

A PROFILE OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ATTITUDES AND VALUES PREVALENT UNDER RELIGIOUSLY ACTIVE MAINSTREAM AFRIKANER ELITES

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There is little doubt that South Africa is one of the world's social test tubes. In many ways it is a microcosm of macro-global issues. This applies equally to an area which is not being studied as much as it should be: the interface of religion with socio-political processes.

There can be very few countries where this interface plays in and of itself as significant a role in the general flow of history as in South Africa. Religion - and indeed a very complicated configuration at that - is a *social* force, knowledge without which no adequate understanding of the South African dynamic can be attained.

Of course this is a statement often made. However, little empirical evidence and theoretical analysis to support it exists. The purpose of this paper then is to contribute in this area by abstracting one section of the South African configuration - the mainstream Afrikaners. It is to be shown how an entry into this group's dynamic through a religious filter will allow us not only to understand the interface between religion and society better but will also shed light on the actual political processes.

1. Introduction

1.1 The process of transition in South Africa manifests itself at various levels and in different ways. The most obvious is of course at the formal level: the attempt to reconstruct the South African state. The less spectacular changes, but on balance probably the more important, are taking place at the *subjective* level: the transition and/or hardening of attitudes, ideologies and values. It is at this level that religion inevitably plays a significant role.

1.2 The complexity of the social texture of South African society has been and still is almost infinite. Indeed, historically South Africa is a country of

contradictions. A short list includes: marked racial, tribal, cultural and language differences with no one numerically dominant; a sharp rural/urban divide; an equally sharp divide between traditional and modern lifestyles with practically 50% of the population outside a modern money economy and 60% effectively illiterate.

Apartheid was an attempt to manage these factors by means of an approach very much akin to present efforts in mid-eastern Europe, following the modern European ideal of homogenized nation states.¹ The geographical parting (hence the Afrikaans word *apartheid*) of nations was to have produced social equilibrium. As we all know today, the reverse occurred. The present drive toward a democratic constitution in a united country therefore, represents a 180 degrees about turn.

The standard-bearers of the apartheid ideal were the establishment Afrikaner elites who, for two generations, succeeded in uniting almost all of the whites and quite a remarkable proportion of non-whites into an all-dominating political and economic force. The hegemony thus established is still not adequately explained. Apart from material reasons it was borne by still largely unfathomed cultural linkages and value ideals. In this respect (that much is clear) religious symbols, ideals and inclinations played an important assisting role in articulating value ideals, cementing the hegemony and legitimating apartheid.²

Equally so, it is still not clear why this hegemony disintegrated so rapidly and why the exclusive stronghold on the flow of South African history was so readily relinquished. Some external factors, such as the increased international pressures during the late eighties, undoubtedly contributed. But there is a convincing case for the opinion that the apartheid state could have withstood these pressures - at a cost certainly, but nevertheless. Again material factors do not adequately explain the change of course.

In this paper it is argued that a most important stimulus came from *within* the Afrikaner establishment as a result of a gradual but decisive shift in value ideals. This can best be detected and described through an analysis of attitudes and values as reflected in the religious inclinations of the mainstream within the Afrikaner community.³ After all, if there had been an integral link

1. See footnote 8.

2. Particularly by means of the anti-communist/= pro-christian doctrine which gained almost metaphysical status in the PW Botha era.

3. By far the dominant institution is the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). However it is not the sole representative of traditional Afrikaner religion. It is flanked by two other Reformed Churches. But whereas the latter two combined have 366 405 the DRC has 1 597 633 members (*Population Census 1991. Summarised Results after Adjustment for Undercount. No. 03-01-01 (1991)*, 126). This means that of the total White population of 5 068 110, 31.5% are members of the DRC. It also means that of the White Afrikaans speaking population of 2 916 515, 55% are members of the DRC. And when the two other traditional churches are added 67% of Afrikaners are members of this religious section.

See footnote 3 on their representation in central state bodies.

between religion in the Afrikaner community and the incubation, establishing and maintaining of the apartheid idea, policies and morality (which can not be dealt with here⁴) some religious factor underlying the demise of apartheid should be assumed. Given the particular calculus of power in South Africa, how mainstream Afrikaner elites religiously perceive the new trends and motivate their attitudes, is a not unimportant aspect of the process of change.

2. Attitudes and values

A major *Longitudinal Study of the South African Elite and their Attitudes regarding Political Change* covering the period 1990 to 1994 is at present being conducted by the Department of Political Science at the University of Stellenbosch. The data reviewed here is derived from a comprehensive survey conducted in August 1992.⁵ For the purposes of this paper an analysis was made of the responses by White, Afrikaans speaking members of traditional Reformed Churches (Sample Group A). This group most adequately represents mainstream Afrikaner perspectives in relation to traditional religious institutional affiliation. It was further filtered into two subgroups: church members who attend religious activities at least once a week (Sample Group B) and church leaders (Sample Group C).

4. For an interpretative overview: J Kinghorn, 1990. *The Theology of Separate Equality: A Critical Outline of the DRC's Position on Apartheid*, in M Prozesky (Ed), *Christianity Amidst Apartheid*. Macmillan:London. For extensive dealing with the subject see J Kinghorn (Ed), 1986. *Die NGKerk en apartheid*. Southern Book Publishers:Johannesburg.

5. This is a *positional* survey of elites.

Why elites? In his *Research Report No 3 of 1992*, Centre for International and Comparative Politics, University of Stellenbosch, the director of the research project, HJ Kotzé, argues that "...elites are the societal agents through which broader forces such as ethnicity, class, religion, etc. are filtered to ordinary people; elites give predictable thrust to the functioning of political regimes; ...elites...are indeed the 'switchmen of history' " (vii). The operational definition of elites for the purposes of the survey is "those persons who hold authoritative positions in powerful public and private organisations and influential movements, and who are therefore able to affect strategic decisions regularly" (17).

Following Field LG and Higley J, 1980. *Elitism*, Boston:Routledge; McDonough P, 1981. *Power and Ideology in Brasil*, Princeton:PUP; Moyser G and Wagstaff M (Eds), 1987. *Research Methods for Elite Studies*, London:Unwin and Allen; Putnam RD, 1976. *The Comparative Study of Political Elites*, NJ:Prentice-Hall, a positional approach to the selection of elites is followed. In particular the following criteria apply: the sector must be regarded as important by experts on South Africa; and the sector must fulfil some or other representative function. The sectors thus surveyed were: agriculture, labour, bureaucracy, business, right-wing, legislative, local politics, extra-parliamentary, media, parastatal, Codesa II (not included elsewhere), church, military.

As could be expected the Sample of 2282 persons reflected the rather skewed distribution of power and privilege as a result of apartheid. 61% of the Sample were Whites, 26% Blacks, 7% Coloureds and 6% Asians. The response rates tilt the scales even more heavily in favour of Whites. 72% of respondents were Whites.

2.1 The significance of this selection

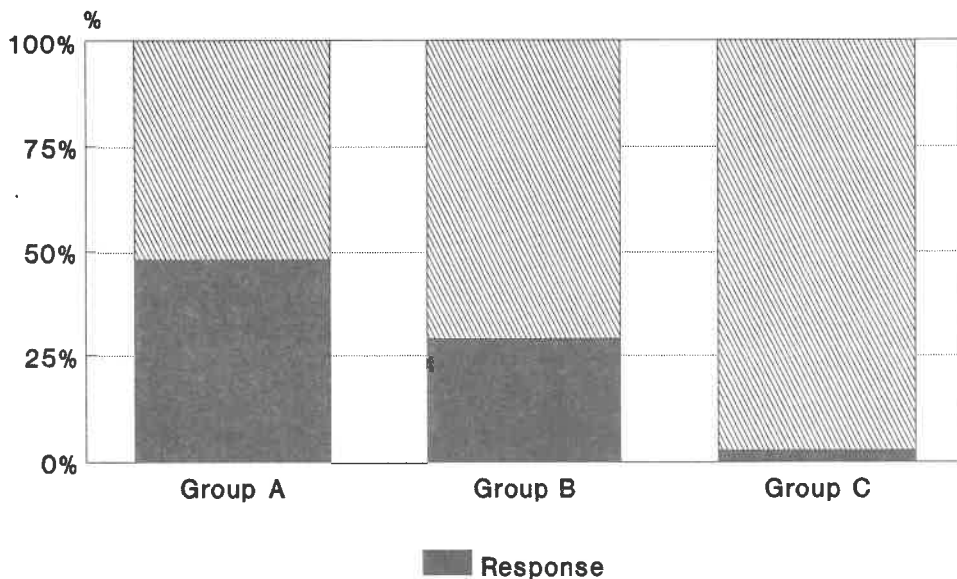
The significance of this selection is evident when one takes into account that

(a) 48.2% (Group A) of *all* the respondents are members of the traditional Afrikaans churches. Of them 87% attend services at least once a month and 60% (Group B) at least once a week.

(b) the military, agriculture, bureaucracy and academic sectors are dominated entirely by Afrikaans speakers (more than 75%)

(c) in the legislative, media, parastatal, local political and church sectors Afrikaans speakers constitute the majority (more than 50%). English is the majority language only in the business sector and African languages in the labour, extra-parliamentary and negotiating sectors.

Figure 1: Groups as percentage of total responses



From the foregoing it is clear that there is an exceptionally high participation by Afrikaner elites in religious activities. One could state the same in a reverse way: membership of the traditional Afrikaans churches almost totally overlapped with the old central organs of state. Thus, whereas only 5.4% of

the total population⁶ were members of the traditional Afrikaans churches the "switchboards" of the state were dominated by religiously active Afrikaner elites. And this points to another remarkable aspect. Of the total response no single other possible common denominator (sport, language, culture, etc.) came close to being as dominant: Group A represents 48.2%, group B 29% and group C 2.7% of the *total* number of respondents. (See figure 1)

Of course the common religious denominator might simply be a matter of pure coincidence and materially irrelevant. But it is not, or at least it is not perceived to be. Asked whether their religious convictions have a definite influence on their views on other areas of life, an astonishing 61% strongly affirmed, and another 36% affirmed⁷. Only 0.7% disagreed. Given this strong perceived link between religion and public life it is reasonable to assume that replies given to questions on socio-economic matters will at the very least be taken by this group as commensurate with, if not entirely an expression of, their religious convictions. Naturally it will be more difficult to ascertain how much of the reflections, attitudes and values entertained in the religious sphere impacts on national policy making. But at least some clues are available.

2.2 On the social role and duties of the church

On the role and duties of the church as an institution regarding social issues of importance a clear stand is taken by the majority in our sample groups.

A number of questions on the perceived role and duties of churches were put in the questionnaire.

On the question how much influence (defined as: "the ability to initiate voluntary change by means of persuasive reasoning") is being exerted by the Dutch Reformed Church, 65% of (C), 83% of (B), and 50% - with 20% indecisive - of (A), replied in the affirmative. Thus, the more active the members are, the more they rate the socio-political role of the Dutch Reformed Church.

To the statement: "Churches should do everything in their power to eliminate discrimination from society" the following replies were received: in A 69% were in favour and 11% undecided, in B 83% in favour and 17% against, in C 89% in favour and only 6% against. On the statement that "Churches should co-operate to reconcile people and groups in the country to one another" the respective responses were: in C 92%, in B 91%, in A 91% in favour.

6. Computed on the estimated total population figure of 37 000 000. The Census statistics exclude the so-called TBVC countries even though their reincorporation into South Africa had been decided upon some time ago.

7. The survey provided five options to respond to: strongly agreeing, agreeing, neutral, disagreeing, strongly disagreeing.

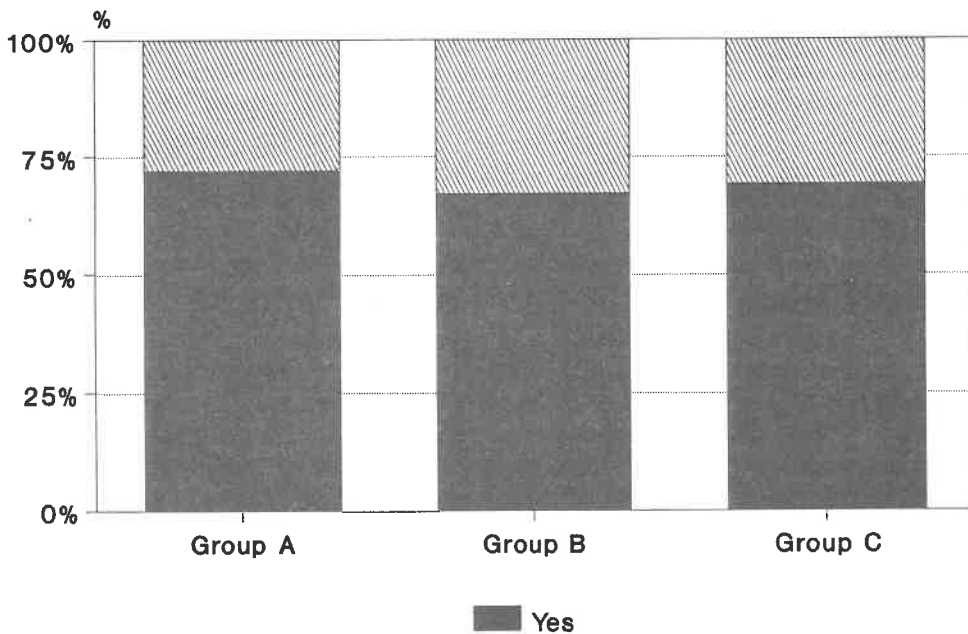
Of course all this might be no more than wishful thinking. Can the churches really do much? The statement was thus put: "Churches can do little to solve social and economic problems". This negative view was supported respectively by only 28% of (A), 28% of (B) and 17% of (C).

It is clear that the conviction that the churches can and should participate in shaping society and have the capacity to do so, is remarkably strong. Let us therefore now turn to the our sample group's views on socio-political issues.

2.3 Views on selected socio-political issues

It is quite evident that a strong majority hold decidedly anti-apartheid views. This is all the more remarkable because the individuals involved, by and large, were the same people who not too long ago were protagonists of apartheid.

Figure 2: Change indicator per group



Asked to state their opinion on the statement that "it would be sensible for Whites in South Africa to accept that they must become part of a large, black nation in the future" only 28% of group A, 33% of group B and 31% of group C rejected it. (See figure 2) Significantly though, of a comparative

group of Afrikaners consisting of elites in *non-traditional* churches (and therefore largely outside the organs of state and establishment) 73% rejected it. The latter group however only make up 11% of Afrikaner elites. It is evident therefore that objection to reform is largely housed outside the traditional churches.

The anti-apartheid direction is underscored by the stand taken on the statement that "the notion of Human Rights is contrary to the Bible". This statement is endorsed, in A by only 8%, in B by 10% and in C by 7%⁸. This is quite a significant result. For a very long time the notion of Human Rights was strongly vilified in mainstream Afrikaner circles. Indicative of this and setting the tone until the mid-eighties, is the report on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the Transvaal Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1951⁹. The report rejects the Declaration as being anthropocentric, humanitarian, blind and unrealistic. In particular it states the view that ". . . the notion of the equality of the more than 2000 million people . . . because they were born 'free and equal in dignity and rights' is a construction of phantasy which does not take spiritual values into account". (My translation, JK) Naturally, conceding to Human Rights would have meant the end of apartheid.

Another indication of the anti-apartheid trend is the response to the question whether respondents were in favour of racially integrated suburbs. Traditionally the so-called Group Areas Act, allocating specific residential areas to the different race groups, was one of the corner stones of apartheid. The Dutch Reformed Church campaigned for the introduction of such legislation all through the forties until its promulgation in the early fifties. In the survey however of group A only 26%, of group B 30%, and of group C 20% were opposed to integrated suburbs. By contrast again the non-traditional group scores a 60% under utterly opposed.

When it came to criteria for employment in the civil service 86% of group A, 88% of group B and 87% of group C wanted "competitively-decided merit alone" to apply.

On preferences as to the form of the so-called "new South Africa", both a "geographically undivided South Africa, entirely controlled by Whites" (white domination) and a "geographically separated South Africa, the smaller part outside the major metropolitan areas, under White control, and the other bigger part . . . under non-racial control" (partitioning) get the thumbs down. A 78% first choice vote goes to a "federal system (with) . . . multiracial regions vested with considerable autonomy, but at central level a mixed parliament with proportional representation, a Bill of Rights and checks and balances on the executive branch of government." A "centralised system in a

8. By contrast the non-traditional group gives a 46% support to the statement.

9. *Agenda vir die twee-en-twintigste Sinode van die Ned. Herv. of Geref. Kerk van Suid-Afrika*, 1951, 189ff.

united South Africa" gets only an 8% first vote but 54% support as second choice. The Afrikaner Right-wing's hobby horse, partitioning, received only 6% of the first and 20% of the second choice vote.

It is unmistakably clear therefore that apartheid as a socio-economic and political system based on racial privileges has almost completely been eradicated from the perspectives of a strong majority of our sample group.

2.4 Ideological terminology

In ideological terminology apartheid used to be defined as *christian-nationalism*.¹⁰ It is clear from the foregoing that nationalism does not feature any more. But what about the ideal of a *Christian* state?

The following two questions relate to this aspect: the state should not give preferential treatment to any one religion; broadcasts on radio and TV should be confined to the Christian religion. In both cases a remarkable tolerance is displayed. In both cases less than a third of the churchiest group (B) insisted on exclusivity for Christianity.

On the other hand in the same group 71% were in favour of a stipulation in the constitution still to be drawn up that South Africa is a Christian country. Of group A 64% took the same stand. It does not come as a surprise therefore that only 9% affirmed the statement that "there should be no religious instruction in public schools." Clearly Christianity - whatever it is understood to be - is still taken as a fundamental component of public life.

It is tempting to interpret this as a vestige of the bygone ideology. But that would misrepresent the evidence. It is not only in the Afrikaner community where religion is highly regarded. The position represented by the survey is but one expression of the high level of religiosity prevalent in South African society as a whole. A recent survey on youth¹¹ (taken as people between the ages of 16 and 30) shows that 87% of South African youth are active members of christian churches - in contrast to only 15% membership of political parties.

Be that as it may, for our purposes it is significant to note that nevertheless a formal relationship between the Christian religion and the organs of society is

10. A very pithy description of this is found in the *Acta van die vyf-en-twintigste sinode van die N.G.Kerk van Transvaal* (Acts of the 25th Synod of the DRC of Transvaal) 1961, 203 where Synod is of the opinion that: "...the policy of separate development [apartheid - JK] by which is understood the development of each indigenous South African race according to its own nature and culture, in its own land and to full independence, is a truly Christian policy, if it is administered in a spirit of equity, without denigrating the image of God which is in every human being. In the particular conditions of South Africa Synod sees this policy as the best solution to ensure the peaceful coexistence of races where there are major differences as to civilisation and culture and assimilation is not possible...." (My translation)

11. D Everatt, M Orkin, 1993. 'Growing up tough'. *A national survey of South African youth*. Joint Enrichment Project:Johannesburg

implicitly assumed. In that respect there is no formal deviation from the apartheid era. As before it is assumed that an, what could be called, *equation* between christianity and the order of society exists - an equation which ought to get recognition in the constitution.

But what then has changed? It is obvious that, in contrast with the apartheid era, convictions about the societal element of the equation have radically changed. Christianity is being equated now with an integrated society.

But has only the political viewpoint changed?

3 Diagnosis

Unless one assumes that religion is nothing more than a vacuum and therefore takes on any political shape as circumstances may dictate, the obvious implication of the above is that a profound shift in religious thinking has taken place as well. Coming from a religious tradition and theological history that equated christianity with apartheid, the switch to a non-apartheid society necessitates either the rejection of religion altogether or a rather fundamental reassessment of one's beliefs. The results of the survey show that by and large the latter was the case.

A paradigm shift in religious beliefs is obviously a complex phenomenon. It was not the purpose of the survey to analyse this in any detail. Even so two important elements of this complex process are clearly evident. Let us analyse them briefly and then draw some theoretical conclusions.

3.1 Privatised religion¹²

The notion of religion being essentially a private activity is evident across the board. So pervasive in Afrikaner circles has it become that it even informs the questions put in the survey. But it is probably best expressed in reactions to the statement that "churches should avoid political and controversial issues and concentrate on the spiritual welfare of their members." With this 67% of A and 70% of B agreed. Quite significantly though only 34% of church leaders affirmed this statement.

12. The term is borrowed from PL Berger, 1969. *The sacred Canopy*. NY:Anchor Books, 134ff. By and large when he says: "Religion manifests itself as public rhetoric and private virtue. In other words, insofar as religion is common it lacks 'reality', and insofar as it is 'real' it lacks commonality. This situation represents a severe rupture of the traditional task of religion, which was precisely the establishment of an integrated set of definitions of reality that could serve as a common universe of meaning for the members of a society..." it describes the phenomenon we are dealing with here. However, Berger is not entirely adequate. He sees privatisation as being equal to individualisation - which might be applicable in the USA in the sixties, but certainly is not in South Africa. I use his concept of privatisation therefore in a restricted sense: religion not defining (prescribing) the *structures* of reality any more. But precisely in (not) doing so religion participates in defining a common reality. In that way privatised religion is more than merely an individual experience.

This must of course be read together with the responses to other statements referred to above. The overall position of the majority of respondents can then be formulated as follows: *they opt for a non-political and non-controversial religion, which nevertheless decisively influences society through reconciling people and combating discrimination.*

In itself this seems to be a contradictory stand. It becomes even more remarkable when compared with positions taken by the mainstream Afrikaner churches a decade or two ago. In 1974, only 18 years before, the Dutch Reformed Church officially was very much politically involved by endorsing the policy of apartheid and providing a lengthy and abstract theological rationale for it.¹³ The preferences expressed in the survey clearly contradict the positions of 1974 - now, it is agreed, religion should not locate itself in the public discourse. Its locus is in the private sphere.

3.2 Ethicisation

But privatisation does not explain the religious shift fully. Why, we have to ask, is (privatised) religion still considered vitally important for society - as the responses described above clearly show? Or to put it completely differently: now that both society and religion have undergone radical changes, how should the equation between them be conceived of?

Putting the question in this way points our attention to an important assumption underlying any conviction of an equation between religion and society. It is the assumption that religion, and only religion, discloses the universal and fundamental conditions for human life. Notions as to the equation between religion and society depend on how this function of religion is understood.

Overall there are two ways of interpreting the disclosure function of religion: the *doctrinaire* and the *ethical*. The former, always a close ally of rigid ideologies, sees religion as the authoritative expression of immutable laws of being. Per definition these laws are extrinsic to the human being in the same way as natural laws are extrinsic to particular elements of nature. The latter sees religion as the moral guide to the intrinsically volutative human person. The former assumes a zero-sum world; it is threatened by the historical consciousness. The latter assumes an open-ended and forever adapting world.

There is no doubt that apartheid religion fell into the doctrinal category. The position of the respondents to the survey on the other hand is clearly ethical. The change therefore is not merely from one perception of the disclosing function of religion to another. At the same time it is a shift from one world view to another.

13. See the entire policy document *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*. This document was finalised in 1974 but remained the official view of the church until 1986.

3.3 Some conclusions

3.3.1

The above seems to support a case for a social theoretical interpretation of developments in Afrikaner circles in terms of modernisation¹⁴.

As is well known one of the primary effects of modernisation is the privatisation of religious beliefs. In this case it has had the effect that the equation of Christianity with objective (social) structures and traditions and with securely solidified immutable doctrines has made way for a Christianity identified with and expressed in subjective experiences, inner harmony and personal values.

The advantage of a privatised view on religion is that it frees, so to speak, the public domain. No political or economic dispensation *per se* can be sacralised or vilified any more. In and of itself the everyday tussle about socio-economic issues is taken to be a neutral affair. It is considered a matter for rational and not religious debate. In fact it is deemed wrong for religion to be involved in this debate. Religion is about the inner core of life and not to be confused with transient dimensions such as the politics of the day. Religion should not deify a particular context or social condition but should transmit immutable values. These pertain to inter-individual relationships and not to the structures of society. Summa: in theory any structure is acceptable as long as it does not militate against the fundamental inter-personal values.

This in a nutshell is precisely the position taken by the influential policy document *Church and Society* first drafted in 1986 and revised in 1990 by the Dutch Reformed Church. The 1990 edition puts a distance between the Dutch Reformed Church and apartheid (even though not unambiguously - at the time a major split in the church between conservatives and liberals was feared). Given the fact that De Klerk's reform initiatives had already been introduced this stand was to be expected. What is informative however is the theological rationale given to the new stand on apartheid. In stark contrast to all previous documents in which doctrinal arguments were advanced to legitimate apartheid in general and in particular, it was now stated that ". . . the Bible . . . shall not be used as a handbook for the solution of social, economic or political questions. For that reason all attempts, now or in the past, to deduce

14. As modernisation goes hand in hand with upward mobility in industrial society (A Giddens, 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity*. 15. See also S Hall/ B Gieben, 1992. *Formations of Modernity*. 6). Afrikaners during the past forty years experienced a major process of modernisation. In the survey evidence is found in the strong support for "big business", economic privatisation and capitalist policies (as opposed to a generation ago when the "black danger", "money power" and Roman Catholics were considered to be the main enemies of Christian Afrikaners). For more factual analysis of income patterns and the remarkable growth of the Afrikaner stake in the economy relative to other groups, see TJ Steenkamp, 1992. The income distribution of Afrikaners: implications for a new South Africa. *Acta Academica*, 24/4 1992, 1-17

a particular political policy directly from the Bible whether it is apartheid or . . . a policy of integration, must be strongly rejected." (Own translation)¹⁵

The theological pros and cons to this do not concern us now. What is important is to note the effect that privatisation has had on the political discourse in the Afrikaner community: the deideologising of politics.

Through its elaborate doctrinal legitimisation of apartheid the traditional Afrikaner churches managed to sacralise apartheid to such an extent that free discourse became well nigh impossible. Coupled with the cold war hysteria - reaching its ultimate frenzy in the PW Botha era - according to which any opposition was categorised as atheistic communism, no sane discourse could develop, only frantic ideological propaganda - for and against. The privatisation of religion effectively meant the erosion of a fertile soil in which such ideologising could root itself. Given the nature of the apartheid ideology (as christian-nationalism) no fundamental political change could have been contemplated without a liberalisation of the religious component of the ideology. And that was not possible without the influence of the process of privatisation.

3.3.2

The shift away from a doctrinaire religious mode, away from a conservative worldview, normally is a traumatic event. It could easily lead to a loss of purpose, to a sense of total relativism.

It is not inevitable that the privatisation of one's religious beliefs be accompanied by ethicisation. (Fundamentalism, for instance, can be defined as privatised doctrinairism¹⁶). But where it happens, the shift to an ethical religious mode averts the despondency which follows on losing one's previously fixed world. It re-establishes the equation between religion and society by helping one to define the, now, mutating world as a moral challenge. It lets one approach life as an opportunity to promote the good. Religion does no longer provide one with a fixed blueprint of the world but it does fulfil the role of a compass - it indicates direction. The psychological self-affirmation thus engendered and the stabilising effects thereof on social dynamics must not be underestimated.

This is quite evident in the present processes within Afrikaner circles to come to terms with the past. This is not the place to analyse such processes but it must be noted that an almost fervent attempt is being made to reinterpret the era of doctrinaire apartheid religion in terms of ethical categories. It is argued that the initial theology as well as the actual policies were firmly rooted in the universal ideals of justice and fairness. In short, the idea was good despite the

15. *Kerk en samelewing 1990*. N.G.Sendingpers: Bloemfontein, 4.

16. See Harvey Cox's brilliant exposition in this regard in *Religion in the secular city*. 1984. NY: Simon & Schuster

eventual outcome. In fact: the present transformation could even be seen as a return to the original idea.

Of course this is a way of claiming continuity with the past without inheriting its sins. Whether it holds true should not concern us now. What is of importance, however, is to understand the stabilising effect this reinterpretation has within the Afrikaner community. It definitely provides moralboosting support during the process of change.

Moreover, in the tussle with the Afrikaner right wing, this may prove to be of vital importance. Essentially the Afrikaner right wing still clings to the doctrinaire mode. They therefore see any move away from apartheid as a move away from religion. Communicated in reverse order (a move away from religion means a move away from ...) it becomes a highly persuasive argument within a religiously sensitive society. Only when the Afrikaner right wing can be persuaded to reconsider their convictions concerning the equation between religion and society to, at least, make room for the possibility of an alternative equation, will the conditions for stability in this country improve. To try to woo them with neat arguments about Human Rights, etc are due to fail. Such arguments assume pragmatic rationality. The right wing's opposition to the new order lies at another level - that level of being where fundamental values are formed. If the form of discourse at that level is religion - as is the case with the right wing - the real question is whether a doctrinaire or an ethical mode is appropriate. That is the discourse in which the right wing should be engaged.