

[Northey] Mission Church
17th Aug 1963.

The D.R.C. and its Attitude
to the Idea of Christian Unity

- Intro:
1. Thanks and appreciation
 2. Significant & memorable occasion
- churches & Christians here always come closer as soon as they've started moving into the field of Miss. work

I Unity within the DRC:

Position before and after 1962 & 1963

a) Mother church: Before 1962: 5 anten. churches each with own Synod (Cape Natal, O.F.S., Trel (3 Reg. Synods) & SW. : 900 congregations & 711,468 comm. members
This decision not voluntary: result of Cape Supreme Court decision which excluded members outside Cape Colony from membership to Cape DRC.

In Oct. 1962 a long-cherished ideal was realized when one united DRC with 7 reg. Synods

b) Daughter or Miss. Churches (Coloured, African & Ind.)

Before May 1963: 10 separate churches on ethnic grounds. In May 1963 ~~the~~ ⁶ ~~8~~ Bantu daughter churches of SA united into one church:

Bantu	116 ²⁹⁴ congregations	+ 117,448 comm. Af. members
Col:	(165 Coloured "	+ 100,464 Coloured members)
Rhod.) - Maz. L. Nyasal	116 "	+ 130,606 "

Total White & Non-White of DRC's: 1400 congregations
929,000 comm. members > 1,836,000 baptized members
Contribution to Miss. work: R2m annually ≈ R3 per member. Christian Liter. Fund: Ideal R5m > R1.

c) S.A. Council of Reformed Churches: Came into being in 1962 - a federal council of mother & daughter churches of DRC to consider projects & undertakings common to all

II Relation to Ecumenical Bodies:

a) Christian Council: Member up to 1965 (as Vice as chairman). Left for 2 reasons:

- ① language protest
- ② difference in racial outlook between DRC and English-speaking churches

b) W.C.C.: Only Cape & Del. churches members up till 1961 - withdrew in 1961 after the latter's Consultation

c) World Alliance of Reformed Churches (World Protestant Alliance):

a) Reformed Ecum. Synod.

III Outlook for closer unity in future:

In the official level no signs of closer co-operation, not even between the 3 Afr. churches. This lack of ecum. consciousness or enthusiasm mainly due to 4 reasons:

- ① Traditional isolation of Afr. people
geographical > psychological
- ② fear of any influence emanating outside own circle or country with resultant opposition
- ③ shock of latter findings of
- ④ official tediousness of all church negotiations

On the other hand deep and sincere desire:

① DRC's officially approved Mission Policy:

"As far as Protestant churches and societies are concerned, the D.R.C. stands for cordial co-operation, without surrendering accepted principles and with due observance of the acknowledged trends prevalent in the D.R.C. provided the interest of the Kingdom of God always receive priority"

② Dr. GBA Gardener in What the D.R.C. stands for: "And, in a land torn by division and dissension, how can a church, in whose ranks all the racial groups and political parties are represented, dare to neglect the glorious truth of our oneness in Christ, whatever our personal and national differences and divergences may be?"

How could this be fostered and assisted?

Let us first get this fact quite clear: no official moves of denominations have any lasting effect if ind. Christians within these denominations do not feel this as an urgent necessity! Therefore the primary move must come from individual Christians within their local surroundings. How?

- ① Information at meetings of the miss. work of the respective churches:
- ② Fellowship & discussion groups on subjects relating to the ~~life~~, nature, life and witness of the Church

③ united church services and rallies at certain fast days:

④ Co-operative ventures where united action is possible and advantageous:

- evangelistic campaigns (Eric Hutchings)
- Christian literature
- youth work
- missionary projects.

⑤ More prayer for the unity which Christ demands