HISTORY

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk stems from the Church of the Reformation which was brought to South Africa by the first White settlers from Holland. Its ties with the Church in Holland were severed by the British Annexation of the Cape. In 1824 the first synod of the now independent church met on South African soil. In 1862 the Cape Supreme Court ruled that representatives from congregations outside the Cape Colony could not be members of the Cape Synod. This led to the formation of independent Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches in the Orange Free State, Natal and the Transvaal. These provincial churches, however, always maintained a close relationship with each other and in 1907 they formed a Federal Council of Churches (1).

At the request of the five synods of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches in South Africa, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa (Cape), the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk of Natal, the Nederduitse Kerk in the Orange Free State, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk of the Transvaal, and the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk of South-West Africa, a convention was held in October 1962 to consider the formation of a united church. A church order for a united church was adopted and it was decided to name the re-united church Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (2). The previously referred to Federal Council of Churches then disbanded. A general moderature was appointed consisting of nine ministers and elders. Commissions of the General Synod were appointed to take the place of the Federal Council and Federated Commissions. The General Missionary Committee was appointed to continue the work of the old Federal Missionary Council.

(1) Official Year Book of the Union of South Africa No. 30 1960.
(2) See page 469 of the Jaarboek van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk 1963
From the time of the founding of the Colony in 1652 serious attention was given to the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen. Up till 1824 the ministers preached to the Non-White peoples and drew them into the White congregations. In 1824 the Synod decided to ordain missionaries solely for the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen. In 1834 the Zendelings Genootschappen, a missionary society, was founded to christianize the natives and group them in parishes. This move paved the way for the founding of separate indigenous congregations and eventually separate churches.

The first separate church, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (Mission Church) for the Coloured community was established in 1881. Since 1881 no less than eleven indigenous churches have been founded by the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church, namely; the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk van Suid-Afrika on 5 October 1881 at Wellington, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of the Orange Free State on 9 March 1910, the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian) (together with the Scottish Missions of Blantyre and Livingstonia) in October 1926, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of the Transvaal on 2 March 1932 at Vrededorp, the African Reformed Church in Northern Rhodesia on 3 July 1943, the Dutch Reformed Bantu Church of South Africa on 6 November 1951 at East London, the African Reformed Church of Southern Rhodesia on 9 September 1952 at Morgenster, Southern Rhodesia, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church of Natal on 30 October 1952 at Ladysmith, the Church of Christ among the Tiv on 9 January 1957 in Northern Nigeria, the Indian Reformed Church in 1957 and the Dutch Reformed Church for South-West Africa at Mariental in 1962 (1).

The Dutch Reformed Bantu (Mission) Churches in the four provinces of the Republic of South Africa united in May 1963 when the first General Synod was constituted at Kroonstad. The name of the church is the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (2).


(2) See Dutch Reformed Newsletter, June/July 1963.
With the two unions; that of the White Churches and that of the Bantu Churches which took place there are today four churches of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde family in South Africa. These are, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk which serves the White people and is known as the mother church. The three mission churches for the Non-White people which are known as the daughter churches, are, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (Coloured); the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (African) and the Indian Reformed Church. Each of these Churches will now be dealt with separately.

A. THE NEDERDUITSE GEReFORMeerDE KERK (MOTHER CHURCH)

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT

The newly instituted General Synod is the most senior body in the Church and it deals with matters that affect the church as a whole such as doctrine and general policy. The General Synod has four hundred and fifty members (half of whom are ministers and half elders). Each of the seven regional synods send fifty delegates except the Cape which sends one hundred and fifty delegates to the General Synod. The seven regional synods are the synods in the Cape Province, Northern Transvaal, Southern Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal, South-Wes Africa and Central Africa. These synods deal with the administrations of church affairs at the regional level. The unit of organization is the congregation, in which church matters are regulated by a church council of elected elders and deacons presided over by the minister. Each Church Council is represented at the regional synod by the minister and an elder. Several congregations are grouped together to form a presbytery or ring.

The church order of the unified Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church contains no reference to colour and none of the synods now has any clauses restricting church membership or attendance to persons of a particular race. Previously the synods of the church in the Transvaal had such clauses. These clauses arose when the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church and the Nederduitsch Hervormde Church entered into a union during the time of the old Transvaal Republic. These churches came together .......
together and agreed on certain "principles of union", one of which read: (1) "The church allows no equality (gelykstelling) between Whites and Non-Whites". The church laws also contained a clause reading: "The members of the mission congregation shall not make use of church buildings of the White members of the church".

In 1957 the "equality" clause was amended to read: "The church is in favour of the establishment of separate churches among the different ethnical groups in the country and only white persons are admitted to membership of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk". It was decided to abide by the clause in connection with the use of church buildings in the meantime, although it was stated that a communion between White and Non-White believers was necessary on certain occasions.

The clause restricting membership was never laid down by the other provinces. In practice, however, they followed the same procedure as the Transvaal in starting mission churches for other races (2). The position of the mother church in the Cape was slightly different. The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (Coloured) was established in the Cape in 1881 but the Coloured members and congregations were never forced to leave the mother church. As a result of this we find that the St. Stephens congregation in Cape Town, which is a Coloured congregation, belongs to the mother church and is represented at all circuit meetings and the Synod by their minister and an elder, who is a Coloured man. Stockenstrom, a Coloured congregation in the Eastern Cape, belonged to the mother church till a few years ago when it decided to join the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk. (3)

With the single exception of the St. Stephens congregation, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk is an exclusively White church.

(1) Information Bureau of the Dutch Reformed Church, Braamfontein.
(2) Star report, 27 October 1961
(3) Information Bureau of the Dutch Reformed Church, Cape Town
STATEMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS ON RACE RELATIONS

In 1955 the Federal Council of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches in South Africa appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to follow up the findings of the Commission for Current Problems and to prepare a statement for publication overseas interpreting the viewpoint of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches. This Ad Hoc Committee drew up a report which was adopted by the synods of the then federated churches and was first published in 1956. In this report the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church maintained the following standpoint as its policy: (1)

"(a) That the founding and development of independent indigenous churches for the purpose of evangelising the Non-White races of South Africa, was both necessary and in accordance with our understanding of the nature of the Church of the Lord Jesus on earth, and has been richly blessed during the many years that have passed.

(b) That since, under the pressure of circumstances, the historical development in the missionary sphere throughout the centuries showed tendencies of unchristian exclusiveness, thus impeding the realization of the true Christian fellowship between believers, this has happened, not through ill-will towards the Non-Whites, nor with the approval of the official leadership of the Church, but must be seen as the result of uncontrollable circumstances and of general human weakness.

(c) That in each congregation both the mother- and the indigenous daughter-churches reserve the right to regulate their membership according to the realistic demand of circumstances, and in accordance with the spirit of Christ; but at the same time it is also the Christian duty of the above mentioned churches to

(1) See Statement on Race Relations No. One, November 1960
educate their members for and in the practice of a healthy Christian communion of believers, avoiding, however, any evil motives or annoying and wilful demonstrations."

In the Addendum to the 1956 report there is the following statement: (1) "We accept the existence of separate Churches according to each indigenous group, as a matter of principle no person will be excluded from corporate worship solely on the grounds of race or colour."

The Ecumenical Synod of the Reformed Church which met in Potchefstroom in 1958 and was attended by representatives of the five federated Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches in South Africa adopted a report submitted by a committee on race relations which included the following statements: (2) "In admitting members of another race to our own gatherings, we should guard against any impression of discrimination which could imply the inferiority of the other race, the members of which should be made to feel that they are being regarded as fellow members in the body of Christ, bound to us by the closest of ties", and "...... the Church by its teaching and example should guide and prepare its members for the practice of Christian communion with believers of other races .........."

A National mission conference of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches was held at Kroonstad in April 1960. This was soon after the riots which had occurred at Sharpeville, Langa and elsewhere in South Africa in March of the same year. At this conference one of the resolutions passed read as follows: (3) "The conference urgently requests white and non-white members of our churches to witness land with its racial earnestly in deed, by acting in our multi-racial tensions with Christian love, self-restraint, obedience to the law, mutual respect, and faithful prayer for each other". An urgent appeal was made to

(1) The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the Problem of Race Relations.
(2) See Chapter on Inter-Church Conferences.
(3) Statements on Race Relations, No. One, November 1960
the entire population of South Africa for mutual respect and cooperation between the races, in order that the glory of God and the extension of His Kingdom might be advanced.

The 1961 Synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church of the Cape Province adopted a resolution which read as follows:

"This Assembly has with approval taken cognisance of the attempts made in several congregations of our Church to establish closer contacts between ministers, church councils, congregations and church organizations of our mother church and its mission churches. The Synod wishes to encourage all congregations of our Church to search for ways and means by which, with due discretion and in a spirit of Christian love we as Christians and Church members with a common creed can learn to know each other better, to co-operate more effectively and to pray together for what concerns the Kingdom of God.

"The Synod considers this to be an urgent matter with a view to times of increasing stress for the Church in the world which, according to Scriptures, are at hand."

The Southern and Northern Transvaal Synods of the Church met in Pretoria during March and April 1963 respectively. The synods felt that the present state law in essence allowed full freedom of worship, but requested the government to grant relief as far as frivolous objections against bona fide church attendance by Non-Whites living in White areas were concerned.

The Northern Transvaal Synod passed a resolution stating:

"It is in accordance with the spirit of the Scripture that provision be made for visitors from any other Christian church who came with the bona fide desire to meet us and join us in worship". (This includes Non-White visitors). The establishment of separate churches for the sake of good order and more efficient ministry to members from different languages and cultures was, however, also in accordance with the Scripture, said the synod.

(1) Information Bureau of the Dutch Reformed Church, Cape Town.
(2) Dutch Reformed Church Newsletter May 1963
(3) Dutch Reformed Church Newsletter May 1963
B. THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE Sendingkerk (COLOURED)

From the time of the founding of the Colony baptised slaves and other Non-Whites were accepted as members of the Mother churches. White and Non-White members attended church services and received the sacraments together. (1) During the second half of the 19th century objections were raised against this practice. Reluctantly in 1857 the Cape Synod agreed to make concessions to human weakness and allowed, in particular circumstances, separate ministration of the sacraments and the Word. A separate church for the Coloured people known as die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk was established in 1881. (2)

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk is organized along the same lines as the Mother church and has its own Synod which meets every four years.

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk is not yet completely independent of the mother church. The Constitution of the Sendingkerk may only be altered or amended by the mother church but the mother church has to obtain the approval of the Sendingkerk before it may do so. The mother church maintains control over the training and ordination of candidates for the ministry. It is also the duty of the mother church to discipline White ministers working in the daughter church. The mother church still contributes substantial financial support to the daughter church.

The 18th synod of the Sendingkerk met at Worcester in October 1962. The synod was attended by 310 White and Non-White clergymen and elders representing 165 congregations all over the country. (3)

(1) The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and the Problem of Race Relations.
(2) Go Ye Therefore, published by D.R.C. Information Bureau.
The 1962 synod meeting expressed its attitude to race relations as follows: (1)

"In its proclamation of the Gospel the church stands under the authority of Christ alone. The church accepts its God-given right to proclaim the Gospel at all times, at all places and to all people.

"Differentiation between various churches is accepted as a scripturally permissible and practical ruling. Notwithstanding such differentiations, the doors of the various churches remain open to all who wish to worship jointly irrespective of race and colour. The church declares that all its services are always open to all who wish to exercise the community of believers in spirit and in truth.

"The church accepts the prophetic task of the church both within and without. The church will, therefore, not only in its own circle, but also, as far as scriptural principles are concerned, agree with or differ from the state, public bodies, organizations and other churches. For this purpose the tried method of negotiation will be used without public display.

"Although no command or prohibition of mixed marriages can be dogmatically inferred from the Scripture, the church recognised the right of civic authorities to see to the order and welfare of the community in this matter. The members of the church seek no mixing of the races through marriage."

G. THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK IN AFRIKA (AFRICAN)

The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika is organised along the same lines as the mother church. It has a General Synod which is attended by six representatives from each provincial synod plus an extra representative for every 5,000 members and one representative from each of the mother churches concerned. (2) At

(1) Dutch Reformed Newsletter, January 1963
(2) Regional synods of the mother church.
present there are four provincial (regional) synods of the daughter church, these are the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal. The Cape has decided to divide into two synods and the Transvaal is considering dividing into three synods, this will mean that instead of there being four provincial synods there will be seven. The provincial synods are attended by all ministers and missionaries serving congregations in full-standing together with an elder from the congregation. Missionaries serving in werkkringe (1) attend the synod in an advisory capacity. Each congregations has a Church Council and a number of congregations are grouped together in a circuit.

The church comprises approximately 294 African congregations and although 69 African ministers and a large number of African evangelists serve their own church the mother church still provides a great number of White ministers and missionaries to serve the Daughter church. Due to the fact that a large number of congregations have White Ministers all the synods and commissions of synod are multi-racial.

D. THE INDIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The mother church does missionary work among the Indian communities in Natal, Cape Province and the Transvaal. The first congregation was established in Natal in 1957 and it is hoped to establish a congregation in the Transvaal in the near future.

The mission work among the Indian people is controlled by the General Synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk. The General Synod has a Kommissie vir die Sending (Commission for mission work) which in turn has a sub-commission for Indian work. Members of the regional synodical commissions for Indian work and the missionaries working among the Indian people are represented on this sub-commission. There is also a Skakalkommissie (Liaison Committee) which is the coordinating body for all the persons actually working in the field.

(1) Congregations which have not reached full-standing.
It is composed of the White missionaries and the Indian evangelists and it meets once a year.

There are four White missionaries in the field; one in the Cape Province, one in Natal and two in the Transvaal. The missionaries are assisted by five Indian evangelists, one working in the Cape Province, three in Natal and one in the Transvaal.

CONTACT BETWEEN WHITE AND NON-WHITE MEMBERS OF THE MOTHER- AND DAUGHTER CHURCHES

Contact between White members of the mother church and Non-White members of the daughter churches is largely confined to the mission field. Men and women are recruited and trained for the various branches of missionary activity which the mother church undertakes and are assisted by the services of such bodies as the Vroue-Sendingbond (Womens' Missionary League), the Manne-Sendingbond (Mens' Missionary League) and the Students' Volunteer Movement.

At present there are 158 White and 25 Non-White workers on 17 mission stations in the Transkei. Their activities include the provision of medical services in the form of hospitals and clinics. In the Transvaal Lowveld six mission stations have been established since 1956 with a White personnel of 47 and a large African personnel. Among the Indian community work is carried out by four full-time White ministers and five Indian evangelists with the help of ordinary members of the church. The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church in South-West Africa has accepted complete responsibility for missionary activity within its own borders although it only emerged as a fully fledged church with its own Synod in 1957. The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (Coloured) is still being served by 125 White ministers besides its Coloured ministers and evangelists.

(1) Go Ye Therefore, published by the Information Bureau of the D.R.C.
(2) See section on Indian Reformed Church.
Besides the contact described above there is contact at other levels as well. In some congregations of the mother Church in the Cape mixed services are held on special occasions, for example, Bible Sunday in Tulbagh. In the oldest congregation, the Groote Kerk in Cape Town, Coloured people often attend the ordinary services. There is no uniform pattern and the practice varies in accordance with the local situation and policy of the local congregation and Church Council. (1)

In the daughter churches special occasions and celebrations such as the induction of a new minister, the official opening of a church, etc., are usually attended by members of both the mother- and daughter churches. An example of this was die centenary celebration of the missionary work of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Church in the Northern Transvaal in May 1963 which was attended by White and Non-White church members from all over the Transvaal. (2)

In the Cape the Vroue-Sendingbond (Womens' Missionary League) of the mother church and the Christelike Sustersbond (Christian Sisters' League) of the Coloured daughter church frequently have joint meetings as do the youth societies of the two churches.

White and Non-White ministers and missionaries meet on occasion to discuss their mutual problems. A conference in missionary work in the urban areas was held in Johannesburg in February 1963 and was attended by 20 Non-White ministers and 31 White missionaries working in all the cities of South Africa. (3)

In the Cape there is contact on an official level between the mother church and the Coloured daughter church in the Skakelraad (Liaison Committee) which is composed of members of both churches.

There is contact between the representatives of all the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Churches in the Council of Churches of Reformed Faith in Southern Africa.

(1) Information Bureau of the D.R.C. in Cape Town.
(2) Dutch Reformed Newsletter, April 1963.
ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE MOTHER AND DAUGHTER CHURCHES

In the mother church and the daughter churches there are women's, men's, and youth associations. The White, Coloured, African, and Indian Churches each have their own associations with members from their own race group. There is very little contact between the associations and what contact there is has been described in the previous section.

THEOLOGICAL TRAINING^ (1)

White candidates for the ministry are trained at two South African Universities. (a) In the Faculty of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch where they take a four year course. Before registering they have to fulfil certain requirements, they have to be in possession of a Bachelor of Arts degree including certain required courses and they have to write an entrance examination. (b) They are also trained in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria. Once again the students have to obtain the B.A. degree, before going on to theological studies. Students who do not fulfil the requirements for entrance to the Bachelor of Divinity degree may take a Diploma Course in Theology. This is also a four year course.

Candidates for the ministry from among the Coloured people are trained at the Theological School of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Mission Church at Wellington. In order to write the entrance examination a candidate must be in possession of the Higher Primary Teachers Certificate for Coloured people, or a matriculation certificate, or an examination certificate regarded by the examining commission as equivalent. Once the student has complied with these requirements, he has to spend a year at the University College of the Western Cape or another recognised university studying certain recommended subjects. The course at the Theological School is a four year one.

(1) Jaarboek van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke 1963.
There are four Theological Schools for the training of African candidates for the ministry, they are:

(a) The Stofberg Theological School at Pietersburg,
(b) The Stofberg Theological School at Witsieshoek,
(c) The Stofberg Theological School at Decoligny,
(d) The Stofberg Theological School at Dingaanstat.

In order to register at any of the above schools for the Theological course a student has to be in possession of (a) Matriculation Certificate; (b) Higher Primary Teachers Certificate; (c) Evangelist Certificate and Junior Certificate; (d) Lower Evangelist (Catechist) certificate plus Junior Certificate plus five years service; (e) Lower Primary Teachers Certificate and Junior Certificate. All Theological courses take four years.

As regards the Indians the four White missionaries referred to above are at present responsible for the training of the Indian evangelists. They work together in drawing up the syllabus and in teaching the courses. There is no institution in the church for the training of Indian candidates for the ministry.

MINIMUM STIPENDS

The Synods in the Transvaal have recommended the following scale for the payment of ministers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Per Annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White ministers and missionaries</td>
<td>R2040 - 3240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African ministers</td>
<td>R 864 - 1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African evangelists:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) in rural areas</td>
<td>R432 - 576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) in urban areas</td>
<td>R480 - 624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The salaries of White missionaries working for one of the daughter churches is paid by the mother church)

The congregations have to provide the ministers with accommodation and travelling allowances.

/The ............
The 1962 Synod meeting of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk resolved that in the future Coloured ministers would get the same minimum salaries as the White ministers. A committee was appointed to consider equal pensions during the recess. (1)

(1) Dutch Reformed Newsletter, January 1963
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