The prophetic voice of the South African Council of Churches after 1990 – searching for a renewed Kairos

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Promoter: Professor PJ (Piet) Strauss

The illustration on the front page is a photo taken in the home of the late Mrs Sadi Matsietseng, Batho, Mangaung, who was our friend during the years we stayed in South Africa. The embroidery was done by my father, Olof Göranzon, and was a gift to Mrs Matsietseng.

John 17:21 reads:

> *... that all of them may be one, Father,*
> *just as you are in me and I am in you.*

Having mentioned my father, I also want to commemorate my mother, Ann-Mari Göranzon, who died in 1999. When I returned from my first stay in South Africa in 1982, she decided to sell the shares she had inherited in a Swedish company with business in South Africa. The profit she donated to the Lutheran Youth Centre in Athlone, Cape Town, where I had been working for one year.

Anders Göranzon

The prophetic voice of the SACC after 1990 –

searching for a renewed Kairos

To Kristina

The end of Apartheid will not mean the end of the prophetic ministry of the Church but merely the release of the thrust of that ministry to other areas in society.[1]

[1] SACC Presidential address 1987, page 18.

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List of abbreviations:

AACC	All Africa Conference of Churches
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organisation
BCE	Before the Common Era
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BIG	Basic Income Grant
CAIC	Council of African Instituted Churches
CC	Central Committee (of the SACC)
CCB	(South African) Civil Cooperation Bureau
CCSA	Christian Council of South Africa
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CE	Common Era
CI	Christian Institute
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CONTRALESA	Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa
CoS	Church of Sweden
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CPSA	Church of the Province of Southern Africa
D	Deuteronomic
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DRMC	Dutch Reformed Mission Church
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCA	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DTM	Department for Theology and Mission
E	Elohist
ELCSA	Evangelical Church of Southern Africa
ESSET	Ecumenical Service for Socio-Economic Transformation
FSPCC	Free State Province Council of Churches
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GMO	Genetically Modified Organisms
GMC	General Missionary Conference
GNU	Government of National Unity
GS	General Secretary (of the SACC)
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IJR	Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
ICT	Institute for Contextual Theology
IEC	Independent Electoral Commission
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
LXX	Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament)
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDG	(United Nations) Millennium Development Goals
MRM	Moral Regeneration Movement
NC	National Conference (of the SACC)

NCCR	National Coordinating Committee for Repatriation
NEC	National Executive Committee (of the SACC)
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (Afrikaans for DRC)
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NGSK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingskerk (Afrikaans for DRMC)
NP	National Party
NPA	National Peace Accord
NRASD	National Religious Association for Social Development
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
Ph D	Philosophiæ Doctor
PCR	Programme to Combat Racism
RCA	Reformed Church in Africa
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SACBC	South African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACLA	South African Christian Leadership Assembly
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCO	South Africa's National Civic Organisation
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SANGOCO	South African National NGO Coalition
SARK	Suid-Afrikaanse Raad van Kerke (Afrikaans for SACC)
SGB	Student Governing Board
SPROCAS	Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid and Society
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TB	Tuberculosis
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UFS	University of the Free State
UN	United Nations
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola[2]
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
USD	United State Dollars
UWC	University of Western Cape
VAT	Value-Added Tax
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WHO	World Health Organization
WCC	World Council of Churches
WCRP	World Conference on Religion and Peace
WPCC	Western Province Council of Churches
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZAR	South African Rand
ZCC	Zion Christian Church

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[2] National Union for the Total Independence of Angola

Foreword

I have worked on this thesis with one foot in South Africa and the other in Sweden. One consequence has been that my promoter, Professor PJ (Piet) Strauss, has been at a great distance. During the first few years we met regularly, but since 2006 we have used other means of communication such as telephone and e-mail. Nevertheless I have always got a reaction when I have presented new ideas or posed questions. I want to thank Professor Strauss for the support he has given me throughout the process. In this gratitude I also include the rest of the staff at the Theological Faculty at the University of the Free State (UFS). One person connected to the UFS who inspired me to start studying there I want to thank especially: The Right Revd Dr Michael Nthuping, retired Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA).

There are also a number of administrative staff at UFS whom I need to thank, both in the Theological Faculty and in the administration block. I don't think that I managed to register in time once during those years. Through e-mail and telephone contact I have been helped every time, and I am grateful for this.

When I moved back to Sweden I connected with my old University in Uppsala. I realised that it would be difficult not to be part of an academic context. Professor Kajsa Ahlstrand (Missiology) assisted me initially and invited me to the postgraduate seminar. Later I made contact with the University of Lund, the other historic university in Sweden. Professor Curt Dahlgren (Sociology of Religion) invited me to the postgraduate seminar, for which I thank him too.

At the final seminar in April 2010 at the University of Lund, I got further valuable input from Professor Stephan Borgehammar, Dr Maria Ericson, Dr Lennart Henriksson, Professor Emeritus Aasulv Lande, Professor Emeritus Sven-Åke Selander, and Professor Mika Vähäkangas. This seminar helped me to identify many things that I then had the possibility of correcting.

Although I have been welcomed at those institutions, I have had even more help from a reference group that I set up on my own. I need to single out my former teacher, Dr Katarina Swartling Widerström, as the one who has given me the most time, advice, and inspiration in my work. Without you, Katarina, this thesis would not have been written. Other persons in this group who have given me valuable help are Extraordinary Professor Hans SA Engdahl

My colleagues and fellow Christians in Kalmar Pastorat (The Parish of Kalmar) have been supportive, and I especially want to thank the Rector, Revd Peter Wänehag, for always believing that I would succeed with my work.

Another important community during my years in South Africa was the Bloemfontein North Parish of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA), and especially the St Johannes Congregation, which was our family's spiritual home for the four years that we lived in Bloemfontein. To mention names would be wrong. I am indebted to each and every one.

One person who has made (and is still making) an enormous contribution to this thesis is Revd Mike McCoy. He has read the entire text and is busy correcting my English as well as giving me advice about format as well as content. I might have made changes after his editing, so any remaining examples of language error are my own fault. Mike, I cannot find words!

Several friends and relatives have from time to time given me moral support. My father, Revd Olof Göranzon, has never stopped encouraging me to continue with the work.

Most of all my gratitude goes to my wife and closest friend, Kristina, and our wonderful children, Amanda, Karolina, Samuel, Matilda, and Johannes. Our four years in South Africa we experienced together. After our return to Sweden you have all given me both moral support and practical assistance. Thank you so much!

Kristina, you are the person who knows me best. You have also become familiar with this thesis through many and deep discussions. We share our love for South Africa and its people. I cannot thank you enough for being my life companion in this too.

Most of all, the Glory ought to go to God. Let me put it in the three languages that became dear to me during our time in Bloemfontein:

Glory to God!   Eer aan God!   Tlotlo a e nne ya Modimo!

Anders Göranzon

Kalmar, May 2010

Prologue – returning to a new South Africa

In April 2002 I was listening to Dr Charles Villa-Vicencio[3], who delivered a paper in Uppsala, Sweden. One of the comments he made during the discussion was that the Christians of Sweden, amongst other things, could help their sisters and brothers in South Africa with one thing. He said that the Church in Sweden has experience of being church in a democracy. More especially he was referring to the problem of being prophetic in a democratic situation. At the time I thought: 'Yes, perhaps we can contribute something.' I am no longer so sure that the Christians of Sweden know how to be prophetic. Until 2000, for instance, the Church of Sweden[4] was a state church. The links between Church and State, and especially between the Church and the political parties, are still strong, perhaps even stronger. Nevertheless, my interest in the Church in South Africa was awakened. Listening to Dr Villa-Vicencio gave me the inspiration to ask whether or not the Church in South Africa is still prophetic. I became curious to find out how the Church in South Africa managed to be Church in the new situation.

Shortly after this experience I moved to South Africa with my family. Meeting the ecumenical Church in South Africa gave me even more to think about. On the outskirts of Bloemfontein in the Free State, one of South Africa's nine provinces, there is a township called Rodenbeck. In this settlement people are living in tin shacks. Right in the middle of the area is situated a former Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) building. It was abandoned many years ago, and was later donated to the Free State Province Council of Churches (FSPCC), the regional level of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). I was very happy to visit the site in 2002, a short time after our arrival to South Africa. I had been looking forward to this for some time. When I moved to South Africa, it was my second stay in South Africa. The first was in 1981–1982, when I was working as a volunteer at the Lutheran Youth Centre in Athlone, Cape Town. The second stay was longer, and I moved together with my wife, who had been chosen to become Youth Worker within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA) in the Free State. Now I was curious to see how the SACC was tackling the new

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[3] Dr. Charles Villa-Vicencio is executive consultant at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), based in Cape Town. Before this he was the executive director of IJR. He was formerly the National Research Director in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and responsible for the report of the Commission which was handed to President Mandela in October 1998. Prior to that he served as Professor of Religion and Society at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

[4] I am aware that there are other denominations in Sweden. Since approximately 70% of the population belongs to the Church of Sweden, the relationship between that denomination and the state dominates the scene.

situation, and I was eager to be part of the work of the SACC. When I came to Rodenbeck I saw the potential. Although the mokukus[5] were simple, the yards were kept in good order and people were even cultivating small garden plots. In the middle of this stood the church with a hall, a parsonage, and even some other buildings on the premises. Some of the members of the executive of the FSPCC spoke about the possibilities of using this as a community centre with a crèche, with HIV–AIDS information and counselling, with a clinic, with the office of the FSPCC, and right in the middle a church, where the inhabitants could worship in an ecumenical congregation. I felt inspired! During the next six month I realised: This vision is not being fulfilled! The church in Rodenbeck is falling apart and the FSPCC is not able to develop this idea.

This caused me to ask: What had happened to the vivid, prophetic movement of the SACC, which I had seen during my first visit in South Africa in 1981–82? Being a prophetic voice is not altogether the same thing as running a community centre. But my question was: Can this organisation, being so weak on the regional level, play a significant role in the new South Africa? Especially when it comes to the prophetic voice? Was it silenced? Or had it just changed? Of course I understood that there were many other reasons behind the situation at Rodenbeck, including a shortage of funds, lack of good administration, etc. But behind this was also a leadership without a clear vision about the role the Council ought to play in the new situation. To be prophetic in a democracy means something very different from being prophetic under an oppressive system. My interest in doing research in this field was awakened again. As the rest of this thesis will show, I shall not be able to answer all these questions. I am telling the story, because those were the questions that made me interested in the prophetic role of the SACC.

The focus of this thesis is the prophetic voice of the church, and more especially of the SACC after 1990. This approach is linked with a deep conviction that even the new South Africa needs a prophetic voice. Having said this I do not want to place the new government on an equal footing with the old. The major difference between the governments in South Africa today and before 1994 (or rather 1996) is not about the ability of the politicians to act righteously, but in the fact that South Africa today has a constitution that regards every citizen as equal. This is a dramatic change; and the question concerns how the church has reacted to it.

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[5] *Mokuku:* Urban shack constructed from discarded materials.

It has been important to write something about my experiences. It is obvious that all of us have some sort of preconception or prejudice.[6] Although I am from Sweden I have had some experience within the context of the SACC, and this shall of course colour my work.

I also find it important to underline the fact that I, being Swedish, am enrolled at a South African university. This means I have been part of two scientific cultures. This shall most probably be reflected in my thesis. I regard this as an advantage!

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[6] Preconception, fore-understanding, or fore-meanings (German: *Vorverständnis)* are terms used for all kind of factors that presuppose or impact upon any scientific study or research. 'Rather, a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something. That is why a hermeneutically trained mind must be, from the start, sensitive to the text's quality of newness. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither 'neutrality' in the matter of the object nor the extinction of oneself, but the conscious assimilation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text may present itself in all its newness and thus be able to assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings' (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. 2nd edition. Translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G Marshall [London: Sheed and Ward, 1989], page 238).

1   Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis I am going to answer four crucial questions. Each question will be answered briefly. In the chapters that follow I shall develop the answers further. Each question is given a heading on its own. First of all I shall state the research problem and describe my objectives, the aim of the study. This is where I answer the question **'*What?*'** in the thesis. The next question to answer is the **'*From where?*'** question. This section deals with the current state of research and seeks to summarise the studies previously done on the subject. Third comes the **'*How?*'** of the study, concerned with the method I have used in this study. Lastly in this first chapter, I answer the **'*Why?*'** question, when I develop the value of this thesis.

At the end of this chapter I shall also elaborate on the subtitle of the thesis: *searching for a renewed Kairos*.

1.1   Research problem and objectives (What?)

I have two basic objectives in my work. First and foremost, the aim of this thesis is to study how the prophetic voice[7] of the SACC has changed over time, and especially how it has changed in relation to the democratisation of South Africa. As the title of the thesis makes clear, I have chosen 1990 as the cut-off year in this process. The reason for doing this I shall particularly discuss in chapter 3.2. Second, I also want to contribute to this process of change. I shall begin with the first aim and come back to the second (subordinate) aim at the end of this introduction. Before I can describe my first aim in detail a few explanations are required.

First of all, something needs to be said about the concept *prophetic*. In order to make the research problem intelligible the concept has to be given a meaning now, at least provisionally. I want to underscore four aspects of the prophetic voice. When I use the term 'prophetic' it means, first, to take a critical stance against something or against someone. Second, the context of the prophetic ministry or prophetic voice in this thesis is the

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[7] The concept *voice* is not used in the material. I add it to my research problem with the aim of differentiating the written or spoken expressions of the prophetic ministry from other aspects, like prophetic actions.

relationship between Church and Society.[8] It is therefore important to state at the outset that I do not focus on the prophetic voice directed to the people of South Africa or to individual persons. The focus is on how the SACC has articulated its prophetic voice towards the state, with the government of the day as its major focus. Third, I look for articulations of a prophetic voice that deals with justice and equality, with the oppressed in focus. It is furthermore an activity that in some sense involves a transcendent reality. I shall develop these aspects extensively in the theoretical chapter.

Another aspect of the research problem on which I would like to comment is the decision to study the role of the SACC. In chapters two and four I shall give examples of how the Council, being an important agent in the history of South Africa, has been described. Different scholars attach importance to the SACC in different ways. At this stage I nonetheless want to state that the SACC, since it got its new name and its new constitution in 1968, has been one of the most important ecumenical organisations on the South African scene. During the period when the liberation movements were banned, much of the resistance against the apartheid system was channelled through the SACC. The former GS, Desmond Mpilo Tutu, who became the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, is well known all over the world. It is not an overestimation to say that the SACC is one of the most renowned Christian Councils on the globe – or at least, has been.

Third, the question arises: How can this organisation be studied? The SACC has a democratic structure. The number of member churches has changed over the years. Officials have come and gone. Initiatives have been taken at the top of the organisation as well as at grassroots level. How can one find a centre, an expression that is representative of the SACC? I have come to understand that the National Conference (NC) forms this centre.[9] (At present it meets every third year. From 1969 to 1995 it met annually.) One can ask questions about the way this level functions. One problem, as we shall see, is that over the years the Council has

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[8] Most of the areas I cover have to do with this relationship. In the chapter about religious diversity, about ecumenism, I deal with how the prophetic voice has been articulated within the church itself. In other parts of the thesis, this perspective will also dominate, but those are still exceptions.

[9] It is not an indisputable opinion to say that the NC is representative of the whole organisation. Thomas writes: 'There can be no doubt that there is a gap between the administration and the constituency on occasion, and that even decisions taken by the National Conference of the SACC have been unacceptable to member churches' (David G. Thomas, *Councils in the Ecumenical Movement South Africa 1904 – 1975* [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1979], page 62). Thomas continues: 'The lesson seems to be that ecumenical organisations must develop a life and vitality of their own because they can expect little from their membership' (Thomas 1979, page 62). Having said this, one can also quote the Constitution of the SACC, which says: 'The National Conference is the supreme governing body of the Council and is responsible for the formulation of the Council's policy' (SACC Constitution, point 6.1).

discussed whether representation has been gender equal or not. Another aspect is that many decisions have been taken in other forums. In particular, the General Secretaries have had great liberty to express views on behalf of the Council. This is no less true about the prophetic ministry. So, the question about how the prophetic voice has been expressed could be answered in many ways. I have nevertheless chosen to look for the answers in the context of the NC. One can say, therefore, that most of all, this thesis answers the question how the NC of the SACC has been prophetic.

In answering the question, 'How has the prophetic voice of the SACC changed?', this is my point of departure. I have read certain texts from these conferences. It might have been possible to interview people who were present, but there are complications with that kind of approach. People tend to forget. After a few years it is difficult to know whether one really remembers what took place, or whether the memories are formed by the stories of others. Another reason is that my interest has not been solely historical. As my research problem reveals, this is one important aspect; but I also want to discuss the content of the prophetic voice. In this context it is important to qualify the research problem and ask: How has the articulation of the prophetic voice changed, seen through certain texts from the highest decision-making body of the organisation, the National Council? Therefore the resolutions and statements of the NC are one part of the empirical material of this thesis. But there are other expressions of the prophetic voice. Right from the beginning the NC delegated to the National Executive Committee (NEC), and even to the GS, the right to speak on behalf of the SACC.[10] There are many reasons for this, and I shall touch upon these in my chapter on method, under the section about delimitations. Suffice it to say that the material would have been endless if one had had to cover all the statements made by the NEC and successive General Secretaries. Therefore I decided to read the GS's reports to the NC as a way of concentrating the material. There is also a second reason for this. One can assume that not all that has been said by the General Secretaries has been approved by the whole organisation. What is in the report from the NC is at least in one sense accepted, since it forms a part of the total NC documentation. A last aspect is that the GS has not always been the most articulate

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[10] 'It was agreed that the Executive be given authority to print and publish documents concerning action taken by the Council in matters of this nature without awaiting authority from the Council.' National Conference 1968 (CCSA), Minutes §13, page 5. At the 1969 NC there was also a memorandum about how the SACC could make statements. This became part of the foundation for the Council to be able to fulfil a prophetic role. Statements could only come from the Executive or the National Conference. It was also clearly stated that these statements were not binding on the member churches. Between meetings the General Secretary was allowed to make statements (National Conference 1969, Memorandum on statements by the SACC).

representative of the SACC. At times this position has been taken by the President of the SACC. Therefore I have also included the Presidential addresses in the research material.

Some of the General Secretaries and Presidents definitely could be – and have been – described as prophets themselves. It would have been interesting to concentrate on some of these individuals as examples of prophets.[11] But my focus is elsewhere. I study the whole organisation, and therefore I shall not even include the names of the different officials in my text. This is a deliberate choice. I have become more and more interested in the power relations between different groups in South African society, and how the prophetic voice of the SACC relates to these power relations. If the reader wants to know exactly who is talking or writing, an appendix offers help. But in this thesis the office is more important than the office bearer.

As I shall also discuss in chapter three, I have decided to concentrate on the verbal side of the prophetic ministry. One can say that even actions are articulations, if one speaks from a discourse analysis perspective.[12] But I concentrate on texts. This thesis is a reading of *written* texts.

These few comments have been necessary, in order to summarise what the research problem really is. **My aim is to study how the articulation of the prophetic voice of the SACC, seen through central texts from the National Conferences, has changed since 1990.**

A fundamental condition is that the prophetic voice has changed, since the South African society has gone through tremendous changes during the time in focus. The aim of the study is therefore to answer the question *how* it has changed.

One important aspect of the contemporary history of South Africa is the Reconciliation process. Also in the texts of the SACC the phenomenon of reconciliation plays a crucial role. The answer to the research problem is therefore going to touch on the relation between the prophetic voice and reconciliation. My preliminary hypothesis is that the SACC, throughout

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[11] 'Within this context Naudé was a prophet. He was a prophet who was thirty years ahead of the Afrikaner people and the DRC in his quest for justice and righteousness' (my translation). 'Binne hierdie konteks was Naudé 'n profeet. Hy was 'n profeet wat die Afrikanervolk en die NGK dertig jaar vooruit was in sy oproep tot reg en geregtigheid' (Jordaan Potgieter, *Cottesloe: Keerpunt in die verhoudinge tussen die Nederduitse Gerefoormeerde Kerk en Ds Beyers Naudé* [Bloemfontein: Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1991], page 79).

[12] 'Like many linguists, I shall use 'discourse' to refer to spoken or written language use, though I also want to extend it to include other types of semiotic activity (i.e. activity which produces meanings), such as visual images (photography, film, video, diagrams) and non-verbal communication (e.g. gestures)' (Norman Fairclough, *Media Discourse* [London: Edward Arnold, 1995], page 54).

its existence, has been more focused on fostering unity, and subsequently also on reconciliation, than anything else. The prophetic voice of the SACC therefore also has to do with reconciliation in different ways. The way the texts of the SACC have filled the concept 'reconciliation' with meaning has changed both over time and in relation to different issues. Before 1990 the reconciliation concept was an important part of the prophetic voice. The prophetic vision was a nation where people from different ethnic groups would live in peace and harmony. Since 1990 this has changed. The prophetic voice of the SACC has become more diffuse. Before 1990 is was focused on abolishing apartheid and ultimately establishing unity between the different ethnic groups in the country; but after 1990 it has not had this focus. In relation to other intersectional[13] injustices, the SACC has not formulated a clear prophetic message. The SACC has been searching for a renewed Kairos.

The texts I have been reading are the General Secretaries' Reports, Presidential addresses, Resolutions, and in some cases Minutes.[14] I have read texts from the years 1969 to 2004.

1.2   Studies previously done on the subject (From where?)

This section also forms part of the context. By this I do not mean that other studies made of this subject are directly part of the context in which the texts are written. But they are part of the context in which the texts are to be read and understood. In chapter two this special context will be developed. When I go through this, two things will be clear. First of all there is not much written about the prophetic voice of the SACC after 1990. No comprehensive study from this perspective has been made.[15] Second, few, if any, studies have been made with the aim of analysing the texts of the SACC. As far as I know this has not been done, at least not with a discourse analysis approach. Therefore there is a clear gap in the research on this point.

1.3   Methodology (How?)

The method I have used has been a combination of different approaches. When I started to read the textual material I did this in the hermeneutical tradition, meaning that I regard the reading of the texts as an interaction between me as a reader and the texts, in which both the

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[13] For an explanation of the term 'intersectionality', see further paragraph 3.3.5.
[14] I shall elaborate on the reason for working with these texts in the paragraph about delimitations.
[15] SACC's own publication for its 25th anniversary, *Come Celebrate*, focuses mainly on the years before 1990.

text and the reader influence each other. In this process, my intention has been to understand the meaning of the texts, being aware that I read with a certain preconception (as already mentioned in my prologue).

Since my research problem has to do with change over time, I regard the historical context as essential. The texts I have read are written in a certain situation with certain aims. This will be reflected in the chapter on context, in introductions to the paragraphs in chapter five, and in connection with different examples of the prophetic ministry, when needed.

When I first read through the material and found areas where the SACC had spoken out prophetically, I found topics that I had expected to find, as well as unexpected topics. The articulations of the prophetic voice covered a wide range of questions, and were also expressions of many different standpoints. This was natural, seeing that the SACC has many different members. But I also sensed different power relations in the material, and felt a need for a supplementary method. In addition to the hermeneutical approach, therefore, I have used a theory based on discourse analysis, in order to unearth some of these differences. The aim has been to describe how the articulation of the prophetic voice has changed, and also how this change is an expression of the power relations I have seen in the texts. The kind of relations I have been interested in is not relations between different persons or groups, but rather between different discourses. In chapter three I shall show how a theory based on discourse analysis can be helpful in this respect.

1.4   The value of the study (Why?)

There is a vast amount of material published about the struggle against apartheid. In this context much has been written about the role of the SACC. But when we come to the period after 1990, the material is surprisingly meagre. In chapter two I give an account of the current state of research. As I shall show, no comparison is made between the role of the SACC before and after 1990. As far as I know no such work has been done so far. Therefore this could be described as a gap in the research field.

Another gap is related to the methodology of the thesis. Contemporary church history can be written in different ways. My contribution to this field is that I have read the SACC texts from the discourse analytical tradition. This has not, as far as I know, been done before. As Etherington writes, although more than 10 years ago:

Up to this point there has been very little historical work on Southern African religion employing techniques of post-structural or discourse analysis.[16]

There are examples of analyses carried out in a post-structural[17] way; but most evaluations of the SACC have been carried out within other theoretical frameworks. With my thesis I hope to broaden the perspective.

There are also other answers to the question about the value of this study. I have chosen to work with a theory based on discourse analysis because I believe it is important to be a part of the reality that I am studying. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips state that the value of one's research can be measured on the basis of how much it contributes to change. Especially when they describe discourse psychology (one tradition within the discourse analytical research field) they discuss a concept related to value, namely how to determine validity, and write about the fruitfulness of a study:

> In evaluating the fruitfulness of the analysis, the focus is on the explanatory potential of the analytical framework including its ability to provide new explanations.[18]

In order to determine this fruitfulness, which is one aspect of the value, we have to look beyond this thesis and appreciate the process taking place in the way the thesis will be received. Only then will the question about fruitfulness be answered.

I write in this tradition because I want to contribute to change. I agree with Winther Jørgensen and Phillips when they clearly state that the purpose of discourse analysis is not to get outside the discourse or to find out what people really mean. It is not even to discover the reality outside discourse. They write:

> The starting point is that reality can never be reached outside discourses and so it is discourse itself that has become the object of analysis.[19]

They argue that the analyst should not even sort out which statements are right or wrong. But when the thesis is read and discussed in the context, it will, one hopes, affect the situation in the ecumenical movement. Therefore one could, as Winther Jørgensen and Phillips say, carry out a critical evaluation at a later stage. But initially the analysis does not aim at taking a

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[16] Norman Etherington, "Recent Trends in the Historiography of Christianity in Southern Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Jun., 1996), page 201 www.jstor.org/stable/2637057 2009-09-11.

[17] One such example is the doctoral thesis of M. A. Plaatjies: M. A. Plaatjies, *Vroue in die Teologiese Antropologie in die Afrikaanse Gereformeerde tradisie* (Unpublished. Pretoria: Unisa, 2003).

[18] Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 125.

[19] Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 21.

stance.[20] If the thesis contributes to the transformation process, it is because it provides new explanations.

Another value of my research is the fact that I live on one continent and study on another. Throughout the work on this thesis I have maintained that I want to be enrolled at a South African university.[21] I strongly believe in the importance of contacts between different continents on all levels. In being a Swedish scholar at a South African university, I shall contribute from the perspective I have. Even more, I shall be at the receiving end, in getting new perspectives from the South African context in general and the Theological Faculty at University of the Free State (UFS) in particular.

The last aspect of the value of the study has to do with reconciliation. I believe that reconciliation is an ongoing process, and is one that has only started in South Africa. The world has been amazed by the success with which South Africa moved from apartheid to democracy in a peaceful way. There are many threats to this process. I lived for four years in South Africa after the democratisation, and met people in different set-ups. My conviction is that the prophetic voice in the reconciliation process is needed. The SACC is far from the only one. But the SACC is one of these voices. If my thesis can contribute to a discussion about how this ministry is to be fulfilled, for the sake of reconciliation, then my aim is more than attained.

1.5   The sub-title of the thesis: 'searching for a renewed Kairos'

Some of the most important analytical tools used in the analysis in this thesis are thoughts from the *Kairos Document*. It has to be said that the *Kairos Document* was not a SACC document, although the Council stood behind the ideology of the document and also regarded

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[20] I am aware, though, that I take a stance both for the need for transformation and for the need for reconciliation in the South African society.

[21] One option was to move to a Swedish university. In discussion with one of the professors at the University of Uppsala, I was given the advice, which I followed, to stay at UFS.

the situation in the end of the 1980s as a Kairos.[22] During this period the texts describe the situation using similar terms. (One example is the term 'crisis').[23]

After the events around 1990 it was clear to the Council that the Kairos had changed. One can say that the Kairos had become more intense, although the focus was still to abolish apartheid as an evil system. When the country was on its way to a new, democratic situation, the way in which the Kairos was described changed. In the words of the GS 1992:

> 2.2 The Opportunity to Secure God's Justice
>
> Whilst this crisis is one of the worst ever, with the risk of letting the country slip into chaos and civil war, I submit that this is an opportunity for all South Africans together with the international society to ensure that a just democratic society is established in South Africa. This crisis has helped to clarify the nature of the problem we are facing and to make the difference between demands for a just democratic order and the efforts to entrench minority rule crystal clear.
>
> A kairos is usually a "moment of grace and opportunity, the favourable time in which God issues a challenge to decisive action". But it can also be dangerous because if we fail to recognise it, if we missed it, the judgement of God will be upon us.
>
> This is the time for us as the Church to play a unique role of safeguarding the interests of justice and peace by strongly advocating for the cause of the poor and oppressed people of South Africa.[24]

The same understanding we find in a resolution the same year, which used the terms 'crisis' and 'Kairos' as synonyms.[25] The country and the Council were still on the way to freedom from the oppressive rule of the apartheid regime. Another suggestion, made already in 1993 by Cedric Mayson, was that the Kairos had gone, the moment of truth was no longer there, but a prophetic voice was still needed:

> Whilst it is true that there are kairos times when the moment seems ripe for society to make a great step forward, our experience in the struggle of God, not only now but for thousands of years, is that God sends

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[22] 'All of these activities must be re-shaped to be more fully consistent with a prophetic faith related to the KAIROS that God is offering us today' ("The Kairos Document, 1985." [Source: The Kairos Theologians, The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church (Braamfontein, 1985).] in *Between Christ and Caesar*, Charles Villa-Vicencio, Chapter five, point 5.3 [Claremont: David Philip, 1986].).

[23] 'The Current situation in South Africa is part of the human crisis. The Church is God's instrument of intervention' (Presidential address 1987, page 14).

[24] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 4, point 2.2.

[25] ' 19. CURRENT CRISIS

In view of the extreme seriousness of the crisis still facing our country over the coming months, Conference requests the General Secretary to arrange a combined meeting of Church Leaders and the new SACC National Executive Committee:

a) to consider the state of the nation.

b) to review the pertinent proceedings of this Conference.

c) to make decision as to action required of the Christian Church in the face of Kairos we face'

(National Conference 1992, resolution 19).

prophets. These are the catalysts who give us the ideals, the vision, the courage, to turn the dreams and rhetoric and culture into reality. Very seldom do prophets appear on the scene as leaders of religious or political movements, though they may become them. More usually, they are ordinary people who have a trust in the power of God amongst us to transcend our problems, a vision of the future that sees the dawn beyond the darkest night, and the willingness to stick their necks out. You maybe?[26]

In 1994 a new government was elected. The Kairos was described in yet a different way, and in this context the Kairos was no longer synonymous with crisis but with opportunities:

4.4 New Opportunities (Kairos) and Challenges

I believe that the ending of the apartheid system; the credibility of the new order which has emerged; coupled with the new world order free of the East-West Cold War; and the stature of President Mandela amongst leaders in the world opens for us (South Africa), together with our sisters and brothers in the Southern African region, an opportunity, space or possibilities for us to establish the 'ideal' society which we struggled for and died for ... the ideals of a just political, economic and social order.[27]

According to Ericson, the Kairos concept later changed and became linked with the Old Testament Jubilee concept (the year when those who had lost their freedom as a result of debts, recovered both their property and freedom). She refers to Molefe Tsele when she states:

On the 10th anniversary of the Kairos Document, the "New Kairos" was seen as one that should lead to Jubilee, as expressed in the Hebrew Bible...[28]

In the textual material from the end of the 1990s, the term Kairos was never used in that sense. Yet another example, although from the provincial level of the SACC, we get from the Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches. According to this Council another Kairos was born in 1996, namely the Kairos on crime, violence, and lawlessness.

In 1996, crime and violence was catapulted onto every agenda in the Western Cape. As we grappled to respond adequately to this crisis, it became clear that we are facing a new moment of opportunity, a new KAIROS.[29]

The concept also later appeared in the texts of the Council, in relation to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, which, according to the GS's Report 2001, became the new Kairos.

Therefore, in saying AIDS is the Kairos, we want to say this is a fundamental challenge to us and to society as a whole, where the church need to speak with specificity and particularity.[30]

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[26] Cedric Mayson, "Theological Themes*" in *Come celebrate. Twenty-five Years of The South African Council of Churches,* eds. Bernhard Spong and Cedric Mayson, page 133 (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1993).

[27] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 8, point 4.4.

[28] Ericson 2001, page 329.

[29] R. Keith Benjamin, "Foreword" in *Until Peace and Justice Embrace – a Challenge to the Church and Christians in the Western Cape –,* page 1 (Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches, 1996).

This was even reflected at a higher level of the ecumenical church, when the Christian Communicators workshop met in Malawi in August 2003.[31]

In and around the SACC a number of different moments of truth appeared. When we choose to use a subtitle like this, the quest is to find out whether or not the Council has found a new focus, a new moment of truth, where it is obvious what God wants and how the prophetic voice should be articulated. This is one aspect of how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed after 1990.

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[30] General Secretary's Report 2001, Page 15. Knutson also describes this as the new Kairos: 'Today it seems that more than anything the AIDS pandemic is bringing Christians and churches back into civil society, back onto the streets, back into the homes of the marginalized, back into vigorous debate and critical involvement with corporations and politicians. It seems that HIV/AIDS is presenting us with a new **kairos**' (Philip. J. Knutson, *Mission and Prophetic Witness in Southern Africa: Some Lutheran Perspectives*. http://academic.sun.ac.za/buvton/Vennote/.../Philip_se_referaat_2005.doc *2010-01-25,* page 11).

[31] 'A Kairos Document, to ensure that HIV/AIDS becomes a part of the NEPAD programme of action is due to be drawn by some of the top theologians in the continent, a Christian Communicators Workshop held in Malawi recently resolved' (Shupayi Mpunga, "Kairos document for HIV/AIDS." *Challenge,* no. 74 [October 2003], page 26).

2   An organisation fighting for independence

Studies previously done on the subject

Although no comprehensive study has been made of the prophetic role of the SACC, there is material about the SACC in other kind of books and articles, and in literature about the role of the Church in South Africa. One such book is *The Church Struggle in South Africa,* where John and Steve de Gruchy give one of the few analyses of how the involvement of the churches in South Africa changed after 1990. Under the theme *From Church Struggle to Church Struggles* they discern four different challenges of the churches involvement in the new situation:

> … we can suggest four significant and interlocking challenges that have emerged for the church in South Africa at the start of the twenty-first century: the livelihoods for the poor; human sexuality and gender justice; the impact of pluralism; and the effects of globalization.[32]

In the end of the book there is a comment about how, during the apartheid era, the churches faced the enemy with passion and compassion, but how this role in the new situation has been challenged. This is common in the literature about the Church in South Africa. Desmond Tutu summarises the point like this in an article he wrote in 1995:

> Nothing unites a disparate group so effectively as having to face a common enemy.[33]

De Gruchy and De Gruchy agree with him.[34] It is a fundamental idea that this phenomenon influenced all the churches that were involved in the fight against apartheid. They found unity in the struggle. In this context the SACC is mentioned as the most important organisation in which this cooperation became visible. The end of the struggle therefore forced the SACC to search for a new meaningful agenda, as Strauss points out.[35] It comes as no surprise that the abolition of the apartheid system led to

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[32] John de Gruchy and Steve de Gruchy. *The Church Struggle in South Africa. 25th Anniversary Edition*, (London: SCM Press, 2004), page 229.

[33] Desmond Tutu, "Identity Crisis" in: *The Christian Churches and the* Democratisation *of Africa,* ed. Paul Gifford, page 95 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

[34] 'The irony of the church struggle against apartheid was that an ideology of apartness and exclusion provided the churches in South Africa with a sense of unity and cohesion' (De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 223).

[35] 'Moreover, the SACC gives the impression that, after the struggle against apartheid, it has difficulty in finding a new, meaningful agenda, and with that to find relevance' (my translation). 'Boonop laat die SARK die indruk dat hy na die *struggle* teen apartheid moeite het om 'n nuwe, sinvolle agenda en daarmee relevansie te vind' (P. J. (Piet) Strauss, *"Die NG Kerk en sy ekumeniese bande."* In *Moeisame pad na vernuwing, Die NG Kerk se pad*

… the emergence of denominational myopia and internal ecclesial concerns, and on the other hand to a diffusion of focus in regard to the witness of the church in the face of the a plethora of concerns in the public arena.[36]

The book by De Gruchy and De Gruchy covers the same field of research as this thesis, but the approach is different. Their focus is certainly wider: the authors write about the role of Christianity as a whole. Nevertheless they refer to the role of the SACC many times. Although they sometimes use a terminology inspired by discourse analysis, their aim has obviously not been to carry out an analysis in this tradition. Their judgement about the SACC is quite positive when it comes to some of the focused areas; and in general terms, they argue that the SACC has taken a leading role in this new situation.[37] They continue to state, though, that there are a number of churches outside the SACC that have their own agenda. Those churches are powerful, especially in their use of the media, and constitute a serious threat to the dominant role of the traditional churches.[38] Walshe agrees that other churches have become such a threat to the leadership role of the SACC, and he also argues that those churches have an agenda different from the member churches of the SACC, who traditionally were politically involved.[39] This is another side of the change that is said to have taken place around the democratisation in South Africa. Not only has the unity of the churches that were involved in the struggle been challenged by the new situation; a new space has also been created for denominations that are, if not apolitical, at least less interested in being involved in politics.

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van isolasie en die soeke na 'n nuwe relevansie, eds. Flip Du Toit, Hoffie Hofmeyr, Piet Strauss, and Johan van der Merwe, page 237 [Bloemfontein: Barnabas, 2002]).

[36] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 223.

[37] 'It is to the credit of SACC that it has sought to provide leadership for the churches around these new challenges' (De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 228).

[38] 'The perspective of the churches that led the struggle against apartheid, led largely by the SACC, is now challenged by the voices of charismatic , independent , Pentecostal and indigenous churches who have a growing hold on TV, radio, and bookshops, and who are making inroads into the membership of the "mainline" churches' (De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 229).

[39] 'The prophetic voice may fade and phlegmatic churches re-establish their ascendancy in South Africa's complex mix of Christian cultures' (Peter Walshe, *"Christianity and Democratisation in South Africa: The Prophetic Voice within Phlegmatic Churches."* in *The Christian churches and the democratisation of Africa,* ed. Paul Gifford, page 93 [Leiden: Brill, 1995].). This is the kind of reaction Egan describes as 'withdrawal'. He argues that most of the churches actually have this approach: 'Most of all, the majority of churches (particularly Africa Initiated Churches [AIC] and Evangelical-Pentecostals) eschew "politics" to focus on worship, personal ethics and healing' (Anthony Egan, "Kingdom deferred? The churches in South Africa, 1994-2006." in *State of the Nation. South Africa 2007,* eds. Sakhela Buhlungu, Johan Daniel, Roger Southall, and Jessica Lutchman, page 459 [Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007]. http://books.google.se/books?id=VZvma2zVuqAC&printsec =frontcover&source=gbs_navlinks_s#v=onepage&q=&f=false 2010-03-22).

According to De Gruchy and De Gruchy, the SACC has been concerned with the situation of the poor. But when it comes to one specific issue facing the poor – which also has an impact when it comes to human sexuality and gender justice – nothing at all is said about the role of the SACC. The issue at stake is the scourge of HIV and AIDS. One of the sections of the De Gruchy and De Gruchy book focuses on the question about how the churches respond to the disease. It is notable that the work of the SACC is omitted in this part.[40] Is it because De Gruchy and De Gruchy do not find that the SACC contributes anything in this area? Or are other organisations or denominations more involved? We shall not get any answer to that question, but we can only recognise that this is the case. There is no doubt, though, that they regard HIV and AIDS as something that the church ought to focus on.[41] They argue that many churches and Christians are involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS, but that the link between AIDS and sex makes it difficult for even those who are concerned to know how to respond. The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town at that time, Njongonkulu Ndugane, is singled out as one important prophetic voice, especially against the government. Commenting on his role, they write:

> In a very similar manner to the struggle against apartheid, it is the church's grassroots presence and ministry among those who are suffering, dying and grieving that gives it the courage and conviction to speak prophetically. Even in a democratic South Africa, it is a calling that it cannot evade.[42]

So, if the SACC is not speaking out prophetically about HIV and AIDS, the answer could be that the churches are not fully involved at grassroots level. De Gruchy and De Gruchy say nothing about this. Another possible explanation has to do with the issue about 'power relations' between men and women. De Gruchy and De Gruchy describes this as

> … one of the fundamental church struggles that we now face.[43]

At this stage we can only ask questions about the omission of the SACC from their discussion in this context.

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[40] Egan also leaves out the SACC when he writes about HIV and AIDS (Egan 2007, page 458).

[41] 'The challenge of AIDS is more than just a livelihoods challenge to the church, of course. It raises a whole range of theological issues to do with sexual ethics, patriarchy, stigma, suffering, exclusion, care, death and bereavement, issues to which the church brings an array of resources and energies' (De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 234).

[42] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 236.

[43] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 236.

It gets really interesting when De Gruchy and De Gruchy move deeper into the field of human sexuality and gender justice. Their language is influenced by discourse analysis. They analyse the situation like this:

> In the past 200 years South Africa has witnessed the collapse of two hegemonic sexual ethical systems. In the first instance, colonial conquest, missionary teaching and migratory labour destroyed the sexual ethic system of traditional African culture. At the same time that this former system was collapsing, the colonial powers introduced a conservative sexual ethical mix of dour Dutch Calvinism, British missionary piety and up-right Victorianism. The break-up of this second system seems to have been coterminous with the end of apartheid and our re-entry to the global world.[44]

Although this section does not directly speak about the SACC it describes a process within which the SACC exists. When asking how the texts of the SACC speak about the HIV and AIDS pandemic, these perspectives will be in especial focus.

The problems that the church has had in dealing with sexuality become even more obvious in the case of gender issues. One of the reasons for this is that the church itself is rooted in patriarchal structures and that the leadership of the church is predominately male.[45] The churches, according to De Gruchy and De Gruchy, have even greater problems dealing with issues of homosexuality.

Another analyst summarises the situation of the SACC after 1994 as a situation characterised by economic hardships:

> The liberation struggle was over, and many overseas donors had chosen to channel their help to other parts of the world, where bigger crises had occurred. The difficult task of reorganising the work of the SACC, and especially to cut personnel drastically, was put on the shoulders of Dr Bam. For more than a decade the work to set the agenda for the SACC in a new South Africa would keep her and her two successors, Rev. Charity Majiza and Dr Molefe Tsele, busy (my translation).[46]

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[44] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 237.

[45] 'Yet sexism in the church and in the broader society was largely ignored in both the church struggle and the struggle for liberation. Not even the *Kairos Document* referred to the oppression of women or to women's theologies of liberation' (De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 212).

[46] 'Die bevrydingstryd was verby en talle oorsese donateurs het verkies om hul hulp na ander wêrelddele – waar groter krisisse geheers het – te kanaliseer. Die moeilike opdrag om die werksaamhede van die SARK te herorganiseer, om veral drasties op personeel te besnoei, het op['] dr Bam se skouers geval. Vir meer as 'n dekade sou dié werk, die vasstelling van die agenda van die SARK in die nuwe Suid-Afrika, haar en haar twee opvolgers, eerw. Charity Majiza en dr Molefe Tsele besig hou' (P.G.J Meiring, ""Welkom tuis, broeders." Die verhaal van die NG Kerk en die Suid-Afrikaanse Raad van Kerke (1936-2004)." *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif),* vol 46, issue 3 & 4, [Sep/Dec 2005], page 461. http://0-search.sabinet.co.za.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/WebZ/images/ejour/ngtt/ngtt_v46_n3_a14.pdf?sessionid=01-33013-1514681707&format=F 2009-09-24).

We can compare this description with the situation referred to by Thomas, describing the early 1970s as a financially stable situation, which changed when the Schlebusch Commission of Inquiry into Certain Organisations issued its report on the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre.[47] When talking about the economic situation of the SACC after 1990, Walshe also asks some questions about the future of the SACC, and touches on the same issue as Meiring.[48]

Walshe continues to ask about the prophetic voice, and introduces the thought that the prophetic ministry is needed for the sake of both whites and blacks in the country.

> In this context, two issues may be of vital importance for South Africa's future. The first is whether prophetic witness will renew its strength and contribute to sustaining the country's predominantly black political culture of racial tolerance and non-racial ideals – in a time when whites experience a loss of power and redress of black communities' grievances about inequality and economic exploitation are slow in coming. The second and related issue is whether the prophetic church having experienced the compromises of a relatively peaceful political transition, will be able to articulate a theology critical of the continuing structural injustices (social sin) of South African society.[49]

This need for a prophetic voice after 1994 features in many articles in different journals. For instance, if one asks whether the SACC has opposed the government since 1990, one can find some signs that the SACC has done that. Kuperus says that this is the case, although one might have expected something else. He does not agree with the idea that the SACC is the ANC at prayer. He argues that the Council maintains a critical distance from the government, eventhough they agree on the basic principles on nation-building and reconstruction.[50] The difficulty is the wish both to be prophetic and to take part in nation-building. Kuperus has seen this, and continues:

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[47] Thomas 1979, page 61.

[48] 'But what about the future? The SACC, which relied essentially on the international churches for its financial support, has seen its budget slashed in recent years, necessitating major cutbacks in staff and programmes; ecumenical organizations like Diakonia and ICT are facing comparable financial stress' (Peter Walshe, "Christianity and the Anti-Apartheid Struggle: The Prophetic Voice within Divided Churches." in *Christianity in South Africa. A political, social & cultural history,* eds. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, page 398 [Cape Town: David Philip, 1997].).

[49] Walshe 1997, page 399.

[50] '… one would expect the SACC's relationship to the current government to be one of strong support, or the 'ANC at prayer'. However, the SACC has tried not to be an instrument of the state. Its leaders today recognise the complex situation in which they find themselves, and they have tried to maintain a critical distance from the ANC-dominated state to maintain their legitimacy, even as they support the state's overall goals concerning nation-building and reconstruction' (Tracy Kuperus, "Building Democracy: An Examination of Religious Associations in South Africa and Zimbabwe." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 37, no. 4 [Dec., 1999], page 657. Published by: Cambridge University Press. www.jstor.org/stable/161430 2009-09-11).

More specifically, in the early 1990s, religious leaders, especially those connected with the SACC, decided that a different contextual theology – a theology of reconstruction (rather than resistance) – was needed to ground the churches' goals and purposes in the new South Africa.[51]

Kuperus refers to Charles Villa-Vicencio and his prophetic theology of reconstruction, which both denounces exploitation and at the same time affirms the process of nation-building. In this context the 'critical solidarity' concept is introduced.[52] We shall have reason to come back to the whole question about 'critical solidarity'.

Interestingly, there are a number of examples in the literature where the SACC is seen as being critical of the government. One such example is given by Vanessa Farr. She writes about the R30 billion weapons procurement package approved by the South African cabinet in November 1998. This deal included the purchase of jet fighters from Sweden and Britain, light utility helicopters from Italy, and submarines from Germany. Thus not only was a lot of money involved: good relations with major trade partners in Western Europe were at stake.

> The decision to embark on this 'upgrading' of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) met with resistance from civil society, especially a coalition formed by the South African Council of Churches, who argued that the country cannot afford such a purchase when social services are in decline and the problems of poverty alleviation and development are pressing. They also expressed fears that South Africa's decision could set off an arms race on the subcontinent.[53]

When we read the texts of the SACC we shall come back to this issue. At this stage we can establish that the role of the SACC is seen as being critical of the government. Another such example is given by Phimister and Raftopoulus, who write about the relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe:

> In much the same period the chairman of the National Constitutional Assembly was brutally assaulted by armed police and left for dead during a march for constitutional reform (Sunday Times, 22 February 2004). An appeal to Mbeki from the South African Council of Churches urging him to send a delegation to Harare to rekindle talks between ZANU-PF and the MDC drew only the blandest of non-committal replies: 'President Mbeki agreed with the churches that there was no substitute for dialogue and that South Africa should do everything possible to assist the people of Zimbabwe to find a solution to their

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[51] Kuperus 1999, page 657.

[52] 'A theology of reconstruction involves churches that are in *critical solidarity* with a democratically elected government. Churches and religious organisations cannot simply retreat to saving souls and letting politicians do the politicking, nor can they continue criticizing and resisting the state, making unrealistic, utopian demands. Instead, the church 'must be critical' but from within the context of solidarity and support for what is good and laudable in the government's programmes' (Kuperus 1999, page 657-658).

[53] Vanessa Farr, "How Do We Know We Are at Peace? Reflections on the Aftermath Conference." *Agenda*, no. 43, Women and the Aftermath (2000), page 24. Published by: Agenda Feminist Media. www.jstor.org/stable/4066106 20090911.

problems' (Cape Times, 25 February 2004). It certainly left Mugabe free to threaten to put his opposition to 'eternal sleep', as he again ruled out talks with the MDC.[54]

As we can see, the SACC is said to have been approaching the government, although in a very tactful manner. Words like 'appeal' and 'urge' indicate that the critique was considerate. When reading texts from the National Conferences, we shall ask whether or not this 'softness' in relation to the Zimbabwe issue is supported by the texts.

Another issue on which the SACC and the government have had different opinions is the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy. Saul argues that the SACC has been critical of the government on this point.[55] He makes the point that poverty and inequality, which fuelled the struggle against apartheid, remain in South Africa. Churches in general are questioning the outcome of the ANC's politics:

> Take the churches, for example. In 1998, Anglican Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane was himself slammed by Mandela for questioning the gospel according to GEAR.[56]

So the question is: Has the SACC been as critical as the former Archbishop of the Anglican Church was? Saul gives some insights from the NC of 1998, but he is referring to the discussion rather than to resolutions:

> Dr. Beyers Naudé argued that 'while GEAR is a "party political issue", when it affects the poor, the church has no option but to intervene.' At the same meeting, Mzwandile Nuns, representing the worker ministry in KwaZulu-Natal, noted the government argument that they are 'cutting social spending in favor [favour] of lower company taxation which will subsequently create an environment for more companies to invest.' But, he continued, 'what we see on the ground is different. The bulk of poor people remain where they were many years ago.' The lesson? As another delegate to the conference, Professor Takatso Mofokeng, put the point, the churches 'should go back to the trenches, because it seems that is the language the government understands. 'People should demand what they are entitled to and use the

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[54] Ian Phimister and Brian Raftopoulos, "Mugabe, Mbeki & the Politics of Anti-Imperialism." *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 31, no. 101, An African Scramble? (Sep., 2004), pages 395-396. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. www.jstor.org/stable/4006963 2009-09-11.

[55] This is also supported by Egan: 'While some church people and groups at the grassroots have endorsed liberation theology (a complex theology that is normally broadly sympathetic to some or other form of humane socialism), the churches' leadership has tended towards a form of people-centred social-democratic welfare capitalism. In South Africa after 1994 this has led to many churches endorsing the ANC's initial Reconstruction and Development Programme policies, and concern that the shift to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy backtracked into a less people-friendly neo-liberalism. A guiding principle is the notion of 'economic justice for all' (the title of the SACBC's 1999 statement). Justice and the avoidance of South Africa becoming a neo-liberal 'imperial state' in Africa were central to the joint SACC/SACBC (2002) statement *Unblurring the Vision: An Assessment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development By South African Churches*' (Egan 2007, page 457).

[56] John S. Saul, "Cry for the Beloved Country: The Post-Apartheid Denouement." *Review of African Political Economy*, vol. 28, no. 89, State of the Union: Africa in 2001 (Sep., 2001), page 452. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. www.jstor.org/stable/4006620 2009-09-11.

methodology that works. GEAR didn't come up for referendum. If people are not happy about it they must stand up against it.'[57]

When we read the resolutions from that National Conference, we shall ask if the same picture will emerge. But the picture given by several researchers in various fields is still that the SACC takes a critical stance against the government from time to time. One commentator writes about the New Partnership for Africa's Development programme (NEPAD):

> The South African Council of Churches' critique seems harsh when one considers the relative [relatively] short period of time during which the NEPAD process was developed.[58]

Yet another field where the SACC is said to have intervened in the business of government is the issue of child grants. Johnson writes about the former Minister of Welfare, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, who launched the child support programme in 1997. She is said to have argued that the grant targeted the poorest of the poor. Johnson records that the SACC, together with some other organisations, has challenged the government about the lives of the poor.[59] According to Johnson the criticism was harsh, and this indicates that the Council was part of a more outspoken critique of the government. But in the same breath Johnson argues that the SACC and the other critical organisations have a problem in relating to the government.

> The South African Council of Churches, also a strong supporter of the anti-apartheid struggle, particularly under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, continues to have strong links with the ANC, especially through another of its formers leaders, the Reverend Frank Chikane, who is now the Director-General in President Thabo Mbeki's office. The Human Rights Commission and the Commissioners are appointed by the ANC government. In other words, all of these organizations have very strong personal as well as professional ties with the ruling ANC government.[60]

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[57] Saul 2001, page 452.

[58] Cornel du Toit, "Global partners for local initiatives: NEPAD in the era of globalization." *Scriptura 91* (2006), page 54, http://0-search.sabinet.co.za.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/WebZ/images/ejour/script/script_v91_a5.pdf ?sessionid=01-36945-894418042&format=F 2009-09-12.

[59] 'However, the Department of Welfare's programs drew harsh criticism from a wide range of organizations, including the South African NGO Coalition, the South African Council of Churches, and the Congress of South African Trade unions (COSATU), which is part of the ruling tripartite alliance with the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party. For the first time, the ANC-led government and an ANC minister faced a broad array of forces – including two constitutionally mandated bodies, the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Gender Equality – that had organized around an issue affecting the poor. These organizations raised a number of criticisms of the proposed grant, including the benefit level of the grant, the eligible age group, and the size of the target group' (Krista Johnson, "The Trade-Offs between Distributive Equity and Democratic Process: The Case of Child Welfare Reform." *African Studies Review*, vol. 43, no. 3 (Dec., 2000), page 20-21. www.jstor.org/stable/525067 2009-09-11).

[60] Johnson 2000, page 29.

This opinion is widespread, and is shared by Croucher (amongst others), who writes about the situation of the gay community in South Africa. She also focuses on the phenomenon that leaders from anti-apartheid organisations have been absorbed into state functions.[61]

Returning to the SACC, Kuperus, in his comparison of the situations in South Africa and Zimbabwe, finds a clear difference. According to him the religious groups in South Africa are more government-friendly than in Zimbabwe.[62]

We can conclude that the picture is not homogeneous. The SACC is seen as a critical voice among others; but at the same time it is an ally of the government.[63] To make the picture even more complex, we can also indicate that the SACC is sometimes described as critical of other groups in the society, and thus as being a partner of the ANC. One such issue is again the situation of lesbians and gays in South Africa.

> Apartheid relied heavily upon the construction of conspiracies that threatened the nation. The discourse of conspiracy retains a good deal of power within a new South Africa and is deployed both by the ACDP and the Coalition. For the ACDP, there is something of a conspiracy of those who take the 'politically correct' position on issues which they would answer in Christian terms: homosexuality, abortion, pornography, and prostitution are high on the list. The conspiracy includes the Coalition, which has co-opted not only African lesbians and gays (whom it also converted), but the ANC, the South African Council of Churches, universities, the media, and no doubt many others.[64]

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[61] 'Steven Friedman has argued that many crucial members of South African civil society, the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU), South Africa's National Civic Organisation (SANCO), the Congress of Traditional Leaders (CONTRALESA) and the South African Council of Churches are too closely allied with, if not firmly under the control of, the ANC to act as a watchdog of the state. In fact, crucial organs of South Africa's civil society were only recently a part of a bloc aspiring to become the state; and since the democratic transition, many of the most talented and trained leaders of these organisations have been absorbed into the state. Who or what, then, Friedman asks, is left to constitute civil society?' (Sheila Croucher, "South Africa's Democratisation and the Politics of Gay Liberation." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, *v*ol. 28, no. 2 [Jun., 2002], page 327, http://www.jstor.org/stable/823387 2009-09-11).

[62] 'After liberation, church groups changed their strategies to reconstruction with the new state/government. Zimbabwean religious groups, however, have moved back to a strategy of steady resistance to the authoritarian tendencies of the Zimbabwean state, while South Africa's religious groups are critically supportive of the democratic gains in the new state' (Kuperus 1999, page 652).

[63] 'Since 2000, the SACC together with the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African NGO coalition have drafted an annual *'People's Budget'*, a set of economic proposals that put poor people first and promote policies and state spending aimed at meeting basic needs, unemployment reduction, job creation, revitalised public services, and economic equity through better wealth distribution. Finance Minister Trevor Manuel has noted the initiative and made the *People's Budget* 'required reading' for his staff' (Egan 2007, page 457).

[64] Carl F. Stychin, "Constituting Sexuality: The Struggle for Sexual Orientation in the South African Bill of Rights." Journal of Law and Society, vol. 23, no. 4 (Dec., 1996), pages 475-476 . Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of Cardiff university. www.jstor.org/stable/1410476 2009-09-11.

In this case one can assume that the author regards the SACC as a voice that prophetically stands up for the rights of homosexuals. If one asked the leaders of the ACDP[65], they would probably argue that the truly prophetic voice speaks against homosexuality. We can see how the SACC is regarded as a movement that is prophetic – sometimes against the government and sometimes on the same side as the government.[66] When Kuperus describes the situation he captures the complexity of the SACC being both critical and supportive of the government, and at the same time having financial as well as leadership problems.

> In sum, religious organisations in South Africa support the state's overall programmes, but they have also maintained their autonomy on policy formulation through their commitment to 'critical solidarity'. Despite their valuable watchdog role, religious organisations like the SACC and SACBC[67] face significant problems related to the lack of a stable financial base, the movement of top leaders into the government, and the difficulty of engaging with and providing moral leadership within a pluralistic, democratic society.[68]

This is one way of summarising the situation, but it is not the only way. This will be clear when we read the texts and go more deeply into the question of how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed.

2.1 Summing up:

First, we can conclude that there is a gap in the research. No comprehensive analyses have been made of the prophetic voice of the SACC in general, and especially not in the discourse analysis tradition. Different scholars, both in books and periodicals, deal with the role of the SACC from time to time and in various contexts. A mixed picture emerges. The SACC is described both as a critical instance and as an ally of the government. Much of the dilemma is summarised in the 'critical solidarity' concept. How to understand this concept will be one important question for which to find an answer, in the second reading.

The SACC is described as a weaker organisation after 1994. There are several reasons for this. The first argument is that the common enemy, apartheid, is gone. The financial situation

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[65] ACDP = African Christian Democratic Party, formed in 1993.
[66] Egan writes about the ACDP that 'it is, secondly a broadly ecumenical coalition to like-minded Christians. In a sense it is a kind of 'anti-SACC'. Hostile to the ANC (which the SACC broadly supports), as well as to the theological liberalism and interfaith religious pluralism. It is also, and to varying degrees, anti-socialist' (Egan 2007, page 459).
[67] South African Catholic Bishops' Conference.
[68] Kuperus 1999, page 660.

is another explanation, and the absorption of former SACC leaders into the state yet another. Our analysis will not focus much on this state of affairs. It is worth noting only when reading how different scholars explain the situation.

From this discussion of the current state of the research I want to raise a few questions. One is the way in which De Gruchy and De Gruchy in particular – but also the other writers – omit the whole HIV and AIDS issue in relation to the SACC. Does this indicate that the Council has not been a prophetic voice in this respect? Or is it just that other voices, like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC), have been more outspoken?

Another issue I want to evaluate more fully is the discussion about different ethical systems when it comes to sexuality. I would prefer to call them 'discourses', and I shall especially look for this in the texts where the SACC deals with HIV and AIDS.

Yet another relevant issue is whether or not a prophetic stance about the situation of the white population, which Walshe mentions, is called for. Has the SACC said anything at all, for instance, about affirmative action? This will be dealt with in the section about ethnicity.[69]

A final question hangs in the air: Are these different examples really speaking about the prophetic voice, as inspired by a divine authority? Or is it just a critical voice against the government?

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[69] I prefer to use the term 'ethnicity' and not 'race'. First, the term 'race' is loaded with so many negative connotations. Second the concept of 'ethnicity' covers more aspects of this problem. Having said this, I still want to indicate that the term 'race' sometimes will be used, depending on the context. In those cases I shall use the terms more or less as synonyms.

3   Approaching reality through texts

On methodology

In the introduction a few remarks concerning method have already been offered. It is now time to develop those thoughts. I agree with Engdahl that there is a difference between methodology and method:

> We deliberately differentiate between method, as the actual model applied to our subject matter, and methodology, as the further elaboration on method as an indispensable means of scholarly work. In other words there is a meta-level in our discussion, which we call methodology.[70]

In the first section of this chapter I shall first present the method I have used in the thesis. It is built on both a hermeneutic approach and discourse theoretical premises. In this context I also present the delimitations that I have done.

In the second part of this chapter I shall first of all discuss the concept 'prophetic' which is central in the thesis. Some attention will also be given to the 'reconciliation' concept. Thereafter I shall further elaborate on the theoretical framework in which my method is to be placed. This means that I continue with methodology. One important aspect of this will be the discussion about the meaning of 'discourse theoretical premises'. Thereafter I shall discuss some other theoretical concepts, which shall be used as tools in the analysis to follow. These are the 'intersectionality' concept and some concepts from the *Kairos Document* ('State Theology', 'Church Theology' and 'Prophetic Theology').

3.1   Method

When I first encountered the SACC texts at the University of Witwatersrand's Historical Papers, I approached the material with a general interest in the prophetic voice of the SACC. I had not worked out any specific approach or battery of questions. I would describe the method I used as hermeneutical. What I did was to carry out a benevolent reading.[71] I started to read the material from the year 1969 onwards the year after the Christian Council of South

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[70] Hans S. A. Engdahl, *Theology in Conflict – Readings in Afrikaner* Theology (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006), page 13.

[71] The kind of approach I had could also be named *text immanent* '... where the internal dynamic of the text would be in focus, not comparisons with other contemporary texts' (Engdahl 2006, page 11).

Africa (CCSA) changed its name to the SACC. Quite early in the process I had to restrict myself to certain texts. (I shall describe this in the section about delimitations.)

Another choice was whether to read the texts with the aim of finding out the intention of the author, or allowing the texts to speak for themselves. I have chosen the latter. When I read the texts from the SACC, I am not primarily interested in the life and thoughts of the person who actually wrote the Minutes. The same applies to the reports of the General Secretaries and the Presidential addresses. It is not the psychological life of the author I am searching for. In line with Foucault, I regard them as subject positions.[72] Therefore I am not going to state which GS or President is the author of a specific text.[73] One can of course argue that the thoughts expressed by the GS say more about what she or he believes, and not necessarily reflect the ideas shared by the whole Council. But I shall argue that statements within the material from National Conferences are expressions of the SACC.

Having said this, I remain interested in the life of the Council. In that sense I am, in my first reading, searching for some sort of compromise. However, even if I want to grasp how the Council was acting, I build on Gadamer and the hermeneutic tradition. Sometimes it is the actual text that forms history, rather than the intention of the author – or in this case, the intention of the Council.[74] In my first reading of the material I therefore try to be in dialogue with the text in order to understand the text itself.

My aim was to read the texts with an open mind, being part of this interaction within the texts. (I shall elaborate on this in the theory chapter.) At this stage I restrict myself to giving an account of some of my preconceptions, a vital element in the hermeneutical theory.

One of the most important was the aim to contribute to change and reconciliation. I am not indifferent to how the situation in South Africa develops. I hope that my research will provide new explanations. I shall present another important preconception in the paragraph about historiography[75] in chapter four. When I describe the history of South Africa in general, and of Christianity in particular, I also do that with a certain preconception. For example, I admit that I have not read the history from a gender perspective. Also, it is important to know that I

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[72] See further paragraph 3.3.4.2.

[73] In appendix 6 I give the names of all SACC Presidents and General Secretaries, in case the reader wishes to know who is behind a certain text.

[74] This became obvious when the NC took the bold decision on conscientious objection at Hammanskraal in 1974. The NC was definitely not aware of the impact that the decision would have in the media.

[75] I shall only describe a few different types of historiography in the writing of South African history, and not involve myself in a more thorough discussion of the history of historiography. For this study it is enough that I describe which historiographical tradition I am part of.

approach the texts, and the SACC as a whole, with a positive attitude. As I stated initially, the Church of Sweden has long been an important partner of the SACC. I am aware that these conditions might have coloured my research, and I therefore need to formulate this at an early stage.

During the first reading of the material, I understood that there is a relationship between the prophetic voice and reconciliation. This has partly to do with the fact that the SACC, as it has stated in its constitution, is an organisation that aims for unity. One general question, as part of my preconception, was therefore to ask how this connection was expressed in the texts. Other more specific questions were: Was there a prophetic voice within the SACC concerning the HIV and AIDS pandemic?[76] Had the SACC said anything about the situation in Zimbabwe? The reason for asking questions like these was of course the fact that I was living in South Africa at the time, and these were two relevant issues in the daily discussions between people as well as in the media. In this sense my study, like all other studies, has been contextual.

At the same time I had a historical approach in mind. The historical context is essential if one wants to understand texts. They were written in certain situations with certain aims. Since the texts are a part of this context, I have therefore also read the texts in this way. This could be seen as a contradiction of what I have said earlier. If the reading is 'text immanent', can it still be historical? The answer to this is that there is this tension throughout the thesis. I nevertheless regard the texts as important sources for understanding the historical period in focus. Sometimes I have even included other sources to shed light on the historical course of events, when the texts have not given enough material for this understanding.

Another dilemma concerns whether the analysis is systematic or historical. In line with the way I have argued above, I would say that the analysis is systematic in a historical situation.

This partly historical approach will be reflected in three ways. First, in chapter four I shall offer a general background to both the political history of South Africa and the history of

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[76] In a publication from the SACC in 2003, one could read: 'Are the churches doing anything? This is the question I'm repeatedly asked in the HIV/Aids circles in which I move. At the International AIDS Conference last year, HIV activist groups were threatening to demonstrate against Faith Based Organisations because of the apparent lack of response.

The fact that so many are raising the question, is the assumption true? Those within the inners circles of the church know that the assumption is completely untrue' (*The South African Council of Churches cares.* Pamphlet sponsored by the SACC as a contribution to Aids awareness. 2003, page 3).

South African Christianity.[77] I shall also give an overview of how the SACC came into being. This includes a prehistory describing both the General Missionary Conference (GMC) and the CCSA. Second, when I present the actual reading of the texts, I shall give an introduction to each section that gives some indication of the historical context. Last I shall put some of the examples I use in their specific context, when this is needed.

In this first, benevolent, reading of the material I found important areas where the SACC had articulated a prophetic voice, both before and after 1990 that I had not expected to find. I started to make notes about this and the list of examples I gathered became longer and longer. I could see that the SACC had spoken out on many different issues and with different perspectives. I began to feel a need for a supplementary method. I could see that different power relations came to the fore in these prophetic articulations. This was nothing strange. Bearing in mind that the SACC consists of a large number of member churches and member organisations, the organisation is bound to contain many different theologies, beliefs, and viewpoints. The question, 'How to be prophetic?', is given different answers within this large body of Christians. But a denominational point of view is not the only way of describing this heterogeneity. It could also be described from gender, ethnicity, social class,[78] or other perspectives. I found those differences within the textual material, although I had made some delimitations. In this situation I moved to a second method, which I decided to use together with the first, hermeneutical, one. While the hermeneutical method tries to see the material as a coherent entirety, I was looking for a method that could help me to find and analyse the irregularities in the material.

I found a tool for unearthing some of these differences in the theoretical framework of 'discourse analysis'. The aim was not only to describe how the articulation of the prophetic voice had changed, but also how this change was affected by the power relations within the SACC. The kind of relations I was interested in was not relations between different persons or groups, but rather between different discourses. (I shall elaborate on this in the theory section.) At this stage I want to indicate that I shall use the discourse analysis method freely. One could say, perhaps, that I build my method on discourse theoretical premises.

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[77] It was not a matter of course to place the historical chapter after the methodology chapter. One reason for doing this was to show that the way I describe the history of South Africa reveals some of my preconceptions. Building partly on the hermeneutical tradition, this is an important approach.

[78] I prefer to use the broader term 'social class' instead of the more traditional, Marxist term 'class', since I am not using Marxist theory in this thesis.

I therefore describe the first reading as a benevolent reading, done in a combined hermeneutical and discourse theoretical tradition. The hermeneutical part is first of all an understanding that I approach the texts with preconceptions. Still, I want to be part of a dialectical relationship with the text, where my understanding, as a reader (or should we say the understanding of the present?) becomes congruent as far as possible with the meaning in the text.

In the first reading I have done exactly this. Although I use certain categories in order to organise the textual material, my intention still is to allow the texts to talk. Therefore I have included a great number of quotations in the chapter about the first reading. I have done this partly to allow the texts to come to the fore, and partly to make the method transparent.

The categories I use as entry points are partly borrowed from De Gruchy and De Gruchy, but also inspired by the way the SACC texts describe the field. I have read the texts with the idea that these categories runs right through the material. Following the terminology of discourse analysis, I call them 'orders of discourse'. In the same way I have discerned different 'discourses' within the various orders of discourse.

When I read the material right through, chronologically, I marked all the different examples of these orders of discourse. Some of the areas I had suspected from the outset I would find, such as different examples of how the SACC expresses itself in the field of ethnicity. But other areas I only found to be important after having read through the material. One such example is the order of discourse that I have named 'violence versus non-violence'.

In one way this method means a disassembling or dismantling of the texts. With the help of discourse theoretical premises I can perform this dismantling. First of all, I have broken down the textual material into orders of discourse and even sub-orders of discourse. Within every order or sub-order of discourse, a number of discourses are found. With the help of concepts such as 'hegemony' and 'antagonism', I manage to uncover some of the power relations within the texts. (I shall come back to these concepts in paragraph about the theoretical framework of this thesis.)

The second reading of the texts will focus on the concept 'prophetic'. The Council has, according to the texts, had different relations to the government. We shall differentiate between more traditional prophetic ministries, where a Mosaic prophetic ministry will be set against a Davidic prophetic ministry. Phenomena like the ministry of mediation and the ministry of nation-building will also be in focus. Furthermore, the relationship between the

concepts 'prophetic' and 'reconciliation' will be elaborated on. With the help of discourse theoretical premises I shall regard these concepts as 'nodal points'. (This concept will be explained in the theory section.) Even in the second reading I have found it important to give many examples from the textual material. Sometimes those quotations will be placed in the text, sometimes given as foot notes. As in the first reading, this makes the study transparent.

3.1.1 Summing up:

The method I have used in this thesis was from the beginning hermeneutical, although I began to read the material without a well thought-out approach. Interested in the prophetic voice of the SACC, I read the material in a benevolent way. Doing this in a hermeneutical tradition meant that I became involved in a relationship with the texts, where both parts influenced one another. In this exercise I have first and foremost been interested in what the texts say, and not in the life and thoughts of the person who actually wrote the text.

My preconceptions played an important role in this interaction. It has therefore been important to state what kind of preconceptions I have been aware of, knowing that there is much more to it. First of all, my aim has been to contribute to transformation (and to the reconciliation process) by providing new explanations. Another important preconception is my positive experience of the SACC. Yet another preconception is that, at an early stage, I saw a relationship between the prophetic voice and reconciliation. Furthermore I had some questions about how the SACC argued in relation to HIV and AIDS and the Zimbabwe crisis, for which I wanted answers. These are some of the preconceptions I had when I entered into this hermeneutical reading.

One goal with the first, benevolent reading was to understand the historical context in which the texts had been written. This historical context will be reflected in three ways: as a general background, in the introductions to each section, and sometimes in connection with examples I offer in a specific context.

Quite soon, though, I experienced a need for a supplementary method, seeing that different power relations were present in the prophetic articulations. I therefore built my method on discourse theoretical premises. So I describe the first reading as a benevolent reading, done in a combined hermeneutic and discourse theoretical tradition. In order to go deeper into the text I make use of some orders of discourse that seemingly contradict my objective to read

benevolently. I have delimited the discourses and the orders of discourse with secondary sources as a help, but also after having read through the texts a first time. Having broken down the textual material into orders of discourse, and even sub-orders of discourse, I manage to uncover some of the power relations found within the texts.

Another important aspect is my intention to allow the texts to talk. Therefore I have included a great number of quotations. I have done this partly to allow the texts to come to the fore, and partly to be transparent.

In the second reading of the texts, the focus is on the concept 'prophetic'. I get help from some concepts, which will be presented in the theory chapter. A major part of the second reading is to shed light on the relationship between the concepts 'prophetic' and 'reconciliation'. Also in this chapter it has been important to give many examples from the textual material, sometimes in the text, sometimes as foot-notes.

3.2   General delimitations

This thesis deals with change over time. Therefore it makes sense to study texts. Conducting interviews would include the problem of people not remembering exactly what happened. I could have carried out a field study, but I was not present during the transition from apartheid to democracy. So, first, I limit myself to the study of texts, written during the period I want to study. One problem here is the question about how the texts are received. When people read the texts, meaning is shaped. I cannot claim at all that I have studied the process of reception. This is my first delimitation. There are others to be made.

Second, my geographic focus is South Africa. This might seem a natural delimitation, but a number of churches are organisationally present in more than one country. For example, the Anglican Church of Southern Africa[79] is found in the countries of Angola, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mocambique, Namibia, South Africa, and the island of St Helena (South Atlantic Island). The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA) is active in South Africa, Botswana, and Swaziland. The Eastern Diocese of ELCSA, for example, is divided into two circuits, one in Swaziland and the other in Mpumalanga, South Africa. Its Swaziland circuit belongs to the Council of Swaziland Churches, whereas the South African part of that diocese relates to the Mpumalanga Council of Churches, the regional level of the SACC. The

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[79] This denomination was formerly called the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA).

list of such examples could be much longer. It would be very interesting to study the ecumenical church in those different countries, but I have not chosen to do that. The political situation in South Africa has been and is still very special. Therefore it makes sense to focus on this country. The ecumenical councils are also organised along national lines, which makes it reasonable to concentrate on one country. As stated in the prologue, I have been interested in South Africa because I have lived and worked there.

Third I have to make delimitations in respect the time frame. One question is where to set the cut-off point, in order to be able to study the 'before and after' aspect. I have chosen 1990 as this cut-off point. This was not a self-evident choice. The year 1994 could just as well have been a good cut-off point, as the year when the first democratic elections were held and Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was sworn in as the President of South Africa. Indeed there are other possibilities too: the new South African Constitution was only adopted on 8 May 1996. But something happened in 1990 that has direct influence on the prophetic role of the SACC. When Mandela was released from prison, and organisations like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) were unbanned, the role of the SACC changed dramatically. Until this point the SACC had been, if not the only one, at least one of the more important voices in the anti-apartheid struggle inside South Africa. This changed in 1990, and it is therefore possible to assume that the prophetic voice of the Council also changed.[80] Most of all, though, the reason for using 1990 as a cut-off year is determined by the church situation. The Rustenburg Conference in 1990, to which we shall return in chapter five, is just such an event.[81]

The time issue also raised questions about how long a period I wish to study. The SACC, as a new organisation, was founded in 1968, when the CCSA took a decision at its biennial meeting to change its name to the South African Council of Churches.[82] As I shall discuss in chapter four, one could argue that the decision was just a name change. The CCSA had existed as an organisation since 1936, and even before that Christians in South Africa were organised. Still I made the decision to start when the Council got its new name. I see this as a

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[80] Ericson supports the view that this change occurred in 1990, not in 1994: 'With the unbanning of the liberation movement and the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 it was no longer enough to resist apartheid, but the churches had to ask themselves how best to share in the building of a new nation' (Ericson 2001, page 329).

[81] The international situation would also support the choice of 1990. We will come back to this aspect, eventhough the focus of the thesis is not on how the prophetic voice has been influenced by the international community in general or the worldwide ecumenical church in particular. This study is in that respect more immanent, taking its point of departure from the textual material itself.

[82] National Conference 1968 (CCSA), Minutes, paragraph 6.

new beginning. In the period after Cottesloe the CCSA was not a strong ecumenical movement. The name change, and changes to parts of the constitution were kind of vitamin injection for the work of the Council. The year after the name change, 1969, will therefore be the starting point of the study, since this was the first year in which the SACC held a National Conference after the name change. I included texts up to 2004 because I wanted to include as much contemporary material as possible. (The material from the NC 2007 will only be finalised at the NC 2010; Since 1995 the National Conference has been triennial.)[83] Therefore I regard the 2004 NC as the latest that can be covered in this study. Another significant matter is that the DRC became a full member of the SACC at the 2004 NC. This had not been the case since the days when the DRC was a member of its predecessor, the CCSA. I believe that this will influence how the prophetic voice will change in the future. (This matter, however, is a topic for another thesis.)

Last, the written material of the SACC is a vast source of information. I have decided to use material from the national level, and especially from the SACC's National Conferences. There may have been good reasons to go further down in the organisation, to the regional or even local level. I have chosen not to do that. But even at national level there are crossroads where I have to decide which road to follow. Should I read documentation from all the divisions and follow themes through the decision-making processes in the National Executive Council (NEC), at the meetings of Church leaders, and in the different divisions at the head-quarters at Khotso house? At an early stage I found it sufficient to read the material from the NC. The major reason for choosing these texts is that the SACC National Conference is the forum where representatives from all the member churches and member organisations are present. If, for example, I read material from the different divisions, it is produced by individual office bearers, whereas the texts written at NC are expressions of a broader ecumenical opinion.

Three categories of texts were to be found at almost every National Conference. First, I read the Minutes and especially the resolutions. Those are decisions made democratically by representatives from all the different member churches and member organisations. If one wants to find out what the SACC really says, this is a starting point. In addition, I found the

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[83] This is a clear weakness in my study. From 1969 to 1995 National Conferences were held annually. After 1995 they were held every third year. This means that the material before the 1990s is much more extensive.

Presidential addresses and the General Secretaries' reports occurring almost every year.[84] These two categories represent the thoughts of the persons respectively elected as chairperson of the Council and appointed the head of administration. The GS's report also summarises the work carried out during the year. The relationship between those two offices is interesting. Sometimes one official has played a more prominent role than the other. But one of the two has been seen as the mouth piece of the Council. Therefore it is of great interest to go deeper into those addresses and reports. I made a deliberate choice to restrict myself to these three categories of text.[85]

3.2.1 Summing up:

I have limited myself to the study of texts. disregarding the process of reception or other non-verbal articulations. The second delimitation has been to study only South Africa. Politically the country is unique. Ecumenically the Councils are also organised nationally. A third delimitation has to do with the time aspect: I have chosen 1990 as the cut-off year for the 'before and after' comparison, because when organisations like the ANC and the PAC were unbanned, the role of the SACC changed. The Rustenburg Conference was also held in 1990. Another aspect of timing sets limits: the SACC held its first National Conference under its new name in 1969, making this the starting point for the study; the final year is 2004. Last, I have restricted the reading of texts to material from National Conferences as the forum where all the member churches and organisations are represented. I have analysed resolutions, Presidential addresses, and the General Secretaries' reports.

3.3   Theoretical framework

In this paragraph I want to present the theoretical framework with which my thesis is written. This means several things. First, I need to discuss the meaning I give to the concept 'prophetic'. This is crucial for the thesis. I shall also say a few words about another important concept, 'reconciliation'.

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[84] I have not been able to find the reports of the General Secretaries or Presidential addresses from every year. In some cases I have used the President's Sermon to fill this gap.

[85] In some cases, though, I have included other, secondary sources, in order to shed light on the historical context in which the texts were written.

Having done this, I shall describe the theoretical traditions on which my method rests. These include hermeneutics, social constructionism, and discourse analysis. I have a reason for doing so at this stage, when I have already presented the method itself. I wanted to give the reader a concise description of my method and why I use it, before I develop the background further.

Last, I shall introduce a few concepts that will be useful in the analysis. The first concept is 'intersectionality', which helps us to understand the relation between categories like 'gender', 'ethnicity', 'social class', etc. I also introduce some concepts from the *Kairos Document*: 'State theology', 'Church theology', and 'Prophetic theology'. These theories and concepts are important parts of the theoretical framework with which I make my analysis.

3.3.1 The concept 'prophetic'

The aim of this section is to look into the meaning of the concept 'prophetic'. Before it is possible to analyse how the SACC has articulated its prophetic voice, I have to say something about the term itself.

There are several levels to this task. First there is a linguistic or semantic level. Second, and more interestingly, I want to describe the concept itself from different backgrounds, including the Old and New Testaments and Church history. Third, I need to discuss the concept thoroughly and show what kind of meaning it is given in this thesis.

3.3.1.1 The word 'prophetic'

The common form of the word is 'prophet', thus referring to a person. In English one can name a person a prophet or a prophetess.[86] The activity of that person is to prophesy. What she or he delivers is a prophecy. When the adjective 'prophetic' is being used, it does not necessarily describe a person; more often it refers to a group of people or to a community rather than to an individual.

We shall have to go back to the ancient Greek to find the roots of the word itself. The Greek word is *prophētēs,* which was

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[86] In my discussion I shall use the word 'prophet' for both women and men.

> … a person who was a member of the temple staff, who interpreted the ecstatic or unintelligible utterances of the priestess of Zeus or the Pythia.[87]

According to Meyer and Friedrich, the oldest example relates to the oldest oracle in Greece, the oracle of Zeus at Dodona in the barbarian surroundings of Epirus.[88] The role of the ancient Greek prophets has few similarities with more recent prophets. When, for instance, the LXX[89] uses the Greek word *prophētēs,* it does not mean that the translators are saying that an Old Testament (OT) prophet is like an ancient Greek prophet.[90] Likewise, the concept of oracle has no place in our present traditions. But we have the word from that context, and therefore it needs to be mentioned. And of course there are some links between these concepts and later examples of prophets. In this context Meyer and Friedrich continue describing prophets:

> Appointed men and women who declare something whose content is not derived from themselves but from the god who reveals his will at the particular site.[91]

The last remark in particular, about the prophet only working in a certain place, is not relevant in this study. The prophetic activities we study can, geographically speaking, take place anywhere.

The common understanding of a prophet is a person who is predicting what will happen in the future.[92] There are other voices that see it differently.[93] Lindblom, however, argues that the *pro-* in the word can literally mean both *forth* and *before.* His interpretation, though, is that it more often means *forth.* So we can describe a prophet as a *forth-teller* rather than a *fore-teller*.[94]

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[87] Joseph Blenkinsopp, *A History of Prophecy in Israel- Revised and Enlarged* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), page 27.

[88] Rudolf Meyer and Gerhard Friedrich, "Prophētēs." in *Theological Dictionary of New Testament,* eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, Vol VI, page 785 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdman, 1968).

[89] LXX, or Septuagint, is the most common Greek translation of the Old Testament.

[90] 'LXX did not translate the word *nabî,* which it rendered consistently as *prophētēs*; rather it used an equivalent term with a venerable Gk history that meant something in the non-Jewish world of that time. Obviously, therefore, although the Jewish translators would have been among the first to insist that Israelite prophecy was something special, they recognised, and so must we, that it stood in some kind of relation to the greater human culture of which Israel was but a part' (Bruce Vawter, "Introduction to prophetic literature." in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary,* eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy, page 224 [12:3] (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968)).

[91] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 791.

[92] A prophecy is 'a statement that something will happen in the future, especially one made by someone with religious or magic powers' (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English.* 3rd edition. Harlow: Longman, 1995, page 1131).

[93] 'By prophecy we understand not specifically or even principally the forecasting of the future - a fairly late conception of what is essential to prophecy – but rather the mediation and interpretation of the divine mind and will' (Vawter 1968:1, page 224 [12:4]).

[94] Johannes Lindblom, *Prophecy in ancient Israel* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), page 1.

Having said this, it is also important to state that there is a difference between the word 'prophet', referring to a person who prophesies, and the concept of 'being prophetic'. Gowan defines the word 'prophetic' like this:

> ... to take a lonely stance for truth and justice, against popular opinion.[95]

The term 'prophetic' is often used to describe a collective, like a movement or an organisation, whereas the term 'prophet' always refers to an individual, although he or she can belong to a group.

One important aspect of the word 'prophetic' is that it presupposes some sort of divine inspiration. This is also a theoretical problem. First, we cannot in any scientific sense show that a particular prophecy is inspired by God. But even outside the scientific context, a number of questions arise. If one argues that the prophetic gift comes from God, who then has the mandate to have any opinions about the prophetic act at all? If different prophecies contradict one another, which one is the right prophecy? Given the specific theoretical background of this thesis, this problem will not be discussed. We shall rather look for different understandings of the concept 'prophetic' in the material, and see how those relate to another. The aim is to decide neither which prophecy is correct, nor how a correct definition of the word 'prophetic' would be formulated.

3.3.1.2 Three perspectives

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the concept, I shall describe the phenomenon from three different angles: how the concept has been used in the OT and in the New Testament (NT) respectively, and how it has been used in Church history.

Before examining the different contexts, I want to state why I do this exercise. My aim is not to give an exhaustive account of what the OT or the NT mean by the word 'prophet'. Likewise it will not be possible to describe more than briefly how the concept has been used in the history of Christianity. My objective is to show how the word 'prophet' has been used in important contexts; and in doing so I lean on other scholars in the different categories, knowing that other choices could have been made.

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[95] Donald E. Gowan, *Theology of the Prophetic Books: The Death and Resurrection of* Israel (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), page 2.

'Prophetic' in the Old Testament

We start with the OT not only because it makes sense chronologically, but also because – as we shall see – the textual material of the SACC makes frequent references to the OT.

There are a number of ways in which one can understand the word *prophet* in the Old Testament. The word referred to is not the Greek word *prophētēs*, but first and foremost the Hebrew word *nābî*. This is the word which the LXX translates as *prophētēs*.[96] The word *nābî* probably comes from an Akkadian verb meaning 'to call'.[97] Scholars have been discussing two different ways of understanding this: either in a more active sense, referring to a person who calls somebody or more passively, meaning the person who is being called.[98] It seems that the passive alternative is more plausible: a *nābî* is a person who is called.

But the *nābî* is not the only type of prophet in the Old Testament. The LXX also uses the word *prophētēs* to translate *roeh* (seer) and *mālāk* (messenger).[99] Related to these concepts are a number of other religious functions in the OT including shaman, witch or sorcerer, medium, diviner, priest, mystic, iIntermediary, etc.[100] This means that we have a wide range of aspects to take into account if we are to understand what the OT means by the word 'prophet'. We also need to understand that, in the many traditions woven together in the OT, a number of different understandings of the concept are found.

The OT concept of 'prophet' has developed over a very long period, and in part is poorly documented. OT scholars have different interpretations of the whole phenomenon. Nevertheless it is possible to find some unity among the different views, even if there are different traditions within the OT itself, and different views on how to interpret these traditions. According to Blenkinsopp, some of the areas of disagreement are:

- How to locate different kinds of prophecy institutionally and socially
- The relation between prophetic experience and tradition
- The dating and editorial history of prophetic material[101]

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[96] Robert. R. Wilson, *Prophecy and Society in Ancient* Israel (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), page 23.

[97] Blenkinsopp 1983, page 27.

[98] Bernhard W. Anderson, *The Living World of* the *Old Testament. 4th* Edition (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1988), page 248.

[99] Wilson 1980, page 23.

[100] Wilson 1980, page 23.

[101] Blenkinsopp 1983, page 1.

What is interesting from our point of view is the difference between former and latter prophetic traditions within the OT. No prophetic book in the OT comes from before the 8th century CE,[102] although both Amos and Hosea refer to an earlier prophetic tradition.[103] Concerning the former prophets, we only have the Deuteronomic[104] tradition to rely on.[105] Although there is an early appearance of prophets in Numbers 11, this is regarded as an anachronism. Anderson points to the prophets in 1 Sam 10:5-13 as the first prophets in the OT.[106]

Even though Wilson presumes that there is biblical evidence for continuity in prophetic activity throughout Israelite history[107], most scholars make a chronological division between different kinds of prophets. Vawter divides them into three major types,[108] but most scholars only use two types: former and latter prophets.[109] The difference between the two groups, apart from the chronology, is primarily the message. In the postexilic tradition the prophets want to convey that the covenant between Israel and Yahweh has been broken.[110] In the pre-exilic prophetic tradition the prophets relate to the political power of Israel. But this relation can have different focuses. Anderson points to one distinction: the prophet could be an outsider like Elijah, who opposes the King (1 Kings 21:20), or an insider like Nathan, who has an influence in the royal court (2 Sam 7:11-17).[111] In both cases the role of the early prophet is to maintain the social structure.[112] Vawter puts it like this:

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[102] CE = Common Era. I use this way of dating in an attempt to be open to other ways of dating, admitting that the traditional Christian (or should we say Western?) version is not the only one, and should not necessarily be regarded as the normal.

[103] Amos 2:11-12; Hosea 6:5; 9:7-8; 12:10, 13 (Blenkinsopp 1983, page 9).

[104] Traditional OT scholarship differs between four different traditions or independent stories within the Pentateuch. The Deutoronomic tradition is one and the others are the Yahwist tradition, the Elohist tradition and the Priestly tradition. (Eugene H. Maly, "Genesis." in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary,* eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy, page 3 [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968].).

[105] Wilson 1987, page 2. As early as Genesis 20:7 Abraham is described as a prophet. Wilson refers this, somewhat contradictorily, to the Elohist (E) tradition where intercession plays an important part (Wilson 1987, page 9). But there is a close relation between the Elohist and the Deuteronomic (D) traditions, as Blenkinsopp says: 'The E tradition, followed by the D, sees the prophets in a charismatic sequence descending from Moses and vitalizing the national history' (Blenkinsopp 1968, page 113).

[106] Anderson 1988, page 249.

[107] Wilson 1987, page 5.

[108] (a) Early prophecy (b) Classical prophecy (c) Post-exilic prophecy (Vawter 1968, page 225f [12:7-11]).

[109] James C. Turro and Raymond E. Brown, "Canonicity." In *The Jerome Biblical Commentary,* eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy, page 520 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968).

[110] Lindblom 1962, page 217.

[111] Anderson 1988, page 253.

[112] Wilson 1987, page 13.

Early prophets' major function was to stimulate patriotic and religious fervor.[113]

There were also false prophets amongst them. They were court prophets in whose interest it was to tell the king and his officials what they wanted to hear.[114]

Referring to OT prophets in general, Von Rad gives four reasons for the prophets to arise:[115]

1)   The degeneracy of Yahwism because of syncretism.

2)   Political reasons: formation of a state. 'Israel had thrown off Yahweh's guiding hand and become politically autonomous.'

3)   Economic and social developments and social injustice. (Isa 5:8, Micah 2:1f).

4)   The rise of Assyria.

The last reason determines the focus of the latter prophets. The nation is torn apart and oppressors rules over Israel. But the prophets do not criticise the oppressors: they address the people for not being obedient to God![116]

It may be possible to use the distinction between former and latter prophets when I look into the prophetic role of the SACC before and after 1990.[117] Instead of doing this, I shall build on the ideas of Anderson, describing prophets as either outsiders or insiders. This thought I want to develop with the help of Walter Brueggemann. He does not agree with the notion that there is a clear distinction between former and latter, between pre- and post-exilic prophets. He states that two circles of tradition in Israel's literature about covenant are commonly recognised; one derived from Moses, and the other more Davidic in its formulation.[118] The biblical material suggests that the two traditions are continuous, meaning that the Davidic tradition is derived from the Mosaic and also is fully faithful to it. Recent scholarship doubts this.

Brueggemann speaks about trajectories instead of traditions. He borrows the terminology from Robinson and Koester, who prefer to talk about trajectories rather than categories like

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[113] Vawter 1968, page 225 [12:7].

[114] Vawter 1968, page 226 [12:8].

[115] Gerhard von Rad, *The Message of the* Prophets (London, SCM Press, 1968), pages 9-10.

[116] There is sometimes a parallel with this last aspect in the SACC material. The prophetic voice of the SACC is not always directed at the government; from time to time it criticises its own organisation.

[117] My assumption would have been that SACC theologians before 1990 used the latter prophets as role models, and after 1990 the former. But it might also have been possible to say that figures like Ezra and Nehemiah became important role models after 1994.

[118] Walter Brueggemann, "Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel." in *The Bible and Liberation. Political and Social Hermeneutics*, eds. Norman K. Gottwald and Richard A. Horsley, page 202 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993).

background, environment or context, which they regard as too static.[119] In a sense the concept 'trajectory' show some resemblance with the 'discourse' concept. Brueggemann builds on these thoughts when he continues:

> … the Mosaic tradition tends to be a movement of protest which is situated among the disinherited and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who decisively intrudes, even against seemingly impenetrable institutions and orderings. On the other hand, the Davidic tradition tends to be a movement of consolidation which is situated among the established and secure and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on the present ordering.[120]

Brueggemann also writes about the sociological factors in relation to those two traditions. He is not primarily interested in the periodisation of the trajectories but in the continuity.[121] He builds on Mendenhall and his understanding of the conquest and the pre-monarchical period of Israel. The oppressed people rejected the given social order and became bound to a non-human overlord by covenant. Brueggemann makes some interesting observations about Israel. It would take us too far off track to include all of them here, but it is enough to say that our view of Israel is probably still to be revised.[122] One relevant aspect, though, is how Brueggemann, instead of calling the people of Israel 'nomad', introduces the term 'peasant', meaning someone whose labour produces something enjoyed by others.[123] Second he introduces a rethinking of the notion of 'tribe', not

> … as a natural ethnic grouping but as an intentional community deliberately committed to a different ideology and a different social organization.[124]

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[119] 'The static categories "background" or "environment" or "context" are all-embracing as well as specific. Their recategorization as "trajectories" applies both to the most embracing movement in which a whole culture is caught up, even to the history of its ontological presuppositions (such as the trajectory of Western civilization from essentialist to historic metaphysics). And to more specific streams, such as the course of its religious understanding of the trajectory of one specific religious tradition within the wider streams of movement. Just as a fixed datum was "located" on a spectrum or grid of static positions, so a trajectory of limited extent moves along as a variant or eddy within a broader religious or cultural current. Indeed only if the more pervasive flow is charted can the course of the specific trajectory be relevantly distinguished in its variance from that of the broader movement' (James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester. *Trajectories through Early Christianity* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971], pages 13-14).

[120] Brueggemann 1993, page 202.

[121] Brueggemann 1993, page 203.

[122] '… the dominant view of Early Israel as nomadic has been sharply placed in question. / … / What is different is not the mobility or lack of a place but a social ordering which is characterized by political decentralization and social egalitarianism in contrast to urban centralization and social stratification with the power in the hands of an elite' (Brueggemann 1993, page 203). Brueggemann. is referring to scholars like Mendenhall, Gottwald, and Frick.

[123] 'Peasant is characterized as one whose labor yields produce enjoyed by others' (Brueggemann 1993, page 203).

[124] Brueggemann 1993, page 204.

Third, a greater stress is placed on covenant as an ideology and form of social organisation. In this he draws on the thoughts of Gottwald; and this way of describing early Israel can shed some light on how the SACC as a movement, especially during the apartheid era, saw itself. But it could likewise lead our thoughts to the way in which the Reformed churches interpreted their situation during the English rule over Southern Africa in the early 1800s.

> These discussions of peasants, tribe, and covenant prepare the way for Gottwald's study of Early Israel as a community of radical liberation. His book has not yet appeared, but we have hints about his argument that conventional historical interpretations do not appropriate the sociopolitical radicalness of a movement which is profoundly religious in its commitment to the God of the exodus and dangerously political in its rejection of the status quo with its oppressive consciousness and practice.[125]

The other trajectory is the Davidic or monarchical one. If the previous quotation has something to say about the SACC during apartheid, or about the Reformed tradition under English rule, this could be just as adequate a way of describing the DRC when the National Party (NP) was in power, and possibly also bring some understanding to how the SACC interprets its role in the ministry of nation-building.

> The innovations and inventiveness of David and Solomon (expressed e.g., in temple, bureaucracy, harem, standing army, taxation system, utilization of wisdom) embody an imitation of urban imperial consciousness of Israel's more impressive neighbors and a radical rejection of the liberation consciousness of the Mosaic tradition.[126]

Brueggemann writes about the radical experiment of Moses, and says that it is given up in favour of an embracing of more imperial notions. This change can be seen in different ways: First, there is the organisational change from traditional to bureaucratic leadership. Second, God's relation to the people is changing where the concept 'tent' is replaced by the concept 'house'. The third aspect has to do with how David and Solomon relate to the priesthood. He also states that the creation theology serves to legitimate the regime. The same applies to messianism, which maintains a tension between the royal perspective and the Mosaic tradition.[127]

Brueggemann also relates the two trajectories to the two kingdoms, where the northern kingdom is said to be more open and vulnerable to the transforming impact of the Mosaic tradition.

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[125] Brueggemann 1993, page 206.
[126] Brueggemann 1993, page 206.
[127] Brueggemann 1993, page 208.

This entire phase of Israel's history is easily understood as a confrontation of kings and prophets, thus continuing the claims of the Davidic-Solomonic commitment to order and continuity and the Mosaic affirmation of freedom even at the cost of discontinuity.[128]

The two trajectories run right through the history of the people of Israel, according to the Old Testament. The pre-exilic period is dominated by the Mosaic trajectory.[129] Brueggemann calls the Mosaic tradition the Mosaic prophetic covenantal trajectory. In the post-exilic time there is a dialectical relation between the two trajectories.[130] Brueggemann claims for himself the inspiration for the use of his thoughts in the quest for how the SACC has carried out its prophetic role, when he writes:

> The pursuit of these trajectories may be a major service biblical study can offer to colleagues in other disciplines, for it may provide ground from which to do serious criticism. This discernment might lead one to expect a very different kind of scholarship, each faithful to a stream of tradition, depending on the context of the interpreter.[131]

The idea to apply his theories in the South African context has already been used by, for example, Villa-Vicencio.[132] When I use the ideas of Brueggemann – and especially the concept of the Mosaic and Davidic trajectories – it is important to say that my use is a development of the concepts of Brueggemann. He is not primarily speaking about the prophetic aspect, which I do. I shall come back to the way in which the SACC uses the prophetic traditions of the OT in the second reading of the material.

'Prophetic' in the New Testament

Prophets in the New Testament are different from their Old Testament predecessors. First and foremost, Jesus Christ is portrayed as the Prophet of prophets. Burkett writes about Jesus Christ as a prophet in the Mosaic tradition.[133] Mark on the other hand, he says, portrays Jesus

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[128] Brueggemann 1993, page 209.
[129] Brueggemann 1993, page 211.
[130] Brueggemann 1993, page 214.
[131] Brueggemann 1993, page 218-219.
[132] Charles Villa-Vicencio, Between Christ and Caesar: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Church and State (Cape Town: David Philip, 1986), page xvii.
[133] 'Certain groups in early Christianity assigned this role to Jesus e.g. Acts 3:22-24' (Delbert Burkett, *An introduction to the New Testament and the Origins of Christianity* [Cambridge, 2002], page 62).

as most of all an eschatological prophet.[134] The way in which the OT prophets are portrayed in the NT is stereotyped and very much like the common interpretation already touched upon:

> In the NT the OT prophets are men [sic] who proclaimed in advance what was later fulfilled in Christ.[135]

We can thus see how the eschatological aspect influences even the way the NT writes about the OT prophets. When we look to see how the NT itself understands the role of the contemporary prophets, it is different. The NT describes the prophet as

> … the biblical proclaimer of the divine, inspired message.[136]

This resembles the way in which the OT describes the prophet. Having said this, it is still evident that the focus of the NT prophet is different. Meyer and Friedrich continue:

> Primitive Christian prophecy is the inspired speech of charismatic preachers through whom God's plan of salvation for the world and the community and His will for the life of individual Christians are made known.[137]

Not much is said about the prophet addressing the surrounding society and taking a stance on questions of justice. Grassi also supports this view when he stresses the encouraging role of the prophet.[138] Crane gives three examples of how the followers of Jesus Christ exercised their prophetic gifts:

- Through revelatory insights
- Through wonder-working
- Through extrasensory perception[139]

Meyer and Friedrich on the other hand identify three slightly different aspects:

- Disclosure of future events
- Keeping expectations of the *parousia* alive
- Addressing contemporary issues[140]

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[134] Burkett 2002, page 158.

[135] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 832.

[136] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 828.

[137] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 848.

[138] 'In 1 Cor 14:1 Paul states that all Christians can aim at this gift. A Prophet is an inspired preacher who encourages, warns, or stimulates the community (1 Cor 14:3). His [sic] sincerity and conviction provoke a like response on the part of others (1 Cor 14:23). When a community is together studying the word of God it is the man [sic] with the gift of prophecy who is able to understand its meaning for the community and to express it with conviction, so that he [sic] is a source of courage to others' (Joseph A. Grassi, "The Letter to the Ephesians." in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary,* eds. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, and Roland E. Murphy, page 347 [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968].).

[139] Sidney D. Crane, The gift of Prophecy in the New Testament. An Inductive Study in the Exercise and Meaning of the Prophetic (Princeton New Jersey: Princeton theological Seminary, 1962), page 217.

The last aspect does not necessarily mean socio-political issues, but rather internal issues in the congregation. Still Meyer and Friedrich explain the major difference like this:

> Fundamentally, however, prophecy is not restricted to a few men and women in primitive Christianity.[141]

This collective concept, meaning that the prophet is part of the community of Christians, is essential to the NT perspective:

> He [sic] does not stand above community; like all the rest he [sic] is a member of it.[142]

This forms one background to the way the prophetic aspect is understood later in the history of Christianity. The emphasis is moving from the individual, religious functionary, to the group in which that person carries out her or his ministry. There is already a development in the concept of prophet in the NT context. In the second letter of Peter there are no longer any primitive prophets. In defence of eschatology, the author quotes Scripture rather than congregational prophets. With the repudiation of Montanism, prophecy came to an end in the early Church.[143] This is supported by Robinson and Koester, who write about the development of the episcopate:

> ... the power of the keys was originally designed to bolster offices which became typical of the major heresies: the prophet in Montanism, and the teacher in Gnosticism.[144]

The prophetic voice in the New Testament and early Christianity more and more becomes linked to an eschatological or apocalyptic teaching.[145]

The way the prophetic voice is expressed and described in the New Testament, generally speaking, is in many ways different from the Old Testament, although the OT itself contains many different aspects. In our study it is more relevant to relate to the OT material, since it deals with the relation between prophet and the surrounding society.

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[140] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 848.

[141] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 849.

[142] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 849.

[143] Meyer and Friedrich 1968, page 860. Chidester gives a more thorough explanation of why the Church rejected Montanism: '... the church of Montanus, a Christian movement that began in Phrygia during the second century, but was castigated as a heresy by Christians who objected that its women leaders were receiving new revelations. The visions of these women prophets might have developed distinctively feminine imagery of Christ' (David Chidester, *Christianity A Global History* [New York: Harper Collins Publisher, 2000], pages 82-83).

[144] Robinson and Koester 1971, page 124.

[145] 'The greatest difficulties, however, arise when one investigates the contribution of the early Christian prophets, their activities, and the preservation and transmission of their utterances. Clearly, this phenomenon, which belongs to the forms of oral tradition, has been a vital factor in the adaption of the literary genre of the apocalypse' (Robinson and Koester 1971, page 271).

When we now turn to the prophetic voice in church history we shall concentrate on the relation between the church and the society. [146]

'Prophetic' in church history

When the concept 'prophetic' occurs in the history of Christianity, the word 'prophetic' is not always used. In this paragraph we therefore explore more generally the relationship between church and state, and focus on the prophetic role of Christianity, even if it has not been described as prophetic. But I shall also mention some individuals who have been described as 'prophets'. This section is mainly built on the book: *Between Christ and Caesar: Classical and Contemporary Texts in Church and State*. Author Charles Villa-Vicencio says that the purpose of writing the book was

> … to identify the moment of prophetic resistance to the state, which is theologically related to the affirmation of government as a God-given institution for the common good of society.[147]

I agree with Villa-Vicencio that Christian resistance can be described as prophetic even if the terminology is not used. Throughout the introduction he draws a picture of the Church that has maintained a dualism with regard to relations with the state:

> The Christian church has played an ambiguous political role throughout its history. At times it has blessed and legitimated the state. This has, at least since the Constantinian settlement, been the dominant position of the church. This it has done either by direct support or by default, through affirming a 'future happiness' divorced from the existing order. At other times the church, although more often minority groups within the church, has rejected the status quo by affirming the rule of God, which has often meant a renunciation of the existing social order. [148]

Villa-Vicencio describes the DRC[149] as the church of the political establishment, always criticising the SACC, amongst others, for using religion for political purposes. But it has not always been like that. The church was committed to the cause of the poor Afrikaner working class. So he quotes a Reverend C. D. Brink, who said in 1947:

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[146] In the material itself, the NT notion of what a prophet is, has played a minor role in forming the prophetic ministry of the SACC. Reference to the NT is very seldom or never made, as is also clear from the way the prophetic ministry is expressed.

[147] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xi*.

[148] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xv*.

[149] But he uses its Afrikaans name: Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK).

> The aim of the church is to bring about social justice. Justice must be done to the poor and oppressed, and if the present system does not serve this purpose, the public conscience must be roused to demand another.[150]

In including this quotation, my intention is not to say something about the DRC, but rather to follow the argument of Villa-Vicencio, who, without doing so explicitly, poses a question to the SACC:

> When the church of the oppressed becomes the church of the oppressors, the danger is that its theology will be remolded accordingly. The NGK is not the only church in history to have undergone this transition. The challenge to continue to speak prophetically after the fortunes of history have changed faces all churches which are committed to the liberation of an oppressed people.[151]

So the underlying question is: Has the SACC also undergone that transition? Does the SACC also take up the challenge to speak prophetically after the historic changes of the 1990s?

Villa-Vicencio argues that, since the Edict of Milan in 313, churches have almost without exception been an integral part of the socio-economic structures of their respective societies. Only in a few cases have churches supported radical social change. But even then the church has become politicised. So the temptation has always been to leave the political field and become an apolitical church. The Church in history has sometimes, at its best, managed to avoid the extremes. Sometimes it has been opposed to the worst rulers, sometimes in favour of the existing system. More often has it been in favour of the status quo. At times the Church has been divided, as in South Africa in relation to the apartheid regime. Villa-Vicencio gives a six-point description of the Christian tradition on church-state relations:

1. The political order has been seen as instituted by God.[152]
2. The Church has been forced to make political choices. Sometimes this has meant martyrdom, sometimes trying not to take a stand.
3. To be obedient to God, first of all, has always been a theological necessity.[153]
4. But the Church has not always agreed on when to be obedient and when to be disobedient.[154]

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[150] In *Kerk en Stad* (Cape Town: NG Kerk Boekhandel, 1947), quoted by Desmond Tutu in his submission to the Eloff Commission of Inquiry into the SACC; see *The Divine Intervention* (Braamfontein: An SACC Publication, 1982) in Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xvi*.

[151] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xvi*.

[152] 'Rejecting both tyranny and anarchy, the church has nevertheless throughout its history – although with some notable exceptions – maintained a stubborn and restless hope for something more than what any existing socio-political order has been able to provide' (Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xxi*).

[153] 'When obedience to civil authority means disobedience to God, the Christian is obliged to disobey civil authority' (Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xxii*).

5. In the notion of God's majesty, social justice and holiness are inextricably included.

6. In Christian history there are different attitudes to violence.

He gives examples of how the Church has related to the state throughout history. The first example is the first Christian martyrs, who opposed the Roman emperor. One example of this is the confession of Polycarp:

> Chap. X And when the proconsul yet again pressed him, and said, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar," he answered, "Since thou are vainly urgent that, as thou sayest, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian.[155]

This clearly shows that the confession or witness (*martyría*) was in fact a political statement. In the mediaeval Church, persons like St Ambrose, St Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas formed different theologies around the relationship between State and Church. They also offered a significant eschatological critique of the state. Bosch writes about the mediaeval church:

> The relationship between church and state was actually one of give and take. The regime would be blessed by the church, in exchange for which the state guaranteed to protect and support the church.[156]

It goes without saying that the prophetic voice in such a relationship is not given priority. Not even during the Reformation did this change, according to Bosch. The Protestants simply exchanged their Catholic rulers for other rulers.[157] Villa-Vicencio's chapter on the church of the Reformation, with Luther and Calvin, is an example of how the church struggled to find how to be both part of society but at the same time to criticise the state when needed. Another example, this time of radical Protestantism, is Anabaptism a movement that radically defined the Christian faith as contradicting the demands of the state.

The heritage of the apocalyptic prophets during NT times, which regarded the prophetic ministry as something eschatological, is also found in the Dominican monk Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98).

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[154] '… most theologians agree that it is the church's obligation to oppose a tyrant, but it is more difficult to reach a common mind within the church, as to whether a particular government is tyrannical' (Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xxii*).

[155] The Encyclical Epistle of the Church at Smyrna. The Confession of Polycarp. Chapter X. [Source: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1: *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenareus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n. d.).] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 9.

[156] David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission. Paradigm Shifts in* Theology *of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), page 221.

[157] 'Catholic rulers soon lost their hegemony over certain parts of Europe, which came to be governed, instead, by Lutheran, Reformed, or Anglican kings and princes' (Bosch 1991, page 240).

> According to Savonarola, the general corruption of church and society indicated that the end would come soon. Preaching this apocalyptic message, Savonarola emerged not only as a popular prophet, but also for a brief period as the political leader of the city of Florence.[158]

Bevans and Schroeder gives another example of a Christian critique of the society: Samuel Ajayi Crowther. His contribution was twofold, taking his role in the anti-slavery movement and his importance for the Africanisation of Christianity into consideration.[159] He is never described, though, as a prophet. On the other hand, someone who is given that title is William Wade Harris (ca. 1865-1928), who lived in West Africa.

> As an African prophet, Harris advanced his religious campaign on two fronts. On the one hand, he attacked the beliefs and practices of African traditional religion. / ... / On the other hand, however, Harris challenged the authority of foreign Christian missionaries.[160]

In the contemporary period examples are given from the German Church in the time of the Third Reich, the Roman Catholic Church at the time of Vatican II, and the liberation theology of Latin America, as well as Black theology. Of interest is how the church in Africa is described. In this context Villa-Vicencio introduces M'Timkulu, the first GS of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), who criticised the Protestant churches' non-participation in politics or political neutrality. Villa-Vicencio writes:

> For him [M'Timkulu] a commitment to unity had to do with national self-identity and nation-building. It meant sharing in the birth pangs of the new nations of Africa.[161]

M'Timkulu talked about the need for the duty to say 'No' to the State on some occasions. This example will help us to ask some questions about the SACC as a role player in the nation-building process of post-apartheid South Africa.

Another important aspect to draw from Church history in Africa is its view on violence. Villa-Vicencio writes about Canon Burgess Carr, the GS of the AACC in 1974, who argued that violence is sometimes justified. He made a distinction between the violence of the state and the violence employed by some resistance movements. Today we would call this institutional violence and counter-violence. In this context the Programme to Combat Racism (PCR)[162] was

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[158] Chidester 200, page 306.
[159] Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context. A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 2004) page 213.
[160] Chidester 2000, page 418.
[161] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 164.
[162] The PCR was a significant World Council of Churches (WCC) programme, which will be described more thoroughly in chapter five.

supported by African Christians, while their European, American, and some of their South African brothers and sisters never understood the aim of the PCR. Villa-Vicencio continues:

> The difficulties facing a people's church committed to both sharing in the revolution and nation building while exercising an incisive prophetic ministry are, however, at times almost impossible to cope with. At times it takes an extraordinary effort to distance oneself sufficiently from one's own people in order to speak the decisive word and engage in the creative action which can bring life and hope to a situation which needs renewal, while its leaders cannot politically afford to admit it.[163]

Villa-Vicencio continues to argue that there is no specific model for church-state relations in Africa. The debate is not very old. Concerning the dilemma of both criticising the state and taking part in the society, he seeks help from Karl Barth:

> Karl Barth would argue that the prophetic ministry of the church is ultimately, even when it is not readily apparent, the most significant contribution which the church can make to nation-building.[164]

On violence, two of the texts quoted by Villa-Vicencio show that the Church in Africa holds different views on violence and non-violence.

> People do not embark on non-violence and violence campaigns for the sheer joy of it, but do so seriously in order to remove social injustice. This, basically, is the essence of both non-violence and violence.[165]

A more radical view is given by Burgess Carr in his address delivered at the AACC in Lusaka in 1974:

> The selective violence employed by the liberation movements is in sharp contrast to 'collective vengeance' perpetrated by the South African, Rhodesian and Portuguese regimes in Africa. Thus any outright rejection of violence is an untenable alternative for African Christians.
> If for no other reasons, we must give our unequivocal support to the liberation movements, because they have helped the Church to rediscover a new and radical appreciation of the Cross. In accepting the violence of the cross, God, in Jesus Christ, sanctified violence into a redemptive instrument for bringing into being a fuller human life.[166]

This is an extreme standpoint. The liberation aspect in Africa has been expressed in many other ways. Frostin writes about five formative factors that have shaped African liberation theology. He argues that this kind of liberation theology, although it is influenced by its Latin

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[163] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 165.
[164] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 166.
[165] The Kampala Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches, 1963. Freedom and unity in the nation. Liberty and anarchy in the colonial era. Violence and non-violence. [Source: *Drumbeats from Kampala: Report of the First Assembly of the AACC* (London: Lutterworth, 1963) This text was prepared by the Assembly on the basis of addresses delivered by Richard Andriamnjato and Ndabaningi Sithole.] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 173.
[166] Burgess Carr, *On violence*. [Source: excerpt from an address delivered in Lusaka, May 14, 1974.] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 173.

American counterpart, has also influenced Latin American liberation theology. And by listing the five different formative factors, he shows that African liberation theology has an African origin. The five factors are

1. The Bible and the Christian heritage.
2. African anthropology.
3. African traditional religions.
4. African Independent Churches.
5. Other African realities, such as the arts and the struggle against economic, political, social and cultural oppression.[167]

Frostin gives a good summary of how the black experience forms a background to the prophetic role of the Church in Africa. This is an indispensable factor in understanding the role of the SACC. Frostin speaks about the black experience as a 'contrast experience'.[168] This clearly relates to the Mosaic trajectory rather than the Davidic.

But there are also other voices about the African concept of a prophet. Berglund, for example, compares the Old Testament prophet with the African prophet, writing:

> A prophet seeks to speak in a comprehensible fashion to a given situation. Thus it was with the prophets of old in Israel. They were men [sic] continually groping with the question of proclaiming a divine message in a contextual manner to circumstances of human life and living of their day. Thus it is with the many prophets in Africa who heal, exorcise, proclaim and liberate.[169]

Sundkler argues that the prophet in the Zionist tradition is above all a healer.[170] This view is partly supported by West.[171] If this is the major role of the African prophet, it has not much relevance in the discussion of how the SACC forms its prophetic ministry. One could ask whether the SACC itself relates its prophetic ministry to the African traditional religion or the African Independent Churches. But this would lead us too far away from the focus of this thesis.

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[167] Per Frostin, Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa. A first World Interpretation (Lund: Lund University Press, 1988), pages 17-18.

[168] Frostin 1988, page 94.

[169] Axel-Ivar Berglund, "Bengt Sundkler, Prophet among Prophets." in *"Daring in Order to Know". Studies in Bengt Sunkler's Contribution as Africanist and Missionary Scholar,* page 29 (Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XXXIX. [Uppsala: Svenska Institutet för Missionsforskning], 1984).

[170] Bengt G. M. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in* South *Africa* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), page 115.

[171] 'The prophet is a healer who is found mainly in the Zionist and Apostolic churches, who has the ability to predict, heal and divine …. ' (Martin West, *Bishops and Prophets in a Black City. African Independent Churches in Soweto, Johannesburg* [Cape Town: David Philip, 1975], page 98.).

This church history background to the concept of 'prophetic' is a succinct one. Furthermore, the paragraph avoids using the concept 'prophetic'. It talks about the relationship between Church and State in general terms. Nevertheless it sheds some light on the concept. To sum up, one can say that there always has been a tension between Church and State. Seen from the perspective of two thousand years, the Church has been an ally of the State most of the time. In those situations, the concept 'prophetic' has not been relevant except in the Davidic sense of the word. On the other hand, the Church has always come back to the prophetic ministry, not only when a certain ruler or government has oppressed Christians, but also when the regime has been unjust and has oppressed people.

3.3.1.3   Summing up and discussing the concept

It is now time to draw some conclusions about what meaning I shall give to the concept 'prophetic' in this study. My intention is not to define the concept in a fixed way. As we shall see in the reading of the textual material, the SACC gives different meanings to the concept. This is in accordance with the discourse theoretical premises, which we shall get into soon. In different discourses the concept will be given different meanings. This chapter serves the purpose of finding the roots of how the SACC uses the concept. This could be seen as a kind of circular argument (*circulus in probando*). But the focus is on the reading of the texts and therefore the way we give meaning to the concept in this chapter will still be provisional. Having said this, it will still be important to make a preliminary delimitation of the concept.

One important aspect is that the prophetic ministry is more a ministry of forth-telling than fore-telling. The prophetic ministry is interested in the present situation. Another factor, which will be referred to many times, is the distinction Brueggemann makes between the Davidic and Mosaic trajectories in the OT. The assumption is that the SACC is more inspired by the OT than by the NT understanding of the prophetic ministry. The reading of the texts will show how the texts lean on either the Davidic or the Mosaic tradition.

Another aspect is whether 'prophetic' relates to a person or a group. We find a combination of these ways of using the words in a resolution from 1978 NC, where the GS is described as an individual prophet, but the connection to the group is underscored:

> The Council supports the prophetic ministry of its General Secretary and commends him in prayer to almighty God.[172]

One important question I want to touch upon is therefore: Is there such a thing as a prophetic movement, organisation, or group? Or is the prophetic activity always and by definition connected to an individual? Nürnberger discusses this when he compares a prophecy with a confession:

> A confession is drawn up in the name of *the church as a whole.* Prophecy is a *particular charisma* given to individuals or groups within the church. This implies that the church as a whole cannot be prophetic. Because the church is part of the world, it is a 'mixed church', as the Protestant tradition has it, or a 'site of struggle', as activists would say today. Therefore, the prophetic charisma always calls both the church and the world to repentance.' [173]

This idea returns in the context of the National Conference of the SACC 1972, where the GS talks about the relationship between gospel, state, and church:

> It is not so much a matter of the State versus the Church, rather the Gospel over against us all, saving, – yes, but judging with unerring ability.[174]

Perhaps we can only describe a group or a community as prophetic when many such persons are present in that specific context, or when a context is open to prophetic activity. I align myself with the ideas of Nürnberger, that a church (or an ecumenical movement) as a whole cannot be prophetic. In this context, therefore, I do not ask whether the SACC is prophetic or not. The research problem is about how the 'prophetic voice' has been articulated in certain texts of SACC. These texts are written and received within the whole organisation, but are probably not expressions of what every single person believes. I assume that there have been different views within the organisations about how the prophetic ministry should be carried out. The concept of power relations is important here. If, for instance, we assume that the SACC as an organisation has been prophetic, do we mean that the individual members of this organisation have agreed on how to be prophetic? As we have seen there are different ways of describing the phenomenon both in the scriptures and in church history; and it is the same in an organisation like the SACC.

With the introduction to church history, based on Villa-Vicencio, I want to show that the relationship between church and state (represented by the government of the day) is in focus.

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[172] National Conference 1978, Resolution 1, page 1.

[173] Klaus Nürnberger, *Martin Luther's* message *for us today. A perspective from the South* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005), page 285.

[174] General Secretary's report 1972, page 2.

This is also what I have already said in the introduction to this thesis. In this context, the black experience as a contrast experience is one of the factors that shaped the prophetic ministry within the SACC.[175]

Furthermore, the concept 'prophetic' implies an act of communication. Behind the sender must be (or at least a claim that there is) a divine power. Prophetic communication also distinguishes itself from ordinary communication by containing some sort of criticism or evaluation. I want to narrow it down to indicate an activity that addresses injustices in the society. Again, I find the reason for doing this in the textual material. I thus partly align myself with the words of Gowan, defining the word prophetic as taking

> … a lonely stance for truth and justice, against popular opinion.[176]

But this activity does not necessarily mean something that is done in isolation. It might be the common role of the prophet to be acting on her or his own, but the prophetic task can be carried out in cooperation with others. Gowan also misses the divine authority behind the words and acts of the prophet. My way of giving meaning to the concept would therefore provisionally be:

To be prophetic is when a person (or a group of persons) in the church takes a stance for truth and justice, and thereby criticises the society (or a part of the society) and claims to do this by divine inspiration.

This understanding of the concept has its point of departure in the socio-political context. It presupposes that religion has to do with ordinary life. It is furthermore a collectivistic approach. With this tentative understanding of the concept, we can proceed to other important theoretical discussions.

3.3.2 Reconciliation

For the sake of consistency, a similarly thorough section about the concept 'reconciliation' ought to have followed after the one about the concept 'prophetic'. This section will,

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[175] 'Churches in South Africa, especially those which constitute the South African Council of Churches with predominantly Black membership as well as Black sections of the Dutch Reformed family, could not escape the impact and message of Black Theology, a message theologically so deeply grounded on biblical witness, if they were still to remain faithful to the gospel which proclaims God's love, fatherhood and justification by grace alone for all people' (Simon S. Maimela, *Proclaim Freedom to My People. Essays on Religion and Politics* [Braamfontein Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1987], page 71).
[176] Gowan 1998, page 2.

however, be much more superficial. As both the title of the thesis and the introduction indicate, the focus of this study is on the prophetic voice. The concept 'reconciliation' has become interesting only in order to understand the prophetic voice. Since I shall use the concept extensively, I find it relevant to say a few words about how I understand its meaning.

One traditional way of discussing the concept is found in the *Kairos Document*. The text presupposes justice, repentance, and forgiveness before reconciliation can be achieved.

> No reconciliation is possible in South Africa without justice. What this means in practice is that no reconciliation, no forgiveness and no negotiations are possible without repentance. The Biblical teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness makes it quite clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless he or she repents of their sins. Nor are we expected to forgive the unrepentant sinner.[177]

The document, to which we shall return in in a later paragraph, states that good and evil can never be reconciled. To say that they could, would be to betray the Christian faith.[178] This is a clear influence from Black Theology, as described by Frostin.[179] The same thought is found in the SACC material from the mid-1970s, which says that the term 'reconciliation' might become meaningless if no confrontation took place.[180] Both the early text from the NC of the SACC and the *Kairos Document* have to be understood in their respective contexts. In the apartheid era reconciliation was desirable, but not possible, as long as the society was unjust. The *Kairos Document* looks forward to a situation when reconciliation will be possible:

> Reconciliation, forgiveness and negotiations will become our Christian duty in South Africa only when the apartheid regime shows signs of genuine repentance.[181]

The *Rustenburg Declaration* (1990) also states that both repentance and justice are prerequisites for reconciliation.[182] Here restitution is brought into the discussion. In 1993 the

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[177] The Kairos Document, 3.1.

[178] 'There are conflicts where one side is a fully armed and violent oppressor while the other side is defenceless and oppressed. There are conflicts that can only be described as the struggle between justice and injustice, good and evil, God and the devil. To speak of reconciling these two is not only a mistaken application of the Christian idea of reconciliation, it is a total betrayal of all that Christian faith has ever meant. Nowhere in the Bible or in Christian tradition has it ever been suggested that we ought to try to reconcile good and evil, God and the devil' (The *Kairos Document*, 3.1).

[179] 'Underlying much critique of black theology seems to be the notion that reconciliation can be brought about *hinc et nunc* provided that the conflicting parties have an open attitude. Black theologians, by contrast, argue that reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressors is impossible as long as the oppressors insist on their privileged position' (Frostin 1988, page 170).

[180] 'The words "reconciliation" and even "justice" today are bandied about to the extent that there is a danger that they could become meaningless. There is no reconciliation without confrontation; there is no true reconciliation without justice. Justice must be seen to be done. So often we in this country pay lip service to this' (General Secretary's Report 1974, page 2).

[181] The Kairos Document, 3.1.

GS of the SACC also mentions confession, repentance, and restitution as parts of the reconciliation process.[183]

After 1990 it had become clear that some sort of reconciliation process was needed. The GS in his 1992 Report asks whether or not South Africa should have Nuremberg trials.[184] We are not going to discuss the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) much in this thesis, but in this section at least a few words about it are relevant. Ericson summarises the aim of the TRC by mentioning four elements: it should establish a picture, grant amnesty, work for restoration and reparation, and submit a report.[185] The only element guaranteed in the Constitution was the provision of amnesty.[186] Just as the TRC itself has been questioned, so has the process. A member of the TRC, Charles Villa-Vicencio, argues that it would be more constructive to regard reconciliation as a process than as a goal.[187]

I shall bear this last remark in mind in what follows when discussing the reconciliation concept. Regarded as a goal, it will never fully take place. If one interprets it as a process, it is something that is happening right now, but also something that can grow and deepen. I want to link the term 'reconciliation' with the word 'unity', and compare them with another set of concepts. If 'liberation' is the process that leads to 'freedom', 'reconciliation' in a similar way

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[182] 1.2 'We believe, however, that we stand on the threshold of new things. There appears to be the possibility of a new dispensation and the promise of reconciliation between all South Africans as both black and white leaders begin to negotiate together for a new and liberated nation of equity and justice' (The Rustenburg Declaration, http://www.ngkerk.org.za/abid/dokumente/amptelikkestukke/Rustenburg%20Declaration%201990.pdf 2009-10-06 1.2); and 'We know that without genuine repentance and practical restitution we cannot appropriate God's forgiveness and that without justice true reconciliation is impossible. We also know that this process must begin with a contrite church' (The *Rustenburg Declaration,* 2.4).

[183] '1) the need for honest confession to one another because of the hurt which has been caused throughout the history of apartheid; 2) the need for repentance, restitution and reconciliation. We need renewal and reconstruction of the whole South African society in all its respects: social, political and economic' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 27-28).

[184] '1) Shall we have Nuremburg [Nuremberg] trials in South Africa or any other forms of trials for crimes committees against the people of South Africa,

2) How do we go through trials of those who are accused for their quest for human rights (which was criminal in the past), and still work for reconciliation and forgiveness? How do we heal the wounds caused by the war because of the apartheid system?

3) How do we get people to forgive and forget when the murderers have not exposed or have not confessed their crimes?' (General Secretary's Report 1992, page 7, point 6 1 and 2).

[185] Ericson 2001, page 331-332.

[186] Ericson 2001, page 331.

[187] 'The theological demands for confession, repentance, resistance and forgiveness are important. They are enduring and need to be addressed. Any suggestion that they are a necessary precondition for the possibility of getting reconciliation underway is, however, likely to be counter-productive in deeply divided societies. An alternative approach, which identifies reconciliation as *process* rather than *goal* is more helpful. This *pastoral* approach is not an alternative to, but an inherent part of, a viable *prophetic* ethic of reconciliation and forgiveness. It may well be the more viable way of attaining the illusive [elusive] goal of justice' (Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Reconciliation as a Metaphor.* Paper, delivered at a seminar at the head office of the Church of Sweden [Unpublished] (Uppsala: 2002), page 4).

is a process that leads to 'unity'. The idea of a process can be summarised in the words of the TRC Chairperson, Desmond Tutu, who describes the goal of the TRC to move the nation

> ... beyond the cycles of retribution and violence that had plagued so many other countries during their transitions from oppression to democracy.[188]

Bevans and Schroeder write about this process when they link reconciliation to the concept of 'prophetic dialogue'.[189] According to them, reconciliation can take place on four levels. They talk about personal reconciliation, cultural reconciliation, political reconciliation, and reconciliation within the church. The church has to be involved, according to its capacity, on every level. The first is on the personal level. When the church ministers on this level, it should also minister to people of other faiths and people who have no specific belief, unconditionally.[190] When they mention political reconciliation, the TRC is given as an example. Bevans and Schroeder stress the role of God in reconciliation:

> The Church proclaims reconciliation as a possibility and works as a mediator of that possibility, but it cannot bring it about itself.[191]

Although the connection between reconciliation and the prophetic ministry is present in texts like the Kairos Document it is articulated in another way by Bevans and Schroeder who summarise in this way:

> The church's ministry of reconciliation is without a doubt a ministry of prophetic dialogue. The witness and proclamation to victims of injustice and violence that reconciliation is a possibility and that it is thoroughly God's work are actions that take real courage. Reconciliation is undoubtedly a counter-cultural movement, a call to envision not a repaired world but a new creation.[192]

Reconciliation here is a journey into the future, a quest for an unbounded community. This indicates a process and not only a goal. When Bevans and Schroeder introduce the 'prophetic dialogue' concept it has a kinship with a phrase from David Bosch who writes:

> It is, however, a bold humility – or a humble boldness. We know only in part, but we do know. And we believe that the faith we profess is both true and just, and should be proclaimed. We do this, however, not

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[188] Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams, *God has a dream. A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (Johannesburg: Rider, 2004), page 10.

[189] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 389.

[190] 'Such availability and openness are simply for the sake of those who suffer, with "no strings attached"...' (Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 391).

[191] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 392.

[192] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 393.

as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure salespersons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord.[193]

Bevans and Schroeder link this to both the prophetic ministry and the ministry of reconciliation.

> As Genesis attests, almost from creation's beginning it has been in need of reconciliation, and God's choice of Israel as a blessing for all the communities of the earth (see Gen 12:3) needed constantly to be maintained through prophets who not only affirmed God's love and Israel's universal vocation, but also brought Israel to task for its faithfulness to God and injustice to those who were powerless within it.[194]

As we continue we shall see how those two perspectives are kept together.

Having discussed two important concepts in this thesis, it is now time to give attention to the theoretical framework behind the method.

3.3.3 Hermeneutics

In the section on method, I state that I began my work with a 'benevolent' reading. By using that word, I mean that I first want to understand what the texts are saying, by reading them as they are written, without a critical approach. In doing that, the scholar still has her or his pre-understanding. In this respect I align myself with the thoughts of Gadamer.[195]

One basic hermeneutical distinction is whether to read the text with the objective of finding the intention of the writer, or to listen to what the text itself says. This finds a response in the GS's report from 1969, in a discussion of the authority of statements given by the Council:

> … that these are not binding on member Churches, but that they are the product of the representatives of member Churches and that they have the authority of their intrinsic worth and of the body that produced them.[196]

The texts can thus have an authority based on their intrinsic worth, if one concentrates more on the texts themselves than on the intentions of the author. When Gadamer writes about the

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[193] Bosch 1991, page 489.
[194] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 348-349.
[195] Gadamer was at heart unwilling to use a specific type of method. His idea was to avoid placing something between the scholar and the text. The reason for this we find in the way Gadamer, and before him Heidegger, argues that the language marks an expression of affinity (Gadamer uses the word *Zusammengehörigkeit* while Heidegger uses the term *Zugehörigkeit*) between the person and the world that shouldn't be disturbed. Gadamer strove to be in dialogue with the text and not to create a methodological distance in relation to the text.
[196] General Secretary's Report 1969, page 4.

history of effect[197] and consciousness of the history of effect[198], I find inspiration in these concepts. What Gadamer talks about is a connection between the reader and the text, explained as a fusion of horizons.

> Rather, understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves.[199]

When Gadamer talks about this *fusion of horizons*[200] he has in mind the tension between the text and the present. Reading the texts in a hermeneutical tradition means understanding that the reader and the text are involved in a relationship where both parts are important and influence one another. Engdahl describes the exercise in these terms:

> Any understanding of a text will have to be concerned with at least the following two things, the interplay between its parts and the whole, between individual words and whole sentences, in order to achieve understanding (the hermeneutical circle) on the one hand, and the realization of the role played by any kind of fore-understanding.[201]

The notion of this hermeneutical reading as a circle could imply that no development of understanding is possible in this process. Therefore it is more constructive to talk about the hermeneutical *spiral*, as Ödman does.[202] While Engdahl seems to refer the hermeneutical circle to the text itself, Ödman regards the reader and the text as the parts interplaying in this spiral. This aspect is pointed out by Engdahl when he writes about the role played by the fore-understanding or preconception.

The text itself has an influence in history, and that influence does not end when the text is written. One could rather say that this is when the process of influence starts. It is when a text

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[197] In the German text the word is *Wirkungsgeschichte*. Gadamer criticises historical objectivism: 'In our understanding, which we imagine is so innocent because its results seem so self-evident, the other presents itself so much in terms of our own selves that there is no longer a question of self and other. In relying on its critical method, historical objectivism conceals the fact that historical consciousness is itself situated in the web of historical effects' (Gadamer 1989, page 300).

[198] In German: Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein. 'To be historically means that knowledge of oneself can never be complete' (Gadamer 1989, page 301).

[199] Gadamer 1989, page 305.

[200] 'Every encounter with tradition that takes place within historical consciousness involves the experience of a tension between the text and the present' (Gadamer 1989, page 305).

[201] Engdahl 2006, page 16.

[202] 'The image of understanding as a spiral can be applied to processes of interpretation or understanding of different form or extent / ... / It can be used to illustrate the development of the scientific understanding or the development of understanding on behalf of an individual over a longer or shorter time' (my translation). 'Bilden av förståelsen som spiral går att tillämpa på tolknings- och förståelseprocesser av olika art och omfång / ... / Den kan användas för att illustrera den vetenskapliga förståelsens utveckling eller en enskild individs förståelseutveckling over en längre eller kortare tid' (Per-Johan Ödman, *Tolkning, förståelse, vetande: hermeneutik i teori och praktik,* 2nd edition (Stockholm: Nordstedts, 2007), page 105). Ödman still does not want to scrap the concept of hermeneutical circle altogether. It has some advantages, referring to terms like 'vicious circle' (*circulus vitiosis*) and 'circular argument' (*circulus in probando*).

is used that the text is understood.[203] In this respect I agree with Bosch, who argues that the text in a sense is created when it is read.[204] Bosch takes the argumentation a bit further, when he introduces the concept of contextual theology:

> And yet even this new hermeneutic approach is not going far enough. Interpreting a text is not only a literary exercise; it is also a social, economic, and political exercise. Our entire context comes into play when we interpret a biblical text. One therefore has to concede that all theology (or sociology, political theory, etc) is, by its very nature, contextual.[205]

In his book *Liberation theology in Tanzania and South Africa*, Frostin makes the point that he engages in a First World interpretation. I too believe that the fact that I come from another context has to be pointed out – but also that it can be a posotove factor. Gadamer writes about temporal distance, which makes the whole exercise of understanding easier.[206] My reflection on this thought is that the temporal distance has a correspondence in what I would like to call a 'cultural or contextual distance'. One would assume that a person within a context could more easily understand the texts of that context. But it could also be the other way round: when the observer finds an outlook outside the context she is going to observe, this can aid the observation. Gadamer underscores the importance of giving account to one's prejudices in this respect. Being from Sweden, I surely have a certain *vorverstandnis*. I have given account of some of them above, and believe that they could also be an advantage.

3.3.3.1 Summing up

The hermeneutical theory makes a distinction between finding the intention of the writer and listening to what the text itself says. When we read a text its authority can be based on the intrinsic worth of the text. Gadamer describes the interaction between the text and the present tradition, which the reader is part of, as a fusion of horizons. Another way of looking at this way of reading texts is to describe it as a hermeneutical circle. This terminology could signal some sort of static relationship between the reader and the text. The concept hermeneutical

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[203] A famous statement by Gadamer, here rendered in German: 'Verstehen *ist hier immer schoon Anwenden*' (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer Philosophischen Hermeneutik.* 4th Edition [Tübingen: JBC Mohr, 1975], page 292).

[204] 'Paul Ricoeur and other recent literary critics have, in a great variety of ways, advanced the view that every text is an interpreted text and that, in a sense, the reader "creates" the text when she or he reads it' (Bosch 1991, page 423).

[205] Bosch 1991, page 423.

[206] 'Often temporal distance can solve questions of critique in hermeneutics, namely how to distinguish the true prejudices, by which we *understand*, from the *false* ones, by which we *misunderstand*' (Gadamer 1989, page 298).

spiral is therefore preferable. It is when a text is used that the text is understood. All kinds of production of ideology is in that respect contextual.

This is part of our preconceptions (*vorverständnis*). Gadamer talks about the 'temporal distance' as a help in the process of understanding. Being from another context, geographically and culturally, could also be an advantage, and thus be described as 'cultural distance'.

3.3.4 Social Constructionism, Foucault and Discourse Analysis

Before describing the field of discourse analysis, I feel a need to say something about a broader field of ideas called social constructionism. The purpose is to explain in which tradition the discursive theories are found.

In the same way it is useful to say a few words about Michael Foucault and mention some of his most important concepts.

This section will also give a short introduction to some important examples of Discourse Analytical theories. Lastly, I shall describe some of the most important concepts in the discourse analytical field.

3.3.4.1 Social Constructionism

When Burr describes 'social constructionism' in her book of the same title, she starts with four basic premises. The first is a critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge.[207] Second, Burr says that all ways of understanding are historically and culturally relative. In this context she writes about anti-essentialism as a main idea of social constructionism:

> Since the social world, including ourselves as people, is the product of social processes, it follows that there cannot be any given, determined nature to the world or people.[208]

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[207] Burr takes the example of the division of humankind into male and female, and states that humankind could as well have divided itself into tall and short. She argues that practices such as gender reassignment surgery show that there are grey areas in such categories. I accept this viewpoint, but at the same time I realise that behind the argument might be an idea that the whole dichotomy between men and female is wrong or undesirable. This shows that we choose an ontology that fits our ideas or opinions. At the same time, this could be said of my own choosing of an ontological standpoint. Still, I regard the comparison of categorising humankind into male/female with categorising it into tall/short as a brave one. Cf Vivien Burr, *Social Constructionism* (East Sussex: Routledge, 2003), page 3.

[208] Burr 2003, page 5.

The third point is that knowledge is sustained by social processes.

> It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of daily life that our versions of knowledge are constructed.[209]

And this assumption leads to the fourth and last one, which introduces the thought of power relations in the epistemological field. She talks about the relation between knowledge and social action:

> Descriptions or constructions of the world therefore sustain some patterns of social action and exclude others. Our constructions of the world are therefore bound up with power relations because they have implications for what it is permissible for different people to do, and for how they may treat others.[210]

In other words, there is a reciprocity between knowledge and the social. It is in our social life or processes that knowledge is shaped; but our knowledge also shapes our social life. I would say that these power relations do not only have implications for our actions in the sense of what we are doing. If we see our words as part of our social actions, it is even truer. The way we construct the world – and perhaps the way others construct the world – restricts what we can say and even what we can allow ourselves to think.

We access reality through language. Social constructionism agrees on this point with structuralism and post-structuralism. This is also the basic thought in Discourse Analysis. Before we come to that, it is necessary to introduce the 'father of discourse', Michel Foucault.

3.3.4.2 Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault is one of the greatest and most productive philosophers of twentieth century France. I shall only draw a few thoughts from the vast material of his legacy. Although initially Foucault could be described as a structuralist, in his later books he becomes instead a poststructuralist.[211] There are a few concepts from Foucault I want to elaborate on: first the concept of 'discontinuity', second 'discourse', and last how Foucault regards the 'subject' based on ideas borrowed from Althusser.

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[209] Burr 2003, page 4.
[210] Burr 2003, page 5.
[211] If structuralism claims that an independent signifier is superior to the signified, post-structuralism regards the signified and the signifier as inseparable, although they are not the same thing.

Discontinuity

Foucault writes about history and the way in which historians have sought patterns in history, while one should rather seek the opposite:

> And the great problem presented by such historical analyses is not how continuities are established, how a single pattern is formed and preserved, how for so many different, successive minds there is a single horizon, what mode of action and what substructure is implied by the interplay of transmissions, resumptions, disappearances, and repetitions, how the origin may extend its sway well beyond itself to that conclusion that is never given – the problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits: it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations.[212]

This is a major change in perspective. When I write the chapter about the historical context, I might do what Foucault refers to as establishing continuities. But in my readings of the textual material I look for discontinuities. As will be clear later on, I dismantle the text into orders of discourse and into different discourses. This is done to show that almost every text contains these discontinuities. In this context Foucault argues that history in its traditional form has tried to memorise the monuments and turn them into documents. The new kind of history does the opposite: it turns documents into monuments. In this way history becomes part of the present.

> The document is not the fortunate tool of a history that is primarily and fundamentally *memory;* history is one way in which a society recognizes and develops a mass of documentation with which it is inextricably linked.[213]

It is my firm belief that the most important purpose for writing history is to understand the present better. I also believe, like Foucault, that history and present are linked to one another. Expressing it in a post-modernist way, one could say that we form the history when we describe it. In doing history in this way, the historian looks for things that distort the order rather than a long series of continuities.

> Discontinuity was the stigma of temporal dislocation that it was the historian's task to remove from history. It has now become one of the basic elements of historical analysis.[214]

This new approach means that method has to change. The idea of discourse analysis is an answer to the questions posed by Foucault.

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[212] Michel Foucault, *Archeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1972), page 6.
[213] Foucault 1972, page 7.
[214] Foucault 1972, page 9.

> Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are two sides of the same system of thought.[215]

In all this there is a kind of similarity between this search for discontinuities and the prophetic task. The prophetic message is a form of discontinuity, because it aims for change.

Discourse

When we do history in this new way, we must, according to Foucault, rid ourselves of a whole mass of notions, like tradition, influence, development and evolution, spirit, and the notion that books and oeuvres[216] are entities with their own intrinsic unity. Even categories like literature and politics are not autochthonous.

> We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption.[217]

The discourses or discursive formations are based on series that are full of gaps. It is in these spaces that a discourse is formed. Foucault argues that one can rather find the discourse in the dispersion – a field of strategic possibilities.[218]

> Such an analysis would not try to isolate small islands of coherence in order to describe their internal structure; it would not try to suspect and to reveal latent conflicts; it would study forms of division. Or again: instead of reconstituting *chains of inference* (as one often does in the history of the sciences or of philosophy), instead of drawing up *tables of differences* (as the linguistics do), it would describe *systems of dispersion*.[219]

So, in a sense, Foucault in the disorder creates some order, by introducing the 'discourse' concept. He continues:

> Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations), we will say, for the sake of convenience, that we are dealing with a *discursive formation ...*[220]

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[215] Foucault 1972, page 13.
[216] When Foucault writes about the concept of oeuvre, he is himself an example that the whole production of one writer or philosopher is often not a unity in itself.
[217] Foucault 1972, page 28.
[218] Foucault 1972, page 40.
[219] Foucault 1972, page 41.
[220] Foucault 1972, page 41.

The discursive object is formed by a number of factors. The family or other social groups, as well as other authorities, are some of the factors. A discourse is first and foremost a practice. The discursive relations are neither interior nor exterior to the discourse, but at the limit.

> … a discursive formation is defined / … / if one can show how any particular object of discourse finds in it its place and law of emergence; if one can show that it may give birth simultaneously or successively to mutually exclusive objects, without having to modify itself.[221]

Another way of describing a discourse and a discursive formation is this:

> We shall call a discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; / … / it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined.[222]

There seems to be a contradiction in the thought of Foucault. He argues that discontinuities or dispersions are the basis for understanding history. At the same time he tries to establish discourses, which are steered by certain laws, in these fields of dispersion. It makes it clear that the post-modern idea that our knowledge is shaped and reshaped by our language makes sense. There is no such thing as a well-organised reality outside ourselves, which we just have to observe and describe. The reality in which we all live and work is simultaneously bound by certain laws and seemingly chaotic. Without reverting to epistemological relativism, one can argue that we choose how to describe (for instance) history. Whether we take our point of departure in the continuities or in the discontinuities is a matter of choice. Foucault helps us to see this dilemma.

The subject

Foucault has a view on the subject which is not typically western. The 'I' in a text is decentred. In this respect Foucault is influenced by his teacher Althusser, who introduced the idea of 'interpellation'. Briefly, it means that the language itself constructs a social position for the individual and makes her or him an ideological subject.[223] One can say that the subjects become points in the discourses. This way of looking at the subject is borrowed from

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[221] Foucault 1972, page 49.
[222] Foucault 1972, page 131.
[223] Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), page 21-22.

Althusser, via Foucault, by Laclau and Mouffe, to whom we shall come later.[224] One can conclude that the subject is created in the discourses. If we accept the mechanism suggested by Althusser, one person can be given many different subject positions by different discourses. This leads to the situation where it is no longer interesting to analyse which physical person lies behind which idea or opinion. This is also why I avoid writing, for instance, which GS is talking or which SACC President is being quoted. I do not focus on describing the views of Brigalia Bam or the ideas of Beyers Naude. The quest is to discern different discourses and how they interact.

3.3.4.3 Different forms of discourse analysis

As already stated, it would be wrong to say that the method used in the work is Discourse Analysis. Rather, I have been inspired by discourse analysis, and have it as a background to my method. The concept 'discourse' helps me to dismantle the textual material, but also to organise it. This could be done in many different ways. Foucault uses the concept in the sense that discourses can be divided into different disciplines like medicine, psychiatry, etc.[225] It is in these domains that the statements can be defined in a certain way. But he can also call Marxism and Freudianism different discourses. One cannot compare those phenomena with different sciences. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips give an example where different political ideologies are described as different discourses. Foucault emphasises that discourses are relative. It is up to the observer to discern them.

> There are statements, for example, that are quite obviously concerned – and have been from a date that is easy enough to determine – with political economy, or biology, or psychopathology; there are others that equally obviously belong to those age-old continuities known as grammar or medicine. But what are these unities? How can we say that the analysis of headaches carried out by Willis or Charcot belongs to the same order of discourse?[226]

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[224] '... a new form of fixity: that of the various decentred subject positions' (Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. 2nd edition (London: Verso, 2001), page 87).
[225] Foucault 1972, page 197.
[226] Foucault 1972, page 34.

When I use the concept I make a distinction between 'orders of discourse'[227] and 'discourse'. An order of discourse is the comprehensive unit, and within the order of discourse there can be a number of discourses.

3.3.4.4 Some concepts

Laclau and Mouffe have not produced a specific method. But they have a battery of concepts or tools which become useful in the analytic work. Before continuing, it is important to give meaning to some of these concepts. The way Laclau and Mouffe use the word 'discourse' can only be understood if one first explains three other concepts: 'element', 'moment', and 'articulation'. Every word, or even a single letter, can be described as an element.[228] The element is not given different meanings in different discourses. One can say that all signs are elements until they become something else.[229] When elements are fixed they become moments.[230] The process when elements are turned into moments is called articulation.[231] A discourse can be explained as a context where this process of articulation is done in the same way. As soon as the articulation is done differently, we have an example of a different discourse. Therefore, a discourse according to Laclau and Mouffe is

> The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice.[232]

Winther Jørgensen and Phillips would define it differently: they prefer to use another word instead of 'context' when they say that a discourse is

> … the fixation of meaning within a particular domain.[233]

Within a discourse there is an agreement about the meaning given to the signs or words used in the discourse. Having said this, it is also important to state that different scholars delimit the discourses differently. The whole idea with discourses, as contexts where meaning is

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[227] I use the concept 'order of discourse' in the same sense as Foucault uses 'discursive formation': Foucault describes discourses and discursive formations in this way: 'We shall call a discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation …' (Foucault 1972, page 131).

[228] Laclau and Mouffe describe an element as '…any difference that is not discursively articulated' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 105).

[229] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips write that, according to Laclau and Mouffe: 'Elements are the signs whose meanings have not yet been fixed' (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 27).

[230] Laclau and Mouffe explain moments as 'The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse...' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 105).

[231] Laclau and Mouffe add that articulation is: 'Any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 105).

[232] Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 105.

[233] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 26.

given differently to different words or signs, has to be understood as a rather flexible system. The same applies to the concept 'order of discourse'.[234]

When the scholar delimits discourses or orders of discourse, she or he can, according to Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, use other secondary sources, as a help.[235]

A specific discourse is constituted in relation to other discourses. The discursive struggle, which is of specific interest in this thesis, is at hand when different discourses are giving the same sign different meanings. Moments about which there is a discursive struggle are called floating signifiers.[236] When in a discourse the meaning of one of these floating signifiers has been fixed, Laclau and Mouffe say that the discourse arrests the flow of differences and constructs a centre.

> We shall call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, *nodal points*.[237]

Without going too much into details, one floating signifier that sometimes becomes a nodal point, and that will be analysed thoroughly in this thesis, will of course be the concept 'prophetic'. Another one might be 'reconciliation'. In the this the concept 'nodal point' will be used as a key to understand the discursive struggle within the texts.

Two concepts used in relation to this, which are quite well known and also frequently used, even if the context is not that of Discourse Analysis, are 'hegemony' and 'antagonism'. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips give a concise explanation of the word 'hegemony':

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[234] 'Thus the order of discourse can be taken to denote different discourses that partly cover the same terrain, a terrain which each discourse competes to fill with meaning in its own way' (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 141); and 'An order of discourse, consisting in a range of different discourses, is established at the same time and in the same way as discourses' (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 144). Fairclough describes the concept in different ways: 'An order of discourse can be seen as the discursive facet of the contradictory and unstable equilibrium which constitutes a hegemony, and the articulation and rearticulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle' (Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* [Cambridge: Polity, 1992], page 93); or: 'The critical discourse analysis approach thinks of the discursive practices of a community – its normal ways of using language – in terms of networks which I shall call 'orders of discourse'. The order of discourse of a social institution or social domain is constituted by all the discursive types which are used there. The point of the concept of 'order of discourse' is to highlight the relationships between different types in such a set …' (Fairclough 1995, page 55).

[235] 'Treating the delimitation of discourses as an analytical exercise entails understanding discourses as objects that the researcher constructs rather than as objects that exist in a delimited form in reality, ready to be identified and mapped. But this does not mean that anything at all can be called a discourse. Researchers have to establish in their reports that the delimitation they have made is reasonable. Delimitation can begin with the aid of secondary literature that identifies particular discourse, but obviously the work continues in the analysis of the material' (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 144).

[236] '... the signs that different discourses struggle to invest with meaning in their own particular way' (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 28).

[237] Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 112.

Different discourses – each of them representing particular ways of talking about and understanding the social world – are engaged in a constant struggle with one another to achieve hegemony, that is, to fix the meanings of language in their own way. Hegemony, then, can provisionally be understood as the dominance of one particular perspective.[238]

Hegemony is not an expression of consensus but rather an effect of one discourse having become dominant in the discursive struggle.[239] The crisis is what we call an antagonism. In the words of Winther Jørgensen and Phillips:

Antagonism can be found where discourses collide. Antagonisms may be dissolved through *hegemonic interventions*.[240]

When this hegemonic intervention takes place, one can describe this as a closure of meaning. But even if the hegemonic intervention has taken place, it is as much a sign of conflict as in an open conflict or antagonism. As I have discussed in connection with the discussion of hermeneutics, different perspectives could be ascribed to specific persons or groups. If I wanted to discern which person or group was behind a certain statement, I would need other analytical tools. This could be done, but then I would already have moved beyond the text. In this context I need to make a reference to the discussion of the subject. Since I prefer to stay on the textual level, I therefore introduce subject positions. Laclau and Mouffe mean that one discourse can never be established as the only discourse. The subject is therefore determined by the discourse in which it occurs. The subject is not sovereign in itself.

As every subject position is a discursive position, it partakes of the open character of every discourse; consequently the various positions cannot be totally fixed in a closed system of differences.[241]

A person may therefore be given different subject positions in different discourses. Thus it is no longer important or even interesting to talk about subjects in the common sense.

To sum up, one can say that in a discourse the different signs are called elements. When an element becomes articulated it becomes a moment. Some of these moments are especially important or privileged in a certain discourse, and are therefore called nodal points. If there is a discursive struggle about one of these nodal points, that point is described as a floating signifier. This state is called antagonism. When a certain meaning is given to a sign, closure

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[238] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 7.
[239] ''Hegemony' will be not the majestic unfolding of an identity but the response to a crisis' (Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 7).
[240] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 48.
[241] Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 115.

takes place and antagonism is replaced by hegemony. A hegemonic intervention has taken place.

3.3.4.5 Discourse theoretical premises

I want to differentiate between Discourse Analysis as an epistemological theory and Discourse Analysis as a method or different methods. In this paragraph I discuss the epistemological side of Discourse Analysis. As Winther Jørgensen and Phillips put it:

> Discourse analytical approaches takes as their starting point the claim of structuralist and poststructuralist linguistic philosophy, that our access to reality is always through language. With language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse.[242]

For me this is important. Reality exists outside discourses. The question is whether it has any meaning to us if we cannot talk or think about it. I suggest that there are deeper experiences of reality outside language. One example of such experiences could be the mystical experience. But then of course it depends on what meaning we give to the concept 'language'. Laclau and Mouffe also discuss this dilemma:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition.[243]

In this thesis I am working with written texts. This means that the question about how reality exists outside discourse has limited relevance. The texts are the reality I am studying. It is the texts I am questioning. It is the texts I am analysing; and any results from this exercise will only comment on the texts. Burr writes:

> All knowledge is derived from looking at the world from some perspective or other, and is in the service of some interest rather than others.[244]

Knowledge is therefore socially produced, and there are reasons or motives involved in this process. It is thus interesting to recall what Foucault says:

> We shall call discourse a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation; it does not form a rhetorical or formal unity, endlessly repeatable, whose appearance or use in history might

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[242] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 8f.
[243] Laclau and Mouffe 1985/2001, page 108.
[244] Burr 2003, page 6.

be indicated (and, if necessary, explained); it is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined.[245]

Every statement made in history belongs to a certain discourse, although those discourses are formed by humans. By 'statements' we mean not only written texts: they could also be spoken words or even pieces of art, actions etc. There are a number of ways of describing this discourse-analytical field. One way of distinguishing between different approaches is to talk about a narrow way or a wide way of describing the discourse concept, as do Bergström and Boréus.[246] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, on the other hand, divide the discourse-analytical field into three main traditions, differing slightly from Bergström and Boréus. Here the issue is partly whether discourse is constitutive or constituting in relation to reality.[247]

According to Fairclough, one can analyse the text itself, either the discursive practice or the social practice.

> I see discourse practice as mediating between the textual and the social and cultural. Between text and sociocultural practice, in the sense that the link between the sociocultural and the textual is an indirect one, made by way of discourse practice …[248]

Laclau and Mouffe, on the other hand see even the social practices as part of the discourse-concept. With them, I concentrate on analysing the textual side of the discourse, and regard other articulations as part of the discourse. If I wanted to carry through an analysis according

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[245] Foucault 1972, page 131.

[246] Göran Bergström och Kristina Boréus, *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2005), pages 305f, talk about different generations in the use of the discourse-concept. The first generation, the linguistic tradition, is described as more narrow, referring entirely to the text, while the second generation, represented by Norman Fairclough, takes the social context into account. According to Bergström and Boréus, representatives of the third generation are Laclau and Mouffe. They make the concept even broader when they include all social phenomena in the discourse-concept.

Another way of categorizing, which Bergström and Boréus refer to, is to talk about one continental or French direction and one Anglo-Saxon. While Foucault belongs to the former, Laclau and Mouffe are representatives of the latter. A third type would be Norman Fairclough and the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

[247] According to Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, the first is Discourse Theory, mainly represented by Laclau and Mouffe. The second form is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which is worked out by Norman Fairclough. Third they mention Discourse Psychology. Both Discourse Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis analyse texts from a linguistic point of view to a greater extent than Discourse Psychology. While Discourse Theory spends more time on analysing the text itself, Critical Discourse Analysis would move further and try to put the text in relation to a wider social context. This has to do with the way, for instance, in which Norman Fairclough divides the use of language as a communicative event into three dimensions. This difference between Fairclough on the one side and Laclau and Mouffe on the other has given me some inspiration (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002).

[248] Fairclough 1995, pages 59f.

to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)[249] I would include other dimensions and also analyse the social field, which would require other analytical tools.[250]

Another important difference is whether the discourse is constituted by other phenomena (such as the economy) or in fact constituting the social. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips place the different approaches on a continuum, where Laclau and Mouffe represent an approach that discourse is fully constitutive of the social. This means, according to Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, that

> …discourse itself is material and that entities such as the economy, the infrastructure and institutions are also part of discourse.[251]

Fairclough is placed in a position where discourse is found in a dialectical relationship between being constituted by the social and being constitutive of the social. Fairclough writes:

> … language is a socially and historically situated mode of action, in a dialectical relationship with other facets of the social. What I mean by a dialectical relationship is that it is socially shaped, but is also socially shaping – or socially constitutive. Critical discourse analysis explores the tension between these two sides of language use, the socially shaped and socially constitutive, rather than opting one-sidedly for one or the other.[252]

This is as a reasonable standpoint. Usually I opt for the more complex explanation rather than becoming, in the words of Fairclough, one-sided; but given the material I have to work with, I tend to agree with Laclau and Mouffe on this point. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips describe their ideas like this:

> Thus, in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory there is no dialectical interaction between discourse and something else: discourse itself is fully constitutive of our world.[253]

In other words, one could say that there is no meaning in searching for a world outside discourse. I therefore agree with Laclau and Mouffe. I am interested most of all in the textual level. In my analysis, building more on Discourse Theory[254], my starting point is that discourse is shaping the social world. It then makes sense to analyse the text and understand reality from that angle or entry point.

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[249] A method worked out by Fairclough.
[250] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 69.
[251] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 19
[252] Fairclough, Norman. *Media Discourse.* New York 1995. page 54f
[253] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 19.
[254] Here I use the word in the way Winther Jørgensen and Phillips use it, referring to Laclau and Mouffe.

As mentioned earlier, I build my method on discourse analysis theory, in analysing how the prophetic voice of the SACC has been articulated in the texts of the organisation. One aspect of this is how the power relations interact within the texts. There are a number of possible parameters when one talks about these relations. Thinking of the situation in South Africa, the whole ethnic issue and relations between Black and White[255] are impossible to avoid. At the same time there is a relation between rich and poor – or rather, between privileged and nonprivileged. Another obvious aspect would be based on gender. Other possible relations could be between different types of theological thinking or traditions. When I use the discourse-concept I shall be able to distinguish between those different aspects. Let me in this context again refer to the four challenges De Gruchy and De Gruchy mention.[256]

I shall use ideas from Laclau and Mouffe in their discourse theory, although Winther Jørgensen and Phillips argue that the method Laclau and Mouffe use makes them rather inaccessible. Winther Jørgensen and Phillips state that Laclau and Mouffe

> …do not include so many practical tools for textually orientated discourse analysis.[257]

The reason for this is that their texts, according to Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, aim at theory development. Nevertheless I have found many of their concepts useful. But I would say that my aim is not to use a discourse analytical method, but rather to build my method on 'discourse theoretical premises.'[258] One of the most important of these is the idea that the theory helps to reveal power relations. The occurrence of discontinuities (which Foucault speaks about) is one reason why the researcher can catch sight of these power relations.

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[255] According to apartheid legislation there were four major ethnic groups (blacks, whites, coloureds and Indians/Asians). One way of describing the situation, though, is to say that there were two groups: those with political power and those without. Therefore one can also talk about blacks and whites. In that case the concept 'blacks' would include, according to apartheid legislation, 'blacks', 'coloureds', and 'Indians/Asians'.

[256] See chapter two: livelihoods for the poor; human sexuality and gender justice; the impact of pluralism; and the effects of globalisation.

[257] Winther Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, page 24.

[258] See further Quennerstedt, who writes: 'I would even state that discourse theory can be understood as a mainly theoretical standpoint without accompanying demands about methods. Therefore, to make my own position in this unclear field clear, I want to name my approach discourse theoretical instead of discourse analytical. In doing that, I aim to put the emphasis on the understanding of the discourse perspective as mainly a theoretical standpoint, which means a basic assumption of a perspective rather than a methodology' (my translation). 'Jag vill till och med hävda att diskursteori kan förstås som ett i huvudsak teoretiskt ställningstagande, utan medföljande metodkrav. Därför vill jag för att tydliggöra min egen position i detta oklara fält benämna min ansats som diskursteoretisk istället för diskursanalytisk. Med det tycker jag mig kunna lägga tyngden i förståelsen av diskursperspektivet som huvudsakligen en teoretisk ståndpunkt som innebär ett visst grundläggande perspektivantagande, snarare än att det är en metodologi' (Ann Quennerstedt, *Kommunen – en part i utbildningspolitiken?* [Örebro Studies in Education 14. Örebro: Örebro Universitet, 2006], page 24).

3.3.4.6 Summing up

From social constructionism we bring in first and foremost the thought that power relations restrict the way we act, talk, or think. A method built on discourse theoretical premises will be helpful in unearthing those power relations within the textual material being studied. Another important aspect is the way Foucault differs between a 'subject' and a 'subject position'. Those thoughts together move the focus from the people behind the texts to the textual level itself.

The concept 'discourse' may be used in many different ways. It is the researcher who makes the delimitations, sometimes with the help of secondary sources. I shall do this in the introduction to chapter five. Although I prefer to say that I write this thesis on the basis of discourse theoretical premises rather than by using a discourse analysis method, I shall still use some concepts from Laclau and Mouffe especially. Concepts like 'hegemony', 'antagonism', and 'nodal points' will be useful tools in the reading of the texts.

Since power relations in the South African context are closely linked to ethnic diversity, I also want to introduce some thoughts from the intersectionality field. Egan writes about

> the multidimensional nature and multiple strands that have made up the Christian community's response to 12 years of democracy, not least since the Christian community is denominationally diverse and, within each denomination, there is a complex mixture of race, social class, gender attitudes, sexual diversities, educational levels and theological persuasions.[259]

It is therefore secessary to see how some of those different aspects interact. The concept of 'intersectionality' will help us with this.

3.3.5 Intersectionality

If one wants to explain power relations in the society, a multifaceted approach will certainly help. This is the thought behind the intersectionality concept[260], which has its origins in black feminism. The problem was that black feminists experienced how Western women looked one-sidedly at gender as the cause of oppression. If one only applies a gender perspective in a

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[259] Egan 2007, page 448.

[260] 'In general, intersectionality means that social constructs such as race, gender, and social class do not operate separately but "intersect" in the identities and actions of individuals' (Jonathan D. Jansen, *Knowledge in the Blood. Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009], page 308n23).

situation where ethnicity also plays a role, it will be difficult to apprehend fully the complexity of that situation.

> We regard intersectionality as an epistemological critique of the positivistic paradigm, which through fragmentation, atomisation, and categorisation makes an unequal order of society natural (my translation).[261]

If we reduce social positions to one-sided categories, we become blind to the interaction between different forms of superiority or inferiority in social life. It is important for De los Reyes and Mulinari to use the intersectionality concept in a reflective way. This can mean a number of things. One aspect is formulated like this:

> Over-focusing on gender and under-focusing on other social relations constructs women as victims, which by extension also excludes some women from the exercise of power (my translation).[262]

De los Reyes and Mulinari underlines that the social position of the scholar also plays a part in research. A white, male, heterosexual researcher will inevitably come to different results from a black, female, homo- or bisexual person. Similarly a black female scholar will ask different questions from a white female scholar. De los Reyes and Mulinari write about the white hegemonic feminism that sees gender as the single explanation of superiority and inferiority. The same problem is described by Andersson and Collins:

> Thinking about diversity has also encouraged students and activists to see linkages to other forms of oppression, including sexuality, age, region [religion?], physical disability, national identity, and ethnicity, but "understanding diversity" is not the only point. The very term *diversity* implies that understanding race, class, and gender means only recognizing the plurality of views and experiences in society, as if race, class, and gender is more than "appreciating cultural diversity." It requires analysis and criticism of existing systems of power and privilege; otherwise, understanding diversity becomes just one more privilege for those with the most access to education – something that has always been the mark of the elite class.[263]

In this thesis we shall therefore get some inspiration from the intersectionality concept. After reading the texts from different perspectives (gender, ethnicity etc), we shall see how those aspects are combined in the section about HIV and AIDS. While scholars like De los Reyes

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[261] 'Intersektionalitet ser vi därför som en epistemologisk kritik av det positivistiska paradigmet som genom att fragmentisera, atomisera och kategorisera naturaliserar en ojämlik samhällsordning' (Paulina de los Reyes and Diana Mulinari, *Intersektionalitet Kritiska Reflektioner över (O)Jämlikhetens Landskap* [Malmö: Liber, 2007] pages 25-26).

[262] 'Överfokusering på kön och underfokusering på andra sociala relationer, konstruerar kvinnor som offer, vilket i förlängningen också utesluter vissa kvinnor från maktutövandet.' de los Reyes and Mulinari 2007, page 125

[263] Margaret L. Andersson and Patricia Hill Collins, "Preface." in *Race, Class, and Gender. An Anthology*, eds. Margaret L. Andersson and Patricia Hill Collins, page *xiii* (New York: Wadsworth 1995)..

and Mulinari have a feministic approach, which they want to expand that cannot be said about this thesis. It could just as well be described as having its point of departure in ethnic inequalities or in the unequal relation between poor and rich in the world.

Yet another aspect is the way in which De los Reyes and Mulinari distinguish between inferiority or subordination and stigmatisation. They place Marx and Foucault in dialogue, and compare a female cleaner with a female prostitute. Although both of them experience similar phenomena, like having to sell their gender-related labour, the cleaner is not outside the norm, whereas the prostitute is. The cleaner is not stigmatised as the prostitute is. This perspective will also shed some light on the issue of HIV and AIDS.

When we come to what De Gruchy and De Gruchy write about the impact of pluralism, this is a related concept. By using that word they show that there are different aspects in social life for the ways humans divide people into 'us' and 'them'. There is a relation between pluralism and the intersectionality concept, but intersectionality stresses how these different divisions are part of the same phenomenon of exercising power in order to dominate other groups. If one wants to understand how this exercise of power works, it helps to take more than one aspect into account. This is a common feature in the textual material. One such example of such an intersectionality approach is given in the GS's Report 2001:

> Our reason for being is abuse of power by the powerful, the violence of the wealthy against the poor, the abuse of women by our patriarchal society, the ill-treatment of foreigners in our midst, and the pain of racism ion [in] our society.[264]

In this sentence, three of the most important intersectional perspectives are mentioned. In the following sections I shall name them 'ethnicity', 'gender', and 'social class'. To these three I shall add a fourth: 'religious diversity'.

3.3.6 'State theology', 'Church theology' and 'Prophetic theology'

These three concepts I borrow from the *Kairos Document*. Although the SACC was part of the context in which the document was written, the *Kairos Document* was not an SACC document. The document was written in 1985, and gives a good picture of how serious the situation was within the churches:

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[264] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 6.

Both oppressor and oppressed claim loyalty to the same church. They are both baptised in the same baptism and participate in the breaking of the bread, the same body and blood of Christ. There we sit in the same Church while outside Christian policemen and soldiers are beating up and killing Christian children or torturing Christian prisoners to death while yet other Christians stand by and weakly plead for peace.[265]

The distinction between Church theology and Prophetic theology especially will be an important part of my analysis. For the sake of completeness I also include State theology. The document itself describes it like this:

'State Theology' is simply the theological justification of the status quo with its racism, capitalism and totalitarianism. It blesses injustice, canonizes the will of the powerful and reduces the poor to passivity, obedience and apathy.[266]

It refers to the theology of the South African apartheid state. But as a theology that justifies the status quo, it could be applied to other contexts as well. We shall ask the question whether there are any signs of State theology in the texts read in this thesis.

The distinction between the two other theologies will probably be more fruitful as a tool for understanding the texts. Church theology relies on a few so-called 'stock ideas':

In a limited, guarded and cautious way this theology is critical of apartheid. Its criticism, however, is superficial and counter-productive because instead of engaging in an in-depth analysis of the signs of our times, it relies upon a few stock ideas derived from Christian tradition and then uncritically and repeatedly applies them to our situation. The stock ideas used by almost all these Church leaders that we would like to examine here are: reconciliation (or peace), justice and non-violence.[267]

The problem with reconciliation, as Church theology describes it, that not all conflicts are the same. The document criticises Church theology for applying the concept of reconciliation to all kinds of conflicts.[268]

In the same way Church theology is not to be concerned about the need for justice. That kind of theology also argues that non-violence and peaceful solutions should be preferred, without taking the factual situation into consideration. Apart from misunderstanding those three concepts, it also lacks a social analysis.

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[265] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter one.
[266] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter two.
[267] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter three.
[268] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter three. (See also above, paragraph 3.2.2.)

Prophetic theology, on the other hand, attempts social analysis, and regards the situation of 1985 as one that is divided into oppressors and oppressed.[269] Prophetic theology is clear on taking a stance in the conflict:

> A regime that is in principle the enemy of the people cannot suddenly begin to rule in the interests of all the people. It can only be replaced by another government – one that has been elected by the majority of the people with an explicit mandate to govern in the interests of all the people.
>
> A regime that has made itself the enemy of the people has thereby also made itself the enemy of God.[270]

Being clear on who the enemy is, the document still strives for reconciliation, but in a way than different from Church theology:

> On the other hand the fact that the State is tyrannical and an enemy of God is no excuse for hatred. As Christians we are called upon to love our enemies (Mt 5:44). It is not said that we should not or will not have enemies or that we should not identify tyrannical regimes as indeed our enemies. But once we have identified our enemies, we must endeavor to love them.[271]

Among other things, we shall use these three theologies, as one way of looking at how the textual material uses the concept 'reconciliation'.

3.4   Summing up

In this chapter I have first described the method I have used in this thesis. Then I have given a number of theoretical components in the theoretical framework of the thesis. One can say that this is part of the meta-level, named methodology.

The most important components, regarding the method as such, are hermeneutics and discourse analysis. One can therefore describe my method as built on hermeneutics and discourse theoretical premises. I have, in the theory chapter, explained more thoroughly what I mean by this.

To give some background to the concept 'prophetic' has been self-evidently necessary. The way I give meaning to the concept has only been of a provisional nature, since different texts of the SACC will fill the concept with different meanings. Still, it was necessary to indicate in

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[269] 'Throughout the Bible God appears as the liberator of the oppressed. He is not neutral. He does not attempt to reconcile Moses and Pharaoh, to reconcile the Hebrew slaves with their Egyptian oppressors or to reconcile the Jewish people with any of their late oppressors. Oppression is sin and it cannot be compromised with, it must be done away with. God takes sides with the oppressed. As we read in Psalm 103:6 (JB) "God who does what is right, is always on the side of the oppressed' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter four).

[270] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter four.

[271] The *Kairos Document* 1985, chapter four.

general terms what the concept means. I have also given an understanding of the term 'reconciliation'.

In introducing other concepts, I have given some tools for further deliberation. I shall use these concepts in the chapters to come.

In the first section, about method, I write about the importance of placing the texts in a historical context. So I now turn to that.

4   Living together – an impossible possibility?

Context

The empirical material in this thesis consists of written texts. It is essential to place those texts in their historical context. Although the texts are written quite recently, it is necessary to offer a longer perspective. The history of South Africa, with its unique relationships between people of different ethnic origins, makes it even more important to start the history at an early point. By doing that, I shall reveal what kind of historiographical tradition I am part of. I describe it as somewhere between liberal and radical historiography. Not many references are made to other types of historiographies. It is important, though, to indicate that the way I describe the history is only one way among several others. I shall come back to that in the first paragraph about historiography. Thereafter I shall offer a summary introduction to the political landscape. Summarising the history of South Africa into a few pages is probably impossible; nevertheless it will be a reflection of my perspective. Having done this, I shall narrow the focus to the history of Christianity in South Africa in general, and of the SACC in particular.

4.1   Historiography

There are different ways of describing the history of South Africa. There are different historiographies. Moll, Van Aswegen, Benyon, Davenport, and Giliomee divide the field into four different historiographies:

1. Colonial and British imperialistic historiography
2. Nationalistic historiography
3. Liberal historiography
4. Radical revisionism

Interestingly enough the second type has a subdivision, distinguishing between Afrikaner historiography and historiography by blacks.[272] Smith, on the other hand, regards black historiography as part of a radical approach to the past. His four categories are:

1. The British and settler schools of historical writing
2. Afrikaans historiography
3. The liberal trend in South African historiography up to the end of the 1960s
4. A radical approach to the past[273]

If I had to choose between the two frameworks, I would go for the former. There are interesting similarities between the Afrikaner and the black perspective. The British school is bound to be an entity on its own, and does not represent a nationalistic approach to the South African context. Another way of looking at the historiography is presented by Van Jaarsveld. He regards the whole question of historiography as closely linked to contemporary politics, and relates to guilt and responsibility. Van Jaarsveld offers this division:

1. The conservative historiography: the British are guilty
2. The liberal historiography: the Afrikaners are guilty
3. The socialist or radical ideology: capitalism is to blame
4. Black historical ideology: the whites are guilty[274]

This raises a few questions. For example, why is there no historiography that puts the blame on the blacks?[275] Van Jaarsveld rightly points out that there will never be a historiography that all South Africans will accept.

> '… a common history of South Africa is possible, but will never be acceptable to all its inhabitants' (my translation).[276]

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[272] In the Afrikaans text these categories are: Koloniale en Brits-imperiale geskiedskrywing, Nasionalistiese geskiedskrywing (Afrikaner-geskiedskrywing, geskiedskrywing deur swartes), Liberale geskiedskrywing, Radikale revisionistiese (J. C. Moll, H. J van Aswegen, J. A. Benyon, T. R. H. Davenport, and H. B. Giliomee, *Tussengroepverhoudinge soos weerspieël in die Siud-Afrikaanse historiografie. [Werkkomitee: Historiese Aspek RGN-Ondersoek na Tussengroupverhoudinge.]* [Pretoria: Raad vir Geestewetenskaplike Navorsing, 1987].).

[273] Ken Smith, *The Changing Past. Trends in South African Historical Writing* (Johannesburg: Southern Book Publishers, 1988), pages 18ff.

[274] 1. Die konserwatiwe geskiedbeskouing: die Britte dra die skuld. 2. Die liberale geskiedbeskouing: die Afrikaners is die skuldiges. 3. Die socialistiese of radikale geskiedenisideologie: die kapitalisme dra die blaam. 4. Swart historiese ideologie: die blankes dra die skuld (Floris Albertus van Jaarsveld, *Omtrede Suid-Afrikaanse verlede. Geskiedenisideologie en die historiese skuldvraagstuk* (Johannesburg: Lex Patria, 1984).

[275] Maybe such a historiography will emerge when blacks have been governing for some time.

[276] '… 'n Algemene geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika is moontlik, maar sal nooit vir al sy inwoners aanvarbaar wees nie' (Van Jaarsveld 1984, page 203).

One example is when Smith says that some regard Afrikaner historiography as outdated; but he also describes the opposite:

> Afrikaners like Giliomee have been prepared to face the challenge presented by Marxist writing, and to examine the evidence rather than engage in emotional outbursts or pretend that historical materialism has nothing to say to them.[277]

But one could also add other historiographies, such as feminist historiographies. (I write in the plural, since a number of different perspectives can be found in this approach.) One view is that feminism is out of place in the African context:

> There are of course those who argue that the very concept of feminism is out of place in the African context. The argument lies not only in the ranking of forms of oppression and therefore prioritisation, but it relies heavily on culturally- and linguistically-centred arguments. [278]

One problem is of course that black women are often marginalised in the mainstream feminist discourse.[279] As we shall see in the documents of the SACC, it will be obvious that the ranking of forms of oppression, and with it prioritisation, has been very common. I have touched on these issues in the theoretical chapter, especially when writing about intersectionality. At this stage I have to confess, that I have not read the history of South Africa or the history of Christianity in South Africa from a gender perspective.[280] When the history of the SACC in particular is studied, not much seems to be written from this perspective. This is a weakness both in general, and in this thesis in particular.

In writing about historiography, one can also make a distinction between the historiography to which a certain academic history writing gives expression, and the historiography that one finds in everyday expressions of historiography. In chapter four the focus is on academic history writing, although I have included some semi-academic material. I have not included other articulations of different historiographies for example, poetry, music, or novels.

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[277] Smith 1988, page 94.

[278] Nomboniso Gasa, *Basus'iimbokodo, bawel'imilambo/They remove boulders and cross rivers. Women in South African History. A project of the South African Departments of Arts & Culture and the Human Sciences Research Council* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2007), page XVII.

[279] 'There are many academics, activists, politicians and policy-makers who associate feminism with Euro-American, Anglo-Saxon and Occidental traditions. Consequently, feminism as an analytical tool has often been held suspect or seen as irrelevant.' Gasa 2007, page XVII.

[280] From an intersectionality perspective this is not strange. As a white, male researcher it is easier to see history from a white and male perspective rather than from a black and female perspective. One question in that case is whether it is easier for me as a white male researcher, to see the history from a black perspective than from a female perspective? I have no answer, but want to indicate that this is a problem.

In my brief history of South Africa, it will not be possible to bring in all those aspects; but it is important to bear in mind that history can be written in different ways. Using the historiographical framework of Moll, Van Aswegen, Benyon, Davenport, and Giliomee, I would place myself somewhere between the liberal and radical types. It will also become very clear that I am influenced by black historiography – but, in this case, with the meaning of the word used by Smith.

4.2   Everyone returns to the cradle of humankind[281]

A brief history of South Africa

When we speak about the South African Council of Churches, we recognise the relevance of the national state of South Africa and its importance to the ministry of the Christian churches in that territory. But, just like other countries of this world, South Africa the country has not had the same shape over the years.

Without going into the early history in depth, Southern Africa is regarded by many as the cradle of humankind. Some say that the presence of Homo Sapiens goes back perhaps 125,000 years.[282] People like the Khoe-San[283] populated the area, albeit very sparsely, for thousands of years before other ethnic groups arrived on the scene.[284]

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[281] 'More than 50 000 years were to pass before human beings, who had first walked out of Africa to inhabit the rest of the world, came back to the southern tip of Africa, where long-established hunters and gatherers (San) as well as pastoral people with cattle and sheep (Khoe) were living' (Francis Wilson, *Dinosaurs, Diamonds and Democracy. A Short, Short History of South Africa* [Roggebaai, Cape Town: Umuzi, 2009], page 43).

[282] T. Rodney H. Davenport and Christopher Saunders. *South Africa A Modern History* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), page 3. Wilson argues that 'the oldest anatomically modern humans were found at Klasies River mouth west of Port Elizabeth – dating from around 100 000 years ago' (Wilson 2009, page 24).

[283] I prefer to use this way to describe the indigenous people of Southern Africa, who are still present in some areas like the Kalahari Desert in Botswana and parts of Namibia. Thompson describes them as 'Hunter-gatherers, ancestors of the Khoisan (Khoikhoi and San: 'Hottentots' and 'Bushmen'), living in Southern Africa' (Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* [Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2000], page xiv). Khoe and San are words used by the people themselves meaning people. According to some historiographies, like that of Thompson, these two terms refers to two different groups of people, most probably because the San were hunter-gatherers while the Khoe were herders. Today scholars tend to regard the two groups as two parts of one people.

Whether we like it or not, we shall have to both use different terms in describing different groups of people in South Africa and define what we mean by the terms. The reason for this is the effect of apartheid, which will still be a factor many years to come. Nevertheless it is the firm opinion of the author of this thesis that it would have been desirable to use the words 'people' or 'human' for all the different groups, for the mere fact that humanity is one.

[284] 'San hunter-gatherers, likely descendants of Late Stone Age peoples described above, may never have exceeded 20,000 in number' (Davenport and Saunders 2000, page 6).

To identify just when the first groups of immigrants from east or central Africa arrived is a sensitive matter. If one had to categorise these peoples, one would use the word 'blacks' in the narrower sense of the word.[285] Depending on whom one asks, the answer to this question will differ. It lies in the interest of some groups to date this phase of history as early as possible, while other groups have an interest of dating it much later. Suffice it to say that the people from the northern parts of the continent arrived somewhere between 400 CE and 1,000 CE.[286] (There are also theories that question these estimations.) The two major groups moving into the region were Nguni people[287] and groups speaking ancestral Sotho-Tswana languages.[288] Much could be said about these nations. There is not so much written about the early years as there is, for example, about the nineteenth century.[289]

Explorers from different parts of the world also came to Southern Africa. According to Herodotus, Necos, the king of Egypt (610-594 BCE) sent out vessels that sailed down the Red Sea, and in the third year of their voyage, they returned to Egypt after passing through the Pillars of Hercules (Straits of Gibraltar).[290]

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[285] As I have already stated, I would have liked to avoid the use of racial categories altogether, but it is impossible to write about South Africa without them. Therefore I need to explain how the terms are being used. The word 'black' in South Africa can mean a number of things. In the narrower sense it refers to people who have one of the so-called Bantu-languages as their mother-tongue, and trace their origins to the African continent. But 'black' can also be used in a broader sense, as a parallel to the term 'white'. The term 'non-white' has been used frequently in South Africa, but Black Theology and Black Consciousness in particular have criticised this way of describing people negatively.

[286] Davenport and Saunders 2000, page 9, and Herman Giliomee and Bernhard Mbenga. *Nuwe geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg Publishers Ltd, 2007), page 5.

[287] Those were forbears of today's Xhosa and Zulu nations.

[288] Wilson 2009, page 41.

[289] We mention just a few examples of different kind of leaders. The Zulu king Shaka is well known: he turned the small Zulu tribe into a mighty nation, introducing new military strategies. Whether the huge movements of the various populations (*Lifaqane* in Sotho and *Mfecane* in Zulu) were caused by him or not should be discussed (Wilson 2009, page 57). Another kind of leadership is represented by King Moshoeshoe of Lesotho, who is often described as a more peace-loving king. 'In the mid-nineteenth century, a Sotho-speaking chief named Moshoeshoe offered protection and allegiance to those fleeing the ravages of the Lifaqane' (Scott Rosenberg, "Monuments, Holidays, and Remembering Moshoeshoe: the Emergence of National Identity in Lesotho, 1902-1966." *Africa Today*, vol. 46, no. 1,(1999) 49-72. http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/resultsadvanced?vid=8&hid=7&sid=fb21a808-9a5a-47fc-950b-25f552a3cf38%40sessionmgr10&bquery= (Moshoeshoe)+and+(king)+and+(lesotho)&bdata=JmRiPWF3biZ0eXBlPTEmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl 2010-04-29, page 50). Last, we should also mention the Xhosa prophetess, Nongqawuse, although the story about her is tragic. Her prophecies are said to have caused the killing of numerous cattle and the end of Xhosa independence (Davies, Sheila Boniface. "Raising the dead: the Xhosa cattle-killing and the Mhlakaza-Goliat delusion." *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 33, no. 1, (2007): 19-41. http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=6&hid=7&sid=fb21a808-9a5a-47fc-950b-25f552a3cf38%40sessionmgr10 2010-04-29, page 20).

[290] 'This discovery was first made by Necos, the Egyptian king, who on desisting from the canal which he had begun between the Nile and the Arabian gulf, sent to sea a number of ships manned by Phoenicians, with orders to make for the Pillars of Hercules, and return to Egypt through them, and by the Mediterranean. The Phoenicians took their departure from Egypt by way of the Erythraean sea, and so sailed into the southern ocean.

Another explorer was Cheng Ho, the Chinese, who sailed to the coastal areas of Africa seven times between 1405 and 1433.[291] Most probably Cheng Ho also visited the southern tip of Africa, although not much has been written about this. On the other hand the arrival of explorers from Europe is well-recorded. The first Portuguese known to round the southern tip of the African continent was Bartolomeu Dias in 1488. Vasco da Gama came soon after in December 1497.[292] The Portuguese presence is to be seen as a short interlude. The real European presence starts on 6 April 1652 when the Dutch East India Company under the command of Jan van Riebeeck arrived in southern Africa. It serves no purpose in this context to describe in detail how South Africa slowly but surely became a White[293] dominated area. But some marginal notes are relevant to this study.

Between 1652 and 1835, most of the white presence was located in the coastal region. The newcomers gradually occupied more and more land, and the Khoe became slaves or servants. When the need for labour increased, people came from Dutch colonies such as Indonesia and Madagascar, as slaves. Self-governing black nations lived side-by-side with the new-comers, although not in peace. Two smaller ethnically homogeneous kingdoms, Lesotho and Swaziland, have remained independent to this day, although they are heavily dependent on South Africa. The other neighbouring countries (Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique) are also dependent on South Africa, although their histories are partly different from those of Lesotho and Swaziland. Between 1834 and 1838 about 15,000 Cape Dutch or Afrikaner colonists left the Cape for the interior in what was to be called the Great Trek.[294] Strauss gives two reasons for this emigration: first, the alienation they felt between

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When autumn came, they went ashore, wherever they might happen to be, and having sown a tract of land with corn, waited until the grain was fit to cut. Having reaped it, they again set sail; and thus it came to pass that two whole years went by, and it was not till the third year that they doubled the Pillars of Hercules, and made good their voyage home. On their return, they declared – I for my part do not believe them, but perhaps others may – that in sailing round Libya they had the sun upon their right hand. In this way was the extent of Libya first discovered' (Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus* Written 440 B.C.E [translated by George Rawlinson] The internet Classics Archive. http://classics.mit.edu/Herodotus/history.4.iv.html 2010-03-09, book IV).

[291] This can also be spelt 'Zheng He'. 'It must be noted, however, that the Chinese apparently never plundered nor murdered – unlike the Portuguese, Dutch, and other European invaders of the Indian Ocean' (Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers. Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* [New York: Random House, 1988], page 7).

[292] He arrived in the area known as Natal close to Christmas Day in the same year. 'Natal' means 'Christmas' in Portuguese, and the Province is still named KwaZulu-Natal to this day.

[293] 'White' is also a categorisation that can mean a number of things. I use it to refer to people of European origin.

[294] Davenport 2000, page 52.

themselves and the British authorities; and second, the unstable and deteriorating economic conditions they were living under.[295]

In the nineteenth century, a great number of Indians came to the coastal region of today's KwaZulu-Natal to work on sugar-plantations. A number of people also came to South Africa in the second half of the nineteenth century when diamonds and then gold were found.[296]

In 1899 the Boer Republics were provoked by Great Britain, and the Anglo-Boer War resulted. Since the British could not defeat the Boer guerrillas, they resorted to war against civilians. According to Wilson, about 28,000 Boers (80% of them children, and of the adults two-thirds were women) and 20,000 black South Africans died.[297] Wilson continues:

> Although the final peace treaty gave the former republics the whites-only franchise they wanted, the net result of the war was to generate a passionate anti-British, Afrikaner nationalism which grew steadily in strength until, in 1948, it came to power under the banner of apartheid.[298]

It was with the forming of the Union of South Africa in 1910 that the whole area, with Lesotho as an enclave, became white-ruled. It is no surprise that the African National Congress (ANC) was founded two years later in 1912, in Bloemfontein.[299]

White domination and the oppression of black people[300] was a reality in Southern Africa from the day the first Europeans arrived. But it escalated and became most vigorous with the birth of the concept of apartheid and the coming into power of the National Party in 1948.[301] The 1950s were the decade when a number of apartheid laws came into being. In 1955 the Freedom Charter was adopted by the ANC and its alliance partners.[302] Resistance was explicitly non-violent until the beginning of the 1960s, when the liberation movements took

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[295] P. J. (Piet) Strauss, "The Boer Emigrants and Their Church." in *A History of Christianity in South Africa,* eds. J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, pages 93-96 (Pretoria: HAUM Tertiary, 1994).

[296] Wilson 2009, page 67.

[297] One can ask why Wilson does not say how many children and women there were among the blacks (Wilson 2009, page 69-70).

[298] Wilson 2009, page 70.

[299] There are different theories about just where in Bloemfontein the ANC was formed. The majority view favours a township called Batho, a Sotho or Tswana word that means 'people'. (I use the terms Sotho and Tswana because I am writing in English. In South Africa today it would be possible to write seSotho and seTswana.) But others state that the meeting where the ANC was formed took place in another part of Bloemfontein, closer to the town centre.

[300] 'Black' in this context refers to people from three different groups identified by apartheid ideology: blacks, coloureds and Indians/Asians.

[301] Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning 'separation'. There are also different ideas of the dating of this concept. It was of course invented earlier, but after 1948 most of the so called 'apartheid' legislation was passed by Parliament.

[302] Among those were the Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Congress (Luli Callinicos, *Oliver Tambo Beyond the Engeli Mountains* [Claremont: David Philip Publishers, 2004], page 219).

the stand of being forced to use violence as a means of fighting the regime. The spark that caused this was the Sharpeville shootings in 1960.[303] This also led to the banning of the ANC, the PAC, and other liberation movements.

It was also in the 1960s that the ruling Nationalist Party took away the remaining voting rights of the so-called coloured[304] community of the Western Cape; and the Rivonia trial took place, when Nelson Mandela (among others) was sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island.[305]

In the middle of the 1970s the crisis escalated further. One cannot write about the latter part of the twentieth century in South Africa without mentioning the Soweto uprising in June 1976 and the death of Steve Biko in 1977. Nineteen Black Consciousness organisations were banned in the same year. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was launched in 1983 as a broad resistance organisation, but was later banned together with 17 other organisations in 1987.[306] During this period the churches played a significant role as part of, for example, the UDF.[307] One state of emergency followed another. The situation was tense. During those years secret talks were held between prominent Afrikaner leaders and ANC officials, and between representatives of trade and industry and the ANC.[308] Change became more and more inevitable.

When Mandela was released on 11 February 1990, nine days after the promise made by President Frederick Willem de Klerk in his speech at the opening of Parliament in Cape Town, it was long overdue. But this did not mean that the issue was resolved. In the years between 1990 and 1994 the country was on the brink of civil war. The conflict was most vigorous between followers of the ANC and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in KwaZulu-

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[303] Callinicos 2004, page 280.

[304] In apartheid terminology 'coloureds' means people who originate from the Khoe-San, descendants of slaves from the Dutch colonies or born out of ethnically mixed relationships. This categorisation was (and is) offensive in many ways. It is still a problem that persons have to be categorised – for instance, as part of the affirmative action legislation.

[305] Callinicos 2004, page 295.

[306] Alister Sparks, *Beyond the Miracle. Inside the New South Africa* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2003) page 67.

[307] De Gruchy writes about the *Standing for the Truth Campaign*: 'This campaign failed to achieve its full potential. Yet, as Frank Chikane, General Secretary of the SACC later noted, it did contribute significantly, within the context of the Mass Democratic Movement spearheaded by the UDF, to the events which led to the unbanning of the liberation movements in February 1990' (John de Gruchy,"Becoming the Ecumenical Church." in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. Barney. N. Pityana and Charles Villa-Vicencio, page 21 [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1995].).

[308] Broederbond chairman Pieter de Lange met Thabo Mbeki at a Ford Foundation conference in New York in 1986. A year later Frederik van Zyl Slabbert led a group of Afrikaners to meet the ANC in Dakar, Senegal (Sparks 2003, page 345).

Natal.[309] On 27 April 1994 the first free and democratic elections in South Africa were held, and on 10 May the same year, South Africa's first democratically-elected president was inaugurated. In 1996 the new constitution was passed in Parliament. It would therefore be more appropriate to say that the new democratic South Africa was born in 1996 and not in 1994; but in reality, the 1994 inauguration of Mandela as president is the more symbolic event.

Since that first election, the ANC has been in the majority. A number of overwhelming challenges have faced the new government – not just those of consolidating the new country and continuing with the process of national reconciliation. Poverty, unemployment, and the lack of free and just education have been major threats to this new nation, not to mention the scourge of HIV and AIDS. This has been an area were the ANC government has been heavily criticised, especially for denying the relationship between HIV and AIDS.[310]

The new leaders of the country have also put a number of programmes into place in order to set right the injustices of apartheid. Affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) are two of those that have been discussed in recent years. While BEE only addresses ethnic injustices, the legislation on affirmative action also deals with gender issues and the situation of the disabled. The land issue is also a question with far-reaching implications.

4.3   An ecclesiastical Klondike

The Church history of South Africa

In his monumental work, *A History of the Church in Africa,* Professor Bengt Sundkler starts by reflecting on the biblical narrative about the Holy Refugees – the coming of the Holy Family to Africa while Jesus was still an infant.[311] He continues that

> … twentieth-century literature devoted to the first thousand years of Church history of Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia and North Africa is immense.[312]

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[309] The role of the churches has been pointed out as an important factor in this period. 'Without the intervention of church leaders as mediators in many situations of conflict, it is doubtful whether South Africa could have been able to hold its first democratic elections' (De Gruchy 1995, pages 214-215).

[310] Andrew Feinstein, *After the Party. A Personal and Political Journey Inside the ANC* (Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007), pages 123ff., and Edwin Cameron, *Witness to AIDS* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2005), pages 103ff.

[311] Bengt G. M. Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Bengt G.M. Sundkler, page 7.

Just as an illustration, one could point out that Christianity was almost non-existent in Sweden during this millennium, except for a few years during the ninth century, when Saint Ansgar, arriving in 829, failed to form a lasting congregation on Birka, an island close to the present capital of Stockholm.[313] In the same way, Southern Africa had not seen the coming of Christian mission at this time – but Africa as a continent had!

The first recorded Christian presence in Southern Africa is probably the Portuguese explorers of the early sixteenth century. In 1510-1512 a Roman Catholic chapel functioned in Mossel Bay.[314] After that it took until the middle of the seventeenth century before Christian churches were built in the region again – this time, by Reformed Christians from the Netherlands. A few years later, in 1660, the first Germans arrived, and in 1688 the first Huguenots from France. Unlike the latter, the German Lutherans never assimilated into the Dutch Reformed form of Christianity.

But the churches were mostly for the settlers. Little mission work took place between 1652 and 1824.[315] One of the first examples of international mission was the Moravian mission with its closed settlements – mainly to protect the Khoe – which started its work in 1737. When Britain ruled South Africa from around 1800, Anglicanism came to South Africa. The first Roman Catholics arrived at the same time,. As a result of the Great Trek, Reformed Christians spread into the interior of South Africa. It has been common to say that they also broke away from the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape. Strauss argues differently, stating that in the beginning they were still part of the Cape Church.[316] Later the Reformed Churches developed into three different denominations.[317] The nineteenth century saw multitudes of mission agencies coming to the whole region. Early in the twentieth century, mainline churches and mission organisations were joined by Pentecostals and Evangelicals. To mention all of these mission efforts take us too far away from our focus. Bosch writes about

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[312] Sundkler and Steed 2000, page 7.

[313] Björn Ryman, "Nordic Churches from 1000 to 1940." in *Nordic Folk Churches: A Contemporary Church History,* eds. Björn Ryman, Aila Lauha, Gunnar Heiene, and Peter Lodberg, page 3 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2005). But one has to bear in mind that Christians had most probably been present in Scandinavia long before: both Christian slaves and merchants were definitely there long before one could call Scandinavia 'Christian'.

[314] J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr, "Christianity in the period of Dutch colonisation." in *A History of Christianity in South Africa,* eds J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, page 8 (Pretoria: HAUM teritary, 1994).

[315] Hofmeyr 1994, page 22.

[316] Strauss 1994, page 108-111.

[317] The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (or simply the Hervormde Kerk), and the Gereformeerde Kerk(e) van Suid-Afrika (Strauss 1994, page 112).

… the multiplicity of denominations. This was caused, on the one hand, by the various waves of European migrations to South Africa, the *new* South Africans taking their churches with them as, of course, also happened in the case of migrations to North America. A complication in the case of South Africa, which was absent from the North American scene, has been that almost every British and continental European missionary society as well as several from America have undertaken mission work in South Africa. These two facts, plus a third one, namely, the genesis and development of many new denominational bodies on South African soil, make it extremely difficult to present anything approaching a synoptic view.[318]

One Christian tradition that has to be singled out in particular is the Ethiopian tradition, followed by denominations known as Zionist Churches – today described as AICs.[319] One cannot speak about church history in South Africa without taking these churches into account. These churches sometimes consist of only a few members, while others, like the ZCC, are big denominations.[320] During the latter part of the twentieth century, many of these denominations formed the Council of African Instituted Churches (CAIC), which is a member of the SACC.[321]

During the twentieth century the whole issue of how churches and denominations related to the question of ethnic relations was vital. Much of this will be mentioned in the section on the history of the SACC. Phenomena like Black Theology and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) played crucial roles in the life of the churches. Equally important has been the history of Reformed Churches in South Africa, and their stance on how people from different ethnic backgrounds should live together.

A number of important meetings and declarations have to be mentioned. The Cottesloe Consultation (1960) made a far-reaching declaration that provoked a strong reaction from the Afrikaans-speaking churches in particular, leading some of the Reformed Churches to resign from the World Council of Churches. Some other declarations after 1960 will be mentioned in the section on the history of the SACC. Some of these have been made by the SACC in

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[318] David J. Bosch, "Racism and Revolution: Response of the Churches in South Africa." *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 3, no. 1, (January 1979), page 13. http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdf?vid=10&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260%40sessionmgr4 2009-09-12.

[319] The abbreviation 'AIC' can also be read as African Independent Churches, African Indigenous Churches, or African Instituted Churches, depending on who is writing and in which time period.

[320] Zion Church of Christ. This denomination, founded in 1925 by Engenas Lekganyane, later split into different denominations like the ZCC (Star) and the ZCC (Dove).

[321] Other organisations that attempt to bring those churches together are the Reformed Independent Churches Association, the African Independent Churches Association, and the African Spiritual Churches Association (Marjorie Froise, *World Christianity: Southern Africa* (Monrovia, California: MARC [Mission Research and Communication Center], 1989), page 75).

cooperation with one or more churches, denominations, or organisations. Declarations like *A Message to the People of South Africa* (1968 – hereafter *A Message*) and the *Kairos Document* (1985) are important expressions of the struggle against apartheid within the ecumenical movement. But they are far from the only ones.

As in Cottesloe, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was involved in Harare (1985) when another important consultation was held, and in Lusaka (1987). The liberation movements were also present at these meetings

The fact that the question about how to live in ethnic diversity and in the apartheid system was high on the agenda has made the South African set-up unique. Many churches – although not all – have been organised along ethnic lines. This started with the division between settler churches and mission-formed churches. The first settlers were, if not uninterested, at least unwilling to spread the gospel to slaves and servants. The different interests of the settlers and the missionaries have been a theme over the years. Although the infamous Clause 29c of the Native Laws Amendment Bill of 1957 was never used, there have in practice been very few examples of ethnically mixed congregations in South Africa; the city cathedrals of the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches are particular exceptions. With the coming of apartheid legislation like the Group areas Act[322], the division became even more evident.

The SACC has represented the majority of Christians in South Africa, but we have to bear in mind that this majority was divided and cannot be regarded as one, homogeneous group. One group that is easy to single out is the Reformed family, where the DRC is the major denomination, with historically strong links to successive white governments. There was also a division along ethnic lines, especially within the DRC family.[323]

When the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) met in Ottawa in 1982 and Dr Allan Boesak was elected its President, a *status confessionis* was declared. Apartheid was declared a heresy. The Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC)[324] did the same at its synod

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[322] Act No. 41 of 1950.

[323] Besides the traditionally white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), there were churches for the three other ethnic groups defined by apartheid legislation. Although the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), with mainly Black members, still forms a denomination on its own in some parts of South Africa, and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA), with mainly Indian members, are still there, the denomination with mainly Coloured members, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) and the DRCA formed the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), which is a denomination with the aim of being a Reformed Church without ethnic limitations. The Belhar Confession played an important role as a watershed in this process.

[324] In Afrikaans 'Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk' (NGSK).

later the same year. The *Belhar Confession* also stems from that synod.[325] The confession caused many problems. One was that the DRC did not agree with its content. Another obstacle was to do with the role of a confession in the Reformed tradition.[326] Even after 1994, this caused problems in the search for unity within the Reformed family.[327] But the attitude of the DRC has changed over time. Important milestones were the *Kerk en sameleving* document, published in 1986,[328] and the *Rustenburg Conference* (1990), known as the Conference of Confession, in which the Reformed family also took part.

The challenge of the church after 1990 – and especially with the government since 1994 and the new Constitution of 1996 – is how to interact with the state in a new situation. A Theology of Reconstruction has emerged. Kekana has identified a few examples where the ecumenical church has taken active part in reconstruction. The National Peace Accord (NPA), the Ecumenical Monitoring Programme of South Africa, the National Coordinating Committee for Repatriation (NCCR), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), and the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) are a few examples.[329]

How the ecumenical situation will develop in this new situation is an open question. Lamola predicts some obstacles, which he names 'reactionary ecumenism'.

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[325] Flip du Toit, Hoffie Hofmeyr, Piet Strauss, and Johan van der Merwe. *Moeisame pad na vernuwing. Die NG Kerk se pad van isolasie en die soeke na 'n nuwe relevansie* (Bloemfontein: Barnabas, 2002), page 80.

[326] Strauss explains why the Belhar Confession cannot be defined as a confession, taking his departure in the Dordt reformed tradition. He identifies four requirements for formulas to be confessions: '... it should be scriptural, it should formulate key issues if faith, it should not repeat what has already been said in existing confessions and it should enjoy a broader ecumenical approval' (P. J. (Piet) Strauss, *Belydenis, Kerkverband en Belhar* [Unpublished] (Universiteit van die Vrystaat.[No year]), page 1).

[327] 'It is obvious, however that the demand by the NGKSA that *The Belhar Confession* be accepted as one of the documents of confession of the emerging united church, is an essential problem' (my translation). 'Dit is egter duidelik dat die eis van die NGKSA om *Die Beleidenis van Belhar* te aanvaar as een van die belydenisskrifte van die beoogde verenige kerk, 'n wesenlike problem is' (Du Toit, Hofmeyr, Strauss, and van der Merwe 2002, page 178).

[328] Strauss points out the influence Karl Barth had in the DRC: 'The major impulse in this regard was a series of events early in the eighties: the Reformation Day witnessing of eight theologians on 31 October 1980, the book *Stormkompas (Storm Compass)* in 1981 and the Open Letter by 123 ministers in June 1982. Barthian sounds and criticism against apartheid could be clearly heard in all of these cases. These documents would also pave the way for the CS 1986 and 1990 as accepted by the General Synod of the same years' (P. J. (Piet) Strauss, "Church and state and apartheid in South Africa. A perspective on the Dutch Reformed Church (1962-1998)." in *European Journal for Church and State Research. Revue européenne des relations Èglises – Ètat*. Vol. 8 [2001], page 340).

[329] Noko Frans Kekana, "The Church and the Reconstruction of South Africa: An ecumenical missiology." *Exchange 28*, no. 1 (1999), page 59. http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/ detail?vid=6&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260%40sessionmgr4&bdata= JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rfh&AN=ATLA0000986903 20090912. Database: ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials 2009-09-12.

In re-working its image and redefining its role in a changed South Africa, the SACC – as the principal ecumenical instrument in the country – is increasingly having to accommodate into its membership church denominations that in the past would never have wanted to be associated with its politically radical mission and programmes. These churches from the conservative tradition are a new and potent ferment in the process of the formulation of the new role for the SACC.

The impact of this newly expanded, less 'ideologically' defined, membership of the SACC has an impact that may increasingly manifest itself in two forms.

First, there is a way in which the process of ecumenical theological development is going to stagnate for a while. Old debates and theological controversies settled in past forums of the SACC and other ecumenical bodies are going to be reopened, wittingly and unwittingly, in order to accommodate these newly-come sisters and brothers. Second, the nature and spirit of ecumenical dialogue and the sensitivity against setting up binding theological positions means that in accommodating these largely conservative churches the SACC will increasingly lose its traditional prophetic focus.[330]

With this we are entering into the ecumenical realm, and it makes sense to describe the history of the ecumenical movement in South Africa.

4.4   Ambivalence – bold resistance – cooperation

The history of the SACC

Although this entire thesis is a description of the SACC, it serves our purposes to give a general picture of the Council, including its history. This paragraph will build on other references as well as on the textual material in focus in the study.

Before giving details of the SACC itself, I shall describe the prehistory of the council, including organisations like the General Mission Conference (GMC) and the immediate predecessor of the SACC, the Christian Council of South Africa. I shall also mention some important events and related organisations.

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[330] M. John Lamola, "Change is pain: a projective reflection on the mission of the Church in South Africa Beyond 1994." *International Review of Mission 83,* no. 328, (1994), page 42. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials   http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdf?vid=9&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260%40sessionmgr4 2009-09-12.

4.4.1 The prehistory of the SACC

Before the SACC there were a number of organisations in the ecumenical field that rightly could be seen as predecessors of the SACC. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Inter-denominational Conferences were held in South Africa, like the one in Worcester in 1860.[331] At the time different mission organisations felt a need for cooperation in their mission efforts.

> Thus the first practical steps towards unity in the modern ecumenical movement were taken by missionary bodies.[332]

I shall not spend time on this part of the ecumenical history, except to point out the existence of contacts between Christians before the first ecumenical organisation, the General Mission Conference (GMC), was formed in 1904. The Conference met for the first time in Johannesburg on 13 July. The members of the GMC were there on an individual basis, and were not sent as representatives of their organisations. Most of them came from foreign mission societies, especially from Europe. Some ministers from the Dutch Reformed Churches were also members. According to Strassberger, among the members

> ... there were some African[333] clergy and some laymen.[334]

By and large it was a kind of debating society more than an expression of ecumenical unity.[335] The membership of that time was almost entirely white. Spong stresses this when he writes:

> At the start, at least, and to only a slightly varying degree throughout its life, it was not a meeting WITH black Africans. It was a meeting of white missionaries ABOUT black Africans.[336]

The GMC had some concerns about the social situation of their members. But it was not interested in a change of the system itself.[337] The most important focus of the GMC was definitely on cooperation between different mission societies. For instance, it was important that the societies recognised each other's membership certificates, and equally important that

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[331] Elfriede Strassberger, *Ecumenism in South Africa 1936-1960 with Special Reference to the Mission of the Church* (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1974), page 134.

[332] Thomas 1979, page 2.

[333] The word 'African' in this context most probably means 'black' in the narrower sense.

[334] Strassberger 1974, page 134.

[335] James R. Cochrane, "Christianity during a Period of 'National Consolidation'." in *A History of Christianity in South Africa,* eds. J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, page 231 (Pretoria: HAUM teritary, 1994).

[336] Bernard Spong with Cedric Mayson, *Come Celebrate. Twenty-five Years of the South African Council of Churches* (Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1993) page 9.

[337] 'The requests, for they can hardly be termed demands, were for a more humane administration of the system of Government. They were certainly not for a change in the overall system itself' (Spong and Mayson 1993. page 11). If one reads this from a *Kairos Document* perspective, this would be a good example of Church Theology.

they could handle situations when members wanted to leave one society and join another. A major threat to unity was of course situations when those who had been fruits of the work by one society wanted to join another denomination.

> To lead people to the gospel and let them create their own form of Church government was one thing. To lead them to the gospel and let them be taken over by other western denominations was another![338]

Since members were not official representatives of their societies, the GMC was rather ineffective. It contributed by building bridges between individual missionaries from diverse denominations and mission societies, but it had little authority to make important decisions. Increasingly there was the need for a National Christian Council.[339] Cuthbertson concludes that, apart from being important opportunities for missionaries to have at least some contact with one another, the only achievement of the GMC was to

> ... prepare the way for the establishment of the Christian Council of South Africa and eventually the South African Council of Churches.[340]

4.4.1.1 The CCSA

Strassberger points to the visit to South Africa of Dr John R. Mott in May 1934 as the most important catalyst in the ongoing process of creating a National Christian Council in South Africa. A speech he gave at a conference in Bloemfontein was especially instrumental in the formation of the CCSA.[341] At this conference a Constitutional Committee was elected, and it prepared everything for the first meeting of the new Council, which was constituted on 24 June 1936, in Bloemfontein.[342]

Although the inspiration to form a National Christian Council came from overseas, there was one major difference from the situation in the Western world: there was a clause that prohibited discussion of matters concerning doctrine. Thomas states that this was one cause of the ineffectiveness of the Council:

> Why should the CCSA have been so ineffective during a period of worldwide ecumenical advance? One answer is that the CCSA was set up to promote missionary cooperation rather than ecumenism as such

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[338] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 11-12
[339] Strassberger 1974, page 138.
[340] Greg C. Cuthbertson, "Christianity, imperialism and colonial warfare." in *A History of Christianity in South Africa,* eds. J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, page 186 (Pretoria: HAUM teritary, 1994).
[341] Strassberger 1974, page 139.
[342] Strassberger 1974, page 141.

and indeed, its constitution precluded it from being used as a platform for discussions between churches relating to faith and order.[343]

This was necessary in order to keep different churches together. Archbishop Derbyshire of the CPSA, for instance, was one who would have left the CCSA if it had embarked on a more European style.[344] This leads Cochrane to describe the situation thus:

> Clearly, therefore, the ecumenical movement in South Africa was something rather different from that which was taking Europe by storm.[345]

The new Council showed a clear continuity with the GMC, especially in having the propagation of the Gospel as its focus. Nevertheless, it also embarked on new ways of functioning. At conferences the delegates would be official representatives of their different denominations or mission societies.[346] A greater emphasis would be put on joint action and on contacts with the wider world Christian fellowship.[347]

The first President of the new Council, the Revd William Nicol, spoke at the second meeting of the CCSA in January 1937, and mentioned three problems facing the new Council. First he mentioned the financial situation; second was the problem of using two official languages, Afrikaans and English. The third and possibly greatest problem was the different perspectives of questions affecting, (in his words) the African population.[348] Some found the pace of progress too slow, others wanted to wait until total agreement was achieved. Nevertheless, at the 1937 biennial meeting, speakers like Z. R. Mahabane could express the view that the coming into being of the Council had renewed the hope of what he called 'Africans', who had almost given up on it. The CCSA did play a role in the social arena, but it was never a radical organisation.

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[343] David G. Thomas, "The Christian Council of South Africa as a Platform for Assimilationist Racial Ideology." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa,* no 67 (1989), page 24. ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdf?vid=8&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260%40sessionmgr4 2009-09-12.

[344] 'If the Council were to conceive of its function as either sponsoring a scheme of reunion or trying to become a Pan-Protestant-Vatican in South Africa, I should have to sever my connection with it ...' (according to Thomas 1979, page 3).

[345] Cochrane 1994, page 232.

[346] At the same time the CCSA did not have any significant influence on the churches: 'While doing much good work, the task it undertook was seldom integrated into Church life as a whole. The transformation of individual men and women continued to be central to the gospel preached in South Africa, but the transformation of the world which so deeply shaped these same men and women remained at best an addendum to the task of the churches' (James R. Cochrane, *Servants of Power. The Role of English-speaking Churches in South Africa: 1903-1930. Towards a Critical Theology via an Historical Analysis of the Anglican and Methodist Churches* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1987), pages 159-160).

[347] Strassberger 1974, page 143.

[348] Strassberger 1974, page 145.

In the early 1940s the Dutch Reformed Church left the Council.[349] Not all DRC synods had in fact been members of the CCSA, but when the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape decided, at a meeting in 1940 not to join the Council, this resulted in the withdrawal of the Transvaal Synod, although this only took place in 1944.[350] Spong argues that there were two reasons for the departure of the DRC: one was the lack of bilingualism, and the other was the decision by Smuts to join the allies in the Second World War.[351] According to Thomas, there was also a disagreement on other political issues such as black education.[352] He also finds that the division between English and Afrikaans-speaking churches opened the way for others to enter.[353] Before that, the decision of the DRC Synod of the Cape had resulted in the disaffiliation of the Church of the Province of South Africa.[354] This resulted in a crisis where the future of the Council was questioned. At a meeting of the CCSA held on 26 June 1941, it was finally decided that the Council should continue. The CPSA came back only two years later.

After the withdrawal of the Dutch Reformed Churches, the CCSA became more active in criticising the way blacks were treated. In 1942 the Council gathered for a conference in Fort Hare with the theme: *Christian reconciliation in South Africa*, and again in 1949 at Rosettenville, under the theme, *The Christian Citizen in a Multiracial Country*. Cochrane sees this as a clear sign that the CCSA moved in the direction of being more politically oriented than concerned with evangelisation.[355] One such situation was in the reaction to Clause 29 (c), the so called *Church Clause*, of the 1957 Native Laws Amendment Bill, which gave a Minister the right to prohibit people of different race groups worshiping together in a religious meeting.[356] Best known is the reaction of Anglican Archbishop Geoffrey H. Clayton. He sent

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[349] It is important to remember that the DRC had been at the forefront in ecumenical work in the latter part of the 19th century. There were even discussions about union with the Anglicans (Thomas 1979, page 16).

[350] Cochrane places this withdrawal in 1940 (Cochrane 1994, page 233), while Strassberger quotes the Minutes of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Transvaal, which clearly states that the final decision to leave the Council was taken in 1944 (Strassberger 1974, page 163). Florin states that the CCSA 'ceased to be representative of the established churches in 1948 when the few Dutch Reformed member churches left the council' (Hans W. Florin, *Lutherans in South Africa* (Durban: Lutheran Publishing House, 1967), page 85).

[351] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 16.

[352] Thomas 1979, page 2.

[353] Thomas 1979, page 3.

[354] Strassberger 1974, page 163.

[355] Cochrane 1994, page 233.

[356] Strassberger 1974, page 153.

letters to all the Anglican churches and urged the congregants to disobey the new law.[357] He also sent a letter of protest to the Prime Minister. Even other churches reacted strongly, and the CCSA was behind these expressions of discontent.

Strassberger gives contradicting comments on how the CCSA carried out its role on the political scene. Perhaps the judgement of Revd Nicol in 1937 was true even in 1960? The hesitations of the Council echo in one of Strassberger's last comments:

> Involuntarily the Council became involved in situations where much of its energy and time was expended in protesting against discriminatory legislation.[358]

Thomas also describes the CCSA as an ambivalent body. During the 1960s there were plans to form another Council of Churches, which then would exist alongside the CCSA; but this never happened. Thomas singles out one factor underlying the insignificant influence the Council had after 1948:

> In assessing the CCSA, there are positive things to be said. One is that whatever else its founders lacked, they did not lack courage as they set out to battle the dragons of racism. That the weapon they chose – assimilationism – was itself racist, cannot be ascribed to evil intentions but simply to their sett[i]ng off in a wrong direction at a time and in territory in which there were no signposts.[359]

Although the Council was unsure of the way forward, important events took place during those years, and there were also other important and higher profile organisations at the time.

4.4.1.2 Important events and other organisations

There are a few events, and also a few organisations that are not predecessors of the SACC, but that form part of the story and needs to be included, in order to understand the role of the Council.

Strassberger's thesis ends her analysis in 1960. In the introduction, she explains the reason for describing ecumenism in South Africa between 1936 and 1960:

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[357] J. C. (Hannes) Adonis and Joan A Millard. "Christianity in South Africa since 1948." in *A History of Christianity in South Africa,* ed. J. W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Gerald J. Pillay, page 272 (Pretoria: HAUM teritary, 1994)
[358] Strassberger 1974, page 173.
[359] Thomas 1989, page 36.

The period 1936-1960 has been singled out because the Christian Council of South Africa was launched as a development from the General Missionary Conference in 1936, and the 1960 Cottesloe Conference virtually ended the most successful period of ecumenical relations South Africa had as yet experienced.[360]

The event that led to the Cottesloe Consultation was the massacre at Sharpeville.[361] The churches reacted differently to the killings. The CPSA strongly criticised the government and Archbishop Joost de Blank sent a letter to the WCC, suggesting that the DRC ought to be expelled from the WCC for its support of apartheid. The WCC did not take up those demands, but instead called the Cottesloe Consultation. The eight member churches of the WCC in South Africa sent ten delegates each, and the consultation took place 7-10 December 1960 in Johannesburg.[362] Thomas gives his interpretation of the outcome in these terms:

Perhaps the most far reaching of these was a statement which read: "It is our conviction that the right to own land [wherever he is domiciled,][363] and to participate in the government of which he is a subject, is part of the dignity of the adult man, and for this reason a policy which denies to the non-white people the right to participate [of collaboration][364] in the government of the country [which they are citizens][365] cannot be justified." Only the delegates of the Nederduitsche Hervormde kerk consistently opposed such statement.[366]

According to Adonis and Millard, the Afrikaans-speaking churches and the English-speaking churches held different attitudes towards apartheid, but this was never clearly reflected in the declaration.[367] But this is not altogether true, as the document itself says:

Nevertheless, widely divergent convictions have been expressed on the basic issue of apartheid.[368]

Still, the document was a typical consensus document, and was therefore rejected by the three Afrikaans-speaking churches. After the consultation and the discussion that took place, they withdrew from the WCC.[369] Thomas says this took place under pressure from the government.[370] When the document is read today, it appears as a text with rather conservative

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[360] Strassberger 1974, Introduction.

[361] Frankel suggests that the usual figure of sixty-nine dead is too low. But the exact number of casualties still remains unclear (Philip Frankel, *An Ordinary Atrocity. Sharpeville and its Massacre* [London: Yale University Press, 2001], page 150).

[362] Adonis 1994, page 274-275.

[363] This text is missing, according to the document printed in Villa-Vicencio1986, page 213.

[364] This text should replace 'to participate', according to the document printed in Villa-Vicencio1986, page 213.

[365] This text is missing, according to the document printed in Villa-Vicencio1986, page 213.

[366] Thomas 1979, page 6-7.

[367] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 274-275.

[368] "The Cottesloe Consultation Statement, 1961" in *Between Christ and Caesar.* Charles Villa-Vicencio, page 211 (Claremont: David Philip, 1986).

[369] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 274-275.

[370] Thomas 1979, page 7.

ideas. First of all, the document uses terms like 'non-white people' and 'Bantu races'. Second, it only talks in male terms about people. Furthermore it describes traditional African religion in a paternalistic way:

> We regard with deep concern the revival in many areas of African society of heathen tribal customs incompatible with Christian beliefs and practice.[371]

It also argues that there is no objection to direct representation in the Parliament for Coloured people. The question is whether the document refers to 'Coloured' in the narrower sense. If so, blacks and Indians/Asians were excluded from direct representation in the political life. Being a compromise, and also quite reactionary, the document did not cause any major reaction except in the Afrikaner churches. The CCSA was not at that stage very active in the struggle. Spong describes a largely inactive CCSA:

> Again it needs to be noted that the Cottesloe Conference was organised directly by the WCC and its member Churches in South Africa and not by the now very much sidelined CCSA.[372]

The Christian Institute (CI), which came into being at the same time as a result of the Cottesloe Consultation, was totally different. One of the members of the Cottesloe Consultation – who was a minister of the DRC – played an especially crucial role. He was Beyers Naude.[373] The CI was formed in August 1963.[374] Walshe describes it like this:

> With the founding of the Institute, a vigorous prophetic witness entered the life of the churches.[375]

It was initially a critical voice within the Afrikaans-speaking churches, but according to Adonis and Millard, this changed.[376] The Institute worked closely together with both the CCSA and later the SACC[377]; and De Gruchy and De Gruchy ascribe to the CI a pivotal role in the struggle against apartheid.

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[371] The Cottesloe Consultation Statement, 1961 in Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 212.

[372] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 20.

[373] Adonis and Millard 1994, pages 274-275.

[374] Peter Walshe, Church Versus State in South Africa. The Case of the Christian Institute. (London: Hurst, 1983), page 30..

[375] Walshe 1983, page *xi.*

[376] 'While the CI as a prophetic ecumenical movement initially aimed to be a critical voice within the Afrikaans-speaking churches, their involvement in the activities of the black communities changed their stance to a conscientious struggle for the liberation of blacks. In this regard black theology and the black conscientiousness movement played significant roles. The involvement of the Independent Churches, particularly through the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA – later the SACC), was a very decisive moment in the history of the Church's struggle against apartheid' (Adonis and Millard 1994, page 275).

[377] 'By the late 1960s, when Naudé and his staff collaborated with the South African Council of Churches to produce 'A Message to the People of South Africa', the Institute (with its journal *Pro Veritate*) had become the seminal Christian organisation in the country' (Walshe 1983, page *xi).*

> While the witness of the CI was by no means the sum of the total of Christian testimony and action against racism in South Africa, the story of the struggle of the church to confess the Christ as Lord, over and against the claims of race, cannot be told with any completeness if the struggle of the CI is omitted from its rightful place on central stage.[378]

If the CI played a crucial role and freely involved itself, Adonis and Millard give the same judgement as Strassberger about the churches in general in the CCSA and their leaders, arguing that they engaged in the struggle against apartheid involuntarily. The developments after Sharpeville left them no other choice.[379] One example of this is *A Message* which the CCSA and the CI drew up in 1968. Adonis and Millard are a bit confused about who really stood behind *A Message*. In one context they say that it was only the CCSA[380], and in another that it was jointly done by the CCSA and the CI.[381] Spong, on the other hand, claims that it was a result of cooperation between the CCSA/SACC and the CI.[382] Walshe writes that only the SACC issued *A Message*.[383] More important is the reactions that followed. It came as no surprise that the government would criticise the document. Another reaction was that of the Baptist Church, which felt that *A Message* confused salvation with political liberation. When *A Message* said that

> There are alarming signs that this doctrine of separation has become, for many, a false faith, a novel gospel which offers happiness and peace for the community and for the individual[384]

the Baptist Church held the opinion that a policy like apartheid could never be a rival gospel but just a political ideology.[385] It eventually led to the Baptist Church leaving the SACC.[386] This was one of the more important effects of *A Message*. Otherwise *A Message* had little impact on the situation in the country. Spong quotes Bill Burnett, who speaks about his disappointment in relation to the way *A Message* was received.

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[378] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, page 101.

[379] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 276.

[380] Adonis and Millard 1994, pages 257-258.

[381] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 276.

[382] 'The message was not a document of the SACC alone. Like all the theological declarations that were to follow down the years it was the work of a number of groups and individuals. The SACC played a crucial facilitating role but can not [cannot] claim credit itself for the content of the message or any such declarations that followed. The message came out of a Theological Commission put together originally by both the CCSA and the Christian Institute. A number of theologians discussed and debated a theological position in the apartheid situation until agreeing upon the final content of the message' (Spong and Mayson 1993, page 28).

[383] 'This message was issued in June 1968 by the South African Council of Churches' (Walshe 1983, page 57).

[384] A message to the People of South Africa. Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1968. http://www.sacc.org.za/about/celebrate16.html 2009-01-13..

[385] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 277.

[386] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 30.

"We thought the Church wouid [would] rally to the occasion," he says, "but the Church was cowed at that time by fear of what the Government might do. They all with one consent began to look at it and say, 'that's quite good,' but they did not take it up in a strong evangelical way. It was a great disappointment to those who produced it at a certain cost to themselves. We really thought it would rock the boat. But the impact ... was very disappointing."[387]

More important – and having an impact that cannot be overestimated – was the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid and Society (SPROCAS) which was put together by the CCSA/SACC and the CI as a follow-up to *A Message*.[388] This was a watershed project that changed the role of the Council from being merely a sign of church unity to becoming a truly prophetic voice in the South Africa situation. As Thomas puts it:

> ... *The Message* and SPROCAS had gone beyond that and the ecumenical imperative had taken on a new and infinitely wider dimension than simply the unity of the Church.[389]

One major proof of the role played by the CI is that it was banned by the government in 1977.[390] Other important parts of the ecumenical movement for change in South Africa were the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) and the SACBC. It will lead us too far away from our topic, however, to describe those organisations in depth.

4.4.2 The SACC

The most common view is that the SACC was formed in 1968. This is only partly true. The predecessor of the SACC, the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA), held one of its biennial meetings in Cape Town in 1968:

> It was agreed that the name of the Council should be changed to "The South African Council of Churches."[391]

The CCSA as an organisation was never dissolved. There are numerous indications in the minutes of the SACC that there was a strong feeling of continuity between the two organisations. One simple example of this is §32 in the Minutes of 1968, about the Immorality

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[387] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 25. Walshe supports this: 'The South African Council of Churches, working with the Institute, could deliver the 'Message' but the churches themselves remained largely unmoved' (Walshe 1983, page 71); and, 'In spite of these initiatives, the actual state of the Institute in the late 1960s was not too encouraging. Far from riding the crest of a wave, it was struggling to overcome a sense of anticlimax and even failure' (Walshe 1983, page *xi).*
[388] Adonis and Millard 1994, page 277.
[389] Thomas 1979, page 10.
[390] Walshe 1983, pages 221-222.
[391] National Conference 1968 (CCSA), Minutes §6, page 2.

Amendment Bill, which refers to the Christian Council even after the name change.[392] Another example is the way in which the continuity has been experienced in relation to distinguished and long-serving members, like for example Dr Ezekiel Mahabane, President and Honorary Life President of the Council. After his death 1978, a resolution of the NC of the SACC describes him as a member of the Council for 42 years.[393] Another indication of the continuity between the CCSA and the SACC is given in a resolution of the 1981 National Council, which authorises the GS to sign documents. It says:

> Whereas the Executive Committee of the South African Council of Churches (formally [formerly] the Christian Council of South Africa) did at the meeting of the 12th, 13th August, 1980 take the following decision:[394]

The SACC was obviously not an entirely new organisation formed in 1968, although a new constitution was adopted. Indeed, the material strongly indicates the opposite. The GS, in his report to the National Council 1981, talks about relations with the DRC (using its Afrikaans abbreviation NGK), and says:

> We must invite the NGK to join the SACC as she was a founding member of the Christian Council of South Africa and left only because of Government pressure not because of theological reasons at the time of Cottesloe.[395]

One should therefore describe it as a name change. De Gruchy also writes about the name change, although he dates it incorrectly, saying that it took place in 1967.[396] Interestingly enough, two other writers place the formation of the SACC in 1969.[397] There seems to be some confusion about to the dating of this event. In the SACC's own records, the birth of the SACC is described as a quiet one, albeit with far-reaching implications.

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[392] 'The Archbishop of Cape Town reported on the steps taken to represent the views of the Christian Council to the select Committee appointed to consider the proposed bill' (National Conference 1968 (CCSA), Minutes §32, page 8).

[393] National Conference 1978, Resolution 10.

[394] National Conference 1981, Resolution 3.

[395] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 13.

[396] 'In 1967 the Christian Council changed its name to the South African Council of Churches (SACC)' (John de Gruchy, "Grappling with a Colonial heritage: The English-speaking Churches under Imperialism and Apartheid." in: *Christianity in South Africa. A political, Social & Cultural History,* edited by Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport, page 163 [Cape Town: David Philip, 1997].). This fault is also found in Henriksson: 'The Christian Council became in 1967 *South African Council of Churches* (SACC)' (Lennart Henriksson, *A Journey with a Status Confessionis. Analysis of an Apartheid Related Conflict Between the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1982-1998.* [Studia Missionalia Svecana 109. Lund: Lunds Universitet, 2010], page 80).

[397] 'In 1968 the Christian Council of South Africa distributed its "Message to the People of South Africa" and in 1969 the name was changed to the South African Council of Churches and a new constitution was formulated, based on that of the World Council of Churches' (Adonis and Millard 1994, page 257-258).

> It was a quiet birth. The South African Council of Churches (SACC) came into the world without a fanfare of trumpets or any special form of celebration.[398]

Although Spong, writing about the first 25 years of the SACC (which of course was a celebration of an anniversary), describes the name change as 'dramatic', he also underscores that the event itself was not remarkable. One opinion is that the change in the constitution was the important thing, and that the name change came as something one could as well do.[399] Villa-Vicencio also passes over the name change without significant remarks when he writes about the period of resistance that with the Cottesloe Consultation after the Sharpeville shootings in 1960:

> A new phase of resistance had developed for the churches. The Christian Council, which changed its name to the South African Council of Churches (SACC) in 1968, was expanding its program.[400]

Meiring agrees with Villa-Vicencio, emphasising that it was not just a change of name but rather a new start.

> The new agenda had caused quite a lot of tension among its own members – so much so that the Church of the Nazarene, the Salvation Army, and the Baptists left the activities of the SACC after a whiel. The *Message to the People of South Africa*, which was accepted by the SACC in 1968, sent shock waves throughout the country (my translation).[401]

4.4.2.1 Chronological features and some important documents[402]

The organisation that emerged from the CCSA in 1968 was thus both a new entity and a continuation of the old Council. *A Message* and SPROCAS (which have already been mentioned) were important parts of the beginning of this period. As we shall see other external events like the PCR also influenced the work of the Council. In 1972 the SACC was declared a black organisation. Thomas describes the early year of the Council as a flourishing period.

> For the root out of dry ground showed a sudden, surprising growth from the 1960s onward, and could be said to have burst into flower particularly in the years from 1968 to 1975.[403]

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[398] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 7.
[399] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 7.
[400] Villa-Vicencio 1986, page 200.
[401] 'Die nuwe agenda het heelwat spanning in eie geledere veroorsaak, soveel só dat die Kerk van die Nasarener, die Heilsleër en die Baptiste hul met verloop van tyd aan die werksaamhede van die SARK onttrek het. Die *Message to the People of South Africa* wat in 1968 deur die SARK aanvaar is, het skokgolwe deur die land gestuur' (Meiring 2005, page 460).
[402] This paragraph is in many parts built on Spong and Mayson 1993 and Thomas 1979.

The events around the 1974 National Conference in Hammanskraal, with the *Resolution on Conscientious Objection*, were going to influence the Council even more. The NC 1976, with the proposal to divide the Conference into different groups based on ethnicity, could have been a watershed, but the organisation managed to keep together. No whites-only group was formed. One can conclude that ethnicity never became an issue in the work of the Council. Desmond Tutu became the first black GS in 1978, but after him, in 1985, the Council appointed a white successor, Beyers Naude. In the meantime the Council had moved to new facilities in Khotso House and also received far-reaching international attention when Tutu received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984.

A Theological Rationale and a Call to Prayer for the End to Unjust Rule (1985) was also an important document, produced in the same year as The *Kairos Document* although it was not an SACC document. In the latter part of the 1980s the SACC was often involved in different demonstrations and marches.

During the same period the Council was hard put under significant pressure by the Eloff Commission. The authorities were harassing the organisation as well as individuals. The bomb blast at Khotso House in 1988 and the poisoning of Frank Chikane, who had succeded Naude in 1987, are two examples.

The life of the Council changed drastically in 1990, with the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the liberation movements. This changed the Council's relationships with the government and the liberation movements. The Council now became a mediator between different groups, and in 1993, for example, it took part in preparations for the first democratic elections in 1994.

After the 1994 elections in 1994 the size of the SACC was reduced. With a smaller budget and fewer people employed, its work had inevitably to be transformed.

4.4.2.2 Ecumenical relations within the Council

A first aspect to note is a heritage of the CCSA: the Council's unwillingness to work with Faith and Order issues. According to its constitution, the South African Council of Churches, as a continuation of the CCSA, is a

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[403] Thomas 1979, page 21.

... fellowship of Churches and Organisations which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[404]

It is an ecumenical body. The preamble therefore allows a variety of different interpretations of what Christian faith really is. The Preamble continues:

The theological basis of the Council is a common confession of the Christian faith of its members and is not a creedal test of Churches or individuals. The Council is not committed to any one theological understanding of the Church, and membership of the Council does not imply acceptance of any specific doctrine of the Church.[405]

Aucamp has a major objection to this openness. He asks for a common confession as a sign of a true ecclesiastical community:

The SACC, through accepting in its constitution that it is not bound to any confession, has distanced itself from the first mark of the true Church and the basis of an ecclesiastical community (my translation). [406]

The SACC never intended to be a Church: it was an ecumenical organisation, consisting of different denominations and even other Christian organisations.[407] *A Message* was an important starting point for the new organisation, and it was experienced by some as a kind of confession.[408]

Throughout the years, the 'mainline' European churches (e.g. Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Lutheran) have formed the core of its membership. The relationship with the Afrikaans-speaking churches has been an issue all along. As mentioned earlier, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was a member of the CCSA. Only in 2004 did it again become a full member of the SACC. Other churches from the Reformed family, such as the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), have been members of the Council since the mid-1970s. One of their ministers, Revd Willie Cilliers, remembers (according to the book *Come Celebrate*):

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[404] The Constitution of the SACC, The preamble.

[405] The Constitution of the SACC, The preamble.

[406] 'Die SARK het deur die aanvaarding in sy konstitusie dat hy aan geen belydenis gebind is nie, hom losgemaak van die eerste kenteken van die ware Kerk en basis van kerklike gemeenskap' (M. Aucamp, *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Raad van Kerke: 'n Teologiese Evaluering* [Pretoria, 1991], page 2.).

[407] See also the chapter on the CCSA, about the differences between ecumenism in South Africa and in Europe.

[408] *South African Outlook* (October 1968) places the 'Message to the people of South Africa' alongside the 'Nicene Creed' and 'the Barmen Declaration' (Thomas 1979, page 8).

And in 1976 the representatives of the NGKA[409] at the Hammanskraal National Conference were the senior Reverend Buti and myself. When we entered to take our places in the hall the meeting rose and sang N'kosi Sikelele Afrika. It was a very deeply moving experience.[410]

Another major group of members are the African Instituted Churches. The Council has also from time to time had members from the Pentecostal and Charismatic family.

The SACC had a common history with the mission agencies. From the beginning some mission organisations were members of the Council; but after the last one withdrew its membership in 1971, this was no longer the case.[411] This should not be interpreted as meaning that the Council ceased doing mission work. There has, though, been discussion throughout the years about whether or not the Council is too 'political'. The question of evangelisation has, according to some, been neglected. (This also was one reason behind the withdrawal of the Baptist Church, when *A message* was published.[412]) According to Thomas, who quotes an editorial in Kairos, this is not totally true.[413] It might be that different members of the SACC understood mission and evangelism differently. The majority of the Council saw that the unity-concept had an impact on the Church universally, on humanity as a whole, and even on the whole creation.[414]

> It is this vision which is caught in the objective of the SACC constitution – "to foster that unity which is God's will and gift to his Church". It lies behind the seemingly incomprehensible activities of the ecumenical movement. Hiring tractors to Black farmers in Mafeking is more than just a charitable gesture: it is a practical attempt to break the vicious cycles of poverty, and so attack divisions between men based on economics.[415]

So the apparent contradiction between socio-political activity and evangelism could just be an imaginary conflict. Whether or not this conflict exists, the Council more and more became an

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[409] NGKA means: Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika and is the Afrikaans name for the DRCA.

[410] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 58.

[411] 'Hermannsburg Mission – A letter was read indicating that the Churches which had been established by the Mission had now become independent and the members of the Hermannsburg Mission felt that it was no longer appropriate for the Mission to be a member of the Council. The withdrawal was accepted with understanding' (Minutes of the NC 1971, §4, page 1).

[412] De Gruchy and De Gruchy 2004, Page 118.

[413] 'Sometimes the Council of Churches has been criticized because it is too involved in socio-political issues and not enough in matters of mission and evangelism. Judging on the basis of news media reports, this may be a valid deduction, but it is not accurate. The orientation of the S.A. Council of Churches is basically concerned with mission' (Thomas 1979, page 58 [Editorial in Kairos Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 8. January 1973]).

[414] Thomas 1979, page 12.

[415] Thomas 1979, page 13.

actor on the socio-political scene, but they also interpreted this as part of salvation.[416] The SACC became, for instance, a channel for international support for the struggle against the apartheid regime, especially via the Special Fund.[417] The PCR initially caused many divisions within the Council.[418] This is an important ingredient in writing the history. It is also one major reason why the Council grew so rapidly, and why it hit a financial crisis after 1990. (We have already touched on this in chapter two). There were different views on this state of affairs. Suffice it to say that it was not only positive.[419]

4.4.2.3 The structure of the organisation[420]

The SACC is organised in National, Regional and Local levels. At national level the highest decision-making body is the National Council, who meets every third year. The Central Committee (CC) is elected at the NC. A National Executive Committee (NEC) is elected by the NC and is led by the President. The administration is headed by a GS, which is appointed by the NEC. The work at the head office is organised in different divisions, the number and names of which have changed through the years.

The relationship between the organisation's national, regional, and local levels is an important aspect of the way the SACC has been a prophetic voice in the country. The regional councils were dissatisfied with the relationship between the SACC at national and regional level, according to one resolution in 1987.[421] A committee was established, and in 1988 the GS

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[416] 'In other words, salvation was not seen in the traditional evangelical terms of liberation from personal sin; it was also liberation from societal sin and oppression. So, in fact, the concerns of the Mission and Evangelism Division turned out to be not very different from those of any other division of the Council.' (Thomas 1979, page 60)

[417] 'Given the particular circumstances under which the 'Special Programme' was implemented during apartheid, EU funds were channeled through intermediary organisations, namely the South African Council of Churches, the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, trade unions, and Kagiso Trust, a body specifically established to give access to funds to non-union and non-ecclesiastical organisations' (Lorenzo Fioramonti, "Analysing Micro-Assistance to Democracy: EU Support for Grassroots Organisations in South Africa." *Development in Practice*, vol. 14, no. 6 [Nov., 2004], page 751. Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of Oxfam GB. www.jstor.org/stable/4030019 2009-09-11).

[418] Thomas writes: '…and it is a pity that the WCC did not take steps to warn its member churches in South Africa about its action …' (Thomas 1979, page 73). Blacks were not as unfavourable to the grants as the whites. In 1975 the SACC supported PCR wholeheartedly and the only disagreement concerned the methods (Thomas 1979, page 78).

[419] 'By 1971, the budget had grown to over R50 000, and by 1975, to R1,2m. The contribution of South African churches to these amounts hardly touched R10 000 at any time. **Figures from the appropriate annual Financial Statements of the SACC. See also Report of the General Secretary to the Executive Committee meeting, 20-21 June 1973, p. 1**' (Thomas 1979, page 60).

[420] See further the SACC Constitution, appendix 1.

[421] National Conference 1987, Resolution 32.

reported on the work. The Regional Councils had then increased from 20 to 25, and the final number was set at 29.[422] One major problem was the underfunding of the regional councils, and the NC resolved

> That Regional Councils' Executive together with the General Secretary meet and urgently address this problem.[423]

The GS 1989 pointed out one of the problems with the relationship between the SACC and its regional level:

> There were also fears that the proliferation of regional councils might turn the SACC into a council of councils rather than a council of churches.[424]

In a number of consultations and meetings it had been decided that the Regional Councils should be autonomous but coordinated by the Regional Councils' Conference (RCC). Rules for the RCC should be laid down by the Executive Committee of the SACC. It was also stressed that the regional councils should be constituted by churches and not by individuals.[425] But the autonomy clause was reported to have been dropped as early as 1991, when the regional councils again became regional branches of the SACC.[426] The whole financial crisis of the SACC, as a result of donor partners not contributing as much money as they been doing, also played an important role in this respect. However, in 1995, there was a resolution stating that the Regional Councils again should be autonomous.

> The National Conference notes the concerns of the Provincial Councils regarding access to international funding and resolves that these Councils receive endorsement from the SACC confirming their autonomy, their membership of the SACC and their authority to raise funds in terms of their constitution.[427]

This example shows that the GS in 1998 believed that, by moving some of the work from national level to regional level, the financial problems could be solved:

> And that most of the work could be done at the Provinces and the National office becomes a facilitator and enabler.[428]

The Council President also believed in the regional councils, but stated that the relationship between regional and national level needed to be strengthened.[429] In the resolutions of 1998

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[422] General Secretary's Report 1988, page 11.
[423] National Conference 1988, Resolution 11.2.
[424] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 32.
[425] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 33.
[426] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 26, point 16.2.
[427] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.38.01 2.
[428] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 4.

this problem was discussed, and one said that there were contradictions concerning the autonomy of the regions. Again the issues were referred to another level for fuller discussion.[430] In 2001 the GS pointed out that there were still problems:

> Except for a few Provinces, a majority need assistance from the National Office.[431]

The whole question of how the SACC tried to move the focus from the national level to the regions would be an interesting field of study. In this thesis it is sufficient to hint at this as one of the reasons why the Council might have had a problem in fulfilling its prophetic ministry.

There is not much to be said about fraternals at the local level. Those are usually not linked to the Council in any organised form. But they are there as an important part of the ecumenical movement. One can, like Berggren in a survey of denominationalism in South Africa, ask whether an organisation like the SACC is known at the local level and is able to influence lives in parishes.[432]

For a fuller understanding, it is important to mention that (for instance) between 1970 and 1975 the number of full-time staff at national level rose from fewer than 10 to more than 40.[433] Thirteen divisions had full-time directors.[434] This was not altogether positive, as the SACC ran the risk of becoming an introverted organisation.[435] One can certainly find much material on the prophetic ministry in the archives of those different divisions. The same applies to the different statements that the SACC has issued at different levels. Different magazines, such as *Kairos* and *Ecunews*, as well as the official website of the SACC, contain many articulations of the prophetic voice. Another important source would have been the Minutes of the National Executive Committee.

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[429] 'The bond between Khotso house and the Provinces has to be made stronger, if the ecumenical movement is to permeate the day to day life and witness of its member churches' (President's address 1998, page 2).

[430] National Conference 1998, Resolution 18 03.

[431] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 12.

[432] Erik Berggren, *"Beyond Boundaries". A Local Study of Denominationalism and Ethnicity Towards unity in South Africa*. Unpublished (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, Department of Theology, 2004), page 58.

[433] Thomas 1979, page 57.

[434] The African Bursary Fund, the Communication Workshop, the Choir Resources Project, the Dependants' Conference, the Ecumenical News Service, the Finance Department, the Home and Family Life division, the Justice and Reconciliation division, the Inter-Church Aid division, the Mission and Evangelism division, the Theological Education division, the University and Technical Bursaries division, and the Women's Work division (Thomas 1979, page 57).

[435] 'The employment of full-time staff look after the work of the different divisions would seem to be an obvious improvement in the situation. And yet, by 1975, this very fact seemed to come to be a weakness; some now saw the SACC as an entity which, equipped with its own bureaucracy, tended very much to "do its own thing" with little or no reference to its constituency' (Thomas 1979, page 60).

4.4.2.4 About the prophetic voice

The organisation decided at an early stage to give the National Executive Committee the right to act on its own.

> It was agreed that the Executive be given authority to print and publish documents concerning action taken by the Council in matters of this nature without awaiting authority from the Council.[436]

This decision was important, because it laid the foundation for the future work of the Council. Many times the SACC expressed its prophetic voice without this being recorded at any National Council. This was a necessary strategy, since the NC met only once a year. At the NC meeting in 1969 a memorandum was recorded about how the SACC could make statements. This became part of the foundation for the Council to be able to fulfil a prophetic role. Statements could only come from the Executive or the National Conference. It was also clearly stated that these statements were not binding on the member churches. Between meetings the GS was allowed to make statements.[437]

Sometimes this arrangement opened up misunderstanding or even disagreement. Just one example from the late 1980s can be mentioned. In 1985 the Executive issued a *Call to Prayer for the End to Unjust Rule* (already mentioned above.) In a press release, two of the members of the Executive, Anglican Archbishop Philip Russell and the Methodist Revd Peter Storey – who had not been present at the meeting – said that they were not prepared to pray for the removal of the present rulers in the country. A few days later two other members, the Chairman of the Western Province Council of Churches (WPCC), the Revd Lionel Louw, and the Senior Vice-President of the SACC, Dr Allan Boesak, issued another statement answering the first:

> There is absolutely no doubt that the statement entitled "A Theological Rationale and a Call for the End to Unjust Rule" was adopted by the SACC Executive on April 16, 1985. Neither the Rev. Peter Storey nor Archbishop Philip Russell were present at this meeting, and it is most regretable [regrettable] that they should see fit to debate this matter in the press rather than through the existing channels of the SACC. We have called for a special meeting of the Executive to deal with this matter further. Should they, however, have any biblical or theological reasons for their objection to the statement we will be glad to respond to them.[438]

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[436] National Conference 1986, Minutes page 5 §13.
[437] National Conference 1969, Memorandum on statements by the SACC.
[438] "South African Council of Churches. Documentation. A Theological Rationale and a Call to Prayer for the End to Unjust Rule." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no. 52 (1985), pages 61-62. ATLA Religion

The whole discussion was thereafter brought into the expanded Presidium of the SACC, and the acting GS, Dan Vaughan, issued a statement that partly

> … welcomed the affirmation by church leaders Archbishop Russell and the Revd. P.J. Storey that they were not seeking to undermine the unity of the SACC in their declarations in connection with this matter.[439]

I include this example as an illustration that the prophetic ministry of the SACC was not always carried out without internal disagreement. My thesis only describes the prophetic voice from one perspective, that of the National Conferences. There are vast areas of interest for further research on this topic.

4.4.3 Summing up

The history of South Africa and South African Christianity could be written in many different ways. I have done it from a point of view in which coexistence between people from different ethnic origin plays a crucial role. This is in a way inevitable. It is almost impossible to write about South Africa without this perspective. But I could also have written from a gender perspective, or brought a class perspective into the story. These perspectives will be brought into the main body of the thesis.

Both the general history of the country and the history of Christianity show that South Africa is a country with diversity. It has been important to describe this diversity, as background to the way in which the SACC has articulated its prophetic voice. The major contribution in the first decades of the SACC's existence was in the field of ethnic diversity.

It has also been important to describe the life of the Council from an ecumenical point of view. Although the concept of 'intersectionality' does not immediately include this kind of diversity, it is relevant in the South African set-up. Apart from ethnic diversity, gender diversity, and the relations between poor and rich, the differences between various denominations are part of the context.

Database with ATLA Serials http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdf?vid=9&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260 %40sessionmgr4 2009-09-12.

[439] South African Council of Churches. Documentation. A Theological Rationale and a Call to Prayer for the End to Unjust Rule. 1985, page 62.

5   A prophetic voice with a divided agenda

The first reading

5.1   Introduction – discerning the orders of discourse

In this chapter I give an account of the first of two readings. As stated in the method chapter, I started to read the texts in a benevolent manner, inspired by the hermeneutic tradition. The objective was to read the texts without critical distance. Quite soon I felt the need of some sort of supplementary method, in order both to organise the material and to understand the different power relations contained in the material. I did this with the specific aim of looking for articulations of the prophetic ministry. At that stage my way of understanding the concept 'prophetic' was not fully developed. I had a tentative approach of looking for examples of when the SACC took a critical stance against something or against someone, and claiming to do this with some sort of divine inspiration.

Part of my preconception was that I already had some ideas about the kind of issues involved in the prophetic activity of the Council. One such preconception was that the Council had been one of the major opponents of the apartheid system. Consequently one of the aspects of the prophetic voice throughout the years has been how this voice has been articulated in relation to ethnicity and especially in relation to apartheid. As noted in the introduction I was also interested in finding out whether and how the SACC had expressed itself in relation to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Since this was and is a major threat to the whole South African society[440], it would have been strange if nothing had been said about this. The chapter about previous studies of the SACC indicates that this might be the case. Another question was whether and how the SACC had spoken prophetically about the situation in Zimbabwe.

The reading of the texts also brought in other aspects of the prophetic ministry. One example is where the SACC has taken a stance with far-reaching effects on how it has been understood as a prophetic agent in South Africa: the question of violence and non-violence. This was the burning question of the middle of the 1970s and in a sense it has been an ongoing theme throughout the period I study.

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[440] South Africa, together with Botswana, has for a long time had the highest number of infected people of any country (Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside. *AIDS in the Twenty-First Century Disease and* Globalization [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002], page 117).

I have also found other aspects of the prophetic voice that I did not foresee or specifically look for. Some of the issues are apparently minor, while others are of greater importance. Although my aim has been to be as general as possible, in this first reading I have begun to focus on some specific areas. In all the different prophetic articulations in the texts of the SACC's national conferences, I have found that some themes are more common than others. There are some areas with a bearing on the prophetic ministry in which the SACC has been more active. In his 2001 address, the SACC President asks:

> If truly Christ is with us in Africa today, how do we combat HIV/AIDS, overcome poverty, transcend racism, and build peace?[441]

These four perspectives partly correspond to the four challenges for the future, mentioned by De Gruchy and De Gruchy (already mentioned above). They write that they

> … can suggest four significant and interlocking challenges that have emerged for the church in South Africa at the start of the twenty-first century: the livelihoods for the poor; human sexuality and gender justice; the impact of pluralism; and the effects of globalization.[442]

If one studies the whole period from 1969 to 2004, the first three of the De Gruchy themes apply – if one includes the issue of HIV and AIDS in the challenge concerning sexuality, and the whole issue of racism in the third challenge (pluralism). But in reading the texts from the whole period, one also finds that the theme of violence versus non-violence is a very important point of departure for the prophetic ministry, as shown in the last example given by the SACC President in 2001, about building peace. Building on De Gruchy and De Gruchy together with the 2001 Presidential address, I have come to the conclusion that the issues of poverty, pluralism, gender, and violence versus non-violence are four important areas on which to focus. I shall return in due course to the whole issue of HIV and AIDS.[443] But first I have to say something about the concept of pluralism.

When De Gruchy and De Gruchy write about pluralism, they do not include gender nor class in the concept. This is one possible standpoint. I have found, and already developed the argument, that the intersectionality concept is very useful in this respect. I am aware that I do

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[441] Presidential address 2001, page 1.

[442] De Gruchy and De Gruchy2004, page 229.

[443] The ecumenical organisation SACLA includes a few other issues in its 'SACLA Giants'. These are: HIV and Aids, Violence, Racism, Poverty & Unemployment, Sexism, Family in Crisis, and Crime & Corruption (South African Christian Leadership Assembly. "SACLA Giants." South African Christian Leadership Assembly. http://www.sacla.za.net/?component=ddb&operation=page&page=17 2010-05-04). While the first five are included in the discussion above, the two last issues will not be part of the analysis more than briefly. The reason for this is that the texts of the SACC at the NC deal with those two issues very sparsely.

not use the concept in the same way as when it was constructed. In the black feminism perspective, the concept served the purpose of showing that gender was not the only aspect when one wanted to explain and discuss oppression. By using the concept in the South African context, I want to say that ethnic diversity is not the only factor or perspective. At least, I want to show that class (rich/poor), gender, and ethnicity are connected to one another. The analysis will keep the different perspectives separate. But in the section about HIV and AIDS it will be obvious that they merge. De los Reyes and Mulinari explains it like this:

> An intersectionality perspective we see as a way of developing an analysis that manages to establish power relations in the society and their unequal division of material and symbolic resources, without degenerating into an ontological ranking about the primacy of inequality. (My translation.)[444]

The main reason for using this concept is that different ways of dividing people into groups cannot be explained as totally different phenomena. They are all interrelated. On this point I agree with De los Reyes and Mulinari. I therefore use the term 'intersectionality' instead of 'pluralism'. Having said this, it is important even at this point to indicate that, for example, Black Theology also includes more than ethnicity in the concept of blackness. Frostin writes:

> In fact, "black" in black theology is not primarily an ethnic designation but rather a socioeconomic and cultural one, denoting the oppressed in a white racist society.[445]

Nevertheless it is important to include other aspects like gender and even religious diversity (meaning both the phenomenon that people hold different religious beliefs, but also the fact that there are different kinds of Christianity). When I include the relation poor/rich under the same heading, I do this without using the term 'class', which would lead us too far off the topic. It presupposes the use of a Marxist theory, which I do not intend to use. Still, I regard the whole issue of poverty as a related issue; and I prefer to name the category 'social class'.[446]

Another reason for grouping intersectionality issues under one heading is the insight that the violence versus non-violence issue is not compatible with the other issues. The question about violence or non-violence is rather to be seen as a matter of how we as human beings handle

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[444] 'Ett intersektionalitetsperspektiv ser vi som ett sätt att utveckla en analys som förmår förankra maktrelationer i samhället och dess ojämlika fördelning av materiella och symboliska resurser, utan att förfalla i en ontologisk rangordning om ojämlikhetens primat' (De los Reyes and Mulinari 2007, page 11).

[445] Frostin 1988, page 87.

[446] In the material the term 'class' is not used frequently. On the other hand, according to Walshe, it was something the CI worked with: 'Working from a Biblical theology, they came to identify with the poor and oppressed and in so doing eventually recognised the elements of class conflict as well as racism in the South African situation' (Walshe 1983, page *xiv*). In doing this the CI was, according to Walshe, still suspicious of communism and was more in favour of democratic socialism (Walshe 1983, page xiv).

the different power relations that come to the fore when we look at reality through the intersectionality perspective.

Another issue is HIV and AIDS. This question is in a specific way interrelated to all the others. Therefore this is treated under a special heading. It also differs from the other areas, since the SACC said nothing about HIV and AIDS before 1990.

There is still one missing issue, which was one of my preconceptions. I started to read the texts in order to find out if the SACC had articulated a prophetic voice in relation to the situation in Zimbabwe. This question will be analysed separately.

Before I get into the actual reading of the text, something has to be said about the fourth challenge of De Gruchy and De Gruchy: globalisation. Bevans and Schroeder describe the phenomenon like this:

> Globalization also threatens, perhaps as never before, to exclude whole peoples from economic and political participation and to extinguish traditional languages and cultures.[447]

In the material studied in this thesis, this threat is not dealt with. There are very few, if any, articulations of the prophetic voice that have globalisation in focus.[448] Therefore I do not study how the SACC deals with it. Of course, it might be the case that the SACC has spoken prophetically about globalisation at other levels. Similarly, I do not claim that the Council has not addressed the problem since 2004.[449] During the period under examination, globalisation is a non-issue in the texts I have read. I can only speculate about the reasons for this. One may be that, in the struggle against apartheid, globalisation was partly a positive force, and not the threat that Bevans and Schroeder describe. One could even discuss whether or not the international community (including organisations such as the WCC) influenced the SACC in its prophetic ministry and was a driving force behind it.

When I continue to read the texts from these different angles, I use the concept 'order of discourse'. Altogether I discern four orders of discourse in the material. The first is the *intersectionality order of discourse*. The reason for starting with this order of discourse is the identity of the Council as an ecumenical organisation. This means that the whole aim of the

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[447] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 390.

[448] One example is in the General Secretary's Report for 2004, page 3, where a reference is made to globalisation.

[449] The SACC published a document on climate change in 2009, an example of the Council dealing with globalisation (Climate Change – A Challenge to the Churches in South Africa. Marshalltown: South African Council of Churches, 2009. http://www.sacc.org.za/docs/climate.pdf 2009-12-27).

organisation is to relate to diversity, with the specific goal of enhancing unity. The *intersectionality order of discourse* is divided into four sub-orders of discourse. The first of those sub-orders of discourse is the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse*. The SACC's era of greatness as an organisation is strongly linked to the struggle against the apartheid regime. Therefore it makes sense to analyse this first. The second sub-order of discourse, concerning the prophetic voice of the SACC as expressed in the material, is related to human sexuality and gender justice. This is not an area where the Council was very active in its earlier years. However, the *gender sub-order of discourse* – excluding the sexuality dimension – has many links to the one concerning ethnicity, and could also have been treated together with that sub-order of discourse. This is the case, for example, in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which among other matters talks about South Africa as a democratic state founded on non-racialism and non-sexism.[450]

The third area of interest will be the fight against poverty. In order to give it a name that is compatible with the other two, I name it the *social class sub-order of discourse*. This has also been a field where the Council has been active, and remains so. To understand power relations, this is a perspective that needs to be added to those of ethnicity and gender.

The fourth sub-order of discourse has to do with ecumenical diversity and interfaith questions. This I call the *religious diversity sub-order of discourse*.

The second order of discourse will relate to the discussion about violence versus non-violence. In different ways this has been an important area in the prophetic ministry of the Council. Not only do the texts talk about how the Council should act: they also argue about different kind of violence, and especially the violence from the side of the State. Historically the discussion about violence versus non-violence – and especially about conscientious objection – gave the SACC a distinctive role in the South African context. Therefore the *violence versus non-violence order of discourse* is included, even though it is an example of another type of phenomenon.

Next I discern the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*. It could have been included in any of the other orders of discourse. The question of HIV and AIDS is linked, for example, to both ethnicity and ecumenical diversity. As we shall see in the material, different ethnic groups are ascribed certain cultural behaviour in this regard. But HIV and AIDS is also a phenomenon that has links to violence, especially the kind of gender-related violence that often takes place

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[450] The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Act 108. Chapter 1 (b).

in connection with human sexuality. Similarly, one can see a strong link between HIV and AIDS on the one side and poverty on the other. Since it has these connections to all other areas, it makes sense to treat it as an order of discourse on its own. This is also where the intersectionality concept will be developed further in my thesis.

Last, I also spend some time on the *Zimbabwe order of discourse*.
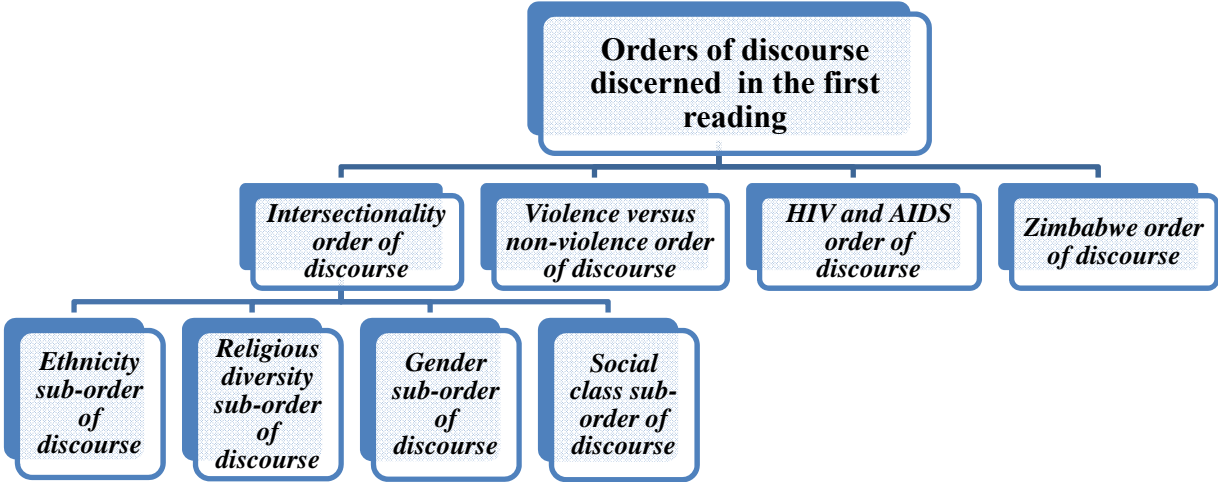
Figure 1: Orders of discourse and sub-orders of discourse in the first reading

In choosing these themes or discerning those orders of discourse, I have been eager to maintain a post-1990 point of view. The research problem is how the articulation of the prophetic voice in the SACC has changed since 1990. Nevertheless, much attention will be focused on the time before 1990. The goal is still, in the end, to find how the prophetic voice has changed.

Writing with discursive theoretical premises, these areas are the orders of discourse in which the first reading will be carried out. The concept *order of discourse* is thus to be understood as a way of delimiting articulations that, over time, show some regularity on the basis of their content. With this approach in mind, it becomes essential to supply the text with contextual references.

When I have discerned those orders of discourse, I have not only included examples that are explicitly prophetic. There are other articulations that show how the material uses certain concepts or a certain terminology. Let us take the whole aspect of ethnicity as an example. The focus has been on how the prophetic voice of the SACC is articulated in this respect. To

understand the use of some concepts such as 'black', 'African', 'white', etc, I have chosen to include material that is not prophetic *per se* but that shows how the SACC gives meaning to these concepts.

5.2   Equal in theory – unequal in practice

The *intersectionality order of discourse*

In this part of the thesis, the intersectionality concept is used as a way of understanding that the field of 'superiority' and 'inferiority' is complex. The four sub-orders of discourse described in this paragraph are not the only possible ones. There could also be other ways of dividing people into different groups.[451] Those are the ones found in the material, and although each one is treated separately, the idea is that there are connections between them. I shall come back to this in a closing section of this paragraph. It will also be obvious in the paragraph about HIV and AIDS.

5.2.1 The prophetic ministry against apartheid and racism

The *ethnicity sub-order of discourse*

The first intersection in focus is the ethnic aspect. We are dealing with the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse.* The major question is how the SACC articulates its prophetic voice in relation to ethnic diversity. Apartheid was one way of organising a society with different ethnic groups. Historically speaking, it is an extreme example. Humankind has had, and still has, a problem with living together in peace, and dealing with ethnic differences. Crimes against humanity are nothing new, and will probably continue to occur. One could mention modern examples like the Jewish holocaust of the Second World War, or ethnic purges in Cambodia and Bosnia. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda is also an expression of the same inability of different ethnic groups to live together in peace. The list could be made even longer. How the apartheid

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[451] The sexuality aspect – and especially the notion of sexual orientation – could have been an aspect to study. In this respect, though, the material is very meagre. In the following I shall only mention the few times when the texts have said anything about different sexual orientations. To regard it as a sub-order of discourse on its own would have taken us too far. When the SACC President speaks about homosexuality in 1994, he strongly condemns it: 'There is also the homosexual issue which is ever more prevalent. But the Bible is unequivocally clear from Genesis to Revelation that homosexuality is not an acceptable sexual lifestyle or alternate in God's eyes' (Presidential address 1994, page 12).

ideology permeated the whole society is unique in modern times. For a number of years it was constitutionally correct to treat people differently on the basis of ethnic origin. And so the way the SACC expresses itself in relation to the apartheid system is of special interest. Needless to say, it will not be possible to do more than touch upon this vast area.

The time period covers mainly the 1970s and 1980s, although the fight against apartheid continues after 1990. This is the period when the government constructs its homeland policy. People are forcefully removed, and the influx control attempts to stop people from moving into the cities (although this still takes place). This is the period when the rest of the world becomes more active in the fight against apartheid. The Soweto uprising (1976) and the death of Steve Biko (1977) are important to mention, as well as all the states of emergency in the middle and towards the end of the 1980s. During this period the SACC becomes more and more involved in the struggle, and the agenda is set by it.

First I give a short summary of how the SACC texts are part of the fight against apartheid. As we have seen in chapter four, it is not self evident what we mean when we use the word 'apartheid'. In this paragraph we talk about the political system in South Africa up to the first democratic elections in 1994 and the new constitution of 1996. It is not easy to state when the political system of apartheid started as it is to say when it ended. One suggestion is 1948, when the National Party came into power. But some of the laws that gave only a few citizens human rights were already in place long before 1948. Other so-called 'apartheid' laws were passed in the 1950s. However, since this study only covers the period from 1969, it is not necessary to fix the starting year of the apartheid system.[452]

Under the heading *A luta continua*[453], I follow the prophetic voice in relation to ethnicity after the abolition of apartheid. In this specific context, it is not possible to use 1990 as the cut-off point: apartheid is still in place until 1994, and in some aspects even up to 1996.

In the next passage I have read the texts with the aim of following some of the most frequently-used classifications of ethnic difference, such as black, White, etc. This was not a matter of course. I did consider leaving out the racial categorisation or giving it less space, since there is the risk of perpetuating a system that should be consigned to history. My aim

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[452] Elphick ascribes the innovation of the apartheid ideology to Dutch Reformed pastors and missionaries. 'It was thus Dutch Reformed preachers and missionaries who first formulated an apartheid ideology (my translation) ''Dit was dus NG predikante en sendelinge wat eerste 'n apartheidsideologie geformuleer het' (Richard Elphick, "'N Nuwe Geestelike Krag." in *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, edited by Herman Giliomee and Bernhard Mbenga, page 259 [Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 2007]..

[453] This is Portuguese for 'The struggle continues'.

has been to show that, although the SACC was a strong voice against apartheid – perhaps one of the most articulate – it was also affected by the system. I also want to qualify how different texts are expressions of different discourses in this respect. In some of the texts the SACC even gives different qualities to different ethnic groups. This will be the focus in one of the paragraphs.

I shall also show how ethnic classification continues, and perhaps has to continue, even after 1996 when South Africa, according to its Constitution, has become a non-racial society. One specific issue I shall touch on is the relationship between the negative attitude the SACC has towards ethnic classification, and its attitude towards affirmative action and BEE.
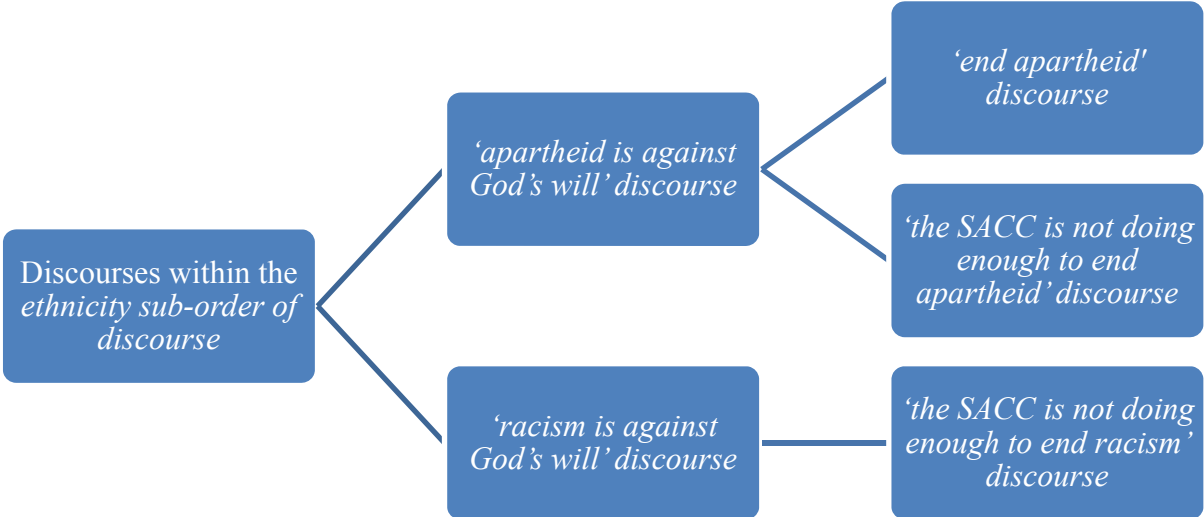
Figure 2a: Discourses within the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse*

5.2.1.1 The fight against apartheid

There is general agreement in the texts that apartheid as a system is evil. The fight against apartheid is central to the prophetic voice of the SACC for a long period of its existence. When the SACC celebrates its first 25 years of existence, and Bernhard Spong and Cedric Mayson writes its history, this is clear:

The common enemy of the evil apartheid structure united the Churches together in a common purpose that formed the priority of Christian mission in South Africa for many years.[454]

From the beginning of the life of the SACC – at the same National Council where the CCSA changed its name – apartheid was on the agenda.[455] This time the effects of apartheid were in focus. But all along the Council argued that the whole system was totally wrong and fundamentally against the will of God. This is the most frequent discourse over the years. I prefer to call it the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse.* This is the case, for instance, in *A Message.[456]* In the GS report of 1974 we also find this discourse when it makes it clear what the church has thought about apartheid for a long time.

Despite what the Government may be saying the fact that what the Churches have proclaimed since 1948[457] in respect of the whole policy of Apartheid which they have made abundantly clear in their opinion is contrary to the Will of God, the various population groups in South Africa to whom this policy has been applied are saying with a very clear voice at the present time. These voices must be listened to.[458]

There is no hesitation in the reports, addresses, minutes, and resolutions that apartheid is against the will of God.[459] And in the Hammanskraal declaration about conscientious objection, even the whole South African society is described as fundamentally unjust and discriminatory.[460] Finally the SACC comes to the conclusion that apartheid is a heresy.

The Church has consistently said that apartheid is totally inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church has a discipline. Anyone who says Jesus is accursed must be anathema and excommunicated. The

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[454] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 36.

[455] The Minutes reflect a decision to criticise one of the most obvious expressions of the apartheid system, population removals. 'A copy of a letter sent to the Minister for Bantu Administration and Development in terms of a resolution of the Executive Committee held on 22nd and 23rd February 1968 concerning the needless hardships experienced by those involved in current removals, to Lime Hill and elsewhere, together with the reply directed by the Minister, were considered' (National Conference 1968, minutes, page 5 §13).

[456] The message was published by the Council together with the Christian Institute (CI). 'According to the Christian Gospel, we find our identity in association with Christ and with each other. Apartheid is a view of life and a view of man which insists that we find our identity in dissociation and in distinction from each other. A policy of separate development which is based on this concept therefore involves a rejection of the central beliefs of the Christian Gospel. It calls good evil' (*A message to the People of South Africa*, chapter 3).

[457] In this quotation 1948 is given as the starting year of the apartheid system.

[458] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 6.

[459] A long list of quotations could be given with the same content. Here are a few: 'We need to be liberated from apartheid and unchristian thinking that we can still be separated in this country' (General Secretary's Report 1976, page 4). 'The National Conference of the SACC and its member Churches have repeatedly condemned the unjust political system in South Africa as a contradiction of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and has declared Apartheid a heresy' (National Conferences 1983, resolution 21).

[460] National Conference 1974, minutes §16.

Church must declare that anyone who believes in and practices apartheid will be excommunicated, that you can't be a Christian and at the same time be a perpetrator of apartheid.[461]

Other organisations, like the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and WARC, had also declared apartheid heretical, turning it into a *status confessionis* – although the GS in 1983 suggests that the SACC was the first to declare apartheid a heresy.[462]

When the Eloff commission is being discussed, it is part of the same discourse, where it is clear that the apartheid regime is acting against the will of God:

Your commission has been asked to be part of a plot to be sacrilegious and blasphemous. It is being asked to engage in a retrial of Jesus Christ and to take part in plot to crucify Him afresh, in doing these things to those of His followers who are guilty of no more heinous a crime than trying to be faithful to their Lord and Master and to obey what they believe are His clear injunctions.[463]

From the beginning of the period we are studying, there are already clear statements against apartheid that declares the ideology to be a total contradiction of the gospel. At the same time there are early examples of the Council expressing itself more carefully. Sometimes it even needed to be pointed out specifically that the SACC was against racism.[464] One example of the SACC's texts expressing themselves a bit hesitantly is in connection with the PCR (which will be dealt with in another paragraph). The SACC was not entirely positive about the PCR, but the launch of the PCR forced the Council to take a clear stance. When talking about the PCR in 1971, the GS indicated that the Church was not aware of the effects of the apartheid system.

If the only positive result of the World Council of Churches decision has been to make us acutely aware of the discriminatory society in which we live and to challenge the Church as to where it stands, it has achieved a great deal.[465]

This shows that, in its first years with its new name, according to some of the texts, the Council was not involved deeply enough in the fight against the apartheid system. It is also a sign that there might be a difference in involvement between the staff of the SACC and the

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[461] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 11.

[462] 'The S.A.C.C.is accused by some of being manipulated from overseas. When one takes into account that it was this conference which last year was the first to declare apartheid a heresy even before the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Toronto last October, then it might be better to accuse the S.A.C.C. of influencing those other churches' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 17).

[463] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 24.

[464] The 1972 Presidential address argues: 'It is not only my intention to discuss a list of detail, but rather attempt to discuss the one basic concern, a direct cause or reason for other things that occupied the minds and hearts of many. I am referring to that which is commonly referred to as <u>racism</u>' (Presidential address 1972, page 2).

[465] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 1.

member churches. Therefore another discourse in the material can be described as the *'the SACC is not doing enough to end apartheid' discourse.* One aspect of this is when the texts express the opinion that the Council is opposing apartheid with words only and not doing it in action. This is what the same GS's Report of 1971 asks for:

> The stand of many of the member Churches of the Council has been made clearer as they have unequivocally rejected the policy of Apartheid in South Africa, but a rejection in words is easy – what is the alternative?[466]

This is a common thought during all the years. General Secretaries and Presidents argue that words must be followed by deeds. It gives rise to the situation where on one level the SACC speaks out about the evil of apartheid but on another level does not do enough to end it. The 1974 GS report therefore talks about the need for radical change and asks for a sharing of power.[467] This is something new in the material – but it will become a common part of the discourse. We can name it the *'end apartheid' discourse.* As an illustration of this, I include an example that is not found in the textual material at hand. Bishop Storey, one of the Presidents of the Council, is quoted in *Come celebrate*:

> That was a very very prophetic action and the content of the documentation that came out of SPROCAS is secondary to the fact that again it was a statement to the world that apartheid would end.[468]

In the mid-1980s there is a change of tune in the texts.[469] The SACC does not only believe that apartheid is going to end one day. There is a growing impatience in the texts. The Council demands that the unjust system must come to an end. This is also the case at the end of the struggle:

> The church in South Africa has consistently called on the South African government to abandon apartheid and to negotiate a new, free, democratic, and non-racial, society in which all blacks and whites will be equal before the law, irrespective of race, colour, or creed.[470]

And the call is intensified after the release of Mandela in 1990. The SACC defines how to tell when the dismantling of apartheid is irreversible:

i) A Constituent Assembly is constituted;

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[466] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 3.

[467] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 5.

[468] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 34.

[469] One of the resolutions of 1976 also formulates the message in a very clear way: 'We reject the oppressive system of apartheid and call for the liberation of the black man, thus according him full citizenship in a common South Africa. AGREED' (National Conference 1976, Resolution no 6).

[470] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 5.

ii) Sovereign power is removed from the existing apartheid legislative structures and invested either in the Constituent Assembly or another agreed interim structure;

iii) The white minority cannot legally reverse or veto the process of change through the present unrepresentative legislative structures.[471]

This resolution is passed during the period between the release of Mandela and before the first democratic election. It is an indication that the SACC did not see the goal achieved before the elections had been held. So the *'end apartheid' discourse* continues right up to 1994. But already at NC 1981 the GS wrote about a meeting[472] with Prime Minister Pieter Willem Botha, where the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse* and the *'end apartheid' discourse* are combined.

> Basically the Churches told the Government that apartheid was in their view totally inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that unrest would be endemic in this country until fundamental change, i.e. political power-sharing, took place.[473]

After apartheid has been abolished, the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse* continues. When the texts comment on the situation before democratisation, they are expressions of the same discourse.

> We meet here today after a momentous event in this country – a transition from the monstrous, evil and racist apartheid system to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic system of Governance.[474]

But there is also another discourse after 1994 that questions whether apartheid is the only enemy.[475] We can still conclude that the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse* continues after 1994, but it does not have the same significance as before 1994.

5.2.1.2   A luta continua – the struggle continues

Especially in writing about the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse* there is a clear time aspect. If the prophetic voice before 1994 specifically addresses the apartheid system, we have to ask whether this voice is continuing after 1994 – and if so, how it is articulated.

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[471] National Conference 1990, Resolution no. 2.1.

[472] In the report the preparations for the meeting are described in the following words: 'The Prime Minister chose to play politics by laying down quite preposterous pre-conditions. The Churches always eager to carry out their Lord's mandate to exercise a prophetic ministry of reconciliation, interpreted those conditions suitably' (General Secretary's Report 1981, page 8).

[473] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 8.

[474] General Secretary's Report 1994, page 3.

[475] 'With the death of apartheid the Church is faced with even more sinister principalities and powers that are destructive in this country' (General Secretary's Report 1998, page 2).

When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, one might have expected a total abolition of apartheid. But first South Africa had to wait for the new constitution. The SACC texts are clear: the system was dismantled neither when Mandela was released in 1990, nor by the elections in 1994.

> I, Frank am still in bondage – classified! It is not true that now apartheid "belongs to history". No, apartheid is with me. My classification will still determine my destiny until a new constitution is agreed upon.[476]

And even when the new constitution was in place, the underlying phenomenon – racism – would still be there. The Interim GS writes about this in 1994.[477] There is an insight that there is still much work to be done before the hard core of apartheid is gone. The Council continues the struggle even after 1994. The word 'apartheid' is not being used, since the system is legally abolished; but between the lines references are made to the past. This is expressed in a statement to Church and Nation, especially in the use of a small word like 'still':

> There are evil people waiting for the right moment to re-arm factions, to fan the flames of tribalism, to inject the poison of racism and to exploit the violence which is still endemic in our society.[478]

As early as the 1980s, one of the SACC Presidents warned about tribalism as a result of the apartheid ideology. In his 1982 sermon, the Council President comments on the homelands system, saying:

> We watch the grand strategy of Apartheid unfold, like some horror movie, before our eyes: the most radical dismemberment of any nation since the partition of India. The deliberate creation of unstable, unviable tribal dynasties in which racism is exchanged for tribalism and white oppression gives way to black despotism. Unable to dominate directly forever, the policy is now to divest this Republic of its sons and daughters by giving them away to whoever will take them.[479]

One can see another discourse emerging. This is a more fundamental discourse, which I prefer to call the *'racism is against the will of God' discourse.* It is expressed in a fight against racism in all its forms, as part of the prophetic ministry of the Council both before and after 1990. The GS 1995 gives an example of this.[480] The terminology, 'to combat racism', is used

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[476] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 2

[477] 'We should never make the mistake of thinking that the triumph of democracy in South Africa means the demise of racism, tribalism and other bigotries' (Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 20). The Interim GS continues to ask for strategies: 'A systematic approach to deal with racism and tribalism needs to be developed' (Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 20).

[478] National Conference 1994, Statement to Church and Nation.

[479] Presidential Sermon 1982, page 1.

[480] 'We must combat racism. We must attempt to create real participation in the new constitution' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 3-4).

although the WCC programme is no longer as significant as before.[481] This is a sign that the SACC does not even regard 1994 as a year when the agenda totally changed.

There are also indications that the SACC does not entirely focus on the apartheid regime when it criticises someone of racism. When the GS 1993 comments on the racial violence in the Country it literally underlines the seriousness of the problem, and directs the message especially at those who show racism towards the white population:

> This Conference therefore needs to condemn this development in the strongest terms possible and call on all peace loving South Africans, both white and black, to close ranks against this racist development to avoid further bloodshed and destabilization of the country which we cannot afford.
> In the same vein we need to condemn all forms of slogans which are perceived as racist, like "one bullet one settler" or "kill the farmer kill the boer".[482]

As late as 2001 the texts argue that the Council has a *raison d'être* as an opponent to racism, even after the dismantling of apartheid. Racism is still prevalent. The focus is also extended to include other forms of discrimination. One could say that the GS is applying an intersectionality perspective on the situation.

> It needs to be said that apartheid did not create the SACC and therefore the demise of apartheid does not imply the demise of the SACC. Our reason for being is abuse of power by the powerful, the violence of the wealthy against the poor, the abuse of women by our patriarchal society, the ill-treatment of foreigners in our midst, and the pain of racism ion [in] our society.[483]

Here xenophobia is also introduced, although with another name. This is an issue that the Council comes back to from time to time after 1994. In this context there is a strong prophetic message to the post-apartheid government. In 1995 there is a resolution concerning refugees from Zimbabwe. The government wants to build a fence on the border, but this is opposed by the SACC, with reference to the gospel.[484]

> The gospel demands that we love our neighbour and extend hospitality to the strangers at our gates.[485]

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[481] Welch writes about the PCR: 'Although it remains both in name and in function at the WCC, the PCR has shrunk in terms of staff (from eleven to two in a little over a decade) and in prominence within the WCC' (Jr. Claude E. Welch, "Mobilizing Morality: The World Council of Churches and Its Program to Combat Racism, 1969-1994." Human Rights Quarterly, vol. 23, no. 4 [Nov., 2001], page 866. www.jstor.org/stable/4489365 2009-10-09).

[482] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 3.

[483] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 6.

[484] 'Conference is totally oppose[d] to the South African National Defence Force's plans to extend the electric fence between South Africa and Zimbabwe at a cost of R50 million' (National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.03, page 20).

[485] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.03, page 20.

Later on in the 2001 GS report, racism is raised again; and now the new phenomenon is named xenophobia.[486] The textual expressions about racism after 1994 are similar to those before 1994. But they do not talk about the end of racism. Rather they assume that racism is present as an unavoidable ingredient in any society. The Presidential address in 2001 comments:

> Racism is immoral, unjustifiable and evil! We do not need it. We never needed it before. However, it has permeated every social formation that we, the Church, cannot claim cleanliness for this cancer.[487]

The texts also expand the concept and link it with discrimination against women, strangers or refugees, the disabled, and people living with HIV and AIDS, with a clear intersectionality perspective, although this terminology is not used.[488] The GS report 2004 expresses unhappiness with the work's lack of success. It comments on a number of issues, such as xenophobia.

> Our narrative would not be complete without mentioning our moments of shame, when we adopted a macroeconomic plan which we saw trading the vision of RDP in exchange for an economic growth vision which seems to serve the interests of globalization at the expense of the poor, or when we failed to act decisively to confront the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We also witnessed unprecedented levels of moral degeneration and incidents of naked racism and xenophobia.[489]

It is not totally clear whether the GS refers to the work of the SACC or the state of the nation. Nevertheless this is an example of a variation on *'the SACC is not doing enough to end apartheid' discourse* mentioned earlier, which I want to call *'the SACC is not doing enough to end racism' discourse*. In the material this self-critique is not frequently present. But it is notable that in the beginning of the 21st century the texts show similarities with the 1970s.

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[486] 'We need to develop an anti-racism plan and strategy which outlines how we are going to attack this growing scourge in our community. Linked to this should be a clear plan on how as Churches we should embrace the challenge of xenophobia' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 17).

[487] Presidential address 2001, page 7, point 4.

[488] 'PLEDGES to work actively within our own faith communities to discourage racist and other intolerant behaviour and opinions, including discrimination against women, strangers, the disabled and those living with HIV/AIDS' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 15). In another resolution three years later: 'Engage in advocacy work through the office of the General Secretary aimed at influencing legislation that ensures humane treatment of refugees and the protection of their rights' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 16:3).

[489] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3.

5.2.1.3 Ethnic categories – possible classification discourses
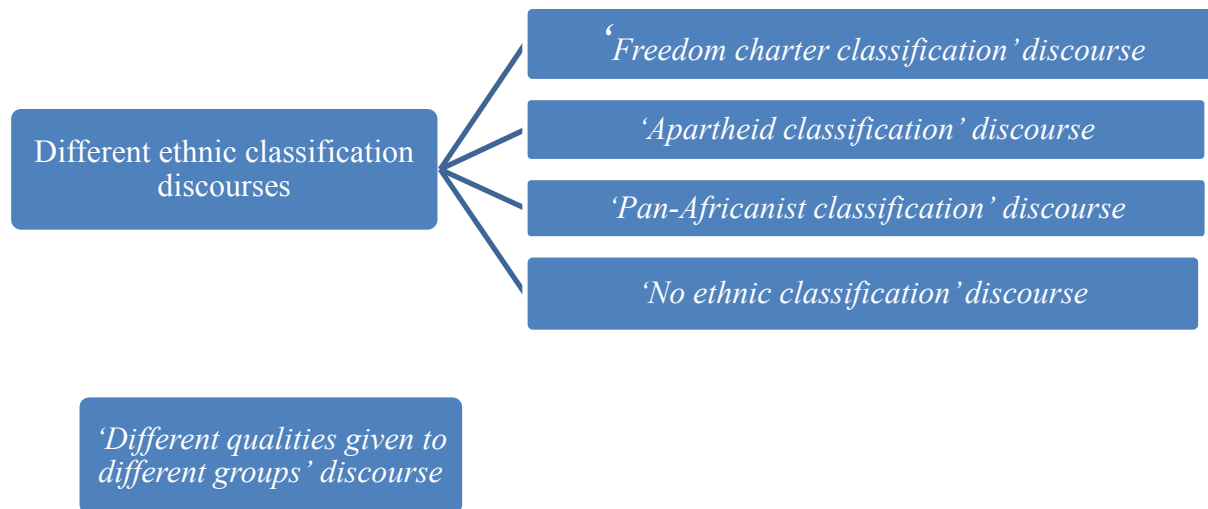
Figure 2b: Classification discourses within the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse*

This section, about ethnic categories, deals with either sorting people into different groups, or regarding them as one group where similarities are more important than differences. The question is, which discourse is more common in the SACC material? In answering that, it will be shown how the SACC's textual material is prophetic in the way that different ethnic categories are used. Even if there is a prophetic aspect to this, this section should be seen most of all as a fundamental study in how the SACC uses certain concepts. This means that some of the paragraphs below have little, if anything, to do with the prophetic voice of the Council.

As we have seen in the earlier paragraphs, the texts are totally against apartheid, tribalism, xenophobia, and racism in general. Nevertheless the texts are still affected or influenced by apartheid terminology. There is nothing strange about that. To live in South Africa during the apartheid era, and even thereafter, without using apartheid terminology, was almost impossible. We can describe apartheid as a discourse that had a hegemonic status in many respects. But apartheid was not the only discourse.

If we adopt Foucault's meaning to the word and say that a discourse is made up of a limited number of statements for which a group of conditions of existence can be defined, the apartheid discourse could be described as follows. (N.B: Here I am only talking about one aspect, namely how the apartheid discourse divides people into different categories.)

The *'apartheid classification' discourse* basically divides human beings into four categories: blacks[490], whites, coloureds and Indians/Asians. According to the apartheid ideology itself, the groups have the same worth. What the apartheid discourse does is to give different roles to the different groups. One major example is that for many years only the white group had the right to vote. Because of this and other aspects, common sense would judge the system to be deeply unjust. But this was not the way the system was described by its own ideologists:

> The population of the Republic of South Africa is heterogeneous and multinational. It may be compared to Western Europe or West Africa in its diversity of cultures. Each group has its own distinctive social system, culture and language, hence its own distinctive political and educational aspirations.
>
> According to the mid-year estimates for 1978, the country then had a de facto population of 23 894 000 persons compromising about 4 408 000 Whites, 2 494 000 Coloureds (people of mixed descent), 778 000 Asians, and the following Black nations:
>
> Zulu …………………………………………………………………….... 5 244 000
>
> Tswana …………………………………………………………………... 1 364 000
>
> North Sotho …………………………………………………………….... 2 037 000
>
> South Sotho ……………………………………………………………… 1 686 000
>
> Xhosa …………………………………………………………………… 3 040 000
>
> Shangaan ………………………………………………………………..… 788 000
>
> Swazi ……………………………………………………………………. 611 000
>
> Venda …………………………………………………………………….... 466 000
>
> Ndebele and others ……………………………………………………….... 579 000
>
> Foreign Blacks ……………………………………………………………….. 399 000[491]

In the constitution of 1983 the picture has changed slightly. According to that constitution there are no blacks in South Africa. They all belong to other countries. Only in some paragraphs is the term 'black' mentioned, when the text talks about a proclamation of the State President

> … whereby a Black area is declared to be a self-governing territory in the Republic …[492]

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[490] As shown in the quotation, the black group could be divided into different nations when this served a purpose.

[491] *This is South Africa.* Compiled and published by the Publications Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Information of South Africa. [No year. Obtained by the author in 1982], page 8. One can make a number of comments on this way of describing a population. If one talks about 'foreign blacks' why not also talk about 'foreign whites'? If the language issue were important, one could instead divide people into Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking. In that case half of the White group would share a common population group with the coloureds, and half the white group with the Asians/Indians. As one reflects on these matters, it becomes clear that the apartheid ideology had another agenda.

[492] No. 110 of 1983: Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983. Part X. 89 (3).

This is of course due to the homelands system. Another change in the 1983 legislation is that coloureds and Indians/Asians are given the right to vote, although only in a restricted sense. In Part VI, about the legislature, it says:

> Every White person, Coloured person and Indian who – (a) is a South African Citizen / ... / be entitled to vote at any election ...[493]

But the system remains the same in dividing people into four groups. Although the *'apartheid classification' discourse* clearly divided people into different categories, it was vague in some respects. One such example is the inclusion of 'foreign blacks' into the group of black nations, as in the example above. There are many examples like this. When we use the concept in this paragraph, it only means a discourse that classifies people into four different basic categories.

We can discern other discourses in this order of discourse. The *'freedom charter classification' discourse* is one that also uses ethnic categories. But it prefers to use only 'Black' and 'White'. According to the discourse, all human beings are equal. People from different groups can work together and also live together. The Freedom Charter declares

> … that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white …[494]

A third discourse I call the *'Pan-Africanist classification' discourse*. This discourse also uses ethnic categories, but it talks instead about Africans, not blacks. It is clear that Africans should rule in Africa. This is shown in the inaugural speech of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, when he was installed as President of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in 1959:

> Further, multi-racialism is in fact a pandering to European bigotry and arrogance. It is a method of safeguarding white interests, implying as it does, proportional representation irrespective of population figures. In that sense it is a complete negation of democracy.
>
> To us the term "multi-racialism" implies that there are such basic insuperable differences between the various national groups here that the best course is to keep them permanently distinctive in a kind of democratic apartheid. That to us is racialism multiplied, which probably is what the term truly connotes. We aim, politically, at government of the Africans by the Africans, for the Africans, with everybody who

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[493] No. 110 of 1983: Republic of South Africa Constitution Act, 1983. Part VI. 52.
[494] The Freedom Charter. Adopted at the Congress of the People, Kliptown, on 26 June 1955. http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/governance-projects/freedom-charter/07_charter.htm 2009-07-02.

owes his only loyalty to Afrika [Africa] and who is prepared to accept the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African.[495]

This could be understood in different ways. One option is to understand that any human being living in Africa, and can decide whether she or he wants to be an African. In that sense, this discourse refrains from using ethnic categories. But it can also be seen as a discourse, where the term 'African' has the same meaning as 'black'.[496] Rightly or wrongly I shall understand the discourse in the latter sense.

If one describes the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse* as a way of categorising people, as I have done, the next step is to see how the different discourses are present in the SACC material. Interestingly enough, we shall see how the SACC and its various texts grapple with the terminology.[497] There is an antagonism within the material, possibly caused by the kind of power relations Burr is talking about, when she states how different descriptions or constructions of the world sustain some patterns of social action and exclude other. This is obvious in the way ethnic classification is used. We shall therefore follow some of the elements whose meaning becomes fixed and therefore turns into 'moments', according to Discourse Analysis terminology.

In this paragraph, as in others, my intent is not to focus on the authors of different texts; but it is sometimes possible to see the group to which the person behind a certain articulation belongs. This becomes obvious, for instance, when the author uses pronouns like *us* or *them*. In some cases I shall elaborate on that.

In the following sub-sections the focus will be more on discerning the different discourses and less on the historical context in which to find the various examples. In the summing up, though, I shall put the findings in their historical context.

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[495] PAC. Izwe lethu!!! "Inaugural speech by Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe." PAC. http://www.pac.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=61&Itemid=133&limit=1&limitstart=5 2009-07-02.

[496] Thompson describes Pan-Africanism like this: 'It assumes that all Black people around the world constitute a single family, descended from a common African origin' (Thompson 2000, page 10). At the same time he underscores that 'It is totally opposed to any form of racial injustice or discrimination' (Dudley Thompson, *They are Africans* [Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 2000], page 10).

[497] Nowhere in the material can I find the terms 'Natives' or 'Bantu', except when talking about established concepts like (for example) Bantu education.

The *'Freedom charter classification' discourse*

This is by far the most common discourse in the material. It is not always easy to discern, though, because if the text uses the wider sense of the word 'black' it will not use articulations like 'coloured' and 'Indian/Asian'. As soon as people are divided into these groups, one sees an example of the *'apartheid classification' discourse*. We can, for instance, ask some questions when there is a discussion in the 1971 minutes about SPROCAS; there people are divided only into Black and White. Although a number of questions are raised by this, one can assume that the term 'black' is used in the wider sense, as when the decision about employing staff says that there should be

> Good staff; both black and white.[498]

Neither coloureds nor Indians/Asians are mentioned. Is the resolution referring to all these groups under the word 'black'? It is almost impossible to know. Another example from the same conference, 1971, is the suggestion to change the name of the African Bursary Fund.

> It was AGREED to recommend to the African Bursary Committee that the name of the Fund be changed.[499]

Here one can also ask whether the term 'African' refers to a specific population group, or simply indicates that this is a Bursary Fund in Africa. A year later that question is answered, when we find the suggestion for a name change being rejected. The motion gives clues about how to understand the words.

> That the Bursary fund be changed to Black Bursary Fund for the purpose of clarity and meaning to include African, Coloured and Asians.[500]

The motion was defeated; and no explanation is given in the Minutes. There is clearly a discursive struggle, where one discourse – which prefers to call the fund 'black' – does that with the intention of showing that even groups like coloureds and Indians/Asians should be included. What the other discourse means is more difficult to understand. This discourse wants to keep the word 'African' and possibly regards the fund as a fund only for blacks in a more narrow sense.

Whatever its meaning, the example shows that as early as 1971-1972 the term 'black' is sometimes used in the wider sense. The discursive struggle is open. The suggestion to change

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[498] National Conference 1971, Minutes §18 B) c).
[499] National Conferences 1971, Minutes §22.
[500] National Conferences 1972, Minutes §26.

the name to 'Black Bursary Fund' is an attempt to use the *'freedom charter classification'*
discourse, where 'black' is used in a wider sense – although the narrower sense of the word is
used in the argumentation. Support for use of the term 'black' in the wider sense is found in
the wordings of another passage in the GS report of 1974, where the GS suggests some
changes in legislation – as for example:

> A sharing of power, political power, on the basis of parity of representation in the House of Parliament,
> granting at this stage representation in the highest policy-making body of this country of equal
> representation to black and white.[501]

It is not totally clear whether the GS means 'one man one vote', or that the group of Whites
and the group of Blacks should have 50% each. But we can at least assume that the term
'black' is used in a broad sense. It is not plausible to suggest that the GS argues for a system
where blacks in a narrow sense, should share power with whites, while coloureds and
Indians/Asians should be left out. It is sometimes confusing to see how different terms are
used. For instance, can the terms 'African' and 'black' sometimes mean exactly the same
thing without being loaded with negative meaning?

> Africans on the whole find Communism abhorrent – as an atheistic and materialistic creed it does not
> satisfy the deep longing of the black psyche.[502]

In the 1979 Presidential address, the terms are also used in a relaxed manner. The texts speak
about the silencing of the prophetic voice, but say that this trend can be stopped. It will
happen

> … when human beings, black and white, are prepared to meet each other in all walks of life, to live
> together, laugh together, weep together, and together seek the will of God for the future. Then God will
> again reveal His prophetic word.[503]

Here it is obvious that 'Black' is used in the wider sense, since the term is used together with
the term 'White'. There is a difference of usage between different General Secretaries'
reports. The ability to write and speak in an inclusive way – or not – is obvious. Although my
intention has not been to go beyond the text and focus on the author, it is sometimes obvious
which ethnic group the author belongs to. In the following, one suspects that the GS is not a
black person:

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[501] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 5.
[502] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 7.
[503] Presidential address 1979, page 14.

It is my call at this Conference for the Black man [sic] to declare openly, where he stands in regard to the future of the White person in South Africa.[504]

Although this is an example of what we call the *'freedom charter' discourse* in so far as the term 'black' is used in a wider sense, it does not talk about unity between Black and White, but rather about the opposite. But there are other examples. On the eve of liberation, the GS report is clear that the new country must be for both Whites and Blacks.

In all this we believe that the churches in South Africa have a special responsibility to reach-out to victims of apartheid racism, (whites and blacks) to cross the bridge from the old to the new.[505]

Even after the release of Mandela in 1990, racial classification plays a role. In one of the resolutions of 1991, education is on the agenda. The root cause is believed to be the absence of a single department of education. The Church leaders request a meeting with ministers of all the relevant Departments of Education, and in that context the text talks about African schools, black schools, and white schools.[506] It is interesting because, not only does the text use ethnic classification, it also mixes the terms 'black' and 'African'. The problem is seen and the recommendation is:

d. The demands of the people of South Africa for the immediate establishment of a non-racial educational system.[507]

Even after liberation the differentiation of Black and White will be an issue. In the *Message to the Churches* (1991) ethnic and economic status are combined.[508] Another issue that is high on the agenda is education:

We call upon Christians to work energetically at all levels for the elimination of racial privilege and separation in education, and the provision of equal, affordable quality education for all, and to work, as an immediate short-term goal, for the opening of white schools and educational institutions threatened with closure, for use by black and other deprived communities.[509]

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[504] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 3.

[505] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 4.

[506] 'a. The failure to provide enough text books to African schools / .... / b. The overcrowding in Black schools and the under-utilisation of facilities in white schools' (National Conference 1990, Resolution 1 a-b).

[507] National Conference 1990, Resolution 1 d.

[508] Talking about whites, the text says that 'Their wealth and power have been accumulated at the time when Black South Africans were excluded by legislation from effective participation in the economy. The effect of past exclusion must be boldly addressed. Similarly we urge churches to deliberately embark on programmes of affirmation of black church members' (National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 2, Point 2).

[509] National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 2, point 3.

It is still obvious that dividing people into Black and White continues after 1994. Commenting on a service conducted during the process of reconciliation and peacemaking in the Anglican Church in Katlehong in 1995, the GS writes:

> Both black and white parishes were represented at this memorable service. It represented an acknowledgement of the need for reconciliation in our country.[510]

The question is whether the service was a sign of the need for reconciliation because this became obvious when Blacks and Whites were actually meeting, or because Blacks and Whites were still separated into different parishes?

Racial terminology is relevant also in the 1995 Presidential address in a section about the importance of individual achievements; and in 1998 the reality is that people are divided into Blacks and Whites.[511] We shall come back to how the differences between the various groups are expressed. At this stage we can conclude that *'freedom charter' discourse* does not necessarily express that Blacks and Whites are different when it comes to human dignity.

The *'apartheid classification' discourse*

When we read the texts, it is not always clear what they mean by certain terms; and sometimes even the texts themselves express insecurity. The 1971 Minutes state that the Annual Conference of the South African Council of Churches recognises

> That the growth of "Black" awareness may be a possible positive development towards reconciliation.[512]

Why is 'black' put in quotation marks? Why are words like *may* and *possible* being used? Is it because it is quite a radical thought to state that black awareness may lead to reconciliation? Or is it because there is an uncertainty about the relations between different ethnic groups within the Council? I suggest that the latter understanding is the more plausible. In the early 1970s the SACC was still dominated by white Christians. It was only in 1972 that it was declared a black organisation.[513] The point I am making, therefore, is that in the texts from the

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[510] General Secretary's Report 1995, age 13, point 2.5.11.

[511] 'I think of Sam Shabalala, the first Black to win the Comrades Marathon' (Presidential address 1995, page 9). And in the General Secretary's Report 1998: 'It soon became clear that the resources in this area are limited. To try and bridge the gap between schools that were disadvantaged, mainly found in the black community and those in their white counterparts was and still remains the greatest challenge of our time' (General Secretary's Report 1998, page 2).

[512] National Conference 1971, Minutes §18 C) b) d)

[513] 'In 1972 the South African Council of Churches was declared a black organisation. The then secretary, Mr John Rees, announced this Government decision to the Executive Committee and added that it was a major step

early 1970s there is a discursive struggle between the *'freedom charter classification'*
discourse and the *'apartheid classification' discourse*. As we shall see, there are some
examples in support of this standpoint.

In the Report of the GS 1971 it is interesting to follow how different terms are used to
describe the ethnic groups. When the GS talks about the PCR, he mentions the African
community.[514] Usually the term 'African' refers to black South Africans, but in this context
the GS includes the whole Conference under that designation. But later in the same report it is
obvious that there are different groups.

> Now, however one may define the term 'black awareness' within the country, we have seen the
> emergence of what I consider to be, the blacks becoming increasingly aware of their place within the total
> society and their own particular identity as men, women and leaders have begun to respond to what power
> has been afforded them under the present form of government and to begin to use that power.[515]

One can read this as if the GS is trying to defend the regime, since he admits that the blacks
have been afforded power. He continues:

> The black members of our population are impatient and many are discontent [discontented]. They are
> watching, particularly the Church, for what it says and does in the days that lie ahead.[516]

One question in this context is the use of pronouns. Who are 'we' and 'them' in this text?[517]
The example shows that the GS is not part of the black group. At this stage it is still unclear
whether 'Black' is used in a wider or narrower sense. This question is possibly answered
when the term 'coloured' is introduced into the argument.

> The Coloured population of our country, particularly at the present time, is a discontented one.[518]

This might indicate that the text has used the word 'black' in a narrow sense all along, but it
could also be different. In a table describing the representation of different ethnic groups in
the Council, the term 'African' is used instead of 'black'. The most probable solution is that

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forward' (Spong and Mayson 1993, page 37). One important aspect of this change is mentioned by Thomas:
'The Lutheran churches brought a powerful new Black voice into the counsels of the SACC. It was from their
ranks, for instance, that were drawn figures such as the Rev. (now Bishop) August Habelgaarn, SACC president
from 1971 to 1974, and Dr Manas Buthelezi, who has several times served on the SACC Executive' (Thomas
1979, page 64-65) .

[514] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 2.

[515] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 2.

[516] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 2.

[517] 'I have come to realize that in a Council in which the predominance of the membership of the Churches
belonging to that Council are black, we must increasingly make plans, not only within the Church structures, but
also within the structure of the Council itself for the voice of our black brethren [sic] to be heard' (General
Secretary's Report 1971, page 2).

[518] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 2.

'black' is used in the broader sense, and 'African' is to be to be understood as the same as 'black' in a narrow sense. If this is so, the GS of that time uses apartheid terminology. A reading of the rest of the material from 1971 supports this opinion. It was important how the different ethnic groups were labelled, and even that they were labelled at all. A paragraph from the 1971 Minutes says:

> A request was made that when stating the Racial composition of the member Churches of the Council, as in Item B, the Indian members be included.[519]

In the material from the 1970s, the Council is searching for its identity, describing itself along ethnic lines. This could be described as different discourses, and the hegemonic intervention would then be, for instance, the use of the term 'black' for the three groups: black, coloured and Indian/Asian. It is even possible to say that 'black' is in some sense a nodal point. The way 'black' is used tells us whether the discourse is an *'apartheid classification' discourse* or a *'freedom charter classification' discourse.* There are more indications of this antagonism, as in 1972 when the GS writes about evangelism. When he uses the term 'black' it is not clear whether he intends to use it in a narrow or a broad sense.

> Evangelism is not the only task of the Church as some people think. The Church is concerned with the whole life of the people in South Africa and we should bear in mind that the majority of the constituency which we represent here today is black ….[520]

As we have seen in the example from the GS Report 1971, the use of 'black' in a narrow sense is sometimes altered with the use of the term 'African'. As in the report of the GS 1973:

> Look at our false witness on the whole question of the use of church buildings by Africans in urban areas. Many people that I know have been sitting back and almost gloating at the predicament in which our Dutch Reformed Church brethren have found themselves over the recent question of combined worship, and yet those same people were smug in the contentment of having opened their Church halls to Africans for worship. I find this to be the most shameful thing of which I am part in South Africa, that our African brethren [sic] are not good enough to use churches! They have to use halls! What is so sanctified about our churches that black people may not be permitted to use them.[521]

The last sentence is typical. If one really follows this argument, the problem does not lie in how the church buildings are regarded, but in how the Africans are regarded. If one did not regard the church buildings as so sanctified, it would be easier to open them to Africans. Whether this is the intention of the GS 1973 or not, is an open question; but between the lines

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[519] National Conference 1971, Minutes §8.
[520] General Secretary's Report 1972, page 2.
[521] General Secretary's Report 1973, page 3.

this is being said. Based on this, I regard this as an example of an *'apartheid classification'* *discourse*.[522]

When the GS 1974 continues to speak openly about the ethnic issue, it is within an *'apartheid classification' discourse*. This does not mean that the GS is siding with apartheid as an ideology; but he uses the ethnic concepts as the apartheid ideology would do.

> My heart bleeds for white people who have never known meaningful contact with black people as friends. Their lives are impoverished as a result of this enforced separation to which we have been subjected.
>
> This claim on the part of our Afrikaner brethren [sic] that they are a "volk" apart cannot be accepted. One wonders where the origin of their fear is, bearing in mind if they are worried about their identity as a minority group one only has to remind them that Indians have existed as a minority group in this country for a long time and have not lost their cultural heritage. I think it goes deeper than this. When cultural identity is linked with power it is ultimately the power which is the corrupting thing. The Church has a word here, has a word for all of us whether black or white, that we must rise above this, that we must see one another as human beings, and that we must be prepared to work and live together.[523]

In the latter part the word 'black' could possibly be used in the wider sense, although the GS talks about Indians as a separate group.

During the late 1970s the language has mostly divided people into Blacks or Whites. A hegemonic intervention takes place, and the *'freedom charter' discourse* becomes dominant. In the 1981 Presidential address, the use of the term 'brown' is therefore a bit strange:

> We meet for this National Conference as a sign of hope in a divided land. The only forum in South Africa where all South Africans, black, white and brown, can speak and listen to each other beyond the boundaries of denomination and race ...[524]

The SACC President, in his 1982 sermon, again speaks about brown people.[525] This terminology is seldom used in the SACC. Maybe here it should be seen as an exception, as in the humoristic note in the GS report of 1983. Although the word 'coloured' is a sensitive term to use, it is used humorously by the GS in 1983, commenting on Dr Allan Boesak's election

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[522] It seems therefore to be two different orders of discourse in this last context. One is discussing whether it is right to treat Africans/blacks and whites differently because of the colour of their skin. The other order of discourse is about the holiness of buildings. One discourse is saying that churches are not more sanctified than halls, and the other discourse is saying that halls are less holy than churches.

[523] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 6.

[524] Presidential address 1981, page 1.

[525] 'We meet in an atmosphere charged with violence, in which the sons of white South Africans (and an increasing number of brown and black South Africans) are poured into the bottomless pit of war – some of them dying for a cause which cannot be defended, all of them surely knowing deep down that their victories are empty because their war is unwinnable, while others, born of the same soil and reared under the same sky, seek out targets for their time-bombs, regardless of who they may destroy' (Presidential Sermon 1982, page 1).

as President in the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), and also on other so-called coloured persons being appointed or elected to important offices:

> I have been wondering whether we can't say we are entering the year of the "Coloured" …[526]

It is quite typical of that time to put the term between inverted commas.[527] This is a way of showing that the word is used under protest. In any case, the use of apartheid terminology continues in the 1980s.

> No community is united. There is a split among Afrikaners. The Indian and so-called Coloured communities are rent down the middle and as for the African community, it has been a sad spectacle of bickering factions forever at one another's throats.[528]

The SACC people find themselves in a situation where ethnic divisions are part and parcel of their lives. Talking about the President's Council without using apartheid terminology would be impossible.[529] There was definitely a conflict between some blacks and some coloured/Indians/Asians when this reform was introduced. Nonetheless the articulations of the *'apartheid classification' discourse* are fewer in the 1980s. There is a clear tendency for the *'freedom charter classification' discourse* to gain more and more terrain.

The *'Pan-Africanist classification' discourse*

When I describe this as the *'Pan-Africanist classification' discourse*, I am aware that I might misunderstand Pan-Africanism. The important thing, however, is not the name of this discourse, but its content. While the *'apartheid classification' discourse* divides the people in a number of population groups, and the *'freedom charter classification' discourse* only talks about black and white as equal, the *'Pan-Africanist classification' discourse* regards the black or the African group as the more rightful heirs of Africa. While black and white are equal and have the same human dignity, the fate of Africa lies in the hands of the Africans. The

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[526] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 7.

[527] This view I base on my own personal experience. From September 1981 to September 1982 I lived and worked in Cape Town. When people at that time referred to this group, the expression 'so-called coloureds' was almost universally used in the context in which I lived and worked.

[528] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 32.

[529] 'In the committees the ratio will be 4:2:1 (whites, coloureds and Indians). How can anyone declare that it does anything more than help to perpetuate white minority rule with the Coloureds and Indians coopted to be what Alan Boesak has so aptly described as the junior partners of apartheid coopressors of the blacks who must know that there will be a day of reckoning when blacks will remind them thay [that] they were collaborators in our oppression and that they delayed the day of liberation of all South Africans (black and white). Like Esau they are selling their birthright for a mess of pottage' (General Secretary's Report 1984, page 19-20).

terminology is thus similar to the *'freedom charter classification' discourse* but the meaning is different. This discourse is not common in the material, but in the following the GS 1975 talks about the white and black people saying:

> I personally believe that the future of South Africa is now firmly in the hands of the Black man [sic]. It is a question of how he responsibly and in the exercise of Christian grace will determine how the future of South Africa will be shaped.[530]

At the same time there is something paternalistic about this statement. An underlying question is: can we trust the black person to be forgiving? But the GS also admits that the white person feels guilt about the situation. Why otherwise should there be a need for the exercise of Christian grace? Related to this example is an argument in a text dealing with the decision on conscientious objection, where the question is put whether not violence from the side of the blacks should be condoned, since violence from the side of the whites is also supposed to be condoned.

> Because God is sovereign and because of our understanding of His Word, we cannot collaborate with the attempt to make us withdraw from last year's resolution. The question remains, if we were forced to condone Whites' preparing to fight to preserve a profoundly unjust and oppressive status quo, as the Government would like us to, would we not then be morally obliged to condone Blacks' fighting to change it?[531]

One can see the influence of Black Theology and Black Consciousness in the Presidential address of 1975:

> Like the sun, which having set, cannot be recalled, so the period of the Black man's [sic] subservience, has gone forever. Black Consciousness has become one of the great events of our time. The Black man [sic] will take command and control of his own destiny, refusing to accept a place delegated to him by others, but taking his own place of dignity and worth.[532]

This discourse could also be named the *'Black Consciousness' discourse*. But it will, in this context, lead us too far from our focus to compare *Pan-Africanism* and *Black Consciousness* in depth. Suffice it to say that in the textual material there are examples where blacks are given a more important role and place than whites. But this is not a very common discourse. However, the introduction to the GS's Report 2001 is an example of this discourse, when the GS talks about the deepest feelings of every African Christian:

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[530] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 2.
[531] National Conference 1975, Appendix D 7.
[532] Presidential address 1975, page 1.

> We have indeed embraced the white man's religion, yet we want something more. Perhaps that is where
> the problem is: that African Christianity continues to present itself as the white man's religion.[533]

We can also ask some relevant questions about such a statement. Is the term 'African' used instead of 'black' in a broad or narrow sense? Do the Indian population feel included in this terminology? This is a question that cannot be answered in this study, but might be a topic for further research.

The *'no ethnic classification' discourse* versus ethnic classification

There are some rare examples of a discourse that talks about people from an ethnic point of view without using ethnic classification at all. In one case there is an understanding that the situation in South Africa is extreme. There is a normal world outside. The GS 1983 describes this, as a couple of quotations will show. The thought is that people would experience that 'normality' if they could visit, for instance, a World Council of Churches event.

> They have never experienced what it means to belong to the world church as represented by the
> bewildering diversity represented at such a W.C.C. event with differences in race, sex, culture, theology
> and even dress – a rich diversity which makes not for division and separation but for a wonderful unity,
> not uniformity.[534]

When the situation outside South Africa is described, the ethnic classification is not used. The GS admits that people have different ethnic origins, but it is not relevant to mention them. It only talks about diversity and unity. These are influences from WCC meetings.

> And the church must hold before all South Africans the vision of this new society of which we in the
> church are a firstfruit that it can happen, has happened here in South Africa that people of different races,
> colours, cultures and sexes have come together to be a fellowship that transcends all differences, where
> diversity far from making for separation and division has enriched a splendid unity ….[535]

In the rest of the world, apartheid terminology is not used. Although there are many examples of ethnic diversity, and conflicts of an ethnic nature, the situation is different from that in South Africa. When the texts talk about the situation outside South Africa, they therefore do it without using ethnic classification. But this totally different approach is also found in a resolution during the National Conference 1986, which talks about the South African context:

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[533] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 2.
[534] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 7.
[535] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 32.

- believing the classification of persons according to racial characteristics for the purpose of their social and political status and rights, to be racialistic and therefore sinful (as set fourth [forth] in the 1982 Ottawa Declaration of the WARC on Apartheid), and
- confessing the passive acceptance by the churches of this classification in the past and our complicity in the present racial fragmentation and consequent injustices and strife in the country.

welcomes the decision/intention to omit race classification from Identity Numbers, but sees this as a secondary concession as long as the process of racial classification continues and therefore calls on South Africans not to co-operate with the racial classification of the population.[536]

There is a discussion in the resolutions of 1991 about what to do with the racial classification system after liberation.

> The National Conference of the SACC commends the scrapping of the Population Registration Act, but believes that this process should be taken to its logical conclusion and that all records pertaining to any kind of race classification should be replaced by new records indicating the citizenship of all South Africans.[537]

On the other hand, there are examples when the word 'African' is used in an inclusive sense. The GS 2004 writes about the day when the Parliament adopted the new Constitution. Although the quoted are words from the then-President Thabo Mbeki, it is an example of the GS using a *'no ethnic classification' discourse.*

> And as that Document was adopted by Parliament, we all echoed Thabo Mbeki in declaring that "Today, it feels good to be an African.".[538]

Although there are some explicit examples of this discourse, they are not many. On the other hand, the vast majority of the textual material refers to humans in different contexts, without describing them from an ethnic perspective.

> And because so many Christians are complacent or passive about the silencing of the prophetic voice, our whole country is today walking in the valley of the shadow of death. One group wants to maintain the status quo at all costs; another wants the word of liberation to be spoken and heard. Between, and sometimes on the fringes of these two groups, stand the many people of our land.[539]

This is just one of many examples where the texts do not use any ethnic classification, and they are definitely in the majority. So the question arises: Why is ethnic classification needed at all?

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[536] National Conference 1986. Resolution 21.
[537] National Conference 1991, Resolution C 3.
[538] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3.
[539] Presidential address 1979, page 13.

The issue of affirmative action comes on to the agenda in 1995[540], and poses a problem if one intends to do away with ethnic classification. Without some sort of classification it is impossible to implement affirmative action. Very few texts say anything about this phenomenon. So it is difficult to know what view the texts hold. Could the ambiguity of the Council be seen in the word *contentious*? Nonetheless, this example supports the system:

> We as the SACC take the view that affirmative action is an issue that is as contentious as it is necessary for the greater development of all workers.[541]

Another issue presupposing an ethnic classification is the BEE programme. This is mentioned without any sense of critique, although there are examples where the SACC criticises the programme.

> In addition, we have seen government's strong commitment Black empowerment, which has translated in black business elite being formed to create new centres of economic power.[542]

There is a dilemma here. The SACC wants to get rid of ethnic classification, but both affirmative action and BEE require that the classification, in one form or another, must be kept, at least for a time. This is the very problem that Walshe singles out as one of the two major challenges for the SACC in the future[543], when he mentions the loss of power experienced by whites. This sense of defeat is also an important thought in the book *Knowledge in the Blood*.[544] In the reconciliation perspective, this is an important aspect to have in mind, although it is not articulated much in the material. The fact that the texts do not often mention affirmative action and BEE explicitly could mean that the SACC supports the systems, although tacitly.

The *'different qualities given to different groups' discourse*

When the GS report 1971 talks about the white population, it expresses an opinion that whites have a different role to play from the other ethnic groups.

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[540] As early as 1991, though, one text talks about affirmation in a more general sense: 'Similarly we urge churches to deliberately embark on programmes of affirmation of black church members' (National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 2, point 2).

[541] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 3.

[542] Presidential address 2001, page 2.

[543] Walshe 1997, page 399.

[544] 'However legitimate the complaint, the lament of the defeated is simply another way of uttering a deep sense of alienation and loss, and this lies at the root of the continuing malaise of defeat and the growing awareness of a troubled knowledge that white citizens have to deal with' (Jansen 2009, page 49).

The burden of the responsibility of readjustment lies mainly with the white members of our Church in South Africa.[545]

This does not necessarily mean that whites have other qualities; but it could mean that. It is possible to understand the GS as saying that whites are better equipped to accomplish the necessary changes. The GS report 1975, on the other hand, deals a lot with the relationship between black and white, and focuses especially on blacks and their role. There is an open antagonism, especially in the paragraph about equality of opportunity. This part of the report suggests that whites are more often the best persons for certain jobs:

> There is one other facet which crops up in the life of our Churches and this is that we talk of the best man [sic] for the job. I think that this is an admirable principle and one to which I would surely give my vote. However, it is very unfair to talk of this being applicable in a situation of inequality. People can only choose the best man [sic] for the job when there has been equality of opportunity. In this Church in South Africa in many instances the best man [sic] for the job will always be White by virture [virtue] of opportunity, of education etc. Therefore, I think that when applying this principle, we must be sure that it doesn't work to the advantage of those who already carry some privilege.[546]

The argument is simple to follow. Since the white person is often better educated, the white person will be the privileged one, if one follows the principle of employing the best person for the job. The GS argues that one has to disregard that rule in order to be able to employ Black persons. This is a hegemonic intervention. But the antagonism is still there to be seen below the surface: Who says that the white person is always the best person for the job? What are the criteria? Who makes the decisions?[547] It is obvious that the 1975 report has a bias in relation to the different ethnic groups. In the paragraph about temperance (especially alcohol) it says:

> The Church also has a Mission, I believe, in the whole area of Temperance. I believe we need to look again at the Word and challenge Christians – Yes, about DRINK. (Here I believe our Black brethren [sic] have cause for deep concern as DRINK robs them of dignity, family life and even the will to work for change.)[548]

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[545] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 3.

[546] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 3.

[547] One example of this problem was in 1974, when Tutu was one of the candidates in the election of a new Anglican bishop of Johannesburg. After a stormy election process a white candidate was elected, and Tutu later commented: 'Johannesburg rejected me. But I am glad mainly because they had to consider a black candidate as a very serious contender' (John Allen, *Rabble-rouser for peace. The authorized biography of Desmond Tutu* [New York: Free Press, 2006], page 143).

[548] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 4.

This remark surely states that there is a difference between blacks and others. Of course alcoholism robs any person of dignity. Why are blacks singled out in this specific way? It shows that there was still, at that time, an atmosphere of white superiority. Just the year before, the GS expresses himself in a way that indicates that there is a discussion whether there are differences between Black and White.

> It is against this background that I also wish to state that I do not believe that as a result of our history over a long period that suddenly our black brethren [sic] have become angels overnight. Far from it. They stand in as great a need of salvation as any other group within our land. I believe that there must be a willingness for co-operation and for striving for reconciliation from their part, as with any other group.[549]

This discourse is a white man's discourse on behalf of the whole SACC. The GS talks about the blacks as 'they'. Behind the argument lies a threat, that black people will use violence.

> Never before in the history of our country has the reality of possible violence been so close. It is not as though the black group desire violence, but in the many contacts that I have, they begin to see the possibility that violence will be inevitable; inevitable because of the intransigence of the white man [sic]; inevitable because the white man [sic] is not prepared to share; inevitable because the white man [sic] is too comfortable with what he has.[550]

This quote shows that different qualities are ascribed to blacks and whites. The first underlying message is that blacks are not violent. But the GS also generalises about the lack of willingness for reconciliation among whites. Still there is a feeling amongst many whites, against which the GS argues, that blacks are violent. Perhaps this is a reaction to the liberation theology concept: God's preferential option for the poor (or oppressed), in the meaning that this concept should be understood, as if blacks were angels. A few years later we find a retort to this, when the GS of 1978 says:

> And God is on our side, not because blacks are better morally than whites. He is on our side because he is that kind of God, who always sides with the oppressed.[551]

But also from the black point of view there is criticism of the whites, as in an appendix to the resolutions of 1975, where the different group discussions are reported on. There is a strong sense that black participants are making their own voice heard in this appendix.[552] In the

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[549] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 5.
[550] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 2.
[551] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 6.
[552] '… as black ministers to invite ourselves on all possible occasions to minister to whites and to take the initiative where we have too long waited for invitation which never came' (National Conference 1975, Appendix to resolutions 2, 1 [b]).

context the black delegates are also being critical about their own role.[553] All through this appendix black persons are speaking, which is unusual at that point in the history of the SACC. In criticising both Whites and Blacks in the same context, it is not a big step to the next factor that plays an important role in the texts of the council: the idea of reconciliation between different ethnic groups. But before we go into that, we have to say something about the threat that white people feel from blacks. One such threat is Black Consciousness:

> There needs to be a clear and careful watch on possible arrogance that could emerge from Black consciousness which would be in the end self defeating.[554]

There is some doubt on the part of whites that black leaders really will be reliable when a different system comes:

> But responsible black leaders have time and without number given our white fellow South Africans the assurance that we want a nonracial society in South Africa and that whites won't be driven into the sea, come black liberation.[555]

This way of describing the black person comes back four years later. So, even if the message is that whites should trust blacks, there is, under the surface, another discourse, that the black person is fearful.[556] The problem remains after democratisation. The way the GS 1994 describes black people is interesting. Of course, it is said to calm the fears of the white people. Still,, there is an undertone.

> But, above all – and this is more than a miracle – blacks did not, after the elections, go out to attack whites or turn the tables upside-down to pay revenge against those who brutalised them over many years. Even those of us who preached about the extra-ordinary goodwill amongst blacks and their ubuntu/botho have been surprised by the peaceful way in which people celebrated this victory for life and justice. It is

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[553] The black delegates say that they '… confess that our major sin as blacks has been the sin of omission in allowing wrongs to go unchallenged' (National Conference 1975, Appendix to resolutions 1 [b]).
[554] General Secretary's Report 1977, page 1 point d.
[555] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 4.
[556] Although the GS report 1972 is positive about black consciousness, it expresses this fear: 'It is very encouraging to note the rise of black consciousness and the assertion on the part of black people of their rights and rightful claiming of their humanity. For many white people in South Africa this will be greatly disturbing and in fact frightening for they are set in their ways and have put these black people in a box' (General Secretary's Report 1972, page 2). Another example is given in 1975: 'Blacks are expectant, thrilled and awakening to the realization that the day of their liberation is dawning and, on the other hand, many whites are fearful, undirected and completely unaware of themselves' (General Secretary's Report 1975, page 2). What also becomes clear is that in the use of quite strong metaphors, there are different possibilities of giving characteristics to different groups. According to the GS 1975, the whites '… are becoming aware of the fact that something is awakening in the black slumbering giant upon which they have fed, upon whose sweat cities have been built and through whose labour they have become affluent' (General Secretary's Report 1975, page 2). We find another example of this underlying mistrust in the GS report of 1982: 'But there is still goodwill in the black community who don't want to drive the white man into the sea. All blacks want is a decent place in the sun too' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 14).

indeed a miracle that after so many years of racial oppression and the related feelings of hatred and bitterness; after so many years of brutal repression and dehumanisation of the black people in this country, no acts of revenge were carried out.[557]

Again, there is the problem of how to give meaning to the concept 'African'. Does that term include White people born and bred in Africa? From the following quotation it is hard to believe that.

> The second event was the Consultation on Christianity, African Culture and Development which was held at Eskom in Midrand. This seminar posed a challenge to the Churches – that Black Christians have something to offer – our culture customs and traditions. The time has come for us to join the movement for culturisation and indigenization which has been taking place and which the Roman Catholic Church has been developing seriously for the last decade. The African worldwide view philosophy; the concepts of God as Umvelinqangi, the concept of Ubuntu, the meaning of time, health and healing; ancestors and ritual, – How do all these impact on the theology that is taught and proclaimed in our Churches each Sunday?[558]

Black Christians are described as different or at least as having a different culture. As late as 1995 this has to be pointed out specifically. The texts suggest that people have to be re-educated. And the reason for this need for re-education is the differences between the different ethnic groups.

> Thus the urgent and most essential task of the SACC and its member churches seems to be / .../ a new concept of mission and evangelism frlom [from] which Christ challenges us to proclaim a mission to the whites to challenge and assist them in love to rid themselves of the many fears which they have of the blacks, and equally a mission to the blacks to challenge and assist them in getting rid of the anger and bitterness and growing hatred of the whites as the symbol of injustice, oppression and suffering inflicted on millions of the victims of apartheid.[559]

Re-education is a recurrent theme at the end of the 1980s.[560] Even if the Council had already resolved in 1986 not to take part in ethnic classification, it does so in sending a message to white people from the NC 1989. It talks about ignorance, mistrust, fear, and hope, and it

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[557] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 5.
[558] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 9, 2.4.2.
[559] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 11.
[560] There is a note in the minutes of 1989 that talks about the need '… to re-educate white South Africans in the light of the historical and Christian experience of black South Africans' (National Conference 1989, Matters referred to executive and divisions, page 1).

presupposes that the white people live in fear.[561] One can almost sense a kind of threat in the message. Or is it just a kind way of informing them about the truth?

> Looking at the above analysis of the present position of the white people in South Africa, we would be dishonest if we did not tell white people that hard times lie ahead of you.[562]

But all along the texts also relate the freedom of black people to the freedom of whites. Here a message of reconciliation appears, to which we shall return to in a later paragraph.[563] Still, the texts suggest that there are differences between the groups. Are these differences examples of differences in qualities, or differences in context? The black and white populations are equally in need of liberation. The GS 1976 has a long argument about the difference between black and white, but both need change.

> Here lies an interesting phenomenon – amongst the whites – the constituency is conservative – whilst the converse is true of the blacks. What has our leadership done about this? To what extent do our structures help or hinder these issues?[564]

So he continues to argue that there are differences between white and black leaders, especially ministers.[565] Another ethnic problem raised by the Council President 1991 is the issue of dependency. Here a specific quality is given to the blacks, albeit that the reason for this is the apartheid system.

> In this time of transition in our country I believe that the stance of the SACC and it's [its] member churches should be different from the missionary stance of paternalism. The Apartheid period unfortunately implanted a psychology of dependence amongst our Black people.[566]

In the context of HIV and AIDS, differences are also attributed to the different groups. The GS 2001 does not talk about blacks but about Africans. It is not totally clear from the context whether this term refers to all inhabitants of Africa or just to black Africans.[567] But because

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[561] 'Being prisoners of ignorance, mistrust and fear, white people have been captured by a false hope' (National Conference 1989, Message to the white people of South Africa, page 1).

[562] National Conference 1989, Message to the white people of South Africa, page 2.

[563] 'There will be no security for anyone whilst the majority believe themselves to be oppressed and exploited because the whites will never be free until the blacks are free' (General Secretary's Report 1978, page 4).

[564] General Secretary's Report 1976, page 2.

[565] 'Our white ministry is bound hand and foot to their congregations. Response to the Gospel and its demands are demonstrated not in renewed commitment but drops in attendance or witholding of funds.' And about black ministers: 'For our black ministry there is a need of liberation for they have in fact become a pale reflection of white society. In so doing, they have underlined a worldwide problem – that of the rich and the poor – sadly this massive problem has serious overtones in South Africa, for the white are rich and the black poor' (General Secretary's Report 1976, page 2).

[566] Presidential address 1991, page 6.

[567] At the beginning of the report, the GS writes this: 'The journey of Christianity with Africa has always been fraught with contradictions. This is the religion Africans have embraced with zealously and unashamedly. Yet it

phenomena like polygamy and funerals are also mentioned, the most plausible explanation is that the GS refers to black Africans. If this is so, the term 'African' should be understood as 'black' in the narrow sense. The first part of the report has a discussion about Africans having embraced Christianity as the white person's religion, but it also questions African leadership.

> AIDS involves a number of challenges such as:
>
> /.... /
>
> - challenges cultural taboos, especially in Africa about what parents are to speak to their children about sex;
> - challenges customary practices, especially in our rural areas where women have no say in matters of sexual partners including the practice of polygamy;
>
> /... /
>
> - finally, AIDS raises question how we bury, especially as Africans.[568]

In this paragraph we have shown that there is a discourse that still describes Blacks and Whites differently. It is not clear whether this difference should be called a difference in character or a difference due to context – for instance, the cultural context. The line is not sharply drawn between the two. The reason for focusing on this aspect is to show that the fight against racism is complex. Even when apartheid had been dismantled, the Council did not only use ethnic categories, but also gave indications in the texts that different groups are given different qualities. But there is also a self-criticism at this point:

> That replacing 'white faces' by black faces in government does not necessarily guarantee justice and peace especially if the said faces are run from Paris, London, Washington or Moscow. We learned that the demands of justice go beyond just the pigmentation of people. If black leadership take over the country we will still be called upon to be prophetic as far as matters of justice and peace are concerned.[569]

In this example the GS says that power can corrupt any person, whatever their ethnic origin. It is an example of a discourse that tries to avoid giving different groups different qualities.

5.2.1.4 Summing up – the SACC and ethnicity

In this first section I have shown that the SACC has been critical towards the apartheid ideology during the whole period, and regarded the ideology as totally against the will of God – what I call the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse*. This is a clear and distinct

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is in Africa where we can say it fails to deliver' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 1). 'Africans' in this context means 'black' Africans.

[568] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.

[569] General Secretary's Report 1991, Part two, page 15.

prophetic message. The Council has also been critical about its own ability to fight apartheid. I name this the *'the SACC is not doing enough to end apartheid' discourse*. Repeatedly the SACC has asked for an end to the system. This could be named the *'end apartheid' discourse*. The critique that the Council is not doing enough, which comes to the surface in the second discourse, is more common in the 1970s; and the last discourse, about ending apartheid, is more frequent in the 1980s. The *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse* dominates the material, although it is more outspoken from the mid-1970s. One has to ask whether this hegemony is the result of a hegemonic intervention, where a discursive struggle has been resolved. This is not the case. In this material, there are no signs of any discourse saying that apartheid is consistent with the will of God.

After 1994 the *'apartheid is against God's will' discourse* is replaced by a similar discourse, namely the *'racism is against God's will' discourse*. There are also signs of a counterpart to the *'the SACC is not doing enough to end apartheid' discourse*. I call this the *'the SACC is not doing enough to end racism' discourse*. After 1994 and 1996 the issues of tribalism and xenophobia are on the agenda. Racism is not gone. Neither 1990 nor 1994 are years when the agenda changes, because the SACC still says it is combating racism. At the beginning of the 21st century, therefore, the texts show similarities to the texts of the 1970s. But I cannot find in these later texts the kind of eagerness to end racism that marks the the *'end apartheid' discourse*. This is an indication that the texts regard racism as an inescapable part of society. It was possible to fight apartheid, because it was a distinct system. But racism is a rather diffuse phenomenon. It does not only find expression in a Constitution; it is intertwined with human relations at large. When we ask how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed since 1990, this is one part of the answer.

It has been necessary to dwell substantially on the issue of ethnic classification. In this section the aim was not to find a prophetic voice, but to determine how the SACC uses ethnic terminology. As already emphasised, it is impossible to write contemporary history in South Africa without doing this exercise. The SACC as an organisation had to deal with this reality. In South Africa under the apartheid regime, people were classified as blacks, coloureds, Indians/Asians and whites. Although the SACC was critical of ethnic classification, it used the terms from time to time. The texts show a development from a white perspective (sometimes paternalistic) to a black perspective. The terms 'black' and 'African' are used with different meanings. After 1990 the term 'black' in the narrow sense is often replaced by the term 'African'.

It is clear from the above examples that the more common discourse is the *'freedom charter classification' discourse*. This is true from the mid-1970s onwards. Although there a few examples of the *'apartheid classification' discourse*, articulations like 'non-white' are never found in the material. Neither are there examples where the black group is subdivided into different 'nations'. But there are examples of whites being classified differently.[570] The *'Pan-Africanist classification' discourse* is not frequent at all. The *'no ethnic classification' discourse*, although we do not find many explicit examples, still dominates the material by far.

There is another type of discourse that I name the *'different qualities given to different groups' discourse*. This discourse is more common in the early texts. If any differences are mentioned in the 1980s, they refer mostly to the fear ascribed to the white population. At the end of the 1980s whites are addressed openly, in the *Message to the white people of South Africa*. There is no message to black people. There are some examples from texts after 1990 where different qualities are given to blacks in a more narrow sense, then referred to as Africans. This is especially true in texts about AIDS.

The question remains: in what sense is the SACC a prophetic voice when it comes to the fight against ethnic classification? Did the Council continue combat racism after 1994, or did it regard the fight as over? As we have shown, some texts suggest that the fight against racism continues. A dilemma, of course, is that the system of affirmative action and BEE presupposes some kind of ethnic classification. The texts indicate that the SACC silently supports those systems.

The kind of power relation we see in those texts, seen through the different discourses, is a conflict between different views. One view is that the whole issue of ethnicity should be consigned to history, and South Africa should enter a new era in which people are seen as human beings and not divided into different ethnic groups. The other view is that the nation

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[570] For instance, is there a difference between a white person in general and an Afrikaner? 'The image indelibly imprinted upon the minds of thousands of detainees, especially children and young people is of the white man, and particularly of the Afrikaaner [Afrikaner], as torturer and a sadist' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 5, point 3). In a few instances 'Afrikaner' is described more positively than 'English-speaking'. One example is GS 1976, talking about the change that has taken place after the Soweto uprising: 'Isn't it frighteningly significant that following the recent Soweto disturbances there has been a right-wing swing on the part of English-speaking South Africans – the so-called liberals, who have stood for justice for so long, and yet so often our maligned Afrikaaner [Afrikaner] brethren have been the ones in recent days to come through with the concrete recommendations about steps for the future. This must not go unnoticed' (General Secretary's Report 1976, page 5). But this discourse, where whites are being differentiated, is not the common discourse. Mostly 'white' is used to describe this group.

must take ethnicity into consideration as long as there are injustices between people from different groups. Those power relations can also be seen as examples of either Church Theology or Prophetic Theology (using the terminology of the Kairos Document). It has to do with reconciliation. When we come back to this concept in the second reading, this will be one aspect of our analysis.

5.2.2 Believing differently

The *religious diversity sub-order of discourse*

Pragmatic or ontological	In relation to ethnicity and culture	About reconciliation	In relation to other religions
'Pragmatic ecumenism' discourse	*'People's theology' discourse*	*'Prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse*	*'Different religions live in peace' discourse*
'Ontological ecumenism' discourse	*'Uniting churches' discourse*	*'Church theology ecumenism' discourse*	
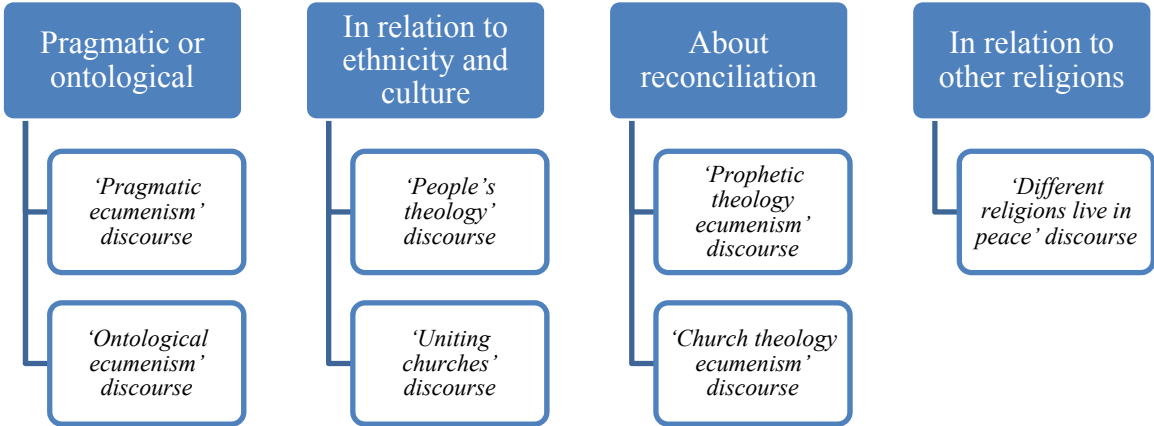
Figure 3: Discourses within the *religious diversity sub-order of discourse*

The next part of the *intersectionality order of discourse* contains the ecumenical and interfaith issues. I have not found much about these aspects in the intersectionality literature. Still it is an area where diversity as such comes to the fore, and different power relations are to be found. Between people of different faiths there can also be elements of superiority or inferiority. There are many reasons for this. If we concentrate on diversity within Christianity, we can see first that the mere fact that ecumenism exists is because of the division of Christianity. As long as there have been Christians, there has been division; and ecumenism is the way Christians strive to reach unity in that situation. Second, the ecumenical situation in South Africa is special. I am not saying that no other countries in the world have such vast numbers of different churches; but in South Africa the different denominations are almost

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countless. The question is: does the prophetic voice in the texts of the SACC address this problem? In the present constitution of the SACC, the goal of unity is enshrined. One of the first objectives of the Council is:

> To foster that unity which is both God's will for creation and God's gift to the Church.[571]

The huge number of denominations and churches is a contradiction of the idea that unity is God's gift to the Church. As we shall see, much of the material deals with this. The SACC constitution continues to speak about unity in the Church and between the member churches:

> To do and encourage all such things as will reduce those factors, whether doctrinal, liturgical or practical, which keep the Churches apart.[572]

But unity is also important in relation to other religions. At the end of this paragraph we shall touch upon this kind of diversity. This is not a very common theme in the material, but it deserves to be mentioned. It is also part of the aims of the organisation:

> To enter into dialogue with people of other faiths and persuasions.[573]

The whole history of the Council is full of decisions with a bearing on ecumenical relations within the Council itself and beyond it, as well as – in a few instances – dialogue with people of other religions. According to the constitution, this in fact is the *raison d'être* of the Council. Special interest will be found in the relations between the SACC and a major denomination that stood outside the Council during the period covered by this study, the DRC. There will also be a paragraph about the *Rustenburg Declaration*, which in itself was unique. In these contexts the questions of power relations are especially important and relevant. In the material a few different discourses can be discerned. One I call the *'pragmatic ecumenism' discourse*. Another is the *'ontological ecumenism' discourse*. The constitution is definitely an example of the latter.

> The Council affirms, on the basis of the Scriptures, that the Church is the Body of Christ and therefore is one. Though obscured and marred by sinful division, this unity of all Christians is the gift of God and does not need to be created.[574]

Another way of looking at ecumenism concerns how to solve conflicts between the churches or denominations. It has to do with the cost of the ecumenical effort. Two discourses in this respect are the *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse* and the *'church theology*

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[571] Constitution of the SACC, 3.2.
[572] Constitution of the SACC, 3.3.
[573] Constitution of the SACC, 3.7.
[574] Constitution of the SACC, Preamble.

ecumenism' discourse. (Here too I borrow the distinctions from the *Kairos Document*.) In relation to the DRC these discourses will be especially relevant. If we bring the ethnic or cultural perspective into ecumenism, there are two partly opposing discourses in the material: the *'people's theology' discourse* and the *'uniting churches' discourse*. The former finds unity between different denominations because the members find unity as part of the same people. In the *'uniting churches' discourse* the focus lies on finding unity with Christians from other ethnic groups within the same denomination.

In the case of inter-religious contacts, I only find one discourse, namely the *'different religions live in peace' discourse*.

5.2.2.1   About ecumenism in general

In the material constantly reference is made to the different member churches. One aspect is how different churches apply for observer status or membership, or even sometimes leave the Council. A study of this flow shows that the SACC has strong support among the so-called 'English-speaking' churches.[575] Relations with the Afrikaans-speaking churches have been more tense. For the whole period covered by this study, the DRC stood outside the Council. It was only in 1995 that the denomination gained observer status.[576] Some other Afrikaans-speaking churches have been members. Although the DRC was not a member, it was an important denomination for the SACC to relate to. This will be dealt with in a special section.

Other important groups of churches that the Council has related to are the Baptist and Pentecostal churches. Some of them have been members from time to time. The SACBC was an important part of the ecumenical work even before 1995, when it became a full member.[577] Another important cooperation partner is the CAIC. Especially during the leadership of Beyers Naude first in the CI and later in the SACC, relations between the Council and the AICs developed.[578] Since then it has been a constant concern for the leaders of the Council to develop cooperation with the AICs – especially the largest group, the ZCC. According to the

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[575] See further appendix 3.

[576] '… and the Dutch Reformed Church was inducted as Observer Members of the South African Council of Churches' (National Conference 1995, Minutes 95/43, Reception of new members of the SACC).

[577] 'The Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference were inducted as full members of the South African Council of Churches' (National Conference 1995, Minutes 95/43, Reception of new members of the SACC).

[578] 'In addition to working with the South African Council of Churches on the Message, the Christian Institute had taken several other initiatives, the most important of which was to establish close ties with some of the African independent churches' (Walshe 1983, page 63ff).

GS Report 1987, efforts had been made to include the denomination in the Council.[579] But the ZCC was not as positive about cooperation as the GS was. In 1992 the Council again expresses a wish for a closer relationship. This wish is an example of an *'ontological ecumenism' discourse*.

> This Conference, recognising the special place occupied by the Zion Christian Church in the family of churches in South Africa, and the need to build our mutual trust and understanding between churches, encourages the National Executive Committee to explore ways of developing contact between ZCC church leaders and the SACC.[580]

The following year, 1993, the GS has new information about the relationship with the Zion Christian Church, when he informs the NC that the denomination has closed the door to further collaboration.[581] Many other AICs are members of the SACC, and in 2004 the GS is talking about the importance of the AICs as a wider group:

> What we can conclude is that ecumenism is growing and gaining more appeal and given life both at provincial and local level and especially from the African Instituted Churches.[582]

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[579] 'Our relationship with some African Independent (Indigenous) churches has grown steadily over the last years. But we are aware that many of them feel that they are still being looked upon as step children of God by some of the main line churches. The necessity of their inclusion in our ecumenical fellowship is emphasised by the fact not only of their substantial numbers (between 3 and 4 million christians) but also of the contribution that they, and they alone, could make to our understanding of the gospel in the context of African cultural social and economic traditions. Included within the family is the ZCC (Zion Christian Church) to whome [whom] I believe the SACC should extend an invitation to enter into a meaningful dialogue on the need for closer co-operation and for the expression of our ecumenical fellowship' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 8).

[580] National Conference 1992, Resolution 10, page 11.

[581] 'In pursuance of the last National Conference resolution on "Dialogue with the ZCC" strenuous efforts were made to arrange a meeting between the leadership of the SACC and Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane. Unfortunately all our efforts ended up with a Mr Marc de la Harpe who is said to be the Public Relations Officer of Bishop Lekganyane.

In response to our request Mr de la Harpe informed us that the Ministers Council of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) decided that a meeting with a delegation from the South African Council of Churches "would not be in the interest of the Zion Christian Church" (21 December 1992). A plea in the form of a follow up letter was met with a blunt NO. In a letter dated the 24 March 1993 Mr de la Harpe said that "The Council correctly feels that a fellowship with SACC, whether spiritual or not will confuse the members of the Zion Christian Church" and concludes by saying that they wish us well and "regard the matter closed".

The contradiction here is that in their magazine "The ZCC Messenger" of Easter 1991, Issue No. 19, His Grace Bishop Lekganyane accused what he called the "core" of the SACC member churches for their "aloofness and disregard towards the ZCC" and also expressed his doubt as to whether or not "the ZCC is eligible for SACC membership".

I believe that we have done whatever we could in this regard. It is now up to the ZCC to approach us should they at any stage change their position. We cannot now impose ourselves on them if they chose to keep aloof and deny the member churches of the SACC from relating to them' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 20-21 point 3.1).

[582] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 6.

Although South Africa has a vast number of different denominations, another tendency is commented on in the texts. The GS 1988 calls this other aspect of the ecumenical situation 'People's Theology'. It is described like this:

> The tents pitched for funeral night vigils are the new cathedrals and sanctuaries of popular ecumenism. There you find Catholics, Lutherans, Zionists, Methodists etc. doing their holy thing peacefully together, not worried by any theological scruples.[583]

This cooperation across denominational lines also influences the liturgical practices in the different churches. It could possibly be explained by an underlying current, a movement towards a situation where religion is no longer a department of life, but life itself. This is, according to the GS, how religion works in traditional African culture:

> There was no separate community of religious people, because everyone who participated in the life of the community also participated in its religion.[584]

One effect of the new trend is that political expressions like the 'black power salute' become a liturgical expression at Christian funerals. Another effect is that different expressions from the various denominations are blended into the practice of almost every church.

> Similarly even though clapping of hands and dancing have become common liturgical gestures among the people, none of these has the official sanction of the church. It looks as if a liturgical coup d'etat has overtaken the church in the early hours of its history while it continues to enjoy the sweet dreams of German chorales and the Lutheran Mass.[585]

The SACC President 1988 sees the birth of a new order with the birth of a people's church. As it is described, it is a movement that has its base among the black population. According to the President of the Council, there might be a blending of the post-apartheid people's state with the people's church, similar to the Christian society of the Middle Ages. We could name this a *'People's theology' discourse*. Partly opposed to this discourse would be a *'Uniting churches' discourse*. The antagonism is not total: it only concerns the parts where the *'People's theology' discourse* builds on a common cultural identity that is defined as African.

The *'Uniting churches' discourse* we find in the GS report of 1991. Having commented on the development in the Church Unity Commission, The Uniting Reformed Church, and The Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa, the GS concludes:

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[583] President's Address 1988, page 7.
[584] President's Address 1988, page 6.
[585] President's Address 1988, page 7.

As South Africa moves painfully into a united non-racial society it is my hope that the churches will not lack [lag] behind, but take a lead in normalizing relations in South Africa.[586]

There might be a problem embedded in this wish to organise churches from a non-racial perspective, if the churches at the same time want to form a broader fellowship based on a *'People's theology' discourse*. An ecumenical organisation like the SACC has an important role to play in this respect.

In the report of 1993, the GS discusses the *koinonia* concept. He deals with the conception that the member churches of the SACC were cooperating only because of their common interest in fighting apartheid. This idea is an expression of a *'pragmatic ecumenism' discourse*. He admits that this was the case:

It is true that in many ways we have developed a structure for co-operation and co-ordination which is simply for realising our common witness against apartheid.[587]

But he does not really believe that it is the reason for cooperation. He comes back to an *'ontological ecumenism' discourse*.

It is therefore important to note that, first and foremost, we have not only been united by the struggle against apartheid. That as an ecclesiological organisation of the Church, our unity is central to what the Church is all about: one body of Christ.[588]

The objective for the Council in the 1990s is to extend ecumenical cooperation to the grassroots level.[589] This is part of the need for a new orientation in the 1990s. This continues in the next decade. In 2004 the GS again writes about ecumenism, and especially the relationship between the struggle against apartheid and the ecumenical role.

Historically in South Africa, ecumenism was viewed simply as a pragmatic and even necessary way of witnessing against apartheid. As a consequence, the demise of apartheid left no compelling reason for churches to seek each other.[590]

This risk could be replaced by a similar one: that in time the SACC would be regarded only as a development organisation.[591] Although development should not be the major objective, a

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[586] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 21.

[587] General Secretary's Report 1993, point 4.4.2, page 30.

[588] General Secretary's Report 1993, point 4.4.1, page 30.

[589] 'We will need to extend our ecumenism to the local church level, and ensure that the church down there, where the poor and marginalised are, is speaking with one strong voice' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 30, point 4.4.2).

[590] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 5.

[591] 'An equally emerging threat to ecumenism is the growing tendency to make the SACC a faith-based development organization or non-government organization' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 5).

political aspect is definitely important to the GS in 2004.[592] We can therefore see that there is an antagonism between the *'pragmatic ecumenism' discourse* and the *'ontological ecumenism' discourse*. Seen over the whole period, though, the *'ontological ecumenism' discourse* is the more common one. This does not change after 1990. If there is a change in the prophetic voice about Christian diversity, it has to do with the growing tendency to seek unity based on a common cultural or ethnical origin. This is not a very obvious trend, and should be regarded with a certain measure of suspicion. Perhaps we could even state that after 1990 the ecumenical question becomes more relevant, since before 1990 the Council was busy fighting the apartheid system. This could indicate that the tendency to regard the identity of the ecumenical church as linked to a cultural or ethnic identity was there all along. However, there are few examples in the material, and I therefore prefer to be careful in this regard.

The relationship between the SACC and the DRC

One important issue that surfaces all the time is the relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church. Many examples of texts that talk about relations with the DRC are expressions of the *'ontological ecumenism' discourse*. The Council regards this relationship as very important. As early as 1969, the GS argues that cooperation with the DRC is essential.[593] The GS 1972 also regards this as a very important matter:

> The Council continues to feel its lack of direct contact with our brethren [sic] in the Dutch Reformed Churches and has persistently proclaimed, and will continue to proclaim its willingness to meet and discuss with these our brethren [sic] the important matters before the life of our country, and the necessity to find one another in fellowship. One realises that there is a history behind the reaction to the Council, but at the same time we believe that time is short and that these matters must be faced up to, dealt with, reconciliation sought, and be set aside in the interests of the Gospel in South Africa.[594]

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Council has sometimes regarded relations with the DRC as the most important. In one of the 1986 resolutions, the Council expresses itself like this:

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[592] 'When we do our advocacy work in Parliament, we remind the politicians that the Council of churches collectively represents over 18 million followers' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 6).

[593] 'The Executive has continued efforts to find ways of co-operation and fellowship with the N.G. Kerk' (General Secretary's Report 1969, page 5).

[594] General Secretary's Report 1972, page 3.

The reason for directing the resolution especially to the DRC is its prophetic content, and the notion that DRC has a special relationship with the political party in power. If this is so, one can suggest that it is an example of *'pragmatic ecumenism' discourse*. The invitation to join the SACC is not unconditional. Although the constitution clearly states that

... membership of the Council does not imply acceptance of any specific doctrine of the Church ...[596]

there are still conditions. One of these is that the DRC has to renounce apartheid. One could raise questions about this. When the SACC describes apartheid as a heresy in several resolutions and documents, it definitely becomes a doctrinal question. Still, the DRC is not welcome in the Council unless it renounces apartheid. This condition has to be seen in the context of how discussions took place within the DRC.[597]

2.1 reminding the DRC of its grave responsibility to let a very clear prophetic voice be heard in the country at this critical point in time, enquiring whether that Church is theologicaly [theologically] in a position to renounce apartheid.

2.2 indicating to the DRC that should the ensuing General Synod reject apartheid in an unqualified way, we would be delighted to extend an invitation to them to join the SACC.[598]

This is a common way of relating to the DRC, and an example of *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse*. The invitation to the church to join the Council is linked to a demand to oppose apartheid. Even if the SACC discusses the question over and over again of involving more and more denominations in its work, the DRC is always the top priority. The GS 1987 says:

The SACC is acutely aware of the fact that a large sector of the [C]hristian family in South Africa is not included in our membership, our structures or our fellowship. I refer here to especially the following main groupings:

i. The three white DR churches and in particular the NG Kerk ...[599]

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[595] National Conference 1986, Resolution 1.

[596] Constitution of the SACC. Preamble.

[597] Meiring writes about the Synod of the DRC1986: 'Four years later a new wind had begun to blow in the DRC. The commission, which in 1982 was instructed to determine the standpoint of the Church concerning its role in the community, had submitted its report. With the acceptance of the policy document *Kerk en Samelewing*, which had brought many new perspectives to the fore, the Church was irrevocably placed on a new path – not only with respect to race relations but also in regard of ecumenism' (my translation). 'Vier jaar later het 'n nuwe wind in die NG Kerk begin waai. Die kommissie wat in 1982 aangewys is om die kerk se standpunt oor sy rol in die samelewing te bepaal, het hulle verslag voorgelê. Met die aanvaarding van die beleidstuk Kerk en Samelewing wat talle nuwe perspektiewe na vore gebring het, is die kerk onherroeplik op 'n nuwe pad – nie net ten opsigte van rasseverhoudinge nie, maar ook wat ekumene betref – geplaas' (Meiring 2005, page 464).

[598] National Conference 1986, Resolution 1.

In 1989 there is again a call to the DRC to take responsibility as a church whose members constitute the majority of the leadership of the ruling party. If they took that responsibility seriously, it would contribute dramatically to the possibility of reconciliation in the nation.

> They should open the flood-gates of peace nationally and regionally, and remove, once and for all, the stigma of a church that supports the brutal, evil, inhumane and heretical system of apartheid. I am aware that this call to prophetic witness and action will prove costly for the DRC.[600]

This is again a *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse* that means that ecumenism cannot be a cheap exercise. The GS 1989 also refers to the Vereeniging Consultation, where the DRC asked for forgiveness for their sin of participating in the apartheid system. The outcome was no unconditional plea for forgiveness from the side of the DRC, and so it was not accepted by the GS.[601] The Conference 1991 sends a specific message to the DRC in regard to the unity of the Church. Now the point is not that the DRC should become a member of the SACC, but that it should intensify its efforts to unite with its sister churches:

> To urge the white DRC as one of the 12 to unite with the Uniting DR Church of South Africa.[602]

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in one of its resolutions, the NC is hesitant about the DRC's application to get observer status in the SACC, and resolves

1. To postpone the application of the DRC for observer status until the next National Conference to take a final decision.
2. In the meantime we call upon the DRC
   2.1 To issue a clear statement that they are withdrawing their previous accusations against the SACC;
   2.2 to provide a clear motivation of their reasons for applying to become an observer of the SACC now,
   2.3 to enter into discussion with its sister churches in order to normalise relationships between them;
   2.4 to declare their willingness to criticise this and any future government in terms of the Gospel.[603]

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[599] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 7.

[600] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 14.

[601] 'Because of the failure of the GSC to adopt the two fundamental positions of confession of guilt of the sin of apartheid (and not only the so-called "discriminatory apartheid"), and the model of one, united, non-racial church as forwarded by the black DRC churches, the isolation of the white DRC could deepen, making our relationship with them more difficult. I propose that we appeal once more to the GSC of the DRC to reconsider their position and to participate with us in the ministry of creating conditions that are conducive for meaningful negotiations in South Africa to end the pain, suffering, misery and death of our people. On our part, we should leave our doors open for the DRC should they reconsider their position' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 25, point 8.1.4).

[602] National Conference 1991, Resolution A 2 (i).

It is interesting that the last part of this resolution also has a bearing on the role of the SACC in any future situation. In 1992 the application from the DRC is again on the agenda. This time the DRC, supported by the WARC, asks for a delay.[604] But the following year the GS wants to speed up the process.[605] A message that might be addressed to the DRC comes as a resolution at the NC 1995. It might also be directed to other church families in South Africa, like the Lutheran Communion, when the Council supports the processes of unification taking place in different churches.[606] The uniting churches are also on the agenda in the GS report 2004.

> SACC continues to encourage and to provide human resource assistance to the Uniting Churches. Meetings and workshops have been held with the Dutch Reformed family of churches especially in the Free State province. We also appealed to the Human Rights Commission to intervene at one stage. Another intervention which is still in process concerns the Presbyterian family of churches in the Vaal region.[607]

The DRC becomes an observer member in 1995 and a full member of the SACC in 2004. Although the DRC and the rest of the Dutch Reformed Churches had not yet united, the DRC was accepted into the Council.[608] From the Minutes it cannot be ascertained how this was possible. Only in the future will it be possible to see how relations between DRC and the rest of the member churches will develop.

We can sum up by saying that the relationship between the DRC and the member churches of the SACC, according to the texts, has always been tense. During the apartheid era, the rest of the SACC wanted the DRC to join. But when the DRC itself applied for membership, the SACC slowed down the process. One could say that in the early years the SACC was closer to a *'church theology ecumenism' discourse*. but later changed to a *'prophetic theology*

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[603] National Conference 1991, Resolution: Application of the DRC for observer status.

[604] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 10, point 7.2.2.

[605] 'Again we hope that these processes will be speeded up to enable us to accept the DRC into membership by the next National Conference in 1994' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 20).

[606] '16. Uniting Churches

AFFIRMS and supports those churches that have taken the initiative to come together across racial boundaries; and

URGES those churches that have not begun this process to give urgent consideration to the matter in faithfulness to our Lord's call to the Oneness of the Church and as a witness to the reconciling power of the Gospel' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 16).

[607] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 13.

[608] National Conference 2004, Minutes 04.09.01. Henriksson makes a rather pessimistic comment on the process, seen from the WARC perspective: 'Instead the WARC expressed a hope that this – the return to the fellowship – would give rise to a new momentum for a new non-racial church. Until now the outcome has been weak' (Henriksson 2010, page 259).

ecumenism' discourse. The important issue was whether the DRC was prepared to merge with its sister churches. Although this has not yet happened, the DRC became a full member from 2004. Does this mean that the Council is back in a *'church theology ecumenism' discourse* in relation to the DRC?

A Conference of Confessions – the Rustenburg Conference

One event that was of utmost importance after the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the liberation movements in 1990 was the confession of guilt by the churches at the Rustenburg Conference. This had already been put on the agenda in 1987, in a resolution that said that the churches had something to confess concerning the past, but also that the different churches had a role to play in the future.[609] The relationship between the different churches and denominations in South Africa – and especially between the SACC and the DRC – comes into focus at the Rustenburg Conference. According to the GS 1991, 90% of the Christian community in South Africa was represented. The conference is described positively:

> As you would know the Conference was characterized by a series of confessions which made others to call it a conference of confessions.[610]

But critical voices said that those who confessed, as well as those who gave forgiveness, did not have the mandate to do so.[611] The GS of the SACC is, of course, concerned with the relationship between the Rustenburg Conference and the SACC.

> I also believe that this Conference has contributed in the process of exposure of other churches, outside the SACC, to the SACC, creating a climate where more and more of these churches could gravitate towards the SACC.[612]

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[609] 'The National Conference of the SACC directs the Mission and Evangelism Division (SACC) to plan and convene a conference on the subject of the responsibility of the Churches in relation to the crisis in South Africa and the evils of the apartheid system, and whether Christian people can unite in a Confession of guilt for the past and of commitment for the future' (National Conference 1987, Resolution 31).

[610] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 21.

[611] 'The thing this conference is most remembered for is however a speech by the DRC theologian Willie Jonker who not only for himself but on behalf of his church expressed responsibility for the political, social, economical and structural wrongs that have been done to many and asked for forgiveness for this sin. Desmond Tutu immediately accepted this and expressed forgiveness. A critical debate then originated as to what mandate both of them had to say what they said. At the end this was described as the first time the system of apartheid had been condemned together with those who supported it in the past, and that apartheid was declared being a sin. This was later to be used by the DRC in arguing that they have abandoned apartheid' (Henriksson 2010, page 257-258).

[612] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 22.

In the following the GS was not totally positive. There was a risk that the Rustenburg Conference organisation would become a competitor to the SACC.

> Of course problems have arisen with fears expressed that this development of the Rustenburg Conference could be used by some to set-up another (alternative) ecumenical movement outside the SACC.[613]

There is also a resolution about the Rustenburg Conference in 1991. Although the NC is positive about the Rustenburg Conference, it warns that

1. the confession of guilt may neutralise the prophetic witness of the Church;
2. the confession of guilt may displace the commitment to a non-racial, democratic and just South Africa as the basis for Christian witness and co-operation;
3. an attempt may be made to form an alternative ecumenical forum in competition with the SACC.

In view of the above, Conference resolves:

1. to receive the Rustenburg Declaration and refer it to its member churches for action;
2. to request its leadership to participate in the activities of the Steering Committee strictly in terms of the Church leaders resolution of 17/18 April 1991
3. to ask its leadership, in particular, not to participate in the organisation of any further gatherings with the explicit support of their denominations and the SACC.[614]

One can discern the *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse* in the first parts of this statement. Between the lines there is an understanding that the Rustenburg Conference might, as *Church Theology*, compromise the truth and cover over the injustices. But there are also clearly power struggles between the SACC and the leadership of the Steering Committee. If one compares the Rustenburg Declaration with documents of the SACC, it is not directly obvious that these power relations are there, although the declaration text indicates that total unity was not achieved.[615] A full comparative study of the Rustenburg Declaration and the documents of the SACC lies outside the scope of this thesis. However, the Rustenburg text does contain many examples of a *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse*.

> We know that without genuine repentance and practical restitution we cannot appropriate God's forgiveness and that without justice true reconciliation is impossible. We also know that this process must begin with a contrite church.[616]

The GS also makes comments about the effects of the Rustenburg Conference in the 1992 report. The comment is very short, and does not show any real enthusiasm:

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[613] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 22.

[614] National Conference 1991, Resolution: Rustenburg Consultation.

[615] 'Some of us are nt [are not] in full accord with everything said in this conference, but on this we are all agreed, namely the rejection of apartheid as a sin' (The Rustenburg Declaration, Preamble).

[616] The Rustenburg Declaration, 2.4.

No progress has been made thus far. The Committee agreed on a meeting sometime in September 1992 where it will consider the future of this ecumenical venture.[617]

In one of the 1995 resolutions, the relationship between the struggle and the ecumenical role is described in another way:

> The SACC recognises and affirms what has been achieved in the past through united, ecumenical efforts at both national and regional levels. This unity has enhanced the Church's prophetic voice and role. Future ecumenical efforts need to be more extensively rooted and articulated through local church structures. It is hoped that the challenge facing the Church in a Post-Apartheid society will be addressed through united ecumenical efforts.[618]

The material adopts a wait-and-see policy towards the Rustenburg Declaration and especially the continuing work of the Steering Committee. There is no obvious antagonism in the texts, but both the Resolutions and the GS report 1991 contain a suspicion that the Steering Committee might form a new ecumenical forum in South Africa.

5.2.2.2 Interfaith questions

There are not many comments about the diversity of religions. Before 1990 not much is said at all. It is as if this is not a field where the prophetic voice is heard. This could be a sign that the relationship between the religions in South Africa is characterised by respect and mutual understanding. The few times it is mentioned, it breathes peace. The GS 1998 mentions the relationship with other religions as one of five parts of her vision for the SACC:

> To enable the church to be confident in herself in order to be able to work with people of other faith communities.[619]

According to one of the resolutions from the National Conference 1990, this was also the case:

> **1.8 National Inter-faith Conference:**
> The National Conference notes the work of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (South African Chapter) in initiating dialogue and cooperation between different faiths in the context of the struggle in South Africa, and the role of organised religion in political development in South Africa as reported by the General Secretary.
> The Conference resolves:

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[617] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 10, point 7.2.1.
[618] National Conference 1995, Resolution no 95.39.01, page 18-19.
[619] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 5.

a. To work with the WCRP on a National Inter-Faith Conference to explore relationships between a future democratic state in South Africa and organised religion:

b. To facilitate a reflection on the political developments in this country and seek consensus on the role of religion in the process of change and in a future South Africa.[620]

The GS's Report from 1991 also deals with cooperation with other religions. It too offers a picture of peaceful relationships and gives several examples.[621] The GS continues and reports from the National Inter-Faith Conference:

> As the spirit of negotiation for a new society was building up there was a strong feeling that a National Inter-Faith Conference on "Religion – State Relations" was necessary to make a joint contribution in this process. The Conference was held on the 2 – 4 December 1990 in Johannesburg. The recommendations of this Conference are attached as **Annexure M.**
>
> One of the most important recommendations of this conference was an agreement that "there should be a clear separation between the state and religion", and that "the state should be constitutionally secular with full freedom of religion" …[622]

This question is quite new on the SACC agenda. There are no signs of antagonism between different discourses, except in the Presidential address of 1994, where the Council President is disappointed with the fact that there was no opening prayer at the opening of the Parliament.

> We do recognise in the inter-faith climate that the ground is level between Christianity and all religions, but even so, the vast majority of this country profess to be Christians and those not professing to be Christians are in a tiny minority.[623]

The President of the SACC compares the situation with that of the Unite States, where the Congress still allows a Christian prayer at the opening and even a full-time Chaplain in the congress. With this exception one still has to conclude that the dominant discourse found could be described as a *'different religions live in peace' discourse.*

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[620] National Conference 1990, Resolution 1.8.

[621] 'The SACC has worked closely with leaders of other religions during this last period. Examples are the joint work on the return of South African Exiles (NCCR); the joint and common position on the Peace Conference and the peace process; and interventions as regards to deadlock on the negotiation process.

Other areas of future co-operation are on "Religion and the Environment", "Religions and Churches in Africa" and "A Women's Collective" to address concerns and rights of women' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 25, point 15.2).

[622] General Secretary's Report 1991, point 15.3, page 25.

[623] Presidential address 1994, page 3.

5.2.2.3 Summing up:

In relating to the DRC, the ZCC, and the Steering Committee of the Rustenburg Declaration, the SACC is involved in open power struggles. There is nothing strange about this. The question of membership has to do with power. Churches and denominations seeking membership of the SACC have to abide by the constitution of the Council and submit to its collective leadership. The relationship between the Steering Committee and the SACC is different. This has to do with which ecumenical organisation is going to be more influential in the South African context.

Within these power struggles there is also a more subtle antagonism between a *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse* and a *'church theology ecumenism' discourse*. Especially in relation to the DRC, the action of the SACC before 1990 is an example of a *'church theology ecumenism' discourse.* This is replaced by a *'prophetic theology ecumenism' discourse* in the 1990s. The texts aim at reconciliation with justice being done, not just what the *Kairos Document* calls a justice of reform, determined by those in power.[624] There are signs that the relationship in the 21ˢᵗ century is again an expression of a *'church theology ecumenism' discourse* approach.

Behind the discussions between the SACC and potential members lies an *'ontological ecumenism' discourse* perspective. This is especially true in the relationship with the ZCC. This approach does not change after 1990. The prophetic voice, pointing at Christian unity, does not change in this respect.

The *'pragmatic ecumenism' discourse* disappears after 1990. This opens the way for an antagonism between the *'People's theology' discourse* and the *'Uniting churches' discourse*. This might just be an appearance, though, and one has to be careful about saying that this really is the case.

In relation to other religions, there are almost no signs of conflict in the texts. The few examples given all agree that the different religions have much in common and have to cooperate. The *'different religions live in peace' discourse* has a hegemonic status.

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[624] The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter 3.2.

5.2.3 Created in God's image

The *gender sub-order of discourse*
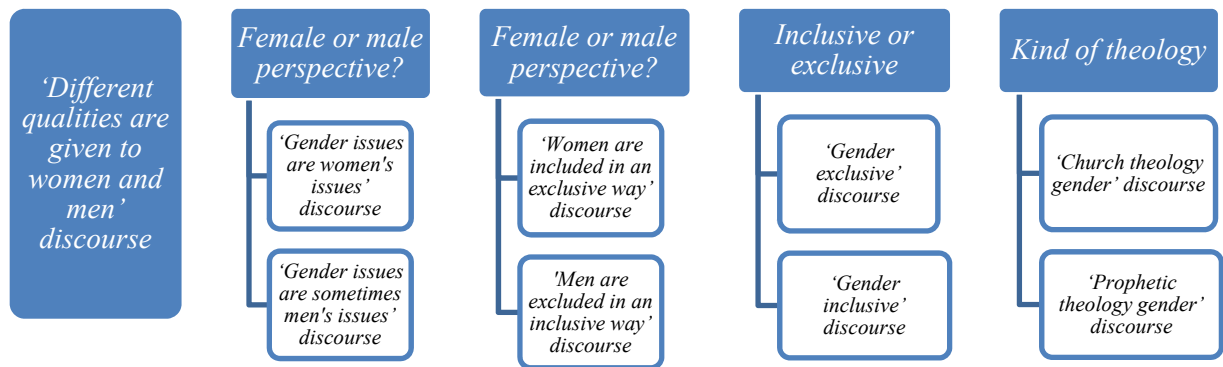
Figure 4: Discourses within the *gender sub-order of discourse*

The term 'gender' does not occur in the texts before 1992. But a lot is said about the relationship between women and men. This paragraph focuses on how the texts talk about this relationship. This means, as in the case of ethnic classification, that not all articulations are examples of the prophetic ministry. It is important, though, to go through the texts in order to understand whether and how the SACC is exercising a prophetic ministry in the field of gender. Before we get into the reading, it is necessary to say a few words about the concept itself. The concept 'gender' can be given different meanings. It has to do with the whole field of issues arising from the fact that human beings have different sexes. The World Health Organization (WHO) of the United Nations (UN) gives this explanation of how to distinguish the term 'gender' from the related term 'sex'.

> **"Sex"** refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women.
>
> **"Gender"** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.[625]

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[625] World Health Organization. "Gender, women and health." World Health Organization. http://www.who.int/gender/whatisgender/en/index.html 2009-10-07. (In this context I am not going to discuss the phenomena of other gender identities, which can be called inter-gender or a third gender. This might be something the SACC needs to discuss in the future, but in the period studied here it has not been discussed at all).

In the following paragraphs 'gender' will be the more important perspective. In some parts, though, the analysis will deal with how the texts talk differently about women and men without making any reference to socially constructed roles. Even though the WHO speaks about gender as a term referring to both men and women, the heading of the website where these definitions were found is: *Gender, women and health*. It is a common view that gender issues and women's issues are synonymous. The same will be obvious in the texts from the National Conferences of the SACC. Almost without exception, texts about the relations between men and women refer to women explicitly. In only a few cases is the role of men articulated, and those are from later years. In the early texts another phenomenon is striking. People are described as 'men' or 'brethren', either possibly meant to include women, or based on a situation where only men are present.[626]

The historical context in which the SACC texts speak about gender is not easy to describe. The political leadership, and the leadership in the church, was mainly male. In the early years of the SACC women were still referred as occupying traditional roles in South African society.[627] At the same time there were examples of strong female leaders such as Helen Suzman and Albertina Sisulu. The march to Pretoria in 1956 is an example of women being active in the struggle against apartheid; and the Black Sash had started its work in 1955.[628] In as much as women were left out of the public arena of both the struggle against apartheid and the leadership of the Churches, one has to underline that men were even further behind in the search for their identity as men. Men took a leading role because of tradition, not because they had reflected on questions of gender. I base this view on the almost total absence of such thoughts in the material I have read.

The overall picture in the texts is that the SACC, at this level of its organisation, is a slow starter when it comes to gender issues.

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[626] There is a discussion about inclusive language which I shall only touch on in this chapter. There is a difference between a *gender inclusive* language, where both men and women are mentioned, and *gender neutral* language, where gender is not marked specifically in the language. The way of (for instance) including *woman* in the term *man* (as referring to a *human being*) is normally described as *sexist* language.

[627] See examples in the next paragraph.

[628] Black Sash. "Our History." Black Sash. http://www.blacksash.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=161&Itemid=115 2009-10-07.

5.2.3.1   Are men included and women excluded?

In this paragraph I shall read the texts in a way similar to that used in the ethnicity context. The question is how the texts articulate gender issues. In the early texts of the SACC, references to women are almost completely absent. When, for example, the GS in his report 1973 writes about the need for liberation in relation to apartheid, he uses completely sexist, masculine language:

> Procedures must be found within Church structures and within the life of the country to enable the black man [sic] to free himself [sic] and express himself [sic], to allow him [sic] to be treated as a full human being, be made responsible to society as much as anybody else is.[629]

The text talks about liberation, but it is put in a patriarchal way. One can ask many questions to the text: Is there no need for white people to be free? And the most relevant question in this context is: What about the need for women's liberation? Examples of this discourse are many. We can call it a *'Gender exclusive' discourse*. In his 1976 address, the SACC President is totally unaware of the possibility of using inclusive language when he talks about the future:

> It is good news to know that there will be a time when everyone in S. A. whatever the colour of his skin may be, whatever the ethnic origin, whatever the language grouping – we will all be able to address each other as "Brother [sic] and fellow-citizen".[630]

At the NC 1976 the GS includes both male and female in his report, when he speaks about being a son or a daughter of God.[631] But in the following he slips back into a gender exclusive way of expressing himself:

> Finally, we will only see true liberation from structures when we begin to train black men [sic] to take over the key positions in our structures.[632]

In the report of the GS 1976 we can see that the there is a discursive struggle between a *'Gender exclusive' discourse* and a *'Gender inclusive' discourse*. But even when women are included, this is sometimes done in an exclusive way, ascribing certain roles and qualities to women. The GS argues that women need to be liberated and given the same salaries as men, but he also maintains that women play a different role in the liberation process.

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[629] General Secretary's Report 1973, page 4.
[630] Presidential address 1976, page 6.
[631] 'Never before have I been so convinced there has been the need shown for a deep and meaningful convers [conversion?] to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, which is the only means of liberating people, as I understand it, into the fullness of what it means to be a son or daughter of God' (General Secretary's Report 1976, page 3).
[632] General Secretary's Report 1976, page 3.

The women in our Churches and Society need to be liberated to play their full part. Legislation is still against this in our country. Liberation needs may differ for Black and White women[633], but the realization that women have played, and continue to play the major role in our Society, must be salutary. Perhaps it is here that real reconciliation between black and white in South African Society can begin because women can share together in their common cause more easily than men. Let me say I do not approve and condemn the practice now being employed of engaging black women in the place of black men as messengers and cleaners and then paying them less.[634]

The argument is that men and women are different, but should be given the same salary if they do the same job. It is thus an example of a *'Different qualities are given to women and men' discourse*. There are other examples where women are included, but are given certain roles or are described in extraordinary ways. When the GS 1979 talks about his secretaries, it is an example of a sexist way of talking about women.

I am lucky to have such attractive and charming secretaries ….[635]

No other persons on the staff are described as 'attractive and charming'. On the other hand, this GS is the first even to mention his secretaries. The quotation continues:

… who make everybody so welcome in my office. I can assure you, Mr. President, that I have good support as well from the woman God gave me to be the mother of my children and I thank her publicly for this.[636]

Even this is an ambiguous expression of gratitude. The wife of the GS is included; but mentioning her as a wife and mother only excludes her from other roles. This is not the only example in the texts. There is an example from the late 1980s.[637] This way of describing women as mothers is also found in one of the 1979 resolutions, referring there to another kind of motherhood.

The mothers of South Africa are all afraid of what the future holds for their children.[638]

A relevant question is: Are the fathers of South Africa not equally afraid? This question does not arise within a *'Different qualities are given to women and men' discourse*. In the 1980s,

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[633] This comment is an early example of an intersectionality approach, seeing that oppression has to do with many different aspects, in this case both gender and ethnicity.

[634] General Secretary's Report 1976, pages 7-8.

[635] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 4.

[636] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 4.

[637] Another example of this is given in the GS report 1988. 'Special thanks goes to my dear wife Kagiso and our children Obakeng and Otlile for their understanding and support of this husband and father who is never at home with them' (General Secretary's Report 1988, page 14).

[638] National Conference 1979, Resolution 1.

though, the officials of the Council start to use a more inclusive way of expressing their thoughts. The Council President 1981 greets visitors, saying:

> Let our oversea [overseas] visitors be welcomed as symbols of that vast brotherhood and sisterhood which transcends Jew and Greek, male and female, bond and free – and makes us all one in Christ Jesus.[639]

This is an example of a *'Gender inclusive' discourse*. One can discern a related discourse where women are included and excluded at the same time. We can call it a *'Women are included in an exclusive way' discourse*. There is an antagonism between those discourses. When the GS 1982 thanks the women who have prepared the tea, one understands that the SACC still has a long road to walk.[640] The Council wants to work for women's liberation, but the gender roles are still rigid. There are certain roles for women, and one such role is to serve the tea. There are other examples, though. When the GS gives thanks for the work of leaders like Tutu and Naude, he does it in an inclusive way.

> My prayer is that God should raise more men and women like them for the sake of the Kingdom of our Lord.[641]

On the whole, women are only excluded in the early texts, but later on they are included in different ways. Sometimes they are included in traditionally female roles. About men as different from women, nothing at all is said. One can therefore say about men that they are excluded, yet they are included. They are the norm; but the texts do not express any thoughts about whether or not men are trapped in gender roles. This is what I call the *'Men are excluded in an inclusive way' discourse*. This becomes obvious in the next paragraph.

5.2.3.2 Gender as women's issues

The majority of sections dealing with gender-related questions are about women's issues. As I have stated, the word 'gender' is not used until 1992. Since the texts before that year only speak about women's issues, this is an indication that men are not involved in gender liberation. At the NC 1974 a paragraph speaks about the establishment of the Women's

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[639] Presidential address 1981, page 1.
[640] 'We have had and will have our tea through the good offices of ladies from various local churches ....' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 5).
[641] General Secretary's Report 1988, page 1.

Division. One of its first tasks is a project about domestic workers.[642] The goals of the Division are clearly stated:

(a) to co-ordinate women's work in South Africa;

(b) to encourage ecumenism among women in South Africa;

(c) to embark on the role of women in the Church, community and society.[643]

Interestingly enough, the Division is instructed to start its work in the black churches. This is an example of a *'Gender issues are women's issues' discourse*. The same year the texts use sexist language when they talk about people, including women in expressions like 'the black man' and 'brethren'.[644] The GS 1976 explicitly writes in his report about the need of liberation for women, and admits that the issue has been neglected.[645] In the 1970s the Council is not clear about the role of women in society. Some articulations of the role of women are not easy to understand, as when the outgoing GS 1977 says:

There needs to be a stronger emphasis on the development of the role of women in society, and the whole idea of mobilizing women to work.[646]

Does this mean that the GS wants women to do any kind of work in society, or just traditionally female jobs? GS 1982 expresses the objectives of the Council's work with gender equality, but it is still only women who are in focus.

We are looking for a more just and participatory society and we must in the Church begin by looking at the role and position of women.[647]

The confusion about how to handle women's issues is also shown in an example about the Women's World Day of Prayer. The resolution

Expresses appreciation for the initiative taken by the Division of Home and Family Life to investigate the present procedures of the Women's World Day of Prayer;[648]

One can ask why this was done by that Division. It is striking that the way in which the relationship between ethnic groups is analysed, and the way in which gender-related issues

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[642] 'That a Division of Women's Work be established within the context of the SACC, and that the Domestic Workers project be lodged within that Division, now to be known as the Women's Division of the SACC' (National Conference 1974, Minutes §17 l [1]).

[643] National Conference 1974, Minutes §17 l (4).

[644] Presidential address 1975, page 1.

[645] 'LIBERATION AND WOMEN. This is a subject which we in South Africa have not given enough attention' (General Secretary's report 1976, page 5).

[646] Outgoing General Secretary's report 1977, page 1, point g.

[647] General Secretary's report 1982, page 5.

[648] National Conference 1983, Resolution 11.1.

are being dealt with, do not correspond at all. When the texts speak about ethnicity there is an openness to discussing both blacks and whites, although they can be described differently. But as soon as gender issues are in focus, men are left out of the picture. The message is that women's issues are about women and for women alone to deal with. Even if one of the 1982 resolutions has the objective of focusing on the role of women at the whole NC 1985, this did not happened.[649] Neither the GS nor the President makes any comments about this. A women was appointed chaplain for the 1985 conference[650], but the only comment about the change of theme is a remark in the Minutes:

> While the theme of the conference was "Women a Power for change" and it was intended that the conference would devote a good deal of its time to the issue, events from outside overruled, and the agenda was radically changed to deal with life and death issues.[651]

This is clearly an example of a *'Church theology gender' discourse*. In one part of the 1992 statement we can trace the same discourse in the discussion about the conflict between gender issues and other, more important, issues, when the statement says women

> c.   are aware that the church is immersed in the problems of national issues of violence, economic and political issues.
> d.   observe that women are victims of violence (macro and micro), misinformation by media and other anti-justice structures. [652]

When the statement continues to talk about the role of women in the church, this is an answer to the argument reflected above, that there were more important issues to deal with.

> We continue to believe that women:
> a.   are created in God's holy image.
> b.   are in the majority in our churches and in society at large.
> c.   have a tremendous potential that needs to be unlocked for the benefit of South Africa – especially in these times.
> d.   believe that the future of any country lies in its ability to empower its women to play a constructive/creative role in the development of its citizens. [653]

When we compare the gender issue with the ethnicity issue, we can see that the texts in this study sometimes argue that white people cannot be free unless black people are free. Even the

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[649] 'Conference resolves that the theme for the National Conference of 1985 be "The Role of Woman in Church and Society"' (National Conference 1982, Resolution 18).
[650] According to the Minutes, the opening service was led by Sister Bernhard, appointed chaplain for the whole conference (National Conference 1985, Minutes, page 1).
[651] National Conference 1985, Minutes, page 1.
[652] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43, Statement of women participants.
[653] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43, Statement of women participants.

oppressor needs liberation. There is no such thought on the gender issue. There is still an instinctive relating of gender issues to women. One exception is a resolution on women 1990 that tries to argue that gender issues are related to both men and women.

> The oppression of women in society and in the church is an issue of justice. We ask you to affirm their God-given dignity an [and] personhood and to recognise that they are called to all forms of ministry in the church. We wish to remind you that the Ecumenical Decade which runs from 1988 to 1998 is the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. It is a programme of Churches and not a programme of women alone. We ask you to demonstrate your solidarity in actions as well as word.[654]

Although it is said to be a programme of churches and not of women alone, women are still the focus, not men. Even when the resolutions from 1995 deal with gender issues, they again call them 'women's rights', and the resolutions are placed under the heading 'Home and Family life'.[655] In the GS report 2001 not much is said about gender issues. But in the Faith and Mission section a Bible reading skills training workshop is mentioned,

> ... which aimed at highlighting incidences of women abuse and mobilising for corrective action through churches using the Biblical account of the rape of Tamar in II Samuel 13.[656]

Nothing is mentioned about the role of men in this context. The issue of gender is a women's issue. This is true both before and after 1990. This becomes even more noticeable when we look at the issue of women's representation at the National Conferences.

Women's representation at the NC

Throughout the years one important aspect has always been the representation of women in the work of the SACC, especially at NC. Needless to say, there are no examples where the representation of men is dealt with.

> That all member churches of the South African Council of Churches be requested to send at least one woman representative to National Conference of the Council and endeavour to ensure that women have full place on all their various committees and groups.[657]

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[654] National Conference 1990, Resolution 5.1.

[655] 'Conference is concerned that attention be given to enshrining the following in the new constitution: the protection of women's right, particularly the guarantee of equal rights by law in matters of property, matrimony and inheritance.
Conference also believes that the State and Justice systems should ensure that all maintenance and support orders by courts, of divorced and separated women and single mothers, are enforced.
Conference urges the SACC to draw attention to, and suggest what forms of practical action can be taken, to curb domestic violence against women and children' (National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.02 B).

[656] General Secretary's report 2001, page 11-12.

One of the 1981 resolutions, speaking of the role of women in the SACC, discusses why there are so few women in leadership.

> Conference notes that leadership positions on Council committees are held predominantly by males and believes this is due in part to the fact that the Churches and other member bodies are not including enough women in their delegations and appointed representatives.[658]

This shows that there is an underlying conflict between the National Conference of the SACC and its inability to elect women to leadership roles, and the inability of the member churches to send women representatives. In 1981, according to the Minutes, there is not even a report from the women's desk. One of the resolutions underscores the seriousness of this.[659] But still the poor representation of women continues to be a problem in the Council. In 1984 a resolution is passed about this.[660] At the NC 1989 some matters are referred to the Executive. Two of them deal with gender issues, albeit still mentioning women and not men, although youth[661] are added as a group that is not fully represented at the NC.

> The National Conference recommends that the Youth and Women's Divisions co-operate to ensure the adequate representation of young women at SACC and other Church gatherings.[662]

On the issue of the ministry of women, another resolution is referred to the Executive that also has a bearing on how women are represented at NC: about women in the ordained ministry.[663]

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[657] National Conference 1975, Minutes, Appendix F.

[658] National Conference 1981, Resolution 7.

[659] 'This Conference notes with concern the absence of a report on the Women's Desk;

Requests a progress report on the work of the Legal Status of women;

This Conference requests the Executive Committee through the Priorities and Objectives Committee to examine the work of the Women's Desk and visibility of appointing a Director' (National Conference 1981, Resolution 9).

[660] 'The following resolution was received by the resolution Committee:

"The Conference deplores that so few women are included in church delegations to conferences and synods, depriving them of the right to participate in leadership roles in the affairs of the church.

The conference believes

1) that there are competent and willing women within the ranks of the churches who can make a creative and vital contribution to the life of the church.

2) draws attention of its member churches to its decision that in 1985 the National Conference will have a focus on women.

Therefore

3) urges all member churches to see that women are fairly and adequately represented in their delegations to that conference and all future conferences.

The Resolution was accepted in principle. A group of women to be appointed by the Presidium to re-word the resolution and refer it back to the Presidium for approval. Agreed' (National Conference 1984, Resolution O).

[661] Not so few resolutions deal with the role of the youth in the Council. This could have been a sub-order of discourse as well.

[662] National Conference 1989, Matters referred to the Executive, Number 15.

It is not common in the material, but there are a few examples. Again and again the NC has to remind member churches about the representation of women. In 1991 there is a break in the trend. Men are mentioned for the first time in the context of representation. But the problem is not that there are too few men.

> In the light of the fact that SACC member churches and organisations have not taken seriously the representation of women in their delegations to National Conference and SACC committees, we earnestly recommend that member churches and organisations adopt as policy that there be equity of representation between women, men and youth in their delegations to National Conference and representation on SACC committees.[664]

The 1992 statement of women participants to the 24th National Conference is partly satisfied with women's representation.[665] The focus has now shifted. The statement does not discuss whether or not the member churches include women in their delegations, but deals with the representation from regional councils that is lagging behind.[666] It also formulates a goal when it comes to women's representation:

> 3. Women should be included at all levels of our church structures, with at least 50% representation. [667]

The expression *at least* indicates that it is acceptable to have more than 50% representation. In that case men would have less than 50%. This is a dilemma. In many organisations a 40/60 concept is applied, since total balance is difficult to obtain. Another resolution again points out that there is an imbalance in representation:

> This Conference, in order to rectify the ongoing imbalance and hurts currently inherent in Conference debates with regard to the rights of women, resolves:
> That time be set aside in the 1994 SACC Conference for a workshop on Gender issues in which all Conference delegates will be expected to participate.[668]

This shows that some delegates in the past have refrained from participating in such discussions. One reason might be that gender issues have always been defined as women's issues. In 1998 the old question about women's representation is on the agenda again. Now

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[663] 'Conference further requests that women ministers be adequately represented in the conduct of liturgical services at future conferences' (National Conference 1989, Matters referred to the Executive, Number 16).

[664] National Conference 1991, Resolution C 1. It is not easy to understand what this equity should look like when youth are also included.

[665] The women '... are pleased that most churches have included women as delegates at this 1992 Conference' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).

[666] 'The Regional Councils of Churches should include women delegates, as it is noted with dismay that at this 24th Conference there are no women delegates' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).

[667] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43.

[668] National Conference 1993, Resolution 16.

the issue is that both women and youth should have representation on the Central Committee. A decision was taken that each full member of the Council should appoint one woman and one youth to the Central Committee. It was also resolved that 12 delegates from the Women's Ecumenical Conference should represent women at National Conference with full voting powers.[669]

If one should give a name to this discourse, it would again be a *'Gender issues are women's issues' discourse*. This discourse is dominant throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. We shall find a few examples later, when gender issues have a connection to men issues. Let us look into how the road to that situation could be described.

5.2.3.3 A new awareness is being hesitantly born

There are some examples in the material that the liberation of women is related to the liberation of all people. The GS 1979 speaks about the ordination of women, an issue that the SACC not deals with many times:

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[669] 'Concerning the representation of Women and Youth

The following options were presented to Conference:

a) Increasing the delegations of member churches to the Central Committee. Clause 7.3 (a) to read:

"The leader and the chief executive officer, or their alternates, and one woman and one youth representative, of each full member of the Council".

b) Restructuring the Central Committee to a size appropriate to effective governance: Clause 7.3 (A) to read:

"The leader and one additional person (either a woman or a young person) representative of each full member of the Council".

c) Considering an entirely new approach

That the whole matter of representation be referred back to the Constitution and Membership sub-Committee through the Executive Committee, to address all issues that have been raised and not losing sight of the need for the active participation of members of the Council in its governance.

It was noted that the term "member churches" in option (a) should be "full members".

It was noted that the size of the National Conference compared to the size of the Central Committee had been taken into account in making these proposals. The three to four tier decision making structures may not be the most effective or efficient way of functioning.

There was a great deal of discussion, culminating in a caucus of both the women and youth delegates to Conference. The following report was made by the women delegates:

The history of the representation of Women at National Conference and other decision making bodies of the Council was outlined. The following proposal was made:

That option (a) as presented by the Constitutional and Membership sub-Committee be approved and that in addition, recommended that 12 delegates from the Womens' [Women's] Ecumenical Conference represent women at national conference with full voting powers.

As option (a) referred to the representation of Women at Central Committee it was put to the vote and carried unanimously' (National Conference 1998, Resolution 98.18.02).

And I myself feel that the ordination of women is also part of the total liberation struggle in which I hope I am involved.[670]

But this is an exception in the material in the 1970s. We have to go as far as the end of the 1980s before a new awareness emerges. We find one example in the 1987 resolutions, where the question of the Women's Division is again on the table.

> The National Conference of the SACC, recognising that women have gifts and talents to minister in the church and are called by God to be his instruments, welcomes the establishment of the Women's Division.
>
> Aware that the church has a long standing tradition of patriarchel [patriarchal] domination, Conference encourages its Member Churches to implement educational programmes to make people aware of this practice.
>
> Conference directs the General Secretary to request Member Churches to include liberation theology with special reference to women in the curricula of their theological seminaries.[671]

Still the text does not include the need for the liberation of men. But there is a new discourse in this resolution. Another example of this new trend occurs when a resolution about the *confession of guilt* is adopted in 1988, with the following remark:

> proposes the addition of the word "sexism" in line 2, p.23 of the report, to read "The guilt of racism, sexism, apartheid and oppression".[672]

The Council also takes gender issues seriously when *the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women* is discussed; and one of the resolutions again deals with the establishment of a Women's Desk, this time on a regional level.[673] It is relevant to ask why gender is still is synonymous with women's issues. It is also a bit surprising that the GS, when he makes a list of aspects that should not render discrimination in the new society in 1989, does not include the gender aspect.

> The church in South Africa has consistently called on the South African government to abandon apartheid and to negotiate a new, free, democratic, and non-racial, society in which all blacks and whites will be equal before the law, irrespective of race, colour, or creed.[674]

By not including gender in that list, the GS shows that he still has not integrated the issue in his analysis of what is needed in the new society. There is also a remarkable articulation of

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[670] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 10.
[671] National Conference 1987, Resolution 15.
[672] National Conference 1988, Resolution 4 iv).
[673] One resolution '... calls on Regional Councils to speed up the process of establishing and budgetting [budgeting] for a Women's Desk and Women's programmes' (National Conference 1988, Resolution 18 ii]).
[674] General Secretary's Report 1989, point 3.1, page 5. This statement is interesting from an intersectionality perspective, whereas the aspect of creed is included, but not class or gender.

the *'Gender exclusive' discourse* when, a few years later, the President of the Council can express himself in these terms, when quoting from *A Message* from 1968:

> ... and therefore such barriers as race and nationality have no rightful place in the inclusive brotherhood [sic] of Christian discipleship.[675]

The Council President is quoting a text from 1968, but one can still ask the question why the word 'sisterhood' is not added, or why the sexist expression 'inclusive brotherhood' is not commented on? But even as the process shows examples of exclusion, it also contains the opposite. Concerning development, the NC 1992 resolves to authorise the Department for Theology and Mission (DTM) to

> liaise with the Joint Board for Theological Training with a view to including development and feminist theology as basic courses in their curriculum.[676]

Since 1992 was almost in the middle of *the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women*, much was said about women in the Church. But it is described as a gender issue.[677] A statement of women participants is adopted as a statement of the NC itself. The statement begins:

> As women we
> a. note that churches and society continue to treat our gender concerns lightly.[678]

This means that a new terminology is used. It is the women who speak – but they speak about gender as if the issues also concern men. However, the rest of the statement is unconcerned with the role of men. In this context we find an expression of a discourse that I would call a *'Church theology gender' discourse*. By this I mean that one seeks reconciliation without justice. The statement criticises this kind of theology, when it

> b. acknowledge[s] that churches wish to maintain unity at most times.[679]

Therefore we could name this criticism as an example of a *'Prophetic theology gender' discourse*. The statement includes issues like the ordination of women[680], equal access to

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[675] Presidential address 1991, page 6.
[676] National Conference 1992, Resolution 8 1.1.
[677] One resolution talks about '... establishing development committees nationally, regionally and locally which are sensitive to gender' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 8 2.1).
[678] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43.
[679] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43.
[680] '4. Those churches still struggling to accept the issue of ordination of women should be encouraged to take a positive leap and ordain suitable women' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).

education, especially by educating women for elections[681], reproductive rights of women, family planning, and abortion.[682] Still, the issue of the role of the men in the context of gender is absent. One small note shows that the Council is working on the issue. One of the last issues in the statement of 1992 reads:

> 9. A conscious effort should be made to remove sexist words and jokes from the language at our conferences and worship.[683]

The text also comments on the exclusion of women from areas traditionally reserved for men. When the NC of 1993 makes a statement about the National Peace Accord (NPA), it criticises the fact that women have been excluded from the structures.[684] The SACC President in his Address 1993 quotes Dr Sheena Duncan from the SACC conference in June 1985, who among other things criticised the exclusion of women from decision making.[685] He continued:

> Brothers and Sisters as we this year are celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the SACC let us open our ears, our hearts and minds and hear what our sisters are saying.[686]

When he argues that it is important to open one's ears to the sisters, this means that the word 'us' refers to the men in the NC. One could ask why the 'sisters' especially have to open their ears to themselves! In the resolutions of the same year, *the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women* is also dealt with.[687] Although women's issues are frequently mentioned, the picture is that the SACC is hesitant to include the gender issue in the struggle for a free and democratic country. When the GS 1993 talks about the new South Africa, it is again

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[681] '5. Because the majority of women have been denied access to education and with the looming elections in the country, churches should play a meaningful role in preparing women through education for elections and voting' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).

[682] '7. As churches open their doors for open debates of public issues; these should include AIDS, reproductive rights of women, family planning and family life.

8. The member churches of the Council to consider as a matter of urgency the question of abortion in the light of the imminent adoption of a Bill of Rights for South Africa which may include an unqualified "Right of Life" clause;

8.1 the SACC and its associated women's organisations concerned with this most serious ethical and socio-economic issue to provide the member churches with study material towards enabling an informed and gospel-centred discussion of the way forward' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).

[683] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43.

[684] 'Recalling that the NPA came about as a result of initiatives by church leaders, among others, this conference expresses the following critique of the Peace Accord: / .../ 10. The virtually total exclusion of women from the structures' (National Conference 1993, National Peace Accord, Point 10).

[685] 'Why is it that the Church has refused women as a power for change? Who are the majority in our Church pews every Sunday? Look around today. Almost all the delegates from the churches and regional councils are men. Therefore it is men who will be making decisions at this Conference' (Dr Sheena Duncan quoted in the Presidential address 1993, page 4).

[686] Presidential address 1993, page 4.

[687] 'This Conference resolves that the SACC continue to encourage church initiatives that promote the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women' (National Conference 1993, Resolution 15).

described, as it was by the GS 1989, as non-racial but not as non-sexist.[688] The GS 1994, on the other hand, speaks about his successor, and uses an inclusive way of doing that:

> I am committed though to ensuring that when the new General Secretary comes he or she will find ...[689]

This shows that there is a discursive struggle between a *'Gender inclusive' discourse* and a *'Gender exclusive' discourse*, although this time it has to with the question of whether or not gender issues are included in the discussion about liberation. The same discursive struggle we find in the Presidential address 2001. The Council President starts his address with the words 'brothers and sisters', but the GS 1989 did, when he talks about important challenges, he does not mention anything about gender in his list.[690] A bit later in his address he again lists important challenges for the Church. Nothing is said about gender inequality. So the awareness of gender inequality comes slowly to the Council. The GS 2001 comments on this, admitting at the end of the report that the Church could have done much more.

> There is evidence that women advancement has taken a faster pace in the public sector than in any other sector in the country. The Church especially lags behind despite having been the first to launch the decade in solidarity with women[.] It is clear than [that] as the Church we never truly took this seriously, or at least, nothing has emerged out of this. We must seriously question our commitment to the gender agenda. In this respect, we need to become seriously [sic] take stock of where the handicaps are, and how to unblock them,[.] There is no doubt that whereas Jesus is and has always been in solidarity with women, the same cannot be said with certainty about the Church.[691]

At the NC 2004 not much is said at all about gender-related issues, except that when one resolution deals with the land issue, women are specially mentioned.

> In the light of the church's solidarity with the poor (and in this context particularly with women and the landless), and its commitment to see justice done in our society ...[692]

The gender issue never became a concern of both men and women in the SACC. Through the years it was only for women. Although there were signs of a change at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the process slowed down after 1994. The *'Church theology gender' discourse* is more common after 1994. This is partly contradicted when we read some

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[688] 'The nation stands at the threshhold [threshold] of a new non-racial, democratic society following the agreements reached at the World Trade Centre last Friday' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 1).

[689] General Secretary's Report 1994, page 4.

[690] 'Indeed, my brother and sisters, the pain of the death of all those dying from malnutrition, crime and HIV/AIDS is God's pain, because God is with us' (Presidential address 2001, page 1); and. 'If truly Christ is with us in Africa today, how do we combat HIV/AIDS, overcome poverty, transcend racism, and build peace?' (Presidential address 2001, page 2).

[691] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 18.

[692] National Conference 2004, Resolution 3.

articles commenting on the leadership of the SACC. The comments from outside that regard women in the SACC as role models indicate that the process within the Council really means transformation, although the pace is slow. Some examples support this view, where texts talk from the perspective that gender can be related to men's issues.

5.2.3.4 Gender as a men's issue

The first time the situation of men is mentioned is in GS report 1983, which had an analysis of the situation of men, although in the context of violence. The statement deals with men in relation to traditionally male phenomena.

> It is the violence of the migratory labour system when the father has to leave his family ekeing [eking] out a miserable existance [existence] in a single-sex hostel being prey to prostitution, drunkenness and homosexuality [sic].[693]

Men are not mentioned often in connection with gender issues, or when women are discussed. When it happens, as in the 1992 statement, men are inexplicably present only as perpetrators.[694] For the first time at NC 1995, under the heading *Church and Development*, men are mentioned in their own right in connection with gender issues.

> Men in particular need assistance in reclaiming and realising, their human dignity, as fathers and workers, within a society which has a history of migrant labour and its effect.[695]

One gets a feeling, though, that the future of men lies in reclaiming their old roles. This is just a suggestion, though: there is no discussion of the role of men in the material. In the texts after 2004 the question of the role of the man finally reaches the agenda in a very outspoken way, when the Conference:

> **Urges** Churches to undertake gender-focused campaigns aimed at encouraging and supporting men's constructive role in the lives of their families.[696]

These few examples are exceptions, but they are examples of a *'Gender issues are sometimes men's issues' discourse*. Texts where the roles of men and women are discussed at the same time are also scarce. In the whole material there is in fact only one example of this, but it deserves to be quoted. Perhaps this is the most challenging text about gender, taken from the

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[693] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 28.
[694] 'Campaigns should be encouraged in our churches on:
Violence against women, rape, child abuse, etc' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 43).
[695] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.04.
[696] National Conference 2004, Resolution 14.

sermon of the Council President 1985. The sermon begins by describing how Christianity came to South Africa, and how the kings Shaka, Dingaan, and Cetshwayo tried to prevent the spread of it.

> The only concession they made was that missionaries might teach only women and children. As far as men were concerned, our kings would welcome any instruction missionaries might give them in how to use the white man's gun.
>
> Little did these kings realize how much of a power for change women and children would be after receiving the radical Gospel. Just to illustrate: My father was not a Christian until he married my mother. Initially he had a couple of girl friends he planned to marry. Later on he fell in love with my mother who was already a Christian. As you can understand my mother was placed under church discipline for falling in love with a heathen. During those days falling in love was a celebrated public affair. My father was so touched by what had happened to my mother that he decided to become a Christian and take only her as wife.[697]

A number of different discourses are represented in this short section, some of them ascribed to the kings. One is a discourse where men and women have different roles. Another has to do with marriage customs. There is also a Christian discourse with an opposite view on marriage. There is no hegemonic intervention leading to the end of the discursive struggle, but through love, the two persons in the story manage to solve their problems. The text describes the interdependence of women and men, and does not regard gender issues as related only to women. This text is unique in the material.

5.2.3.5 Summing up:

In the first years of the SACC's existence, women are almost completely left out of the texts. When the Council starts to discuss women's issues, they are mostly connected with domestic issues, and are sometimes even treated under the Family and Life division. There are two different discourses here: one that can be named the *'Gender inclusive' discourse*, and another called the *'Gender exclusive' discourse*. Even when women are included, they can be excluded from certain roles and referred to traditional female roles. This we can describe as a *'Women are included in an exclusive way' discourse*. The other side of the coin is to name this a *'Men are excluded in an inclusive way' discourse*.

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[697] President's sermon 1985, page 17. (This year it seems that the President gave no address, but only delivered a sermon. That is why a sermon is included in the material).

There is a change in this way of using language. From the beginning the 'brethren' are addressed. This is changed to 'brothers and sisters'. But one cannot see that women are influential in the work. There is a difference in how the Council deals with gender inequality and with ethnic inequality. This discursive struggle is solved after 1990 in a hegemonic intervention when the *'Gender inclusive' discourse* becomes dominant.

All along, gender issues are women's issues. I call this a *'Gender issues are women's issues' discourse*. A lot of attention is given to the problem of having equal representation of men and women at the Conferences. This is true both before and after 1990.

Slowly, though, the insight dawns that sexism is as problematic as racism. But even in the 1990s the General Secretaries and the Presidents forget to mention this. The whole question about women's ordination is not discussed much at all. There are some examples, but the Council takes no clear stance. In the beginning of the 1990s there is an argument that gender also concerns men. However, the *'Gender issues are sometimes men issues' discourse* is rare.

One reason why awareness of this issue comes so slowly is that a *'Church theology gender' discourse* is prevalent. Unity is more important than justice. The texts do not give any examples of a *'Prophetic theology gender' discourse*. Although the language is more inclusive, the process slows down after 1994.

The power relations in this respect are obvious. Women are excluded, and men are seen as the norm. But we can also see that, in a way, men are excluded from the whole gender discussion. If we compare the fight against sexism with the fight against racism, some interesting findings surface. We shall come back to that in the discussion. One can also compare the ethnic and gender perspectives, and discern a *'Different qualities are given to women and men' discourse*, just as a similar discourse appeared in conjunction with ethnicity.

Finally, one result of this reading is that we find that the prophetic voice about gender justice is directed almost entirely at the organisation itself. There are few examples where gender justice in society is the issue.

5.2.4 Being the Church of the poor

The *Social class sub-order of discourse*
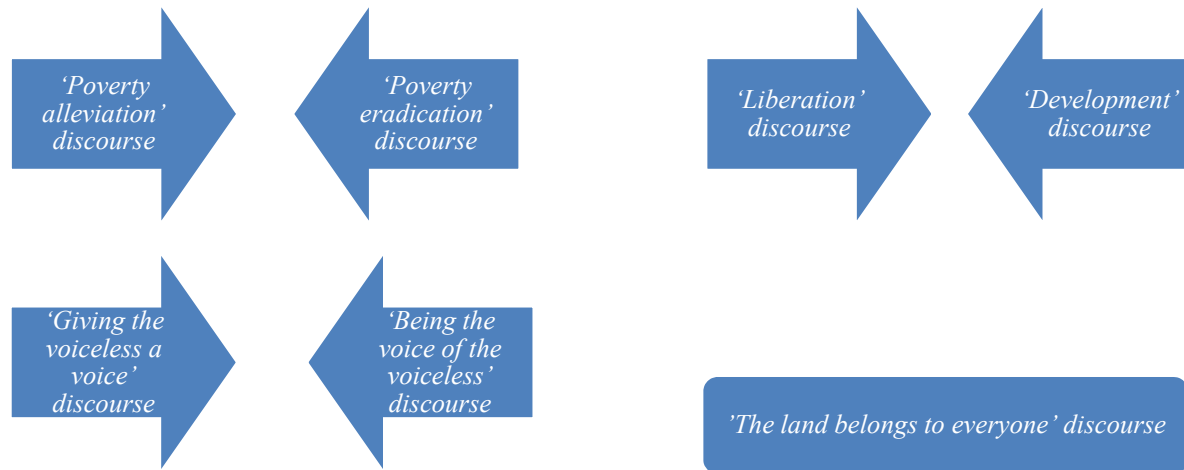
Figure 5: Different discourses within the *social class sub-order of discourse*

This paragraph will deal with the aspect that there are differences between people concerning material wealth and poverty. One way of describing this would be to use the concept *class*. Since this is linked with a Marxist theory, which I do not intend to use, I prefer to use the more open term *social class*. By this I mean that being rich or poor has to do with a number of different aspects, although the material aspect is the dominant one.

In most cases I shall discuss how the SACC has articulated its prophetic voice against poverty as an undesirable condition. In this sub-order of discourse there are two main different discourses. I simply call them the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse* and the *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. The difference in theory is clear. There are several examples of statements when these two discourses are engaged in an antagonism. Fruitful thoughts about the concepts of 'poverty alleviation' and 'poverty eradication' are given by Bevans and Schroeder, who speak about the epistemological leap – a term borrowed from missiologist Eloy Bueno:

> Because of a number of factors in the development of secular society and in the understanding of the churches, it has become increasingly clear that it is not enough merely to minister *to* the poor and marginalized through works of charity. Because of new understandings of human dignity and equality that emerged in the Enlightenment, because of new insights into the systemic causes of poverty in

socialist and Marxist thought, because of a gradually developing social consciousness within the churches (such as Rauschenbusch's Social Gospel movement in Protestantism and a growing body of social teaching in Catholicism), and because of the shift of the center of gravity of Christianity from the wealthy North to the poor South, it became apparent that the mission of the church was to be involved not only in the alleviation of human suffering and exclusion but also in the eradication of their roots.[698]

Historically the SACC has worked extensively with poverty in different ways. One can easily determine, though, that poverty as such has not been eradicated. For individuals or groups of people, the work of the SACC might have had that effect. This, however, is not the focus of this thesis. The question we answer is how the articulation of the work against poverty has changed over time. The texts might from time to time reflect how the SACC has been active in practical work against poverty, but the activities as such are not the focus; only the way in which the texts express themselves about these activities is central.

If one compares the *social class sub-order of discourse* with the other sub-orders of discourse, there is a difference. Whereas it is more obvious which group a person belongs to in respect of gender and ethnicity (although there are many exceptions), it is more difficult to decide whether a person is rich or poor. Whether or not a person lives in abject poverty is clear, as is whether or not someone is extremely rich. But between the two groups there is a middle group. People in this group describe themselves as rich or poor, depending on with whom they compare themselves. If we also include aspects other than material ones, the picture becomes even more complex.

Although there is no need, in this thesis, to exactly determine who is poor and who is not, some sort of discussion about the concept 'poverty' is needed. One conventional definition of a poor person is someone whose income is less than one dollar a day.[699] This is a strictly material definition. Poverty can also be described as social or cultural, or even with other dimensions. In this context I shall restrict myself to defining poverty as being deprived of material essentials for a minimum standard of well-being. But again, there is no direct need to find an exact definition. With the method we use, the different texts will fill the concept with meaning in different ways.

One important aspect to take into account is that the SACC was deeply involved in the fight against apartheid, which was seen as the root cause of poverty. For that reason there is a

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[698] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 370.

[699] Millennium Development Goals Indicators, The official United Nations site for the MDG Indicators. "Official List of MDG Indicators." United Nations. http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Indicators/OfficialList.htm 2009-11-26.

tendency in the texts for the Council not to address poverty *per se*. As will be clear in the next paragraph, the idea was that if apartheid could be abolished, one of the main obstacles to fighting poverty would be gone. Rightly or wrongly, this has left its mark on the material.

Another perspective is the difference between 'development' and 'liberation'. One cannot say that development and poverty alleviation are synonymous, just as liberation and poverty eradication are not. But there is a kinship between the two pairs of concepts. The difference will be focused on in the second reading. It has also to do with the concepts of the Davidic and Mosaic prophetic ministries. But we shall see examples of both a *'Liberation' discourse* and a *'Development' discourse* in this sub-order of discourse.

Before we go further, one last remark is relevant. In the case of ethnicity and gender, there are few ideologies that would argue that people should move from one group to the other, at least not in big numbers. But in the case of social class, many ideologies would say that it is desirable that people become less poor, and so move from the poor end towards the rich end of the continuum. (If it were possible that each person became rich (in any sense of the word), this would be a positive thing.) This is a difference between this and the other sub-orders of discourse.[700]

Another pair of discourses we shall have in focus in this sub-order of discourse is the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse* and the *'Being the voice of the voiceless' discourse*. This pair of discourses could possibly be found in other sub-orders of discourse as well, but are most obvious in relation to social class, especially when the voiceless are named 'poor'.

In a later paragraph, we shall also see that the texts in relation to the land issue only contain one discourse.

5.2.4.1 Poverty is not in focus in the early texts

Expressions of articulations against poverty before 1980 are very few. There are some paragraphs dealing with bursary funds, the Dependants' Conference, and other means of

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[700] Concerning religious diversity, on the other hand, there can be similarities with social class. Some would wish everyone to become Christian and even belong to the same denomination. Others would suggest that there are no differences in value between different religions and denominations.

helping people financially. On the whole, not much is said about poverty as such.[701] But in 1980 the GS relates the situation of the poor to the political system:

> South Africa has the most inequitable distribution of wealth in the world / ... / In 1970 the whites – reduced to 17 percent of the population – got 72 percent of the income, while blacks forming 70 percent had progressed to 19 percent of national income. It is unlikely that there will be any significant redistribution of the national wealth without a significant shift in political alignment.[702]

Since this was the situation for the first 11 years of the SACC's existence, one could ask why this inequality has not been expressed earlier. Perhaps it has been taken for granted. In 1981 the GS relates the poverty issue to the Bantustan system, and expresses himself in a way that leads one's thoughts to liberation theology, when he says:

> Sadly we will always have these poor with us until the whole system is dismantled. They are a particular responsibility of the Church of Jesus Christ the Servant who came to serve and not to be served, who showed God's bias in favour of the alien …[703]

This is a good example of an antagonism between the *'Poverty eradication' discourse* and the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*. A long time goal is the eradication of poverty, but in the mean time the role is to serve the poor, which could mean (for example) poverty alleviation. Some of the resolutions that year clearly show that the organisation as a whole is concerned with poverty alleviation. A number of the resolutions deal with poverty issues such as a blanket scheme, relief work, a water scheme, a development scheme, the Month of Compassion, and work in resettlement camps.[704] The resolution about the Month of Compassion sums it up:

> … to give this campaign their whole-hearted support since it aims at our stewardship to the poor and our responsibility for resettled and uprooted communities.[705]

This statement says that poverty will exist until apartheid is gone. Only then will it be possible to eradicate the phenomenon. Until then, poverty alleviation is the only practical approach. We could even go further and say that it is impossible for the SACC to believe in poverty eradication as a possibility until apartheid is abolished. For the rest of the 1980s the SACC does not say much about work among the poor: the Council is involved in the struggle against

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[701] One reason for this could be that this work in the 1970s was carried out in the departments or divisions, and never reached the textual material of the National Conferences, which are the focus of this thesis.
[702] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 21.
[703] General Secretary's Report 1981, pages 10-11.
[704] National Conference 1981, Resolutions 23-29.
[705] National Conference 1981, Resolution 28.1

apartheid, which, as we have said, is seen as the only way to eradicate poverty. One exception is a 1984 resolution that discusses the issue at length.

RESOLUTION 14: THE CHURCH AND THE POOR

The National Conference having received the report of the Development Division notes its specific recommendations on:

1. The Church becoming a "Confessing Movement" in solidarity with the poor

2. The Church being churches of the poor

3. The Church being churches that hear the Gospel from the poor

4. The Church identifying in the struggle of the poor against structures of oppression and impoverishment

5. The Church recognising the poor in the churches.

Therefore requests the Development Division to submit to National Executive as soon as possible a detailed and comprehensive education programme that would enable the Church to respond to the challenge being made to the Church to identify and involve itself constructively and positively with the poor.'[706]

This resolution shows influences from liberation theology. Still, it is part of the Development Division. The term 'liberation' is not used much in the material. The whole discussion about development is on the agenda in 1989, and there is no sign that the GS relates it to the idea of liberation theology.[707]

The SACC has been involved in development but new ideas and new visions towards development are needed at this critical time in the history of so many poor people. It is clear that development is not simply growth of the GNP, but an inter-related process of economic growth, self reliance and social justice, in both micro and macro social structures. Related issues on land distribution should be part of the discussion.[708]

But the way the GS expresses himself shows that this is an example of the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*. When he continues, the goal is to meet the most basic needs.

Poverty and hunger should be a priority for churches. Churches must insist that food is a resource which belongs to God and that all forces must be mobilized to ensure that people do not die from hunger.[709]

One of the 1992 resolutions also shows that there is a conflict between eradicating poverty and alleviating it. The issue at stake is whether bursaries should be paid out in the future, or a

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[706] National Conference 1984, Resolution 14.

[707] According to Frostin, Black Theology relates the concept of blackness to the concept 'oppressed'. This means that liberation from the apartheid system is identical to the liberation of the poor (Frostin 1988, page 87).

[708] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 32.

[709] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 32.

loan system should be introduced. First, the text admits that the SACC itself uses bursaries in its ministry.[710] But other organisations have tried to introduce another system.

> The SACC is greatly concerned by the introduction of the grant/loan system by some organisations.
>
> The SACC objects to the timing of the launching of this system.
>
> SACC objects to the way in which this policy has been imposed on the Churches without due consultation.
>
> The SACC feels it is immoral to place recipients in a position of burdening themselves and their families with a debt they may not be able to repay in the future.
>
> It is unjust that young people, who are themselves victims of the apartheid system, should be made/held responsible for paying for the reconstruction of the country by having to repay huge loans.
>
> For a long time after a just political dispensation has been achieved there will be a need to give maximum financial support to the majority of black students.[711]

As we shall see in the case of the Basic Income Grant (BIG), the SACC is in favour of grants later. The question is whether grants will serve the purpose of poverty eradication or instead be a way of alleviating poverty. In recent years microloans have been shown to be helpful in transforming the situation of the poor. Whether or not this possibility was known to the SACC in 1992 is an open question.[712]

When the SACC President 1992 states that God is close to the poor, still not much is said about liberation. On the other hand, the situation can sometimes be described as if the poor will stay poor even in the future.

> … God's impotence, God's helplessness, is the absolute nearness to the poor and the oppressed, sharing their lot to the end.[713]

But these words could also be seen as an example of a *'Liberation' discourse*, since it describes the poor as the oppressed. In that case the expression *to the end* has the same meaning as *until apartheid has ended*. This is a variant of the *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. The same is said in the words of the GS in 1991, talking about the development and reconstruction field:

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[710] 'The SACC sees itself fulfilling part of its mission to ministering to the poor through the granting of bursaries' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 23).

[711] National Conference 1992, Resolution 23.

[712] 'Microcredit, following the Grameen model, is not a panacea. But in conjunction with a broader set of progressive social and economic policies, microcredit can improve the lives of poor women and children in the short run; and it can contribute to more significant social, economic and political change in the long run' (Alexandra Bernasek, "Banking on Social Change: Grameen Bank Lending to Women." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. 16, no. 3, Toward Gender Equity: Policies and Strategies (Spring, 2003), page 383. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20020172 2009-12-11).

[713] Presidential address 1992, page 1.

We thus have a responsibility as churches within our prophetic tradition and as a conscience of the society, to ensure that these new evolving structures will not just crush our people rather than offer them an opportunity to escape the vicious circle of poverty and powerlessness.

We have made an option for the poor and oppressed and we must remain seized by that vision as we enter into a new society.[714]

The discourse is clearly influenced by liberation theology, although the whole context is more an example of development.[715] In his 1994 address, the outgoing GS focuses on a new society, and has the well-being of the poor in mind:

Will the new order change the quality of life of those who have been victims of the old order; those who are at the bottom of the ladder? What about those excited masses who celebrated joyfully the birth of the new order only to find that they wake-up the following morning from the same shack... go to the same rough and risky taxi-rank, bus-stop or train station... go to work for the same boss who treats them as less than human? What about those without jobs or even a cover over their heads? What about those children who go back to the same over-crowded class or school, without electricity or the necessary teaching aids and facilities?[716]

This is also an example in which poverty is seen as having been caused by the apartheid system. What we can see is a growing insecurity about whether a new system will automatically eradicate poverty. If we compare this sub-order of discourse with the *ethnicity sub-order of discourse*, we can perhaps find a parallel in the different approach to apartheid and racism. Apartheid could be defeated, but not racism. The same could be said about poverty: it will always remain. This is the case when the GS 1995, quoting economist Sampie Terreblanche, indirectly criticises the budget by saying that it

... still does not do enough to meet the basic needs of the poorest people − more or less seventeen million people.[717]

The SACC is waking up in a new society, and it finds that poverty is still there. Nevertheless, there is a hope that things will be solved; and the GS leaves the matter in the hands of economists and trusts foreign investors:

The Economists tell us that capital growth is a slow process and that the effects of foreign investment will be slow. The concern for us is investment that will create jobs and with it stability.[718]

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[714] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 13.

[715] In the second reading more will be said about this.

[716] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 6. Since there was an interim General Secretary this year, the previous General Secretary delivered an address.

[717] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 3.

[718] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 3.

This is a clear example of a *'Development' discourse*. If there is a difference between poverty eradication and poverty alleviation, one can ask whether this section, where the whole question of how to uplift the poor is placed in the hands of investors, is an example of *'Poverty alleviation' discourse* or a *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. One could of course argue that poverty might be eradicated through investment. This question opens up a discussion about whether a market economy serves the interests of the poor better than a socialistic economy; and this thesis is not the right place for such a discussion. It is obvious, though, that the fight against poverty is crucial; and since poverty is not gone in the new order, it has to be blamed on the former order.[719]

> We are now struggling not against apartheid, but against poverty. The formal ending of apartheid did not mean the end of the struggles for social justice and equality. The social and economic effects of apartheid continue to dominate the existing order.[720]

One can see another tendency in the material. Sometimes the texts articulate a view that comes close to charity work, which is part of the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*.[721] Still, one cannot doubt that the texts are convinced that the work of the SACC is closely intertwined with poverty issues:

> Finally, the Church must be there among the poor. For the struggles of the poor are the struggles of the Church. The Church must be seen in the informal settlements working for the betterment of the living conditions of the people.[722]

After 1994 there is a clear understanding that much more needs to be done about poverty. Sometimes, as we have seen, the texts blame apartheid for the situation, and sometimes they simply state that there is work to do. Sometimes even the church is blamed for the situation.

> The Conference recognises the Church's lack of understanding and experience of poverty and the poor. It recognises that the Ecumenical movement needs to reach out to the poor through practical activities which aim to:
>
> * Link privileged with disadvantaged communities;
>
> * To address the culture of entitlement which curbs people's creativity
>
> And
>
> * To try to address the failure of Government to accommodate the housing needs of the poorest section, who total 30%, of our population.[723]

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[719] I am not discussing whether or not the legacy of apartheid is the cause of continuing injustices. I simply point to the fact that apartheid, even in the new order, is seen as the root cause of poverty.

[720] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 5.

[721] 'The Churches and the Non-Government Organisations will continue their role to assist the poor' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 8).

[722] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 15.

At the same time this is a strongly prophetic message against the government: it asserts that the government has failed. In this context the message is stated bluntly in the resolution, and nothing is said about the apartheid system and its share of the guilt. One might wonder how this message was conveyed to the government, and how it was received. But, as we have said before, this is not a focus of this thesis.[724] At this stage it is enough to state that the SACC articulates a direct, prophetic critique against the government.

With the words of the GS 1998, when she argues against the culture of entitlement, a new tone is heard. There is criticism (although it is very mildly expressed) directed at those who benefit from the new system.

> We are now experiencing the culture of entitlement, rights which are not balanced with responsibility.[725]

With this reference to the culture of entitlement, agents other than the authorities are brought on to the scene. There are other ways, apparently, of explaining why the new government is not able to deliver wealth to the people overnight. Apartheid as such is not always blamed. It could also be the old public service that is seen as an obstacle.

> The new South Africa whilst it has delivered political freedom to those who were oppressed it has revealed a lack of economic power and economic know how. Tied up with this is the fact that the present government has inherited the old public service.
>
> These realities began to impact on the basic expectations of the people eg. Insecurity, job losses, violence and increased poverty.[726]

The GS continues that there has been tremendous growth in the economy, especially between 1996 and 1997; but poverty remains.[727] Another addressee is brought to the fore by the GS 2001, who asks prophetic questions of the leaders of broader Africa, from a biblical point of view. He quotes Jesus' saying:

> "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold, your house is forsaken." (Luke 13:34).

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[723] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.02 C.

[724] The text is part of what is called 'Statements of Conference'. In the same Minutes, there is one resolution, with the heading: 'Resolutions directed to Government'. That resolution only says that the churches want to be partners in the RDP process. It remains an open question how this so called 'Statement of Conference' was communicated.

[725] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 1.

[726] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 2.

[727] 'There is a perception that most of the promises made have been forgotten. The cycle of poverty, violence and fear in the community seem to be difficult to break. This brings us to the role of the SACC in the new South Africa' (General Secretary's Report 1998, page 2).

Quite clearly for us, we need to pose the same question to our political principalities. Africa needs to interrogate its leadership and systems, from the point of view of whether they have any fruits to show to its children.

For many of us, we have toiled bitterly to end oppression, the blood of our sisters and brothers were sacrificed in order to grow this beautiful tree of democracy. But the time of reaping the fruits of our toil seems to offer us nothing but disappointment.[728]

Here one can see a prophetic voice about poverty. (This is also an example of something we shall come back to in the next paragraph, namely whether the SACC is talking on behalf of the poor, or giving the poor a voice of their own.) There is still an ambivalence about poverty alleviation and poverty eradication in the material when we come into the 21st century.

The programme has also became involved in the ESSET and the Public Policy Liaison Unit facilitated pro-poor budget processes that culminated in People's Budget Campaign launched in 2001.[729]

This campaign aims at eradicating poverty, not just giving occasional assistance to the poor. Still, the Month of Compassion is the basis of the initiative, and support from the provinces was not impressive.[730] This is something totally different from the poverty eradication approach. According to the text, there has been some cooperation between the Council, the Regional Councils, and the government.

There have also been numerous engagements with government as well as the National Development Agency. Some provinces did follow up on the national office initiative and develop their own working relation with provincial governments.[731]

But profounder issues are dealt with by the texts in the early 2000s, such as the land issue.[732]

Poverty demands us to enhance and increase the speed of delivery of basic services to all people. The hunger for access to land needs this nation to accelerate its delivery systems to landless people.[733]

The 2001 resolutions raise the whole question to an international level when one of them calls on

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[728] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 3.

[729] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 9.

[730] 'The driving force behind this objective was going to be the Month of Compassion. To date only two provinces are known to have actually received donations around the concept, which are the Eastern Cape and the North West. In Gauteng initial meetings have been held to develop a framework of raising funds from congregations' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 10).

[731] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 9-10.

[732] This aspect will be dealt with in a paragraph of its own.

[733] Presidential address 2001, page 3.

> ... the Government, the G8 nations and the United Nations (UN) to urgently seek for and implement more just economic systems which will prevent the exploitation of the poor people and poor countries to the benefit of the rich.[734]

This is an example of a *'Development' discourse*. It also introduces, as the President of the SACC did in the same year, the whole question of land into the discussion on poverty when it calls on

> ... the South African government to desist from criminalising the landless people by the imposition of the proposed Illegal Occupation of Land Bill, and, instead, should interact with the religious community and the landless people of South Africa in order to be guided by their insights .....[735]

The 2001 resolutions introduce a new ingredient into the fight against poverty. The Basic Income Grant (BIG) is one of the major contributions of the SACC, although other organisations support the campaign, such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO); but the question is, Will it alleviate or eradicate poverty? One argument is that it could create even more dependency. The Conference

> CALLS for existing social security grants to be supplemented through the introduction of a Basic Income Grant of not less than R100 per month, payable to all in South Africa through public institutions and recovered, in part, through a progressive income tax structure, and
> MANDATES the General Secretary to communicate this call to the President and the cabinet and Minister of Social Development.[736]

This could be seen as an example of development rather than liberation. When the GS speaks in 2004 about poverty, it is at first not clear whether he is talking about eradication or alleviation.

> A particular focus has been a rights-based and pro-poor approach in lobbying government.[737]

But when the People's Budget Campaign is mentioned, it is clearly spelled out: it is about poverty eradication. But the approach still has more to do with development than liberation. Of interest in this context is the mention of race, gender, and class. This terminology is not common in the material. It leads one to recall the 'intersectionality' concept.

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[734] National Conference 2001, Resolution 1.
[735] National Conference 2001, Resolution 2.
[736] National Conference 2001, Resolution 3.
[737] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 13.

The purpose of the campaign is to identify alternative macroeconomic strategies and fiscal policies that can eradicate poverty, create jobs, promote broad based economic empowerment, and foster greater equity by race, gender and class.[738]

When the BIG is dealt with, there is an interesting addition to the argument. The GS says that the BIG should eradicate extreme poverty.[739] Perhaps criticism about the BIG's real effectiveness has reached the GS and resulted in this small but important addition. The BIG question is also raised in a resolution that requests the GS and the NEC to

approach the government again to reaffirm the churches' call for a Basic Income Grant as an affordable and crucial mechanism to alleviate poverty ....[740]

Here the text itself says that it is part of the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*. Whether alleviation or eradication is the major approach of the Council, it is clear that the question about poverty is crucial for the NC of the SACC, if one reads the preamble to the 2004 resolutions:

We affirm that that a renewed church must continue to give priority to the needs of the poor, to work for social, economic and political justice and to ensure the sustainable preservation of the environment for future generations. In pursuing these aims, we will seek ways of cooperating with government, business and organs of civil society while remaining faithful to our prophetic calling to work for justice for the poor.[741]

The quotation shows clearly, though, that the text is closer to a *'Development' discourse* than to a *'Liberation' discourse*. The question is, How will the SACC solve the equation of both cooperating with the government and at the same tome being prophetic? We shall come back to that aspect when we go deeper into the texts in the second reading.

5.2.4.2 The voice of the voiceless

One question is whether the SACC is the voice for the voiceless, or whether the SACC gives the poor or disadvantaged a platform to raise their own voice. This is not easy to determine. One approach is to see how the SACC itself talks about the issue. There are two contradictory

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[738] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 15.

[739] 'Consistent with a resolution adopted at the 2001 SACC Triennial National Conference, the SACC has called on Government to introduce a universal, Basic Income Grant (BIG) of no less than R100 per month to eradicate extreme poverty and stimulate local economies' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 15-16).

[740] National Conference 2004, Resolution 8.

[741] National Conference 2004, Preamble to resolutions.

discourses in this respect. One expresses the view that the voiceless must be given a platform to voice their own opinion; the other says that the SACC should be the voice of the voiceless.

When Bevans and Schroeder write about mission as prophetic dialogue in relation to justice, they mention two aspects of this ministry. First, the church is called to speak to and for the poor and marginalised in the world. Second, they describe the justice mission as one of empowerment, which they understand as

> ... the ministry of conscientization, of assisting people toward self-awareness of their own power, subjectivity, strength and capabilities. Ultimately this means that the goal of the church's commitment to justice is not to remain a spokesperson *for* the poor and marginalized, but to work in such a way that they discover *their own voice* and speak within their culture, their traditions, and their humanity.[742]

The first articulation of the willingness to give oppressed persons a platform to discover their own voice has already been heard at the beginning of the 1970s when the GS discusses the role of black awareness:

> I have come to realize that in a Council in which the predominance of the membership of the Churches belonging to that Council are black, we must increasingly make plans, not only within the Church structures, but also within the structure of the Council itself for the voice of our black brethren [sic] to be heard.[743]

This is an early example of the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*[744], but in the 1970s this is not common. In 1979 the GS uses a formulation that is a direct example of the opposite – what I call the *'Being the voice of the voiceless' discourse*.

> … in obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ we believe we must be the voice of the voiceless …[745]

In the documentation from 1980 there are also examples of this same discourse, especially in the GS report.[746] In a draft of a message the same year, there is an example of a *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*:

> The time has therefore come to let the Church be the Church again, that is the church of the people with the prayer that those "at the bottom" may succeed in that in which we "at the top" have failed.[747]

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[742] Bevans and Schroeder 2004, page 372.

[743] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 2.

[744] From an intersectionality perspective it is striking that no reference is made to black sisters! It is typical that only the ethnicity aspect is taken into account.

[745] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 6.

[746] 'We shall not apologise for being "political", for the term means what the users want it to mean. If I were to suggest that apartheid is just, very few in this land would accuse me for being political. But when we work on behalf of the marginalized, speak up for the voiceless, demand the empowerment of the powerless – then we are accused of bringing politics into religion or vice versa' (General Secretary's Report 1980, page 14).

In one of the resolutions that same year dealing with education, the so-called 'voiceless' are regarded as able to talk. The Conference

> … expressed solidarity with the recent protest of school children, students, teachers, parents and church leaders against discriminatory system of education in force in the Republic.[748]

When the GS 1981 talks about the voiceless, he first describes the situation in El Salvador, where the Church is described as 'the voice of the voiceless'. He does this without any criticism or discussion.[749] But in another context in the same year – concerning poor people in the Bantustans – the two different discourses are involved in an antagonism.

> They are the particular responsibility of the Church because they have no voice except the voice of the Church, they have no power unless the Church empowers them;[750]

There is the potential for progress in this articulation, an opening that the poor will be empowered and have their own voice. But in the present situation they do not have it. The Presidential address of 1981 also expresses the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*, when it describes the National Conference as a sign of hope for the land.[751] This is also what the GS says in 1989, although his report contains both discourses. The Church should listen to the poor but, having done that, become the voice of the voiceless:

> For us as a church to play our role in this matter we need to initiate a broad consultation with and among the oppressed people so that what we will say and do in this regard will reflect their views and aspirations.[752]

The use of the different pronouns *we* and *they* also indicates who is speaking through the SACC structures. One of the 1992 resolutions is an example of the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*, where the poor, here described as the disenfranchised, are part of the protest for peace and democracy.[753] The tendency to regard those who are marginalised as a group

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[747] National Conference 1980, A draft of a message.

[748] National Conference 1980, Resolution on education.

[749] 'The suffering of ordinary people, small people, peasants, the poor and oppressed cries out to heaven in these and other parts of the world, especially the so-called Third World. The Church has a tremendous calling to be on their side, to be their voice and protector and this obviously at great cost as the Church takes on the powerful on their behalf' (General Secretary's Report 1981, page 7).

[750] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 11.

[751] '… where the voiceless must be heard …' (Presidential address 1981, page 1).

[752] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 15.

[753] 'On mass action for peace and democracy

We believe that mass action is a legitimate and democratic means of protest particularly for the disenfranchised' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 6).

who must be empowered continues in the material in the 1990s. The opinion that the Church or the SACC is speaking on their behalf is no longer expressed.

4.2 Political-prophetic challenges

> During this process of Constitutional negotiations, we have a responsibility to ensure the maximum participation of all South Africans; that those who are in danger of being marginalised and forgotten in the course of debates and policy formulations are empowered;[754]

This is a very clear example of a *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*; and the same message that regards the poor as having the power to express themselves is shown in one of the resolutions of 1995, which says that the Church has lacked an understanding and experience of poverty.

> The Conference hopes that local churches, especially those serving the rural poor, will listen and respond to the needs identified and expressed by the poor.[755]

So the question is whether this discourse is the common one after 1994. There are not many other examples, but the GS 2004 talks about it, and does it with a discourse where, again, the poor do not have any voice of their own.[756] But in the same report he speaks about the mission of the Council, and one of the points is to empower the marginalised.[757] The report from 2004 gives more examples of the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse* than of its opposite.

> ... and as "a witness to the SACC's commitment to strengthening the voices of the poor and marginalised groups in the public policy process."[758]

Although there is some sort of antagonism in how the relationship between the Council and the marginalised is described, it could well mean that the change taking place in the 1980s and 1990s is continuing in the 2000s. The Council is no longer a paternalistic movement, talking on behalf of the disadvantaged. It wants to empower the marginalised.

5.2.4.3 The land issue

There is a long history concerning land in South Africa. Marquard writes about the (in)famous Land Act of 1913:

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[754] General Secretary's Report 1993, point 4.2, page 27.
[755] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.02 C, page 19.
[756] '... one thing was certain, that we have to continue to be the voice of the poor even in the new land' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3).
[757] 'To contribute to the empowerment of all who are spiritually, socially, economically marginalized' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3).
[758] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 15.

In 1913 the Botha government tried to deal with the most fundamental and ancient aspect of relations between Africans and Europeans, namely, land.[759]

He argues that the government in fact wanted to demarcate areas where Europeans might not own land, but it realised that additional land had to be bought for what it called 'African use'. He concludes:

And the position of Africans worsened because, by controlling squatting, the Land Act made it more difficult for them to rent land from Europeans.[760]

There is no space to tell this story in detail. Suffice it to say that this is one of the basic issues relating to poverty. The history of South Africa is a history of the expropriation of land – in most cases owned by blacks – and of forced removals. After democratisation, one huge task is to redistribute land. The Churches have been involved in this process, but cooperation with the government is not without friction. In a research report commissioned by the Church Land Programme, Graham Philpott and Mark Butler write:

In July 2000 at a meeting between church leaders and the Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs, there was a tension as churches tried to communicate to the Minister a broader vision involving the sustainable and productive use of church land by and for the poor. The Minister's interest seemed focused at encouraging churches to be 'partners' with government and handing over their land to 'communities' using existing land reform instruments. What was not articulated clearly at the meeting was that underlying the tension was perhaps a growing apprehension that handing over land in terms of government's present package of land reform instruments provides no guarantee of sustainable livelihoods for the poor.[761]

The question we must put to the texts is whether the SACC has spoken prophetically about the land issue.

As with other issues related to social class, as distinct from ethnicity, not much was said during the 1970s. But in 1981 the issue was raised, and the conference resolved

… to formulate and draft a proposal in the form of a Manifesto for the guidance of Christians on the actions required to achieve a more equitable redistribution of the land and its benefits.[762]

This Manifesto itself is not part of the NC documentation, but in the resolution there are a few sharp expressions that speak of

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[759] Leo Marquard, *The Story of South Africa.* 2nd Edition (London: Faber, 1966), page 224.
[760] Marquard 1955, page 224.
[761] Graham Philpott and Mark Butler, *Land in South Africa: Gift For All or Commodity For a Few. A Research Report Commissioned by the Church Land Programme* (Pietermaritzburg: Church Land Programme [No year]), page 1.
[762] National Conference 1981, Resolution 32.1.2.

… the claim for justice and freedom from want over against the present elitist mode of ownership, distribution and use of their God given resource.[763]

The Conference also asks Churches to experiment with alternative models of how Church land could be owned.[764] The question is not discussed much thereafter, but in 1988 another resolution deals with the same issue in connection with the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Amendment Bill. It argues from another angle: the risk of being dispossessed of land.

> … for if it becomes law we in conscience will be unable to obey it and we shall have no option but to urge all Christians to disobey its provisions.
>
> We pledge ourselves to work for the repeal of the Land Acts and the Group Areas Act so that all the people of this country may be free of the fear of sudden dispossession and be free to choose where they will settle.[765]

The whole question about forced removals, of course, has to do with the issue of poverty. I am not saying thereby that without land one is doomed to poverty; but land is seen as a symbol of life itself.[766] Probably the question of possessing land is very distant during the apartheid era. When apartheid is abolished, this issue is back on the agenda – not necessarily focusing on ownership, but rather seeking access to land. So the question comes up in 1990, when the liberation movements are unbanned.

> It is crucial, Mr President, that we begin to investigate, in conjunction with communities and relevant service organisations the questions of land in order to ensure fair, equitable and legitimate redistribution in the future.[767]

The prophetic tone is quite humble as the GS suggests that the government change its policies relating to the Bantustans,[768] The question is also reflected in one of the resolutions the same year, about restoration of land:

> The National Conference of the SACC recognises the anger and distress of a number of communities in Natal, Namaqualand, the Transvaal and elsewhere which have been evicted from land on which they have lived for many years and where members of their families are buried.
>
> Conference accordingly:

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[763] National Conference 1981, Resolution 32.1.1 (c).

[764] National Conference 1981, Resolution 32.2.

[765] National Conference 1988, Resolution 7.

[766] 'Land is the "locus of life", the place where life is lived and celebrated, the place that gives life and identity. There is a critical function of land' (Philpott and Butler, page 9).

[767] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 20.

[768] 'At this juncture in our history, when Mr de Klerk and his government have declared their commitment to the politics of negotiation and reform, it would serve as an act of good faith if they were to terminate the policy of forced incorporation and removal, and if they were to abolish legislation which makes it possible' (General Secretary's Report 1990, page 21).

a. Calls upon the State President, in the interests of justice, to ensure that all communities which wish to return to these areas should be enabled to do so speedily and with state assistance;

b. calls upon Church leaders and congregations in those areas to support such communities in every possible way;

c. Requests the General Secretary to arrange for a staff group to prepare a factual memorandum on this issue;

d. Requests the General Secretary and Church leaders to convey this urgent request for justice and sensitivity to the State President.[769]

The message is clear. And it has both a prophetic side addressed to the government, and a compassionate side about taking care of the victims. When another resolution (about the *Abolition of Racially Based Land Measures Act*) comments on the land issue, it starts positively:

> The Churches note with gratification the recognition by the government of criticisms and recommendations made by the delegation of Church Leaders (among others) which met with Cabinet Ministers on 22nd April 1991. We are pleased at the announcement by Mr H J Kriel, Minister of Planning and Provincial Affairs and National Housing, that two of the proposed Bills had been withdrawn and revised. We as churches have welcomed the much desired scrapping of the Land Act of 1913 and 1936, and the Group Areas Act – two crucial laws which have prevented Blacks from acquiring a just access to land and the resources of this country.[770]

It is uncommon in the material for the SACC to be satisfied with the apartheid regime. It is worth noting. But in 1991, of course, there is still a need for full rights for every citizen. So the resolution continues in a more outspoken prophetic tone:

> The Abolition Act does not satisfy these claims to restoration of full citizenship right in South Africa. It is greatly to be hoped that new legislation will address these urgent issues.[771]

The land issue is important for the new dispensation. In the GS report 1995 the land issue is linked to the issue of poverty. A gender aspect is also woven into the argument.

> On the 28th June this year the Cabinet approved a new set of land tenure laws. We welcome the concern and the efforts of Minister Derick Hanekom, to protect the interests of the rural poor and to ensure that women have access to land.[772]

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[769] National Conference 1990, Resolution 1.2.
[770] National Conference 1991, Resolution F 6.
[771] National Conference 1991, Resolution F 6.
[772] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 2.

But there is no criticism to be heard at this stage. In 2004, though, there was a call for a speedier process.[773] Another example concerns the Communal Land Rights Act, about which the GS says:

> The SACC held a highly critical stance on the Bill's entrenchment of traditional authorities control over the allocation of communal land as well as its failure to protect adequately women's tenure rights and access to land. So grave were the SACC's reservations about both the content of the Bill and the process by which it was developed, that it called for the withdrawal of the legislation making it only the second piece of legislation the SACC has responded to in this way since the creation of the Parliamentary Office.[774]

This is a very strong prophetic outburst by the GS. This also leads to a resolution in which the Conference notes that there is much to do on the land issue. Again the situation of the women is specially underscored.[775]

As the resolution mentions, the SACC cooperates in this matter with other organisations in the Church Land Programme. Therefore it is not possible, from the textual material of this thesis, to investigate fully how the prophetic voice of the SACC has been articulated in terms of the land issue. But the resolution text indicates that the Council strongly critiques the government even after 1990.

This leads to the conclusion that there is no discursive struggle in relation to the land issue. All along the texts belong to a discourse that we can call a *'Land belongs to everyone' discourse.* The land issue is important in the texts, and it is seen from a gender point of view.

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[773] '... engage government, in particular the DLA, on ways of speeding up land reform programmes' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 11).

[774] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 16.

[775] '• In spite of government's efforts to address the land question, the vast majority of land in South Africa remains in the hands of the white minority;

- Market-based land reform strategies effectively deny the poor secure access to land:
- Women continue to have restricted access to land and limited role in decision-making regarding its use.
- In the light of the church's solidarity with the poor (and in its context particularly with women and the landless), and its commitment to see justice done in our society, Conference **resolves** to:
- Cooperate with the Church Land Programme and other organisations in taking forward the member churches' initiatives on land, including the hosting of a church consultation on land matters that can address both church-owned land and the broader agrarian question;
- Call for the government to convene a national land summit, in collaboration with other civil society organisations to review the progress made in land reform;
- Advocate for agrarian reform that prioritises the needs of the poor and ensures household food security' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 3).

5.2.4.4   Some minor issues in connection with poverty

In this section we touch upon a few seemingly minor issues[776] that relate to the social class issue. We can regard them as case studies, to see whether the texts are part of a *'Poverty alleviation' discourse* or a *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. Those examples lie on another level of argument, but can still give some indication of what the texts are saying. They are also examples of phenomena that concern poor people in the country. The first example is the national lottery.

> The issue of lottery and gambling also requires the serious attention of this Conference. As Conference will remember, the apologist of Lottery told us that this is a means of raising money to help the poor. The irony of this logic is that Lottery has become a scheme of robbing the poor or stealing from the poor in order to enrich a few of them, whilst plunging millions of them into abject poverty and the welfare basket of the state.[777]

This is more an example of the *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. The question is also raised in the Presidential address the same year, where the Council President combines it with issues of pyramid schemes and cash loans.[778] Another is the issue of expensive funerals, which also have a bearing on the life of the poor. In one of the resolutions of 2001, the National Conference prophetic voice addresses funeral undertakers.[779] But in the GS report the same year, the GS asks for a much stronger statement on funerals. He does not hesitate to call the traditions around funerals 'pagan':

> Christian funerals, especially those in which we preside as ordained ministers, have become a charade and are in reality worse that [than] pagan services.[780]

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[776] Spong reports about this: 'Alongside the weighty matters of human rights and economic justice, the resolutions spoke to the grassroot problems arising from the ever increasing cost of funerals and the extravagance of matric dances. These issues, small as they may seem in relation to national emergency relief programmes, affect many people in the local churches and parishes of our land. They are also symbols of the insensitivity in society to economic justice and poverty eradication' (Bernhard Spong, "A new role for the churches." *Challenge*, no. 78 (Sep/Oct 2004), page 21).

[777] General Secretary's report 2001, page 18.

[778] 'Due to poverty levels, our people have become easy victims of people who promise them quick money-making, through pyramid schemes. And, our society is being made to believe in gambling, lottery and instant cash loans (credits) as the easy way to come out of their poverty. On the contrary, it is the poor themselves (the old aged, unemployed, etc) whose hard-earned income is spent in these machines that promise instant wealth' (Presidential address 2001, Page 3).

[779] 'CALLS on Funeral Undertakers to desist from the exploitation of the bereaved and to conduct their business ethically,

CALLS the Churches, minister in particular, to educate and counsel the bereaved to refrain from such impoverishing funerals ...' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 5).

[780] General Secretary's Report 2001, Page 16.

This is an outspoken GS who speaks prophetically not only to undertakers but also to the people:

> We must rise up and declare as heretic, pagan, and unChristian funerals which are becoming fashionable in the townships.[781]

These are strong words. In many cultures in South Africa, funerals are big events that play a very important part in the life of the society, the family, and the religious group.[782] It is therefore an example of great frankness when the GS writes with bold letters:

> **Is it perhaps not the time for the Church to take a stand and declare that we are not going to participate in funerals that are nothing more than a show piece? Is it not the time for us to declare as immoral and pagan these funerals of the wealthy and famous. Should we say: As a Church, we would have nothing to do with these philistine practices.**[783]

It would have been even more radical if the National Conference had listened to the GS on this occasion. But there is no resolution taking up this thread. This leads us to the conclusion that there is a discursive struggle between the GS report and the resolutions. Even the lack of articulation is part of the discourse.

Another minor issue is comparable with the traditions at funerals, although it deals with a tradition much younger than funerals, and with an expression of joy rather than sorrow.

> As Conference we also need to address ourselves to another practice which is wreaking havoc amongst the poor. This is the custom of celebrating Matric Year in the manner it is being celebrated.[784]

The resolution about this issue, like the one on funerals in 2001, identifies the problem, but comes out with a very weak message that only talks about engaging stakeholders about the concerns.[785] With expressions like 'engage stakeholders involved' and 'concerns identified'

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[781] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 16.

[782] Engdahl says about funerals that they play as big a role in Africa as in the past. It is a religious feast of fellowship that one has to make time for. To travel 500 kilometres to attend a funeral in South Africa is nothing (my translation). '... spelar dessa i Afrika en lika stor roll som förr. Det är en religiös gemenskapshögtid som man måste ge sig tid till. Att åka 50 mil till en begravning i Sydafrika är ingenting' (Hans S. A. Engdahl, *Början till slutet. Politik och kyrkor i Sydafrika* [Älvsjö: Verbum, 1986], page 111).

[783] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 16.

[784] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 18.

[785] 'Matric Farewell Functions, also known as Matric Dances, are becoming increasingly extravagant and imposing unsustainable financial burdens on poorer families;
- The Social value of such functions may be lost if they become little more than occasions for conspicuous consumption and materialistic competition among students.
- Unbeknownst to parents and teachers, these functions can become occasions for substance abuse and sexual immorality among youth.

there is not much hope that a strongly prophetic message will be heard. On the other hand, a stronger resolution about funerals is formulated in 2004, when the Conference commits itself to

- Promoting and investing our resources in life-enhancing processes;
- Calling church leaders (ordained and lay) to educate their members about appropriate burial options by making public statements about how they should be buried and encouraging members of their families to do the same;[786]

These three issues – the lottery, funerals, and matric dances – are to be seen as examples of how the poor in South Africa use huge amounts of money in a way that the SACC believes worsens the situation. When the SACC speaks out about those things, it is done in a way that lies closer to the *'Poverty eradication' discourse* than to the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*. They are also examples of a *'Being the voice of the voiceless' discourse* rather than a *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*.

5.2.4.5 The ecological crisis

Recalling what De Gruchy and De Gruchy wrote about globalisation, we also need to give some attention to how the SACC talks about the global ecological crisis. It also has to do with the life of the poor.

In 2002 the UN held the Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa. The Council was engaged, together with other NGOs, in meetings around the summit.[787] Even before this event, the Council expressed itself on environmental issues – although the SACC took some time to say something about these issues. Only in the 1990s do remarks appear. It is clearly a prophetic message in one of the resolutions of the NC 1990:

> The National Conference of the SACC recognises the threat which is posed to the God-given eco-system by industrialisation (including the generation of nuclear power), deforestation, soil erosion and the demands of consumerism. It believes that the ecological crises needs to be addressed urgently both nationally and internationally, and that individuals, families, communities and churches should bring pressure to bear upon the responsible authorities to act speedily and decisively.

Conference therefore urges the SACC to engage stakeholders involved in education – including the Association of SGB's, student bodies and teachers' organisations – about the concerns identified' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 13).

[786] National Conference 2004, Resolution 15.

[787] The NC 2001 resolves to '... call on SACC members to engage in programmes on environmental justice' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 17).

Conference therefore calls upon the Council and member churches to co-operate with environmental organisations in their attempts:

a) To alert the public through a vigorous educational campaign to the urgency and extent of the problem and to the actions that can be taken to deal with it;

b) To save our environment by reducing pollution, waste and the destruction of the ozone layer.

The Conference also asks local churches to monitor environmental issues in their areas and to publicise and oppose any moves which could displace people as has happened in Bushmanland where people were moved to allow dumping of nuclear waste.[788]

In 1992 the issue concerns a shipment of plutonium around Southern Africa; the resolution calls upon the South African government to:

1. Ensure that the said shipments do not make use of the sea route around Southern Africa;
2. Withdraw all offers of logistical and emergency support for the said shipments.[789]

Apart from these few examples, these issues are only mentioned in passing.[790] The Council may have engaged these issues at other levels than in the National Conference.[791] Still, one can conclude that these questions do not form a major part of the work of the SACC at National Conferences during the period in focus. From time to time minor questions about the environment are on the agenda, such as building roads in environmentally sensitive areas or the issue of genetically modified organisms (GMO).[792] Apart from those, not much is said on environmental questions at NC level. One point of interest, however, is that the National Conferences never relate the ecological crisis to the poverty issue.[793]

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[788] National Conference 1990, Resolution 3.

[789] National Conference 1992, Resolution 4.

[790] 'Encouraging member churches to take up environmental/ecological issues as part of development policy' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 8.2.3). 'Building awareness of environmental concerns is a matter of great importance to all of us ...' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 12, point 2.5.5).

[791] In one example in a press release in 2001, the GS writes: 'Perhaps the first step is to embrace the environment Agenda as our own. Environmental justice is the new terrain of struggle for sustainable development and poverty eradication' (Press release 25th of September 2001 on National Waste Summit).

[792] Two examples are: 'Following the Resolution of Central Committee of 2003, the Office assisted the office of The General Secretary in drafting a response to the DEAT's Record of Decision to sanction the construction of a Toll Road on the Wild Coast of the N2' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 16); and 'Adopt the precautionary principle and prohibit the introduction of GMO until their safety for future generations is certain' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 12).

[793] This may change in the future. In a document published in 2009, the SACC writes: 'Climate change is therefore deeply related to the skewed distribution of wealth. It is quite understandable that the poor, as well as those in the so-called middle class, would desire to share in the wealth that is so visibly portrayed in our society and through the media. This merely illustrates that the lifestyles of people in the consumer class are unsustainable since such lifestyles cannot be copied by all. Moreover, in years to come those of us with low carbon emissions will have to suffer the consequences of the economic activities of those with higher emissions' (Climate Change 2009, page 30).

5.2.4.6 Summing up

As we have seen, not much is said about poverty in the early texts of the SACC. References are made to the work being done, but there are no prophetic articulations as such. The reason is that the focus is mainly on apartheid as the root cause of poverty. Possibly one can say that the concept of 'blackness' is to be seen as a synonym for 'poor or oppressed'. At the end of the 1980s, the hope of seeing the end of apartheid is born. Combined with this is a belief that poverty too will end. When this does not happen, around the mid-1990s the blame is put on the old system. But later on in the texts, the new leaders are also blamed. The SACC is starting to formulate a prophetic critique with different addressees such as the government, other leaders in Africa, funeral undertakers, the churches, and even the people themselves.

In the material a number of discourses are involved in an antagonism. The most frequent at the beginning of the period is the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*, but later the *'Poverty eradication' discourse* becomes dominant. We can also see a discursive struggle between a *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*. In this respect the *'Development' discourse* is the more common, both before and after 1990.

Another perspective is whether the texts of the Council gives the voiceless a voice or wants to be the voice of the voiceless. We can see that the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse* is more common in the 1990s.

Although the land issue is not dealt with much, it has a stronger critical voice than is heard in other matters. Before 1990 it was a fight against resettlements and similar questions. After 1994 the council has expressed itself clearly on this point. One can even say that the message has been prophetically strong. It is also an example where the SACC includes an outspoken gender perspective. The *'Land belongs to everyone' discourse* dominates the material in this context.

The prophetic articulations against funerals traditions, which are even described with words like 'pagan' and 'unchristian' are very strong, but are not followed up in the resolutions.

Another issue with relation to poverty is the ecological crisis. This is not dealt with much by the Council.

We shall come back to this in the second reading, where we look into concepts like nation-building and the theology of reconstruction. These phenomena have to do with the articulations within the *social class sub-order of discourse*.

5.3   Violence – a necessary evil?

The *violence versus non-violence order of discourse*
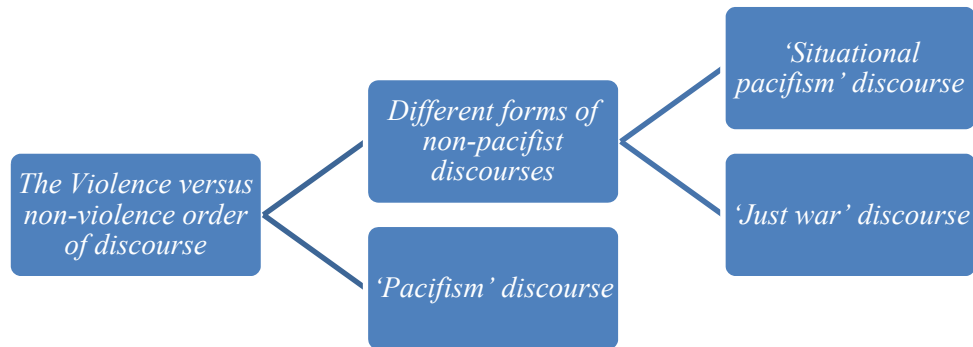
Figure 4: Discourses within the *violence versus non-violence order of discourse*

It was not a given that this order of discourse, about violence and non-violence, be included. It is not compatible with the *Intersectionality order of discourse*. While ethnicity, religious diversity, gender, and social class deal with different groups and their relations, the issue of violence and non-violence has to be seen from another perspective. The main reason for looking into this order of discourse is that the texts themselves clearly show that the Council has articulated its prophetic voice in a number of aspects related to violence and non-violence.

The historical context makes a special argument for asking the question about how the SACC relates its prophetic voice to the issue of violence and non-violence. There are at least two aspects to this. The first is when the material says something about the use of violence or non-violence in the struggle against apartheid. The other is when the Council speaks prophetically about violence that is not part of the struggle against apartheid, but rather part of the apartheid system itself. Examples of this latter type of violence would be the death penalty, military service, etc.

In chapter four I have outlined briefly the history of South Africa. There is a lot of violence in the story. During the 20th century much of this violence relates to the apartheid system. This is the context in which this chapter needs to be read. The violence versus non-violence issue is therefore one of the most important orders of discourse in which the prophetic voice of the SACC is articulated.

In deliberating on the concept itself, I shall more-or-less restrict the use of the term to the use of physical force in order to hurt or kill others. Violence can also be non-physical; but I do not take that form of violence into consideration, except when the whole apartheid system is described as violent. In that, I see an example of what Galtung refers to as *insulting basic needs*.

> If you negotiate away you own or others' basic needs, you are sentencing yourself or others to a life unworthy of human beings. You are exercising violence. Negotiation is possible where goals and values are concerned, but not with basic needs. Basic needs have to be respected; they are non-negotiable.[794]

If one gives this meaning to the concept 'violence', it includes too many phenomena. I therefore retain the understanding of violence as a way of physically hurting or killing others. Having said this, the meaning of the concept could be qualified even more. Violence may be used between people, within families, and also between groups of different sizes. It could even be used between countries or alliances. It is thus impossible to avoid the concept of war.[795] When I discuss violence it could refer to any of these phenomena, depending on the context.

As we have said, there is also the aspect of structural violence, or violence used by the State. Capital punishment is one example; but other forms of violence are also used by the State. This could in some cases mean violence of a non-physical nature.

5.3.1 The SACC – a pacifist movement?

If we use the concept of violence with the understanding that it is the use of physical force in order to hurt or kill others, one question is: Are the texts of the SACC in favour of non-violence? Do the texts of the SACC accept the use of violence in some situations? In answering those questions we first see that it is not difficult to find examples suggesting that the SACC is a pacifist organisation. One example is from the GS's report of 1979:

> I want to reiterate that I and the Council I serve are opposed to all violence. I repeat − to all violence.[796]

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[794] Johan Galtung, *Transcend and Transform. An Introduction to Conflict Work* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pages 2-3.

[795] Galtung divides conflicts in *micro-conflicts* within and between persons, *meso-conflicts* within societies, *macro-conflicts* among states and nations, and *mega-conflicts* among regions and civilisations (Galtung, 2004).

[796] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 9.

If we read the material more closely, we shall find that it is not univocal. We shall return to that.

In 1968, when the CCSA becomes the SACC, two items on the agenda refer to the question of violence contra non-violence. One is the whole question of conscientious objection, and the other concerns capital punishment. The CCSA wants the State to allow both Christians and non-Christians to refuse to do national service. The Christian Council also resolves to continue to study the issue of capital punishment.[797] Although it does not say that the Council is opposed to the death penalty, this is obvious from other passages in the material. Those two issues are dealt with over a number of years. At first one could easily get the impression that the Council is a pacifist organisation. This is not the case. The reasons for being opposed to the death penalty are different from the reasons for supporting conscientious objection. This also causes some misunderstanding in the press. One note shows that the Council finds that it is sometimes misrepresented in the media:

> A letter to commission members in which the Christian response to violence was referred to, signed by Ds. Naudé, had been grossly misrepresented by the press. There had been a press statement by the Council denying our support for violence (Appendix 14).[798]

Behind much of the discussion is the idea that the violence of the apartheid regime is the primary violence. When the GS 1980 says that

> ... the debate in violence and non-violence is a non-issue for the rest of Africa and, in view of the overwhelming pressure of institutionalised violence in South Africa, an irrelevant academic exercise here unless it addresses that basic reality ...[799]

one has to understand that the GS means by that that violence is an issue – not only violence against the government, but most of all violence against the people. We can see that the texts alternate between a view that violence could sometimes be understandable, and a view that violence is wrong. A year later the non-violent strategy is again declared:

> We are committed to working for fundamental change by peaceful means. We are equally committed to seeing that apartheid is dismantled.[800]

A year later, the GS returns to an argument that sides with the so-called 'terrorists'.[801] The GS does not say that violence from the people is acceptable, but puts it in perspective by

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[797] National Conference 1968, Minutes §26-27.
[798] National Conference 1970, Minutes §26.
[799] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 15.
[800] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 9.

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introducing the concept of 'primary violence'. More and more, especially towards the end of the 1980s, violence became the all-pervading problem. The whole phenomenon of vigilantism[802] is an example of that. 1987 one of the resolutions deals with that South African expression. One problem is that

> … perhaps a majority, of these vigilantes are worshipping members of the congregations of the Christian churches.[803]

The Conference condemns such violence, but still says that there is a need for further discussions in the churches:

> The National Conference recognises that this issue raises the question of violence in general, to which the SACC and its Member Churches must address themselves earnestly. It requests the Executive to take urgent steps to initiate such a process.[804]

To understand the argumentation in most of the texts of the SACC, the difference between primary violence and counter-violence is critical. According to most of the textual material, State violence (which is primary) is the root cause of the violence of the resistance (which is the counter-violence). This does not excuse counter-violence, but it explains it. To understand further why the texts sometimes justify violence, the 'just war' concept has to be introduced. According to the texts read for this thesis, the SACC is not a pacifist movement. Although it is opposed to violence, the Council makes a distinction between primary violence and counter-violence.

The Council also uses different ways of arguing on different issues. When it opposes the death penalty, it is because it is wrong to take lives. In that case the SACC articulates a *'Pacifism' discourse*. The language is different. On conscientious objection, it deals with the concept of whether or not the South African Defence Force is involved in a just war. That

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[801] 'But many in our land seem to think that violence is something that is introduced de novo from outside into South Africa by those who are called terrorists who are part of the so-called total onslaught masterminded by the Soviets or other Communists. I want to stress, as we hardly ever do, that violence is part and parcel of our South African way of life, that the primary violence is the violence of apartheid and racism' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 28).

[802] 'The term "vigilante" or "Mabangalala" has come to have a distinct meaning in South Africa. It does not mean a concerned citizen intent on preserving the safety of his family and "decent values". In South Africa the term "vigilante" has a far more menacing connotation. It is associated with potentially murderous gangs, intent on intimidating, injuring or killing anti-apartheid activists. That, and the fact that they are believed to enjoy police support, is very often all that binds the "A-team", the "Pakhatis", the "Mabangalala", the "Amadoda", the "Amosolomozi", the "Amubutho", the "Mbhokoto" and the "Green Barets" (Nicholas Hayson: *Mabangalala.* Centre for Applies Legal Studies; March 1986.)' (National Conference 1987, Resolution 27).

[803] National Conference 1987, Resolution 27.

[804] National Conference 1987, Resolution 27.

would be an example of a *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. But I prefer to call it the *'Just war' discourse*.

5.3.2 If a war is unjust, it can also be just

Throughout the history of Christianity we can find different ways of relating to violence. Some traditions have fully accepted the use of violence, while others have upheld a pacifist view. There is also a tradition saying that violence, although it is wrong, can sometimes be accepted.[805] I want to call this a *'Just war' discourse*: a just war can be defended when all else had failed. This is not to be confused with the notion of 'holy war', as a fight against evil forces.[806] In the SACC material, there is also a discussion about the concept of *the just war*. One example of this concerns the war on the border between Namibia and Angola. The GS 1982 writes:

> We are greatly exercised in this country about violence and war and revolution and rightly so. I want to ask this conference to tell me and others "is the present war on the border a just war in the traditional Christian understanding of the concept?" I would argue that it is not …[807]

Again and again the texts come back to this issue, and the point that most of them make is that the South African war in Namibia is not an example of a just war.[808] Even the service some give in defending South Africa itself, as part of the defence force, is described as taking part in an unjust war:

> Declares that this is an unjust war and that participation in such a war is not in keeping with the Christian faith;[809]

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[805] Evans ascribes the theory of just war to Augustine. 'In the face of civil disorder, Augustine concludes that the resort to violence is justified but *regrettable*. To restore, as best one can, a just order, violence may be necessary if no alternative remains viable' (Evans 2005, page 3).

[806] Mayson discusses the difference between 'holy war' and 'just war' when he analyses the All Africa Conference of Churches in Lusaka in 1974: 'Two traditional theological attitudes to war had been cited. The first was that of the *holy war* used by the Crusaders and many since, which obliged Christians to fight because the war was being fought against evil in order to further the cause of God. This attitude prompted government to call Christians to fight the "communist terrorists" who were seeking to "destroy Christian civilisation" in Southern Africa. The second position was the *just war* theory which originated in the Reformation, and stated that when all else had failed a defensive war against evil was justified provided it stood a strong chance of success. Government proclaimed the struggle to defend South Africa against "terrorism" was just and thus all young men should share it' (Mayson 1993, page 117).

[807] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 10.

[808] 'To call on member churches to educate their members about the unjust nature of the war in Namibia' (National Conference of the SACC 1984, Resolution 15.3.2).

[809] National Conference of the SACC 1983, Resolution 15.

This is clearly an example where the critique of taking part in war is not based on pacifism but on the idea of the just war. We shall see that this idea lies behind the stance the Council takes especially in relation to the PCR. This programme was going to cause divisions within the Council, as it was imposed from outside. When the programme was launched there was clear disagreement about it. At the centre of the matter was the question whether or not it was right of the WCC to support the liberation movements in their armed struggle.

5.3.3 Violence by liberation movements

The texts indicate that the SACC was critical towards the PCR when it was introduced. One can see that critique as part of a *'Just war' discourse*. From the beginning the texts were critical of the PCR, not because the PCR supported the liberation movements' use of violence, but because the liberation movements were not fighting a just war. Later they came to support the PCR, but by then the fight was seen as an example of just war, because State violence was the primary violence. So all along the question is whether or not the armed struggle is justifiable. There are differences between various texts, but this is the overall picture.

The idea to form a special programme on racism came from the WCC meeting in Uppsala, Sweden in July 1968. The specific policies for the PCR were established in subsequent meetings in London, Canterbury, Frankfurt, and Addis Ababa, from May 1969 to January 1971.[810] The programme meant both support for liberation movements[811] and taking part in international campaigns of disinvestment. The greatest reactions were to the so-called 'Special Fund'. Welch writes:

> The WCC Executive Committee met in Arnoldshain, Germany, in September 1970, with approval of grants from the Special Fund one of the many items on their agenda. The decision ignited public controversy.[812]

According to Welch it was actually those reactions that made the programme successful.[813] As we shall see, the reactions in the SACC texts were also strong. In the material where the PCR

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[810] Welch, 2001, page 872.
[811] It was explicitly stated by the Executive Committee of the WWC that the funds should not be used for violent purposes (Welch 2001, page 883).
[812] Welch, 2001, page 883.
[813] 'Was the explosion of publicity about the PCR harmful to it, the World Council as a whole, or the struggle against apartheid and colonial rule in southern Africa? My response is simple-"No." The public brouhaha over grants to liberation movements publicized moral mobilization. The attacks on the Special Fund by South African officials, several denominations, newspapers, and the like resulted in far greater public attention to the WCC's

is dealt with, we find two different versions of the *'Just war' discourse*. One is to support the PCR because the liberation movements are fighting a just war. The other is to criticise the PCR because the South African army is fighting a just war. The first is characterised by an unwillingness to support the use of force or violence when it comes from the liberation movements. The latter view does not explicitly defend the use of violence, but relates the issue to the use of violence by the State. Therefore they are both examples of a *'Just war' discourse*.

The first reaction to the programme was very negative. One reason could be that it took the Church in South Africa by surprise.[814] One critique was that the theological and semantic quality of the statement was poor.[815] But according to Spong, most of the member churches of the WCC were negative when it came to the relationship between the PCR and violence.[816] The idea that violence could be used in the struggle was the point that also led the GS of the SACC to condemn the programme.

> The re-action of many Christians including persons in responsible positions in the Church, has simply
> been to reject the Statement of the Racism Consultation out of hand and to ask that the Church should
> condemn outright the resolution that, all else failing, it should be permissible for Christians to support the
> use of force.[817]

There are no indications in the text of the GS who those 'many Christians' are to whom he refers. A question one could ask is whether those Christians are critical of the WCC because they support the liberation movements' fight against apartheid *per se*, and not because they support the use of force? If the answer to that question is yes, it means that those Christians support the use of force by the army but not by the liberation movements. This means that the

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effort than they could have received through the usual channels of church communication. Such open debate encouraged supporters of majority rule. The most significant impact may have been felt among the victims of apartheid and colonial rule in southern Africa (to the extent, admittedly, that they heard at all about the WCC). Here was a new face to part of Christianity, one that stood in solidarity with the liberation movements' (Welch, 2001, pages 888-889).

[814] 'Although the idea of a funding programme for liberation movements had been supported at a WCC Consultation on Racism in May 1969 in London, the actual announcement of the PCR came as a bolt out of the blue for most, if not all, leading Churchmen in South Africa' (Spong and Mayson 1993, page 42).

[815] 'In my judgement the Statement prepared by the Consultation on Racism is poorly constructed and badly expressed. This makes it difficult to commend to our people. Nevertheless, it raises very sharply issues which Churches in South Africa cannot ignore, and if the Statement is substantially endorsed by the Central Committee, the relationship between the Church in South Africa and the World Council may well be profoundly affected' (General Secretary's Report 1969, page 4).

[816] 'The overall consensus was to retain membership of the WCC, criticise the implicit support for violence in the financial aid to liberation movements, criticise the racism in South Africa, and call for a meeting with the WCC leadership about the PCR' (Spong and Mayson 1993, page 42). When the Prime Minister later announced restrictions, it was decided that the gathering should be postpone indefinitely.

[817] General Secretary's Report 1969, page 4.

argument is not pacifist. Under the surface lies an argument about whether the use of violence is just or not. Most probably a large part of white Christianity in South Africa at the time were loyal to the South African Defence Force, and prayed for the South African soldiers at the border and not for their antagonists.[818]

In 1971 the GS talks about the great pressure from abroad, when he says that the PCR has had two good results: it has made the South African Church aware of discrimination, and placed before the Church the problem of violence versus non-violence.[819] In 1972 the GS also reflects on the PCR, but a bit differently. Here the discussion about State violence or primary violence is introduced.

> Living in South Africa where the Church has so roundly condemned the action of the World Council of Churches in implicitly, in their understanding, supporting violence by making certain grants to organizations operating in Southern Africa, it becomes increasingly difficult to reconcile and explain to the constituency in South Africa how they are to respond to the increasing violence used by the State.[820]

The Council is still ambivalent in this matter. In 1972 the SACC President comments on the PCR. Although he wants to be clear, the statement does not bring clarity about his view of the PCR:

> Whatever one may decide, one thing is clear to me: we as Christians are called to promote values of justice and re-concilliation [reconciliation], and this should mark our actions.[821]

Since the President concludes with a prayer that, for example, asks God to replace anger with concern and hate with brotherhood [sic], it is likely that the President is critical about the support for liberation movements. Be that as it may, the point is that the SACC leadership in the early 1970s was ambivalent about whether the violence used by the liberation movements was an example of a just war or not. But more and more, the violence of the liberation movements began to be compared with the violence used by the State. A change in perspective can be seen in 1973, when the GS related the whole matter to the way churches have been silent about – or even actively supported – the violence used by the State.

> Our protestations about abhorrence of violence and particularly direct criticism of the World Council of Churches can be meaningless in the light of our non-criticism and action regarding the considerable violence which is perpetrated daily in the life of South Africa, e.g. migratory labour, starvation, restrictive legislation. In fact, the Church is like sounding brass on this particular issue. Because its history is written

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[818] Engdahl 1986, page 149.
[819] General Secretary's Report 1971, page 1.
[820] General Secretary's Report 1972, page 1.
[821] Presidential address 1972, page 5.

in blood, and its church buildings are bedecked by flags and plaques sounding the victories of wars, it has the least right to speak about non-violence, but it would be very well if the Church were witnessing to non-violence![822]

In this context there is a change of opinion about how the SACC should regard the PCR. The message is still that the Council should promote non-violence, but since most churches have been silent about State violence, the churches have no right to criticise the use of violence by the liberation movements. In 1974 the GS is clearly in favour of the PCR.

The Programme to Combat Racism which has placed the WCC over and above its many and other varied programmes in the limelight, is one which I believe all churches should support.[823]

The council as a whole does not articulate any different opinion on the matter. It is silent about the PCR in the Minutes and resolutions of that year. But in the Hammanskraal Declaration about conscientious objection, one can see that the Council is still in two minds, when it comes to how it regards the liberation movements. In one paragraph the declaration

maintains that it is hypocritical to deplore the violence of terrorists or freedom fighters while we ourselves prepare to defend our society with its primary, institutionalised violence by means of yet more violence;[824]

The interesting point here is how the declaration describes the liberation movements as 'terrorists or freedom fighters'. Probably this reflects how differently the members of the Council regard the question of liberation movements taking up arms. I regard this as an example of open disagreement that is not resolved by hegemonic intervention.[825] The text, for some reason, has to contain contradicting ways of naming the 'terrorists or freedom fighters'.

A warning formulated in 1975 can give the impression that the SACC is threatening to support the use of violence, if change does not come:

We warn that such actions and all further attempts to impose totalitarian control over the people of our land will in the end only help to hasten violent confrontation on our country.[826]

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[822] General Secretary's Report 1973, page 3.

[823] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 4.

[824] National Conference 1974, Minutes §16 point 7.

[825] Du Toit, Hofmeyer, Strauss and van der Merwe support this when they write about the mid-1970s: … while the outspoken dissidents in the SACC member churches become noticeably silent about the violent methods of the ANC and the PAC and the earmarking of the Special Fund hereafter (my translation). '… terwyl die uitgesproke reserwes in die SARK-lidkerke teenoor die gewalddadige metodes van die ANC en die PAC en die oogmerke van die Spesiale Fonds hierna merkbaar verstil' (Du Toit, Hofmeyer, Strauss and van der Merwe 2002, page 198).

[826] National Conference 1975, Resolution §15 c 3, page 4.

It is of course more likely that this should be seen as a kind of enlightenment, saying that violent confrontation will take place if changes do not come. Not that the SACC would be behind those confrontations. For about 10 years thereafter, not much is said about the liberation movements. On the other hand, there are many examples of different General Secretaries of the Council stating their non-violent position. One example is at the NC 1984, where the GS comments on the liberation movements. He clearly states that he is against the armed struggle, although he wants to cooperate with the liberation movements:

> I have said before and will say it again – I support the A.N.C. wholeheartedly in its aim to work for a truly democratic and non-racial South Africa; but I do not support its methods. I have never hidden the fact that I meet with the leaders of the liberation movements when I go abroad. It is one of the first things I announce when I return to South Africa. How are we going to persuade them to come to the negotiating table if we have not kept in touch with them. Whether the Government and whites like it or not, I won't have the South African Government dictate to me who my friends are going to be. The ANC and the PAC especially the latter have a long history of working peacefully for change and it was this Nationalistic Government that banned them in 1960 forcing them to opt for the armed struggle.[827]

The GS 1985 concludes that there has to be non-violent action against the government if the SACC is going to be regarded as being of any consequence. The focus in this statement lies on the question of whether the SACC should concentrate on action or declarations, rather than whether the Council should work with non-violent or violent methods. The message is that the Council should not only talk, it should also act!

> The Christian church here, as well as in other parts of the world, loses much of its credibility if its criticism and rejection of violence as a means of effecting change is not accompanied by non-violent actions which are effective in breaking the power of an oppressive and unjust system and thereby bringing it to its knees.[828]

The Conference the same year follows the GS, and resolves to work with more effective, non-violent methods.[829] In 1986 the GS wants to make contact with the liberation movements. But even here the aim is non-violent. He wants to contribute to reducing the use of violence in the

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[827] General Secretary's Report 1984, page 31.
[828] General Secretary's Report 1985, page 5.
[829] '... to investigate more effective ways of non-violent resistance to the present system of political and economic injustice and to give active support to similar non-violent efforts initiated by secular organisations and groups throughout the country' (National Conference 1985, Resolution 15).

struggle.[830] In his report from the Lusaka Conference 1987, the GS gives the view of Dr Emilio Castro, the GS of the WCC, saying that it was held

> ... for the churches to take meaningful steps in order to terminate or diminish as much as possible the escalation of conflict and violence in the Southern Region of Africa as a result of the continued implementation of the policy of apartheid by the South African Regime.[831]

Although most of the texts belong to a *'Pacifism' discourse*, the NC was not agreed on how to evaluate the liberation movements' relationship to violence. One resolution that was defeated said:

> The Conference recognises that the decision by the liberation movements to use force as one of the means to end oppression was taken under extreme provocation and in the face of vicious State violence. Nevertheless we would caution against any suggestion that such a decision was a matter of compulsion and therefore involved no choice.
>
> Questions about both the morality and the efficacy of the armed struggle ramain [remain] amongst many Christians, but above all, person or body of persons can abdicate moral responsibility for the decision to wage war on the grounds that they were "compelled" to do so. MOTION DEFEATED[832]

There are no clear indications in the material why this motion was defeated. It could of course have been for other reasons, but one possibility is that it has to do with the way the motion argues in favour of the armed struggle.[833] Nevertheless, it gives evidence of the discussion about the morality of the armed struggle. It shows that there are different discourses struggling within the texts of the SACC when it comes to supporting violence or not supporting it as a means to fight apartheid. Another aspect is the misinformation about the SACC that the GS in 1988 regards as a problem, when he says that the

> ... intensification of prophetic action by Churches and Church Leaders has led to a reinforced effort to try to discredit Church Leaders and the SACC.[834]

It is especially the talks with liberation movements, according to the GS, that form the hot bed for such allegations.

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[830] '... in order to see to what degree the danger of present as well as future violence could be reduced and, if possible, totally eliminated' (General Secretary's Report 1986, page 6).

[831] General Secretary's Report on the World Council of Churches Conference in Lusaka, page 1.

[832] National Conference 1987, Resolution 12.

[833] It seems as if the motion contradicts itself, though. In the second paragraph it is cautious about arguing that one can be compelled to use force, but in the last paragraph it says that one can abdicate the moral responsibility for such a decision. One option is that it should read 'person or body of persons *cannot* abdicate moral responsibility ....' If one makes that change, the motion makes more sense, and shows that the NC understands the armed struggle.

[834] General Secretary's Report 1988, page 6.

Besides these groups the Apartheid government has attacked the SACC and Church Leaders as agents of what they call ANC/SACP Alliance. They have painstakingly tried to present them as supporters of violence.[835]

A complementary expression of the non-violent approach of the SACC is its support for sanctions. In the GS report 1988 we read that the SACC regards sanctions as one of the most effective ingredients in a non-violent struggle.[836] This is a recurrent theme in the material.[837] There has never been any option for the SACC to use violent means in their own activities. But in the total work of the Council it has been important to include an aspect of giving support to the non-violent side of the liberation movements. In that respect the violence used by the liberation movements puts the SACC leadership in a difficult situation. The GS is dubious when writing in 1989:

I am not an advocate of violence. In fact, I abhor violence. But given this history, any human being should understand why these victims of such a nakedly violent and brutal system would resort to violence in response. No, Friends, if anyone is to be declared violent, bloody violent or terrorist, it is the South African racist minority regime.[838]

There are two different discourses competing in this quotation. First of all a *'Pacifism' discourse*, which on the surface says that violence is wrong, but at the same time it tries to justify or at least explain why the victims are in fact using violence. This could be described as a *'Just war' discourse*. This is a form of discursive struggle that is fairly open. The power relations revealed in this context are interesting. In the context it is not possible to support violence directly, but through contrasting the violence used by the liberation movement with the violence used by the regime, the GS can still show where his support lies.

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[835] General Secretary's Report 1988, page 6.
[836] 'Those who are for sanctions believe that:

i) It is one of the most effective non-violent ways to forces the South African government to the negotiation table (only if there was political will on the part of at least the six Western major trade partners).
ii) That this is the only way to avoid a bloody confrontation between the people of South Africa and the apartheid regime' (General Secretary's Report 1988, page 7).
[837] 'On our part we must make a commitment to action that will increase pressure on the government so that it can compliment [complement] the international pressure that we have called for. From our resolutions, decisions, actions and programmes of the last five years I have deduced a three track non-violent strategy that involves:
i) Direct non-violent actions to force the regime to abandon apartheid and enter into negotiation that will lead to the establishment of a new society.
ii) Support for and solidarity with those who are working to end apartheid.
iii) Campaign to isolate the regime politically, culturally and economically' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 16).
[838] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 11.

But even if the blame is put on the government of South Africa, the texts also include examples when the liberation movements are criticised for using violence – especially when it is not in the form of counter-violence but rather a violence that is uncalled for.

> As a result of allegations of torture in camps of African National Congress and representation by various concerned individuals and groups, the SACC decided to send a delegation of Church leaders to visit the present camps of the ANC to determine whether or not they are still keeping political prisoners and, if so, the conditions under which they are kept.[839]

To sum up, we can say that the SACC texts, in the early years, show a negative attitude towards the armed struggle adopted by the liberation movements. This changes and becomes more understanding over the years. More and more the whole question is related to the use of force by the South African State. Still, the SACC never openly supports the violence used by liberation movements. But under the surface lies a *'Just war' discourse* that, in a sense, justifies violence in some situations. Therefore we could also name it a *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. The difference between the two is whether or not it wants to underline the pacifist side of the argument.

5.3.4 Death penalty – capital punishment

When the texts argue against the death penalty, they do it differently than in the case of the armed struggle. In this case they are examples of the *'Pacifism' discourse*. In this issue the Council is clearly against violence. One could say that capital punishment is a situation where pacifism always should rule, meaning that one should never use the death penalty. But the way the texts express it, it is as if the arguments are more general than that. One such expression is the concept 'sanctity of life'. The opinion about capital punishment is not outspoken in the early Minutes. The texts only say that the issue is on the agenda.[840] We have to go to 1981 to find a resolution where the Council is clear in its standpoint about the death penalty.

> 5. Capital Punishment
>
> That noting the mercy shown to Mr. du Toit who was paroled after serving 18 months of the 3 year prison sentence imposed on him for the brutal killing of a farm labourer, and believing that revenge

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[839] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 7.

[840] 'This conference of the S.A. Council of Churches notes the formation of the Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in S.A., and particularly welcomes the intentions of the Society to promote the scientific study of all facets of the death penalty and to undertake appropriate steps to educate the public at large. Council commends the study of its findings to member Churches' (National Conference 1971, Minutes §13 a).

should never be a consideration in the punishment of criminals, and believing that capital punishment is contrary to the teaching of the gospel, this S.A.C.C. Conference:

5.1 In the name of the Lord Jesus requests the State President to commute the death sentence for all those people who are currently awaiting execution in South Africa and in S.W.A./Namibia.

5.2 In the name of the Lord Jesus calls upon the Government to abolish the death penalty altogether.[841]

The resolution does not clearly say that it supports the decision by the state to show mercy to the said Mr. du Toit. Clearly the Council uses the fact that this person (most likely white) has been pardoned to support the demand that others should be pardoned as well. Point 5.1 is clear, though, that the Council wants all those who are sentenced to be pardoned. Another of of the 1988 resolutions clearly dissociates itself from the death penalty, and gives theological arguments why it is wrong.

> Whereas we believe that all men and women are made in the image of God and that the deliberate killing of any human person is a violation of this belief; and whereas we believe that God is love and that the deliberate killing of any person is an absolute denial of love; This National Conference of the SACC / ... / calls for the abolition of the death penalty...[842]

If one uses this argument in other discussions, for instance about the armed struggle, the SACC could have clearly stated that even deliberate killing in that context is an absolute denial of love. The Council does not do that. On the other hand, it never openly supports the armed struggle. It only relates it to the force used by the State. But in the case of the death penalty the texts are clearer. The GS in his 1988 report totally dissociates himself from capital punishment. Now more reasons are given, but this time they are only indirectly based on biblical or theological argumentation.

> There are a number of reasons why we need to campaign for an end to capital punishment:
>
> i) Because of the sanctity of life.
>
> ii) Because of possibilities of error (e.g. the "Sharpeville Six")
>
> iii) Because society is, in the main, responsible for conditions which make people guilty of the offences punishable by the death sentence (see statement by the Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, 1969)
>
> iv) Because of the illegitimacy of the South African government particularly in relation to people sentenced to death for politically related activities (See 1987 National Conference Resolutions).
>
> v) Because there is evidence that in South Africa race is a determinant for the gallows.
>
> vi) Because it is not preventative nor does it act as a deterrent.[843]

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[841] National Conference 1981, Resolution 5.
[842] National Conference 1988, Resolution 21.
[843] General Secretary's Report 1988, page 5-6.

And obviously the campaign was successful, because the GS of 1990 reports that fewer people are being executed.[844] He also says that it is against the will of God. It is anathema! Throughout the years, the SACC was opposed to the death penalty. And a kind of final celebration is described in the GS report of 1995, when capital punishment is abolished.[845] The arguments are very consistent. The SACC has been opposed to the death penalty from the very beginning. One can see how this opposition becomes more outspoken through the years, and after 1996, when there is no room for capital punishment in the Constitution, nothing more is said about the issue. One question remains: The argument, that the SACC believes that God is love and that the deliberate killing of any person is an absolute denial of love, is not used as stringently in other matters related to violence and non-violence. Why is that so?

As I continue to study how the SACC texts talk about violence, I keep this question before me. Is there a discursive struggle, an antagonism, between this *'Pacifism' discourse* and a *'Situational pacifism' discourse* – and how is that antagonism to be seen in other texts?

5.3.5 Conscientious objection

In 1974 a revolution took place in Portugal that led to the independence of three of Portugal's African colonies. In turn this led to the Angola crisis, where South African forces were involved on the side of UNITA.[846] These events could be seen as one important circumstance that made the decisions on conscientious objection taken by the SACC in 1974 so decisive. The link between this and the revolution in Portugal was also made by Dr Axel-Ivar Berglund, an employee of the SACC, according to Spong.[847] This is one historical perspective

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[844] 'There is no doubt in my mind that the campaign for the abolition of capital punishment has been extremely successful: in 1988, 117 people were executed, in 1989, 53 people, and since 14 November, there have been no executions. It would be appropriate for this conference to intensify the campaign. Capital Punishment is, by any civilized norm, reprehensible, and before God, anathema. It is our duty as Christians to press for its removal from the statut [statute] books, not only to prevent the taking of human life, but to prevent the mental suffering and abject despair experienced by those awaiting execution' (General Secretary's Report 1990, page 17. 3.4).

[845] 'South Africa ended 350 years of capital punishment. We heard that 453 inmates, mostly black, sentenced to hand at the Pretoria Central Prison, burst into cheers and song when they heard the unanimous decision of the 11 members of the Constitutional Court to abolish the death penalty' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 2).

[846] União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola. (In English: National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

[847] 'In 1974 soon after the emotional uproar that followed the conscientious objection resolution, and when the Portuguese withdrew from Angola and Mocambique, Dr Axel-Ivar Berglund pointed to the lives and resources that had been wasted in those countries. He then went on to say "If only someone in Portugal twelve years ago had raised a voice and asked: 'In God's name, what are we fighting for? What are the alternatives to violence?' it just might have given that nation pause for thought and spared it an immensity of sacrifice and humiliation. Such a voice has been raised in South Africa. Will South Africa listen?"' (Spong and Mayson 1993, page 53).

on the conscientious objection decision. But did the decision really deal with the issue of saving lives? One suggestion is that it was about the right of the individual to follow his or her conscience. This freedom of conscience is what the United Nations had stated in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[848] The fact that the whole debate revolves around the concept of conscience can lead to the conclusion that the texts of the SACC do not support pacifism. Since they make room for different choices, this could be a kind of *'Situational pacifism' discourse* that changed over time.

There is no risk of exaggeration if we say that the stance on conscientious objection was one of the most important resolutions the SACC had ever made when it took the step to defend it in 1974. But the issue had been raised before, for example in the Minutes of 1969. At that stage the government argued that exceptions only could be made for members from traditionally pacifist Churches. Other cases would be treated on their own merits.[849]

The National Conference at Hammanskraal has become a key event. Although a number of Conferences were held there, it is the Conference of 1974 that one has in mind. The decision taken there on conscientious objection changed the role of the SACC overnight.[850] One comment says that it

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[848] 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion' (The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/ 2009-10-09, article 18).

[849] 'The General Secretary reported on correspondence he had had with the relevant Government department. He reported that the position was that each case, other than members belonging to traditionally pacifist Churches, is treated on its own merits. After discussion it was agreed that nothing further could be done, but the Executive be given the power to act as and when necessary' (National Conference 1969, Minutes §27).

[850] Thomas 1979 tells how this decision became such a determining factor in the life of the Council. One aspect is that the press was admitted from 1971. 'Without the Press, things might have developed differently in 1974' (page 87). As early as 1952 the CCSA had said that 'conscientious objectors had the right to have their opinions respected' (page 88). According to Thomas there were two reasons why NC 1974 took the decision. One reason was how Rev Douglas Bax, who was teaching at the Anglican Seminary of St Bede's in 1974, argued that it had to do with the view of the prophets and of Jesus on violence. The other source was the reaction of John Rees at the Third Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches held in Lusaka in May, 1974, when the General Secretary of the AACC, Canon Burgess Carr, said: 'In accepting the violence of the Cross, God, in Jesus Christ, sanctified violence into a redemptive instrument for bringing into being a fuller life' (page 88). According to Thomas, Rees spoke at the NC 1974 about the risk of having violence between blacks and whites. When Rev. Douglas Bax rose and suggested 'that it was time "for us to consider seriously whether the SACC should challenge young men on the score of conscientious objection" he evoked no great interest' (page 88). Bax is said to have stated that it was 'Oshadi Phakati (of the Christian Institute, who was later banned and fled the country) who first indirectly raised the matter of conscientious objection in the first open discussion and so gave me [Bax] the opportunity to raise the matter' (page 104). Bax had told a reporter from the *Rand Daily Mail* about the content of his motion, which reported in its later editions about the motion coming up. This was 'the spark which ignited the Hammanskraal explosion' (page 90). The article was picked up by a Pretoria Afrikaans newspaper, *Hoofstad,* 'which the same day printed a lead article on its front page under a headline proclaiming that Beyers Naudé was urging young men to "refuse" military service' (page 90). 'The debates raged on for five hours, and in a final desperate move, Bishop Russell asked that the preamble and the resolution itself be voted on separately. He won this point, but lost the vote when he tried to have the preamble rejected. In the final voting on

... in fact caused a furore when the National Conference of 1974 passed a resolution on the right of conscientious objection.[851]

The opinion that this was one of the major decisions taken by the SACC is supported vividly by Thomas:

> On that score, the SACC and its officials were like the crew of a ship who in the middle of a hurricane simply had to admit that they had lost all hope of controlling the situation and could do nothing but go below decks and let the strength of their ship determine whether they would survive or founder.[852]

The Council did not argue from a pacifist angle in defending conscientious objection. There were a number of arguments intertwined in the resolution. Two of the paragraphs dealt with the concept of a just war, saying that the Council

> … reminds its member Churches that both Catholic and Reformation theology has regarded the taking up of arms as justifiable, if at all, only in order to fight a "just war".
> … points out that the theological definition of a "just war" excludes war in defence of a basically unjust and discriminatory society;[853]

This suggests that the SACC partly argues from a point of view where violence could be justified. But the Minutes show that this is not the case. The first motion put before the Conference was defeated, and the final one had an important extra paragraph, saying that the Council

> Deplores violence as a means to solve problems;[854]

This is an indication that the SACC at the time is divided between a pacifist faction and another faction that could be described as situational pacifist. These are, as we have already pointed out, expressions of different discourses, namely the *'Pacifism' discourse* and the *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. Thomas argues that although there is some acknowledgement of the pacifist position in the Hammanskraal resolution, it leans far more

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the motion as a whole, the Conference was unanimous, 48 votes being recorded for it, none against it, and no abstentions' (page 91). According to Thomas the question of 'classical' conscientious objection had hardly ever arisen in South Africa, since 'it had never had universal conscription until a little more than a decade before Hammanskraal' (page 93). In his book Thomas concludes that 'the Hammanskraal resolution was perhaps possible only if taken at a rush' (Thomas 1979, page 94).

[851] Spong and Mayson 1993, page 48.
[852] Thomas 1979, page 93.
[853] National Conference 1974, Minutes §1.
[854] National Conference 1974, Minutes §16.

strongly towards the theory of a just war.[855] In that case we have here an example of a *'Just war' discourse*.

In the light of a paragraph in the report of the GS 1982, one can also draw the conclusion that a Christian could either do national service or refuse. How otherwise could one give meaning to the argument that the right of conscientious objection is a matter of obeying one's conscience (and this is even described as an imperative and an inalienable right)?

> In the same vein we must insist that the Gospel of Jesus Christ demands that each person should obey his conscience and that this imperative implies an inalienable right to be able to do so. It is pernicious in the extreme therefore for the state to force people to violate their consciences, especially for a state that claims to be Christian.[856]

In fact, this paragraph does not discuss violence versus non-violence at all, but mainly the person's right to follow his or her own conscience. Seen in a wider context, this way of understanding the paragraph is not the most plausible one. The conscience argument is one important aspect, but only one aspect of this decision. Most of all it has to do with the violence versus non-violence discussion.

There is a change in the argument when one reads the resolutions from NC 1984, on the 10th anniversary of the Hammanskraal declaration, when the Conference argues in a different way. Now it has more to do with the right to refuse to take up arms. One resolution

> ... resolves to support all those who in conscience refuse to serve in the SADF.[857]

Some of the proposed resolutions were neither accepted nor defeated, but referred to the presidium for further consideration, because of doubt about their legality.[858] This shows that the matter was as sensitive in the late 1980s as it had been in the 1970s. In 1986, for example, one resolution about conscription was embargoed.[859] In 1987 the NC takes a clear stand against all kinds of military training in the South African Army:

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[855] Thomas 1979, page 93.

[856] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 8.

[857] National Conference 1984, Resolution O.5.

[858] 'The Resolution Committee indicated that it was uncertain whether clauses O.3 and O.5 constitute a violation of the Defence Amendment Act and recommended that the Presidium obtain legal opinion on this issue and thereafter to submit the contents of the Resolution to the member churches' (National Conference 1986, Resolution O)

[859] 'No 20: Compulsory Military Conscription

Addressed to this Conference: The Presidium; The Executive; individual members.

N.B: EMBARGOED UNTIL RELEASE BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY. Received and referred to the General Secretary for editing and forwarding to the State President. The text of the letter be included in the Annual Conference Report.

> Given the Government's commitment to further strengthen the SADF by conscripting both black and
> white persons, the National Conference of the SACC resolves:
>
> a. to call upon people to reject conscription until there is universal franchise in a unitary state;[860]

This resolution sharpens the Hammanskraal declaration and implies that the freedom of conscience is no longer the message. In the resolution of the NC 1987 it is obvious that the Council takes the issue a step further. It does not recommend that anyone join the SADF. The conclusion is that the SACC no longer supports the freedom of conscience argument: it is simply wrong to join the SADF.

In 1992 the National Conference opposes the Defence Amendment Act, and calls for its immediate withdrawal and the referral of all matters of conscription to the interim government. Whether or not the resolution accepts military conscription is not easy to ascertain. The most plausible view, though, is that the NC accepts the fact that the new South Africa is going to have a defence force, and so does not necessarily oppose military conscription. At the end of the resolution the NC

> ... calls on the Department of Justice and Social Ministries to monitor and prepare representations on
> issues of military conscription and militarisation.[861]

Since 1994 there has been no discussion of conscientious objection.[862]

The SACC has not been against military training as such because of pacifism, but because SA is fighting an unjust war. This is obvious from the text of the Hammanskraal declaration.[863] More and more the issue of conscientious objection became an issue of not joining the SADF at all. Therefore one can, from the texts about conscientious objection, claim that a *'Situational pacifism' discourse* takes over the *'Pacifism' discourse* in the texts of the SACC. The argument for not doing military service is that the apartheid regime is unjust.

Letter to the State President – See Appendix 4' (National Conference 1986, Resolution 20).

[860] National Conference 1987, Resolution 23.

[861] National Conference 1992, Resolution 18.3.

[862] Conscription is no longer applied in South Africa, which has a professional standing army.

[863] There were also other implications of the Hammanskraal declaration. The SACC achieved an overnight media breakthrough. So the importance of the Hammanskraal resolution is not only about the point at issue (violence or not), but even more about how the SACC took a clear stance against apartheid and how the media played a role.

5.3.6 Military chaplains

A few remarks about the system of military chaplains in the SADF are in order. There are several examples in which the question of conscientious objection and the attitude towards the PCR has been linked to the issue of military chaplains.

> And ironically, whilst roundly condemning PCR solidarity grants for the humanitarian use of liberation movements, most English-speaking churches continue to provide chaplains for the South African police and armed forces.[864]

This statement shows again a discursive antagonism between the *'Pacifism' discourse* and the *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. The SACC has treated this question in different ways. In 1980 the SACC President argues in a way that would indicate that the SACC is totally against chaplains in the armed force.

> To white church people army chaplaincy is part of the Church's mission to young men serving their country, who need spiritual guidance under demanding circumstances. To black church people this chaplaincy is nothing more than encouraging and giving moral support for the killing of their sons who are endeavouring to make their voices heard.[865]

Let us look at this statement. It shows that there are different ways to view the system of military chaplains. Depending on perspective, it could be something either positive or negative. Clearly we have an antagonism between different discourses, but not necessarily between the *'Pacifism' discourse* and the *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. Neither of the standpoints is pacifist. The difference is rather over which side in the struggle one supports. There are also other voices. If in 1980 the SACC President rejects the system of military chaplains totally, the 1984 Conference has another proposal. It understands that those who take part in war need spiritual guidance, but the question is about who is going to employ the chaplains. Here the suggestion is that they should not belong to the Defence Force, but rather be paid by their churches. The Conference resolves

> … to demilitarise its chaplains by relieving them of the symbols of military status like rank and uniform

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[864] Alan Brews, "Vulnerable to the Right: the English-Speaking Churches." *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, no 69 D (1989), page 45. http://0-web.ebscohost.com.wagtail.uovs.ac.za/ehost/pdf?vid=8&hid=3&sid=a5b46509-159f-4a6a-b504-e51a5ded8260%40sessionmgr4 2009-09-12. Another example is Moll, who writes: 'In 1974 the South African Council of Churches issued a call to young men to refuse military service because the military was engaged in defending apartheid. The "English-speaking" churches have since become more insistent in condemning the use of the army in quelling internal unrest and in occupying Namibia. Nevertheless their ministry to military personnel is exercised by a uniformed chaplaincy of high rank. This paradox has been criticised at church conferences, particularly by black clergy, who feel the chaplaincy legitimates the military activities which the churches condemn. In the absence of any alternative to the current arrangement, the churches have not yet taken steps to change it' (Moll 1985, page 13).

[865] Presidential address 1980, page 9.

> … to undertake all training and financing of its chaplains
>
> … to bring its chaplains under church authority, thereby releasing them from military influence.[866]

The underlying argument is not that the SACC is against military chaplains being employed by the State, but not wanting them to be involved with an army that fights an unjust war.

The SACC was critical about the chaplaincy system, not because of non-violence arguments, but because of this meant taking sides in an unjust war. So the actual discourse is a mixture of the *'Just war' discourse* and the *'Situational pacifism' discourse*.

5.3.7 On the verge of civil war – the situation after 1990

After the release of Mandela, the situation inside the country becomes even more violent. This puts the SACC to the test. Will the Council be able to stick to a non-violent course in this new situation? Can we discern a *'Pacifism' discourse* or a *'Situational pacifism' discourse* in the texts? The way the GS in his report 1990 describes it, with police brutality and tragic deaths, the seriousness of the situation is obvious.[867] The GS does not try to hide the fact that different groups in the country are causing this violent situation:

> Sadly, we also witnessed the escalation of the senseless violence in Natal between supporters of Inkatha, on the one hand, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) on the other; and the outbreak of violence between various groups in several communities around the country.[868]

This leads the GS to comment on the negotiations between the different liberation movements and to relate them to the violent situation. The Church needs to become engaged in the situation.

> We have already witnessed elements of this kind of violence, and only quick action will ensure that it is nipped in the bud. Church leaders have decided to intervene in this regard by engaging these organisations in critical dialogue which will hopefully help to identify common positions and possible compromises.[869]

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[866] National Conference 1984, Resolution 16.3.3-5.

[867] 'The period following the unbanning of people's organisations and liberation movements was also characterized by the following: massive political upheavals and uprisings; a regression to police brutality; and, tragically, the deaths of over 1650 people since the beginning of the year' (General Secretary's Report 1990, page 3).

[868] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 4.

[869] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 8.

As we shall see, the Church leaders did engage themselves in these talks, but it was not that easy to 'nip the violence in the bud'. The GS suggests that a 'third force' is causing the violence when he speaks about the CCB.[870]

> The liberation movements have now been unbanned, yet there is [are] no indications that the activities of the CCB have been suspended.[871]

The whole notion of a third force will be reiterated throughout the first four years of the 1990s. And the violent situation will become a top priority of the church leaders for a number of years.[872] The Council and the Church leaders acted in many different ways during those years. One of the more important aspects was the ministry of mediation.

> We have spent endless hours trying to convene a meeting of leaders of all major organisations including the Government, to address the violence together. Today we can Praise God that it did happen.[873]

The efforts of the church leaders to intervene is a common theme during those years. Even Archbishop Tutu, former GS of the SACC, is very active. It is not easy to evaluate the extent to which the texts regard him as a leader of the process.[874] Whether he is or not, he also takes part in the ministry of mediation. The same is underscored in the Message to the Churches from the NC 1991, where church leaders are urged to continue with the struggle against violence, described as both a pastoral and a prophetic ministry.[875] The pastoral ministry includes the role of mediation, and the prophetic means that either of the fractions could be criticised. The question is whether it was possible to combine them into one. We find an indication that this is not an easy task, in one of the 1991 resolutions:

> Conference therefore expresses its conviction that an Independent mediator from outside is desperately needed to monitor the violence and help bring it to an end.[876]

It is not said whether the SACC is regarded as an independent mediator. But earlier in the resolutions the GS is commended for having played an important role in the peace process

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[870] The South African Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) was a covert, special force organisation during the apartheid era that operated under the authority of the Defence Minister.

[871] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 15.

[872] 'Church leaders are seriously concerned about the culture of violence in the country ....' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 6).

[873] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 7.

[874] 'The Summit of Black Leaders held in Bishopscourt, convened by Archbishop Tutu, in which we (SACC) participated helped a great deal in bridging the gap between the liberation movements and homelands leaders. On the violence issue it was clear that there was commitment from all the parties to put their ideological positions aside' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 13).

[875] '... to exercise to the full both their pastoral and prophetic ministry in such situations' (National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 3, point 7).

[876] National Conference of the SACC 1991, Resolution D:7.

thus far. This indicates that the resolution opts for somebody outside the SACC to be that independent mediator.[877]

An example of an event that disturbs the process of becoming a democratic country is the Boipatong crisis, which is acute during the 1992 National Conference.[878] Another issue is the alleged violence in ANC camps that the SACC wants to investigate.[879] This shows that the SACC is prepared to condemn violence on the part of the liberation movements as well. The examples show that the involvement of the SACC in the peace process is a complex matter. Sometimes it wants outside help, and sometimes the texts see the SACC as a key actor, like the SACC President in 1992, who believes that no peace can be achieved without the help of the SACC.[880]

In this context one can get an impression that the Council totally rejects all use of violence. But this is not the case. After the Boipatong massacre the need for an unbiased security force is obvious. If the SACC is totally pacifist, it should reject such an armed force. It does not.

> The National Conference of the SACC is determined to do everything in its power to ensure that there is never a recurrence of the Boipatong Massacre in our land. As a Christian Conference we assert the sanctity of all life; we believe that our land will not know peace until Black life is given the same value as all other life. We call for the establishment of a new integrated Peace-keeping Force to replace the existing Police and Defence Forces.[881]

So, obviously, violence is sometimes acceptable, depending on who is using it and for what purpose. First of all, the same articulation is used as in the argument about the death penalty. The Council speaks about the sanctity of life. At the same time there is support for a peace-keeping force. How the issue of conscription is treated, for instance, shows that the SACC prepares itself for a new stance on the issue.[882] The following year the question of armed

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[877] National Conference of the SACC 1991, Resolution D:2.

[878] 'We are meeting at a time when there is a deadlock at the second Conference for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA II) and the escalation of violence in the country especially the Boipatong Massacre both of which have led to a breakdown in the negotiation process' (General Secretary's Report 1992, page 1).

[879] 'As a result of allegations of torture in camps of African National Congress and representation by various concerned individuals and groups, the SACC decided to send a delegation of Church leaders to visit the present camps of the ANC to determine whether or not they are still keeping political prisoners and, if so, the conditions under which they are kept' (General Secretary's Report 1992, page 7).

[880] 'I don't need to remind you that without the efforts of the SACC, through its general secretariat, it would have been very difficult to bring together all the rival political groups to a historical [this should be "historic"] conference where the Peace Accord was signed' (Presidential address 1992, page 6).

[881] National Conference 1992, Resolution 92.42.01. 3b.

[882] '… calls for its immediate withdrawal and the referral of all matters of conscription to the Interim Government' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 92.42.04. 18).

forces is on the table again. [883] The GS speaks about control of the armed formations, and is prepared to support an armed force depending on who is controlling it.

> As it has developed since the last Conference what we need is an armed force...[884]

The SACC is not a pacifist movement. Under certain circumstances it can admit that violence is necessary. It also supports the idea of a *youth peace service corps*.[885] After the elections in 1994 the security forces are complimented by the GS. [886] The interim GS puts it even more bluntly, when speaking on the issue of militarisation:

> We are not a pacifist country.[887]

So the question of violence becomes a mere issue of when it defensible to use weapons or to whom it is acceptable to sell them. The *'Pacifism' discourse* and the *'Situational pacifism' discourse* are in this contest replaced by a *'Just war' discourse*. According to the Council Minutes of 1994, there is a discussion of whether or not to sell arms. [888] The arms trade is sometimes heavily criticised.[889] In 1994 the arms industry is totally condemned, in the *Statement to Church and Nation*. The text opposes violence, both in the public and in the private space:

> We therefore believe that the arms industry should be phased out and that a conscious policy be used to reallocate this technology to be used responsibly. This industry is a product of apartheid. It made weapons to kill and control our own people and to destabilise neighbouring countries. This country does not need to perpetuate that evil, or live with such a horrific legacy of apartheid.
> But it is not enough to castigate the arms trade. We give our full support to the campaign for a gun-free South Africa which will challenge all South Africans, and especially Christians, who possess licensed or

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[883] '... the only outstanding problematic issue is the <u>joint control of all armed formations</u> to arrest the violence and to address the problem of legitimacy and credibility of the present security forces' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 5).

[884] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 6.

[885] 'The Implementation Committee of the National Youth Development Forum which is addressing the needs of marginalised youth has a broader programme on Youth Development, Training and Employment opportunities where this peace keeping function is a small part of the whole' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 6-7).

[886] '... I believe that the security forces must be given credit for conducting themselves as professional armed forces who are committed of the welfare and security of this country ...' (General Secretary's Report 1994, page 5).

[887] Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 5.

[888] '... conduct a study of the implications of the manufacture of and trade in arms in order to promote discussion in the churches and to make urgent representations to the Government and other parties' (National Conference 1994, Resolution 6).

[889] '... its anger and shame that arms manufactured in South Africa have been used in the conflict' (National Conference 1994, Resolution 7).

unlicensed firearms to hand them over to be destroyed. We further support the proposal that this campaign be extended to other countries in Southern Africa.[890]

In 2001 small arms are also condemned by the NC.[891] The Conference goes into great detail when in the same breath it condemns firearms owned by private citizens and even talks about toy guns.[892] But it also comes back to the issue of the arms deals.

> EXPRESSES strong opposition to the expenditure of billions of rands on sophisticated and unnecessary weapons in the midst of such staggering human need, and
>
> CALLS on the South African government to decline all optional purchases associated with the current strategic defence procurement package and to explore the total abandonment of the deal.[893]

In this resolution the SACC comes out with a strong prophetic message against the government. In the context, the issue of security is linked to the issue of poverty, which is said to be the major security threat in the country.[894] This development was begun by the Interim GS in 1994.

> **That is why it is important for us to engage our government and our ecumenical partners in the process of developing a foreign policy, and in particular, an arms sales policy that will be based on clear moral values.**
>
> The second issue related to the technology that has been committed to arms manufacturers. A conscious policy to reallocate this technology into non-military pursuits is important.[895]

One cannot read from the material whether or not the SACC is totally against arms manufacture. But it is clear that the Council strongly opposes the fact that South Africa is trading in arms. This is in line with the non-violent tradition of the organisation. But the way in which, for example, the interim GS of 1994 puts it, the discourse is more a *'Just war' discourse* than anything else.

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[890] National Conference 1994, Resolution 3, Statement to Church and Nation.

[891] 'CALLS on the South African government to intensify its effort to restrict the trade in small arms' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 7).

[892] '...DISCOURAGES parents from buying toy guns for their children' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 7).

[893] National Conference 2001, Resolution 8.

[894] 'Affirming that poverty constitutes the greatest threat to security of most South Africans...' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 8).

[895] Interim General Secretary's report 1994, page 5.

5.3.8 Summing up:

In this paragraph we have followed the theme of violence throughout the material. The SACC is strongly opposed to violence, but not from a strictly pacifist point of view. One could rather describe the discourse as a *'Situational pacifism' discourse*. This kind of discourse is not pacifist, but it leans more towards pacifism than anything else. There are also signs of another discourse, related in a way to what I call the *'Just war' discourse*. The difference between the two is merely a difference of focus.

One important aspect is the differentiation between structural or primary violence by the State, and the counter-violence of the liberation movements. There is a difference between different resolutions and different General Secretaries and Presidents on how to evaluate the armed struggle of those movements. The spoken or unspoken argument is connected with the notion of the 'just war'. That is probably why between 1990 and 1994 force by a peace-keeping force is accepted to uphold stability in the country.

In the arguments against capital punishment, the Council is close to the *'Pacifism' discourse* when the texts argue for the sanctity of all life. Had that argument been used in other arguments, much might have been put differently.

In the case of conscientious objection, the Council does not argue from a pacifist point of view. Initially it has more to do with the right to follow one's conscience. Later the texts are against taking part in military training under the apartheid regime. Therefore the texts also criticise the system of military chaplains.

After 1990 the SACC shows another face. It criticises violence, but not in the same way. It acts as a mediator in the violence between different groups. In this respect it blames the government for supporting a third force in the conflict. The SACC takes up a mediating role. But it also criticises the different groups when they use violence. This means that the SACC acts both in a prophetic role and as mediator. In this process the SACC supports the legitimate use of force, just as it does after 1994. This indicates that the Council has moved away from a *'Pacifism' discourse*. When the texts accept a defence force, this is an example of a *'Just war' discourse*.

5.4   A new threat to people and nations

The *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*

In this paragraph I describe how the SACC, in the material at hand, talks about the pandemic of HIV and AIDS. After a short introduction to the field, I give some examples of how the SACC has articulated itself in relation to the scourge. Thereafter I show that there are five different discourses involved in a discursive struggle. The first reaction in the texts is to prevent the spread of the disease, which I name the *'Prevention' discourse*. Second, there is a *'Care giving' discourse* in the material. The third discourse I have chosen to name a *'Fight the stigma' discourse*. Fourth, there is a *'Structural' discourse*, meaning that in some texts the cause of HIV and AIDS is placed on a structural level. But it could also be explained as something to do with individuals. This fifth discourse I name a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*.[896] In a sense the two last discourses belong to one group, both answering the question about the causes of the disease; while the first three answer the question of what to do about it. Another way of looking at the different discourses is to see a difference between individualistic and collective approaches. In that case the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* would be an example of the individualistic aspect, and the rest are mainly examples of the collective.

The fact that the material does not contain any prophetic articulations about HIV and AIDS before 1990 makes it difficult to say whether or not a change in the prophetic ministry takes place after 1990, and if so, how this change might be described. We can still compare how the SACC says something prophetic in relation to HIV and AIDS with other statements about other phenomena before 1990. One such comparison takes its departure from the way in which the fight against HIV and AIDS is described in some texts as 'the new Kairos'. Therefore we are going to compare the HIV and AIDS issue with other issues, using two of the discourses: the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* and the *'Structural' discourse*. These two discourses are involved in an antagonism in other fields as well. Through this exercise we shall see whether the way the SACC addresses the HIV and AIDS issue represents a change from how the Council would have done it before 1990.

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[896] When I use this concept I mean moralising about the private sphere of life. The line is not always clear, but this is the intention.
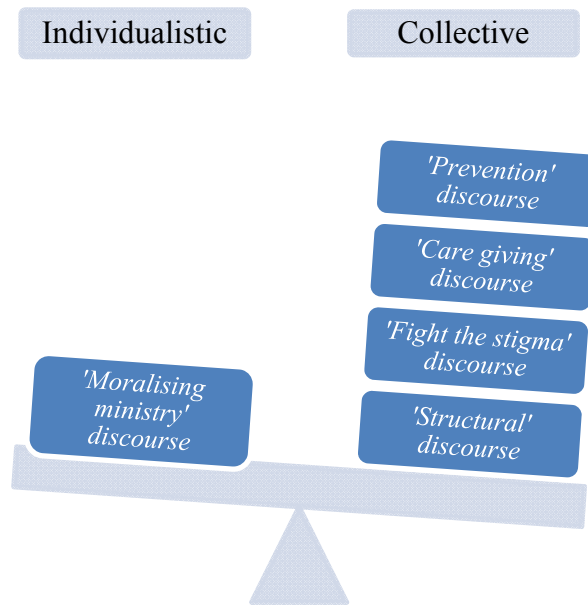
Figure 5: Discourses within the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*

5.4.1 About HIV and AIDS

The first cases of this epidemic were reported in 1979 and 1980.[897] Medical doctors in the United States then found a new disease that after some time was called the Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). In 1983 a French scientist identified the virus that led to the disease, the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). At about the same time, cases started to show up in different parts of the world, including sub-Saharan Africa. Whether other levels of the SACC worked with the disease before the 1990s we cannot tell from this material. As we shall see, though, it was mentioned for the first time at a National Conference in 1991.[898] For the next decade, the Council engaged with the pandemic as the new enemy after apartheid.

> Therefore, in saying AIDS is the Kairos, we want to say this is a fundamental challenge to us and to society as a whole, where the church need to speak with specificity and particularity.[899]

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[897] Barnett and Whiteside 2002, page 28.
[898] National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 3.
[899] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.

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When we look at some general statements during this period, they show that HIV and AIDS has been on the agenda all the time – but also how unspecific the Council has been in many instances. In 1991 the President states in his address that

> The AIDS issue should be given urgent attention by the Churches.[900]

He does not explain how this should be done. Between 1991 and 1994 there are some resolutions about HIV and AIDS, but in 1994, when the nation elected its first democratic parliament, nothing was said by the GS about this challenge. When talking about the challenge of the new society, one misses any mention of AIDS (among other issues).[901] On the other hand, the interim GS that year at least mentions the scourge:

> While there are many organisations and other church related bodies working on AIDS, the population is big so is the country. Our programmes do not reach every sector of the community. [T]he HIV/AIDS pandemic has now led to the resurgence of tuberculosis. The research that has been conducted in Uganda, Tanzania and Zaire has provided evidence, according to the WCC General Secretary, that great expectation among the people regarding the church as a caring and healing community. We must again launch new programmes on AIDS or intensify the existing ones by providing more resources to the work.[902]

In this context it is not clear what the purpose of the work is. In the reference to East Africa lies an indication that the dominant discourse is the *'Care giving' discourse*. One of the resolutions in 1994 is also very meagre in this respect. From the beginning the churches are uncertain about their role.[903] *A statement to church and nation from the SACC National Conference 1994* says nothing about HIV and AIDS when it lists the problems facing the country.[904] Likewise not much is said about the pandemic in the material from 1998.[905] The SACC itself judges this silence or inactivity rather harshly. One example is when the GS 2001 reflects on the pandemic:

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[900] Presidential address 1991, page 6.

[901] General Secretary's Address 1994, point 4.2, page 6.

[902] Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 18.

[903] 'The National Conference of the SACC encourages and supports a process that enables the churches at provincial level to pool resources at an ecumenical level in order to design and implement programmes to address the problems of AIDS, illiteracy, underdevelopment and poverty' (National Conference 1994, Resolution 4).

[904] 'As a nation we still have many problems to face. Chief amongst them are racism, ethnicism and political and criminal violence' (*A statement to church and nation form the SACC National Conference 1994*, page 10).

[905] The GS only mentions HIV and AIDS once in the report this year. 'This means that we need to rebuild our human resources. Find new ways of preparing our clergy to meet the new challenges of HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and rediscovering of our cultural values that have been with us for ages' (General Secretary's Report 1998, page 3). In the President's Address 1998 HIV and AIDS is also almost neglected: 'The problems are the epidemic of aids, the horror of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse' (Presidential address 1998, page 2-3).

AIDS: A Special Challenge to the Church in our Times

There are battles that we must at best avoid simply because they are unwinnable. There are battles which, no matter the outcome, you never emerge unscathed. There are battles which, we cannot evade, which we do not engage because we are assured of victory, the kind where conscience obliges us to get in. One such battle confronting the Church in our times is the battle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is not yet clear whether as Churches of diverse traditions, we have come to the full realization of the challenge of AIDS. Reading from how various Churches are responding to the crisis, there seem to be a self assurance that we are on the right path. The evidence points to the contrary. It is clear that despite our voluminous sermons and moralism, the danger is engulfing our villages and cities.

In some respect, the Church is a late starter, like shouting fire when the house is long consumed. Looking at Papers submitted at the 1995 SACC Consultation on "Being the Church in South Africa Today" almost all papers dealt with the problematic of Church State relationship. There was disturbing sidelining of the AIDS question.[906]

It is striking that even in 2001 nothing is said about what the churches should do about the pandemic. The only thing the GS points out is that moralism is not the answer. The GS makes reference to different passages in the report from the 1995 Consultation. Having done that, he states that there is no plan of action to hand.[907] Again the GS expresses himself about the moral aspect, but this time moral leadership is required. (One suspects that there is a difference between moral leadership and moralism.) He continues to argue that the moralistic sermons of the church only reach those who are already converted – and perhaps not even them.

There are many young people to whom the moral law of abstinence is written in their hearts, and they do not abstain for fear of contracting AIDS or for fear of being caught, or for fear of the Church of their parents. To them it is simply a matter of their choice. But there are millions others who, despite their sincerest wishes, despite their vow to wait, falter. The tragedy is a majority of these are in our homes and churches, they are amongst our choirs and youth groups. Does it matter to us that these young people may have sinned but they do not need to die? I am formulating these questions as provocatively as possible because there is a tendency in Church talk to play with words. The question is clear: under what conditions will it take us to advocate the use of condoms as a weapon against the spread of AIDS? We

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[906] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 12-13.

[907] 'Despite this marginalisation of so important an issue, the Conference Statement "Reconstructing and Renewing the Church in South Africa named AIDS as one of the challenges which require moral leadership. It said:

"Many diseases are exacerbated by poverty and poor health service. The pandemic of HIV/AIDS constitutes a serious threat to society."

However, despite this discerning observation, not [no] plan of action was developed around this challenge' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 13).

either say never ever, or we acknowledge that in this matter, we have are [have been] unwilling to speak and therefore counsel each person to consult their conscience. [908]

This is an example of the *'Prevention' discourse,* but there is also a discursive struggle between this discourse and the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. One can even say that there are two different moralising ministry discourses. The GS admits that the youth falter, meaning that, as he puts it, they sin. At the same time, a bit later in his report, he strongly denies promiscuity as a cause of the spread in Africa.

> One thing that must be refuted with all strength we can master is the fallacy that Africa has AIDS because we are promiscuous, engage in immorality, or that we have forsaken the ways of the kingdom. [909]

One can see in these quotations an ambivalence about two different arguments. First, the GS, as leader of the SACC, has to condemn sexuality outside wedlock. At the same time he does not want to admit that this is the cause of the spread of HIV and AIDS. The aim of his argument, when he includes thoughts about California and Scandinavia[910], is to argue that condoms are needed. This is an example of the *'Prevention' discourse*, which at the same time supports the argument behind the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. If there were no sex outside marriage, there would be no need for condoms. If the GS argues that condoms must be permitted, this is the same as admitting that there is promiscuity, at least to a certain extent. This antagonism is solved by the argument that in saying yes to condoms, the church should also go beyond the condomising message.

> The problem for the Church is that when we say we need to go beyond, some interprets that to mean a denial of the starting point. We must say a categorical yes to Condoms, but as a value driven community, we need to raise the stakes and say AIDS is just more than fluids transmitted during sexual intimacy.[911]

So, finally, he comes to the point. He wants to see the scourge of HIV and AIDS as a phenomenon with many facets. There are other questions involved and all these have to be taken into account.

> AIDS involves a number of challenges such as:
> * gender equality question;
> * challenges cultural taboos, especially in Africa about what parents are to speak to their children about sex;

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[908] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 14.
[909] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.
[910] The whole paragraph about AIDS in the General Secretary's Report 2001 is found in appendix 4.
[911] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.

- challenges customary practices, especially in our rural areas where women have no say in matters of sexual partners including the practice of polygamy;
- questions of our capitalist system that has turned sex into a commodity which sells products;
- raises serious ethical question around the morality of the pharmaceutical industry which puts profits before people;
- raises serious question about how we care for those terminally ill, about our caring systems in general and the present commercialisation of hospitals in the name of efficiency;
- raises critical questions of poverty, access to health services; and
- finally, AIDS raises question how we bury, especially as Africans.[912]

We can see that the GS in this list has got examples of many different discourses. In the case of polygamy he is close to the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*, but one can argue that the polygamy argument also is part of a *'Structural' discourse*. There are also other examples of this *'Structural' discourse*, especially in relation to poverty. There is a *'Care giving' discourse* as well as an example of the *'Prevention' discourse*. One discourse that is not directly obvious is the *'Fight the stigma' discourse*.

In 2004 the GS admits that the work with HIV and AIDS has not always been successful. The question is whether this paragraph refers to the SACC or to the nation as whole. One option could also be that it criticises the government.

> Our narrative would not be complete without mentioning our moments of shame / ... / when we failed to act decisively to confront the scourge of HIV/AIDS. We also witnessed unprecedented levels of moral degeneration ...[913]

The Council, like many of its member churches, has a problem finding a focus for the fight against HIV and AIDS. This is also said in one paragraph in the Minutes 2004.[914] The documents are either vague or give examples from almost every facet of the scourge. In order to understand more about how the prophetic ministry has been articulated in texts about HIV and AIDS we need to look for examples of the different discourses and see if some of them are more frequent than the others – and also how they are related to one another.

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[912] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.

[913] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 3.

[914] 'Many churches want to do something but are not sure what to do or how to go about it; some that are already doing something are struggling and need to be encouraged' (National Conference 2004, Minutes 04.14.03).

5.4.2 The *'Prevention' discourse*

The first mention of the disease, as we have already seen, is in the *Message to the Churches* of the NC 1991:

> This conference, having spent time informing itself on the urgent crisis facing the country as a result of the rapid spread of aids and its deadly consequence, calls upon the Church to give urgent attention to this issue. In particular we challenge churches to undertake frank, positive, informed programmes of appropriate sex education among adults, young people and even children as a matter of grave urgency, and to co-operate in preparing course material and training educators. All our people need to be informed as to what AIDS is, what its consequences are, what measures can be taken to avoid its spreading.[915]

This statement focuses on prevention. This is not a common discourse in the material on a whole, but in the following year, 1992, one of the resolutions deals with the AIDS pandemic at length, and prevention is also part of that text.[916] In this case it is intertwined with other discourses such as the *'Structural' discourse* and the *'Care giving' discourse*. The resolution from 1992 continues with prevention issues.[917] Even when the need for theological reflection is on the agenda, prevention is the main objective:

> To develop a positive theology of human sexuality, to enable people to come to mature responsible decisions.[918]

In 2001 other perspectives dominate, but in one of the resolutions the Council talks about prevention.[919] In the GS report 2004 not much is said about prevention, except at the beginning when talking about the Council's overall objective:

> **To contribute towards reducing the spread of HIV infections ...**[920]

In that year's resolution the prevention part is not significant at all. The *'Prevention' discourse* is more prevalent in the early 1990s than it is later. Although it is mentioned in both

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[915] National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, point 6, page 3.

[916] 'The Churches should not abdicate their prophetic ministry in challenging social injustices which are conducive to the spread of HIV?AIDS [HIV/AIDS], e.g. the overcrowded prisons, rapes and prostitution' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 22, point 1).

[917] 'To disseminate information on HIV/AIDS training/trainers and the risks involved, eg the importance of the use of condoms'(National Conference 1992, Resolution 22, point 4).

[918] National Conference 1992, Resolution 22, point 6.

[919] 'Acknowledging the devastating impact of the AIDS pandemic on our communities, Conference RESOLVES

- That the SACC encourage churches to adopt a mindset of prevention in dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to develop pro-active measures aimed at *eradicating* the disease, rather than just pursuing an "ambulance ministry"' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6).

[920] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8-9.

2001 and 2004, it does not play a major role. Before we draw any conclusions from this, we need to look how the other discourses have been part of the material.

5.4.3 The *'Care giving' discourse*

The focus in this discourse is the argument that care-giving is an important task for the church to promote. Also included are issues of counselling, medication, and treatment – aspects of the care that society can give. In 1992, although the resolutions deal mostly with prevention, there are examples of this *'Care giving' discourse*.

> Local congregations to be assisted in establishing HIV?AIDS [HIV/AIDS] units in co-operation with other Churches and organisations. Churches offer these as a programme permeating all the work of the Church in unconditional acceptance and care-giving. [921]

The resolutions also underline the importance of counselling[922] that can be seen as a part of the care-giving side, although it could also contain aspects of prevention. A year later, in 1993, not much is said about the pandemic. Neither the GS nor the President mentions AIDS, and the only resolution to deal with the pandemic does so in a very diplomatic way, calling it a sensitive issue. The only obvious discourse in this resolution is the *'Care giving' discourse*.[923] There are signs of a *'Prevention' discourse* in this resolution, but mostly it is about care-giving. Compared with the resolution of 1992, this one is more careful. The use of the word 'sensitive' clearly indicates the problem mentioned above, as the Council focuses on how to meet the disease. In 2001 the GS suggests only home-based care as a concrete action the churches should adopt.

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[921] National Conference 1992, Resolution 22, point 3.

[922] 'To train people in care-giving and counselling' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 22, point 5).

[923] 'Conference recognises that HIV/AIDS is a sensitive issue in some Churches but one which must be addressed.
(1) To motivate the Churches to take the issue seriously and to utilise their local recourses for HIV/AIDS programmes;
(2) to co-operate with the Churches in providing training, awareness-raising and conselling [counselling] and support for persons living with Aids:
(3) to provide workshops on human sexuality in co-operation with the Faith and Mission Unit' (National Conference 1993, Resolution 5).

It is worth noting that although HIV/Aids was reaching pandemic stages in 1998, National Conference gave no directive. The Council began to address the issue only in 1999[924] and it has only been since 2001 that a staff person has been assigned full responsibilities to coordinate the programme. In that time;

ü   The programme facilitated the SACC's involvement in the National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD) campaign against HIV/Aids targeting the mobilization of religious leaders and the setting up home based care and counseling [counselling] centres.

ü   The programme has also been part of Southern African regional consultation on HIV/Aids, which sought to find ways of sharing strategies and developing effective networks among, churches in the region. Subsequently the programme was given the task of coordinating this regional initiative.

ü   A national strategic planning workshop was convened and it produced a strategy document of how the SACC can intervene meaningfully in the HIV/Aids struggle.[925]

The *'Care giving' discourse* is the only obvious discourse in this section. Apart from the message of care-giving, the resolution deals with HIV and AIDS only in general terms, and states that there is a lack of strategy in the work. In the 2001 resolutions too, the care-giving aspect is at the forefront.[926] The *'Care giving' discourse* is the most common in the material, and this is also the case in the GS report 2004, where the GS wants to

• **establish and build the capacity of denomination and provincial HIV and AIDS support Committees as Resource Teams to deal with community care systems and to look at issues of bereavement and orphans.**[927]

But in this context too there is some confusion about the role of the churches. Much of the material speaks in general terms about the programmes.[928] The care-giving part, though, is a safe focus, as in a resolution from the NC 2004 that also speaks about medication:

Whilst noting the decision of the 2001 Conference on HIV and AIDS, Conference further:

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[924] But the GS is wrong to say that it was only addressed in 1999. As we have shown, the pandemic had been addressed before that year. Perhaps he suggests that the way it was addressed before 1999 was not sufficient. One interpretation is that the GS is talking about whether or not the staff at Khotso House dealt with it.

[925] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 8-9.

[926] ' • That the SACC hold a theological consultation within the next year to develop joint strategies for dealing with the pandemic and to review the training of clergy and the teaching of the church in order to minister most appropriately to people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS;

• That the SACC should, together with all its member churches, commit itself to practical demonstrations of compassion, such as making its facilities available for the treatment, care and sustenance of infected and affected people as well as caregivers:

• That SACC member churches be encouraged to provide chaplains to caregivers' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6).

[927] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8-9.

[928] 'The first draft of the SACC's HIV and AIDS Training Manual was presented to the Task Team. The Unit facilitated three HIV/AIDS education workshops. These were five-day training events with a three pronged thrust, viz., updated and reliable HIV education, facilitation skills training and addressing individual perception and attitudes. Participants in the events were provincially identified groups of ten people who now serve as the provincial HIV/AIDS Resource Teams. The participating group included youth, women and clergy' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8-9).

1. **Encourages** member churches and theological training institutions to develop an appropriate theological response to the HIV and AIDS crisis. A theology of life that deals positively with suffering and the loving acceptance of those affected;

2. **Encourages** dialogue between the medical profession and traditional healer;

3. **Welcomes** the roll out of the anti-retroviral medications and urges the Department of Health to accelerate the process within the context of appropriate treatment;

4. **Urges** member churches to assist HIV and AIDS orphans financially and in other ways; and

5. **Instructs** the NEC to offer practical leadership to member churches in developing appropriate HIV and AIDS responses within their churches and communities and to extend programmes to areas that are presently under-served.[929]

This *'Care giving' discourse* is common throughout the whole period. One question, however, is whether it really is an example of a prophetic ministry, or just part of Christian compassion. This is a question one could elaborate on. In many contexts it is indeed a prophetic statement to care for people living with HIV and AIDS. But this thesis, as I have stated several times, deals not with actions but with verbal articulations. When I ask whether care-giving is part of a prophetic voice or not, I comment only on the verbal side of the issue. The argument is that it is not provocative to say that one should give care. The act of giving this care, though, could in many cases be seen as provocative, partly because it would be to fight the stigma – and that leads us into the next paragraph.

Overall the *'Care giving' discourse* is the most common discourse in the material. One reason could be that it is less provocative than the others.

5.4.4 The *'Fight the stigma' discourse*

With a few exceptions, the real fight against stigmatisation only begins in 2004. In the 1992 texts no such message can be found, but in the GS report 1995 AIDS is mentioned in an anti-stigmatisation way.

> While some Churches work on AIDS too many Churches are still maintaining a narrowly moralistic and judgemental attitude which increase stigmatisation and exclusion.[930]

We can see that a *'Fight the stigma' discourse* is in direct opposition to the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. The resolution of 2001 contains the same kind of message:

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[929] National Conference 2004, Resolution 9.
[930] General Secretary's Report 1995, point 2.4.5, page 10.

- That the SACC denounce all forms of discrimination, including the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS, and work to create an environment conducive for people to declare their HIV/AIDS status and to undergo voluntary testing and counselling.[931]

It is in the GS report of 2004 that the fight against stigma becomes a priority. It also contains other discourses, like the *'Care giving' discourse* and the *'Prevention' discourse*, but those are in no way opposed to the *'Fight the stigma' discourse*.

> Overall Objective
>
> The Unit articulated its goal for the programme in the following overall objective:
>
> **To contribute towards reducing the spread of HIV infections and creating an environment of acceptance and care for people infected with an affected by HIV and AIDS.**[932]

When the report gives an overview of the activities in this field, we can see that the Council has actively addressed the government and even Parliament on these issues.[933] But all along the fight against stigma is the focus.

- **mobilise churches to publicly condemn stigma and discrimination and to actively promote Christian and positive living.**[934]

The report gives many examples of how this has been done, and constantly underscores that de-stigmatisation is the objective.[935] One of the points in the resolution in 2004 is also an expression of this discourse:

> 1. **Encourages** member churches and theological training institutions to develop and appropriate theological response to the HIV and AIDS crisis. A theology of life that deals positively with suffering and the loving acceptance of those affected;[936]

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[931] National Conference 2001, Resolution 6.

[932] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8.

[933] 'The staff in the Unit had been involved in numerous activities ranging from public acts of demonstration such as marching on Parliament, conducting programmes to raise awareness about destigmatising HIV/AIDS, participating in consultations, representing the SACC at various meetings both nationally and globally, making submission to the Health department, developing the training manual and hosting visitors, coordinating and facilitating training events, preparing and circulating material for World Aids day events' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8).

[934] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8.

[935] 'The activities included the production and distribution of posters, de-stigmatisation campaigns by local churches, a television campaign and the World Aids Day Campaign. The poster production activity aims at conveying positive messages that would contribute to de-stigmatise HIV/AIDS as a visible medium.
For our World Aids Day Campaign we produced a series of Posters, Fact Sheets and Bible Studies. The theme for the year was 'Care for and support the HIV infected and affected'. Thirty one thousand posters, 155 000 leaflets and 1000 Bible studies had been produced in English, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Venda, Tsonga and seSotho. The Provincial Councils and offices of our member churches distributed these to local congregations' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8).

[936] National Conference 2004, Resolution 9.

The *'Fight the stigma' discourse* is in a way more congenial with the prophetic message than the *'Care giving' discourse*. But in this respect one can also argue that it becomes more provocative when words are turned into action.

5.4.5 The *'structural'* discourse

When we talk about a *'Structural' discourse*, it is to be contrasted with the individualistic discourse that I see mainly in the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. The *'Structural' discourse* takes its point of departure in the understanding that the causes of HIV and AIDS are to be found on a structural level. It could mean that poverty is the cause, or lack of political will on the part of the government. This discourse is common when the Council addresses itself to the government. Other discourse like the *'Care giving' discourse* and the *'Prevention' discourse* can still be part of such statements, but when the government is the addressee, the overall discourse sees the problem as structural. The resolution about HIV and AIDS in 1992 has this element:

1. That relentless pressure be placed on the government to provide facilities, for awareness raising, prevention and treatment – especially in the rural areas.
2. Pressurise the government to make relevant drugs available free of charge to people with HIV/AIDS.
3. Pressurise the government to subsidise research into developing a cure for this epidemic.
4. To promote a caring community with people trained and equipped for home-based care.
5. To network with other Churches and health institutions eg in Health Protection Week.
6. Welcomes the appointment of a staff person to co-ordinate and administer an HIV/AIDS Programme in the SACC.
   This staff person should:
   6.1   Liaise with the Churches to enable formation of local Churches' AIDS Programmes.
   6.2   Seek funding for Regional Training Workshops, assisting with the attendance of participants, and the production of vernacular material for the various media.[937]

It is notable that the *'moralising ministry' discourse*, which speaks especially about the relationship between sexual behaviour and the pandemic, is scarce in connection with this *'Structural' discourse*. There can still be openness to the role the individual plays in fighting the disease, but not in a moralistic way.

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[937] National Conference 1992, Resolution 22.

In the material there are also examples of structural problems being addressed without the HIV and AIDS pandemic being mentioned. This is the case when the Council President 1994 writes about the role of the Church. Nothing is said explicitly about AIDS, although he is talking about medical care and relates it to the role of the State.

> So the Early Church was very practical and the modern Church of South Africa needs to have a great togetherness in order practically to meet the huge human needs around us in the areas of hunger, unemployment, clothing, housing, medical care, education and all sorts of other things which cannot be left simply to the State.[938]

Instead of speaking out critically about the role of the authorities, the President of the SACC almost exculpates the government. This is no surprise. The year is 1994, and the government is new. It has a huge task ahead of it. The whole society, of which the SACC is an important part, supports the idea of nation-building, reconstruction, and development. The State is sometimes even saluted for its actions:

> We must support the Minister of Health in her initiatives to fight and contain AIDS. The Annual Anti-Natal [Ante-natal] Patient Survey of November 1994 has shown that about 1.2 million people in South Africa are HIV positive. We salute Dr Nkosazana Zuma, our Minister of Health, for increasing the budget for AIDS healing and control to R 85,5 million.[939]

Although the government is commended, this is part of a *'Structural' discourse*. On the other hand, in 2001 the SACC President is critical on a structural level. But his critique is against the medical companies, not the government. And in blaming the companies he is trying to defend the government.

> It is regrettable that debates on the causes of HIV/AIDS have led to feelings and perceptions that South Africa is not committed to fighting this pandemic. Our economic systems have not come to our rescue but have also contributed also to the spread of the infections rates, as pharmaceutical company saw it fit to deny access to medication to the majority to drugs that treat opportunistic infections. Profits have become the priority than the millions lives of the infected people.[940]

If the government can be defended it can also be criticised, as in one of the resolutions in 2001, where the situation is described differently. Medical treatment is still the focus, but in this case the government is part of the target.

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[938] Presidential address 1994, page 9.

[939] General Secretary's Report 1995, point 2.4.5, page 10. (Simple arithmetic shows that this increase gives the authorities about ZAR70 per person to spend on fighting the pandemic. Even though the exchange rate was different in 1994 – USD 1 equalling ZAR3.50 – this was still not a big amount for such a serious disease.)

[940] Presidential address 2001, page 6.

- That the SACC should, together with other organizations who are involved in lobbying the government, work to ensure the availability of free anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS, including Nevirapine for all pregnant women and their newborns, and the provision of adequate health care for all South Africans;[941]

Even if the government is part of the problem, the Council still directs itself more to the private sector. The tone of the resolution is polite when it talks about engaging with business. The task to provide medication is not primarily seen as the task of the State.[942] Whether directed at the State or the private sector, the articulations are still examples of the *'Structural' discourse*. The same is clear in the GS report of 2004. The GS, in his account of activities, mentions a few areas that are examples of a *'Structural' discourse*, although intertwined with other discourses, such as the *'Prevention' discourse* and the *'Care giving' discourse*.

- **monitor and influence policy formulation on HIV and Aids.**
The Unit (on behalf of the SACC) and with the assistance of the Public Policy Liaison Unit, presented a written submission to the Gauteng Portfolio Committee on Health on 26th June 2003. We urged them to implement and campaign for the introduction of a Comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Plan.
- **lobby for access to treatment, appropriate facilities and basic health care for all.**
The Director and General Secretary joined other church leaders in Cape Town in a 'march on parliament' which was held in support of the Treatment Action Campaign's (TAC) demand for the implementation of a National Treatment Plan. The Unit represents the SACC on the Executive Committee of TAC thereby enabling it to actively participate in the discussion and decision-making process of the TAC.
The SACC has entered into a partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation to develop resource material on sex and sexuality for the churches. The aim of this project is to get the churches to reflect theologically on these issues and through it enable them to communicate effectively with their constituencies. This project will focus on clergy youth leaders and parents.[943]

In the second of those points reference is made to the need for theological reflection about sexuality. There is no sign, however, that the hidden discourse is a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. When the government is approached, the discourse is structural. In the resolutions about HIV and AIDS in 2004 there are no examples of the *'Structural' discourse*.

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[941] National Conference 2001, Resolution 6.

[942] '• That the SACC engage with business to improve access to affordable medication, to provide financial and material resources to community HIV/AIDS projects and to ensure that training and treatment programmes are implemented in the work place' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6).

[943] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8-9.

5.4.6 The *'Moralising ministry' discourse*

When the President of the SACC mentions AIDS in 1994, it is an example of the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. The context is different: he speaks about structural issues, but he does so in a moralistic way:

> Political, social and economic options for a new South Africa can be tested against our fundamental Christian values, because our Christian faith is by no means neutral on such matters. For example, the Church cannot remain silent about social ailments caused by <u>drugs</u> and <u>AIDS</u>, just to mention a few.[944]

When he continues, there is an open antagonism in the text. The Council President puts two different approaches against one another: being silent about AIDS is regarded as worse than being moralistic. The comparison between drugs and AIDS supports the view that the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* is the dominant one. The unspoken thought is that AIDS is caused by sexual promiscuity. The President wants to distance himself from the moralistic approach, but at the same time he supports it by making the comparison. As he continues, his statement is an example of the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* – although he is criticising precisely the moralistic approach.

> I believe that the Church has a powerful platform with an in-built acceptable concept from which to take up the challenge, and make a compassionate and relevant response to these crises. Some Christians have reacted moralistically, while others have remained silent. Such silence can be as dangerous as drugs and AIDS themselves.[945]

While this Presidential address, although it wants to distance itself from a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*, is at the same time part of that discourse, it is different with the GS report 2001. The long section in the GS report 2001 is throughout a critique of the kind of moralising ministry he sees in the church. (See appendix 4.) We have already touched upon this in the introduction to the chapter about HIV and AIDS. As it was pointed out that even that text contains a discursive struggle. Although the GS argues against the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*, his text too contains that very same discourse. One sentence reveals this in a very clear way:

> Does it matter to us that these young people may have sinned but they do not need to die?[946]

The use of the word 'may' shows that the GS is not sure that these young people actually have sinned. The more interesting point, though, is that he does not accept the relationship between

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[944] Presidential address 1994, page 13.
[945] Presidential address 1994, page 14.
[946] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 14.

the moral behaviour and the consequences, namely that one can die from the disease. When the President deals with AIDS the same year, he does it in a more moralistic way. In this context there are no signs of any discursive struggle.

> Throughout the villages, townships and suburbs, our people are dying of the scourge of HIV/AIDS. The nation is under the threat of being extinguished from this scourge. Because of the irresponsible sexual activities, and the impoverishment of the people, the levels of infections have reached proportions that are unprecedented.[947]

This is clearly an example of a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. Even though he includes structural explanations of the disease, such as poverty, the President continues to explain the pandemic with moral behaviour in mind:

> Without the eradication of poverty, our people will continue to perish from HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and many other such diseases that have plagued our nation and continent. We should not be ashamed to call our people to return to the values of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage. At the same time, we need a strategy that is consistent with our Lord's words; "Sabbath is there for the people and not people for the Sabbath." We, therefore, need to accept that usage of protective sexual measures could be helpful but inadequate.[948]

This is an example of a hegemonic intervention that (barely) solves the antagonism between the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* and the *'Structural' discourse*. To promote the use of condoms is, in this context, a way of accepting that there are moral reasons behind the scourge. At the same time the President can admit that abstinence is not the only solution. One of the resolutions in the same year, 2001, is another example of the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*, combined with the *'Prevention' discourse*:

- That as part of its mission work, the SACC engage with the people of South Africa to promote a return to values of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage and to encourage the use of measures necessary to prevent infection;[949]

When the resolution continues to address the problem, there are more examples of this *'Moralising ministry' discourse*.[950] In the GS report 2004 there are, by contrast, very few examples of the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. When HIV and AIDS is discussed in

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[947] Presidential address 2001, page 5.
[948] Presidential address 2001, page 6.
[949] National Conference 2001, Resolution 6.
[950] 'That the SACC engage vigorously with the media, especially television broadcasters, to discourage programming that promote sexual promiscuity' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6).

relation to the youth, this is done in a more open manner.[951] In the same way, there is not as much *'Moralising ministry' discourse* in the 2004 resolution.[952]

5.4.7 Summing up:

When we read the texts about HIV and AIDS, we have to bear in mind that the analysed time period is quite short. The other orders of discourse deal with phenomena as old as humanity itself. The AIDS epidemic started around 1980. In the textual material, HIV and AIDS is first dealt with in the early 1990s. This is a problem, as the research problem is to find out how the prophetic voice changed after 1990; and in this order of discourse we have nothing to compare before 1990. We can still compare with the other orders of discourse and see whether the discourses within this order of discourse are new or have changed, compared with similar ones in other orders of discourse.

This does not in itself mean that the SACC as organisation did not deal with the issue earlier. Other levels, or head office, could possibly have dealt with the pandemic, without this being reflected in the documents of the National Councils. Having said this about the rather short time span within which we are working, we can still discern some tendencies.

When the pandemic is first mentioned, the texts are examples of the *'Prevention' discourse* and a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. In 1991 there is no critique of the government. This changes in 1992, when it is said that the government should be pressurised. The material from 1992 gives examples of several discourses. The only discourse that is not apparent is the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. Rape and prostitution for instance, are seen as examples of social injustices, and are not described in a moralistic way.

In 1993 a step in a different direction is taken, when the pandemic is described as a sensitive issue and is mentioned very carefully. The same happens in 1994. The texts about the pandemic become even more careful, showing uncertainty about what to say. So very little is

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[951] 'On 11 April 2003, the Unit cooperated with LoveLife, a NGO focussing in youth and HIV/AIDS, in hosting a one-day event to discuss and engage around the issue of HIV and youth. At the consultation, representatives from 22 churches throughout the country examined the role of the church in HIV prevention among young people. The consultation resolved that the Church had not been active enough in helping young people deal with their challenges' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 9).

[952] It seems as if the *'moralising ministry' discourse* ended in 2001. This is supported by a comment in the final remarks of the 2001 Health Report: 'It, however, remains clear that the church cannot stand adamantly by its teaching and advocacy of abstinence in an environment that has great pulls to secularism' (National Conference 2001, Health Report).

said about HIV and AIDS in 1994. There is no critique directed at the government, and in 1995 the government is even saluted. In 1998 HIV and AIDS is only mentioned once, by the GS, and in this case it is only mentioned in general terms.[953]

There is a change in the material from 2001 onwards. The GS speaks more openly. The *'Fight stigma' discourse* becomes more focused. Still there is no criticism of the government. The resolutions talk more about prevention and about lobbying the government. A march on Parliament is reported on. (As far as I understand it, this is the only time that the texts reflects such an activity after 1994.) The President of the Council, on the other hand, is rather moralistic. From the Minutes 2004 one can see that working with AIDS is a problem for many churches, but there are examples of many different discourses in the material. This year, though, there is no example of a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. By contrast, the *'Fight stigma' discourse* is more focused.

One interesting finding is that the *'Fight stigma' discourse* never appears together with the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. The reason could be that as soon as the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* occurs, there is a risk that people become stigmatised. To blame the government or pharmaceutical companies is a way of de-stigmatising people.[954]

The SACC deals with the matter in the early 1990s and in the early 2000s, but not around 1994. The reason could be that the SACC does not want to worry the Government of National Unity (GNU).

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[953] According to the annual report of the Health Unit, in its 1998 strategic review the SACC '… identified Health as one of its five programmatic Key Performances Areas (KPA)' (Annual Report of the SACC 2000, KPA Health). But a full-time Director was never appointed. According to the report there were two reasons for not doing that: First, the SACC lacked funds, and second, the Provincial Councils were regarded as the implementers. The effect of the first consideration was that the staff of the Capacity Building Unit was assigned the task of dealing with HIV and AIDS issues. The fact that the SACC couldn't afford a full-time Director is remarkable. In the budget proposal for the year, the SACC identified HIV/AIDS as '… the most difficult and complex challenge for the Nation' (Annual Report of the SACC 2000, KPA Health). In the Health report to National Conference 2001, the Capacity Building Unit says: 'Our International Partners, as well, at the stage, did not identify HIV/AIDS as a priority' (National Conference 2001, Health Report). The report even says that '… it was only 1999 that the Council began to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic more seriously' (National Conference 2001, Health Report).

[954] In the discussion we shall come back to this dilemma. If the churches do not address moral issues, there is a tendency that individuals are not made responsible. Responsibility or guilt belongs to the government or the structures. If on the other hand moral issues are addressed, it easily leads to stigmatisation. Another possible discourse, which is almost nonexistent, is what we could call a gender-powered structures discourse. The exception is the GS report 2001, which states:

'AIDS involves a number of challenges such as:

- gender equality question; / … /
- challenges customary practices, especially in our rural areas where women have no say in matters of sexual partners including the practice of polygamy' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15).

In all the texts about HIV and AIDS, the prophetic voice is calm. There are no examples of the intensity found in the fight against apartheid, although AIDS is said to be the new Kairos. This could be described as a change in the prophetic voice. We can express it like this: Before 1990 the SACC is prophetic in a distinctive way in relation to the Kairos. After 1990 the SACC is prophetic in a more careful way in relation to the Kairos. Generally speaking, there is very little criticism of the government.

5.5   Good neighbours

The *Zimbabwe order of discourse*

FInally, a specific order of discourse will be our focus: occasions when the Council has articulated its prophetic voice in relation to Zimbabwe. This was one of the preconceptions I had, to which I referred in chapter three. To shed light on the issue, I shall also include examples when the SACC has criticised governments of other African countries. One might suspect that the SACC would express itself differently towards other regimes, depending on whether they were led by white people or black people.

'Criticising other African countries' discourse

'Being hesitant to criticise other African countries' discourse
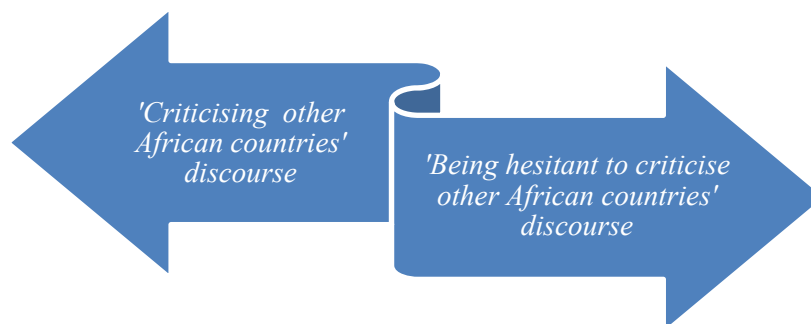
Figure 5: Discourses within the *Zimbabwe order of discourse*

5.5.1 Comment on other African countries

In this aspect of the prophetic voice of the SACC, a perception lurks that the SACC might be a bit hesitant to voice criticism of other African countries. There are examples of the SACC

criticising European countries where the texts express a calling to be a prophetic voice.[955] Equally there are prophetic statements about the situation in neighbouring African states. Although the Zimbabwe issue has been the most important question to study, I shall start with some statements about Mozambique. In 1980 the GS and one of the resolutions deal with this neighbouring country:

> Perhaps we should send a cable to President Samora Machel of Mozambique appealing to him to lift travel restrictions on Church leaders and calling for greater freedom for Mozambican churches to carry on their work without let or hindrance, because enemies of the struggle for liberation are delighted to point to instances of oppression and persecution in black-ruled countries.[956]

The reason for criticising Samora Machel is obviously not for what he is doing or not doing, but for how his actions are used by enemies of the struggle. The message sent to the President of Mozambique contained these sentences:

> We share your concern for liberation in Southern Africa and believe that you would not want the ending of white minority rule as oppression in reverse – the more so as this would harden the hearts of those who stand in the way of liberation in this country.
>
> We are disturbed by reports of restrictions on church leaders wishing to travel to other countries where relevant church meetings are being held, and appeal to your government to lift whatever restrictions impede participation in the fellowship of the Worldwide Church. Also to review any hindrances to the rightful worship and witness of the Churches in Mozambique.[957]

It is clear that the SACC finds it possible to criticise another African country. At one stage the GS generalises, addressing leaders throughout the continent.

> I find it galling as a black man to have to acknowledge as I have done on other occasions, that often there is much less real freedom and liberty in most of independent Africa, than there was under the much vilified colonial era. But as Christian I must speak the truth in love; injustice and oppression are injustice

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[955] In the early 1990s the GS discusses the changes in Europe: 'Whilst we are not opposed to the unifications of Europe we need to determine what our prophetic responsibility is in ensuring that the "New Europe" is born on the basis of economic justice in relation to people of the Third World rather than for the purposes of economic power at the expense of the poor in the world' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 17 point 12.2). The GS also has views on the former Eastern Europe: 'To this end various initiatives are being considered to dialogue with our sister and brothers from both the West and the "new" Eastern Europe to learn from their success and failures and then determine what God would like us to do as God's instruments in carrying our God's mission in the world. I believe strongly, on the basis of my understanding of the Kingdom concept, that the future system for South Africa is beyond the present system, there, ahead of us we need to strive for. Those who are striving for the Kingdom of God must refuse to be arrested by the present system nor worship them. Our mission is to call them to move ahead towards the justice of God' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 18).

[956] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 12-13.

[957] Resolution 1980 about Afghanistan and Mozambique.

and oppression whether they are perpetrated by a white or a black ruler and we must condemn them equally whoever the perpetrator.[958]

Only one example of texts criticising other African countries is found from the time after 1990. In 1993 Angola is on the agenda, and the GS wants the NC

> ... to strongly call on UNITA to stop the war and return to the negotiation table.[959]

We can name this the *'criticising other African countries' discourse*. It is not common, but it is part of the material.

5.5.2 Comment on Zimbabwe

In the 1980s only praise is given to the leader of Zimbabwe.[960] Quite soon thereafter, the GS is prepared to speak out critically against Mugabe.[961] For the rest of the 1980s and the 1990s, prophetic articulations towards Zimbabwe are not found at all. In 2004 the situation in Zimbabwe has become acute. Therefore the GS and resolutions deal with the issue openly:

> This Conference is not about Zimbabwe. However, it would be a grave miscarriage of what we are about as a community rooted in the prophetic tradition of those who hunger for justice were we to gather here as Churches and not formulate a word about Zimbabwe.[962]

The GS is really trying to say something, but the whole paragraph lacks the clarity he seeks. He blames both division in South Africa and the churches in Zimbabwe:

> We are also painfully aware that no other matter has the potential to divide our people as the matter of Zimbabwe. Yet we dare not be silent for fear of saying the unpalatable words. The problem is not made easier by the realization that our counterparts in Zimbabwe, the Churches, send conflicting words to us.[963]

But in the end he cannot criticise the government of Zimbabwe or Mugabe. The only promise is to meet the government.

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[958] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 8.
[959] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 22.
[960] 'We give thanks for the victory of Mr Mugabe and even for his magnanimity in working for reconciliation and national unity' (General Secretary's Report 1980, page 20). And 'Mr. Mugabe must be commended very warmly on their outstanding performance which has exceeded by far the wildest dreams of their well-wishers' (General Secretary's Report 1981, page 8).
[961] 'It is alleged that in putting down Ndebele dissident supporters of Mr Joshoua Nkomo, who has fled the country, Government forces have killed many innocent civilians. Your General Secretary has sent a number of messages to Mr Mugabe asking for details of the situation as well as suggesting that a judicial commission be appointed to deal with the allegations in a way that would satisfy everybody. I also offered my services as a mediator between Mr Mugabe and Mr Nkomo' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 16).
[962] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 20.
[963] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 20.

We promise that an urgent meeting of eminent Church leaders be held with our government to share with them our sorrow. We need to admit that we do not have solutions and we do not prescribe what our government should be doing which they are not doing. But we need to share with them our pain about Zimbabwe.[964]

One of the resolutions this year also comments on the Zimbabwe issue, but the Council does not really take a stance.[965] There is carefulness in the resolution. President Mugabe is not mentioned by name. The question is whether the statements of the SACC are somehow adjusted to match the silent diplomacy of the government of South Africa. This is an area where one needs to read material from other parts of the SACC such as the NEC, different departments, and even church leaders' meetings. Suffice it to say that the prophetic ministry concerning Zimbabwe has not been very outspoken in the National Conference context. We call this the *'being hesitant to criticise other African countries' discourse*.

We can discern another kind of discourse when in 2004 the GS suggests that an urgent meeting be held with the government; this is a prophetic discourse we shall return to later, namely a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. This will, however, be elaborated on in the next chapter.

5.5.3 Summing up:

The SACC articulates its prophetic voice in relation to other African countries. This does not happen often, but it happens. In relation to the president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, this

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[964] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 21.

[965] 'Conference:
- **Decries** the tragedy of Zimbabwe which has resulted in pain, suffering and dislocation for many people in Zimbabwe, as well as the erosion of human rights, the decline of the economy and the destruction of much of that country's natural heritage.
- **Regrets** the violence involved in the process of land redistribution;
- and
- **Notes** the ineffectiveness of outside intervention and the desire and efforts of many Zimbabweans to solve their problems themselves;

And therefore resolves to:
1. Express its prayerful concern for the people and churches of Zimbabwe;
2. Support the efforts of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches to arrange a Forum for dialogue that will include all political parties and representatives of civil society;
3. Call for unhindered participation of local and international Observers at the next elections to assist in creating a climate of free and fair elections;
4. Call on members of the National Council of Churches in the FOCCISA region to support one another when crises beset our people; and
5. Affirm the SACC programme of solidarity and pastoral involvement with the people and Churches of Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean refugees in South Africa' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 1).

critique is both negative and positive before 1990. The examples belong to the *'criticising other African countries' discourse*. After 1990 the texts do not criticise Zimbabwe, but show examples of the *'being hesitant to criticise other African countries' discourse*.

When the GS suggests a meeting with the government, without declaring his view on the matter, it is an example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*, to which we shall return in the second reading.

5.6   Summing up the first reading

What we have set out in this chapter is a first reading of the material, based on combined hermeneutical and discourse theoretical premises. The first aim has been to understand what the texts are saying. Second, the texts have been put into their historical context. Thereafter the aim has been to analyse how a prophetic voice is articulated from a discourse analytical perspective. This approach has meant that a number of different threads have been followed. We have done this through the different, and sometimes incompatible, orders of discourse, as well as through discerning a number of different, and also incompatible, discourses. It is now time to see how all these threads relate to one another. In this summary I shall first recall the different orders of discourse and discourses and how they have changed over time. Second, I shall see how some of these threads belong together. Some articulations or examples I shall leave out. Finally, I shall summarise which of the findings will be brought into the second reading of the material.

It is self-evident that the texts of the SACC after 1990 – and especially after 1994 – have to change in respect of the ethnicity issue. With this I do not say that the situation with different ethnic groups living together, sometimes in harmony and sometimes not, has gone away. But apartheid is gone as a legal political system. This is a fundamental change, although the relations between the different ethnic groups have not changed as dramatically. Racism is still there. Through the reading of the texts we have seen that the SACC continues the fight after 1994, and that the target is changed from apartheid to racism in general, and xenophobia, tribalism, etc. in particular. Using discourse theoretical terminology, we say that the *'Apartheid is against God's will' discourse*, the *'The SACC is not doing enough to end apartheid' discourse* and the *'End apartheid' discourse* have been replaced by the *'Racism is against the will of God' discourse* and a *'The SACC is not doing enough to end racism' discourse*. The major change is that we find no *'End racism' discourse*. The Council regards

the existence of racism in different forms as a natural part of human existence. The message in the texts is that the fight against racism is, in a sense, futile. Racism will always be there. Therefore the texts continue to use ethnic classification after 1990, even though the Council regards ethnic classification as totally wrong. This has to do with two other issues, namely affirmative action and BEE. Although these are not dealt with more than a few times, the examples indicate that the SACC is in favour of the programmes. There are no examples, though, of the *'Apartheid classification' discourse*. The dominating discourse is the *'Freedom charter classification' discourse* with a notable change: The term 'black' is sometimes replaced by the term 'African', which means 'black' in the narrow sense. On the other hand, there are examples of the *'Different qualities given to different groups' discourse*. There are examples where different qualities are ascribed to different ethnic groups even after 1996, although the new Constitution of the country is both non-racist and non-sexist, especially in relation to HIV and AIDS. Overall the Council has not managed to do away completely with ethnic division.

If I now bring the reconciliation aspect into the analysis, there is in this respect a power struggle where the one side is a *'Church theology' discourse*, with the risk of ecclesiastical myopia and of adopting an individualistic approach to problems. This kind of theology tries to reach reconciliation without justice having been done. The other side in this power struggle is a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* that argues that ethnic classification still needs to be brought into the discussion, for the sake of truth, as long there are injustices between different groups.

As we have seen, there are few articulations in relation to other religions. In connection with Christian diversity there is also a difference between a *'Church theology' discourse* and a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. This is especially true in relation to the DRC. Although the texts set conditions for the acceptance of the DRC as an observer member, the DRC gets observer status and becomes a full member, even though the conditions are not met.[966] This can be explained by the fact that the SACC, like the CCSA, has a history of not discussing differences in theology between member churches.[967] Since rejecting apartheid almost achieved a *status confessionis* in the Council, one might ask how it was possible to demand a

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[966] The DRC has still not merged with the other denominations in the Dutch Reformed family.

[967] 'The theological basis of the Council is a common confession of the Christian faith of its members and is not a creedal test of Churches or individuals. The Council is not committed to any one theological understanding of the Church, and membership of the Council does not imply acceptance of any specific doctrine of the Church' (The Constitution of the SACC, Preamble).

rejection of apartheid from the DRC. The *'Church theology' discourse* won this discursive struggle, and in this respect became hegemonic.

This first reading has furthermore indicated that racism and sexism are handled totally differently in the texts. Whereas gender issues are mostly identified as women's issues, and most of time deal with female representation in the Council, men never really get into the gender discussion. There is also in this respect a difference between a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* and a *'Church theology' discourse*. The only discourse present is the *'Church theology' discourse*. When other issues are more urgent, the women keep silent for the sake of unity. We find an exception to this in relation to the land issue, where there are links to gender. This is almost the only example where social class and gender are combined.

In the *Social class sub-order of discourse* we find that the early texts do not say much about poverty. This is mainly because apartheid is seen as the root cause of poverty. When apartheid ends, the texts also believe that poverty will end. The kinship between blackness and poverty is not clearly spelt out in the texts of the SACC. The texts believe that justice will come automatically when apartheid is abolished. Here we can find a parallel to the phenomenon in the *Ethnicity sub-order of discourse*, where racism does not end. The SACC begins slowly to formulate a prophetic message with many different addressees. The *'Poverty eradication' discourse*, the more common discourse, is linked to a *'Development' discourse* rather than to the *'Liberation' discourse*. This also has to do with the kind of *'Nation-building' discourse* that is increasingly found in the material in the mid-1990s.

In the *Intersectionality order of discourse* we can thus say that there is a change after 1990, and even more in the mid-1990s. The *'Church theology' discourse* becomes more common in different contexts. The texts have more examples of discourses that aim at gradual transformation, and the liberation aspect is tuned down. This comes as no surprise, since the Council regards itself as part of the nation-building project. In the same breath, one still has to point out that the texts often relate different parts of the intersectionality concept to one another in analysing the situation of the country, or when they point out how the prophetic voice should be articulated. Although it varies, there are many examples where the texts combine at least ethnicity, gender, and social class.

If we turn to the *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse*, we see that the SACC is not a pacifist movement, although it argues for the sanctity of all life in relation to capital punishment. The kind of discourse we find is a *'Situational pacifism' discourse*, which in

some parts tends towards becoming a *'Just war' discourse*. In relation to conscientious objection, it argues for the right to follow one's conscience rather than adopting a pacifist point of view. This argumentation changes in the 1980s, when the texts suggest that conscientious objection has more to do with not taking part in an unjust war than following ones conscience. After 1990 we find that the texts about violence versus non-violence are fewer. As part of the nation-building project, the Council supports the idea of South Africa having a defence force, but, for the sake of meeting the demands of the poor, it does not give up its prophetic voice against militarisation.

In the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse* the SACC articulates a prophetic voice in a diffuse way. It is not clear what the focus is, neither who the addressee is. The *'Moralising ministry' discourse* is more prevalent here than in other orders of discourse. Since the Council starts to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic only after 1990, it is not possible to see any change *per se*. However, there are signs that the Council, which in other areas articulates it prophetic voice in a *'Structural' discourse,* does this less in connection with HIV and AIDS. In 1994, when the country gets a new government, HIV and AIDS become a sensitive issue. The texts express themselves carefully. Before and after those years the texts criticise the government, but the GNU is never criticised. This is again an expression of the *'Nation-building' discourse*, which has hegemonic status during those years. This could also explain why the Council focuses more on a moralising ministry than regarding the pandemic from a structural point of view.

In the *Zimbabwe order of discourse* we have found that the critique against other African countries in general, and against Zimbabwe in particular (which is more frequent before 1990), is replaced by a *'being hesitant to criticise other African countries' discourse* at the end of the studied period.

Before we continue to the second reading, we are going to look at how the *'moralising ministry' discourse* interacts with the *'structural' discourse*, as part of this summing up section. Thereafter we shall analyse the prophetic voice in relation to HIV and AIDS, as an interesting case study.

5.6.1 *'Moralising ministry' discourse* versus *'Structural' discourse*

The texts of the SACC at National Council are dominated by a structural discourse. Very seldom is the prophetic voice directed to the private sphere. What I call a *'Moralising ministry' discourse* is less common in the textual material from the National Conferences of the SACC. In relation to HIV and AIDS, though, it is more frequent. Why is this so? In order to shed further light on this, it is useful to describe this discourse, even when it appears in connection with issues other than HIV and AIDS. In this respect I get inspiration from De Gruchy, Cochrane and Peterson, who make a distinction between *prophetic ministry* and *moralising ministry*:

> A definition of 'Denouncing social evils/sins', was seen to be inadequate, especially when 'social' did not refer to the political but only to other social ill such as drunkenness, immorality etc. In this context it was necessary to differentiate between a 'moralising ministry' and a 'prophetic ministry'. The latter may address the same problem but does so with a critique that is total, that understands the context and deals with the issues in the context. A further essential dimension of prophecy was the function it must perform in bringing hope to people, of setting them free, and not only being a critique of the problem.[968]

I agree that there is a difference between those two ministries, although I would still refer to the moralising ministry as prophetic. Thus I choose to replace the term 'prophetic' with 'structural' in this context. In order to shed some light on how this discourse has functioned in the material of the SACC, I include some examples from other orders of discourse that are not a focus of the thesis. The first example is sexuality and family life. This example, from the NC 1970, shows that the discourse is intertwined with a *'Structural' discourse*:

> Also reported that the proposed Conference on Marriage had been postponed. The General Secretary to investigate whether this Conference should fall under the Division of Mission and Evangelism or the Division of Home and Family Life.
> When planning the conference it should be kept in mind that there are two aspects: -
> a) The training of people themselves to build successful marriages.
> b) The whole social system of the forced breakup of African families.[969]

In this example there is a link between the policies of the government and the ability of people to succeed in their marriages. This is in line, in a way, with the thoughts of De Gruchy,

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[968] John de Gruchy, James Cochrane, and Robin Peterson, *Towards a practical theology of social transformation. Workshops on practical theology. Federal Theological Seminary 10-12 Feb 1988*. Unpublished. [In the Kiestner collection 098 A – 100, Lutheran Theological Institute, Pietermaritzburg], page 22.
[969] National Conference 1970, Minutes §20, page 4.

Cochrane and Peterson. Another resolution, in 1981, speaks about pre-marriage counselling.[970] There is also a resolution about customary marriage, where the question is whether or not monogamy is safeguarded.[971] In one 1983 resolution, member churches and regional councils are asked to give attention not only to the problem of home and family life, but also to maintaining healthy family life through marriage enrichment courses.[972] Related to these questions are the relationship between houses and homes/families, on which the Interim GS 1994 touches when she argues that

> … to build houses for the people is not the same thing as building homes and families. The RDP will deliver but not homes and families. The churches can add value to the RDP by helping to create homes out of the houses and rebuilding families. Again this looks down to the question of values of our people. We need the respect for and the centrality of the family in our society.[973]

This is a sign that the SACC, after 1994, is moving towards taking a stand on the moral side of issues, rather than on the political side. Also the Council President 1994 is worried that the church is becoming inactive in the moral arena:

> The Church is busy compromising in our time in the arena of family life and sexuality, and it is extremely important that we take our stand clearly and unambiguously. Compassion, love, forgiveness, acceptance, pastoral care and all of these things are necessary. There is also the homosexual issue which is ever more prevalent. But the Bible is unequivocally clear from Genesis to Revelation that homosexuality is not an acceptable sexual lifestyle or alternate [alternative] in God's eyes. We cannot use any hermeneutical trick with passages like Romans 1 whose teaching along with that in the rest of the Bible on [in] the arena of homosexuality, is as clear as the sun is clear on a cloudless day at noon. We must not confuse the clarity of Biblical principle at this point with the appropriate practice of compassion and pastoral care. [974]

This is more or less the only example of an outspoken standpoint against homosexuality. No resolutions on that question have been passed. It is only mentioned in passing, as in the report of the GS 1983[975], who writes about violence. This is in fact a comment on the difficult role a father has, owing to structural problems. But homosexuality is still used as a negative example. In 1994, moral values are also in focus:

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[970] National Conference 1981, Resolution 21.

[971] National Conference 1981, Resolution 11.

[972] National Conference 1983, Resolution 19.4.

[973] Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 21.

[974] Presidential address 1994, pages 12-13.

[975] 'It is the violence of the migratory labour system when the father has to leave his family ekeing [eking] out a miserable existance [existence] in a single-sex hostel being prey to prostitution, drunkenness and homosexuality' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 28).

These same moral values must inform all of our society. We need an ethical economy which is directed to the eradication of poverty and to focus on a genuine care for the under privileged, a desire for the best for each other; a society which reaches out to the refugees in our midst; a culture of learning amongst young people and a sexual morality which treats all people as sacred, unique and therefore worthy of respect. We call upon the churches to reaffirm these Christian values and to promote them in every possible way. We are concerned that a strong family life and a genuine care for children, young people and the disabled should characterise our society.[976]

The SACC President 2001 takes it a step further and argues within a *'Moralising ministry' discourse* about HIV and AIDS, when he writes:

Because of the irresponsible sexual activities, and the impoverishment of the people, the levels of infections have reached proportions that are unprecedented.[977]

Still, the presence in the material of the *'moralising ministry' discourse* is minor. It is obvious that the texts are more interested in structural problems than in the private morals of the members. GS 1989 puts this plainly when he writes:

We take seriously the power of our living God, and God's infinite capacity to address the national and international dimensions of human problems rather than to restrict or reduce God's mission to the "micro" level of human problems (i.e. individual, personal, small groups, local institutions, etc), as some would like us to do. We refuse to reduce the role of the church and its mission to a peripheral one in society. The church must deal with humanity's needs at the "macro" level, to give an eschatological vision of the totality of mankind …[978]

Linked with this is of course the question whether the prophetic ministry of the Church should only be spiritual. The Council refuses to answer that call:

At the same time many members of the church of Christ may be tempted to vacate the thorny ground where political, economic and constitutional issues have to be debated and a prophetic word from the church be spoken, and instead put their energies (and money) into what appeared to them as more "spiritual issues".[979]

In 1995, however, the SACC President underscores the role of the individual in society.[980] We can thus see that these different discourses have been present in the texts. Besides a *'Structural' discourse* there is a *'Moralising ministry' discourse* that has a tendency to be both

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[976] National Conference 1994, Statement to Church and Nation.
[977] Presidential address 2001, page 5.
[978] General Secretary's Report 1989, pages 1-2.
[979] National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 1.
[980] 'Unless the individual accepts the challenges, no amount of empowerment and or training will achieve success. The answer lies with the individual, only the individual can rise to the challenge' (Presidential address 1995, page 9).

spiritual and individual. When the texts deal, for instance, with alcohol abuse, one might suspect that it would be done from an individual perspective; but instead the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* is replaced here by a *'Structural' discourse*. In 1977 the GS express views on the use of liquor.

> We need to take a more enlightened but stronger stand against the use of liquor.[981]

From this short statement it is not easy to say whether the GS argues in an individual or collective sphere. The same uncertainty we find in a resolution from 1981.[982] In 1976, though, the GS definitely comments on alcohol from a structural perspective:

> It is significant that in Soweto the buildings which were burned were the beerhalls – so long a symbol of the undoing of much of the manhood [sic] of black people;[983]

Another issue is criminality. Almost nothing is said about it; and when the GS report of 1995 touches on the problem, we cannot decide whether or not it is an example of the *'Moralising ministry' discourse*.[984] One might have expected more about crime and security. Why is this missing in the material? Especially after 1994 this is an issue that concerns the population. The same applies to corruption. The Council does not spend much time on the question of corruption either, but at least it gives it a bit more attention than it does to crime. The first time corruption is mentioned is in 1992, when the GS criticises the former apartheid government.[985] The GS also criticises the murders that the government had been accused of being behind. With both these allegations as a background, the GS suggests:

> I propose that in the case of both Government Corruption and Murders a broad based campaign should be launched to compel the Government to address these matters effectively or otherwise vacate the office of government as one would expect in any democratic society.[986]

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[981] Outgoing General Secretary's Report 1977, Point bb.), page 2.

[982] '… to seek the co-operation of the Churches with regard to educating people about the evils associated with alcohol and drugs' (National Conference 1981, Resolution 20).

[983] General Secretary's Report 1976, page 5.

[984] 'The increase in crime is the most disturbing factor. The greatest threat is the death factor especially in car-hijackings and house-breakings' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 4).

[985] 'Since July 1991 to June this year our country has been rocked with exposures of large scale government involvement in corruption and murders.

3.1 Government Corruption

The reports of the Pickard Commission on Corruption in the Department of Development Aid and the latest report of the Melamet Commission on the running of Motor Vehicle Accident Fund are just the tip of the iceberg of theft and corruption in virtually every arm of government and the "independent" homelands' (General Secretary's Report 1992, page 5).

[986] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 6.

Concerning the situation after 1994, the Council President 2001 has something to say, and is quite outspoken when he speaks about the difficulty the SACC has to avoid grandstanding and appear prophetic:

> When we do that, we need to remember that we are adding to the circle of mistrust that characterizes our national debates.
>
> The prevalence of bribes, corruption and kickbacks among the leaders and officials has take an upper-hand and, in a great way, contribute in people seeing it legitimate in engaging in such activities that bring instant wealth and materialism. As this happens, moral decadence deepens and widens, making [it] a toll [tall] order for those who [are] working hard for the moral regeneration of the South African society. We are greatly saddened that some people we knew to be committed to the emancipation of our people have deserted the values that informed our struggle for a new order. They have allowed themselves to be seduced to the world of materialism that leads to graft and corruption, which seeks to destroy us as a nation.[987]

When the President of the SACC calls for a national focus, he has moral regeneration in mind. This means that the issues of corruption and bribery are part of a *'Moralising ministry'* *discourse* rather than part of a *'Structural' discourse*. Or should the following be seen as a hegemonic intervention, where the lack of morals in some quarters can be solved by a structural, collective approach, such as the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), a government programme?[988]

> We believe that the Church has a role in that plan for renewal. Although not limited to moral regeneration, we believe that there is a contribution that the Church can play with its available resources. Greed and corruption will continue to govern this country unless we assert the values borne [born] of our spirituality, as a people in this country and continent.[989]

But there is nothing said about this in the resolutions of that same year. The GS 2004 also comments on the issue, but he does not mention corruption when he says that it is important

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[987] Presidential address 2001, page 4.

[988] 'The Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) was launched in Pretoria on 18 April 2002. From inception, it was emphasized that this campaign should be rooted in the provinces and metros, municipalities, districts, villages, townships and every local area, to ensure effective implementation. It is meant to entrench positive values among our communities. It is about commitment to high moral values as well as the high regard to the right to human dignity and all other human rights.

The Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM) is a national campaign to reclaim the nation's higher values of, among others, moral uprightness, peace, tolerance, ethically sound lifestyles, good neighbourliness, and civil responsibilities within the context of a stable South Africa' (The Presidency. Republic of South Africa, "Topical Issues. Moral Regeneration." The Presidency. Republic of South Africa, http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/main.asp?include=topics/main.htm#moral 2009-12-15).

[989] Presidential address 2001, page 6.

To work for moral reconstruction in South Africa, focussing on issues of justice, reconciliation, integrity of creation and the eradication of poverty;[990]

He becomes more outspoken:

Our core mission is to contribute towards the rebuilding of the Soul of the Nation through moral reconstruction. Our nation has been scared [scarred] by past injustices which continue to cast their shadow on the new nation we are building. Reports of corruption in every sector of our life are evidence that we need a strong recovery of moral character. Our Programmes are founded on that premise.[991]

A third time the GS 2004 discusses moral regeneration. He formulates it very diplomatically:

In the same manner, there is a growing consciousness for morality and ethics, especially in business and public office. The popularity of codes of good governance and within the NEPAD framework the African Peer Review Mechanism all point to a new appreciation of morality in politics.[992]

This is the last time anything is said in the material concerning morals. To sum up, we can see that the material does not contain many examples of a *'Moralising ministry' discourse*. There are a few exceptions to do with homosexuality and family life. In some of the examples the moralising ministry and structural issues are mixed together. This gives the sense that the SACC, when articulating its prophetic voice, is more eager to do this from a structural than from an individual point of view.

Returning to HIV and AIDS, one reflection on the material, seen from the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* perspective, is that this discourse is often a prerequisite for the Council to accept the use of condoms. One exception is the resolution from 1992, which clearly states that it is important to develop a positive theology of human sexuality. It even says that this is done to enable people to make mature responsible decisions.[993] After 1992 the texts have problems with the relationship between human sexuality and traditional Christian teachings. One suggestion is that the HIV and AIDS issue evokes a *'Moralising ministry' discourse* that was there all along, but never got an opportunity to be influential during the fight against apartheid. This issue has a lot to do with the problem of stigmatisation.

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[990] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 2.
[991] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 7.
[992] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 17.
[993] National Conference 1992, Resolution 22.

5.6.2 HIV and AIDS as a case study

When we discern different orders of discourse within the field of how the SACC argues prophetically, and relate these to the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse,* we can make some interesting observations.

In the *Ethnicity sub-order of discourse* we saw that in the texts after 1994, the term 'African' is used to mean 'black' in the narrow sense. We find that the *'Different qualities are given to different ethnic groups' discourse* is one that also occurs after 1994. The only group that is singled out in relation to HIV and AIDS is the African group, thus using 'black' in that narrow sense. There are no examples in the texts that regard HIV and AIDS as an issue for the white population.

Another question we can ask is whether the texts relate HIV and AIDS differently to different religions or Christian denominations. There are no such examples. The only time when HIV and AIDS are related to the *Religious diversity sub-order of discourse* is when the resolution about HIV and AIDS in 2004 is positive about dialogue between traditional healers and the medical profession.[994]

In some cases gender is related to the pandemic. Only women are mentioned, although it is implied that the role of men also is crucial, especially when *gender powered structures* are described. In this respect, clearly a *'Church Theology' discourse* approach is at work. Although the exposed situation of women in connection with sexuality is mentioned, and this has severe implications in relation to HIV and AIDS, the texts almost never articulate a prophetic voice about this.[995]

In the 1992 resolution the material does mention rape and prostitution, which could indicate that the relationship between men and women is addressed. But rape could also happen between persons of the same sex, especially since overcrowded prisons are included in the same sentence. Even prostitution does not necessarily include a gender perspective. Let us look at a quotation to which we already referred in another context:

> The Churches should not abdicate their prophetic ministry in challenging social injustices which are conducive to the spread of HIV?AIDS [HIV/AIDS], e.g. the overcrowded prisons, rapes and prostitution.[996]

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[994] National Conference 2004, Resolution 9, point 2.
[995] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15.
[996] National Conference 1992, Resolution 22. A 1.

This short passage is part of a longer resolution with many different points; but never in the whole resolution is the gender perspective included, even though the same National Conference also issues a *Statement of Women Participants* that includes a paragraph about HIV and AIDS. One aspect of HIV and AIDS related to gender is the notion that the woman belongs to the man. This is still widespread in many layers of South African society.[997] When the Council writes about enabling people to come to mature responsible decisions[998], a comment could have been made about this.

Another example when women are particularly held up as victims of this scourge is in the GS's Report from 2001. The GS quotes Dr Brigalia Bam in the report *Being the Church Today* when she writes that the average AIDS patient is a black young woman with a number of children, living in a disadvantaged area and being an AIDS-widow.[999] This is definitely an example of an intersectionality perspective, because it integrates many different aspects of oppression. The GS establishes that one challenge in connection with the pandemic is gender equality questions.[1000] This is probably the only example where the gender aspect is directly articulated. The GS argues that HIV and AIDS

> ... challenges customary practices, especially in our rural areas where women have no say in matters of sexual partners including the practice of polygamy ...[1001]

When one of the resolutions the same year deals with HIV and AIDS, not much is said about the gender aspect, apart from the demand that Nevirapine be given to all pregnant women and their newborns.[1002] When the resolution talks about faithfulness within marriage, nothing is said about the point made by the GS the same year, that many women have no say in the matter of sexual partners.[1003] This does not change later in the material.

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[997] 'Women are still viewed as commodities in our *lobola* system' (Bonganjalo Goba, "Searching for a New Moral Identity." in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. Barney. N. Pityana and Charles Villa-Vicencio, page 75 [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1995].). 'As the weaker vessel, the woman subordinated herself to the man and served him as the head of the household. This does not mean that the woman is or was without power in the relationship, but it does mean that she knows her place in this patriarchal world of the Afrikaner' (Jansen 2009, page 165). See also Anders Göranzon, "Perspektiv på sydafrikansk teologi." *Svensk Kyrkotidning*, no. 13 [4775] (1 April 2005), page 163.

[998] 'To develop a positive theology of human sexuality, to enable people to come to mature responsible decisions' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 22. A 6).

[999] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 13 (See further appendix 4).

[1000] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15 (See further appendix 4).

[1001] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 15 (See further appendix 4).

[1002] National Conference 2001, Resolution 6 (See further appendix 4).

[1003] 'That as part of its mission work, the SACC engage with the people of South Africa to promote a return to values of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage and to encourage the use of

In the section about studies previously done on the subject (chapter two), we came across some thoughts about how two hegemonic sexual ethical systems were said to have collapsed. Colonial conquest, among others, destroyed traditional African morality; but also the system that came in its place has been broken up by influences from the global world. The question is whether or not this has had any impact on how the texts of the SACC discuss HIV and AIDS in relation to sexuality, especially from a gender perspective. As we have seen in the previous section, there are signs that the texts relate traditional African cultural practices to the disease. No prophetic voice is articulated in the texts in this respect. The texts neither criticise nor build on these thoughts. On the other hand there are clearer indications that the other ethical system, the traditional western, colonial mindset, influences the material. When the GS 2001 talks in his report about HIV and AIDS under the heading: *AIDS: A Special Challenge to the Church in our Times*, we see a clear antagonism between a traditional, western ethical system, which comes close to the *'moralising ministry' discourse*, and a more liberal view, expressed in terms of a *'fight the stigma' discourse*.

The resolutions about rape referred to above, and the reference made to Dr Brigalia Bam, both discuss HIV and AIDS from a social class perspective. If we look for other direct connections between the *Social class sub-order of discourse* and the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse* in the rest of the material, the only issue that comes to the fore is about affordable medicine. Here one can sense some kind of *'Poverty alleviation' discourse*. It is a result of the *'Nation-building' discourse* having hegemonic status, and the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse* can easily be combined with the ministry of nation-building.

Not much is said about HIV and AIDS in connection with the *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse*.[1004] One exception has to do with the example of rape. The way the resolution talks about it, it only mentions rape as one example of social injustice; and there is no analysis of the context, which indicates that the text discusses it from a violence versus non-violence perspective.

The question is: Do the texts analyse the HIV and AIDS pandemic from an intersectionality perspective? The answer could be that this perspective is virtually non-existent. The texts do realise the seriousness of the pandemic, but the analysis of the reasons is not extensive. There

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measures necessary to prevent infection' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6. See further appendix number 4).

[1004] This comes a no surprise: Egan says that an '... urgently needed dialogue about sex in South Africa that takes into account the widespread reality of gender violence/... / remains nearly totally absent' (Egan 2007, page 456).

are few if any signs that the texts allow any reflections about power relations in the context. If references are made to ethnicity, gender, or social class, they are only made in passing. After the first reading, we can therefore conclude that the texts have no interest in analysing the reasons behind the pandemic; and thus the picture of how the SACC comes up with solutions is also disrupted. If the HIV and AIDS pandemic is the new Kairos around 2000, this lack of direction is remarkable. However, one can sense an intersectionality perspective together with a violence versus non-violence perspective in the following quotation from the GS 1998,. But the analysis is non-existent in the report, and not much is said about possible solutions. The critique is also not addressed to anyone in particular:

> This means that we need to rebuild our human resources. Find new ways of preparing our clergy to meet the new challenges of HIV/AIDS, domestic violence which affects women especially to our shame children in our community, loss of values and rediscovering of our cultural values that have been with us for ages.[1005]

Between the lines, there is a message about power relations in general and gender powered structures in particular. But it is too early to speak out about this, even in 1998.

5.6.3 Looking towards the second reading:

The first reading of the textual material showed a number of different areas where the SACC has articulated its prophetic voice. With the help of discourse theoretical premises, those areas have been summarised into four orders of discourse and a few sub-orders of discourse. When we see those different topics, it becomes clear that the prophetic voice, among other aspects, has to do with unity versus diversity. The *Intersectionality order of discourse* is a field where diversity comes to the fore in different ways. As the SACC has an aim of fostering unity, and regards this as God's will for the whole creation, it is relevant to ask how the SACC, within those orders of discourse, articulate this quest for unity.

The intersectionality concept has a bearing on power relations. It wants to shed light on the relation between superiority and inferiority. As we have seen in the *Kairos Document's* discussion of the reconciliation concept, there can be different ways of searching for reconciliation in a situation that is characterised by superiority and inferiority. The prophetic theology concept suggests that justice is a prerequisite for reconciliation. Church theology, on

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[1005] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 3.

the other hand, applies unity and reconciliation to any situation. Villa-Vicencio contributes to this discussion with the notion of regarding reconciliation as a process that can have its starting point while the parties are still far from one another and not on the same level. One can have different views on this, and also express it differently. The task now is to see how the texts of the SACC resolve this dilemma. To put it differently: How do the texts of the SACC combine the prophetic voice with the search for reconciliation within the different orders of discourse discerned in the material? And how have these different ways of doing this changed over time? This will be one important way of answering the research question of how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed since 1990.

In the next reading I shall apply another perspective. Instead of looking at different areas where the prophetic voice has been articulated, I shall focus on the prophetic voice itself. A number of discourses will be discerned, some of them already frequently mentioned in the first reading. I shall describe those prophetic discourses, their mutual relations, and what kind of questions they deal with.

Thereafter I shall deal with the relation between the prophetic voice and reconciliation. I regard both the concept *'prophetic'* and the concept *'reconciliation'* as nodal points, meaning that different discourses give different meanings to those concepts, and also that the discourses are therefore involved in a discursive struggle. I shall conduct this analysis with the historical context in mind, to see whether this says anything about how the prophetic voice has changed.

The aim in the second reading is to analyse and understand the relation between the prophetic voice and reconciliation, and thereby contribute more knowledge about how the prophetic voice has changed. With reconciliation (and other related phenomena such as unity and mediation) as a background, we shall see how the articulation of the prophetic voice has changed over time. But we shall also see how it has been carried out differently within the different orders of discourse discerned in the first reading. In this respect the concept of discontinuity is relevant. We do not look for patterns in the historical context, but rather for examples of discontinuity. This helps us to understand a process that is often anything but regular.

6   Exodus completed?

The second reading

The first aim of this second reading is to analyse and understand how the concept 'prophetic' is given meaning in the material. With this as my focus, I shall discern other discourses than in the first reading. In the first reading the focus was to read the material in a benevolent way, trying to understand how the prophetic voice had been articulated in certain texts at National Conferences of the South African Council of Churches. The first reading also included a dismantling of the material with the help of a method built on discourse theoretical premises. I found four different orders of discourse: The *intersectionality order of discourse*, the *violence versus non-violence order of discourse*, the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*, and the *Zimbabwe order of discourse*. Within those orders of discourse there are, first, a number of sub-orders of discourse, and second, a number of discourses that were discerned on the basis of ideological differences.
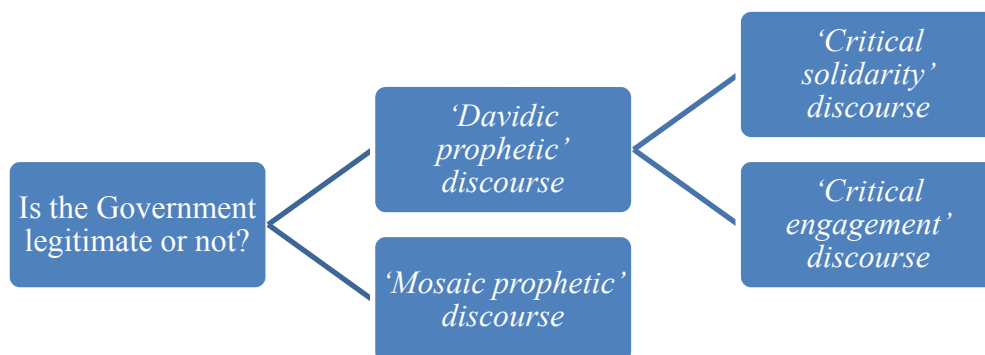
Figure 6: Different prophetic discourses in relation to the legitimacy of the government

In this second reading we are going to see how the concept of being prophetic has been articulated differently throughout the material. If the first reading analysed this from the perspective of four different orders of discourse, the second reading will be a way of reading the material from the perspective of understanding the concept 'prophetic' differently. One pair of prophetic discourses is based on the thoughts of Walter Brueggemann. I look for

articulations of a 'Davidic' prophetic voice and of a 'Mosaic' prophetic voice. Thus I write about the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* and the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*.[1006] This distinction has to do with how the church regards its prophetic role in relation to the government: Does the prophetic voice regard the government as legitimate or illegitimate?[1007]

I also find two other discourses in the textual material emerging explicitly after 1990. These are the *'Critical solidarity' discourse* and the *'Critical engagement' discourse*. These prophetic discourses could be seen as sub-discourses of the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. The difference between the two lies in how they describe the relationship between the SACC and the government.

Figure 7: The *'development' discourse* and *'liberation' discourse*

Another pair of discourses that I use in this second reading are the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*. While the *'Liberation' discourse* shows many similarities with the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* (I intend to use them synonymously) the *'Development' discourse* describes an understanding of a prophetic voice that aims at a more gradual transformation. This discourse sees the way to poverty eradication as achievable through development.

[1006] When I use the concepts *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* and *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*, the meaning of 'Davidic' and 'Mosaic' is different in some ways from how Brueggemann uses the concepts.

[1007] At the end of paragraph 6.3.2 there will be a discussion about whether or not the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* can be filled with a different meaning and play a role, even if the government is regarded as illegitimate.
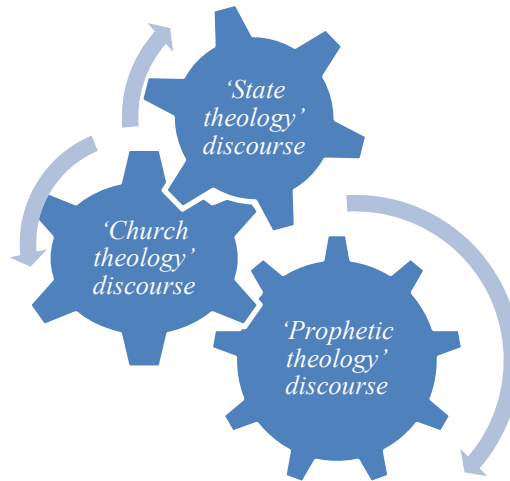
Figure 8: State, Church, and Prophetic theology discourses

Yet another group of discourses is derived from the distinction that the *Kairos Document* makes between 'State theology', 'Church theology', and 'Prophetic theology'. The aspect I want to stress, when I use the concepts from the *Kairos Document*, has to do with reconciliation. The *'State theology' discourse* is not a prophetic discourse at all. I use it partly to describe the absence of a prophetic voice in some texts. One can even discuss whether the *'Church theology' discourse* is prophetic. This concept is useful most of all when I look for the relationship between the two nodal points: 'reconciliation' and 'prophetic'. With the terminology of discourse analysis, these nodal points, being filled with meaning differently within the different discourses, may be described as floating signifiers. There is a clear antagonism in how the SACC fills these concepts, 'prophetic' and 'reconciliation', with meaning. I find this both before and after 1990.

6.1   Reconciliation as a transformation-process

It goes without saying that the concept 'prophetic' is relevant in a thesis about the prophetic voice of the SACC. On the other hand, the relevance of the concept 'reconciliation' has to be explained. There are several reasons for including this concept as a nodal point in the analysis. First, the material itself indicates that it is an important concept. Second, it is also, at least at times, linked to the prophetic ministry, as in the report of the GS in 1989. He discusses

whether or not there is a conflict between the healing ministry or the ministry of reconciliation and the prophetic ministry.

> Our mission is of cosmic dimensions and includes the priestly, the prophetic, the kerygmatic (proclamation) and the diakonial (service). One always senses a feeling of uneasiness, in the course of our struggle to undertake this mission, about the tension between the priestly mission as that of reconciliation in the traditional sense of the word, and that of prophetic mission as rebuking evil which implies taking sides with the victims of this evil practice. M M Thomas' description of the two functions of the church is helpful. He describes them as "the priestly ministry of liberating reconciliation and the prophetic ministry of liberating conflict".[1008]

There is an attempt to resolve this conflict by using different concepts like 'critical solidarity', 'critical engagement', etc. Third, a reason for discussing the concept of reconciliation in this context is the fact that the SACC's constitution regards the quest for unity as crucial. This aspect of change or transformation on different levels can be seen frequently in the material. Both the prophetic perspective and the reconciliation perspective have to do with transformation. In the following I shall therefore show how the different discourses discerned in the second reading relate to one another, especially when it comes to their transformation potential. The following illustration aims to show how this difference can be measured from a transformation potential perspective. In the various discourses, the concept 'prophetic' is given different meanings; and on the basis of this I have discerned a number of possible discourses. The illustration on the next page will be of help before I begin to describe the different discourses.

[1008] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 2.
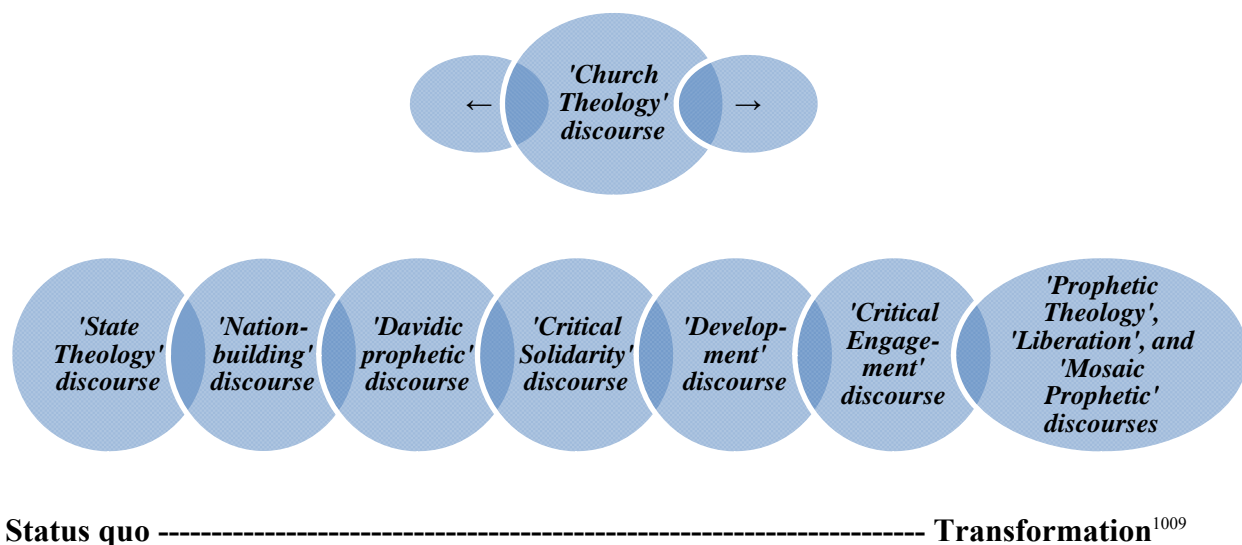
Figure 9: Continuum indicating the transformation aspect in different discourses

The diagram contains a number of discourses. Most of them have already been described in the theory chapter. On this continuum I have placed the *'Davidic*[1010] *Prophetic' discourse* to the left, although it does not completely strive for status quo. In this discourse the prophet is part of the establishment around the government. There is a prophetic voice, although it never questions the legitimacy of the government. On the other hand, the *'Mosaic*[1011] *prophetic' discourse* is placed right at the other end. In a sense it is a revolutionary discourse that aims at liberation.

Another group are the discourses based on concepts borrowed from the *Kairos Document*, namely *'State Theology' discourse*, *'Church Theology' discourse*, and *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*. In this analysis, this distinction answers first the question about how the

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[1009] 'Change and transformation are not the same thing. You may appoint a new manager, or get a new name for your firm or your country, without changing direction, / …. / Things have been changed but not transformed. Transformation means that the same unit undergoes an internal change. Replacing white people with black people is therefore not transformation in itself' (Antjie Krog, *A change of tongue* [Johannesburg: Random House, 2003], page 126).

[1010] This discourse can be described as 'a radical rejection of the liberation consciousness of the Mosaic tradition' (Brueggemann 1993, page 206). 'On the other hand, the Davidic tradition tends to be a movement of consolidation which is situated among the established and secure and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on the present ordering' (Brueggemann 1993, page 202).

[1011] ' … the Mosaic tradition tends to be a movement of protest which is situated among the disinherited and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who decisively intrudes, even against seemingly impenetrable institutions and orderings' (Brueggemann 1993, page 202).

phenomenon of reconciliation is being approached. The *'Church Theology'*[1012] *discourse* is placed loosely above the others in the illustration. I want to include it because the link to the *Kairos Document* connection feels incomplete without it. Still, one can discuss whether or not it aims at transformation. It aims for reconciliation without truth and justice, and applies the concept in the same way in every conflict, while the *'Prophetic Theology'*[1013] *discourse* regards reconciliation as a state that is possible only when justice is done. The *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*, as it is described in the *Kairos Document*, is contextually situated in the apartheid era, but could be applied in any situation where the regime is tyrannical.[1014] Since it strives for total liberation, I regard it, in my analysis, as identical with the *'Mosaic Prophetic' discourse*. The *'State Theology'*[1015] *discourse*, on the other hand, is not interested in reconciliation at all. It would rather speak about law and order. But one still has to bear in mind that this kind of discourse has been very common throughout the history of the Christian Church.[1016]

Another two possible discourses in the material, when it comes to how the prophetic ministry is described, are the *'Development'*[1017] *discourse* and the *'Liberation'*[1018] *discourse*. The latter I understand in the same way as the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* and the *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*. These three discourses aim at overthrowing an oppressor. This might be a problematic approach in a democracy. Even so, I still regard them as possible discourses after

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[1012] 'Its criticism, however, is superficial and counter-productive because instead of engaging in an in-depth analysis of the signs of our times, it relies upon a few stock ideas derived from Christian tradition and then uncritically and repeatedly applies them to our situation' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter three, point 3.1); and, '... the justice that is envisaged is the justice of reform, that is to say, a justice that is determined by the oppressor ...' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter three, point 3.2).

[1013] 'The conflict between two irreconcilable *causes or interests* in which the one is just and the other is unjust' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter four).

[1014] '... if it is a tyrannical regime, it is, from a moral and theological point of view, illegitimate' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter four).

[1015] One of the descriptions in the *Kairos Document* is this: '... the use of the idea of 'Law and Order' to determine and control what the people may be permitted to regard as just and unjust' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter two).

[1016] 'The Christian church has played an ambiguous political role throughout its history. At times it has blessed and legitimated the state. This has, at least since the Constantinian settlement, been the dominant position of the church' (Villa-Vicencio 1986, page *xv*).

[1017] 'The RDP is a fine programme, which aims to create jobs and prosperity and to provide education for all. We believe it has the potential to sustain the expectations of many and to be an instrument of healing in the land. However, the Government alone cannot put it all into effect. It is the responsibility of the people, as we take hold of the vision ourselves and do not leave it to others. The church is ready to play its part in helping to rebuild the community and to promote a culture of responsibility, work, tolerance, learning and listening' (National Conference 1994, Statement to Church and Nation).

[1018] 'Put in simple words, it means that in any level of the realization of justice and liberation there is always scope for striving for more justice and liberation. The end of Apartheid will not mark the coming in of a paradise but the widening of the horizon to strive for more justice and more liberation until the Lord comes again' (Presidential address 1987, page 18, point 2).

1990 – and even after 1994 – inasmuch as they acknowledge that a major part of the people in the country is still marginalised. This is not because of political oppression; but they still need liberation as much as they need development.[1019] With the *'Development' discourse* it is different. It could function with the *'State Theology' discourse*, with the *'Church Theology' discourse,* or with the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*; but it relates to other problems. The aim of the discourse is to uplift the people. The way I see it, though, it tends to be driven by a top-down agenda.

Related to the *'State Theology' discourse* (with the very important addition that in the post-1990 situation it is a positive concept) is the *'Nation-building'[1020] discourse*. It also has similarities with the *'Davidic Prophetic' discourse*, but the prophetic aspect works differently. One could also ask in this case whether the *'Nation-building' discourse* has anything to do with the prophetic voice at all. But it is still fruitful to include these discourses both in the illustration and in the analysis. When we look for the prophetic voice, we might also find examples of the absence of this voice.

A final pair of discourses also included in the illustration in this second reading are the *'Critical solidarity'[1021] discourse* and the *'Critical engagement'[1022] discourse*. These are discourses found after 1994, and they deal directly with the question of being prophetic in a democracy. The *'Critical solidarity' discourse* has another way of being prophetic than the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. The prophetic aspect of the *'Critical solidarity' discourse* is directed more towards changing the society than the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. Both do this from an 'insider' position, and both are top-down. There is a different movement in the *'Critical engagement' discourse*.

[1019] One can also make a distinction between 'liberation' and 'freedom'. The first is the process that leads to the other. 'But the most important, Brothers and Sisters, is that the noble struggle of our people has reached the most critical stage of our quest for total liberation and total freedom. There can be no total freedom until the socio-economic landscape has been totally transformed' (Presidential address 1995, page 4).

[1020] 'The Theme of this Triennial Conference "Unless the Lord Builds the House, those who build labour in vain" should be heard as a call to what should constitute the core essence of our project of nation building' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 1).

[1021] 'The Churches are committed to stand in critical solidarity with the Government, participating in and supporting those aspects that uphold justice, that bring new dignity and create greater opportunities for the people, but challenging the Government when it forgets the marginalised, the needs of the poor, and its responsibility to all sectors of society. The Church's role in civil society is well established, it has a strong base from which to call accountability' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 15).

[1022] In his report 2004, the GS has a heading which describes the first decade after 1994 like this: '**From Prophetic Resistance to Critical Engagement. On Being the Church in a New Land**' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 2).

The different discourses are thus not compatible with each other. They deal with different questions. They also come from different eras in the life of the SACC, and from other contexts. The continuum only sheds light on how they relate to one another from a prophetic perspective. In the following, one important question – apart from how the different discourses express this prophetic voice – is how they relate to 'reconciliation'.

If the prophetic voice is sometimes weak or even non-existent, one explanation could be the underlying aim of the Council to work for unity. This is particularly obvious if reconciliation is given meaning within a *'Church theology' discourse*. In this analysis I shall therefore look for how this other nodal point, 'reconciliation', is understood in different contexts. But I shall only do that when the different discourses have been described. Then I shall come back to the different orders of discourse, and find out how the reconciliation aspect in particular is filled with different meaning in the various orders of discourse respectively.[1023]

6.2   Egypt – Wilderness – Promised Land

When Mandela was released and the liberation movements were unbanned, a new era began in South Africa. This specific point is part of a process that might be described as a modern kind of Exodus. I use the illustration partly because it is used frequently in the textual material. I also use it because it describes a process with different phases. In the biblical narrative the process has already started before the first Passover.[1024] After leaving Egypt the Hebrew people spend a long time in the wilderness, and even when they enter the Promised Land, the process continues. The illustration has been used in this way in the SACC texts. One such example is when, as early as 1986, the Council President states that pride blinds the SACC members from acknowledging that they cannot see what will come.

> If the slaves freed from bondage in Egypt having journeyed as far as the borders of the promised land, could see the distant scene and the mighty Kingdom united under King David, would they have remained unwilling to contend with the giants in order to possess the promised land?[1025]

[1023] I will especially see how the prophetic voice has been formulated in relation to HIV and AIDS.

[1024] We find an example of this in the GS 1984. Ten years before the first democratic elections, he writes about the Exodus: 'I doubt that the Egyptians under Pharaoh would have been enthusiastic in endorsing the view that the God they had to deal with was neutral when He devastated their land with all those plagues, all because He wanted to deliver out of bondage that somewhat obstreperous rabble of slaves' (General Secretary's Report 1984, page 3).

[1025] Presidential address 1976, page 1.

The metaphor is used before 1990[1026], but it becomes more frequent when liberation actually takes place. In 1991 the theme of the National Conference directly uses the Exodus as a *typos*.[1027] The material from this year is therefore full of references to the Exodus story.[1028] *A message to the Churches* that year discusses the Exodus phenomenon from the perspective that there is still a long way to the Promised Land.[1029] The President of the Council also places the people of South Africa in the wilderness[1030], but argues that in their hearts, some of them are still in Egypt.

> This then becomes a challenge to the Churches as we cross the Red Sea from Egyupt [Egypt] to the wilderness. Even in the Wilderness most of the people are still in Egypt because they are still carrying Egypt in their hearts.[1031]

The wilderness metaphor wants to affirm that the transformation process has to take time, and that setbacks in the process are to be expected. In 1992 the GS uses the same metaphorical language, although images from Exodus are mixed with images from Revelation:

> Indeed, and since then, we went straight to the wilderness. And, like Israel, we were jubilant when the prospects of negotiations taking off looked good. And, like Israel, at the Red Sea we held our breath for a CODESA II breakthrough on an elected Constitution making body (a Constituent Assembly). But, unlike Israel, we seem to have got caught there and brought back into the belly of the beast. When I heard Mr de Klerk address the Nation last Thursday and statements made by his ministers in a press conference, I could not help but fear that we are returning to the bad old days.[1032]

When I use the illustration from the Exodus narrative, I realise that this concept has numerous connotations. Liberation from apartheid is not the first situation, and probably not the last, in

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[1026] 'God was subversive and a destabiliser in Egypt when He helped some slaves to escape' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 13).

[1027] 'This is where the theme of this Conference comes in: "The Ecstasy and the Agony: From Egypt to the Wilderness"' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 1).

[1028] 'Like the Israelites, the Pharaoh is pursuing us. Some of us have been terrified by this fearful advancing army of the Egyptians. Some of us are beginning to feel that it would have been better to remain and maintain the old order rather than surge towards the new order. Some feel that it would have been better to serve the racist oppressors than to die in the wilderness. But we must say, as Moses said to the people: Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today, for the forces of violence (the enemies of your freedom) whom you see today you shall never see again, for the Lord will fight for you' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 2).

[1029] 'It is our conviction that the South African community has been plunged into a wilderness experience, freed from some of the restrictions of slavery in Egypt, but still far from crossing over Jordan into the promised land' (National Conference 1991, Message to the Churches, page 1).

[1030] 'At this moment in history we find ourselves in a wilderness, as we journey from Egypt of oppression to the promised land of freedom and democracy' (Presidential address 1991, page 2). 'You will remember how the children of Israel turned against their great liberator Moses when he filed to give them food in the wilderness: "It was better in Egupt [Egypt] for we had food ....." (Paraphrase)' (Presidential address 1991, page 4).

[1031] Presidential address 1991, page 5.

[1032] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 1.

which an oppressed nation has seen its situation in the light of the Exodus story. I want to make clear, therefore, that I do not intend to evaluate the phenomenon *per se*. The Exodus model serves the purpose of describing the transformation process. This is also what the President wants to do in 1987, when he predicts a situation where there will be a temptation to believe that the end of apartheid means that the mission is accomplished.[1033]

When we read the texts around 1994, we find a clear antagonism in the material. The texts suggest either that South Africa is on its way to the Promised Land, or that it is still in the wilderness. Two groups of examples will illustrate this. The first type of example can, for instance, be found in the GS's report in 1993, where he describes himself as a modern Moses who is close to entering Canaan.

> The Lord has brought us to the top of the mountain after a long and costly struggle. We can now see the promised future of a just and peaceful society not far ahead of us.[1034]

Together with the image of the Promised Land, the texts between 1990 and 1994 also talk repeatedly about the Kingdom of God[1035] as something within reach. As we have seen, the GS in his 1994 address[1036] compares the RPD policy ideals with the Kingdom of God. But other texts also make this comparison, both before and after 1994.[1037] The events in Germany, 'die Wende'[1038], and the feeling that change is possible after the release of Mandela, influence the

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[1033] 'The end of Apartheid will not mark the coming of a paradise but the widening of the horizon to strive for more justice and more liberation until the Lord comes again. The end of Apartheid will not mean the end of the prophetic ministry of the Church but merely the release of the thrust of that ministry to other areas in society' (Presidential address 1987, Points 2, page 18).

[1034] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 1.

[1035] Egan also describes the situation in similar terms: 'When Nelson Mandela was elected president of a democratic South Africa many felt that salvation - in theological terms the 'kingdom of God' - had come on earth' (Egan 2007, page 448).

[1036] 'On reconstruction and development we now have the ANC's RDP Policy Document which will soon be acted upon by parliament to make it a policy of the Government. A close reading of this Document shows that it approximates closely the ideals we have been struggling for and proclaimed. It brings us closer to the ideals of the Kingdom (the Sovereign Rule) of God' (General Secretary's Address 1994, page 7).

[1037] 'To this end various initiatives are being considered to dialogue with our sister and brothers from both the West and the "new" Eastern Europe to learn from their success and failures and then determine what God would like us to do as God's instruments in carrying our God's mission in the world. I believe strongly, on the basis of my understanding of the Kingdom concept, that the future system for South Africa is beyond the present system, there, ahead of us we need to strive for. Those who are striving for the Kingdom of God must refuse to be arrested by the present system nor worship them. Our mission is to call them to move ahead towards the justice of God' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 18). Another example of how the texts reflect on the relation between the present situation in the country and the Kingdom of God is the GS report 1991. 'But the escalation of violence in the country and the threat to reverse all the gains made in the directions of justice and peace, made more and more people to remember that the Kingdom has not yet come, and until the mission to stand for the truth was to continue' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 12).

[1038] The events in Germany in November 1989 were described as 'die Wende' (the turning point). The so-called Autumn Revolution of 1989 culminated in a permanent opening of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989. The

texts to become more positive. It is striking that the texts are more interested in relating the situation in 1990 to the events happening in Germany than to events elsewhere on the African continent. I can give no reason for this, other than a guess that some of the National Conference texts are written with the donor partners as addressees. Nevertheless, the same sense of euphoria can be seen in some of the texts, even before the release of Mandela and also before the 'Autumn Revolution' in Germany.

> By joining with all your fellow Christians you will share the liberating experience of building God's kingdom and doing His will. This is our hope for you![1039]

The second kind of example is quite different, as in the Presidential address of 1994, which is more reluctant to see that governmental policies are in line with the ideals of the Kingdom.

> Just because we have changed from a White Minority Government to a Non-Racial Government, it does not mean that the State will always get it right or that the State has no further need for a prophetic ministry from the Church. Perhaps the Church will need more courage than ever at this time to speak forthrightly to the State. It was very fashionable and made one a hero to speak strongly against the Apartheid Government and all its works. It will not be so fashionable to stand up and challenge the Government of National Unity if, when or where it gets things wrong and out of line with the Word of God, the same principles which required the Church to stand up against Sin and Apartheid Government, will require it to stand up against Sin in this Government.[1040]

This is said as background to when the texts search for the new way of being prophetic in the democratic era. Even in 2004 the GS uses the same biblical story as a model to understand the life of both the Council and the whole people of South Africa, thus underlining the need for divine guidance:

> A reading of the narrative of the release from bondage, through its journey through the wilderness and finally their settlement in the land of Promise, tells one central lesson, namely, that at every stage of their journey, the Israelites required a religious charter and compass to guide them through their sojourn.[1041]

The GS urges the churches[1042] not to read their own history into the Bible. Nevertheless the GS understands the situation both in South Africa and in the churches through the narrative of the people of Israel being delivered from slavery in Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land. When he writes that the South African nation is involved in a similar project of nation-

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GS refers to this in his address in 1994: '... the new world order free of the East-west Cold War ...' (General Secretary's Address 1994, page 8, point 4.4).

[1039] National Conference 1989, Message to the white people of South Africa, page 3.

[1040] Presidential address 1994, page 11.

[1041] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 1.

[1042] 'We must resist the temptation of reading ourselves and our national history into the Holy Scriptures' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 2).

building, he places the people in the Promised Land. To understand fully how the texts of the SACC portray this transition, we need to go back and reread the texts from the beginning of the life of the SACC.

6.3 Different prophetic and other related discourses

In this second reading we discern a number of different discourses, as shown in the previous illustrations. We are now going to see how these different discourses give meaning to – or in some cases even refrain from using – the concept 'prophetic'. I have grouped the discourses mainly under two headings: those that regard the government as legitimate, and those that do not. Arranging them in this way does not do full justice to how the discourses appear, but it makes the narrative easier to follow.

After having shown how the nodal point 'prophetic' is given meaning in the different discourses, taking the four orders of discourse from the first reading into account, I shall also ask how the other nodal point in focus, 'reconciliation', is filled with meaning.

6.3.1 'The government is legitimate'

In this group of discourses there is an antagonism between prophetic discourses that criticise the government of the day (while still regarding the government as legitimate), and non-prophetic discourses that become so involved in a relationship with the government that they do not express any critique at all. The first example is one of the latter such discourses.

6.3.1.1 Siding with the powerful – the *'State theology' discourse*

This is a discourse that is not prophetic at all, but it is a possible way for the Church to relate to the State. Although the discourse is not prophetic *per se*, there may still be room for a prophetic ministry; but in that case it will be more of a moralising ministry than anything else.

There are no examples of this discourse before 1994. A first example is when the GS, in his 1994 address (which we have touched on already), compares the programmes of the government with the Kingdom of God. In doing so, the GS clearly shows that the SACC is in

no way questioning the government. This example goes further than any other text in the material:

> On reconstruction and development we now have the ANC's RDP Policy Document which will soon be acted upon by parliament to make it a policy of the Government. A close reading of this Document shows that it approximates closely the ideals we have been struggling for and proclaimed. It brings us closer to the ideals of the Kingdom (the Sovereign Rule) of God.[1043]

The text accepts the legitimacy of the government. None of it contains any prophetic aspect. Even if this articulation is extreme, there are other examples in the material that even criticise the phenomenon of being critical. Since it expresses a negative attitude to criticism, it fits well into the *'State theology' discourse*.

> It is not uncommon today to hear armchair critics saying that Mandela's government has failed to deliver to the masses. They point long fingers at the politicians, some even making mockery of our leaders.[1044]

These are not the only examples, where high office bearers of the Council give unreserved support to the government, and even question that it is right to criticise the leadership of the State. The articulations in the Presidential address in 1995 suggest that it is possible to reach total freedom under the present leadership. One has to understand these and other articulations in the light of, for example, the Exodus narrative. If God delivered the people from slavery, it goes without saying that God also wants to lead his people to the Promised Land.

> The point here, Brothers and Sisters, is that we should be asking ourselves, i.e. each one of us should be asking herself/himself: "WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE SOUTH AFRICA A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL? WHAT CAN I DO TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TOTAL TRANSFORMATION AND DEMOCRATISATION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND MAKE TOTAL FREEDOM A REALITY?"[1045]

The Presidential address in 1995 is at the same time an example of the antagonism between different discourses. In some parts it shows no need for a prophetic voice directed at the government at all, but in other parts the Council President indicates that there still is a need for transformation. In his view this road will be more complicated to travel after 1994.[1046] But again in the report of the GS 1998, the motif of having close links to the government

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[1043] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 7.
[1044] Presidential address 1995, page 5.
[1045] Presidential address 1995, page 5.
[1046] 'However, empirical evidence on transformation of societies suggest that the process of gaining political power, though long and arduous, may be less difficult than the subsequent task of achieving economic power, social transformation, empowerment, economic parity, satisfying people's material expectations and delivering to the masses' (Presidential address 1995, page 4).

dominates. One such example is when the GS discusses the role of the SACC, and refers to the view of the President of South Africa.

> We have yet to take up the challenge in a concerted effort that has been put to us by President Mandela last year. He believes that religious communities are better placed to take the lead in the moral construction in this country.[1047]

It is not strange that, given the position he had after the events of 1994, the SACC pays attention to the words of President Mandela, sometimes referred to as 'the miracle man'.[1048] In many ways the time of his presidency was special. But the close link to the government continues. In the Presidential address of 2001, we also find that the SACC supports the new dispensation. One can ask whether this is really prophetic ,or whether it is just supporting the government – as it clearly says, unreservedly:

> Government, therefore, in my view, has been illustrious in making this call of a nation at work, going beyond the tangible. These efforts deserve our unreserved welcome. To this extent, the government needs our full support and encouragement.[1049]

Although those examples point in the direction of a Council supporting the government in a State Theology way, there are other examples. An antagonism can be found in the same Presidential address. The government is a partner and the SACC is searching for a new relationship in a new time.

> We must state clearly and unequivocally that we do not see government as an enemy of the church, or our people. This we must state with no blind eye of loyalty because our loyalty is to the One who called us into being, as the church, and to his mission in the world. We must state this because the temptation is high among ourselves to see all governments as enemies to be prophesied against.[1050]

The question, therefore, concerns when the Council ought to support the government and not prophesy against it; but still the text indicates that full loyalty to the government is impossible. The Council President would prefer not to criticise the government, although he does not rule out the possibility at all. On the whole those examples are few. I wanted to include some of them, though, to show that the SACC has been tempted to become even closer with the government. This to a great extent is the case around 1994, when the prophetic

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[1047] General Secretary's Report 1998, page 3.
[1048] One book, at the inauguration of Mandela as President, gives the following description of the new President '... Nelson Mandela, the miracle man, the living martyr ...' (Sparks, 2003, page 1).
[1049] Presidential address 2001, page 3.
[1050] Presidential address 2001, page 3.

voice is very silent. The Council President comments on the coming Constitution, and regards it as almost identical with the will of God.

> So God is at the beginning and the end of the new Constitution. How will we in this new day ensure that this submission to Almighty God is really worked out in a more thorough and full-blown way than happened in the past … [1051]

As we shall see, though, there have also been other discourses in this context. Closely related to the *'State theology' discourse*, we discern the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*.

6.3.1.2   Being the prophet at the court – the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*

An initial question is whether there are any examples of a discourse where the texts regard the government as legitimate during the apartheid era. In some of the early texts we actually find that. At least, those texts argue that the government or specific ministers ought to carry out their duties towards the people, as in this example from one of the resolutions in 1976.

> We therefore demand that the money which is being spent in re-erecting beer halls and bottle stores should instead be used for black education.[1052]

This is an example of a prophetic voice because it criticises the government – but not from a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* perspective. If it were, it would not, for example, use a concept like 'black education'. In many cases there is a fine line between these two discourses. The GS 1978 talks about the police minister; it gives him some credit, and even argues that some degree of normality is possible under the apartheid regime:

> I give only a qualified approval to Mr Kruger's latest steps to ensure the safety of those in police custody by his recent appointment of those who can carry out snap visits etc. My approval is only very partial because I think Section 6 of the Terrorism Act must be scrapped if we are to revert to any degree of normality and abide by criteria acceptable in civilized society.[1053]

This is an example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. It criticises the government, but still expects the government to fulfil its duty. But this discourse has no hegemonic status. In the

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[1051] Presidential address 1994, page 2.
[1052] National Conference 1976, Resolution 2 ix, page 7.
[1053] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 3.

same context the GS speaks about the need for fundamental change[1054], although this process of change is described as if it could be achieved gradually.

> And so calls have been made for the abolition of the Pass Laws (albeit gradually) since they are the most hateful parts of a thoroughly hateful system; for the recognition at least initially of urban blacks as a permanent part of what is erroneously called white South Africa and granting to them freehold title rights to land and not this 99 year lease which really is neither fish nor fowl, because people who have a stake in the land are unlikely to join a violent revolution since they have so much to lose thereby themselves.[1055]

This approach could be named reformist rather than revolutionary, indicated by the use of the words 'gradually' and 'initially'. In the other 1978 resolutions there are also examples of a kind of cooperation with the government – for example, over unemployment:

> In the present situation of unemployment this Conference calls upon all employers, including Government bodies, local authorities, businesses, churches and private individuals, to do all that they can to provide employment …..[1056]

In this resolution there is no mention of liberation. The NC expects the government to be a partner, at least in a limited sense. The same applies to another resolution about providing homes to the homeless instead of demolishing the informal settlement called Crossroads.[1057] The way these texts articulate the prophetic voice could be seen as a pragmatic way of negotiating with the authorities. We could see the mild language as evidence that the NC, with the best of the people in mind, expresses itself in a moderate way in order to achieve at least some changes. But if we read what the text really says, it accepts that the government is legitimate. The Council is manoeuvring within the system, although the system is seen as unjust. This is in itself an antagonism, but leaning more towards a Davidic approach. Another example of the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* is an appeal made by the GS in 1979, directed to the government:

> We appeal to the new Minister of Justice and Police to redeem the good name of his departments and of our country by restoring the rule of law as commonly understood in free and democratic countries.[1058]

One option could be to regard this as an example of irony or sarcasm. Nevertheless it is an example of a GS directing himself to a government official in a way that regards the official

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[1054] 'Fundamental change ultimately means blacks having a significant share in political decision making…' (General Secretary's Report 1978, page 3).

[1055] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 4.

[1056] National Conference 1978, Resolution no 3, page 1.

[1057] 'In the name of Christian compassion we call upon the civil authorities to allow these people to stay where they are until they can be provided with adequate accommodation in the Western Cape within reasonable distance of their places of work' (National Conference 1978, Resolution no 8, page 3).

[1058] General Secretary's Report 1979, page 3.

as legitimate. The example regards the country as at least potentially democratic. One of the resolutions that year is also an example of the expectations that the Council had of the government in the 1970s:

> About education it urges the Minister of education and Training to introduce, as soon as possible, free and compulsory education for blacks who are the only section of the community who do not have this right.[1059]

One interesting aspect of this we find in one of the 1982 resolutions, which is addressed to the Ciskei authorities, one of the homelands governments. In a sense it is a way of conveying a message to those who have detained some Council field workers; but there is no sign in the resolution that the NC questions the authority of the Ciskei authorities when it says:

> This Conference strongly condemns the detention of the two field workers of the Border Council of Churches, Mr Mzwandile Msoki and Mr Alfred Metele and calls for their immediate release by the Ciskeian authorities.[1060]

A further example of a relationship with the homelands is found in another of the 1982 resolutions:

> Conference requests the SACC General Secretariat to arrange a high level Church delegation to be present (if so invited) at the meeting on 10 July 1982 at Rooigrond between Chief Mangope and the people of Rooigrond when their future is to be decided.[1061]

From the context we cannot ascertain whether an invitation ever came from Chief Mangope. Likewise, we cannot find out whether he was acting as a chief or as leader of a homeland. In any case it is a discourse that recognises the authority of Mangope. But also in relation to the apartheid regime, some texts give recognition to its legitimacy. Some texts sometimes even give credit to the government.[1062] From the context it is obvious that the GS in 1986 is sometimes critical in a Mosaic way.[1063] The discourses are therefore mixed. There is some sort of antagonism, when he continues to say that

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[1059] National Conference 1979, Resolution, page 73.
[1060] National Conference 1982, Resolution 2.1.
[1061] National Conference 1982, Resolution 12.
[1062] 'I do not think that these reforms should be seen as purely cosmetic ...' (General Secretary's Report 1986, page 2).
[1063] 'The tragedy of those reforms, however, lie in the fact that they are seen by the majority of the people (especially the blacks) as too little, too slow and therefore too late, where as for many of the whites they are regarded as too radical and revolutionary. Thus we find ourselves in a situation where two polarised communities are diametrically opposed in their goals as well as the speed of change: what hope is there of reconciliation in such a situation?' (General Secretary's Report 1986, page 2).

Recognition should be given to the State President for his willingness to undertake these changes, even if some of them were initiated only after sever pressures from either the blacks in the country or from [the] outside world.[1064]

If we compare the 1970s with the 1980s, the antagonism becomes even more obvious. But after 1990 there is a radical change in the relationship with the government. It is natural that the SACC now regards the government as at least a potential partner. When, after violent events in Natal (called 'the killing fields of Natal'), the GS reflects on a meeting of church leaders, he clearly shows that the government has legitimacy.

It was agreed that meetings would be sought with the leadership of the ANC and Inkatha, as well as with the State President, Mr F W de Klerk, who, in his capacity as head of state, they were convinced must bear overall responsibility for ending the war.[1065]

This is a clear example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. De Klerk is still regarded as ruler of the nation. One can thus expect him and his government to act to stop the war. This also means that the GS regards the use of force as justifiable. How would else the State President be able to end the war? Of course, this is after the release of Mandela, with its hope for a new situation in the country; but the old constitution is still in place, and the old regime is still in power. In connection with a corruption case in 1992, the GS also gives an example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*, as he compares South Africa with other democracies:

I propose that in the case of both Government Corruption and Murders a broad based campaign should be launched to compel the Government to address these matters effectively or otherwise vacate the office of government as one would expect in any democratic society.[1066]

The same applies in the case of a new tax, the VAT[1067], when one of the resolutions regards the then government of South Africa as a counterpart with which to discuss the matter.

1. The conference believes that there is very little support amongst church people for VAT and the way it was implemented and therefore resolves to:
2. Oppose any further increase on VAT.[1068]

This has to be seen in relation to earlier articulations about not paying tax without representation. This is first discussed in 1987. In this case the resolutions support the principle

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[1064] General Secretary's Report 1986, page 2.
[1065] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 13.
[1066] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 7.
[1067] VAT = Value Added Tax.
[1068] National Conference 1992, Resolution 92.42.04.

that employers should stop paying taxes.[1069] This shows that there are different ways of relating to tax issues. The recommendation in 1987 also includes a call for member churches to stop paying taxes. In 1992, one of the resolutions refers to the 1987 resolution and recommends the same action.[1070] Both of those resolutions support opposition to the State, even if it means being prosecuted as a result of their action. With the resolution about VAT in 1992, the SACC takes another approach. This can be explained by the fact that the country is in the process of negotiating a new constitution. Still, the old constitution remains valid, and the government is not yet democratically elected. Yet another example in 1992 is when the SACC urges the government to implement an effective witness scheme.[1071] Again the SACC expects the government of the day to take up its responsibility.

In 1994 there is a dramatic change, as the SACC begins to cooperate closely with the government. The address of the GS shows that the churches want to have a role in the elections:

> Their ministry during this period ranged from a ministry of intervention and facilitation to assist the process of negotiations, to educate for democracy, voter education, and ultimately to the actual running and monitoring of the elections themselves.[1072]

Some articulations after 1994, as we have seen, are examples of a *'State Theology' discourse*, and there is sometimes a fine line between that discourse and the *'Davidic Prophetic' discourse*. The report of the interim GS in the same year says that the RDP must be a people-driven process, and it argues that even in this respect the Church must support the programme.[1073] In connection with this, the GS ascribes the churches some sort of critical role. The same discourse is carried into a special statement called *Statement to Church and Nation*, one of the 1994 resolutions, where the texts encourage the churches to play a part in

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[1069] '… supports the principle that employers should stop deducting PAYE tax from their wages; … upholds the principle that there should be no taxation without representation and requests the Executive Committee to constitute a process whereby the SACC, in consultation with its employees, may take the first steps towards implementing this principle within its own structures' (National Conference 1987, Resolution 13.2).

[1070] '… recognizes the need for the establishment of a broad based, tightly co-ordinated NATIONAL PEACE TAX CAMPAIGN, which co-ordinates: 1.1 the with-holding by employers of an agreed % of SITE and/or PAYE tax deducted from employees' salaries (placing the employer in a legally prosecutable position)' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 13 1.1).

[1071] National Conference 1992, Resolution 15 4-5.

[1072] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 5.

[1073] 'The church must use its good offices and presence in the community to help rebuild community institutions as a matter of urgency. Otherwise the RDP will not be a people driven process' (Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 19).

rebuilding the country.[1074] Later we shall see how this develops into what I call a *'Nation-building' discourse*, where the motive of rebuilding the nation dominates the perspective.

From 1994 onwards it is obvious that the SACC accepts and welcomes the new dispensation. In that sense the discourse is Davidic, being an example, if not of Royal consolidation, then at least of State consolidation. The Churches are not seen as an outsider preaching the need for liberation. Like the Davidic prophets, the Church is part of the ruling power.

> Within the context of a society in change and transformation, such as ours, it is absolutely essential and important for us as representatives of the new ecumenical movement to develop and strengthen our relationships with the government, the Churches and other community organisations. In the course of this year representatives of the Church and the staff have participated in several events and celebrations organised by other bodies and agencies. It is heart-warming to see the willingness with which the Church is included in these networks.[1075]

One can suppose that the Council has not been included in such networks before 1994. This is a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* speaking. This does not mean that the SACC abandons its prophetic ministry, but rather it gives a different meaning to the concept 'prophetic'. After 1994 it is carried out differently than before.

> The final word in this section is about the attempts we have made to facilitate ongoing dialogue and co-operation between the government and the member churches of the SACC. It has been our wish to establish a forum in which the churches can meet and interact with the government at national, provincial and local levels.[1076]

In this interaction the Church – and therefore the SACC – will have the opportunity to act and speak prophetically. But it will be a forum where the church will certainly speak prophetically, but behind closed doors. It is a good example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. In the GS report of 2001 the close cooperation with the government returns.

> There have also been numerous engagements with government as well as the National Development Agency. Some provinces did follow up on the national office initiative and develop their own working relation with provincial governments.[1077]

[1074] 'The church is ready to play its part in helping to rebuild the community and to promote a culture of responsibility, work, tolerance, learning and listening' (National Conference 1994, Statement to Church and Nation).

[1075] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 11.

[1076] Presidential address 1998, page 2.

[1077] General Secretary's Report 2001, pages 9-10.

There are also examples where the addressee of the prophetic voice shifts from the holders of political power to the economic power-brokers.[1078] From the GS report 2004 it is quite clear that the relationship between the Council and the government has changed:

> If one were to characterize the current Church and State relationship, we can [say we] are like courting couples who are enjoy[ing] mutual fascination with one another, but still remain in deep suspicion of the other['s] motives.[1079]

In chapter five we saw this kind of discourse in how the GS 2004 expressed himself about the Zimbabwe issue. There is a prophetic dimension in the relationship, but there is no talk of liberation. One of the resolutions also works with this problem. It is the resolution about Church-State development cooperation, which almost sounds like the Lutheran teaching about the two kingdoms:

> ... Conference acknowledges that both the Church and Government are instruments in the service of God's mission in the world and that both face common challenges in uplifting the marginalized and the poor.[1080]

Having said this, the resolution continues to argue that a prophetic voice is needed, and it does so in the form of advocacy.[1081] (We shall come back to this in the next section.) This is not done in an atmosphere of confrontation. The Council speaks, rather, of partnership and cooperation.

> The SACC National Conference, therefore, understands and supports the need for a process that seeks to define a new strategy and model of partnership between member Churches, Government and civil society in order to seek a model of cooperation for social development that will alleviate poverty in our communities.[1082]

'Partnership' could be another expression of the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. It is also worth noting that the resolution speaks of 'poverty alleviation' and not 'poverty eradication'.

[1078] 'We also had to learn new skills such as parliamentary advocacy skills as well as unlearn some of our old habits, such as the temptation to make public pronouncements against those in power from the outside, without the benefit of informed opinion or understanding the difficulty of governance, especially in the context where the levers of power still reside with the economic oligarchy' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3).

[1079] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 19.

[1080] National Conference 2004, Resolution 21.

[1081] 'At the same time, the Churches recognise, however, that our public and prophetic witness covers a wide variety of issues. We therefore affirm the need for an independent, prophetic voice that seeks to advocate in fundamental issues such as economic justice, moral regeneration, equality, land distribution etc' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 21).

[1082] National Conference 2004, Resolution 21.

'Prophet at the court': mid-wife, monitor, lobbyist, or advocate

There are some specific terms or metaphors used in the material that I want to add, to give some illustration as to how this discourse has been articulated. These are not the only metaphors used at the time: others are in circulation, although they are not found explicitly in this material.[1083] In the address of the GS 1994, a specific expression is used to describe, in this case, the role of the GS himself when he was appointed to be part of the IEC.

> … I could not say no to this call for me to act as a mid-wife to help deliver the new non-racial democratic South Africa. In fact this was taken as an honour to the Church to have one of her servants to serve in this crucial and strategic commission.[1084]

The expression 'mid-wife' describes a function of being involved in the process but still playing a free role.[1085] The expression could be linked without difficulty to the prophetic ministry. Another way of expressing the way the Council interacts with the government after 1990 is when one of the resolutions 1995 requests the GS to establish a mechanism to monitor the proceedings in Parliament and the Constitutional Assembly.[1086] The GS 2004 evaluates the work of this Parliamentary Office, and describes it in the following words:

> The Office was originally established to "monitor the proceedings in parliament and to convey to relevant Portfolio Committees, Ministries and Theme Committees the concerns and opinions of the Churches on those issues which have relevance to our ministry and on which the members of the Council have a common mind" and as "a witness to the SACC's commitment to strengthening the voices of the poor and marginalised groups in the public policy process."[1087]

[1083] One such example is the notion of the Church as a watchdog. 'In the ever colourful words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the church is called, as it always has been, to be "watchdogs – not lapdogs"' (Brigalia Hlophe Bam, "Foreword." in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. Barney N. Pityana and Charles Villa-Vicencio, page *xi* [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1995].). A response to this can be found in the words ascribed to President Mbeki, at the triennial National Conference of the SACC in 2004, where Spong writes: 'Mbeki suggested that it was now fashionable for some groups to take up the role of "watchdogs" and hoped that the council would not choose that role. Instead, he pleaded for a role of partnership in what he called "the progressive reconstruction and development of our country"' (Spong 2004, page 20).

[1084] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 3.

[1085] This is also used in the literature about the post-apartheid situation. Egan writes about De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio as two distinguished theologians, who saw 'the church's task as the midwife of democracy in the transition period and a strong defender of democratic values and institutions. The underlying assumption was that the churches would be partners with the state in the creation and propagation of democratic values and practices. Beyond that, a theology of reconciliation was needed to heal the wounds of apartheid' (Egan 2007, page 452).

[1086] It is said about monitoring the Parliament that 'such a mechanism should also convey to the members of the Council information about the way in which these issues have been dealt with by the elected representatives in the national parliament and alert the members when urgent combined action is required' (National Conference 1995, Resolution 7).

[1087] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 15.

This new way of engaging with political power is close to another modern concept, namely 'lobbying'. This is also used by some of the texts to describe how the SACC wants to fulfil its prophetic ministry after 1990. In 1995 one of the resolutions urges the Council to lobby in relation to the setting up of a TRC.[1088] Also, in the context of drafting the new South African Constitution, the

> Conference appeals to the SACC Education for Democracy programme to train churches to engage in pro-active lobbying through actions which bring democracy to all levels.[1089]

This is clearly another way of exercising the prophetic role, although many lobbyists can hardly be described as prophets. It does not produce headlines like those caused by activities during the apartheid era. It could possibly be described as an example of the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. It shows similarities at least with the Old Testament concept of prophets being associated with the court, criticising the king but not questioning his legitimacy. As we have seen in the context of HIV and AIDS, lobbying is also deplored as a way of being prophetic.[1090] Another example of the Council lobbying in Parliament concerns income tax:

> The Parliamentary Office continues to lobby for an income tax exemption process that better accommodates the needs and circumstances of local congregations and small faith- and community-based organisations.[1091]

The field where the Council is involved can be described in different ways. As we saw earlier, the Council also deals with funeral issues by lobbying the government.[1092] Close to this concept lies the concept of 'advocacy'. The GS 2001 asks:

> How are we to become an organ which can minister to and advocate for the good of the poor in our society.[1093]

The GS 2004 also underscores the importance of advocacy work.[1094] We have already touched on this. These are examples of the Council searching during the 1990s for a new role that

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[1088] 'To provide information for members to lobby for the broadening [of] these terms' (National Conference 1995, Resolution 13).

[1089] National Conference 1995, Resolutions, page 19.

[1090] 'That the SACC should, together with other organizations who are involved in lobbying the government, work to ensure the availability of free anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS, including Nevirapine for all pregnant women and their newborns, and the provision of adequate health care for all South Africans' (National Conference 2001, Resolution 6). The GS 2004 also speaks about the need to '... lobby for access to treatment, appropriate facilities and basic health care for all' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 9).

[1091] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 17.

[1092] 'Lobby government to set up a statutory body involving all stakeholders to regulate the funeral industry ...' (National Conference 2004, Resolution 15).

[1093] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 3.

includes using different designations for the critical role it wants to play. One of the most often discussed is the concept of 'critical solidarity'.

6.3.1.3 Prophetic explained within the *'Critical solidarity' discourse*

After 1994 there are a number of examples of the SACC using different ways to give meaning to the prophetic ministry. 'Critical solidarity' is one of those expressions, similar to the 'critical support' and 'critical dialogue' concepts. What do the texts mean by the word 'solidarity'? It can sometimes be used without any addition, as in an example from GS 1994.

> We also thank our partners internationally for accompanying us in carrying out this mission and engaging in acts of solidarity with us to end the apartheid system.[1095]

Here the text uses 'solidarity' in a traditional way, meaning some kind of fellowship between persons or groups having common responsibilities and interests. But in the same report in the same year, the GS changes the focus of the solidarity and introduces an element of criticism. The background is expressed by the GS the same year:

> We in the SACC have never dealt with a democratic government before.[1096]

This is the same dilemma that Villa-Vicencio has, referred to in the prologue to this thesis. How is it possible to be a church in a democracy? We could also qualify the question and ask: How is it possible to be a prophetic voice in a democracy? The GS 1994 suggests an answer, using for the first time the terminology of critical solidarity:

> In all its work, the Task Force will take into consideration our commitment to act in critical solidarity with the new democratic government on all aspects which contributes to the cause of justice and peace, and, to engage in prophetic witness against all that negates the justice of God in the world.[1097]

One way of understanding this paragraph is that 'critical solidarity' and 'prophetic witness' are different approaches. This is possible; but I prefer to understand critical solidarity and prophetic witness as two aspects of the one prophetic ministry of the Church. From the 1994 material it is possible to see that a discussion about this took place, but was not completed. The same year one of the resolutions talks about dialogue and interaction, without using the word 'critical'.

[1094] 'When we do our advocacy work in Parliament, we remind the politicians that the Council of /churches collectively represents over 18 million followers' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 6).

[1095] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 3.

[1096] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 9.

[1097] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 9.

> The National Conference encourages its member churches to examine ways of creating new, or modifying old structures, in order to participate fully in joint regional ecumenical dialogue and ecumenical interaction with the nine new regional or provincial governments ...[1098]

In this articulation there is no clear prophetic role; one could argue that there is no prophetic voice at all. The resolution talks, however, about dialogue and interaction, which could be seen as an expression of at least some kind of potential criticism. In this respect the 1994 Presidential address has another view on the need for a critical voice.[1099] This tension between the solidarity aspect and the criticism aspect we find in the 1995 GS report:

> The President has graciously agreed to represent us at several important State functions. The Church must not now give up its influence and presence and give critical support to the proper administration of the affairs of the State.[1100]

One could compare the notion of 'critical support' with the 'critical solidarity' approach. But later in the same report the GS describes the relationship with the government in another, more distinctive way:

> The Churches are committed to stand in critical solidarity with the Government, participating in and supporting those aspects that uphold justice, that bring new dignity and create greater opportunities for the people, but challenging the Government when it forgets the marginalised, the needs of the poor, and its responsibility to all sectors of society. The Church's role in civil society is well established, it has a strong base from which to call [for] accountability.[1101]

According to the GS this concept of 'critical solidarity' is borrowed from another context, an international conference[1102]; but the text does not explicitly mention which one. Most probably it is the conference held in Vanderbijlpark in March 1995 with the theme: *South Africa and its Regional Context – Being the Church Today*. A number of the papers from the consultation discuss the concept, which makes it likely that this is part of the inspiration.[1103] If we look at

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[1098] National Conference 1994, Resolution 3.

[1099] 'Now more than ever, the Church <u>together</u> must be vigilant to ensure that we do not go out of the frying pan of the old land of Apartheid into the fire of secular neo-pagan state of the New Land detached from the principles and purposes of the Word of God' (Presidential address 1994, page 14). And 'I feel that the Church in a New Land should commit itself to pro-actively establish a good and co-operative relationship with a democratic Government of National Unity on reconstruction and development issues. But it must, however, insist on, and jealously protect its autonomy from Government' (Presidential address 1994, page 14).

[1100] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 11, point 2.5.4.

[1101] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 15.

[1102] 'This concept of critical solidarity arose out of an international Conference' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 15).

[1103] In a foreword to the report from the consultation, WCC General Secretary Konrad Raiser writes: 'This is a government which has been put in place with the support of the churches: it needs support. It is a government with which the churches will want to be in solidarity. But the churches must not be co-opted by any government. They must, at least, take a stance of critical solidarity. They cannot let ideals of justice be compromised or

the actual articulations of some sort of direct criticism of the government after 1994, there are only a few examples of SACC texts being outspoken. One example deals with Ascension Day no longer being a public holiday.[1104] In the texts of 1995 there are also some deliberations about the prophetic role. It is never expressed strongly, but the Council at least discuss the matter.[1105] The 1998 Presidential address, as we have already seen, goes a bit further in discussing the relationship between the Church and the government.[1106] He comes out in strong support of the government; almost every form of criticism has disappeared, and only solidarity or support remains:

> The problems are the epidemic of aids, the horror of rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. Then there
> is the shameful brutality directed at old people, the plight of the poor who have to make do with
> cardboard and plastic for shelter, the gross inequalities between rich and poor, and the debilitating effects
> of crime, drug abuse and moral decay. Before we climb on the bandwagon of those who complain that the
> government is not doing enough to resolve these problems, I suggest that we should pause and recollect
> just how apartheid squandered our material resources, and ruined the moral fibre of our society.[1107]

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postponed until a more convenient time' (Konrad Raiser, "Foreword." In *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. Barney. N. Pityana and Charles Villa-Vicencio, page *xiv* [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1995].). De Gruchy writes in the same publication: 'The ecumenical church is called to be in *solidarity* with the state in giving its support to those initiatives, and especially the RDP, which may lead to the establishment not only of a new but also a just social order. It means that the church should be fully engaged in reconstruction and development, encouraging and enabling the state and other agencies to achieve their goals in this regard. But this does not mean that the church surrenders its prophetic or critical responsibility. Rather, the church is called not simply to be in solidarity with the state but in *critical solidarity*. The church remains prophetic in its stance towards the emergent nation, but now on the basis of a shared commitment to the realization of that new nation. Being in *critical* solidarity means continued resistance to what is unjust and false, and continued protest on behalf of what is just and true. The prophetic struggle against injustice must continue; standing for the truth never comes to an end' (De Gruchy 1995, page 19). De Gruchy continues to describe this critical solidarity in a twofold way: 1) To take sides with the oppressed. 2) To defend human rights (De Gruchy 1995, page 19). The final *Statement on Reconstructing and Renewing the Church in South Africa* says this: 'Recognizing the complexities facing a new nation, the progress made by our leaders in redressing the wrongs of the past must be acknowledged. We need to be in critical solidarity with the Government of National Unity engaging with it in the creation of a new and just social order, fully involving ourselves in reconstruction and development' ("Statement on Reconstructing and Renewing the Church in South Africa." in *Being the Church in South Africa Today*, eds. Barney. N. Pityana and Charles Villa-Vicencio, page 166. [Johannesburg: South African Council of Churches, 1995].).

[1104] 'Though this is not a policy issue some of the NEC members expressed concerns that there had been no prior consultation with the Churches on the decision to change Ascension Day to a working day. A letter expressing concern has been sent to the Director General of Home Affairs' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 6).

[1105] 'Several key points emerged underlying and reaffirming the prophetic role of the church. The task of the Churches is to proclaim the values of the kingdom and to ensure that these values are clearly articulated and continue to be part of the political debate' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 6, point 2.2.4).

[1106] 'The final word in this section is about the attempts we have made to facilitate ongoing dialogue and co-operation between the government and the member churches of the SACC. It has been our wish to establish a forum in which the churches can meet and interact with the government at national, provincial and local levels' (Presidential address 1998, page 2).

[1107] Presidential address 1998, pages 2-3.

This might be one of the most supportive parts of the material in all the years surveyed. The text even criticises those who criticise the government, and the whole blame is put on the apartheid regime, even four years after the first democratic election. After this one can see that the SACC has a problem with the concept of 'critical solidarity', and in 2001 one of the resolutions introduces another concept, namely 'critical engagement'. But we shall return to this at a later stage. Before doing so, we have a few other versions of the *'Davidic prophetic'* *discourse* to take into consideration.

6.3.1.4 The *'Nation-building' discourse*

Related to the *'Davidic' discourse* is the *'Nation-building' discourse*, which is found mostly after 1994 – although it is also occasionally found earlier than that. Examples are when the texts say that the SACC should cooperate with the government to build a just nation. As early as 1986 the GS speaks about the role of the church in having a vision of the new society after apartheid:

> Now more than ever the Church has a responsibility to undertake a meaningful role in order to stimulate and guide thinking of all people of goodwill in our country.[1108]

This time the GS says nothing about cooperating with the authorities, but lays the foundation for the nation-building ministry. A clearer example is when the GS 1987 suggests that the churches should take responsibility for education.

> If we take into account the historic role of the churches in the history of education in South Africa, it is clear that the church has a major responsibility in the current crisis i.e. to initiate discussions with the educational bodies which are determined to bring about real reform in the educational system.[1109]

These are a few examples where the SACC articulates a willingness before 1990 to be part of the nation-building process. They are really exceptions, but still they show a tendency towards a closer cooperation with the authorities. In 1993 the GS is more outspoken about this:

> On the other hand we need to be <u>ready</u> for the reconstruction of the country once the new non-racial democratic society is established.[1110]

When the texts say something about the RDP, the church is often seen as a partner in the nation-building process.[1111] In different ways it is describes how the churches may contribute

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[1108] General Secretary's Report 1986, page 5.
[1109] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 5, point 4.
[1110] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 1.

in that process. The texts give certain roles to the churches that complement those of the government – preferably to lead moral regeneration.[1112] The church is also supposed to be closely involved in the RDP as a mediator.[1113] In one of the 1995 resolutions, the involvement of the Church in the RDP is given strong support:

> The Conference of the SACC meeting at Vanderbijlpark notes with concern the difficulty experienced by the Government of National Unity in implementing the RDP at community level, and notes further that there are repeated calls from GNU[1114] to the Church to become involved. Conference recognizes that the Church has skilled persons, resources, facilities and a large measure of credibility with and acceptance by the community and therefore resolves to call upon the GNU
>
> (I)   to make the Church a full and active partner in implementing RDP at community level, and
>
> (II)   to use the skills and resources offered by the Church for this purpose [1115]

In this process, the SACC was part of nation-building, and the prophetic voice was not as audible as in the past. Under the heading, *The unity of the Nation – A call for National Focus,* the Council President 2001 articulates how the Church can be involved in the process:

> Poverty demands us to enhance and increase the speed of delivery of basic services to all people. The hunger for access to land needs this nation to accelerate its delivery systems to landless people. Above all that,
>
> 1.   The time is now ripe for the government to move beyond the canvassing for the renewal plan of Africa, The need for a direct dialogue between civil society and government on the initiative has come. We believe that the Church has a role in that plan for renewal.[1116]

The whole NC in 2004 focused on the ministry of nation-building.[1117] As we have understood the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*, there is no direct conflict between that discourse and the *'Nation-building' discourse*, although the two are far from identical. While the latter actively becomes a part of the government's endeavours, the former could equally mean that the Church, having close links with the government, only acts as a kind of watchdog, and does not necessarily have the same objectives as the government. In the *'Nation-building'*

[1111] 'The Government may build houses but it needs the Church to create homes' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 14).

[1112] 'The Churches should provide leadership, restore hope, determination and inspiration to people living in distressed communities especially those in the rural areas' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 14).

[1113] 'It is also the duty of the Church to serve as an ongoing liaison between the community and RDP representatives' (General Secretary's Report 1995, page 14-15).

[1114] GNU = Government of National Unity. The first Government after the democratic elections was a coalition between the ANC, the NP and the IFP.

[1115] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.38.02, 14.

[1116] Presidential address 2001, page 6.

[1117] 'The Theme of this Triennial Conference **"Unless the Lord Builds the House, those who build labour in vain"** should be heard as a call to what should constitute the core essence of our project of nation building' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 1).

discourse there is also a tendency for the Churches to be given the distinctive role of being the moral guardians of the project. This could also be seen as an aspect of the prophetic role.

> … we ourselves are engaged in a similar project of nation building after years of bondage and transition. We need to choose our moral compass which will guide us through the wilderness of change. We need to be deliberate in making our priorities for our new nation.[1118]

Closely related to this discourse is another that has its focus on transformation and change.

6.3.1.5 The *'Development' discourse*

The GS 1993 summarises how the SACC was almost forced to be involved in development before the 1990s:

> The churches entered into the area of development at a time when there was no legitimate government to take care of the needs of the people. As a result churches extended themselves to cover as much area as possible, given the vacuum. The possibility of the establishment of a legitimate government requires us to reexamine our role and determine our particular focus.[1119]

This discourse expresses something other than the *'Liberation' discourse* (which we shall come back to), as another way of naming the *'Mosaic Prophetic' discourse*. While the *'Liberation' discourse* wants to change or transform the whole society, making people free, the *'Development' discourse* presupposes a situation where positive change is possible without fundamental transformation of the society. There are a number of examples of this discourse in the material. It is also found in the textual material long before 1990. For example, the GS talks about development as early as 1972.

> It is no use talking about a communist threat and arming ourselves to meet this unless at the same time and with double the energy, we are working for parity of opportunity and development of all peoples in South Africa.[1120]

He also gives examples of how the Council is working with development, such as the Devcraft project.[1121] In one of the 1981 resolutions it is clearly stated that development is the aim of the work, when the Inter Church Aid Executive Committee is requested

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[1118] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 2.
[1119] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 14, point 2.10.6.
[1120] General Secretary's Report 1972, page 1.
[1121] 'The launching of Devcraft, a black company, and its immediate impact is of great encouragement to all those concerned with the development of the black peoples of South Africa' (General Secretary's Report 1972, page 3).

… to investigate the obstacles in providing electricity to rural communities and to take appropriate action to overcome such obstacles where the supply of electricity would contribute to development and improvement of quality of life and economic growth.[1122]

The *'Development' discourse* is common throughout all the material. Sometimes the texts relate it to the need for liberation, as in the GS report 1989.[1123] The GS draws a clear line between the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*, this time partly using different labels:

For us, there is a difference between survival methods (i.e. helping blacks to survive in an apartheid society), and liberation strategies (helping blacks to end apartheid).[1124]

But in the same report development is also discussed on its own merits. The thought is that even the concept of development needs to be developed.[1125] So it is not easy to decide which discourse is the more important in the report. Between 1990 and 1994 the *'Development' discourse* becomes more and more common. In 1993 there is even a wish in one of the resolutions for the Council

… to develop a spirituality for Development;[1126]

The GS suggests three different ways of interacting with the government, but all three are part of the *'Development' discourse*.[1127] The issue of development is thus high on the agenda of the National Conferences around 1994.[1128] In 1993 one resolution urges churches to employ people who can work in development.[1129] This is in line with the thoughts of the GS Report the

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[1122] National Conference 1981, Resolution 27.2.

[1123] 'My experience in this ministry is that one deals constantly with the symptoms of the problem rather that with the fundamental causes thereof' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 20).

[1124] General Secretary's Report 1989, page 20.

[1125] 'The SACC has been involved in development but new ideas and new visions towards development are needed at this critical time in the history of so many poor people' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 32).

[1126] National Conference 1993, Resolution 10 b, page 3.

[1127] 'There are at least three possible models we could follow as churches. One is being part of a national reconstruction and development programme which could end up being a parastatal organisation. If it ends up being a coordinated entity consisting of governmental and non-governmental organs we could possibly be able to be part of that national strategic planning structure. But if it became an implementing organ or structure of the government, Churches may have some difficulties.

The second model is that of being part of a national coordinated non-governmental initiative which will work in partnership with the government on identified and agreed development priorities.

The third is that of the SACC Development and Training arm to facilitate the formation of an Ecumenical National Development Forum is able to relate to the government on policy issues, priorities, use of government resources and other identified development issues' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 14-15, point 2.10.6).

[1128] 'Put development high on the agenda of the member churches' (National Conference 1993, Resolution, 11.1).

[1129] 'The National Conference of the SACC resolves that all member churches and associate members of the SACC be urged to appoint Development Officers ….' (National Conference 1993, Resolution 11).

same year.[1130] Also in this context it is worth mentioning the GS report of 1994 again, where development is an important part of the RDP, and compares it with the ideals of the Kingdom of God.[1131] The interim GS of 1994 also talks about development.

> This is a time of great hope in our country. This new era of healing reconstruction and development is a challenge to the churches. We must continue to work for peace.[1132]

It is of course natural that liberation be seen as already achieved. So development becomes the core value of the new agenda. The President of the SACC states in 1995, for example, that South Africa has reached a critical point in the struggle:

> But the most important, Brothers and Sisters, is that the noble struggle of our people has reached the most critical stage of our quest for total liberation and total freedom. There can be no total freedom until the socio-economic landscape has been totally transformed.[1133]

In these short sentences an antagonism is found because just before that section, the address says that the people must rebuild the land and develop the communities; and the Church must be involved in that process, according to the Council President.[1134] Development is thus a way of achieving total liberation and total freedom. When one of the 1995 resolutions talks about church and development, it gives the whole project divine sanction:

> Conference supports an [a] holistic understanding of development which entails sound stewardship of God's creation. Through its national and autonomous provincial structures development initiatives need to be identified and encouraged.[1135]

Another resolution, addressed to the GNU, asks for full partnership in the RDP.[1136] Cooperation in the development project is the way that the SACC chooses at the end of the

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[1130] '... I believe that there is an area of development which the churches must focus on, irrespective of what the new government will do' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 15, point 2.10.6).

[1131] 'On reconstruction and development we now have the ANC's RDP Policy Document which will soon be acted upon by parliament to make it a policy of the Government. A close reading of this Document shows that it approximates closely the ideals we have been struggling for and proclaimed. It brings us closer to the ideals of the Kingdom (the Sovereign Rule) of God' (General Secretary's Report 1994, page 7).

[1132] Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 25.

[1133] Presidential address 1995, page 4.

[1134] 'The Church in South Africa can play a major role in the promotion of this project' (Presidential address 1995, page 5).

[1135] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.04.

[1136] 'The Conference of the SACC meeting at Vanderbijlpark notes with concern the difficulty experienced by the Government of National unity in implementing the RDP at community level, and notes further that there are repeated calls from GNU to the Church to become involved. Conference recognizes that the Church has skilled persons, resources, facilities and a large measure of credibility with and acceptance by the community and therefore resolves to call upon the GNU

(I) to make the Church a full and active partner in implementing RDP at community level...' (National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.38.02 14).

period studied. It is also clear that the development motif is more important than the liberation motif, although the two concepts are sometimes merged.

Still, it is different from the *'Davidic Prophetic' discourse* because it has a more outspoken drive for change. From time to time it also has the marginalised in focus, even though the perspective is top-down. It is also a form of ministry for which the SACC has been criticised. The GS report of 2004 understands the critique, and argues against too strong a focus on the development aspect.

> An equally emerging threat to ecumenism is the growing tendency to make the SACC a faith-based development organization or non-government organization. Whereas such development programmes are supposed to be seen as the outgrowth of our common witness, in most cases they overshadow our true ecumenical basis, with [which] is our common faith. What brings us together should not be development projects but the opportunity to fellowship together despite our denominational brokenness and the prophetic need to speak in unity on public and national issues. Ecumenism is our strategic objective and through that we then are engaged in development work as part of our ecumenical ministry. We should admit the dilemma though, that most of our partners do not fund us to do ecumenical work, but rather what they define as development work.[1137]

This is also an example where the texts admit that the financial aspect is part of the answer to the question about how (and even why) the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed. If we take this report literally, it means that the SACC has to make development a priority if it wants to get financial support from its partners.[1138] If the prophetic need to be united over national issues, and a commitment to development work, are seen to be opposed to each other, the GS suggests that the funding partners are actually interfering in the way the Council is acting, and that they are making it difficult to uphold the prophetic ministry. This is at least a possible way to understand the 2004 GS report.

6.3.1.6 The *'Critical engagement' discourse*

The antagonism between discourses that strive for loyalty with the government and discourses that aim at a critical distance is obvious. In the 21st century there is a need for a new strategy. This problem has already been foreseen in the early 1990s, when in 1991 the GS discusses the

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[1137] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 5.

[1138] If this is true, it is a new situation compared with how the relationship was described before 1990: 'That its reliance on overseas funds has never created such a "dominance-dependence" relationship between the SACC and overseas funders is indicated by the fact that apart from the appointment of the Rev. Basil Brown in 1962, nowhere do SACC records yield any indication of overseas agencies dictating how their funds should be spent locally' (Thomas 1979, page 61).

need for continuing prophetic ministry even in a free and democratic situation. He underscores the risk of some churches becoming too close to the new government.

> 3. That a church which settled initially with the "old order" has no credibility to critically minister to those who are in a "new order", and, that a Church which settles uncritically with the new system after independence gets co-opted by the said system and can never be prophetic in relation to injustices practised by the new system.[1139]

After about 10 years, the Council has reached a place where this issue has to be raised again. But in the intervening years, different texts have pointed to the risk.[1140] In a resolution with the heading 'Church-State Relations', the NC 2001

> RESOLVES that the SACC adopt an attitude of critical engagement in its dealings with the state and other organs of civil society and therefore requests the NEC to develop clear policies that will inform the concept of "critical engagement" and to assist SACC members in defining our relationship with the State;[1141]

So, for instance, this new policy is applied to the relationship with the Department of Education, where the Council

> RESOLVES that the General Secretary should initiate engagement with the Education Ministry with the intention of promoting a religious education policy that makes provision for both a multi-religious approach and for single faith learning programmes.[1142]

The GS report of 2001 is clearly an example where there is a shift of emphasis towards a more critical relationship with the government. The Church cannot be comfortable in the presence of power, and a prophetic critique of both political and financial leadership can be heard.[1143] There are expectations, which the GS continues to discuss, that the SACC should

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[1139] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 15.

[1140] 'There is no guarantee that even in future when we have a new government, our government of men and women who are sinners, sinners who will need to be confronted with the light of the Easter God – a light in the darkness' (Presidential address 1992, page 8); and, 'We thus have a responsibility as churches within our prophetic tradition and as a conscience of the society, to ensure that these new evolving structures will not just crush our people rather than offer them an opportunity to escape the vicious circle of poverty and powerlessness' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 13).

[1141] National Conference 2001, Resolution 18.

[1142] National Conference 2001, Resolution 21.

[1143] 'The true heroes and heroines of the anti apartheid struggle have been forgotten as our political leadership consorts with their new found comrades in the World Bank and IMF.

The future of the SACC lies in our acceptance that we do not belong to the establishment, and never did. Our vantage point is being at the pulse of pain, vulnerability, and poverty. To stake such a claim should not suggest that we must withdraw from mainstream public life, it does not mean we should retreat into a ministry of souls. What it means is that we must begin to redefine the basis of our power from an alternative vantage point: the disestablished and disempowered of our society' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 5).

deal only with so-called 'spiritual' matters. This is not what the GS believes.[1144] We could find many examples in the GS report 2001 where the GS pursues a holistic view of the role of the SACC. The prophetic agenda – which was almost non-existent in the texts after the 1998 National Conference – is restored.

> I want to suggest to this Conference that this prophetic and transformation agenda remains our core business, and without it, we then have no reason to exist.[1145]

In 2004 the GS offers a historical retrospective, and also reflects on the policy of critical solidarity, when he writes under the heading, 'From Prophetic Resistance to Critical Engagement', that the SACC National Conference of 1995

> ... acknowledged that the historical premise of our praxis has shifted from one of prophetic resistance to a new, as yet undefined praxis. In that context, a major question for us was how to characterize our relationship with government in an era of reconstruction and development. It was from such probing that the notion of critical solidarity emerged from some quarters among us. Amidst all the uncertainties of how we are to be the Church and what our mission was to be, one thing was certain, that we have to continue to be the voice of the poor even in the new land.[1146]

In this articulation we can see that the perspective has changed from the former way of regarding oppression as based on ethnicity, to a new language where the oppressed are described as 'the poor' with no reference to ethnicity. Apartheid is gone as the target. Not even the phenomena of racism and xenophobia are the issues. The text talks about the poor, although it is an example of a *'Being the voice of the voiceless' discourse*. The GS is discussing how the church is going to be church in this new situation. Describing the poor as the focus of the prophetic ministry, the addressee is no longer the government alone, but also those with financial power – as we have seen in an example, already quoted, from the same

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[1144] 'Many in the church are relieved that apartheid is over so that the SACC can be what it was supposed to be, namely to unite churches in South Africa. It is a matter of concern that some who make that argument are those who should know better, especially those who are in government today. There is a widely held view by our new political leadership that the SACC has outlived its usefulness and when they invite the Churches to meetings, it is only to make opening prayers. We should refuse being turned into praise singers of the state. It is true that there are many in the Churches today who subscribe to this notion. To be fair, it is true that the core business of the SACC is not politics, economics or society as such. That is why we have argued that the SACC is not merely a development agency. /..../ The problem is that the Church Agenda school had a narrow view of spirituality, a kind of spirituality that abstracts us from the world' (General Secretary's Report 2001, page 5).

[1145] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 6.

[1146] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3.

report.[1147] This is a change of attitude from before 1994, although it still shows a great deal of solidarity with and understanding for the government.[1148]

When the GS 2004 summarises the mission of the Council, the prophetic ministry is not explicit, but it is implicit in the first point. The focus on empowering the marginalised contains a prophetic element.

> **To work for moral reconstruction in South Africa, focussing [focusing] on issues of justice, reconciliation, integrity of creation and the eradication of poverty;**
> **To contribute to the empowerment of all who are spiritually, socially, economically marginalized; and**
> **To facilitate joint reflection and action by the churches as an expression of a shared commitment to united witness.**[1149]

An example that the texts give to show that the Council acts prophetically is the march on Parliament in 2004.[1150] There are also verbal articulations of a prophetic nature:

> We gather here to recall such struggles of the past in order that our eyes can be opened to see contemporary pain and misery of the poor of our times, and that our moral passion can be fired to a new pastoral praxis to ensure that we should not be resigned to a society which tolerates as normal gross inequalities, unprecedented levels of unemployment and poverty.[1151]

The GS 2004 argues that the relationship between the Church and the State has to be discussed. He defines, as we have seen, the current relationship as like that of a courting couple.[1152] The goal is not marriage but a stable relationship. He relates it to the rest of the

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[1147] 'The last Decade had seen us become involved in the Reconstruction and Development Programmes, in the Constitution making processes, and in the praxis of delivery of services to the poor. We also had to learn new skills such as parliamentary advocacy skills as well as unlearn some of our old habits, such as the temptation to make public pronouncements against those in power from the outside, without the benefit of informed opinion or understanding the difficulty of governance, especially in the context where the levers of power still reside with the economic oligarchy' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 3).

[1148] Another way of using the concept 'critical' when it comes to the relationship between the Church and the government is suggested by Knutson, although it refers to the Lutheran Church. 'During the years of the struggle against apartheid church members were challenged to adopt a position of critical solidarity with the liberation movements. Now that the liberation movements have become political parties the situation has changed. What is needed now is not critical solidarity with political parties but critical solidarity with the poor and critical participation in the ongoing process of building a more democratic society through involvement at local, regional, national and global levels. It is not enough to "think globally and act locally." Today we have to think and act locally and globally' (Knutson 2005, page 10).

[1149] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 2.

[1150] 'The staff in the Unit had been involved in numerous activities ranging from public acts of demonstration such as marching on Parliament ....' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 8).

[1151] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 4.

[1152] 'If one were to characterize the current Church and State relationship, we can [say we] are like courting couples who are enjoy mutual fascination with one another, but still remain in deep suspicion of the other's motives' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 19).

continent, and delivers quite a strong critique of African governments – although he describes the South African situation as different.

> We need to mention that we find this problem to be pervasive in the entire continent. It appears that the democratic space we have opened has sufficiently evolved to allow clarity on Church State relationship. Those in civil society also make the same claim, that African governments are not receptive of opening and sharing the democratic space with non government organs.[1153]

This example shows that the SACC, after 10 years of democracy, openly discusses the risk of becoming too closely linked to the government, and also puts the blame on the politicians for not welcoming an open, democratic discussion.

6.3.1.7   Summing up:

We have discerned a number of prophetic discourses that have a view that the contemporary government is legitimate. We find this perspective, interestingly enough, even in the material before 1990, although it increases in prevalence after 1990 and becomes almost dominant after 1994. In some instances the articulations even go beyond this, and suggest that the SACC should become a partner of the government, where the prophetic or critical distance is almost gone. I call this a *'State theology' discourse*. There are no examples of such a discourse before 1990, but after 1994 especially it appears more frequently. When I use this term, I do not use it in the same sense as the *Kairos Document* does. I am not saying that the SACC justifies an unjust system. But it sometimes supports the government without any critical aspect. In that sense it aims at justifying the status quo.

The different discourses discerned in this context shows different aspects of how the texts of the SACC want to interact with the government. As portrayed in figure 9, these discourses contribute to change to differing extents. Between 1994 and 1998 we find the *'Critical solidarity' discourse* to be one of the more common expressions of how the SACC wants to interact with the government. Alongside this approach, the *'Nation-building' discourse* is very common. After 1998 there is a change: a new concept is introduced in the form of 'critical engagement'. One element in this antagonism between a more supportive relationship with the government and a more critical role is the interference of the funding partners, who prefer that the SACC concentrates on development issues. One can see signs that the Council is not happy with this. In 2004 the ethnic aspect is no longer important when the texts speak about

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[1153] General Secretary's Report 2004, page 19.

the oppressed. The poor are the focus. The use of the term 'oppressed' could indicate a antagonism between the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*. We shall return to that in the final discussion.

6.3.2 'The government is illegitimate' – the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*

The *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is a more frequent discourse in the texts than the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. It is characterised by a sense of being outside the spheres of political influence, or outside the court, if we speak with the biblical language from the time of the Old Testament prophets. As already indicated, I regard this discourse as more or less similar to the *'Liberation' discourse* and to the *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*. The meaning might differ, but I prefer to use the concepts borrowed from Brueggemann, since it correlates to the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. Most frequently we find examples of the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* after 1976, which might be seen as a reaction to the Soweto crisis. There are many aspects of this quest for liberation. One has to do with ethnicity:

> Finally, we shall only see true liberation from structures when we begin to train black men [sic] to take over the key positions in our structures.[1154]

In the fight for liberation, black persons need to take over. But the language in this example is still paternalistic and patriarchal. The example is an articulation of a *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse*. But there are other examples in the material that year[1155], so there is an open antagonism in the texts in this respect. Later in the GS report of the same year, the GS uses a different language. Even whites need to change.

> We need to be liberated from apartheid and the unchristian thinking that we can still be separate in this country. The continued arrogance of whites towards blacks in pretending to know what is good for them can no longer be tolerated and has, in fact, demonstrably been rejected.[1156]

The phenomenon of being an outsider could be expressed in different ways. In one of the 1976 resolutions there is a proposal that the Church should be some sort of alternative society. The resolution does not talk about development or liberation. There is some kind of third way.

[1154] General Secretary's Report 1976, page 3.

[1155] 'We affirm the right of the students to have protested non-violently on the language issue and express our solidarity with the black youth in the struggle for liberation' (National Conference 1976, Resolution 2 iii).

[1156] General Secretary's Report 1976, page 4.

> Invigorating the Church to <u>be</u> the Church; the "zone" of our common life over which the Church <u>HAS</u> control; so that it can offer an "alternative society" in which on national regional and local level, all aspects of apartheid will be eliminated.[1157]

This alternative society is somehow seen as a temporal or transitional phase on the way to true liberation.[1158] This idea that the Church is being an alternative society can be linked to another phenomenon, namely making liberation a spiritual matter. There are such examples of a more 'inner' liberation, a liberation that is not political. In the NC of the same year, 1976, we can see that different emphases were made by the different office bearers. Our focus is not to stress the differences but to see how the variety of thought is there within the textual material.

> <u>WE NEED LIBERATION FROM OUR PRIDE</u>; the pride that rules our wills.[1159]

As an example of this spiritual liberation, England is mentioned.[1160] The SACC President continues by referring to John Wesley, arguing for an inner spiritual liberation as a prerequisite for liberation in society.[1161] This could be seen as a variant of the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* that concerns the wholeness of life, or at least an example that liberation can also start with the spiritual aspect. Examples of this inner liberation are not very common in the material, which is rather critical of this kind of approach, and even suggests that the Council has been a stumbling block to real liberation.[1162] So most of the articulations take a different line, as in the report of the outgoing GS 1977, who reflects on the homelands policy and

> … condemns this policy of depriving Black South Africans of their birthright to freedom, equality and participation in a united South Africa.[1163]

The base of the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is that human beings have a birthright to freedom. It is not negotiable. It has to do with the dignity of every human being, and therefore even white people need liberation. But in their case it cannot mean liberation from political oppression, but rather something else:

[1157] National Conference 1976, Resolution 3 v b.

[1158] 'We reject the oppressive system of apartheid and call for the liberation of the black man [sic], thus according him [sic] full citizenship in a common South Africa' (National Conference 1976, Resolution 6).

[1159] Presidential address 1976, page 1.

[1160] 'The land was purged of its evil and iniquity because one man realized that the sin in his own heart had to be confessed and forgiven' (Presidential address 1976, page 3).

[1161] 'Spiritual power liberated the masses and England of its injustices' (Presidential address 1976, page 3)

[1162] 'We call upon the Churches to examine their own structures as sometimes being a hindrance to liberation ….' (National Conference 1976, Resolution 3 (ii)).

[1163] Outgoing General Secretary's Report 1977, page 4, point 9.b.

There will be no security for anyone whilst the majority believe themselves to be oppressed and exploited because the whites will never be free until the blacks are free.[1164]

The same theme returns in 1979, when the GS again talks about the need for liberation on the side of whites, that they too have a non-negotiable right to freedom. 'Birthright' is here changed to 'heritage', which means more-or-less the same thing.

We are engaged in a glorious liberation struggle even for their sakes, to liberate them from their fears so that they too can enjoy their heritage, their glorious freedom as the children of God.[1165]

These examples show that the concept of liberation is much more complex than just involving freedom from oppression.[1166] It has to do with the wholeness of human life. Having said this, we still have to say that in most examples, liberation refers exactly to the need to come out of political oppression, and especially to get rid of the apartheid system. Especially in the late 1970s there are many examples that discuss the liberation aspect in relation to ethnicity. As we can see in an example from the GS report 1978, the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is influenced by liberation theology.

And God is on our side, not because blacks are better morally than whites. He is on our side because he is that kind of God, who always sides with the oppressed.[1167]

God is named as the liberator God in this discourse.[1168] In this example of the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse,* the exodus from Egypt is a common perspective, as we have already seen.[1169] This discourse, which finds its expression in the exodus from Egypt, continues and becomes even more dominant the closer we get to 1990.

[1164] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 4. We find another example in 1976, when the GS also talks about the need for white people to be liberated: 'Good work and identifications are not enough! You see, what is required is that they need to be liberated to see that human dignity, human rights, and basic freedom are the issues at stake' (General Secretary's Report 1976, page 5).

[1165] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 16.

[1166] 'South Africa will eventually be free from political domination and economic exploitation, but this freedom should be accompanied by a deeper liberation of the whole man, and of society as a whole – and this task only the church of Christ and the people of God can fulfil! Let us go forward in faith and joy with a new song in our hearts .....' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 12).

[1167] General Secretary's Report 1978, page 6.

[1168] 'We are fellow-workers with this God, the exodus God, the liberator God ....' (General Secretary's Report 1979, page 13).

[1169] 'God was subversive and a destabiliser in Egypt when He helped some slaves to escape' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 13). A disturbing thing in the story about the Exodus is that the Israelites also keep slaves. They are allowed to eat the Passover meal if they are first circumcised (Exodus 12:44). The question is, therefore, whether the Exodus story is a story about liberation from slavery in general terms, or a story about how God delivers his people. The GS nevertheless uses the story as a model for the liberation from apartheid. This is nothing unusual: the story about Exodus has been used in many similar situations.

My dear friends, I have a deep faith in the God of the Exodus, the liberator God. Consequently, I can never ultimately fear men, however powerful they may be temporarily. Our cause is just and therefore it will triumph even if some, even if many, including Tutu and the S.A.C.C. should become causalities of the liberation struggle.[1170]

There is in this context a willingness even to break the law, to reach liberation. The first time this is expressly said is in a resolution in 1980, about mixed marriages. The resolution supports any minister of religion who wants to solemnise the marriage of a couple from different race groups.[1171] But in some texts one can see a hesitation to articulate anything that could be seen as illegal. In 1986 the GS discusses what the Western governments can do to stop apartheid, but he does not speak out:

If the SACC or its member churches would be asked (as we are constantly being asked) what our advice to the different governments of the western world would be to resolve the conflict on our country, what answer does one give?[1172]

But the text do have examples when, in an outspoken way, the whole legal system is questioned, and therefore people are encouraged to break unjust laws.

The National Conference takes note of Church pronouncements on Apartheid as a Heresy which call in question the moral legitimacy of the South African regime as a basis for questioning the de jure Legitimacy of that regime. Therefore, recommends to the Member Churches to question their moral obligation to obey unjust laws such as:

The Populations registration Act

The Group Areas Act

The Land Acts

The Educations Acts

The Separate Ameneties [Amenities] Acts

Further calls upon Member Churches to support the structures which are recognised by the people as their authentic legitimate authority in the eyes of God.[1173]

The Council has the marginalised in focus in this context.[1174] Therefore the texts also express the need for further meetings with the ANC and the PAC, which, at that time, were still

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[1170] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 33.

[1171] National Conference 'supports and calls on its member churches to support any minister of religion who is a marriage office [officer] who out of conscience solemnises the marriage of a couple from different race groups or belonging to a race group whose marriage he is not authorised by the State to solemnise' (National Conference 1980, Resolution, page 90).

[1172] General Secretary's Report 1986, page 4.

[1173] National Conference 1987, Resolution 4.

[1174] 'The crucial test in our obedience to Christ, our commitment to the task of liberation and our deepest motivation in the witness and ministry to the needs of the oppressed, of the poor, the detained and imprisoned, the downtrodden and the outcast' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 9).

banned.[1175] The same year the resolutions also support rent boycotts as a way of resistance.[1176] The same applies to some unjust taxes that the NC argues should not be paid, since there should be no taxation without representation.[1177]

But the texts also speak about liberation in general terms. Nevertheless I name it a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*, because it questions the legitimacy of the government. One resolution of 1986 asks for amnesty for South African refugees, making four points.[1178] Although the SACC asks this of the government, as if the government were legitimate, it is clear that the demands are so profound that they presuppose a new regime. This becomes even more obvious in the words of the GS 1987, where the legitimacy of the government is openly questioned:

> All the above developments have raised a serious question in the minds of many christians [Christians] about the moral legitimacy of such an oppressive rule.[1179]

The argument continues to ask whether the government is constitutionally legal[1180], and it also asks whether people in general, and the church in particular, need to obey such unjust rule:

> It immediately raises a number of crucial questions: what moral obligation does the church then still have to obey unjust laws which clearly are in conflict with the laws of God?[1181]

The GS continues later in the report to explain that the commitment to obey Christ also includes solidarity with the oppressed.[1182] According to one of the resolutions 1988, the SACC is not going to cooperate with the government, since it has drafted new legislation in order to control how funds are used. The SACC therefore

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[1175] National Conference 1987, Resolution 7-8.

[1176] '... regards the rent boycott which has persisted in different parts of South Africa for many months as a justified form of resistance and a strategy which the churches share and should continue to share in and identify with' (National Conference 1987, Resolution 11).

[1177] National Conference 1987, Resolution 21.

[1178] '(a) Unban liberation movements presently in exile;
(b) Declare an unconditional amnesty for all South African exiles;
(c) Stop conducting raids and attacks on refugees in neighbouring states.
(d) That the S.A. Government release all political prisoners in South Africa' (National Conference 1986, Resolution 11).

[1179] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 6, point 6.

[1180] 'If from the view point of the gospel this is conceded another question immediately arises i.e. to what degree this government can any longer be seen to be constitutionally legal?' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 6, point 6). And 'The Conference expresses its view regarding the moral legitimacy and the constitutional legality of the government and indicate[indicates] the steps to be taken it is found that this government is morally illegitimate and constitutionally illegal' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 13, recommendation no 6).

[1181] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 6, point 6.

[1182] 'The crucial test in our obedience to Christ, our commitment to the task of liberation and our deepest motivation in the witness and ministry to the needs of the oppressed, of the poor, the detained and imprisoned, the downtrodden and the outcast' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 9).

… reaffirms its commitment not to co-operate with the authorities by complying with unjust and unacceptable requirements, nor to accept the governments definitions of what constitutes the church's mission.[1183]

The *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is obvious when the NC texts analyse the situation – as, for instance, when the GS indicates that the government of South Africa is totalitarian.[1184] He calls for a Mosaic liberation. The whole issue of sanctions and pressure on the apartheid regime is clearly in line with the Mosaic ministry. Even after the government has freed Mandela, the SACC uses a Mosaic way of expressing itself:

> While acknowledging Mr de Klerk's efforts / ...../ there was no basis for reconsidering the relaxation of pressures on the regime as **the system of apartheid and its structures still remained intact.[1185]**

As we have seen in the foregoing, there are several examples between 1990 and 1994 of other discourses. In that way there is an antagonism within the material. In this context, the concept of irreversibility is introduced and is given meaning from a liberation or Mosaic point of view. Irreversibility means that

> ... the Constituent Assembly is continued and the existing apartheid legislative structures have their sovereign power removed and invested either in the Constituent Assembly or in any other interim structure that could be agreed on.[1186]

When one of the 1990 resolutions further explains what is meant by irreversibility, one can see that liberation from the old system is the only way forward. There is no longer any option for the old regime to remain in power.

> The dismantling of apartheid will be irreversible only when:
>
> i. A Constituent Assembly is constituted;
>
> ii. Sovereign power is removed from the existing apartheid legislative structures and invested either in the Constituent Assembly or another agreed interim structure;
>
> iii. The white minority cannot legally reverse or veto the process of change through the present unrepresentative legislative structures.[1187]

So, the question of irreversibility becomes a tool in order to determine whether transformation is really taking place or not. The year thereafter, in 1991, the judgement is that it is not.[1188]

[1183] National Conference 1988, Resolution 20.

[1184] 'History, Mr President, has taught us that empires do not collapse voluntarily; that dictators never allow for freedoms that threaten their dictatorship; and that totalitarian states do not spontaneously self-destruct. It takes enormous pressures to force an oppressive system to surrender its powers of oppression and thereby to allow a free and democratic process to take its course' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 18).

[1185] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 4.

[1186] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 6.

[1187] National Conference 1990, Resolution 2.1.

Even in 1992, the question of illegitimacy leads the Council to resolve that transformation has not yet taken place. A whole list is included of activities to be done in order to put an end to apartheid and obtain a legitimate government.[1189]

In this *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* there is no other option than the replacement of the unjust and illegitimate regime. One sign of how long the SACC adhered to this discourse is seen when there are talks about the arms embargo. Only when the change is irreversible can this be lifted.[1190]

Focusing on liberation also means that the texts tend to regard the post-liberation situation as a kind of Promised Land. The GS thus links the RDP to Christian thoughts about the Kingdom of God:

> To what extent we must ask, will the new order approximate our vision of the Sovereign Reign (Kingdom) of God?[1191]

This is a new note in the way that the SACC talks about the government. If we read the text from a Mosaic point of view, one could say that the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is ending and being replaced by a discourse of entering the Blessed Canaan. This means that there is no further need for liberation. The people have come to the land flowing with milk and honey. But there are examples that this attitude changes in the 21st century.

> ... it is true that the core business of the SACC is not politics, economics or society as such. That is why we have argued that the SACC is not merely a development agency. /..../ The problem is that the Church Agenda school had a narrow view of spirituality, a kind of spirituality that abstracts us from the world.[1192]

[1188] 'A strict interpretation of our past resolutions therefore leads to a conclusion that the changes thus far are not irreversible' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 9).

[1189] 'In line with the SACC's position on the illegitimacy of the South African regime, Conference instructs the NEC to facilitate a process of consultation amongst member churches and in the civil society with a view to formulating a plan of action which may include the following elements:

1. to disobey all unjust laws and practices in obedience to God.

2. to fast and go on hunger strikes to force the regime to resign.

3. to urge Church leaders to place adverts in the newspaper calling for the resignation of the government.

4. to organize marches where Christian symbols will be displayed.

5. to inform and mobilize our congregations to support and participate in the campaign.

6. to urge church leaders to impose a moratorium on further talks with the regime and urge our overseas partners to do likewise; and that this be done in consultation with other concerned organisations.

7. to mobilise all African states to actively support the cause of justice and liberation in South Africa.

Conference urges such a campaign in order to hasten the replacement of this regime with a democratic structure' (National Conference 1992, Resolution, 92.42.04 no 4, page 8-9).

[1190] 'We believe, in line with the UN, that the arms embargo must be left in place until a new non-racial democratically elected government is in place' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 10).

[1191] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 10.

There are still very few examples after 1994 of something like the *'Mosaic prophetic'* *discourse*. This raises a number of questions. First, one can ask: Are the people now liberated? Has South Africa entered the Promised Land? Second, there is a tendency that the texts of the SACC, which has been inspired by Black theology and a version of liberation theology, now becomes more inspired by a theology of development or, as it more often is described, a theology of reconstruction. As we have seen already, those kinds of theologies are prevalent in the *'Nation-building' discourse* as well as in the *'Development' discourse*.

Another aspect is that the texts around 1994 describe the prophetic ministry in many different ways. In the address of 1994 the GS describes the ministries that the Council had already identified in 1993.

- The ministry of reconstruction and development.
- The ministry of reconciliation and healing.
- The ministry of renewal and regeneration.[1193]

Just as in the 1993 GS report, there is no explicit reference to a prophetic ministry. The GS even speaks about different discourses when he comments on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (which he calls the 'Truth Commission').

> I personally, strongly believe that the discourse of the legal profession alone cannot fully express or effect the necessary dimension of a truth commission beyond the questions of justice and retribution. For me, it is the religious, theological and liturgical dimension of this discourse – involving concepts like confession, repentance, and forgiveness – which can assist in making such a commission truly liberating and healing.[1194]

The GS regards the work of the coming TRC to be liberating. This is another discourse, a new way of giving meaning to the word 'liberation'. It is in the same context that the GS says that the RDP programme brings the nation closer to the Kingdom of God. In such a situation there is not much need for the traditional prophetic ministry. The GS still comes to the conclusion that some sort of criticism might be needed, at least potentially.

> The Church has to take a stand and remain a conscience of the nation. It has to actively participate in the programme of reconstruction and development with a particular bias to achieve justice for all the people, especially those who are at the bottom of the ladder.[1195]

[1192] General Secretary's Report 2001, page 5.
[1193] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 6.
[1194] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 7.
[1195] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 9.

This shows that the GS Address of 1994 only contains a '*Mosaic prophetic' discourse* in a very potential way. The problem is that the new government is legitimate, and the concept 'liberation' has been given the meaning of opposing an illegitimate government. The question is whether or not there is any room for liberation in the new situation.

6.3.2.1 Summing up:

Especially between 1976 and 1990, the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* – together with similar discourses – dominates the material. It can sometimes be a narrow discourse that focuses only on liberation from apartheid, or it can have a wider scope, regarding liberation as something that concerns the whole of life, including the spiritual aspect of reality. Liberation is in that sense mostly a holistic concept, relating to the whole of society. At the end of the period, before 1990, and even between 1990 and 1994, it is usually filled with the meaning of opposing an illegitimate government. Especially after 1994 this discourse disappears in the material, but there are signs that the texts in the 21st century return to see a need for liberation, even in the democratic set-up. We have seen this tendency also in the paragraph about critical solidarity that borders on the *'Mosaic Prophetic' discourse*. When the texts change the focus of the prophetic voice from oppression based on ethnicity to oppression from a wider perspective, this might make space for a return of the *'Mosaic liberation' discourse* in another form. But this has not yet happened in this material.

6.3.3 Other prophetic discourses

Before we go further into the discussion, I want to draw attention to some specific aspects of the prophetic voice of the Council. I need first to say something about the *'Intervention and healing' discourse*, and second, about what I call the *'Prophetic ministry of hope' discourse*.

6.3.3.1 The *'Intervention and healing' discourse*

This discourse is only found between 1990 and 1994. We have already touched upon it in different contexts, but it is special in a sense that justifies a special paragraph describing it.

The SACC does not describe it as a prophetic ministry, although it has prophetic aspects.[1196] The GS talks about it in his 1990 report.

> In addition, Churches decided to act as facilitators to encourage the initiation of the process of negotiations, and to encourage the process itself once it gets underway.[1197]

So the SACC speaks with the ANC, the PAC, and with AZAPO.[1198] The role of the Council is called the 'ministry of intervention'.[1199] The GS 1991 also stresses the need for different ministries, among them the healing ministry:

> Mr. President, the experience of the last few months have convinced me the unbanning of the people's organisations did not bring relief for the SACC and its member churches contrary to what many had thought. It is clear that the transition period is going to be more taxing to us than we had ever thought. I am, infact [in fact], beginning to believe that even when the new society is born the pressures on us will not stop. We shall be faced with a healing ministry, a ministry of reconstruction, renewal and reconciliation.[1200]

Although the GS mentions reconstruction that is part of either a *'Development' discourse* or a *'Nation-building' discourse*, the most important discourse in this context has to do with mediation, expressed as both healing and reconciliation. Reconciliation is a prerequisite for reconstruction and renewal, not the other way round. But this list of different aspects of the ministry of the SACC returns in 1994. The outgoing GS, in his 1994 address, writes about the need for a successor:

> For this reason I believe that the SACC needs to call another servant of the Lord to carry the SACC through the mission of the next five years or so of the ministry of reconstruction, reconciliation, renewal and healing.[1201]

[1196] According to Spong, the prophetic and the mediation ministry were two different ministries, but possible to combine: 'A significant debate running through all the discussions and deliberations has been that of prophetic ministry as against mediatory ministry. Should the SACC be the prophetic voice proclaiming the word of God upon the events of the period, or should it act as a mediator between the different factions to help bring them together? In fact it has found itself taking the precariously balanced middle road between. Not to be neither but to be both' (Spong 1993, page 99).

[1197] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 5.

[1198] General Secretary's Report 1990, page 8. (AZAPO = Azanian People's Organisation).

[1199] 'In addition to our ministry of intervention, our solidarity and support for the victims of Natal has continued' (General Secretary's Report 1990, Page 13). 'The SACC has often been called on to intervene in various situations of conflict and institutionalized violence perpetuated by the apartheid regime' (General Secretary's Report 1990, Page 22). 'In December, the SACC, its member churches, affiliate organisations and Regional Councils of Churches, held a consultations on The Pastoral Care to Victims of Apartheid which provided and innovative framework for our approach to our ministry of intervention' (General Secretary's Report 1990, page 24).

[1200] General Secretary's Report 1991, page 13.

[1201] General Secretary's Address 1994, page 4.

The intention is to carry on not only with nation-building but also with reconciliation and healing.

6.3.3.2 The *'Prophetic ministry of hope' discourse*

This discourse we find both before and after 1990. The need is always there, even in other contexts.[1202] One could assume that the need was more frequent during the struggle against apartheid.[1203] There are signs that the character of the discourse has changed, depending on the circumstances. We find a number of examples of such a discourse in the material before 1990.

> After describing events which were fearsome and terrifying, the Son of God said: "Look up! The Kingdom of God is near! These things are like the buds on the fig tree – they are the promise of summer.[1204]

It is interesting that seven years before the release of Mandela, the GS 1983 talks in a visionary way about a possible future.[1205] This continues during the 1980s, and examples are not difficult to find throughout the material.

> South Africa will eventually be free from political domination and economic exploitation, but this freedom should be accompanied by a deeper liberation of the whole man, and of society as a whole – and this task only the church of Christ and the people of God can fulfil! Let us go forward in faith and joy with a new song in our hearts .....[1206]

[1202] According to Kristenson, this was one of the most important aspects of the ministry of Gutiérrez in Peru during the difficult years: '... to raise hope in an extremely difficult situation was one of the most important tasks of Gutiérrez as pastor ...' (Olle Kristenson, *Pastor in the Shadow of Violence. Gustavo Gutiérrez as a Public Pastoral Theologian in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s* (Studia Missionalia Svecana 108. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2009), page 185). It is also how for example Walshe describes the Christian Institute: 'Finally, the Institute's activities can be viewed as an example of the historical phenomenon of recurring hope' (Walshe 1983, Page *xiv*).

[1203] Also in texts outside the SACC, such as the *Kairos Document*, this is an important aspect: 'There is hope. There is hope for all of us. But the road to that hope is going to be very hard and very painful. The conflict and the struggle will have to intensify in the months and years ahead because there is no other way to remove the injustice and oppression. But God is with us. We can only learn to become the instruments of his peace even unto death. We must participate in the cross of Christ if we are to have the hope of participating in his resurrection' (The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter four).

[1204] President's sermon 1982, page 2.

[1205] 'And the church must hold before all South Africans the vision of this new society of which we in the church are a firstfruit that it can happen, has happened here in South Africa that people of different races, colours, cultures and sexes have come together to be a fellowship that transcends all differences, where diversity far from making for separation and division has enriched a splendid unity ....' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 32).

[1206] General Secretary's Report 1987, page 12.

But there are also examples of the opposite, especially after 1990,[1207] where the texts speak about how difficult the situation is. Still, the material always returns to the message of hope.

> We need to be reminded as the Church that "hope" is our roots. It gave confidence and courage to the people of Israel in the wilderness. Hope was built in the wilderness. Hope was built in the very future of the people of Israel. They looked forward for the coming of the Anointed One and the establishment of God's kingdom. This hope was fulfilled by Jesus who announced that the kingdom of God was at hand.[1208]

In the period between 1990 and 1994, when the ministry of mediation dominates the material, we also find many examples of the *'Prophetic ministry of hope' discourse*.[1209] But the need for restoring hope is also mentioned after 1994, although it is not as frequent as before.

> The Churches should provide leadership, restore hope, determination and inspiration to people living in distressed communities especially those in the rural areas.[1210]

6.3.3.3 The *'Church theology' discourse*

Having arrived at the end of the sections about different prophetic discourses, the *'Church theology' discourse* is still missing. The reason for this is that this discourse does not contain any prophetic voice.

> It hardly needs saying that this kind of faith and this type of spirituality has no biblical foundation. The Bible does not separate the human person from the world in which he or she lives; it does not separate the individual from the social or one's private life from one's public life. God redeems the whole person as part of his whole creation (Rom 8:18-24). A truly biblical spirituality would penetrate into every aspect of human existence and would exclude nothing from God's redemptive will. Biblical faith is prophetically relevant to everything that happens in the world.[1211]

In any case, it will be seen in relation to the nodal point 'reconciliation'.

[1207] 'But in 1991 it began to dawn on us that the birth-pangs might infact [in fact] be 'death-pangs'. It is a birth that kills rather than a birth that gives life. It is for this reason that resistance began to build-up even against the very negotiations process' (General Secretary's Report 1991, page 1).

[1208] Presidential address 1991, page 5.

[1209] 'Our Christian faith requires us to have hope against hope. For the God in whom we believe "gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist" (Rom 4:17-18)' (General Secretary's Report 1992, page 2). And 'When a minister/pastor in a Black township at Imbali was asked what the Church us doing in the midst of people's suffering because of violence, he answered simply: "keeping up the hope of the suffering". Yes, friends, as Christians we must pitch our tents of hope vis-a-vis [vis-à-vis] the pitching tents of fear and despair by Battalion 32 and other security forces in our townships' (Presidential address 1992, page 8).

[1210] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 14.

[1211] The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter three.

It is now time to ask how the relationship between the two nodal points, 'reconciliation' and 'prophetic', can be described, and whether this relationship can say anything about how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed after 1990.

6.3.3.4 About divine inspiration

Neither in the first reading, nor in this second, have we especially investigated whether or not the prophetic voice is articulated with divine inspiration. It was an assumption we made in the theory chapter, and it has not been opposed. There are, on the contrary, many examples where the texts relate to divine authority, as in the GS Report 1980:

> What we do and say in the context of South Africa is derived from the imperatives of the Gospel and not from any political dogma.[1212]

The list of examples could be made longer.[1213] Throughout the material the divine aspect is underscored. It is part of the identity of a Christian organisation. We have no intention of evaluating whether or not the prophetic articulations are in line with the presumed will of God. In this thesis it is sufficient to state that the textual material claims a divine inspiration for the prophetic voice.

6.3.4 How 'reconciliation' relates to 'the prophetic voice'

When I search for ways in which the nodal point 'reconciliation' is given meaning in the different prophetic or non-prophetic discourses, I prefer to offer only a single paragraph. In each case I shall link certain articulations to different discourses, but the picture will be too scattered if I create different sections for every aspect. What I shall do instead is to look for

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[1212] General Secretary's Report 1980, page 14.

[1213] 'We continue to see the Chapel on the ground floor as the centre, the heart of all our operations' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 4); and, 'If this was not God´s calling we would all have abandoned this mission. But because this is from our Lord we have no option but to undertake this ministry irrespective of the consequences' (General Secretary's Report 1989, page 34). And 'One of the most effective campaigns was that of defiance in obedience to God' (General Secretary's Report 1990, page 22). And 'It is in the light of His Word, which by His Spirit continues to lead us with all truth that we address this message to you. As we have sought to wrestle with the situation of our people in this land we have also sought to 'hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches' in this time of turmoil which offer the opportunity to transform our society and to conform it more closely to the ideal of His Kingdom' (National Conference 1990, Message to the Churches). And 'My brothers and sisters, to be both prophetic and pastoral is no easy task and may be achieved only by much prayer and discipline of heart and mind' (Presidential address 1992, page 10).

different meanings in the different orders and sub-orders of discourse found in the first reading.

In the earlier material, reconciliation is mostly given a meaning in line with the *'Prophetic theology' discourse* as it is used in the *Kairos Document*. However, the basis for how the SACC uses the term 'reconciliation' is that humankind, through the work of Christ, is reconciled with God and one another.[1214] Thus from the beginning it is a theological concept, although references are made to the socio-political sphere. There is a wish to be reconciled with different counterparts. For instance, the Council President discusses the differences with the WCC in 1969, and argues that, even though there is disagreement, the SACC has to keep in contact with the WCC for the sake of truth.[1215] There are also texts that stress that reconciliation is not about sweeping problems under the carpet.[1216] This thought is expressed by the GS 1974.

> The word "reconciliation" and even "justice" today are bandied about to the extent that there is a danger that they could become meaningless. There is no reconciliation without confrontation; there is no true reconciliation without justice. Justice must be seen to be done. So often we in this country pay lip service to this.[1217]

The GS report from 1974 is a good example of a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. The issue of reconciliation and truth also comes to the fore when in the following year the GS talks about reconciliation in relation to repentance and forgiveness.

> But there can be no reconciliation in this land until we meet, until there is repentence [repentance] and forgiveness and a preparedness to work for a better tomorrow in togetherness.[1218]

[1214]'The Annual Conference of the South African Council of Churches recognises:

a) That the Church is called to the Ministry of Reconciliation, whereby men [sic] are reconciled to God and to one another by the Cross;' (National Conference 1971, Minutes §18, C] b]). This perspective is common even later in the material, as for instance in 1982, in connection with the homelands issue: 'We as the Church, namely the fellowship of believers in the One body of Christ, believe that we are called upon to proclaim, witness and promote the reconciliation of all human beings which has been accomplished by our Saviour' (National Conference 1982, Resolution 1: 2.1).

[1215] 'But when we have given full weight to the opinion of thers, [theirs] even if we still continue to disagree with the majority, we must seek to maintain the closest contact with one another until each convinces the other of the truth that is in them' (Presidential address 1969, page 4).

[1216] 'There has been much use and bandying about of the word 'reconciliation' in the last months. In fact, I am becoming worried that this might be the next dirty word, for I am sure we are all aware that there is no such thing as reconciliation without cost, - cost on both sides - but in particular for white South Africa. This means being prepared to drop the present standards, or give up a few of the luxuries in order that others may climb the social scale' (General Secretary's Report 1973, page 3).

[1217] General Secretary's Report 1974, page 2.

[1218] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 3.

This kind of argumentation puts forgiveness before reconciliation, or makes it a condition for reconciliation.[1219] But one can also see this as a way of saying that true reconciliation presupposes an honest analysis of power relations. In another appendix of the NC 1975, a diffuse way of understanding reconciliation is therefore criticised. In this appendix it is said

> That the church should practice the true, full meaning of reconciliation especially in our situation wherein Christians are continually in danger of using this word as a mystification.[1220]

The way 'reconciliation' is used here is with the sense that one must deal with real issues. One such issue is of course the relationship between the different ethnic groups. (We shall come back to that aspect in the section dealing with this sub-order of discourse.) The Presidential address 1979 also talks about combining justice and reconciliation. There is no freedom without justice. The authentic prophetic word will only be heard

> … when Christians recognise that reconciliation cannot be divorced from righteousness: that when God justifies man in Christ. He reconciles man to himself *and* to his fellow man.[1221]

The tradition from the early years, of making the relationship between human beings and God the point of departure, continues; but the implications for relations between humans are further stressed. In some instances the texts even talk about reconciliation as part of a prophetic ministry, as in an example from a meeting with the government, when the GS 1981 writes that the churches were eager to

> … carry out their Lord's mandate to exercise a prophetic ministry of reconciliation …[1222]

It is clear from the context that the GS is commenting on a delegation that met the Prime Minister to put forward an agenda for change. It contained a commitment to a common citizenship for all South Africans in an undivided South Africa, abolition of the Pass Laws, an immediate stop to forced population removal schemes, and the establishment of a uniform education system. Both sides were frank.[1223] Later in the report the GS expresses what the bottom line in this prophetic ministry of reconciliation might be:

> I still believe that the Prime Minister could still bring about the sort of change we want despite the results of this last all white election, such that posterity would acclaim him as a great man. He could still dismantle apartheid as the most vicious system since Nazism. We are prepared to engage with him in that

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[1219] We will come back to this aspect at the end of this section.
[1220] National Conference 1975, appendix C 2.
[1221] Presidential address 1979, page 14.
[1222] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 8.
[1223] 'The meeting was hardly an engagement of minds. Each side presented its position. The miracle was that we were still talking to one another' (General Secretary's Report 1981, page 9).

enterprise but not in anything less which is designed to perpetuate white supremacy however it may be described.[1224]

While the reconciliation concept up to this point has been given meaning within a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* framework, this quotation contains different discourses. The *'Prophetic theology' discourse* (or *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*) is there, because the total abolition of apartheid is a must. At the same time, the GS regards the Prime Minister as legitimate, at least to a certain extent, and as an agent of change, indicating a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. There is an open antagonism, and we cannot immediately see any hegemonic intervention. Whether to understand reconciliation in a Mosaic or Davidic way is thus an open question, when we read the report of the GS 1981. In this context it is enough to state that the texts sometimes talk about reconciliation in the same breath that they argue for total liberation. Reconciliation is in that case given meaning from a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* perspective.

The GS 1982 argues that reconciliation as a central Christian thought makes it impossible to be a Christian and still believe in separation:

> The Christian faith teaches that the chief work that Jesus came to accomplish was the reconciliation of men [sic] and God and men [sic] with one another. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." Apartheid says "No – people are made for separation, for eternal irreconcilation. Is that not denying a central, the central assertion of Christianity?[1225]

This is again an example when reconciliation is used as a religious term, but with implications for the political situation in South Africa at the time. As we shall continue to discuss in the paragraph about reconciliation and gender, this perspective is not present in 1982. In the 1980s the core idea is still that there is no reconciliation without truth, but the context is the way in which apartheid separates people on the basis of the colour of their skin. There is at this stage no articulated gender perspective in the prophetic voice about reconciliation.

> The Church must be around to give itself to the costly ministry of reconciliation which would cry "Peace, peace where there is no peace", but a reconciliation that seeks justice and peace, a costly reconciliation for our reconciliation cost God the death of His Son. Reconciliation is never an easy or soft option. [1226]

There is a recommendation in one of the resolutions this year that opposes reconciliation. The text expresses that it is sometimes a problem to be involved in talks with the government. The

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[1224] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 9.
[1225] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 12.
[1226] General Secretary's Report 1983, page 33.

context is workshops on the South African Constitution Bill, where the Council resolves that it must find out

> … how to counteract participation of ministers in government-created political institutions that uphold the apartheid system;[1227]

Although it always is important to meet, there are limits to participation. It could be counter-productive for reconciliation. In 1986 the GS in his report also links reconciliation with justice.[1228] Especially in the later part of the 1980s, the texts frequently make this connection. Reconciliation is continuously given meaning within the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse.*

The closer we get to 1990, the more we can sense a change in perspective. It is as if the Council prepares itself to be a uniting force in the country in a different way. We get one example that the meaning of reconciliation has broadened when the SACC is asked to engage with industries in order to contribute to reconciliation.[1229] It is interesting how far-reaching the responsibility of the SACC (or the way the SACC describes its responsibility) goes. In 1987 the role of the SACC to mediate between different groups begins, as an answer to the WCC consultation with the liberation movements in Lusaka. One of the resolutions has the aim

> ... to building a greater spirit of unity amongst the forces struggling for liberation.[1230]

The concept of reconciliation is discussed further when the texts speak about the future process, and compare it with what happened in Germany after World War II.

1) Shall we have Nuremburg [Nuremberg] trials in South Africa or any other forms of trials for crimes committees against the people of South Africa,

2) How do we go through trials of those who are accused for their quest for human rights (which was criminal in the past), and still work for reconciliation and forgiveness? How do we heal the wounds caused by the war because of the apartheid system?

3) How do we get people to forgive and forget when the murderers have not exposed or have not confessed their crimes?[1231]

In this context the relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness is mentioned. The question is whether to regard confession/forgiveness as a prerequisite for reconciliation, or

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[1227] National Conference 1983, Resolution 37.1.

[1228] 'I sincerely hope it would be possible for our conference to discuss this issue in depth in order to gain further clarity on the role which a body like the SACC could fulfil, however limited, in bringing about peace with justice and true reconciliation' (General Secretary's Report 1986, page 4).

[1229] 'Equally the SACC has a responsibility to initiate ways and meands [means] to establish a process of ongoing consultation with management in commerce and industry as a contribution to justice and reconciliation in our society' (General Secretary's Report 1987, page 6).

[1230] National Conference 1987, Resolution 9.

[1231] General Secretary's Report 1992, Point 6 1 and 2, page 7.

confession/forgiveness as the end result of a reconciliation process. As already mentioned, Villa-Vicencio argues, albeit after 1990, that reconciliation is a process rather than a goal. In the Presidential address 1992 this is not the case:

> President de Klerk wants us to forget the past and not keep raking it up. But you cannot have reconciliation in this way. Theologians tell us that to attain reconciliation one must first confess the wrongs dome [done] to others in order to receive forgiveness. Only then can there be redemption and reconciliation.[1232]

So, although the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation is discussed, there is still another view than that suggested by Villa-Vicencio.[1233] The texts regard repentance and forgiveness as a must, if reconciliation is going to take place.

In the 1990s not much is said about reconciliation in general terms. Directly after the release of Mandela and the unbanning of the liberation movements, another ministry becomes more acute, namely the ministry of mediation, which of course relates to reconciliation, but in a way strives for something else. This is the case, for instance, in the hospital strike in 1992, where the Council opts for a mediating role.[1234] In this mediation ministry, reconciliation is not mentioned. The only aim is to stop the parties fighting.

After 1994 many of the references to reconciliation have to do with the TRC. Since this deals with ethnicity, it will be dealt with in the next section. Otherwise not much is said about reconciliation after 1994, which is strange. In 1998 one of the resolutions deals with reconciliation, but in the Minutes it is only summarised:

> Another [resolution] was concerned with continuing the reconciliation process, especially as the TRC was coming to an end. It was agreed that this would be redrafted to incorporate the need to work with existing initiatives.[1235]

This is striking in the material. Reconciliation, which the outside world regarded as significant in the post-1994 situation in South Africa, is not a prominent issue in the texts of the SACC at the same time.

[1232] Presidential address 1992, page 4.

[1233] 'Politicians can only do so much to improve our situation. The real foundation for a brighter future lies in forgiveness and acceptance' (Presidential address 1992, page 5).

[1234] 'If required to, the churches offer their services for mediation' (National Conference 1992, Resolution 92.42.01 5).

[1235] National Conference 1998, Minutes §98/24.

6.3.4.1 The Kingdom is coming – reconciliation and ethnicity

Already in *A Message*, the reconciliation concept plays an important role. The statement establishes that the policy of separate development is opposed to true reconciliation, even though it promises peace and harmony between the different peoples in South Africa.

> Any demonstration of the reality of reconciliation would endanger this policy; therefore the advocates of this policy inevitably find themselves opposed to the Church if it seeks to live according to the Gospel and if it shows that God's grace has overcome our hostilities. A thorough policy of racial separation must ultimately require that the Church should cease to be the Church.[1236]

The opposite of reconciliation is the ideology of racial separation. This is a common theme in the 1970s.[1237] The goal is a non-racial society, and there will be no true reconciliation before this is a reality. But there is a sense of regarding reconciliation as a process that has to start even in the apartheid situation.

> Blacks and whites at all levels of life will have to get on to speaking terms and prepare to enter the new day together.[1238]

But reconciliation and upholding apartheid can never go together. So it becomes more and more difficult to live in reconciliation the closer to 1990 the texts get. GS 1986 speaks about the tragedy that blacks regard the reforms as too slow, while the same reforms are regarded as too revolutionary by whites.

> ... what hope is there of reconciliation in such a situation?
>
> It seems to me that the conflicting convictions in goals which militate against meaningful reconciliation and preventing white and black to come to a better understanding are concentrated in the four areas mentioned here.[1239]

In a following paragraph the GS points out those four areas of fear. First is a threat felt by whites of a communist takeover, which is not shared by blacks. Second, whites fear the incompetency of blacks to rule the country, while blacks do not see any problem in doing that. There is also among whites, as a third factor, the threat of economic chaos. The blacks

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[1236] A Message to the people of South Africa, point 3.

[1237] 'But responsible black leaders have time and without number given our white fellow South Africans the assurance that we want a nonracial society in South Africa and that whites won't be driven into the sea, come black liberation. But if we go on as at present then there can be no doubt we are hellbent for destruction, for the alternative too ghastly to contemplate. If the present ordering of society continues, then all the fears of the whites will become self-fulfilling prophecies. And we have as a Council and a church worked and continue to work to avert this holocaust. We have worked and continue to work for real reconciliation' (General Secretary's Report 1978, page 4).

[1238] Presidential address 1975, page 4.

[1239] General Secretary's Report 1986, page 2.

emphasise their equal concern for a sound economy. Last, he mentions the fear, especially felt by Afrikaners, of losing their cultural identity. Here the blacks point out that they are part and parcel of a large number of ethnic groups living together. These are areas where the Church needs to work if the church is going

> ... to play a meaningful role in achieving both liberation and reconciliation.[1240]

There are many other examples in the texts where liberation and establishing justice are linked with true reconciliation. The *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* gives this meaning to reconciliation in relation to ethnicity almost entirely before 1990. After that we see a shift in the perspective. But even before 1990 there are a few examples of how reconciliation is given meaning from a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. One example is when the President in 1980 makes an initiative to unite different leaders among the blacks, such as homeland leaders, community council leaders, and liberation movement leaders.

> In the face of this polarisation the Church is called to proclaim the word of reconciliation and good news of unity between God and man [sic]. Therefore the annual conference of the South African Council of Churches makes an earnest appeal to its member churches, and to those churches not in community with the Council, to proclaim the reconciliation and unity between differing groups mentioned above. The Church is the place where people with sharply opposed commitments can meet at the foot of the Cross within the divine mercy.[1241]

The kind of reconciliation the Council President is referring to is not further explained. When the word 'unity' is used, it is an indication that it could be an example of the *'Church Theology' discourse*.

When the texts talk about reconciliation between black and white, there is sometimes an open antagonism between a *'Church Theology' discourse* and a *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*. One such example we have already mentioned, in the GS report 1981.[1242] In 1986 the focus is placed on the relationship between black and white Christians, and here too reconciliation is the goal. One of the resolutions stresses the importance of involving white members in the dialogue.[1243] The President of the SACC also talks about reconciliation. The risk is that the Church is siding with different interest groups.

[1240] General Secretary's Report 1986, page 2.
[1241] Presidential address 1980, page 8.
[1242] General Secretary's Report 1981, page 9.
[1243] 'Conference notes the analysis in the report of the General Secretary if the factors which militate against a better understanding between black and white South African and requests the Executive to give special attention

However, it would not be proper for the church to endorse parties and factions since its duty is to unite and reconcile.[1244]

Here the process has started when the SACC becomes more open to understand both sides in the conflict, and moves closer to a *'Church Theology' discourse*.

As we have already pointed out, the Council in the early 1990s carries out a ministry of mediation and healing related to the ministry of reconciliation. The difference is that in the case of the mediation and healing ministry, the SACC places itself between the parties, whereas the SACC often is one of the parties when speaking of reconciliation. The mediation and healing ministry is almost completely limited to the period between 1990 and 1994. But already in 1987 the SACC President predicts that this ministry will be needed.

> May I close by making a general remark on the healing role the church must play in the face of current violent conflicts among the Anti-Apartheid forces. / … / The point I am making is that of all the social agencies the church is best equipped to make a healing intervention and stop the conflicts. But the Church must earn the right to intervene, already before liberation. It will do this by projecting the image of wholeness in relation to political formations.[1245]

This is a prophetic statement in the traditional meaning of 'predicting the future'. The need for this ministry is already foreseen a few years before the release of Mandela. It is during the negotiation process between 1990 and 1994 that the mediation aspect become urgent, as is obvious, for example, in the GS report 1993:

> Although we have tried whatever we could we have not been able to get the Azanian Peoples Organisation (AZAPO) and some other right wing parties to be part of this negotiation process.[1246]

The focus is on getting the parties to talk. The prophetic role of the SACC is not stressed, but mediation is seen as a kind of prophetic ministry. The GS does connect mediation and prophetic ministry a bit later in the report:

> We believe that appropriate pastoral[1247] and prophetic action on the part of the churches can help save South Africa from another senseless racist war.

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to dialogue on these and related issues which will involve the white membership of member churches' (National Conference 1986, Resolution 5, page 165).

[1244] Presidential address 1986, page 4.

[1245] Presidential address 1987, page 18.

[1246] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 2, point 2.1.

[1247] This is a parallel to the way the Latin-American liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez is described in the violent situation in Peru in the 1980s and 1990s (Kristenson 2009, page 236ff).

On our part (SACC) we have made representation to both the ANC and the PAC on the disturbing slogans used by some of their members and we are pleased that efforts are being made to address these matters.[1248]

The issue here was black racism, which the SACC felt it had to address. The SACC takes a prophetic role in relation to liberation movements. But the GS of the SACC also deliberates on what are called political-prophetic challenges. The GS speaks about the need for negotiations between the parties:

During this process of Constitutional negotiations, we have a responsibility to ensure the maximum participation of all South Africans; that those who are in danger of being marginalised and forgotten in the course of debates and policy formulations are empowered; that the processes of negotiations are just; and the results of the entire process are respected and honoured by all concerned.

We will therefore continue:

1)   to act as facilitators; bringing leaders and various parties together to work for peace;

2)   to intervene where there is conflict and pastorally minister to the victims of such conflict;

3)   to encourage all parties to participate fully in the negotiation process;

4)   to make representations to all the parties on issues we believe are vital for peace and justice and to ensure that the outcome of the negotiations is a just peace.

Once a democratically elected Constitution-making body is in place, representation will be made to this body to ensure again that the said constitution complies with the justice of the Sovereign Reign (Kingdom) of God.[1249]

The GS continues to talk about the ministry of healing. The scheme is the traditional one of confession, repentance, and forgiveness. Reconciliation is a goal rather than a process.

From now on and beyond the establishment of the new society we shall be called upon to address the anger of blacks and the fear of whites. We are going to have to actively and systematically devise programmes which will bring to the fore:

1)   the need for honest confession to one another because of the hurt which has been caused throughout the history of apartheid;

2)   the need for repentance, restitution and reconciliation. We need renewal and reconstruction of the whole South African society in all its respects: social, political and economic.

I am convinced that although politicians can secure a settlement and agree on a non-racial democratic constitution, they cannot change the hearts and minds of people. It is therefore going to be the mission of the church to reach out to all those who have been damaged by the evil apartheid system to help them to

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[1248] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 4.
[1249] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 27, point 4.2.

create new beings and communities out of the old. We need to return to the ABC's of evangelicalism to call the nation to conversion and repentance.[1250]

Healing and mediation become the core functions of the SACC between 1990 and 1994. There are points of contact between those concepts and reconciliation. But even after 1994 the need for reconciliation continues, although the SACC does not stress the mediation aspect to the same extent. On 15 May 1995 President Mandela invited religious leaders to address the situation of violence in the country. The GS commented at the NC about this:

> We must make time in this Conference to find a solution to this problem. The Church must be involved in the process of reconciliation and peace.[1251]

A few specific expressions of the ministry of reconciliation are reported in the same year. Two services are arranged for the sake of reconciliation in Katlehong and Mohlakeng. The GS writes about the first:

> Both black and white parishes were represented at this memorable service. It represented an acknowledgement of the need for reconciliation in our country.[1252]

The second service is given the same meaning by the GS, but is also connected with another discourse, the *'Nation-building' discourse*:

> This was a thanksgiving service for the smooth transition and the acceptance of the Masakhane Programme. I would just like to share that on this particular Sunday, all Churches in the community were closed to allow people to attend the gathering. The Mayor challenged the Churches to play an important role in the Reconciliation among communities and in the implementation of the RDP.[1253]

There is no comment from the GS about whether these two ministries can be combined, or how they should be combined. But one can possibly see reconciliation as a tool in order to fulfil the nation-building objective. In that sense reconciliation is becoming part of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* that aims at consolidating the State. We can also see the TRC in this light. Commenting on the TRC, the GS again talks about reconciliation, but now as a religious phenomenon:

> The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is a response to a huge need to help a divided society become one, restore dignity and bring unity to our land. It can never succeed as a political or judicial exercise

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[1250] General Secretary's Report 1993, page 27-28.
[1251] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 4.
[1252] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 13.
[1253] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 13.

alone. The Church must be involved to offer and promote a healing and reconciling spirit that comes through the religious experience.[1254]

Concerning the TRC, one of the resolutions discusses how the Church ought to be involved. The relationship between reconciliation and forgiveness is on the agenda when the NC resolves:

> Encouraging perpetrators to confess and disclose their involvement in violence and help them to address their fears.
>
> 4. To investigate possible ways in which the Church may co-operate to bring victims and perpetrators together to facilitate the whole cycle of repentance, reconciliation and healing.
>
> 5. To plan a special day to focus, nationally, on Truth and Reconciliation. This focus should take the form of liturgical services around the country.[1255]

Another way of expressing the need for unity is through the 'healing of memories' concept.[1256] The GS 2004 also commented on the TRC when it had come to an end after 10 years. The SACC was involved in an interfaith service in Pretoria. It is interesting to read about the absence of the word 'forgiveness' in the text.[1257] The question is whether or not the SACC has the same view as Villa-Vicencio on reconciliation – that it is a process that possibly in the end results in confession and forgiveness. The material indicates that the Council rather regards reconciliation as the end result. Another aspect of the TRC process is the question of reparation, which one of the resolutions deals with in the same year (2004):

> 6. Mandates the NEC to meet with the government urgently to confer broadly on the matter of reparations to apartheid victims.[1258]

This is an aspect of the reconciliation process that is not touched on often in the material. It would be an interesting question to ask in future research. Reparation has a bearing on a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*, where there is no true reconciliation without justice. The

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[1254] General Secretary's Report 1995, page 14.

[1255] National Conference 1995, Resolution 13.

[1256] 'To enable our clergy and lay people to continue to listen to the stories of the hurting in our community and to engage in the Healing of Memories after the TRC has closed' (General Secretary's Report 1998, page 5).

[1257] 'The service was marked by 4 stages: A Call to Prayer; A Call to Remember; A Call to Healing; and a Call to re-Commitment. The service was an acknowledgement of what had been achieved and a reminder of what still needs to be achieved. Archbishop Desmond Tutu preached. In his address he, among other things, congratulated SACC for organising the service. He said the service was appropriate to mark the closure of the Truth and reconciliation Commission and to open a chapter for the work of the church and society to continue the work initiated by the TRC. The format of this service continues to be used in the Provinces for the services of healing and reconciliation on the day of Reconciliation on 17 [16th ?] December.

This service offered SACC an opportunity to reposition its member churches in the history of South Africa as agents of peace, healing and reconciliation, and as advocates of justice' (General Secretary's Report 2004, page 14).

[1258] National Conference 2004, Resolution 20.

absence of this phenomenon could be a sign that the meaning the SACC gives to the reconciliation concept lies closer to the *'Church theology' discourse.*

We can thus summarise and state that the texts before 1990 fill the nodal point 'reconciliation' with a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* meaning. After that, the *'Church theology' discourse* becomes the context in which the concept finds its meaning. The need for justice is not to the fore when reconciliation becomes a tool in the nation-building process, rather than being linked with liberation. When the texts comment on the TRC and bring in the need for reparation, the meaning of the reconciliation concept again comes closer to liberation.

6.3.4.2 Unity at all costs – reconciliation and gender

The reconciliation concept is not used in relation to gender. This does not mean that the phenomenon *per se* is absent in this context. As we have already seen in the first reading, there are some examples where gender issues had to stand back for other more important problems. Especially in 1985, when the whole National Conference was supposed to deal with the role of women, the willingness to be reconciled in a *'Church theology' discourse* way appears obvious. In its critique of this theology, the *Kairos Document* states that

> … it would be totally unChristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed.[1259]

In this context it refers to ethnicity; and this is the interesting part of how the textual material deals with the reconciliation aspect in connection with gender. Although it never openly talks about it, it is easy to trace this perspective between the lines. In a statement at the NC 1992, already quoted, this comes to the surface when it is said that the representatives

> c. are aware that the church is immersed in the problems of national issues of violence, economic and political issues.[1260]

The whole statement by women participants is very humble, and in one part it even concludes that unity, for the churches, is more important than justice. The short sentence is open-ended in the sense that one cannot judge whether this is regarded as positive or negative.

> b. acknowledge that churches wish to maintain unity at most times. [1261]

[1259] The *Kairos Document* 1985, Chapter 3.1.
[1260] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43, Statement of women participants.
[1261] National Conference 1992, Resolution 43.

If we compare the gender issue with the ethnicity issue, we can see that the texts in this study sometimes argue that white people cannot be free unless black people are free. Even the oppressor needs liberation. There is no such thought expressed from a gender perspective. There is an instinctive way of relating gender issues to women's issues. The texts never imply that men need liberation from a gender perspective. Thus reconciliation between men and women is never on the agenda. In all the material where gender issues are articulated and the aspect of 'unity' or 'reconciliation' is mentioned, the texts are closer to the *'Church theology' discourse* than to the *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. There are no signs that women, as the oppressed, treat the issue of injustice in a way where liberation is preferred to be achieved in a revolutionary way. Rather, one remains with the possibility of a gradual transformation, especially when it comes to women's representation in the NC. There is therefore in the *Gender sub-order of discourse* no sign of a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* approach to reconciliation. As we have seen, the overall message is that other issues are more important, and gender justice has to wait. We have also seen earlier in this section that the texts, when they speak about liberation and reconciliation, use gender-exclusive language. Although the *'Prophetic theology' discourse* gives its meaning to reconciliation in relation to ethnicity, this is not the case in relation to gender.

We look in vain for a change in this respect after 1990. The whole material has the same tendency: it fills the 'reconciliation' concept with meaning from a *'Church Theology' discourse* point of view.

6.3.4.3   Reconciliation in relation to religious diversity and ecumenism

As already stated, not much is said about relations with other religions. The few articulations in this respect all belong to what I prefer to call the *'Different religions live in peace' discourse*. The meaning of reconciliation here comes closer to a *'Church Theology' discourse* understanding. The question is whether there is any conflict between the different religions, and if so, whether there is any need for reconciliation at all.

In the ecumenical field, on the other hand, it is relevant to talk about reconciliation throughout the history of the SACC, and especially in relation to the DRC. Before we discuss how the reconciliation concept is filled with meaning, we have to say that the SACC and the DRC are two different types of entities. The DRC is a denomination and the SACC an ecumenical organisation. With the DRC as a potential member, the reconciliation process looks different

before and after 2004. When the DRC is a full member of the SACC, there may still be a need for reconciliation, but no longer between the SACC and the DRC. If the need is there, it is a need for reconciliation between different member churches of the SACC. The role of the SACC in such a reconciliation process is therefore going to be very different.

But let us look at the situation before 2004, and go back to the 1970s, when the *'Church Theology' discourse* is the most prevalent. Speaking about the relationship with the DRC, the GS in 1975 says:

> Let us put old things aside. Let us try as far as possible to escape from the history which has thus far bound us and let us move together into a new era of co-operation.[1262]

This is strange, because it is not the kind of reconciliation spoken about earlier in the report. But there is also an open invitation to be sympathetic to white Christians in an appendix to the resolutions:

> We offer to the white man [sic] ourselves as bridge-builders into the Church of the future, acknowledging as we look into the past that we have contributed to the present situation, and wanting reconciliation and not revenge. For too long we have bottled our hatred and become sour and distrusting. We do not judge whites knowing that for both of us there is the new commandment that we love one another, no matter what the past injury, hurt, misunderstanding and oppression.[1263]

In the 1970s the Council is more interested to normalise relations with the DRC than the other way around. The DRC is rather uninterested in having good relations with the Council, as reported in 1980:

> I want you to know that at least from 1978 the SACC has issued invitations to try and improve our relations with the white DRC and at each attempt virtually, we have been rebuffed.[1264]

According to the GS, it is not the SACC that is failing in the relationship. The SACC is holding out the hand of fellowship.[1265] We can see that the Council's tune changes over the years. Although there is a wish for continued fellowship, there are at the same time conditions for the DRC to become a member of the Council.

> We must invite the NGK to join the SACC as she was a founding member of the Christian Council of South Africa and left only because of Government pressure not because of theological reasons at the time

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[1262] General Secretary's Report 1975, page 5.
[1263] National Conference 1975, appendix B 2.
[1264] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 12-13.
[1265] 'People must stop accusing us of seeking confrontation of the wrong kind. We have sought fellowship with fellow Christians and been consistently rebuffed. We will continue holding out the hands of fellowship' (General Secretary's Report 1982, page 13).

of Cottesloe. We must invite them to join the SACC to correct any imbalances they might perceive in our theological understanding and they might recover their prophetic sensitivity. And I am as always willing to engage in conversations with them – but they must condemn apartheid outright.[1266]

This is an example of a *'Prophetic Theology' discourse*. The DRC must change before there can be true reconciliation.[1267] The link between reconciliation and justice is in that respect outspoken. The closer we get to 1990, the more the tune towards the DRC changes. And in 1991, when the DRC applies for observer status, the NC takes a resolution that sets a number of conditions before any membership can be obtained.

1. To postpone the application of the DRC for observer status until the next National Conference to take a final decision.
2. In the meantime we call upon the DRC
    2.1 To issue a clear statement that they are withdrawing their previous accusations against the SACC;
    2.2 to provide publicly a clear motivation of their reasons for applying to become an observer member of the SACC now,
    2.3 to enter into discussions with its sister churches in order to normalise relationships between them;
    2.4 to declare their willingness to criticise this and any future government in terms of the Gospel.[1268]

The following year, the GS writes in his report that the DRC itself has advised his office that it would not be wise to decide on the matter since there were still outstanding meetings with the sister churches of the DRC in order to normalise their relations. Even the WARC was involved in the discussions, according to the GS Report.[1269] The discussion continued in 1993.[1270] In 1995 the DRC is inducted as an observer member of the Council.[1271]

The interesting thing is that the DRC obtains observer status, and even becomes a full member in 2004, even though the DRC has not gone into full church communion with the other denominations in the DRC family in South Africa. This indicates that the SACC again went back to a *'Church Theology' discourse*. Unity first of all!

[1266] General Secretary's Report 1982, page 13.

[1267] 'As our brothers and sisters in the Lord, they need our prayers, for if the NGK could be converted we would havce [have] a tremendous country' (General Secretary's Report 1983, page 18).

[1268] National Conference 1991, Resolution about the application of the DRC for observer status.

[1269] General Secretary's Report 1992, page 11, point 7.2.2.

[1270] 'The application of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) is still held in abeyance until processes within the DRC family are completed. Again we hope that these processes will be speeded up to enable us to accept the DRC into membership by the next National Conference in 1994' (General Secretary's Report 1993, page 20, point 3.3).

[1271] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95/43. (The fact that the DRC gets observer status is not commented on in the GS report that year).

To sum it up, one could state that the SACC, in relation to the DRC, applied a reconciliation concept based on a *'Church Theology' discourse* understanding in the early 1970s. This changed in the 1980s, and during the 1990s the Council gave meaning to reconciliation from a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* perspective. One example that does not directly concern relations with the DRC is given in a resolution in 1995:

> The SACC recognises and affirms what has been achieved in the past through united, ecumenical efforts at both national and regional levels. This unity enhanced the Church's prophetic voice and role. Future ecumenical efforts need to be more extensively rooted and articulated through local church structures. It is hoped that the challenges facing the Church in a Post-Apartheid society will be addressed through united ecumenical efforts.[1272]

In the 21st Century, though, this again changes to be more in line with a *'Church Theology' discourse* view. The Council sets church unity as a pre-requisite for the membership[1273] of the DRC, but even though it has not happened the DRC still became a member of the SACC.[1274]

6.3.4.4 Not without justice – reconciliation and social class

It is not easy to find examples where the texts talk about reconciliation between rich and poor or between oppressors and oppressed unless justice first is done. When the interim GS in 1994 speaks about the RDP, she links it to reconciliation. It is an example of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. The interim GS argues that the most important aspect of the RDP is reconciliation. The message is that reconciliation between rich and poor is possible, through development.

> The RDP is the concretisation of reconciliation. It is the duty of the churches and the SACC to promote this understanding of the RDP.[1275]

[1272] National Conference 1995, Resolution 95.39.01.

[1273] The Resolution is open-ended, and one can understand it as if talks about Church unity are enough, when the NC resolves '... to enter into discussion with its sister churches in order to normalise relationships between them;' (National Conference 1991, Resolution about application of the DRC for observer status, page 2).

[1274] 'In the years after 1948 the relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and these churches were often seriously hampered through the policy of apartheid. Since 1994 the ideal of unification with the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Reformed Church in Africa has gathered momentum although a lot of work still has to be done' (Website of the Dutch Reformed Church, History). The URCSA describes the situation a bit more negative on their website: 'We therefore decided to put a moratorium on the re-unification talks between the URCSA and DRC on a national level until the DRC is serious committed and ready for unity talks, but we also decided that we will invite the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to come and facilitate the process of re-unification between URCSA and DRC' (Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. "Pastoral Letter from the 5th General Synod." Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. http://www.ngkerk.org.za/VGKSA/News.asp 2010-03-22, page 2).

[1275] Interim General Secretary's Report 1994, page 19.

Whether or not the programme has been working in this way is not the focus of this thesis. In relation to the *Social class sub-order of discourse* there are no examples of how this discourse uses the concept of reconciliation within a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*. Reconciliation is not possible between the privileged and marginalised, unless justice first is done. Since the examples in this respect are so few, we can barely say anything about the change after 1990.

6.3.4.5 Trying to be neutral – reconciliation and violence versus non-violence

When I relate reconciliation to the *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse*, there are several aspects to take into account. First, the whole phenomenon of violence is opposed to reconciliation. If for instance a text condemns violence, this can in itself be seen as a way of promoting reconciliation. But we have seen that the textual material includes examples of a genuine *'Pacifism' discourse* as well as a *'Situational pacifism' discourse* or a *'Just war' discourse*. When the texts talk about the relationship between primary violence and counter-violence, this is a way of giving the reconciliation concept the meaning that first there needs to be justice before any reconciliation can take place, in relation to violence.

When the texts deal with conscientious objection, reconciliation is not mentioned, but the text talks about peace, and this could possibly say something similar. The text

> Maintains that Christians are called to strive for justice and the true peace which can be founded only on justice;[1276]

It is obvious that insofar as the Council strives for unity, it does this from a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* perspective, if we use the *Kairos Document* wording.

Another big question in the *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse* is the death penalty. It is motivated from perspectives other than reconciliation.

As we have already touched on, the ministry of healing and mediation, which was prevalent especially between 1990 and 1994, is an example where the Council gets involved in the violence versus non-violence field with the aim of bringing about reconciliation. During this period the objective is to take part in nation-building, and the SACC places itself between the different parties, trying to side with none of them. In this context reconciliation is given meaning from a *'Church theology' discourse* perspective.

[1276] National Conference 1974, Minutes §16.

It is not possible to see any changes in the prophetic voice of the SACC in this respect.

6.3.4.6 Infected or affected – reconciliation and HIV and AIDS

In relation to the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse* it is not obvious how to regard the reconciliation aspect. When the texts talk about fighting the stigma, this is of course in a sense a way of working towards unity between those who are infected and those who are not. One cannot easily say that this is done from either a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* or a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse*.

The way the reconciliation aspect is absent in relation to HIV and AIDS still says something about the prophetic voice of the SACC. Around 1994, the texts talk very little about the pandemic. This could be an indication that the SACC wants to be in unity with the NGU in a *'Church theology' discourse* way. But even later there is no deeper analysis on how relations between people living with HIV and AIDS and the rest of the population may be affected in a reconciliation perspective. If any discourse is prevalent, it would probably be the *'Church theology' discourse*.

6.3.4.7 Summing up:

In this short exercise, discerning how the concept 'reconciliation' is given meaning in the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* and other related discourses, we have found a few examples where the concept is filled with a meaning that lies close to the *'Church theology' discourse*. This is especially true in the case of gender.

We have also found that forgiveness is expressed as a prerequisite for reconciliation, especially in relation to ethnicity. This is a sign of a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*.

If there is a change to be seen in this exercise, it is that reconciliation before 1990 is given meaning within a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*, where justice is a prerequisite for reconciliation. After 1990 and especially around 1994, the focus changes and the prophetic voice is linked to a *'Church theology' discourse* understanding of reconciliation.

It is striking that the texts do not speak much about reconciliation after 1994. In what follows we shall discuss whether this can shed some light on the change of the prophetic voice.

6.4   Summing up the second reading

A possible pre-understanding before starting the second reading would have been that before 1990 the texts regarded the government as illegitimate, and that especially after 1994 they did the opposite. This is also what the second reading indicates. But this is only partly true. There are also numerous examples where the texts before 1990 contain discourses that regard the government as legitimate. When it comes to the post-1994 situation, there are not so many indications of discourses where the legitimacy of the government is questioned. There is nothing strange about this. What we have seen in the second reading of the texts is a discursive struggle between different discourses that regard the government as legitimate. Examples of the *'State theology' discourse* are found a number of times around 1994, when the GNU is seen as a partner of the Council. The critical distance has sometimes totally disappeared, and the texts can even condemn criticism against the government. The *'State theology' discourse* is sometimes combined with a *'Nation-building' discourse*.

The texts still admits that there is a need for a prophetic voice, and we can see how just after 1994 this is given meaning from a *'Critical solidarity' discourse* point of view. This discourse is also questioned, and closer to the 21st century this approach changes and the *'Critical engagement' discourse* becomes more frequent in the material. The Council is looking for different ways of being the prophet in partnership or cooperation with the government. Although the prophetic voice is almost gone during the GNU era, it changes thereafter and shows signs of coming back in a more articulated way. Expressions like monitoring, lobbyism, and advocacy meet the need for a new kind of prophetic approach.

We can also see that the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* plays a part during those post-1994 years. In some issues the SACC relates to the government as a Davidic prophet would do, and we can even find examples of a prophetic voice behind closed doors.

After 1998 there is a quest for a more outspoken prophetic role. One obstacle to this we find in an antagonism between the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*. Whereas the funding partners prefer to support development projects financially, the Council finds itself in a situation where the partners dictate the way the Council should express the prophetic voice.

Another finding is that ethnicity is no longer the main explanation for oppression. When poverty becomes a reason for the prophetic voice to be uttered, this can open the way for a renewed prophetic voice, given meaning from a *'Liberation' discourse* instead of a

'Development' discourse. Otherwise *'Liberation' discourse* and the *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* dominate the material only up to 1990.

The prophetic voice is articulated in different ways in relation to different orders and sub-order of discourse. If we apply an intersectionality perspective, we find that the way the prophetic voice appears in connection with ethnicity is more outspoken than in connection with social class, and especially in connection with gender. One could even say that the Council in the *Gender sub-order of discourse* articulates no other voice than within the *'Church theology' discourse*. This means that there is no prophetic voice in relation to gender, and the nodal point 'reconciliation' is therefore also given meaning within a *'Church theology' discourse*. Although the texts mention sexism from time to time, the critique of South African society about how gender equality is being achieved is almost non-existent. On the other hand, there is a frequent critique of the situation within the Council. There are also examples where the texts admit that the Council is lagging behind society in this respect.

Concerning 'reconciliation' as a nodal point in the material, we have found that some texts regard forgiveness as a prerequisite for reconciliation. This is true in relation to ethnicity, and is a sign of a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. After 1990 this changes, and reconciliation is seen more often from a *'Church theology' discourse* point of view. Even more noticeable is the finding that the texts after 1994 do not speak much about reconciliation at all.

7   Discussion and 'drawing the threads together'

In the introduction I state that the prophetic voice is the focus of this thesis. I am especially interested in how the articulation of the prophetic voice of the SACC, seen through some central texts from the National Conferences, has changed after 1990. To find answers to this question and discuss them is the overall objective of the study. It goes without saying that when I decided to study this change, I had a historical interest. Without putting the different articulations of the prophetic voice in their historical context, there can be be no possibility of suggesting how this voice might have changed. Therefore the historical background chapter, as well as the historical introductions in different paragraphs, are crucial.

With the sub-title of the thesis ('searching for a renewed Kairos') I indicate that the SACC has had a problem in finding a focus for the prophetic voice since 1990. One aspect of this, which I also touched on in the introduction, is how the prophetic voice relates to the reconciliation phenomenon. In studying the relationship between those two phenomena, it also becomes interesting to study different power relations within the Council. Taking this into consideration, I decided to use a supplementary method built on discourse theoretical premises together with the hermeneutical method I used when I started the reading.

The two main chapters in the thesis (the first reading – chapter five, and the second reading – chapter six) dismantle the textual material and reorganise it with the help of the method built on these discourse theoretical premises. The study covers a long period – 35 years – and the textual material is vast. Many different persons have been involved in the decision-making, and a number of General Secretaries and Council Presidents have come and gone. This is one explanation for the number of different discourses found in the material. It might have been possible to simplify it, but there is an obvious risk in doing that. The life of the Council is complex, and I wanted this to be seen in the thesis. At this stage, however, it is time to draw the threads together and see if any patterns can be found. In doing this I still hold that the discontinuities are as important as the continuities in a study of this nature.

Before we enter into a discussion about how the findings – especially those in chapters five and six – can shed light on these and other questions, I shall refer back to some parts of the background chapters. The way in which the SACC has been portrayed by other scholars and in other disciplines will be important background when we discuss the findings from the two readings carried out. Second, it will also serve our purpose to say something about the

theoretical framework within which this thesis has been written. This means reflecting on both the methods I have been using and the other theories that have been used as tools in the two readings. Third, I shall also draw some conclusions from the historical background chapter. The life of the SACC has to be seen in the light of the historical context of both South Africa as a country and the ecumenical church in this specific country.

After these comments have been made, I want to go back to the first and second reading of the textual material and summarise the findings made. Only after that has been done will it be time to bring all the different threads together and to discuss how all the material can shed light on the research problem: how the prophetic voice of the Council has changed, and how this change can be described. In doing this I hope to provide new explanations, and thereby to contribute to change.

7.1   Insights from studies previously done on the subject

What we found when we studied how the SACC has been described by other scholars was a divided image. The organisation is seen by some as a critical voice on the South African scene, even after the democratisation of the country. Others regard the SACC as a close partner of the government. When we started the readings of the material, one of the questions was to see if this mixed picture was also reflected in the texts. A major part of the second reading has been working with exactly this dilemma. One example of this ambivalence is the way the Council has used the concept 'critical solidarity'.

Another finding from previous studies of the Council was how the SACC is described, especially after 1994, as a weaker organisation both financially and when it comes to influence in the public arena. We have not placed much emphasis on this aspect. Although there are comments in the material about the financial situation, and an uncertainty about the role of the Council in a new situation, the focus has not been to determine whether the organisation has become more or less influential.

In the section about previous studies of the subject, I asked a few questions. In this closing discussion I shall come back to those. This means that I want to discuss how, for example, the SACC has been dealing with the HIV and AIDS issue and the relationship between this scourge and how the texts deal with sexuality. (We have also touched on this in chapter five.)

I have also touched on the situation of the white population in the country. We shall come back to the question of whether and how the Council deals with ethnicity in relation to a set-up where many whites experience a loss of power and opportunities.

Another question from this section was to evaluate whether the voice of the SACC is prophetic in the sense that it is based on divine authority, or whether it is just an example of one critical voice among many others. We bring these aspects into the discussion, together with other parameters.

7.2   Insights from the theory chapter

There is no need to dwell much on the methods used in this thesis. I simply want to point out how I started to read the material from a hermeneutical point of view. In chapter three I have discussed this at length. At this stage I want to highlight three aspects. The first is the importance of the historical context, which I have included in a number of ways. Second, I built on a hermeneutical method to be open about my preconceptions and enter into a hermeneutical spiral, in order to understand more of what the texts really want to say. I have given an account of some of my preconceptions; for instance, I entered the study with some questions about how the SACC had articulated the prophetic voice in relation to the situation in Zimbabwe and in relation to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. In the study I have partly answered those questions. Another preconception was to contribute to transformation. This is something I shall not get an answer to before the thesis is read by others. Third, I wanted to explore which subjects or perspectives were most important in the material. Together with some inspiration from other scholars, I found a number of issues that, based on discourse theoretical premises, I decided to name 'orders of discourse'. I give an account of my methodological approach in the theory chapter. In this context I want to stress that the perspective – or rather, perspectives – I have chosen are just a few possible perspectives. Having said this, I still want to maintain that these perspectives are crucial both in the material as such and in the surrounding context in which the SACC was and is working.

In the section about delimitations, I discussed especially where the cut-off date should be, in asking questions about the change of the prophetic voice of the SACC. Having worked with whether the texts regard the government as legitimate or not, one finding is that the choice of the year 1990 was not self-evident. Even before 1990 the SACC regards the government as

legitimate, and after 1996 there are also articulations about liberation, although the legitimacy of the government is not questioned.

Another kind of delimitation was only to read material from the National Conferences. I have supplied the text with other material from time to time in order to shed light on some courses of events. The majority of the material still comes from the NC documentation; and we therefore have to be aware that this thesis only answers the question about how this material articulates the prophetic voice.

The starting point was to describe the prophetic voice and to find out how it has changed. I formulated a tentative understanding of the concept earlier, in chapter three. It is now time to summarise how the concept has been filled with meaning in the texts from the NC of the SACC. The provisional way of understanding the term 'prophetic' was this:

> To be prophetic is when a person (or a group of persons) in the church takes a stance for truth and justice, and thereby criticises the society (or a part of the society) and claims to do this by divine inspiration.[1277]

I have found, in relation to the prophetic aspect, the phenomenon of 'reconciliation' to be a perspective of great importance. Since unity as such is a basic aim of the whole organisation, as can be seen in the preamble of the constitution[1278] of the SACC, the question is whether achieving reconciliation might be a more fundamental goal than being prophetic. I am aware that 'reconciliation' and 'unity' are different concepts, but I regard them as two sides of the same coin. Just as 'liberation' is a 'process' that leads to freedom, a state that is not possible to reach, 'reconciliation' is a process that strives for 'unity'. As much as total freedom is impossible in this world, total unity is also a condition that never fully occurs. With the help of the discourse theoretical tools I decided to use, I have named both 'prophetic' and 'reconciliation' as nodal points, in relation to which the discursive struggle within the texts becomes evident. Especially the *Kairos Document* (with its different categories) helps to describe this discursive struggle. We could therefore add this aspect to the formulation above.

To be prophetic is when a person (or a group of persons) in the church takes a stance for truth, justice, and reconciliation, and thereby criticises the society or a part of the society, and does this by divine inspiration.

[1277] See page 38.

[1278] There are several articulations of reconciliation in the SACC constitution. It uses phrases like: Common glory, church is one, unity is gift of God, fellowship, cooperation, unity, common mission, and common confession. It is evident that the SACC through its constitution regards unity in different forms as a major objective of all its work.

Throughout the study the aspect of divine inspiration is obvious. The SACC is a religious organisation, and as such it is implicit that the organisation makes its statements with some sort of divine inspiration. From time to time this is also expressed through references to the Bible or the Christian gospel. The constitution of the SACC gives no reference to any specific doctrine, and is very general in the way it describes what it means to be a fellowship of churches. It is therefore not possible to evaluate whether the different articulations of the prophetic voice are in line with the kind of Christianity the Council stands for. Suffice it to say that the texts implicitly speak with divine inspiration.

Having carried out the second reading, some methodological questions about the method itself and the reconciliation concept have arisen. In using, for example, the idea of the discursive struggle, where an antagonism sometimes is resolved through a hegemonic intervention, I have to ask myself whether this intervention is an expression of reconciliation in any sense of the word. If I apply thoughts from the *Kairos Document*, I am tempted to state that the notion of 'hegemonic intervention' comes close to the way in which *'Church theology' discourse* relates to reconciliation. The point here is that reconciliation, in the *'Prophetic theology' discourse* sense of the word, would indicate some sort of 'third way' – a kind of hegemonic intervention that is not a result of one discourse dominating the other, but rather a situation where the two discourses have met and influenced each other. This could be a weakness in the method I have chosen to use, especially in relation to the reconciliation concept. I still maintain that the method has unearthed some of the power relations present in the texts, and thus the thesis can contribute to the transformation process in providing new explanations.

After all, it is the textual material that is in focus – not the persons behind it as subjects, but rather the kind of subject positions that Foucault speaks about. Within and between the different discourses there is a discursive struggle between different discourses. Floating signifiers are given new meaning (and thus become nodal points) and antagonisms are resolved through hegemonic interventions. Both with the premise from social constructionism (that power relations restrict the way we act, talk, or think) and with the concept 'intersectionality', we are helped to understand more about those power relations.

A final remark therefore concerns the decision to include such generous quotations from the textual material. This has been done to allow the material to speak for itself. Hopefully, through this the reader has got a sense of the kind of prophetic voice (or absence of the same prophetic voice) that I have found while reading the documents from the different National Councils.

7.3   Insight from the context

In the historical background chapter, focus was put on the ethnic aspect of the history of South Africa. I described how different ethnic groups have fought in the past, and how apartheid in particular has been a major component in the history of the 20th century. This has also been an important perspective in the readings, since the texts deal to such a great extent with these questions.

The reading of the texts, though, has shown that other expressions of diversity, such as gender, social class, and religious diversity, also are important ingredients in a more complex picture. This is summarised in the 'intersectionality' concept. Seen from this point of view, the background chapter could have been written differently. Especially the gender perspective is missing. One reason for this is that much of the available literature has another focus, namely ethnicity. But I do admit that I could have made more effort to find material with a gender perspective. Even if the history has been written by men about men, one can always ask the question: Where were the women?[1279] In the study itself, this perspective is brought in with the aim, to a certain extent, of correcting this imbalance.

The same could be said about the social class perspective, which in the same way could have been stressed more in the background chapters.

Another aspect of the intersectionality concept that I brought into the discussion – religious diversity in general, and ecumenism in particular – is on the other hand part of the context I described in chapter four. This is a field that is more extensively described in the literature.

7.4   Insights from the first reading

The historical context in which the texts are written is vital. Between 1969 and 2004 South African society is changing radically. I have given an account of this in chapter four, but it has

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[1279] In a letter to the editor the day after International Women's Day 2010, this thought was expressed: 'From my old teacher Ann-Sofie Ohlander I and my fellow seminar members learned to always in our research and teaching put the question: "Where are the women?" This does not make history different, but it helps us to highlight earlier forgotten or invisible parts of it' (my translation). 'Av min gamla lärare Ann-Sofie Ohlander fick jag och mina seminariekamrater lära oss att alltid i vår forskning och undervisning ställa frågan "var finns kvinnorna?" Det gör inte historien annorlunda, men det hjälper oss att lyfta fram tidigare brotglömda och osynliga delar av den' (Anders Fröjmark, "Kvinnor i historien." [Letter to the editor.] in *Östran.* Tuesday 9th March 2009).

to be underscored. The Council itself has also undergone a transformation. Although this is not the focus of the thesis, we have to take account of the new situation the Council finds itself in after 1990, when the liberation movements are unbanned. The situation has also changed ecumenically, as shown by the Rustenburg Conference. In this changing situation, the texts show how the Council battles to find a new focus – or, as we have put it in the sub-title, to search for a renewed Kairos.

I have discerned four different orders of discourse from the questions I have asked, influences from other sources, and also from the textual material itself. One important and self-evident condition for this is the changes that took place in South African society between 1990 and 1994. It is inevitable that the prophetic voice also changed after the fall of the apartheid regime.

The first reading of the texts indicated, however, that some aspects did not change. The texts still classify people from an ethnic point of view, although the term 'African' after 1994 is used instead of 'black' in a narrow sense. Does this mean that the Council only regards blacks as Africans? Or is it caused by a problem in speaking about blacks in a narrow sense, without doing it within an *'Apartheid classification' discourse*? This problem is an indication that the Council simultaneously feels the need to address ethnic diversity and tries to avoid slipping back into the apartheid mindset. This dilemma influences the prophetic voice and makes it vague. It also has to do with the need for affirmative action and BEE. In the *Ethnicity sub-order of discourse* this is a definite problem. The Council wants to leave apartheid thinking behind, but the legacy interferes from time to time. We can thus see an example of how the discursive struggle unearths some power relations about whether or not ethnic classification is important in the transformation process, in order to address injustices. Also the underlying phenomenon, racism, is still there, and we have seen that the texts do not express the same kind of eagerness to end racism as they did in relation to apartheid (what we called the *'End apartheid' discourse*). There are also examples of a *'different qualities given to different groups' discourse*, even after 1996, when the nation has a new constitution. One example is in relation to HIV and AIDS.

We found that the relationship between the DRC and the SACC was an example of an antagonism between a *'Church theology' discourse* and a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* where the *'Church theology' discourse* has attained hegemony since the DRC became a member, even although it has not fully met the conditions set by the Council. There is one interesting aspect to this: If the Council, as the CCSA also did, does not expect the members

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to accept any specific doctrine of the Church, how can the Council expect the DRC to change in relation to church unity? Is the question about unity not part of doctrine? The first reading has shown that the Council is uncertain on this point. In relation to the Rustenburg Conference the picture is the opposite. The texts contain a *'Prophetic theology' discourse.* They articulate a view that the Rustenburg Conference did not address injustices deeply enough, but rather opted for unity at any cost.

Also within the *Gender sub-order of discourse* there is a discursive struggle between the *'Prophetic theology' discourse* and the *'Church theology' discourse*. What we have found, though, is that the only discourse present is the *'Church theology' discourse*. Women should not rock the boat, and gender inequalities are therefore not addressed in a prophetic way. This has implications, for instance, for how the prophetic voice in relation to HIV and AIDS is articulated. It is also obvious that the Council addresses sexism and racism differently. (An intersectionality perspective has helped in this analysis.) Furthermore, the Council spends more time addressing gender inequalities within its own organisation than in the surrounding society. One explanation for this might be that the surrounding society is regarded as being ahead in the process.

The *Social class sub-order of discourse* is another area where the Council has articulated the prophetic voice in different ways. The *'Development' discourse* is more common than the *'Liberation' discourse*. Liberation is mostly a concept used in relation to apartheid, and is therefore used less often after 1994. The *'Nation-building' discourse* becomes dominant after 1990, and is built on a theology of reconstruction. In the discursive struggle between the *'Poverty alleviation' discourse* and the *'Poverty eradication' discourse* it is not easy to see which discourse comes out as the dominant one. There is a tendency, though, for the later texts to be dominated by the *'Poverty eradication' discourse*. (There is a parallel in the discursive struggle between the *'Giving the voiceless a voice' discourse* and the *'Being the voice of the voiceless' discourse*. In this case the former dominates the material at the end of the 1990s.) Interestingly enough, the *'Poverty eradication' discourse* sometimes works together with the *'Development' discourse*. The *'Land belongs to everyone' discourse* dominates the material in the land issue context, and here a gender perspective sometimes is applied.

There are also some findings about the *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse* that should be included in this section. The SACC was never a pacifist organisation. In relation to 'capital punishment' and 'conscientious objection', the Council applied different ways of

arguing. There has been a discursive struggle between the *'Situational pacifism' discourse* and the *'Just war' discourse*. While the former strives to hold on to the pacifist line, the latter openly admits that violence is sometimes necessary. After 1990 there is a change towards a *'Just war' discourse* in the texts. The Council at the same time opposes the military expenses of the new dispensation.

In the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse* we found that the *'Moralising ministry' discourse* is more common than in the other orders of discourse. It is still the collective discourses that dominate the question. Before and after 1994, the texts criticise the government in relation to HIV and AIDS. On the other hand, the GNU is never criticised. This shows that the *'Nation-building' discourse* has a hegemonic status. As already indicated, the intersectionality perspective becomes most relevant in relation to the pandemic, and we can see that the texts do not analyse the pandemic in relation to an inferiority/superiority perspective. There is no discussion about the kind of power relations that might be seen in this respect, and if mentioned they are not dealt with in a distinct way. The gender aspect, for instance, is only mentioned in passing. The ethnicity perspective is also mentioned from time to time, but without any further reflection. (At no point is there any indication that white people also contract the virus.) The *HIV and AIDS order of discourse* is the only order of discourse where a moralising ministry is apparent. The articulation that HIV and AIDS is the new Kairos is not reflected in how the texts deal with the pandemic.

Although the texts do not mention the concept 'intersectionality', there are many examples where the texts combine at least ethnicity, gender, and social class in their analysis of superiority and inferiority. One aspect of the problem in finding a new Kairos possibly lies in this: the Council accepts after 1990 that aspects of injustice are more numerous than before 1990, when much of the analysis was concentrated around ethnicity.

7.5   Insights from the second reading

I entered the second reading with a preconception that the government was regarded as illegitimate before 1990 and legitimate thereafter, especially after 1994. The second reading indicates that this is how it was. One important question in relation to this is whether or not the liberation concept has lost its relevance as a result.

In the second reading a number of prophetic discourses were delimited. We found a discursive struggle between different discourses concerning the legitimacy of the government. The *'State theology' discourse* cooperated with a *'Nation-building' discourse* to the extent that the prophetic voice almost became silent around 1994. The Council became a partner of the government. But the Council always expressed the need for a prophetic voice, and developed other concepts, such as 'critical solidarity'. The closeness with the government was also subjected to criticism, and was replaced by another concept, 'critical engagement'. Phenomena like 'monitoring', 'lobbyism', and 'advocacy' became expressions of this new prophetic approach. We have found that this could be described as examples of a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* where, most likely, the prophetic voice is sometimes articulated behind closed doors. There is possibly a quest for a more outspoken prophetic voice towards the end of the 1990s.

Another interesting finding is the antagonism between the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*. It comes to the fore when the funding partners of the Council are said to prefer to support development projects financially, instead of projects aiming at uniting the ecumenical, prophetic voice. If this is so, it indicates that the Council is sensitive about how partners dictate the way in which the Council should express the prophetic voice. But to assert that the donor partners influence the prophetic voice of the SACC would take us beyond the scope of this thesis.

At the end of the period we can see a shift in focus in how the Council speaks about oppression. During the apartheid era, oppression was almost entirely defined from an ethnicity point of view. In the later texts, the Council starts to explain oppression from a poverty perspective. It is still interesting to see that the *'Liberation' discourse* belongs to the pre-1990 (or at least pre-1994) era. After 1994 the *'Development' discourse* dominates the material. There is, however, a tendency to opt for a theology of liberation even at the end of the 1990s.

We brought an intersectionality perspective from the first reading into the second reading. The ethnicity aspect dominates in relation to the prophetic voice. There are some tendencies for the social class aspect to be woven into the picture, whereas the gender point of view in particular is a weak part of the analysis. When, for instance, the nodal point 'reconciliation' is given meaning in the *Gender sub-order of discourse*, this is done from a *'Church theology' discourse* perspective, and one can see from that how the struggle for gender equality is toned down. Most of the time it has to do with gender equality in the organisation and in the

churches, and seldom with the surrounding society in focus. By comparison, we saw how reconciliation, in relation to ethnicity, was given meaning from a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* perspective, which regards justice as a prerequisite for reconciliation. This has changed, though, in the general picture. After 1990 reconciliation is more and more seen from a *'Church theology' discourse* point of view – although, generally speaking, forgiveness is seen as a prerequisite for reconciliation. At a matter of fact – and this was almost shocking – the texts hardly speak about reconciliation at all after 1994.

In connection with the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the reconciliation concept is almost non-existent. Questions arise as to why nothing is said about the need for reconciliation in this respect.

We have now summarised some of the more important findings and insights from this study. It is time to bring all these aspects into a discussion to find out what kind of possible conclusions we can make.

7.6   Discussion

In this discussion on how the prophetic voice of the SACC has changed since 1990, I want to locate my starting point in the concept of 'discontinuity', taken from Foucault. In the foregoing, a disparate picture has emerged. Although we can discern certain discourses that show that there are lines of thoughts that can be followed right through the material, there are also a number of contradictory ideas. We find a number of discursive struggles, depending on the context in which the Council articulates its prophetic voice. Even within the same texts there are discontinuities in this respect. In the following I shall discuss in turn each order of discourse discerned in the first reading, with the aim of summarising how the prophetic voice has changed in that order of discourse, and also how the reconciliation aspect is articulated in that context.

7.6.1 The *Intersectionality order of discourse*

The prophetic voice of the SACC in this material takes a critical stance mainly against the government. The focus of that voice has been, and still is, to speak against different forms of injustice and oppression; but at the same time there is an underlying aspiration for unity. My

preconception that the Council speaks mainly from an ethnicity point of view proved to be adequate; but after 1990 this perspective has changed and widened. A social class perspective is also included in later texts – although the problem is that the Council becomes an ally of the establishment after 1994. The critique is delivered within a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse*. In this respect a discontinuity is to be found in the material. A discursive struggle between the *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* and a *'Mosaic prophetic' discourse* is at hand.

On the whole, the gender aspect is still missing as an outspoken, prophetic perspective. If the texts articulate any critique concerning gender justice, it relates, in the majority of cases, to the situation within the Council itself. The surrounding society is regarded as more gender equal than the churches are. The Council continuously discusses gender from a women's perspective, and men are therefore, in one sense, excluded from gender liberation. There is no parallel to the way in which liberation has been regarded in the *Ethnicity sub-order of discourse* as something that both white and black need.

The study shows that in relation to both gender issues and Christian diversity, a *'Church theology' discourse* is predominant. Unity is the important aspect; justice in this regard is not a condition. After 1994 this is also applicable within the *Ethnicity sub-order of discourse*. Before 1990 the texts indicate that blacks are prepared to forgive whites, with justice as a prerequisite. When this happens at the Rustenburg Conference, the Council sticks to a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. After the Conference, the Council is reluctant to undertake any further cooperation with the Steering Committee. Here we also find a discursive struggle. The texts of the Council fill the concept 'reconciliation' with meaning within a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. In relation to the DRC, on the other hand, the fact that the DRC became a member of the Council in 2004, even though it still was not united with other denominations in the Dutch Reformed family, can be seen as an example of a *'Church theology' discourse*. One way to understand this discontinuity is that the Steering Committee is seen as a possible threat and an ecumenical rival. On the other hand, the DRC, not being an ecumenical organisation, can become part of the SACC.

The Council continues to use ethnic classification in its texts after 1996. One significant aspect is that the term 'African' often refers to 'black' in a narrow sense. The Council even regards racism as inevitable, albeit undesirable, and something that cannot be done away with. One remaining question that it has not been possible to answer is whether or not the Council supports affirmative action and BEE. There are indications that the Council is in favour of these programmes. If so, the use of ethnic classification can be seen as a way of applying a

prophetic theology perspective to the issue of reconciliation between black and white. This is done, however, in a one-sided way. There is no evidence that the texts understand the phenomenon of the white population's sense of losing power. This is not addressed in the material, although sometimes the texts oppose racism directed towards whites.

7.6.2 The *Violence versus non-violence order of discourse*

The SACC, according to these central texts, has never been pacifist. A *'Situational pacifism'* *discourse* dominates in the material, although it is involved in a discursive struggle with the *'just war' discourse*. There is no immediate change in 1990 in this respect. In the period between 1990 and 1994, the Council concentrates on the ministry of mediation, but at the same time it accepts that peace-keeping forces will be armed. After 1994, within the *'Nation-building' discourse* the texts turn more in favour of a *'Just war' discourse*. When the texts support the nation having a military defence force, one can ask whether this is getting close to a *'State theology' discourse*. But on the whole, the texts do not often deal with questions about violence after 1994, except when the arms deal is criticised. There is also little, if any, discussion about the relationship between violence and reconciliation.

We can ask why the texts do not deal with gender-related violence, which could be relevant, especially in relation to HIV and AIDS. This question hangs in the air. Another question concerns violence in connection with criminality. (As we saw in the introduction, the WCPCC dealt with this aspect, but it never became a priority in the National Conference context.) The question is, why has this never happened? These are two areas where the texts say remarkably little.

7.6.3 The *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*

The readings have shown that the Council has not applied a gender perspective to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. After a period of silence in the 1980s, at least at NC level, the Council began to talk about the scourge in the early 1990s. Around 1994 the prophetic voice was again silent. At the end of the 1990s the texts tried to cover different aspects such as 'social class' and 'ethnicity', but there are few examples in the material that take power relations from a gender perspective into consideration. Sometimes the gender perspective is close at hand, but not actively focused on.

Another important aspect is the lack of a connection between the pandemic and violence versus non-violence. From the perspective of gender-powered structures, the texts of the Council could have said more.

Another aspect of HIV and AIDS is how the material, when relating to ethnicity, links the pandemic with blacks only. This is not discussed in the material. Does this mean that the SACC regards the HIV and AIDS pandemic as a matter for blacks only? Nowhere in the material does it explicitly say that whites contract HIV and AIDS.

Another interesting aspect is that the texts of the SACC never connect HIV and AIDS to their basic goal of unity and reconciliation! If we look for the fundamental dimension of unity, there are traces in the *'Fighting the stigma' discourse* or the *'Care giving' discourse*; but it is not explicitly mentioned.

In relation to HIV and AIDS, the texts talk from a moralising ministry point of view more than they do in other orders of discourse. As we stated in chapter two, we can see a break-up of the sexual ethical systems that have been dominant in South Africa. This could be the reason why the Council feels a need to give moral guidance in relation to HIV and AIDS. There is an antagonism to be found between different discourses in this respect. This could be a topic for further study.

There is also an antagonism between a '*structural discourse*' (which regards the pandemic as caused by poverty, for instance) and a *'moralising discourse'* (which explains the disease from an individual perspective). The dilemma is that the structural approach has a tendency to victimise the individual, whereas the *'moralising discourse'* adds fuel to stigmatisation.

7.6.4 The *Zimbabwe order of discourse*

Within this order of discourse, only a few comments are possible. The material is meagre. This could of course indicate that the Council, at this level, has had problems in articulating a strong prophetic message. The GS Report of 2004 reveals this hesitant approach. If this observation is correct, this means that the Council, after the 1994 democratisation, speaks within a *'Davidic prophetic' discourse* about the Zimbabwe issue.

7.6.5 Unity sometimes more important than justice

One aspect of the prophetic voice in South Africa after 1990 is how it has been articulated in relation to reconciliation. During the apartheid era, and especially before 1990, the texts of the SACC often regarded justice as a condition for reconciliation. There could be no unity between the different ethnic groups unless apartheid was dismantled. This is an indication that the concept of 'unity' was more fundamental than 'justice'. Justice was a means to obtaining true unity.

The situation between 1990 and 1994 was unique. The Council was striving for unity in order to keep the negotiation process alive. After 1994, unity – especially with the GNU – was sometimes sought without justice having been done, at least if we take perspectives like 'gender' and 'social class' into account. It was important to apply a *'Prophetic theology' discourse* aspect in relation to ethnicity, but not between different social classes or in a gender perspective. This is why most of the articulations about gender inequality have to do with the situation within the Council.

This leads to the conclusion that unity is so fundamental to the SACC that the years between 1969 and 1990 are to be seen as an interlude. After 1990 the unity aspect gained the upper hand. This means that reconciliation again became a concept that got its meaning from a *'Church theology' discourse*. The SACC did not want to 'rock the boat' in the democratic situation. Even during the years from 1990 to 1994, the texts tend to show that the SACC strove more for unity than for justice, although the picture is not clear. There are also many examples where the texts talk within a *'Prophetic theology' discourse*. But in the texts around 1994, national unity was emphasised. National unity was sometimes so important that the prophetic voice had to stand back.

7.6.6 Development sometimes more important than liberation

Writing about liberation theology in South Africa, the following reflection can be offered. During the apartheid era it was clear that liberation was the only solution. When the new dispensation came into place, liberation was no longer the option. Therefore the SACC texts changed to a development (or reconstruction) perspective. The texts describe the situation as unequal, with a majority of people still marginalised. In the material there is therefore an antagonism between the *'Development' discourse* and the *'Liberation' discourse*.

We can draw some conclusions about this discursive struggle on the basis of the information we get in some texts that international partners of the Council, presumably the donor partners, prefer to offer financial support to development projects rather than to ordinary ecumenical work. At the risk of taking the argument a bit too far, this could be a sign that the donor partners are afraid to support the prophetic voice within a *'Liberation' discourse* when apartheid is no longer the target. If the SACC were to continue to seek liberation for the oppressed – given that the oppressed are not only described from an ethnicity point of view, but are also seen as the materially poor; and also with gender-powered structures taken into account – this could be something that the Western world would be reluctant to support. The choice would be in that case to support the *'Development' discourse*, because donors in the West could continue with some charity work, and unity, seen from a *'Church theology' discourse* angle, could be kept.

7.6.7 Liberation combined with reconciliation

The texts do not mention reconciliation much after 1990. When reconciliation is mentioned, it is mostly in connection with the TRC. This is an indication that 'reconciliation' as a religious concept becomes a political concept, and the churches in turn delegate the reconciliation process to the State, knowing that the TRC is headed by a church leader. This in turn raises questions about how to place the TRC in relation to the different discourses delimited in the second reading. The TRC was of course a State concern. When the former GS of the SACC became its chairperson, the Council refrained from being directly engaged in the TRC process. In that case, the only possible answer would be that the TRC was seen from a *'State theology' discourse* point of view (although not in the sense that the State was regarded as a tyrant) and the Council, without intending it, played a part in the government's drive for national unity, without really articulating a prophetic voice in that respect. We have seen, though, evidence in the Council's evaluation of the TRC that it questions the lack of reparation when the TRC ends its work. This would indicate that the Council still had a prophetic approach to the TRC. From the material at hand it is not possible to get a clear picture of the relationship between the SACC and the TRC.

One explanation is that the SACC combined the reconciliation concept with liberation, because, if the Council sought to give it meaning from a *'Development' discourse*, it would be a way of sweeping the conflicts under the carpet, similar to the *'Church Theology' discourse*.

In this respect there is still an antagonism to be found in the material. The TRC, on the other hand, gave meaning to reconciliation from a *'Nation-building' discourse* point of view. The TRC saw reconciliation as a prerequisite for nation-building.

In the *Kairos Document* the 'Prophetic theology' concept is contrasted with 'Church Theology'; and one important issue is how those two theologies give reconciliation different meanings. The texts of the SACC lean more towards 'Church theology' after 1990. Reconciliation is not the focus, and if it is, it is not linked to liberation. The voice of those without power is not given a place within the Council, for the sake of unity. This unity becomes a tool of those in power to maintain the status quo in society.

7.6.8 Searching for a renewed Kairos

How has the Council managed to find a renewed Kairos? Before 1990 the Kairos was found from an ethnicity perspective. After 1990 this was no longer the case, even though there were examples of combating racism in forms other than apartheid. There was no eagerness to end injustices, as had been the case in the late 1980s. Neither social class issues nor gender inequality is described as the new Kairos. Criminality, suggested as a possible Kairos by the WCPCC, is not a renewed focus either. As we have seen in the texts, neither has the Council managed to find a focus within the *HIV and AIDS order of discourse*.

The reading of the texts from the NC of the SACC between 1969 and 2004 shows that the Council is still searching for a centre, a renewed Kairos, and perhaps it will continue to do so.[1280] The conclusion is that the Council, in these central texts, does not focus on a Kairos in the same way as it did before 1990.

In the final part of this thesis I shall argue that the reconciliation process could be this new Kairos, and that the Rustenburg Conference was a moment when the ecumenical church could have taken another path into the future.

[1280] In the document about climate change from 2009, the Kairos concept returns, linked to a new phenomenon: 'It is therefore appropriate to see climate change as a new "kairos" – a moment of truth and of opportunity where our collective response will have far-reaching consequences' (Climate Change 2009, page 7).

Closing remarks

This thesis has shown that after 1990, the SACC searches for a renewed Kairos. The SACC has dealt with many different issues through the years. This thesis deals with some of them. During the apartheid era the agenda is given to the Council from outside, and it is one of the few possible arenas for resistance. After 1990 this changes; and the Council has to struggle if it wants to be this arena again. As we have seen in the different readings, the Council has articulated a prophetic message, sometimes even in a strong and outspoken way. The addressee has mostly been the government – but sometimes also companies, member churches, or even the population of the country. The prophetic voice has been articulated! But has anyone listened? If the voice is not heard, the reason could be that the media are listening somewhere else. (And it is mainly through the media that the prophetic voice in the 21st century can be heard.) The Council is in good company, though. If the Council is the voice that cries out in the wilderness, this has happened before in the history of the prophetic movement.[1281] The question is whether the prophetic voice is articulated in the wilderness, or within a 'Davidic prophetic' discourse, meaning behind closed doors. In that case the reason for not hearing the voice is that the SACC is part of the establishment, and not a place where the voiceless are empowered.

Bevans and Schroeder discuss the concept of 'prophetic dialogue', which combines the two important nodal points 'prophetic' and 'reconciliation'. The concept of 'prophetic dialogue' contains something different from concepts like 'critical solidarity' and 'critical engagement', which say nothing specific about the SACC as a faith-based organisation. The 'dialogue' aspect could suit the situation after 1990, and especially after 1994. The SACC is no longer only a prophetically outspoken critic. It is involved in a dialogue with a democratically elected government, which still needs the prophetic voice. Prophetic ministry is the most significant contribution the SACC can make to nation-building. The dialogue concept also contains an aspect of reconciliation. If one strives for unity, dialogue is inevitable. There are many areas where reconciliation is needed. Only dialogue will lead to a situation where unity becomes the overall perspective. With the addition of 'prophetic', dialogue is given direction. There is an aspect of transformation added to the reconciliation part, and the concept will not become part of a 'Church Theology' discourse.

[1281] Isaiah 40:3.

The SACC could make new efforts to cooperate with the churches involved in the Rustenburg Conference, as well as other churches, and do that within a 'Prophetic theology' discourse. (This is especially possible with the DRC as a member.) Reconciliation could become the renewed Kairos. The final right of explanation should not be left to the State alone. The concept is religious, and has to be filled with meaning by the religious community. The SACC could be the arena where such a process could take place, in an intersectional way – where ethnicity, gender, different sexual orientation, social class, different political views, and even religious diversity could be seen as assets and not as problems. There would definitely be many discursive struggles in such a process, but the result would not necessarily be hegemonic interventions, where the voice of the stronger seizes the final right of explanation. If the Council could establish a forum where the voiceless could be empowered and power relations could be revealed, this would contribute substantially to the ongoing reconciliation process, and also be an articulation of a prophetic voice, with dialogue as one indispensable aspect.

Appendix 1:

Organisational chart – National level[1282]

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┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   Church Leaders Forum      │
│ (With no Constitutional     │
│          status)            │
└─────────────────────────────┘

                          ┌──────────────────┐
                          │    National      │
                          │   Conference     │
                          │      (NC)        │
                          └──────────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ Central Committee    │────────│ General Secretariat  │
        │       (CC)           │        │                      │
        └──────────────────────┘        └──────────────────────┘

        ┌──────────────────────┐
        │ (National) Executive │
        │   Committee (NEC)    │
        └──────────────────────┘
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| Health - including combating HIV, AIDS and Tuberculosis KPA (Responsible for facilitating the SACC Youth Forum) | Justice, Reconciliation & Healing KPA (Responsible for facilitating the Women's Ecumenical Consultation | Poverty Eradication KPA | Faith & Mission Support Programme | Communications Support Programme | Public Policy Liaison Unit (PPLU) Parliamentary Office Support Programme |

Organisational chart – provincial councils[1283]

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │   Provincial     │
                        │    Councils      │
                        └──────────────────┘
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| Eastern Cape Provincial Council of Churches | SACC Free State | SACC Gauteng | KwaZulu-Natal Christian Council | SACC Limpopo | Mpumalanga Council of Churches | Western Cape Provincial Council of Churches |

| Local Councils and Fraternities |
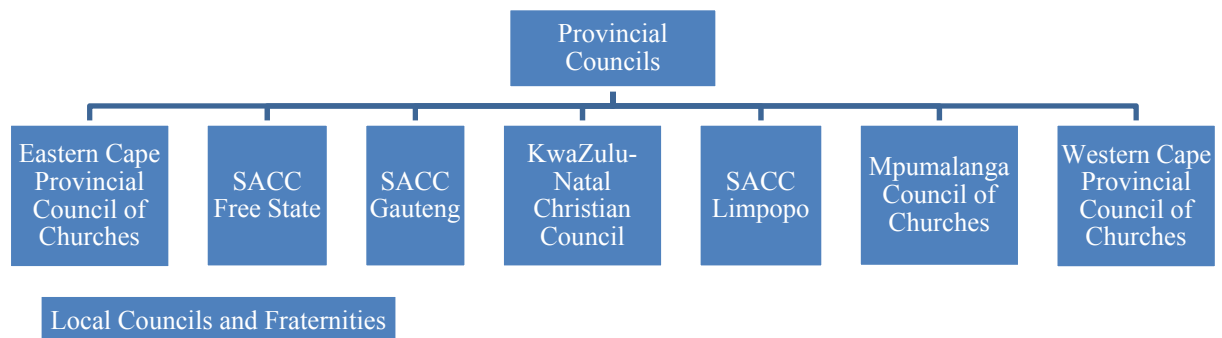
[1282] This organisational chart is partly based on information from the website of the SACC, retrieved 2010-03-19 and partly based on information from the present General Secretary, Eddie Makue, in an e-mail to the author,. In the same e-mail the GS writes: 'These KPAs are determined by member churches and likely to change after the National Conference scheduled for August 2010' (Makue, Eddie in e-mail to the author 2010-03-19).

[1283] The SACC has a provincial structure only in seven out of nine provinces. The Provincial Councils in the Northern Cape Province and in the Western Province have been closed down.

Appendix 2:

Constitution[1284]

PREAMBLE

The South African Council of Churches is a fellowship of Churches and Organisations which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to fulfil their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Council affirms, on the basis of the Scriptures, that the Church is the Body of Christ and therefore is one. Though obscured and marred by sinful division, this unity of all Christians is the gift of God and does not need to be created.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the Council is an instrument and servant of the Churches, committed to stimulating and effecting fellowship, co-operation and unity among its member Churches and all other Christians in their common mission in the world. The work of the Council is based on the recognition of Jesus Christ as the divine Head of the Body and is to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The theological basis of the Council is a common confession of the Christian faith of its members and is not a creedal test of Churches or individuals. The Council is not committed to any one theological understanding of the Church, and membership of the Council does not imply acceptance of any specific doctrine of the Church.

1 NAME

The name of the Council is the South African Council of Churches (hereinafter referred to

as "the Council.")

2 LEGAL STATUS

The legal status of the Council is that of an autonomous body having perpetual succession and legal existence independent of its members, the liability of members being limited to the payment of outstanding dues, if any. The Council is entitled to own property and to sue and to be sued in its own name, no members having the right to any of its assets.

3 OBJECTS

The principal objects of the Council are:

3.1   To give expression to the Lordship of Christ over every aspect and area of human life by promoting the spiritual, social, intellectual and physical welfare of all people.

3.2   To foster that unity which is both God's will for creation and God's gift to the Church.

3.3   To do and encourage all such things as will reduce those factors, whether doctrinal, liturgical or practical, which keep the Churches apart.

3.4   To engage in such activities on behalf of its member Churches as are integral to the Church's worship, witness and service.

[1284] Website of South African Council of Churches. Constitution. http://www.sacc.org.za/about/constitution.html #preamble 2010-02-08.

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3.5 To assist the Church, wherever situated, to carry out its mission in and to the world.

3.6 To undertake joint action and service on behalf of the Churches and to encourage co-operation among member Churches.

3.7 To enter into dialogue with people of other faiths and persuasions.

4 POWERS

In order to further and give effect to its objects the Council shall have the following powers:

4.1 To initiate and promote consultations, negotiations and joint action by representatives of Churches in South Africa in any matter bearing upon the welfare and witness of the Church.

4.2 To promote fellowship and co-operation among Churches and related Christian organisations by creating opportunities for Christians of different traditions to pray, plan and act together in fulfilment of their common calling to witness in word and deed to justice, truth and love.

4.3 To liaise with Councils of Churches, Christian Councils, and Churches outside South Africa.

4.4 To promote and encourage the study of all matters pertaining to the unity and mission of the Church.

4.5 To make available information and resources in regard to national, social and other problems affecting the Church and society.

4.6 To bear witness to Christian principles and standards in matters relating to the welfare of all the people of South Africa, and to take such actions and to make such representations as are consonant with Christian convictions and social responsibility.

4.7 To work for a just social order in South Africa which is consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

4.8 To initiate, encourage and promote evangelistic and educational programmes and activities, including publishing and broadcasting, in furtherance of the objects of the Council.

4.9 To establish Trusts, registered companies and voluntary associations as may be necessary to give effect to the objects of the Council.

4.10 To co-operate with and affiliate to Christian and other bodies the purpose of which is consistent with the objects of the Council and to make grants and other assistance.

4.11 To receive affiliation fees, donations, grants and bequests, to raise funds and to use and/or invest all income for the furtherance of the objects of the Council.

4.12 To acquire and dispose of by purchase, donation, lease, exchange, or by any other means, any immovable property or movable assets for use in facilitating the purposes of the Council. Any property acquired shall be registered in the name of the Councilor of nominees appointed by the Executive Committee.

4.13 To maintain, insure, amortize, lease, develop, demolish or abandon any asset.

4.14   To engage in legal proceedings.

4.15   To borrow money for the purpose of furthering the Council's objects, to mortgage and/or pledge any property or security owned by the Council and to act in any manner necessary to give effective security for the repayment of such loans.

4.16   To make loans, either secured or unsecured, to persons, Churches, other bodies and organisations for purposes consonant with the objects of the Council. Such loans shall require the prior approval of the Executive Committee.

4.17   To employ persons for the fulfilment of the Council's objectives.

4.18   To establish and dissolve provincial offices, provided due process has been observed.

5 MEMBERSHIP

5.1   Basis of membership

Members of the Council affirm the following statement of faith:

"We confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek to enter into fellowship with other Christians, through the South African Council of Churches, as witness to our commitment to a common ministry to the glory of the one God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

5.2   Categories of membership

5.2.1   Full members:

The following bodies may be full members of the Council:

5.2.1.1   Christian denominations that have a national character, including

congregations in at least three provinces of the Republic; and

5.2.1.2   Associations of churches that have a national character, including member churches in at least three provinces of the Republic, and that are comprised primarily of churches or denominations that are not members of the Council in their own right.

5.2.1.3   Any ecclesial body that was admitted to full membership of the Council before 16 July 2007 and that has remained a member, without interruption, after that date.

5.2.2   Observer members

Christian denominations and Associations of Churches may be observer members of the Council.

5.2.3   Associate members

Christian organisations may be associate members of the Council.

5.2.4   Affiliate members

One provincial Council of Churches in each of the provinces of the Republic of South Africa may be an affiliate member of the Council; provided that such provincial Council is governed by a Constitution that:

5.2.4.1   Establishes the council as a legal person;

5.2.4.2   Adopts the name "South African Council of Churches" followed by the name of the province;

5.2.4.3   Uses the same basis of membership as that set out in the Constitution of the South African Council of Churches and requires that Council to adhere to any rules governing membership adopted by the Central Committee of the SACC;

5.2.4.4   Requires any amendment to be subject to ratification by the Central Committee of the South African Council of Churches;

5.2.4.5   Recognises and governs any district, regional or municipal Council of Churches established by or affiliated to that provincial Council;

5.2.4.6   Complies with the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1962, relating to Public Benefit Organisations; and

5.2.4.7   Provides for the net assets of that provincial Council to be turned over to the South African Council of Churches in the event of that provincial Council's dissolution;

and provided that the powers, duties and responsibilities of any provincial Council to act in the name of the South African Council of Churches (including the right to enter into any contractual agreement that might be binding on the national structures of the Council) must be specified in writing by the Executive Committee.

[Transitional measure: Any existing provincial Council of Churches recognised by the 2007 Triennial National Conference shall be deemed to be in conformity with the provisions of section 5.2.4 until the next regular meeting of the National Conference. During this period, the National Executive Committee shall monitor provincial Councils' progress in amending their respective constitutions to comply with the provisions of this section, new provincial Councils of Churches may apply for affiliate membership in the manner indicated below, and the Constitution Subcommittee shall consult with provincial Councils of Churches to determine if any further amendments should be proposed to the next National Conference to promote harmonious working relationships and mutual accountability among the SACC's provincial and national offices. This transitional measure will expire on the adjournment of the next regular meeting of the National Conference after 2007 unless that meeting votes to extend its period of application.]

5.3   Application for membership

5.3.1   Christian denominations, associations of churches or organisations or provincial Councils of Churches wishing to become members of the Council may apply, in writing, to the General Secretary.

5.3.2   An application for membership must:

5.3.2.1   Affirm the statement of faith set out in section 5.1;

5.3.2.2   Indicate the category of membership for which the body is applying, the number of members the body has and the basis on which that number is calculated;

5.3.2.3   Include a copy of the applicant's constitution or other founding document;

5.3.2.4   Supply a postal address and telephone number (and, if available, a facsimile number and electronic mail address) to be used for communicating with the body; and

5.3.2.5   Be signed by the chief executive or ecclesiastical officer of the body.

5.3.3   The General Secretary shall submit all applications for membership to the next meeting of the Central Committee for consideration and action.

5.3.4   In assessing applications for membership, the Central Committee shall consider whether—

5.3.4.1   the applicant meets the membership criteria for the relevant category of membership;

5.3.4.2   the applicant has affirmed the statement of faith;

5.3.4.3   admission of the applicant to membership of the Council is likely to further the objects of the Council, as set out in section 3.

5.3.5   The General Secretary shall notify applicants in writing of the Central Committee's decision within 30 days.

5.4   Membership fees

The Central Committee shall determine, from time to time and on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, the annual membership fee payable by members in each category of membership.

5.5   Suspension of membership

5.5.1   The Central Committee may decide, by a two-thirds majority of those present, to suspend the membership of a member that —

5.5.1.1   has failed for two consecutive years to pay the annual membership fee established by the Central Committee for that member's category of membership;

5.5.1.2   has engaged in activities that the Central Committee finds to be inconsistent with the objects of the Council, set out in section 3, or the statement of faith, set out in section 5.1; or

5.5.1.3   in the judgement of the Central Committee, seriously in breach of the provisions of this Constitution.

5.5.2   Suspension of membership does not affect a member's liability for membership fees.

5.6   Termination of membership

5.6.1   A member's membership of the Council shall be terminated if:

5.6.1.1   A member sends the General Secretary written notice, signed by its chief executive or ecclesiastical officer, stating its intention to withdraw from the Council; provided that such member remains liable to pay membership fees for the current year; or

5.6.1.2   The National Conference adopts, by a two-thirds majority of those present, a motion to terminate the membership of a member whose membership has previously been suspended by the Central Committee.

5.6.2   If the membership of a provincial Council of Churches is terminated it shall cease to use the name "South African Council of Churches."

5.7   Appeals

5.7.1   An applicant (or member) may appeal against the refusal (or suspension) of membership by the Central Committee.

5.7.2   The National Conference must hear an appeal against the refusal or suspension of membership; provided 28 days' notice of the intention to appeal shall be given to the General Secretary in writing save where the suspension or refusal has taken place less than 28 days before the meeting of the National Conference when the appeal may be placed on the agenda with the consent of the Conference.

5.7.3   The suspended member or potential member on whose behalf an appeal has been lodged may address the Conference.

6 THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

6.1   The National Conference is the supreme governing body of the Council and is responsible for the formulation of the Council's policy.

6.2   The National Conference shall consist of:

6.2.1   The members of the National Executive Committee who shall not be counted among the delegates of any particular member, not withstanding their affiliation to any member church or organisation.

6.2.2   Delegates representing each Christian denomination or Associations of Churches that is a full member of the Council, according to the following formula:

6.2.2.1 Each member church or association with fewer than 60 000 members and adherents shall be entitled to 2 delegates;

6.2.2.2 Each member church or association with 60 000 or more but fewer than 200 000 members and adherents shall be entitled to 3 delegates;

6.2.2.3 Each member church or association with 200 000 or more but fewer than 1 000 000 members and adherents shall be entitled to 4 delegates;

6.2.2.4 Each member church or association with 1 000 000 or more members and adherents shall be entitled to 5 delegates.

6.2.3   Two delegates representing each observer member who shall have the right to speak but not to vote on matters considered by the National Conference.

6.2.4   One delegate representing each associate member.

6.2.5   Two delegates representing each affiliated provincial Council of Churches, one of whom is also selected to represent the interests of provincial members that are not members of the national Council of Churches.

6.2.6   The Ecumenical Secretary or equivalent chief executive officer of each provincial office established by the national Council who shall be a delegate ex officio with the right to speak but not to vote on matters considered by the National Conference.

6.2.7   Honorary Life Presidents and Honorary Life Vice-Presidents of the Council.

6.2.8   Any special delegates recognised by the National Conference in terms of section 6.5.

6.2.9   Not more than six additional persons, invited by the President because of their particular skills, position or expertise, who shall have the right to speak but not to vote on matters considered by the National Conference.

6.2.10   All delegates shall have the right to vote except where otherwise stipulated in terms of section 6.2 or 6.5.

6.3   With the exception of the General Secretary and provincial Ecumenical Secretaries (if any) delegates shall not be paid employees of the Council.

6.4   Members shall appoint delegates according to their own rules and procedures but should ensure that their delegates reflect the gender and age balance of their membership, as far as is possible.

6.5   The National Conference may agree, by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present, to recognise one or more special delegates for the duration of the Conference. A motion to recognise special delegates must specify either the names of the delegates or the criteria or mechanism by which they will be selected and must indicate whether each special delegate will have voting rights.

6.6   The National Conference has the following powers and duties:

6.6.1   To determine the vision, mission, strategy and goals of the Council;

6.6.2   To formulate Council policy with respect to national and ecumenical issues;

6.6.3   To elect the Officers of the Council;

6.6.4   To ratify and amend the Constitution of the Council;

6.6.5   To terminate membership on the recommendation of the Central Committee and to hear appeals against the suspension of members or the refusal of applications for membership; and

6.6.6   To provide an opportunity for interaction with guests from international partners and ecumenical institutions.

6.7   Meetings of the National Conference

6.7.1   The National Conference shall meet not less than once in every three years at a time determined by the National Executive Committee.

6.7.2   The General Secretary shall notify members, in writing, of a meeting of the National Conference not less than 28 days before the commencement of the meeting. Such notification must contain a statement of the business to be transacted, the reports to be received and the text of any constitutional amendments to be considered at the meeting.

6.7.3   National Conferences shall be chaired by the President of the Council or, in the absence of the President, by one of the Vice-Presidents of the Council.

6.7.4   Each meeting of the National Conference shall:

6.7.4.1   Keep a record of those in attendance and the members that they represent;

6.7.4.2   Read and confirm the minutes of the previous meeting;

6.7.4.3 Receive a report from the General Secretary on the work of the Council for the period since the previous National Conference;

6.7.4.4 Receive a financial report from the Chair of the Finance Committee of the National Executive Committee;

6.7.4.5 Consider any properly proposed amendments to the Constitution;

6.7.4.6 Elect new office bearers;

6.7.4.7 Conduct any other business that is consistent with the powers and functions of the National Conference.

6.7.5 A quorum for the National Conference shall be one third of the delegates entitled to be present and to vote in terms of Section 6.2, provided that not less than two thirds of the full member churches have at least one delegate present.

6.7.6 The General Secretary shall convene a special meeting of the National Conference within two months of receiving a requisition in writing signed by the authorised representatives of not less than one third of the full members of the Council.

7 THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

7.1 The Central Committee implements the policy and programmes approved by the National Conference and oversees the administration of the Council's affairs when the National Conference is not in session.

7.2 Any decision made by the Central Committee that alters or reverses a policy decision of the Conference must be reported to the National Conference at its next meeting.

7.3 The Central Committee shall consist of:

7.3.1 The members of the National Executive Committee who shall not be counted among the delegates of any particular member, notwithstanding their affiliation to any member church or organisation;

7.3.2 The leader and the chief executive officer of each full member of the Council (or their designates);

7.3.3 One woman and one youth delegate appointed by each full member of the Council;

7.3.4 One delegate appointed by each observer associate member of the Council; and

7.3.5 One delegate appointed by each affiliated provincial council of churches.

7.4 Delegates representing observer members shall have the right to speak but not to vote on matters considered by the Central Committee.

7.5 Employees of the Council may be present at Central Committee meetings and may be afforded the opportunity to speak at the discretion of the meeting's chair, but, with the exception of the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary (if appointed), they shall not have the right to vote on matters considered by the Central Committee.

7.6 The Central Committee has the following powers and duties:

7.6.1 To admit new members to the Council;

7.6.2   To set membership fees for different categories of membership;

7.6.3   To interpret the policies and programmes adopted by the National Conference;

7.6.4   To elect the Executive Committee at least once every three years and to fill any vacancies that arise in the Executive Committee (with the exception of the seats contemplated in section 8.2.5);

7.6.5   To assess the performance, discipline and, if necessary, remove Officers of the Council and members of the Executive Committee;

7.6.6   To appoint and delegate responsibilities and powers to subcommittees or to the Executive Committee.

7.7   Meetings of the Central Committee

7.7.1   The Central Committee shall meet at least once in each calendar year.

7.7.2   Meetings of the Central Committee shall be chaired by the President of the Council or, in the absence of the President, by one of the Vice-Presidents of the Council.

7.7.3   The General Secretary shall notify members, in writing, of a meeting of the Central Committee not less than 28 days before the commencement of the meeting. Such notification must contain a statement of the business to be transacted and the reports to be received.

7.7.4   A quorum shall be one third of the members of the Central Committee entitled to be present and to vote in terms of section 7.3.

7.7.5   The General Secretary shall report on the work of the Council to the Central Committee at each of its meetings.

8 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8.1   The Executive Committee shall meet at least four times in each calendar year and shall appoint one of its members to preside over its meetings.

8.2   The Executive Committee shall consist of:

8.2.1   The President and the Vice-Presidents of the Council;

8.2.2   The General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary (if any);

8.2.3   Four persons, elected by the Central Committee at its first meeting following the commencement of a National Conference, to represent full members of the Council, taking into account the diversity of age, gender and theological traditions represented among the Council's members;

8.2.4   Four persons, elected by the Central Committee at its first meeting following the commencement of a National Conference, to provide skills in finance, law, management or other areas of expertise vital to the efficient administration of the Council;

8.2.5   Not more than four additional persons, some or all of whom may be elected by the Central Committee at its first meeting following the commencement of a National Conference. The Executive Committee may fill any unfilled seats by co-option.

8.3 The Central Committee may, by a two-thirds vote of the delegates present, remove any member of the Executive Committee that it has elected if that member—

8.3.1 is absent, without providing a valid reason, from two or more consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee;

8.3.2 was appointed to represent a full member of the Council and is no longer able to do so; or

8.3.3 engages in activities that are inconsistent with the objects of the Council, as set out in section 3.

8.4 The Executive Committee has the following powers and duties:

8.4.1 To adopt an annual budget for the Council and to assist in raising funds to carry out the programmes of the Council;

8.4.2 To assume fiduciary responsibility for the Council's finances;

8.4.3 To authorise all Council grants, loans, investments and bank accounts and ensure that these are managed in accordance with sound financial principles;

8.4.4 To appoint the Auditors of the Council's accounts;

8.4.5 Oversees the development and implementation of programme plans;

8.4.6 To appoint a General Secretary and, if necessary, a Deputy General Secretary;

8.4.7 To appoint subcommittees, including any standing subcommittees; to delegate powers and duties to them, and to receive reports from them;

8.4.8 To build the image of the Council and foster good community relations;

8.4.9 To interpret, elaborate and apply Council policy in the period between National Conferences;

8.4.10 To assess continually the Council's overall performance; and

8.4.11 To develop and enforce procedures governing staff employment, appraisal, discipline, training and development.

8.5 A quorum shall be one third of the members of the Executive Committee.

9 OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

9.1 The President and the Vice-Presidents

9.1.1 Election

9.1.1.1 A President, a Senior Vice-President and a Vice-President of the Council shall be elected by the National Conference in separate successive ballots.

9.1.1.2 A candidate for election to any of these offices must be nominated and seconded by full members of the Council, must be a member in good standing of his or her denomination and must consent to serve if elected.

9.1.1.3 Officers shall hold office until the closure of the next National Conference subsequent to their election but shall be eligible for nomination and re-election.

9.1.2 Powers and duties

9.1.2.1 The President presides over the National Conference and all meetings of the Central Committee.

9.1.2.2 The Senior Vice-President shall deputise for the President if the President is absent or incapacitated. In the absence of both the President and the Senior Vice-President the other Vice-President shall deputise for the President.

9.1.3 Suspension

9.1.3.1 The Central Committee may suspend an officer from office if it determines that such officer has made statements or taken actions inconsistent with the objects of the Council.

9.1.3.2 Notice of a motion to suspend an officer must be given in writing to the General Secretary not less than 14 days prior to the Central Committee meeting at which the motion is to be considered. Such motion must state the reasons for suspension and must be signed either by two voting members of the Central Committee or by two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee.

9.1.3.3 An officer whose suspension is to be debated must be given not less than 7 days written notice and must be afforded an opportunity to speak in his or her own behalf at the meeting.

9.1.3.4 To succeed, a motion to suspend an officer requires the support of two-thirds of the voting delegates present at a Central Committee meeting.

9.1.3.5 If the President resigns or is suspended from office, the Senior Vice-President shall assume the office of the President for the remainder of the term of office of the President. If the Senior Vice-President is unable to serve as President, the Vice-President shall serve as President.

9.1.3.6 If a Vice-President resigns or is suspended from office the Central Committee may appoint an interim Vice-President for the remainder of the term of that Vice-President.

9.2 The General Secretary

9.2.1 The Executive Committee shall appoint a General Secretary who will be the principal executive officer of the Council.

9.2.2 The General Secretary has the following powers and duties:

9.2.2.1 To manage the day-to-day operation of the Council;

9.2.2.2 To interpret and apply Council policy in response to contemporary events;

9.2.2.3 To act as primary public spokesperson for the Council;

9.2.2.4 To report to Council structures on Council activities;

9.2.2.5 To appoint and supervise departmental and programme directors;

9.2.2.6 To ensure the implementation of programme plans and policies;

9.2.2.7 To facilitate fund raising on behalf of the Council; and

9.2.2.8 To serve as a professional resource to the Executive Committee and to provide orientation for new Executive Committee members.

9.2.3 The General Secretary may delegate certain powers and responsibilities as necessary for the efficient functioning of the Council.

9.2.4   The Executive Committee may appoint a Deputy General Secretary to assist and work with the General Secretary.

9.2.5   The responsibilities of a Deputy General Secretary shall be decided by the Central Committee in consultation with the General Secretary.

10 FINANCE

10.1   The Executive Committee shall appoint at least three unrelated people as financial officers to accept fiduciary responsibility for the Council's financial management. Normally, the financial officers will be the President, the General Secretary, and the Chair of the Finance Subcommittee of the Executive Committee, unless any of these individuals are related.

10.2   The Executive Committee shall appoint a standing Finance Subcommittee to oversee the Council's finances.

10.3   The head of the Council's financial department shall be responsible for managing the day-to-day finances of the Council and ensuring that proper records are kept of all of the Council's assets, liabilities and financial transactions.

10.4   The head of the Council's financial department shall ensure that all of the Council's funds (except for a reasonable amount of petty cash necessary to finance incidental expenses) are deposited into a bank account in the Council's name. All withdrawals from or cheques drawn on this account must be signed by at least two of the financial officers designated by the Executive Committee.

10.5   The Council's funds may only be spent in pursuit of its objectives and may not be distributed, directly or indirectly, to any person except in the course of undertaking a public benefit activity.

10.6   The Council may not use its assets, directly or indirectly, to support, advance or oppose any political party.

10.7   The Council may not accept any donation that may be reclaimed by the donor (except where the Council fails to abide by or fulfil a written condition attached to the donation at the time it was made).

10.8   The Council may not carry on any business or trading activity that would render it ineligible for registration as a public benefit organisation in terms of the Income Tax Act, 1962.

10.9   The Executive Committee shall appoint a registered accounting officer or firm

annually to audit the Council's financial records.

10.10   The financial year of the organisation shall be from 1 January to 31 December of each calendar year.

10.11   The General Secretary must ensure that the organisation's audited annual financial statements and a narrative report on its activities during the previous financial year are submitted to the Director of Nonprofit Organisations within six months after the end of the financial year.

11 PROCEDURES

11.1   Notice of meetings

11.1.1 Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, the General Secretary shall give 14 days notice to members of all regular meetings of Council structures.

11.1.2 It is the responsibility of members to provide the General Secretary with current contact details for the dispatch of notice of meetings. Notice will be deemed to have been properly given where it is dispatched to a member's current address by post, fax or electronic mail.

11.1.3 The inadvertent failure to give adequate notice of any meeting or to include an agenda shall not invalidate the business of any meeting, provided that any member of the Council who may not have received notice will be entitled to require any matter decided in their absence to be debated afresh if the President is satisfied that notice was not given.

11.1.4 The decision of the President as to whether notice was or was not given shall be final.

11.2 Voting

11.2.1 Unless otherwise specified in this constitution, every motion before a structure of the Council shall be decided by a simple majority (50 per cent plus one of those present).

11.2.2 Voting shall be conducted by a show of hands unless the President rules that there shall be a ballot.

11.2.3 In the case of a tie, the President shall have a deciding vote.

11.3 Rules of Procedure for National Conferences

11.3.1 The Executive Committee shall draft Rules of Procedure for adoption by the National Conference.

11.3.2 Any procedural rule may be suspended by the National Conference provided that two thirds of the delegates present so decide.

12 AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

12.1 This constitution may be amended by the vote of two thirds of delegates present at a meeting of the National Conference, provided that particulars of the proposed amendments were included in notice of the meeting given not less than 28 days before the meeting.

12.2 The Central Committee shall be empowered to amend the constitution to the extent necessary to bring it into compliance with South African law. Any such changes must be ratified by a vote of two thirds of the delegates present at the next meeting of the National Conference.

12.3 The General Secretary shall submit a copy of any amendment to this constitution to the Commissioner of Revenue and the Directorate of Nonprofit Organisations within 30 days of its adoption.

13 DISSOLUTION

13.1 The Council may be dissolved upon the vote of two thirds of the full members at a special meeting of the National Conference called for the purpose of considering such dissolution, provided that notice of such proposed dissolution shall have been given not less than 90 days before the date of such meeting.

13.2   In the event of dissolution, the net assets of the Council shall be disposed of to other organisations or bodies having similar aims and objects to the Council in such manner as the resolution dissolving the Council directs, subject to section 13.3.

13.3   The net assets of the Council may only be transferred to one or more of the following bodies—

13.3.1   Any public benefit organisation, approved by the Commissioner of Revenue in terms of section 30 of the Income Tax Act, 1962;

13.3.2   Any institution, board or body that is exempt from tax in terms of section 10(1)(cA)(i) of the Income Tax Act, 1962, and that has as its sole or principal objective the carrying on of any public benefit activity; or

13.3.3   Any department of state or administration in the national, provincial or local sphere of government of the Republic, as contemplated in section 10(1)(a) or (b) of the Income Tax Act, 1962.

Adopted by the SACC National Conference, 17 July 2007

Appendix 3:

Member churches 2009-09-02[1285]

- African Catholic Church
- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- Anglican Church of Southern Africa
- Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa
- Baptist Convention
- Coptic Orthodox Church
- Council of African Instituted Churches
- Dutch Reformed Church (Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk)
- Ethiopian Episcopal Church
- Evangelical Church in South Africa
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa (Natal/Transvaal)
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa
- Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Observer)
- Greek Orthodox Archbishopric of Johannesburg & Pretoria
- International Federation of Christian Churches
- Maranatha Reformed Church of Christ
- Methodist Church of Southern Africa
- Moravian Church in Southern Africa
- Presbyterian Church in Africa
- Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
- Salvation Army
- Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
- United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
- Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
- Uniting Reformed Church of Southern Africa
- Volkskerk van Afrika

[1285] Website of South African Council of Churches. Member's list. http://www.sacc.org.za/members.html 2009-09-02

Appendix 4 – some texts about HIV and AIDS:

Resolution 22 – 1992:

Noting with concern the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the need for involvement of the Churches and government, the National Conference of the SACC calls on Churches to own this programme. We recommend:

A   To the Churches:

1.   Prophetic Ministry
      The Churches should not abdicate their prophetic ministry in challenging social injustices which are conducive to the spread of HIV?AIDS [HIV/AIDS], e.g. the overcrowded prisons, rapes and prostitution.
2.   To raise awareness, especially amongst clergy, seminarians, youth and Church organisations.
3.   Local congregations to be assisted in establishing HIV?AIDS [HIV/AIDS] units in co-operation with other Churches and organisations. Churches offer these as a programme permeating all the work of the Church in unconditional acceptance and care-giving.
4.   To disseminate information on HIV/AIDS training/trainers and the risks involved, eg the importance of the use of condoms.
5.   To train people in care-giving and counselling.
6.   To develop a positive theology of human sexuality, to enable people to come to mature responsible decision.
7.   To formulate a theology to reclaim the lost salutary terrains, considering these in relation to the Christian faith and practices.

B.   We recommend to the SACC:

1.   That relentless pressure be placed on the government to provide facilities, for awareness raising, prevention and treatment – especially in the rural areas.
2.   Pressurise the government to make relevant drugs available free of charge to people with HIV/AIDS.
3.   Pressurise the government to subsidise research into developing a cure for this epidemic.
4.   To promote a caring community with people trained and equipped for home-based care.
5.   To network with other Churches and health institutions eg in Health Protection Week.
6.   Welcomes the appointment of a staff person to co-ordinate and administer an HIV/AIDS Programme in the SACC.
      This staff person should:
      6.1   Liaise with the Churches to enable formation of local Churches' AIDS Programmes.
      6.2   Seek funding for Regional Training Workshops, assisting with the attendance of participants, and the production of vernacular material for the various media.

AIDS: A Special Challenge to the Church in our Times

There are battles that we must at best avoid simply because they are unwinnable. There are battles which, no matter the outcome, you never emerge unscathed. There are battles which, we cannot evade, which we do not engage because we are assured of victory, the kind where conscience obliges us to get in. One such battle confronting the Church in our times is the battle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It is not yet clear whether as Churches of diverse traditions, we have come to the full realization of the challenge of AIDS. Reading from how various Churches are responding to the crisis, there seem to be a self assurance that we are on the right path. The evidence points to the contrary. It is clear that despite our voluminous sermon and moralism, the danger is engulfing our villages and cities.

In some respect, the Church is a late starter, like shouting fire when the house is long consumed. Looking at Papers submitted at the 1995 SACC Consultation on "Being the Church in South Africa Today" almost all papers dealt with the problematic of Church State relationship. There was disturbing sidelining of the AIDS question.

Reference to AIDS came almost in passing in the Address by the then President of the SACC, Dr Khoza Mgojo and was given a respectable paragraph in the concluding part of the presentation by the then General Secretary of the SACC Dr Brigalia Bam.

Dr Mgojo in discussing the prophetic role of the Church and had this to say:

> **"(But) the prophetic dimension must be complemented by the pastoral concern for the seer enormity of human suffering in our region and the world over. We need to care for people, nursing the wounds of the oppressed and bleeding people. This is to say that we need to act pastorally towards the victims of AIDS and war." (Being the Church in South Africa Today, 1995, p.10).**

Dr Bam in concluding her paper went on to say

> **The demands we face not only in South Africa but throughout southern and eastern Africa are tremendous. I can only mention some of them briefly.**

The AIDS epidemic is expanding. Strategies need to be focused on containment through programmes which integrate prevention, health care and community support. Today the typical AIDS patient is a young, black woman living in a township in substandard housing. The man has left or died. There are three or four children, at least one of whom is HIV infected. She is nearly destitute and desperately worried about the future of her children." (Being The Church in South Africa Today, p. 52).

Despite this marginalisation of so important an issue, the Conference Statement "Reconstructing and Renewing the Church in South Africa named AIDS as one of the challenges which require moral leadership. It said:

> **"Many diseases are exacerbated by poverty and poor health service. The pandemic of HIV/AIDS constitutes a serious threat to society."**

However, despite this discerning observation, not [no] plan of action was developed around this challenge.

The recent statement by the Catholic Bishops Conference entitled "A Message of Hope" comes close to what we consider a correct analysis when it says:

> **"AIDS must never be considered as a punishment from God. He wants us to be healthy and not to die from AIDS. It is for us a sign of the times challenging all**

people to inner transformation and to the following of Christ in his ministry of healing, mercy and love."

But what the Statement goes on to say regarding the use of condoms to fight the spread of AIDS deserve our rigorous scrutiny.

The critical question for this Conference is: if truly AIDS presents itself as a sign of the time to the Church, how does it challenge our theologies, our customs, our worship, and indeed our practice. The fact of the matter is, as long as mainstream culture, advertisement, television, movies and mass media in general sell sec to the youth of our nation, our moralistic counsels will simply be speaking to the minority of youth who are not in the endangered group in any way. The time has come when we need to ask whether do we have anything to say to those youth who do not come to our Churches every Sunday. Are we perhaps not speaking to ourselves and to the converted only in preaching abstinence and faithfulness? Indeed, the challenge faced by the Church is not what we say to those of our members, but rather whether do we have anything to say at all to those who may not be as virtuous and morally exemplary as our "good" youths? Why are we unwilling accept the simple truth that a majority of the youth who fall in the most threatened age group, are contracting the AIDS virus and dying in numbers? Why do we still persist in the denial that a majority of young people, despite our sermons and intercessions, possible on account of their hardness of heart, stupidity or simple dangerous adventurism, simply do not subscribe to the A and B sermon we preach? Does it matter that to these groups, condoms, this fragile plastic, can actually become a means of defense [defence] against this dreaded disease or at least it can protect its spread? What do we have to fear and why do we assume that educating the youth about condoms means giving them license to indulge in sexual promiscuity? The truth is that there are millions of young people in our university who have access to condoms, but who have chosen for themselves a lifestyle of values. We need to be reminded that the fact that someone sits with a person of the opposite sex does not mean lets sleep together. The decision to sleep or not to sleep around is not decided by availability of opportunities or the lack of such. There are many young people to whom the moral law of abstinence is written in their hearts, and they do not abstain for fear of contracting AIDS or for fear of being caught, or for fear of the Church of their parents. To them it is simply a matter of their choice. But there are millions others who, despite their sincerest wishes, despite their vow to wait, falter. The tragedy is a majority of these are in our homes and churches, they are amongst our choirs and youth groups. Does it matter to us that these young people may have sinned but they do not need to die? I am formulating these questions as provocatively as possible because there is a tendency in Church talk to play with words. The question is clear: under what conditions will it take us to advocate the use of condoms as a weapon against the spread of AIDS? We either say never ever, or we acknowledge that in this matter, we have are unwilling to speak and therefore counsel each person to consult their conscience.

One thing that must be refuted with all strength we can master is the fallacy that Africa has AIDS because we are promiscuous, engage in immorality, or that we have forsaken the ways of the kingdom. This is an unfair characterization of our moral conduct. The truth is that, in the last five decades, no continent has turned to God in millions more than Africa. In no continent is Christianity as popular as in Africa. Yet, this very same Africa, is the one that has seen AIDS explode where in other countries it is on the decrease. Is this a coincidence, or perhaps can we be forgiven to claim that possibly our version of Christianity is one of the main reasons for the spread of HIV/AIDS? Why, must we ask, that the state of California, which has turned promiscuity into a badge of honour, is winning against HIV/AIDS? Why is it that Scandinavia, where the concept of open marriages is openly broadly accepted has by far insignificant cases of AIDS than Africa? Is the fact that both California and Scandinavia

promote the use of condoms just a mere coincidence? Indeed the time has come for us as the Church to question whether would we rather have our youth chaste and dead or simply alive, whether as weak and impure vessels, but at least alive? Are we ready as the Church to embrace this hard message or do we rather prefer to subscribe to our traditional medicines, which as we now know, is failing our people to disastrous proportions.

Clearly, if we are to become different, it is not in repeating what LoveLife and other similar campaigns are saying. Our message must clearly seek to go beyond the condomize message. The problem for the Church is that when we say we need to go beyond, some interprets that to mean a denial of the starting point. We must say a categorical yes to Condoms, but as a value driven community, we need to raise the stakes and say AIDS is just more than fluids transmitted during sexual intimacy. AIDS involves a number of challenges such as:

- gender equality question;

- challenges cultural taboos, especially in Africa about what parents are to speak to their children about sex;

- challenges customary practices, especially in our rural areas where women have no say in matters of sexual partners including the practice of polygamy;

- questions of our capitalist system that has turned sex into a commodity which sells products;

- raises serious ethical question around the morality of the pharmaceutical industry which puts profits before people;

- raises serious question about how we care for those terminally ill, about our caring systems in general and the present commercialisation of hospitals in the name of efficiency;

- raises critical questions of poverty, access to health services; and

- finally, AIDS raises question how we bury, especially as Africans.

Therefore, in saying AIDS is the Kairos, we want to say this is a fundamental challenge to us and to society as a whole, where the church need to speak with specificity and particularity. Not the time to sermonise and moralise, but to give courageous leadership as the Church. After AIDS life cannot be the same, sexual relations cannot be the same, an act of love can easily turn into an opportunity of death. It is from this vantage point that this Conference should speak. It is from this premise that South Africa dearly needs to hear what the Churches have to say on this crisis. To do less would be a tragic and missed opportunity. We hope the Commission on AIDS will assist this Conference to come with a message to our people and the nation as a whole. The time has come to speak coherently, with clarity and compassion. **I Call on Conference to convene a Theological Consultation to map put our theological response to Challenge of HIV/AIDS.**

Resolution no. 6 2001:

Acknowledging the devastating impact of the AIDS pandemic on our communities, Conference RESOLVES

- That the SACC encourage churches to adopt a mindset of prevention in dealing with the HIV/AIDS pandemic and to develop pro-active measures aimed at *eradicating* the disease, rather than just pursuing an "ambulance ministry";

- That the SACC hold a theological consultation within the next year to develop joint strategies for dealing with the pandemic and to review the training of clergy and the teaching of the church in order to minister most appropriately to people infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS;

- That the SACC should, together with all its member churches, commit itself to practical demonstrations of compassion, such as making its facilities available for the treatment, care and sustenance of infected and affected people as well as caregivers:

- That SACC member churches be encouraged to provide chaplains to caregivers;

- That the SACC should, together with other organizations who are involved in lobbying the government, work to ensure the availability of free anti-retroviral drugs for people living with HIV/AIDS, including Nevirapine for all pregnant women and their newborns, and the provision of adequate health care for all South Africans;

- That as part of its mission work, the SACC engage with the people of South Africa to promote a return to values of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within marriage and to encourage the use of measures necessary to prevent infection;

- That the SACC denounce all forms of discrimination, including the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS, and work to create an environment conducive for people to declare their HIV/AIDS status and to undergo voluntary testing and counselling.

- That the SACC engage with business to improve access to affordable medication, to provide financial and material resources to community HIV/AIDS projects and to ensure that training and treatment programmes are implemented in the work place; and

- That the SACC engage vigorously with the media, especially television broadcasters, to discourage programming that promote sexual promiscuity.

GS report 2004:

Overall Objective

The Unit articulated its goal for the programme in the following overall objective:

To contribute towards reducing the spread of HIV infections and creating an environment of acceptance and care for people infected with an affected by HIV and AIDS.

Overview of Activities

The staff in the Unit had been involved in numerous activities ranging from public acts of demonstration such as marching on Parliament, conducting programmes to raise awareness about destigmatising HIV/AIDS, participating in consultations, representing the SACC at various meetings both nationally and globally, making submission to the Health department, developing the training manual and hosting visitors, coordinating and facilitating training events, preparing and circulating material for World Aids day events.

Activities

These are informed by the resolutions of the Triennial National Conference of 2001. Following is an account of activities:

- **mobilise churches to publicly condemn stigma and discrimination and to actively promote Christian and positive living.**

The activities included the production and distribution of posters, de-stigmatisation campaigns by local churches, a television campaign and the World Aids Day Campaign. The poster production activity aims at conveying positive messages that would contribute to de-stigmatise HIV/AIDS as a visible medium.

For our World Aids Day Campaign we produced a series of Posters, Fact Sheets and Bible Studies. The theme for the year was 'Care for and support the HIV infected and affected'. Thirty one thousand posters, 155 000 leaflets and 1000 Bible studies had been produced in English, isiZulu, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Venda, Tsonga and seSotho. The Provincial Councils and offices of our member churches distributed these to local congregations.

- **educate leaders within the church on HIV and AIDS and keep them informed on current trends and initiatives.**

- **establish and build the capacity of denomination and provincial HIV and AIDS support Committees as Resource Teams to deal with community care systems and to look at issues of bereavement and orphans.**

The first draft of the SACC's HIV and AIDS Training Manual was presented to the Task Team. The Unit facilitated three HIV/AIDS education workshops. These were five-day training events with a three pronged thrust, viz., updated and reliable HIV education, facilitation skills training and addressing individual perception and attitudes. Participants in the events were provincially identified groups of ten people who now serve as the provincial HIV/AIDS Resource Teams. The participating group included youth, women and clergy.

- **create a platform for the church to dialogue, engage, formulate policy and respond to issues related to HIV and Aids.**

On 11 April 2003, the Unit cooperated with LoveLife, a NGO focussing in youth and HIV/AIDS, in hosting a one-day event to discuss and engage around the issue of HIV and youth. At the consultation, representatives from 22 churches throughout the country examined the role of the church in HIV prevention among young people. The consultation resolved that the Church had not been active enough in helping young people deal with their challenges.

- **monitor and influence policy formulation on HIV and Aids.**

The Unit (on behalf of the SACC) and with the assistance of the Public Policy Liaison Unit, presented a written submission to the Gauteng Portfolio Committee on Health on 26th June 2003. We urged them to implement and campaign for the introduction of a Comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Plan.

- **lobby for access to treatment, appropriate facilities and basic health care for all.**

The Director and General Secretary joined other church leaders in Cape Town in a 'march on parliament' which was held in support of the Treatment Action Campaign's (TAC) demand for the implementation of a National Treatment Plan. The Unit represents the SACC on the Executive Committee of TAC thereby enabling it to actively participate in the discussion and decision-making process of the TAC.

The SACC has entered into a partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation to develop resource material on sex and sexuality for the churches. The aim of this project is to get the churches to reflect theologically on these issues and through it enable them to communicate effectively with their constituencies. This project will focus on clergy youth leaders and parents.

Resolution no. 9 2004:

Whilst noting the decision of the 2001 Conference on HIV and AIDS, Conference further:

1. **Encourages** member churches and theological training institutions to develop and appropriate theological response to the HIV and AIDS crisis. A theology of life that deals positively with suffering and the loving acceptance of those affected;

2. **Encourages** dialogue between the medical profession and traditional healer;

3. **Welcomes** the roll out of the anti-retroviral medications and urges the Department of Health to accelerate the process within the context of appropriate treatment;

4. **Urges** member churches to assist HIV and AIDS orphans financially and in other ways; and

5. **Instructs** the NEC to offer practical leadership to member churches in developing appropriate HIV and AIDS responses within their churches and communities and to extend programmes to areas that are presently under-served.

Appendix 5 – Resolutions on gender justice:

<u>Resolution no. 43 1992:</u>

As women we

a.   note that churches and society continue to treat our gender concerns lightly.

b.   acknowledge that churches wish to maintain unity at most times.

c.   are aware that the church is immersed in the problems of national issues of violence, economic and political issues.

d.   observe that women are victims of violence (macro and micro), misinformation by media and other anti-justice structures.

e.   are pleased that most churches have included women as delegates at this 1992 Conference.

We continue to believe that women:

a.   are created in God's holy image.

b.   are in the majority in our churches and in society at large.

c.   have a tremendous potential that needs to be unlocked for the benefit of South Africa – especially in these times.

d.   believe that the future of any country lies in its ability to empower its women to play a constructive/creative role in the development of its citizens.

We urge/challenge the SACC and its member churches to endorse the implementation of the following actions:

RESOLUTION:

1.   The mid-decade gathering of all women planned for 1992 be supported and that all churches have their own mid-decade evaluation workshops.

2.   The Regional Councils of Churches should include women delegates, as it is noted with dismay that at this 24th Conference there are no women delegates.

3.   Women should be included at all levels of our church structures, with at least 50% representation.

4. Those churches still struggling to accept the issue of ordination of women should be encouraged to take a positive leap and ordain suitable women.

5. Because the majority of women have been denied access to education and with the looming elections in the country, churches should play a meaningful role in preparing women through education for elections and voting.

6. Campaigns should be encouraged in our churches on:

Violence against women, rape, child abuse, etc.

7. As churches open their doors for open debates of public issues; these should include AIDS, reproductive rights of women, family planning and family life.

8. The member churches of the Council to consider as a matter of urgency the question of abortion in the light of the imminent adoption of a Bill of Rights for South Africa which may include an unqualified "Right of Life" clause;

8.1 the SACC and its associated women's organisations concerned with this most serious ethical and socio-economic issue to provide the member churches with study material towards enabling an informed and gospel-centred discussion of the way forward.

9. A conscious effort should be made to remove sexist words and jokes from the language at our conferences and worship.

Appendix 6 – officials of the SACC:

General Secretaries (Acting General Secretaries included)

    – 1970 Bishop Bill Bendyshe Burnett

1970 – 1977 Mr John Rees

1977   Revd John Thorne

1978 – 1984 Bishop Desmond Tutu

1985 – 1987 Dr Beyers Naude

1987 – 1993 Dr Frank Chikane

1994 – 1997 Dr Brigalia Bam

1998 – 2000 Revd Charity Majiza

2000   Dr Donald Cragg

2001 – 2006 Dr Molefe Tsele

2007 –   Mr Eddie Makue

Presidents

    – 1971 Archbishop Robert Selby Taylor

1971 – 1974 Revd Abel W Habelgaarn

1974 – 1977 Revd John Thorne

1977 – 1980 Ds Sam Buti

1980 – 1983 Bishop Peter Storey

1983 – 1990 Bishop Manas Buthelezi

1990 – 1995 Dr Khoza Mgojo

1995 – 1998 Bishop S Dwane

1998 – 2001 Bishop Mvume Dandala

2001 – 2007 Prof, Russel Botman

2007 –   Prof. Tinyiko Sam Maluleke

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Oorsig

Hierdie verhandeling is 'n studie van hoe die profetiese stem van die Suid Afrikaanse Raad van Kerke (SARK) met tyd verander het. Die fokus val hier op die verhouding tussen die SARK en die Suid Afrikaanse regering van die dag. Die verhandeling analiseer sentrale tekste van die Nasionale Konferensies van die SARK wat plaasgevind het gedurende die tydperk vanaf 1969 tot 2004. Hierdie verhandleing analiseer die inhoud van Notules, Resolusies, Verslaë van Algemene Sekretarisse en die Presidente se Openingsredes.

In hierdie verhandeling word daar gekyk hoe die profetiese stem verander het sedert 1990, wat dien as afsnydatum. Die keuse om 1990 as afsnydatum te gebruik spruit voort uit die datum waarop Mandela vrygelaat is en die ban gelug is ten opsigte van die onderskeie bevrydingsbewegings. Die jaar 1994 kan egter gesien word as 'n meer vanselfsprekende keuse. Die skrywer is van mening dat die rol van die SARK reeds sedert 1990 verander het. Omstandighede gedeurende die tydperk tussen 1990 en 1994 verskil van omstandighede van beide die tydperke voor 1990 en die tydperk na 1994.

Deur gebruik te maak van metodes gebaseer op hermeneutiek en diskoers teoretiese uitgangspunte, word 'n aantal ordes van diskoers gegroepeer. Die aanvanklike lesing van die profetiese stem word ge-analiseer met betrekking tot 'intersectionality' (met etnisiteit, geloofsdiversiteit, geslag en sosiale stand as sub-orde van diskoers), geweld teenoor nie-geweld, HIV/VIGS en die Zimbabwe vraagstuk. Daar bestaan 'n aantal verskillende diskoersies, sommige is gebaseer op terminlogie wat ontleen word uit die Kairos dokument.

Die HIV/VIGS pandemie word in een paragraaf hanteer as 'n gevallestudie van hoe die profetiese stem dit binne die verskillende ordes en sub-ordes van diskoers beklemtoon. Daar word ook spesiale aandag geskenk aan die verhouding tussen prefetiese werksaamhede en morele werksaamhede (wat ook 'n vorm van profetiese werksaamhede is).

Geïnspireer deur die teorieë van Walter Brueggemann rakende Mosaic en Davidic trajekte in die Ou Testament, deel die twede leesing met die verhouding tussen die profetiese stem en rekonsiliasie as twee nodale punte in die werk. Groeperings van diskoersies wat hier gevind word is 'Davidic profeties', 'Mosaic profeties', 'Staatsgesinde-teologie', 'Kerklike-teologie', 'Profetiese-teologie', 'Ontwikkeling', 'Bevryding', 'Nasie-bou', 'Kritiese solidariteit', en 'Kritiese samewerking' diskoersies.

In die sub-titel van die verhandeling lug die skrywer die mening dat die SARK soekende is na 'n nuwe Kairos (of fokus). Na die totnietmaking van apartheid ontstaan die vraag of die fokus

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gevind is al dan nie. Ten slotte word rekonsiliasie (en eenheid) teenoor regverdigheid gemeet, so ook ontewikkeling teenoor bevryding en bevryding teenoor rekonsiliasie.

Sleutelterme: Suid Afrikaanse Raad van Kerke, SARK, hermeneutiek, diskoers teorie, ordes van diskoers, 'intersectionality', die Kairos dokument, Walter Brueggemann, nodal punt, profeties, rekonsiliasie, bevryding, ontwikkeling

Abstract:

This thesis is a study of how the prophetic voice of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) has changed over time. The focus is on the relationship between the SACC and the South African government of the day. The thesis analyses central texts from the National Conferences of the SACC held from 1969 to 2004. The analysed texts are Minutes and Resolutions, General Secretaries' Reports, and the Presidents' Addresses.

The thesis asks how the prophetic voice has changed since 1990, which is chosen as the cut-off year. This choice was not a matter of course. 1990 was the year when Mandela was released and the liberation movements were unbanned; but 1994 could be seen as the more obvious alternative. The author argues that the role of the SACC had already changed by 1990. The period between 1990 and 1994 is different from both the time before 1990 and the post-1994 situation.

With the use of a method built on hermeneutical and discourse theoretical premises, a number of orders of discourse are delimited. In the first reading the prophetic voice is analysed in relation to intersectionality (with ethnicity, religious diversity, gender, and social class as sub-orders of discourse), violence versus non-violence, HIV and AIDS, and the Zimbabwe issue. A number of different discourses are discerned, some of them based on terminology borrowed from the *Kairos Document*.

One paragraph treats the HIV and AIDS pandemic as a case study that deals with how the prophetic voice has been articulated within the different orders and sub-orders of discourse. Special attention is also given to the relationship between a prophetic ministry and a moralising ministry (which also is a kind of prophetic ministry).

With inspiration from Walter Brueggemann's theories about Mosaic and Davidic trajectories in the Old Testament, the second reading deals with the relationship between 'the prophetic voice' and 'reconciliation' as two nodal points in the material. Discourses that are discerned here are the 'Davidic Prophetic', 'Mosaic prophetic', 'State Theology', 'Church Theology', 'Prophetic Theology', 'Development', 'Liberation', 'Nation-building', 'Critical Solidarity', and 'Critical Engagement' discourses.

With the sub-title of the thesis, the author argues that the SACC is searching for a renewed Kairos (or focus). After the dismantling of apartheid, the question is whether or not this focus

is found. In the final discussion, reconciliation (and unity) is put alongside justice, development alongside liberation, and liberation alongside reconciliation.

Key terms: South African Council of Churches, SACC, hermeneutics, discourse theory, order of discourse, intersectionality, the Kairos Document, Walter Brueggemann, nodal point, prophetic, reconciliation, liberation, development