence, when the money ceased, the ministry ceased.

Although the Mission's influence on the ownership problem was quite decisive, the RCEA can still change this situation. It is significant to note that the Youth department and the Women's fellowship which were both supported by the RML until 1995 did not disappear. The reason for this is the fact that these two ministries are exclusively owned by the Church on the grass-roots level.

Especially the Youth department serves as a good example in this respect. It was a wise decision by the RCEA during the 1970s to emphasise the policy introduced by the RML in the Youth department to strengthen the youth leadership on the local level. The positive results of this approach was evident when the RML discontinued their financial support to this department by 1995. Although there was limited assistance available to the Youth department towards 2000, the Sunday-school and youth activities at the local church level flourished. By the year 2000 this was still the case. Through the initiative of the youth leaders on the local level, the youth of the RCEA have not been neglected. The basic activities which was formerly supported by RML, though on a much smaller scale, continued, albeit on a much smaller scale.

10. Towards the future

If the General Secretary of the RCEA in his address to the Synod of 1999 speaks on behalf of the Church with his remark that the RCEA "cannot rely on Foreign Aid forever" (RCEA Annual Synod report 1999:19), the matter of relations between the RCEA and its partners should be considered carefully in the future. For many decades the relations with partners influenced the development in the RCEA. In this regard two tendencies should guide the Church. 1) As indicated above it was especially the unhealthy financial assistance to the RCEA which limited the Church in its ministry. 2) Ministries which were not owned by the Church on the local level disappeared when the financial assistance ceased.
Real partnership towards the future might perhaps involve the decreasing of financial support while a missionary remains in the field. During this time the responsibility for the work is handed over to a local head of department. The missionary remains in the field until the financial support ceases completely. As partners, the Mission and the Church would then be in a position to determine whether the work can be owned effectively by the Church, and if so, to think creatively on how this can be done.

Another matter hampering the ministry in the RCEA already pointed out in research done by CORAT (1991) was that the different departments at the head office by the early 1990s operated in isolation with very little coordination by the General Secretary. Due to a lack of flow of information between them, the departments did not learn from each other (CORAT 1991:11).

Although much has been done to solve the problem through the Management committee and the merging of TEE and the RTCEA in RITT (1997), more needs to be done, especially with regard to theological education in the RCEA. Integration of theological training at all levels, which corresponds with the vision of the RCEA on the short and the long term, should be considered by the Church. The shift taking place in the theological training at the RITT concerns emphasis on the importance of the local congregation as missionary by its very nature, which corresponds with a vision developing in the Church which concerns the necessity of "each RCEA member being a witness" (Akoru 2000). The Church might consider a period of consolidation of theological training, with an emphasis on refresher courses for ministers, evangelists and elders whereby the RCEA at all levels is made aware of and exposed to the vision of the Church.

11. Final conclusion

The research problem with which this study worked, concerns the effect of the dual involvement of the South African DRC and the Netherlands RML on the RCEA. The research results indicated that the mission objectives, policies and methods implemented by the two Missions had a lasting effect on the current identity of the RCEA. While the particular context in which the RCEA was established and developed had an inevitable impact from a cultural and sociological point of view on the identity of the Church, it is equally clear that the impact of the Missions is strongly evident in the theological factors determining the identity of a church. As indicated in this study, this is especially true of the confession, the particular ecclesiology, the worship and the liturgy of the RCEA. On the negative
side it also became evident that the major problem facing the RCEA today, namely that of ownership, was a result of the vast financial input by the Missions and especially the RML.

The *hypothesis* with which the study worked is that the influence of the two Missions on the historical processes that the RCEA went through, will provide answers towards the better understanding of the current identity of the RCEA. Through evaluating the historical processes, the study revealed valuable information on how these processes were influenced by the two Missions. By analysing the identity of the Church, it was possible to establish in which respects the DRC Mission and the RML directly shaped this identity.

As the RCEA reflects on its past in an attempt to seek to fulfil its task and role as Church of the Lord towards the future, may the Lord of the Church provide wisdom in the Church’s own labour for the extension of the Kingdom of God.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Aleman, M 1979. Spanningen in de kerk. Alle den Volcke 72/10, 4-5.


Eybers, BB 1956. 'n Mylpaal, in *Lig oor Afrika,* feesblad uitgegee tydens tienjarige bestaan van Bwana Loubser Sending Stasie, 1956, 1.


Fish BC & Fish GW. *The Kalenjin Heritage. Traditional Religious and Social Practices.* Kericho: Africa Gospel Church


Nairobi: Uzima Press.


Lig oor Afrika, feesblad uitgegee tydens tienjarige bestaan van Bwana Loubser Sendingstasie, 1956 Eldoret: Vergenoeg Gemeente.


Loubser MP 1933. Die Kerkbode 1933, 1194-1195.


Mouton, AJ 1956. Hoe dit by my begin het, in Lig oor Afrika, feesblad uitgegee tydens tienjarige bestaan van Bwana Loubser Sending Stasie, 1956, 8-9


Murray, C 1956. Loubsergemeente, in *Lig oor Afrika.* Feesblad uitgegee tydens tienjarige bestaan van Bwana Loubser Sending Stasie, 1956, 2.


Scholtz, MC. Eldoret en verder, in PW Grobbelaar (Red) nd 185-205.


Spoelstra B 1992. 'n Teologiese beoordeling van die afskeiding van die Gereformeerdes in 1859 en die stigting van die APK in 1987. *NGTT* 33/1, 60-80.

Stofberg, JHM 1954. Van die Transvaalse Sendingsekretaris, in *Lig oor Afrika*. Feesblad uitgegee
tydens tienjarige bestaan van Bwana Loubser Sendingstasie, 1956, 2.


Van den End, Th 1996. De Gereformeerde Zending en de anderen in Holtrop, PN (Red) 1996, 77-


Kerkboekhandel.


Wilson, C 1953. *Before the dawn in Kenya. An Authentic Account of Life in East Africa when it

Minutes, reports, memoranda and other documents


Eybers BB 1929. Letter to AC Murray (Mission Secretary) in 1929 in Correspondence: Malawi Mission - Personal File (BB Eybers) Cape Town: Archives.

Gereformeerde Zendingsbond. Het eigen karakter en de plaats van de GZB binnen het geheel van die Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk nd. Driebergen: GZB


Joint Meeting. Resolutions of the Joint Meeting of the RCEA executive committee and the RML delegation proposed to the Synod of the RCEA and the Board of the RML, 1994-1999. Eldoret: RCEA.


Lekkerkerker-Tarus, M. 1999. Plateau Mission Hospital, Medical Department of the RCEA, Community Based Health Care Plan 1999-2000. Eldoret: RCEA.

Making informed choices for a better future (NCCK Week 4th-11th June 2000). Nairobi: NCCK.


Medical Department, RCEA. Annual Reports of the Medical Department of the Reformed Church of East Africa, 1979-1999. Eldoret: RCEA.
Meru Church Council minutes - 1945-1965

Meru Classis minutes - 1957-1965


Omondi, F 1996. The Bible and Islam. Lecture - 25/03/96. Eldoret: RCEA.


RITT. Three Years Plan (1997-2000). Eldoret: RCEA.


Van Apeldoorn, HAF 1978. Some statistics upon the Reformed Church of East Africa. Research paper done by RML for RCEA.


Van der Ham, JJ 2000. History of EEC. Letter

Vergenoeg Church Council minutes - 1908-1975.


Wilcocks, D 1927. Letter to A C Murray (Mission Secretary) in 1927 in Correspondence: Malawi Mission - Personal File (BB Eybers) Cape Town: Archives.

Wilcocks, D 1927. Letter to A C Murray (29/10/27) in Correspondence: Malawi Mission - Personal File (B B Eybers) Cape Town: Archives.

What is Reformed? An outline of Reformed Doctrine. Eldoret: RCEA

Personal interviews


Kruger, L 1996. Interview at Plateau (RTCEA) on 8th February.


IDENTITY ANALYSIS OF RCEA CONGREGATIONS
by students of the Reformed Institute for Theological Training (Eldoret)
15 February 2000

Assignment: Write a culture and identity analysis of your congregation.

Defining terminology: with the word "culture" one refers to what the congregation does/how it lives. It is a broad concept. It looks at the congregation in its context and tries to discern how the context shapes the congregation and its life, how it in turn also shapes the context. "Identity" is a more specific word in that it refers to the character and soul of the congregation, to the core beliefs and values, to the fundamental assumptions the congregation has about itself, life, faith, the world; the reason for its very being, its hope and its self-image.

Structure and headings

1. The context: Describe the context, the wider setting of the congregation. The purpose is to relate the influence of the context on the congregation and also the other way round. Use as subheadings:

1.1 The secular culture: The country, province, region, geography and everything that is particular to it that influences the congregation.

1.2 Is it a city or rural area? How does the economy of the region influence the culture of the surroundings? What are the SES (social-economic-status) of the people?

1.3 Describe the different groups in the region: cultural (language, tribes), political and religiously. What subcultures does one find, i.e. generational groups (old and/or young)? Many old-timers no newcomers or the other way round? How does it influence the congregation?
1.4 What are the important changes that occurred during the last 5-10 years or more? How did it influence everything?

2. The congregation and its artefacts (buildings, etc)

Is there a church building? Clay or brick? Built by whom? When? Describe the furniture in front of the church. Where are people seated? Any pecking order visible? Specific places for specific people (elders, choir, etc)? Is there a pulpit?

3. The congregation and its activities

3.1 Describe its most important rituals.

Worship service: Describe the different elements and liturgical order of your local Sunday service. Who participates in liturgy? Starting time of service? What hymnbook is used? What instruments? How often is Holy Communion administered? And baptism? Usually together? How often does church council meetings take place and when? Who attends and how many? Is the drinking of alcoholic liquor allowed? What is the view of the church on somebody who does? Can he be a Christian? Is authority based on a top-down or an equality of believers principle in your local church (and in the RCEA as a whole)? Church members involved in polygamy?

Funerals: From your cultural background: What are the cultural beliefs regarding rituals and actions that needs to be done at the funeral for protection? Did Christianity change this? From a contextual point of view: Are funerals increasing, for example because of AIDS? From a theological point of view: What are people's beliefs concerning this life (hard and tough or good and not too difficult, etc) and how do they view heaven (way of escape from this life or as reward, etc.) Church membership and Christian funerals viewed as ticket or passport to heaven? Sociologically: Good funeral final sign of respect and status. Ecumenically: Opportunity where different denominations meet? These are only a few guidelines on what to write about.
3.2 Other activities
Religious education activities: youth, adults, Sunday-school; fellowships; programmes; ministry activities like reaching out to those in need.

3.3 How are newcomers introduced?

3.4 How well balanced are the different groups in the congregation in the leadership structures (church council)? Is there one dominant group in your local church (and in the RCEA)?

4. The congregation and its accounts

To a certain extent this is the most important part of the assignment. What was said previously and in this part should be aimed at describing the real identity of the congregation. Like any person, every single congregation has its own unique identity. The challenge is to understand it in depth and describe it adequately.

4.1 The story / history of the congregation and the people that played an important part in forming the congregation's identity. Do the time-line exercise. The faith tradition of a church (like being Reformed, Pentecostal etc.) has a considerable influence on the character and identity of a congregation. Describe the unique way it is realised in your congregation.

4.2 Language: Try to discern the keywords and central issues people use in the church and when they are talking about spiritual matters. What do these point to?

4.3 Worldview: How do the people view life and how does it influence their lives and faith? Four views are usually identified: optimistic - think positive; romantic - there will be a happy ending to everything; tragic - accept the hard realities of life; rational - very realistic, effectivity important in life.

4.4 Symbols and images: What are the important symbols and why? (In Catholic Church the symbols of the sacraments are centre staged, in Reformed churches it is the pulpit). Any specific dressing codes for elders or pastors? Where did it come from? Is it important? How does the symbols in your local church effect the culture and identity. Members' view on women in office (pastor/elder). With what is authority associated (money, pastor, church council, status, tradition)?
4.5 Myths: Are the deepest assumptions that shape our core beliefs and values, especially as it relate to our worldview and attitude to life, to the cultural group we belong, etc. It is a real challenge to try to recognize them in the culture that you are born into because one usually are not aware of them. Here lies the biggest challenge for a good pastor, prophet and researcher. Only if you understand the deepest myths of a people, are you in a position to let the Holy Spirit and the Word of God shed light on them and deepen the process of sanctification and spiritual growth towards maturity in Christ. Try to discern what the combination of all the information above point to. Remember you are describing the present reality, not what the congregation is suppose to be like or where-to it is suppose to grow. That is another step in the process of doing theology.

Also say something about the resources in the congregation: Give the basic (statistical) facts about the congregation: How old is it? How many members does it have? Is it growing or declining? How many local churches in the parish? Is there a minister? Is there an evangelist? How often does the minister visit the local church. Does the minister have a programme of visitation? Who is mainly preaching in your local church? The same person every time? When was the last time the elders of your local church attended a training course for elders? Who taught the course? Average amount for offerings on a Sunday?
Map 1

Luo: Ethnic Group
*KISUMU: Provincial headquarters

0.40 0.60 0.80 1.00 Km
0.20 0.40 0.60 0.80 1.00 1.20 Miles
RCEA parishes and extension areas are spread over eighteen different districts mainly in western Kenya.
Rev. MP Loubser

From left to right: Revs. Hubert Tibanga, Jeremia Lugumira, Jason Wamukota and BB Eybers
The first RML missionary ministers in Kenya

Rev. JJ Tigchelaar (1961-1969)  Rev. CJP Lam and his family (1962-1964)

RCEA, RML and DRC fellowship in 1997 at Emmanuel local church in Eldoret

From right to left: D Kiprono, JH Koch, A Lichtendonck, D Muhia, G Songog, E vd Ham, M Chemei, S Samoei, congregation member
The first RML missionary ministers in Kenya

Rev. JJ Tigchelaar (1961-1969)  
Rev. CJP Lam and his family (1962-1964)

RCEA, RML and DRC fellowship in 1997 at Emmanuel local church in Eldoret

From right to left: D Kiprono, JH Koch, A Lichtendonck, D Muhia, G Songog, E vd Ham, M Chemei, S Samoei, congregation member
Moderators of the Reformed Church of East Africa

Rev. JK Biboko (1980-1990)


Rev. R Chepkuto (Moderator 2000–)

Rev. F Okonyene, trained by BB Eybers as evangelist from 1948-1951.

Mrs. R Muttai, chairlady of the Women’s League during the 1980s and 1990s.
General Secretaries of the Reformed Church of East Africa

Rev. JM Muttai (1980-1990)

Rev. HC Wanjala (1990-1994)
