The relationship between the state and the church during the early history of Pretoria

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Abstract

In this article, I shall be discussing the development of the church in the Transvaal and the South African Republic – with specific reference to the situation during the early history of Pretoria. Although I shall highlight the situations within different communities, the main focus of this article is on the relationship between the state and the church in the period 1839 until 1902. As we shall see, during this time, the two institutions protected each other and actually consisted of the same group of leading and influential people. Although these people followed some of the same principles practised in other regions (Cape Colony, Europe), this close relationship between the church and the state harmed the development of both the church and, in many ways, the development of the state in South Africa.

Background

Right from its very first steps on the road to becoming the capital city of South Africa, the history of Pretoria has always been closely connected to the histories of a number of churches and religious groups. Economical, anthropological and political influences in church and society during the last one and a half century played major roles in creating a city with its own unique features. These dynamics, combined with certain other issues, also created a climate for the growth and decline of the influence of a number of mainline and other churches. It can be assumed that major changes in the landscapes of government and the state had a profound influence on some of the churches. But the reverse is also true; the churches influenced, to an enormous degree, the political development of South Africa. This is in line with the statement by Southey (as quoted by Hofmeyr 1990:80): "It is almost a truism to state that the history of the church is intimately bound up with the history of the society in which it is grounded, and that church history divorced from 'general' history can be dangerously distorted to the point of being demonstrably false."

The purpose of this article is to study some of the factors that influenced the growth of Pretoria as a city and to investigate how these factors led to the development and functioning of some of the different church traditions to be found within its boundaries. More specifically, this article attempts to investigate the relationships that existed between the state and the church during the initial phases of Pretoria's history. We believe that not only the histories of different churches and local congregations should be researched in this endeavour, but also their respective roles in society at large (cf. De Wit 1999:20).

The periods under scrutiny, are the years before and after Pretoria was proclaimed as a town in 1855, and the years between the creation of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (South African Republic) (ZAR) and the Second Freedom War (or the South African War, as it is also known). In other words, this article covers the years between 1839 and 1902. This, we hope, will lay the foundation for further investigation regarding Pretoria's later history: it is clear that a gold mine of information is still to be unearthed.

Historical events will be noted first, and discussed from the perspective of more than one church and community (Afrikaans, English and black). The roles of prominent individuals will also be highlighted. In a subsequent section the data will be evaluated against a wider theological and historical background. This approach tries to heed the dangers indicated by Van Jaarsveld, Hanekom and Brown

as discussed by Hofmeyr (1990:40-48) concerning church history as a discipline and as it is practised in South Africa.[1] See also the criticism voiced by Cochrane (1987:3-7).

A study of the relationship between church and state during the early years of Pretoria could be illuminating in terms of developments during the 20th century and in order to better understand the church-state relationship since the 1994 elections.

Early developments

Mzilikazi

What is today known as Pretoria or as the Tshwane Metropole (City of Tshwane) – thus including the surrounding areas and their former municipalities – was a seat of government long before white people appeared on the scene. Andrews and Ploeger (1982:2-3) mention the fact that the Bakwena tribe, a west Sotho group, lived and reigned during the 17th century in an area between what is now known as the Apies, Pienaars and Crocodile rivers. The founder of the Matabele kingdom, Mzilikazi – also known as Silkaats – changed the political landscape from 1825 to 1826 and until 1837. After wiping out other tribes in the vicinity, he built himself a military kraal and place of government on the south side of what is today Meintjieskop – in other words, where the Union Buildings are situated, now the official home of the President of South Africa.

In 1837 Mzilikazi had to flee to the north after a second attack by the Zulu armies of Dingane, who eventually burned down his kraals along the Apies and Crocodile rivers.

A new human settlement is proclaimed

In 1839, Potchefstroom became the first of the official white settlements north of the Vaal River. Shortly afterwards, quite a number of people moved to the north-eastern part of the then Transvaal region, the reason being to get as far away as possible from British rule – remember that Potchefstroom was perceived to be an "adjunct colony" (Rex 1960:13). The result of this was the proclamation of Andries Ohrigstad as the seat of government in 1845. However, other groups also moved to the far northern part of Transvaal and others settled south and north of the Magaliesberg. This resulted in the middle part of the then Transvaal beginning to have more influence, especially since Commandant General Andries Pretorius also built his home in the vicinity (Rex 1960:13-14). A need was soon identified to develop one government structure and a central place of government (Rex 1960:14, 23).

Initially it was thought that Rustenburg would be the new capital city, since Andries Pretorius himself proclaimed the town and lived in the district. His influence can be detected in that he personally decided which area had to be the church square in the town of Rustenburg (Rex 1960:31-32). The first full meeting of the newly constituted "Volksraad" (Council of the People) of Transvaal was also held in the town (Pelzer & Prinsloo 1951:4).[2] However, Pretorius died in 1853. In the same year, the Council of the People decided that a new town should be proclaimed and developed in the middle of the country (Transvaal) and named after Andries Pretorius – namely, Pretoria. It should be noted that some uncertainty arose as to the precise name of the new settlement because, initially, the names "Pretorium" and "Pretoriusstad" (Pretoria City) were also used (Preller 1938:15). A church elder with the name of Smit also proposed the name Pretoria-Philadelphia which, presumably, would have alluded to the very good relationship that existed between Pretorius and his two brothers. In fact, for a short period, the new settlement was known as Pretoria-Philadelphia. However, the final decision on this issue was made on 16 November 1855, when the Council of the People, at a meeting in Potchefstroom, voted on a proposal by the new Commandant General, Marthinus Wessel Pretorius (son of Andries Pretorius), namely to create a new town on the two farms that he (MW Pretorius) previously had bought from Mr Prinsloo and Mr Van der Walt. This proposal was carried with the help of the church (Preller 1938:56).

Church and state

Developments within the Afrikaner community

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[1] According to this observation, Van Jaarsveld indicated that church history in South Africa is used as a buttress for some Afrikaners, while Hanekom said that "church-ism" (*kerkisme*) is the big enemy of church history in South Africa. Brown warned against a church history that is written only from the perspective of one church tradition (cf. De Wit 1999:40-42).

[2] See also the observations made by De Wit (1999:50) and Rex (1960:31-32) in this regard.

That a very close relationship existed between the newly elected government of the time and the church can be illustrated by a number of events that occurred at the time. Indeed, this pattern and the close relationship between church and state continued for the rest of the period discussed in this article.

It should be remembered that the new white settlers in the Transvaal region, when they left the Cape Colony, were all members of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) or the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK).[3] The settlers organised themselves into one local church with geographical boundaries identical to that of the new country, namely the Transvaal – the region on the other side, north of the Vaal River (Van der Westhuizen (1969:8, 15).[4] Technically, the church in the Cape only had jurisdiction in the area similar to that of the Cape Colony (cf. Van der Westhuizen 1969:15).

An important observation is that the civilian "Volksraad" (Council of the People) was the body which inducted the first church council in the Transvaal. This happened in Potchefstroom on 23 February 1842 (cf. Banda 1996:19; Van der Westhuizen 1969:8).

The settlers did not want to belong to an independent church and therefore it was no surprise that the church board of the Transvaal congregation unanimously decided, in 1852, to seek closer ties with the Cape Synod. Based on this decision, the Reverend Andrew Murray was invited (June 1853) to visit the church in order to start negotiating the conditions for the envisaged relationship. However, late in 1853, Dr Murray was requested not to come to the Transvaal. It was felt that his visit would be at an inconvenient time, given that the Council of the People first had to decide on the appointment of the Reverend Dirk van der Hoff (Du Plessis 1925:8). This is a significant example of the relationship between state and church during this period.

Van der Hoff is regarded with respect within the Nederduitsche Hervormde Kerk. Others, however, are not so sure of his integrity (cf. Du Plessis 1925:2). For the purposes of the article, it only needs to be noted that he was ordained by the Indian Commission in the Netherlands during August 1852 and that he arrived in Cape Town on 5 November 1852. He was legitimised as a minister of the church by the Reverend Faure of the Cape Synod (Oosthuizen 1960:60). The first "Volksraadsvergadering" (Assembly of the Council of the People) took place from 17-19 March 1852. A meeting of the "Krygsraad" (Military Council) was also held during the same time. The first "Algemene Kerkvergadering" (General Church Assembly) of the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika [5] began in Rustenburg on 8 August 1853. At this meeting, the Reverend Dirk van der Hoff was officially welcomed. One of the main points on the agenda was to decide whether or not this new church needed to be become part of the church in the Cape Colony (Pelzer & Prinsloo 1951:4) and whether people of other religious denominations should be allowed in the region (cf. Banda 1996:20). The Transvaal church decided to discontinue seeking closer ties with the Cape Synod (Du Plessis 1925:8) and not to allow other Christian denominations into the region. Apparently, Van der Hoff originally pleaded for closer ties with the Cape Synod and for a more tolerant attitude towards others but, during the course of the meeting, changed his mind. Part of the reasoning behind this decision was that some of the older members of the community, when they had occupied the land, swore to Almighty God that they would not allow any other church but the DRC to settle in the area and the public had insisted that the church board should decide on this accordingly. The other argument was that the state was still too young and that the country was politically too divided in itself to allow other church denominations: this would lead to even more internal disunity (cf. the minutes of the NHK as quoted by Banda 1996:21).

The Lydenburg church was not represented at this meeting and wanted to get this decision revoked. However, at the next meeting of the General Assembly of the church (20 November 1853) both the church and the Assembly of the People(!) confirmed the earlier decision (Oosthuizen 1960:61).

The influence of the father (Andries) and son (Marthinus W) Pretorius on this decision should be considered. Van der Hoff was, from the outset, a controversial figure. Many things have been said about his background and his ministry in the Transvaal.[6] The important point in this context, however, is that it seems that Andries Pretorius persuaded him neither to pursue closer links with the Cape Synod nor to be inducted as the local minister of Rustenburg under the ministry of Reverend Andrew Murray, as was originally been planned (Oosthuizen 1960:60). The same kind of influence was probably

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[3] See also the discussion by Van der Westhuizen (1969:7-10) with regard to the official name of the church in the Cape and in the Transvaal.

[4] For similar developments in Natal, see Van der Westhuizen (1969:15).

[5] The English translations of the names of the three mainline Afrikaans Reformed churches normally cause problems, one of the reasons being that the word "Reformed" is used in all three names, albeit with one variation (Hervormd); in the Dutch language the words "Hervormd" and "Gereformeerd" actually have the same root and the two terms were used as synonyms in different stages of the development of the language. The use of the name is often a cause for debate between members of the two churches.

[6] For a short description of some of the biographical material, see De Wit (1999:66).

exerted on Van der Hoff by MW Pretorius – who was a very influential person in his own right. He became the military leader – Commandant General – after the death of his father and, on 6 January 1857, was sworn in as the first President of the ZAR. He was re-elected in 1864 and in 1869 and, in the meantime, was also elected as President of the Orange Free State. Pretorius tried very hard to have the two republics north of the Orange River united in one country. The main idea was that both the state and the church should function independently from any outside power or authority (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:9; cf. De Wit 1999:56). Interestingly enough, Van der Hoff, because of his strong relationship with the father and son Pretorius, was seen as belonging to the "Pretorius faction" and could therefore always rely on the support of the "Volkraad" (Assembly of the People) (Du Plessis 1925:17).

It is also noteworthy that, on his deathbed, Andries Pretorius had two remarkable letters written on his behalf. The one was addressed to his children. The second one, addressed to the "Krygsraad" (Military Council), encouraged this body to take the wellbeing of the church very seriously. His opinion was that, if the influence of the Christian religion diminished, the state as an institution would fail and the blessings of God on the land and its people would come to an end (Preller 1938:45).

MW Pretorius's idea to buy two farms followed the church board's decision on 17 June 1854, namely, that a new congregation should be constituted on the farm Elandspoort (later Pretoria). The idea of a new congregation actually gave significant support to the idea of creating a new settlement, later to become Pretoria. In short, the farm which later became Pretoria was actually first earmarked as belonging to the church. Only afterwards was it sold to the government of the time (cf. De Wit 1999:65-67).

According to Oberholzer (1972:299), the first services on what is now known as Church Square, were held on 8 and 9 September 1855. The first church building in Pretoria – a small grass-roofed building – was built there in 1857, and Skinner Street, in Pretoria, was named after the builder of the church. He first built Andries Pretorius' house near the present Hartebeespoort Dam (1853), then the church building on Church Square and later on the Ou Raadzaal (Old Council Hall) across the street (cf. Andrews & Ploeger 1989:27, 59-60).

An important link in the unfolding of the historical events was that the church located in Lydenburg was not satisfied with the secession from the Cape Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. A measure of distrust existed right from the start as far as Van der Hoff's activities were concerned and eventually it was decided, by the church board of Lydenburg on 31 August 1854, to notify Van der Hoff that he was no longer the "konsulent" (relieving clergyman) of the Lydenburg congregation (Du Plessis 1925:19). After this split, there were two different Reformed churches in the Republic. On the one hand there were the local churches of Potchefstroom, Rustenburg and Zoutpansberg (combined into, and represented by, one church board) and, on the other hand, there was the church of Lydenburg. Lydenburg was thus, at first, the only church associated with the Cape Synod of the DRC (Oosthuizen 1960:63).

The split in the church between the groups mentioned above in 1854 also had other repercussions, in that Lydenburg seceded politically and as a separate state or republic from the rest of Transvaal in 1857. And although it re-united with the ZAR in 1862, it did not do so in terms of its church affiliation (Oosthuizen 1960:63, cf. De Wit 1999:67); its relationship with the Cape Synod remained intact.

A conflict also arose because both these groups made use of the name "Gereformeerd" (Reformed). However, since 1858 the new church insisted that the name Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk should be used and, from about 1859, Van der Hoff himself started to use the name consistently (Scholtz 1951:18). The church farm bought by MW Pretorius and on which the first church building was erected belonged to this church: the NHK. The local congregation in Pretoria was at first known as the Elandspoort congregation, but later became known as the Pretoria-Philadelphia Church (Rex 1960:48).

The Reverend Cachet, who pastured the church in Utrecht (at that stage part of the Transvaal region) was instrumental in linking the churches of Lydenburg and Utrecth with the Cape Synod of the DRC (Oosthuizen 1960:66). He also organised a number of other people, groups and churches who were not satisfied with the idea of secession of the Transvaal church(es) into local churches and established ties with the Cape Synod. The Reverend Cachet actually got a serious physical hiding with a "sjambok" from Commandant Jan Viljoen from Marico, who prohibited Cachet from entering his district (Oosthuizen 1960:67).

According to the newly adopted Constitution of the Republic (1858), Potchefstroom became the "hoofdplaatz" (main place or centre) of the Republic and Pretoria the seat of government. But soon afterwards it was proposed that Pretoria should serve in both capacities. One of the reasons was that the meetings of the combined church board (NHK) were held there. The more central venue was used in order to benefit the church's representatives from the Potchefstroom and Rustenburg (western),

Lydenburg (eastern) and Zoutpansberg (northern) regions (Preller 1938:58). The significant observation here is the fact that the church played such a major role in society, to the extent that the seat of government needed to be moved to the main area of church activity.

AF du Toit, a friend of MW Pretorius, first came to Pretoria in 1857. Du Toit was appointed by Pretorius as a magistrate; he was also given the task of planning the layout of the new settlement (Andrews & Ploeger 1989:27). His brief as magistrate and land-surveyor was to keep in mind the fact that the future church building needed to be the central point of the new town (Bulpin 1974:91) and that the surrounding area, Church Square, should be big enough to accommodate the ox wagons and the tents normally erected during the time of the quarterly communion services (Preller 1938:60-61).[7]

The day after the first church building (the one erected prior to Du Toit's arrival and situated more or less where the Palace of Justice was built later on, thus presently just across the street from Church Square) was consecrated in 1857, the "Vierkleur" (Four Coloured Flag) was hoisted for the first time. The flag was designed by the Reverend Van der Hoff and, in 1860, became the official flag of the young Republic (Preller 1938:57).

Another Reformed denomination, the Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA), came into being in this area at more or less the same time (10 February 1859). The turmoil that led to its creation had actually some years previously, on 9 January 1814, following a decision on 1 January 1807 in the Netherlands by which the singing of "Gesange" (free hymns other than those directly based on the 150 psalms recorded in the Bible) was introduced or allowed into the liturgy of the DRC in the Cape (cf. Fourie 2000:283). The Reverend Dirk Postma from Rustenburg led this secession, following resistance and conflict that had occurred in towns such as Colesberg and Craddock and in the Waterberg and other regions (Engelbrecht et al 1952:39; Van der Vyver 1958:325; Oosthuizen 1960:64; De Wit 1999:68).

The same tension that can be detected between church and state above surfaced during the presidency of President Burgers. Burgers was recommended by President Brand of the Free State. Brand, who was elected unanimously, actually turned down the appointment as president of the Transvaal, but then recommended the Reverend Burgers on the basis of his educational background, the fact that he could speak English fluently, and because he had made a very good impression during a previous visit to the Transvaal (Lamb 1976:51-52). However, Lamb (1976:46) also refers to the fact that, just before the time Burgers was elected as President, he was suspected of having some very liberal theological ideas. Burgers defended the accusations against him successfully and although the Cape Synod appealed to the Privy Council in London, he was found to be not guilty. However, none of this went down well within the very strong Calvinistic society of the Transvaal. Nor did his success in the court prevent a hate and smear campaign from being waged against him (Bulphin 1974:131). Preachers such as the Reverends JP Jooste (Hartbeesfontein), JH du Plessis (Cradock) and AI Steytler from Uitenhage – the last two on a church mission to the Transvaal – openly spoke out against his candidature (Engelbrecht 1933:108-109).

Burgers experienced a great deal of antagonism in Pretoria. He did his best to improve the quality of education but, in his enthusiasm, he made a big mistake. In article 16 of the Education Law it was stipulated that no religious education was to be offered during official school hours. Should religious leaders want to educate pupils after hours, the classrooms would be available. With the permission of the relevant school boards the Bible might be read and Bible history might be taught. The basic reason for this was the fact that the NHK was the official state church and therefore religious education would have to be taught only by that particular church – something which would have irritated the DRC and the GKSA. However, this argument was not accepted by the embittered and antagonised citizens (Lamb 1976:55-56).

Burgers had a difficult time as President. He had to deal with the war against Sekokoni/Sekhukhuni (north west of Lydenburg), the fact that he did not succeed in building a railway for the Transvaal and, eventually, the annexation of Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in the name of the British Crown on 12 April 1877 (Lamb 1976:63). His own words after the Sekokoni/Sekhukhuni experience are descriptive of his own feelings: "It was not here on the battlefield that the greatest mischief was done. At home, in the capital, in the dorps the spirit of evil was about, and on my return from the expedition I was betrayed and deserted" (Lamb 1976:61-62).

After the First Freedom War the peace was signed in Pretoria on 2 August 1881. An important incident then occurred that well illustrates the focus of this article. Immediately after the signing of the

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[7] In most Reformed churches in South Africa, the communion services ("Nagmaalsdienste") are held on a quarterly basis; every three months. In the early years people would come from far away for a whole weekend of church activities: baptisms, catechesis, services in which new adult members were accepted, weddings, preparatory services before the communion service, communion service and the service after the communion service, apart from meetings of the church board, the election of new board members, and so forth.

peace treaty, and with the two parties as onlookers, a burial service was held. A funeral procession with a coffin containing the Union Jack departed from Church Square and all along the government house. After the normal liturgies, the Union Jack was then buried by sympathisers of the British cause. A tombstone was erected inscribed with the following words: "In loving memory of the British flag in the Transvaal, which departed this life August 2nd 1881 in its 5th year. In other times none knew thee but to love thee- resurgam" (Lamb 1974:207).

Kruger was elected as President after the First Freedom War and was sworn in in front of the original government buildings on Church Square on 9 May 1883. The Reverend Bosman – from the then NHK – conducted the service. Kruger made no secret of the fact that the Republic was to be a Christian state. He had many friends amongst Jews (e.g. Nellmapius and Sammy Marks), Catholics and even Free Thinkers, but he himself held an extremely conservative religious position. In fact, it seems that he had a dramatic conversion experience that changed his whole life (Nathan 1942:38).

Kruger had to be very cautious regarding his relationship with the other two Reformed churches, since he belonged to the smallest of the three (GKSA) and since the NHK was, at the time, the state church. Kruger himself, with fifteen other people, actually resigned from the NHK when the new church (GKSA) was formed in Rustenburg way on 10 February 1859 (Oosthuizen 1960:64).

It should also be remembered that the DRC and the NHK united during the middle eighties in order to form one united church. However, one local church within the NHK resisted this merger and, after a long court battle, the NHK started to function as a separate church again. Meintjes (1971:123) indicates that Kruger was very much involved in the merger issue. En route to Natal during a train journey he interviewed anyone who wanted to consult him on the problems between the two merging churches. However, he was also accused of creating more problems than he solved and of failing to solve the issues at stake. The Reverend Bosman claimed that Kruger had asked him to leave the united church and return to the NHK. Bosman (cf. Du Toit 1979:80-81) also made a point of referring to the political motive behind the request, given that the NHK supported the President and given the turmoil the country was experiencing at the time.

After having been re-elected on several occasions during the following years, Kruger left Pretoria on 29 May 1900 by train en route to Europe. He died in exile in Switzerland on 14 July 1904. He was buried in Pretoria on 16 December 1904 (Liebenberg 1988:176).

The original church building (1857), rebuilt during the sixties (cf. Engelbrecht et al 1952: 18), was destroyed by a fire in 1882. A new building was erected in 1885. When the two churches referred to above merged in 1886, this new building became the property of the new amalgamated church. However, when the new church was divided again on the basis of the court case referred to above, the church building became a bone of contention. The government bought Church Square in 1899 and the money was divided between the two churches involved. This church building was torn down in 1905 (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:40). The DRC then used this money to erect what is today known as the Bosman Street building (the name of the then pastor who remained within the amalgamated church). For its part, the NHK built a new sanctuary in Du Toit Street.

English-speaking community

The various circumstances of the English-speaking churches do not have a direct bearing on the topic discussed in this article. However, there are some important exceptions. First of all, it is worth noting that these churches were originally dominated by the theological thinking of the Afrikaans speaking community (although the official language was Dutch, Afrikaans was the language most commonly spoken). By the end of the century, there was a growing English-speaking community, most of whom were business people – as can be deduced from the advertisements in the seven newspapers published at the time (cf. Boyce 1989:1).

Initially, the state prohibited the Catholic Church from holding any public services. However, in 1870, Baron Carlos Pedro Barahona e Costa, the Governor of Kilimane, visited the Transvaal and Natal regions. He was made an honorary citizen of the Transvaal for the duration of his visit. On his insistence and request, the then Volksraad decided that, from then on, Catholics would be allowed to exercise their faith in public and that (male) members of denominations other than the three Reformed Churches would receive suffrage (Bulpin 1974:123). In the same year, a property was given to the Catholic Church. Constant Jolivet, who became the "Vicar Apostolic" of Natal in 1875, visited Pretoria right after the Annexation and held the first service on June 8, 1877. The first local priest was Andrew Walsh, who officially arrived in 1877 (Engelbrecht et al 1952:31).

Only short references will be made to the positions of the other mainline English speaking churches during this period. It could be argued that this information does not have a direct bearing on state-church relationships in the early history of the Transvaal. However, we decided to include these

remarks, because we felt that the histories of these other churches also contribute to our understanding of the developments in the relation between church and state in subsequent years.[8]

The first Anglican service in Pretoria was held in 1863. In 1869 a deacon with the name of Joseph Willes was stationed in the city. The services were led by lay-preachers. The first St Albans Church was built in 1872, the first Rector being the Reverend GW Sharley (1874), and the first Anglican bishop being Henry Brougham Bousfield. From 1879 onwards, the services moved to Schoeman Street (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:30).

The Reverend George Weavind was a well-known person during the first 50 years of Pretoria's existence. He started the Methodist Church in 1876 and worked until 1915. The first Methodist Church building was erected in St Andries Street in 1903 (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:55).

The official Baptist ministry started in 1889 under the guidance of the Reverend Brotherton. Later on, it was led by the Reverend HT Cousins and, in 1891, the foundation stone for/of the new building was laid by President Kruger. The Baptist Church encountered some financial difficulties and a number of pastors stayed only for a short time. A significant incident happened in 1899 during the Twentieth Assembly of the Baptist Union. According to Cross (1986:99), the assembly was organised by the Reverend Batts, who tried hard to reconcile people and calm the political turmoil that still existed after the Jameson raid (note that the Baptist Church was regarded as an English Church). During the assembly, the Reverend JB Heard from Pietermaritzburg was elected as new president of the Baptist Union (although he was on holiday in England owing to ill health). Cross also tells us that President Kruger attended the Assembly on Good Friday of that year, accompanied by a whole entourage of VIPs. Cross (Cross 1986:99-100) welcomed the guests and directly addressed the President through an interpreter. The President was invited to the pulpit and to respond to the written charter document presented to him. Apparently, Kruger took part in the worship service enthusiastically (Cross 1986:101). This incident had repercussions: when Heard, the newly elected president of the Baptist Union, learnt of what had happened in Pretoria, he resigned from the position. He was disgusted by the role that President Kruger played in the proceedings and called it "a disgraceful scene in our history", implying that within Baptist Churches there always had been a clear distinction between church and state. However, Cross (1986:107) claims that, in fact, Heard's own loyalty towards the British Crown was also a factor in his decision to resign.

The Reverend James Gray started his ministry in the Presbyterian Church on 2 March 1890. The foundation stone of the first building was laid by President Kruger on 12 April of the same year (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:46).

The first Jewish Synagogue was erected in Markt Street (later to become Paul Kruger Street) in 1897-1898. Sammy Marks, a friend of Kruger, was a member of the synagogue and played an important part in this development (Engelbrecht et al. 1952:56).

Black community

An important observation is that, right from the beginning, the white settlers in the Transvaal and specifically the Afrikaans-speaking churches reserved their churches for white people only. Gerdener (1930:628) illustrates this point by a submission from the church in Lydenburg, in which it was said that "the church wants to put on record that if the preaching of the Word would be done amongst the Black nations it would not be allowed in church buildings belonging to the White community. And furthermore, would any church exist or building be erected for Black people it should be done at their own cost or be generated by collections with the intention to conduct their religious services in a separate church or home" (Translated). It is reasonable to deduce that this was the thinking amongst the members of the Reformed Churches in Pretoria also.

We decided not to include the histories of individual black churches in Pretoria in this article. It is obvious that the black community at the time suffered owing to the close relationship between the church and state in the white community (cf. Esterhuyse 1986:36). We also felt that the history of the black churches deserve an in-depth treatment, simply because this history has been neglected for so long. Note, also, that during the period discussed in this article, black churches were practically non-existent.

As far as communion services were concerned, the Cape (1855), segregation was accepted because white worshippers were not prepared to partake of communion with coloured worshippers (Loubser 1987:12); this situation also had an impact on the church in the ZAR. The decision of the Presbytery of Albany in 1857, namely, to allow for a separate communion service for white members,

[8] Cf. the important contribution of Cochrane (1987) in this regard. He specifically deals with the period between 1903 and 1930.

served by their own deacons and with their own chalices, was discussed at the Cape Synod meeting of 1857. The well-known decision of Synod – to allow for "the weakness of some" and to opt for the possibility of separate communion services where necessary – was the result of this discussion, a decision based on practical problems rather than theological principles (Esterhuyse 1979:35-36).

The title of the MTh dissertation by ZJ Banda (1996): *From open resistance to cautious involvement: the emergence of mission in the Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika*, describes something of the situation that existed in the ZAR towards people of colour. The content of the dissertation depicts the resolutions that were taken by the General Church Assembly and the Council of the People to safeguard the position of the church and white people in general. He rightly states that the main factor behind all of these decisions was the fear of equality "gelykstelling" among white and black people (1996:30ff).

Discussion and evaluation

The historical data presented above will now be interpreted within a wider context.

The new settlers in the Transvaal brought with them their own church traditions, and continued to practise their faith in the same way that they had done when they lived in the Cape Colony. They were strong adherents of the Reformed faith and Reformed ecclesial practices. We also need to remember that, in their move to the northern parts of South Africa, the people who were the leaders of the different Voortrekker groups were also, to a large extent, their spiritual leaders. There were some exceptions, such as Erasmus Smit, the missionary and spiritual leader who accompanied Retief and others and who stayed in Natal until his death in 1863 (Spies),[9] but for the most part, the leaders who helped to establish the new settler civil societies were also people with strong religious convictions. The two Pretorius leaders (father and son) discussed above, as well as Kruger, exemplified this characteristic in more ways than one. As we pointed out earlier on, their opinions swayed the thinking of many in the early years. For instance, the civil leader Commandant General Andries Pretorius discouraged ties between the church in the Transvaal and in the Cape; and that basis, the board of the Transvaal church retracted an earlier decision (i.e. to strengthen ties with the Cape Synod) and became an independent church in the Transvaal. Pretorius's opinions and influence was reinforced by his son Marthinus's (the first President of the new republic) comments. MW Pretorius also played a very prominent role in getting Pretoria established as a town on church property – as did his father in Rustenburg (cf. De Wit 1999:50). Given the prominent role that religion played in the Transvaal at the time, one can conclude that both father and son encouraged a close relationship between the state and the church right from the beginning of Pretoria's history. The same was true of Kruger, who wanted to protect the church and the state by declaring that, as far as he was concerned, the Republic was a Christian state.

According to Banda (1996:42), it is worth noting that the decisions of the General Church Assembly a couple of years earlier were incorporated into the Constitution of the ZAR (1858). This meant that equality between whites and blacks would not be tolerated, the NHK would be the state church, no Catholics and no other churches apart from the Reformed churches would be allowed to conduct public worship services, only people belonging to the NHK could serve in the "Volksraad" (Council of the People), that no other authority is to be recognised other than recommended or accepted by the NHK and that the state would supply the needs of NHK preachers and teachers (cf. Banda 1996:42-43). Banda further observes that the laws indicate that the NHK was the state church in the ZAR (cf. Van der Westhuizen 1969:8). In other words, the NHK was constitutionally protected by the laws of the country. The church was even protected against other churches which wanted to operate within the republic. The NHK was the determining authority on spiritual matters. It was incumbent on the state to guard against any threat to the state-church relationship. Banda (1996:42) and Van der Westhuizen (1969:8) even refer to a combined meeting of the Council of the People and the General Church Assembly in 1853. In this instance the Council of the People was in favour of missionary work on the model of the Berlin Missionary Society, but the church was against it – Van der Hoff argued that if one would like to exclude some missionary societies, one should actually exclude all.

It is important to note that the underlying issue, namely the difficulties regarding the relationships between state and church, were by no means foreign to Reformed thinking and experience. The history of the settlement in the Cape of Good Hope testifies to this in that Jan van Riebeeck, as an employee of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and as Governor of the new colony, had to decide on religious matters. It should be remembered that his company was bound by the stipulation of the second charter of the *State General* (Netherlands Government) of 1622, which

[9] Cf. Spies http://www.groottrek.co.za/smit1_01.htm

held it responsible to further and protect the "public religion", namely the Reformed Church (Van der Watt 1976:2-4). Loubser (1987:4) says that it is against this background that we need to understand Van Riebeeck's prayer on his arrival in the Cape. His prayer was the expression of the Reformed "monoculture" (or *corpus christianum)* of the seventeenth century, which did not distinguish between the "religious" and "secular" spheres of everyday life. As a result, the charter the "Political Council", which controlled the halfway station at the Cape, also controlled the church. The result was that no other church or "deviant ideology" was allowed in the Cape. The Lutheran Church was officially allowed, by the state, to hold services only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[10] The English-speaking community encountered the same problems until 1820 because up until that stage the British Government – in order to calm the minds and emotions of the Dutch speaking community – did not allow any preachers who were not accepted by the ministers of the DRC (Hudson-Reed 1970:5). It was only after the arrival of the British Settlers in 1820 that the situation started to change.

Thus, from the beginning, the church was closely associated with the government, while its officials saw matters from the viewpoint of the authorities. In exchange, the church enjoyed almost total protection from these same authorities. But, once again, as in the Cape, the influx of a number of foreigners, in this case English-speaking people in the Transvaal, had a dramatic influence on the church-state relationship. Thus the growing numbers of people that the republican government (ZAR) had to deal with swayed the opinion of the government leaders on religious matters. Thus, for example, the state or "Volksraad" (Assembly of the People) eventually allowed members of the Catholic Church to express their faith in public.

In fact, one could go back much further into Reformed history and see that, as long ago as 1652, when Jan van Riebeeck came to the Cape of Good Hope, Calvin negotiated the same issue – the relationship between the church and the state – with the political government in Geneva. In the case of the church in Geneva, all twelve of the elders appointed to rule the church were also members of the city government. Although appointed to the eldership by the magistrate, these men were officers of the church and, as such, were not responsible to the city government. However, this did not alter the fact that the city council had the right to approve (or withhold approval of) the election of new ministers (Pauck [1956] 1983:129-130). To apply Heitink's (1982:307) insights to our situation: the leaders of government were the more affluent and influential of civilians ("burgers" in the Transvaal and in the ZAR), and these men also had influence in the affairs of the church. In short, the government exerted influence on the church via the elders. This naturally meant that there was no objection to the church, on the basis of its disciplinary code, actively intervening in the lives of its citizens.

To give an example: one of Calvin's innovations was the introduction of the yearly house visit by pastors and elders. Calvin also put enormous emphasis on church discipline and the need for the church to be pure. Without going any further into this matter here, it should be noted that Heitink (1982:306) claims that the issue of church discipline grew out of the judicial tension that existed between the state and the church during the Middle Ages. This, once again, emphasises the point that the same situation (more or less) occurred in the Transvaal in the 19th century. Apart from being religious leaders, the elders were also representatives of civic society within the framework of a new country.

The same link between house visitation and church discipline – notwithstanding his condemnation of Catholic confession – helped Calvin to forge a link with the confession practices of the early church. One of his chief concerns was to keep the church pure. However, as far as the Transvaal was concerned, "pure" not only referred to Reformed or doctrinal purity, but also to "racial purity". This point needs to be seen against the background of the trend in the Cape, in which whites (in the 1700s) started to see themselves as a distinctive group from everybody else, calling themselves "Christians" in contrast to people of colour. The wars against the Xhosas on the Eastern Border of the Cape Province strengthened this awareness, by which I mean that the colonists used to express their feelings toward the Xhosas as "heathen" (cf. Loubser 1987:5-6). They also felt that the Hottentots were not racially pure. Loubser (1987:6-11) describes some other trends in the Cape at the time. He (Loubser 1987:12) then quotes Karel Tregardt's remark, namely, that the equalisation of coloureds and whites was one of the reasons for the Great Trek (1834-1838). Esterhuyse (1979:34) refers in this regard to the famous Voortrekker diary of Anna Steenkamp, who said that the equality of coloureds and Christians was contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinctions of descent and faith. Loubser (1987:12) comments on this remark, and makes the point that, for the first time, the conviction was documented that God had ordained the divisions of colour and that these divisions must not be put to one side. As far as this article is concerned, this was an indication of the direction in which the people's theology in

[10] For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between church and state in the Cape, and especially the opposition that Lutherans experienced from state and church in the Cape before they were allowed to conduct separate public services in 1779, see Van der Watt (1976:66-78) and De Gruchy (2005:1-2).

the northern regions was to develop. The view that people of colour had no right to equal social or political status with whites was a theological view. Esterhuyse (1979:33-34) also makes the important point that we should not conclude from the Christian/heathen division that the "heathen" would, as soon as they were converted and baptised as Christians, receive free entrance into white society. Thus, as social stratification hardened into an ever more concrete reality in the Cape, baptism alone did not allow people into the white community. This thinking culminated in the constitutions of the Boer republics in the north (Free State 1854 and the ZAR 1859), by which coloureds were excluded from suffrage – unlike the situation in the Cape (in the Cape, suffrage was extended to coloureds in 1853 (Loubser 1987:12)). In the Transvaal, submission and obedience were expected from black people because they were not considered to be fit for the responsibilities of civilised life (Esterhuyse 1979:36).

Esterhuise (1979:37) and Van Jaarsveld (1978:7-12) highlight this issue by approaching it from another angle: they make the point that the aristocratic self-awareness of the Afrikaner was strengthened during the course of the 19th century with the idea of a calling and election by God – a view based on certain Old Testament passages. Also, and as a significant illustration of our point here, the State President, MW Pretorius, using religious themes, is quoted in this specific regard. In a speech dated 1871 he addressed his own people by saying: "… fathers of Israel, the elected of the Lord, who like the Israelites departed out of Egypt to escape the yoke of farao, moved out of the Cape Colony to be free from the yoke of the hated British government".

The strong emphasis on the idea within the NHK that this particular church should be *the church* for Afrikaners (cf. its previously well-known Article III)[11] should also be understood against this background. The main idea was that the church should be pure in all ways.

It should be noted that the first church amongst coloured people in Pretoria officially started in 1897 as part of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church ("NG Sendingkerk") (cf. VGK 1997: Eersterust 1897-1997). The work within NHK circles was driven by a society that began in 1929 (Banda 1996:82) – official church work itself started in 1951 (Banda 1996:79).

To reiterate: it is clear that there was an extremely strong bond between the church and the state in the Transvaal and later on in the ZAR. But it is also true that the close links described above started to be dismantled right from the start. The idea of one church and one state in the northern part of the country simply did not materialise. Very soon two churches were to be found within the Afrikaner community. That number grew to three before the end of the 1850s. Furthermore, the influx of English-speaking people, the starting of the ministries of English-speaking congregations, the eventual recognition of Catholic Church, the discovery of gold in the region, economic factors and so forth eroded the values so highly esteemed by both the church and the state at the beginning of the 19th century.

Further attention needs to be given to Cochrane's study (1987:3), in which he indicates that the English-speaking churches in many ways during later years did subscribe to the values of the state and that they, in partnership with the Afrikaans-speaking churches, actually became "servants of power" in that both supported the powers of domination.[12]

Conclusion

It is clear from the reasoning above that the very close relationship between the church and the state in the Transvaal developed more or less along the same lines as it did in the Cape; in other words, before the start of the Great Trek. Furthermore, the Trekkers also inherited and accepted the same theological thinking that was imbedded in the Reformed theological traditions of previous centuries and which manifested itself in certain ways in the Cape and, more specifically, in the Transvaal. It is also clear that the weakening of this close relationship (albeit over a long period of time) was in effect forced upon both the government and the church by external factors. In short, these changes were not the result of any proper theological thinking.

It is fair to say that the governing bodies of church and state in the Transvaal and the ZAR did not understand the consequences of their own decisions as far as the relationship between them was concerned, and nor did they learn anything from history (the then recent history of the Cape Colony, and Geneva in the 16th century).

From the perspective of church history, it would be interesting to see how the relationship discussed in this article influenced the further development of the church in general and even individual churches in Pretoria. This research still needs to be done. Also, and as we indicated earlier on, the histories of churches in the black community deserve special attention.

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[11] For an in-depth discussion of the development of this article and its impact on missions within NHK circles, see Banda (1996).

[12] Cochrane's. study covers the years between 1903 and 1930.

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