

# *Sentinel Points in My Life*

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## PART 1



## MY JOURNAL FROM A RACIST TO A BISHOP WITH NO COLOUR



## THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON APARTHEID & RACISM

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## MY JOURNEY FROM A RACIST TO A BISHOP WITH NO COLOUR

On 28 August, 1963 Martin Luther King, who was equally committed to non-discrimination and to non-violence, in other words to justice and peace, led a march of 250,000 people, three-quarters of whom were black and one quarter white, to Washington DC. And there he shared his dreams of a multiracial America.

*"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.*

*I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice ... and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.*

*I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character ...*

*I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists ... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers ...*

*With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.*

*With this faith, we will be able to work together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day ..."*

It is right for Christians to dream this dream. For God has given us in Scripture a vision of the redeemed as 'a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne' (Rev. 7.9). That dream, we know, will come true. Meanwhile, inspired by it, we should seek at least an approximation to it on earth, namely a society characterized by racial justice (no discrimination) and racial harmony (no conflict). Perhaps even the word "multi-racial" is not specific enough, and inter-racial would be better, since the South African Nationalist government described its vision of separate 'homelands' as 'multi-racial development' and that is not at all how the word should be used. I do not know a more careful definition of racial integration than that given by Roy Jenkins when he was Home Secretary: 'I define integration,' he said, 'not as a flattening process of assimilation, but as equal opportunity, accompanied by cultural diversity, in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.

Before considering the biblical basis for 'this dream', this is the world I was brought up in. Here is a summary of what life was like in South Africa from 1948 – 1994.

*"I was born in Johannesburg in 1951; three years after the Nationalist Government came into power. My schooling up to Matric took place at Christian Brothers College in Boksburg. After my schooling, I did my nine-month military training at 6 S.A.I. in Grahamstown and then went to study at the Bible Institute of South Africa in Kalk Bay.*

*Sadly, during these years I lived in my little world where everything took place with only whites, I never was exposed in any way to any black people and never heard a*

*sermon or heard any word about the evils of apartheid. But all around me, this was the situation for the black people”.*

Discrimination and prejudice against black people occurred long before 1948. British paternalistic attitudes, the interests of mine owners and industry, greed – especially for ownership of land, and white fear combined to strip blacks of many of their rights, for example the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts and the Masters and Servants Acts of 1856 and 1904. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, measures were taken to transform Africans from peasant farmers to labourers by passing the anti-squatting laws, and hut, poll and labour taxes. The success of these measures resulted in the Witwatersrand mine African labour force soaring in numbers from 3000 workers in 1887 to 100,000 in 1899.

Since 1948 however, the government has implemented a comprehensive policy based upon the idea that the best way to solve the problem of possible black domination over the whites is to separate these groups. In this way (a) group identities would be preserved (b) inter-group friction would be eliminated (c) white self-determination would be possible (though in fact this meant whites determining every other group's destiny). In this way, whites could retain power.

This policy has been variously designated baasskap, apartheid, separate development, etc. It actually adds up to racism and white domination because among the white community there are no separate homelands for English, Afrikaans, German or Portuguese cultural groups. Today there is another approach to retaining power. This involves the call of 'state security' against the 'total onslaught' so that various methods of accommodating limited changes may be enforced. The motive for staying in control is the same. The ideological justifications change.

The policy of apartheid was blatantly, discriminatory against 'non-whites' and has inflicted incalculable pain and suffering as the following brief list demonstrates. Note that while some aspects of apartheid are being changed, what follows is what has applied for over 30 years. This is the legacy we live with today.

1. **Dispossession of land:** The 1936 Land Act allocated 13% of South Africa to over 75% of the people and has created bitterness in blacks, which is beyond description.
2. **The Population Registration Act:** classifies all South Africans into one of several groups. Once allocated, one's course is set as to where to live, what sort of education to get, whether one has a vote or not in the central government. Much anguish was caused when members of one family were classified into different groups. Much humiliation, anxiety and resentment has resulted from official investigations into 'borderline' cases.
3. **The Group Areas Act** and related acts were used to clear up 'black spots' in urban and rural areas and to prevent blacks from buying land in 'white areas'. All the cities were 'white' and blacks were guest workers. So for years blacks could not own their own homes in black townships nor even develop businesses. An artificial shortage of over 20,000 homes exists today because government ideology has not (until very recently) allowed for black

urbanization, by discouraging the growth of black urban areas. This has led to over-crowding and to squatter settlements. In the process of 'clearing up' black spots and the creation of 'national states' about 3.5 million people lost their homes and were resettled elsewhere.

4. **Influx Control Laws**: required blacks to carry a passbook (dompas) at all times so as to prove they had work and a place to stay. The enforcement of this law by pass raids was a cause of great bitterness. Since the first laws were introduced, some 17.5 million people have been arrested and sentenced. About 200,000 people were imprisoned each year. A 'trial' lasted on average 30 seconds and the guilty party was sentenced to 3 months in jail or a fine. Whites have full freedom to move to any city to find work and are not subject to a web of laws, which entangle them.
5. **Migratory Labour**: practices allowed men to work on the mines and factories, but prevented wives and families from following them to urban areas. This suited employer for it was cheaper for them to build 'bachelor quarters'. The result has been a horrendous breakdown in African family life. Separation of husband/father from his family for 11 months of the year has caused all sorts of problems. Back in the 'home-land' women, children and old men remain behind to do the heavy work of farming and the growing family is left without a father figure. A circle of poverty exists in the reserved. Sexual needs are met in clandestine relationships. The rapid population increase is aggravated by migrant labour. Everyone suffers.
6. **The National States** have been created and thereby 3.5 million black South Africans automatically lost their South African citizenship against their will. Most of these 'states' are not economically viable, and are therefore dependent upon the central government. Rural poverty and malnutrition are serious problems. Men left to seek work on the mines or in the cities. The National States are meant to provide the opportunity for blacks to vote for their own leaders in their own areas and are in effect reservoirs of cheap black labour. This is designed (it seems) to prevent blacks from dominating whites by force of numbers, though the justification made is that this plan is supposed to make 'equal' rights for each group in its own area' possible.
7. **Inferior Education** for blacks is well documented. Less than 3% of black teachers have degrees. The government was spending 10 times more on each white child than each black pupil. Black people deeply resent this discrimination and suspect the motive is to keep them in an inferior position. Education is seen as an ideological tool of apartheid to train blacks to do manual jobs at low wages. Africans have had to pay for books while wealthier whites got them free. It is clear that black education is a highly political issue. Recently government spending on black education has increased sharply.
8. **No meaningful political channels** exist for urban blacks and the Asians. Local community councils are the highest level of appeal. Whites can go up through different levels of authority right to the central parliament. Whites have representation in the governing bodies that make laws which affect them. Blacks do not have this access to central government via MPs. The

tricameral system has complicated structures and procedures but none of these have resolved the issue of adequate black representation. In fact, it has entrenched race classification in the constitution of the Republic in a way that it was not previously present. The States of Emergency have been imposed following the spate of unrest which flared up largely because of black anger at being excluded from the new constitution.

9. **Wealth and Poverty:** There is a huge inequality in the distribution of wealth in South Africa. The top 10% of income earners (mostly whites) received 58% of the national income as reported recently. The lowest 40% of income earners (mostly black) received 6%. (34% under R500.00 pm).
10. **Many laws are discriminatory:** At the peak, there were hundreds of laws on the statute books designed to enforce separation with the brunt of the effects being borne by blacks (although non-productive financial costs to whites are a part of this loss). Many whites do not actually know what apartheid means in practice because this mass of laws hardly affects them. Apartheid has successfully separated South Africans from each other by the Group Areas Act leading to segregated housing, churches and schools. This means that separate (but rarely equal) amenities, transport, education, marriage laws and voting rights have been in effect, which have worked so 'well' that black and White South Africans have become strangers, in fact enemies, in their own land. Apartheid has been devastatingly effective, as Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd predicated ('it will be impossible for future governments to eradicate it').
11. **Infant Mortality Rates:** In 1983, the death rate of babies (number of deaths per thousand births) was 80 for blacks and 14 for Whites.
12. **Security Legislation:** Security laws have been passed which have eroded the rule of law leaving South Africans exposed to the repressive apparatus of the State and often dependent on the whims of officials. Opponents of apartheid have been silenced through house arrests and detentions without trial, banning order and through the imposition of a series of States of Emergency.
13. **A Minority Government:** A political party elected by a small minority of South Africans (approximately 1 million white voters in the 1987 election out of a total population of approximately 25 million) is by the very nature of the case totally unable to do other than look to its own interests, namely the white constituency. Even every conservative attempt to do so is viewed with deep suspicion.

## **RELATIONSHIPS AND STRUCTURES**

Almost forty years of legal separation has encouraged inter-group estrangement. Prejudices and stereotypes flourish in these conditions. Whites fear the 'black tide' and worry about losing their privileges and standards of living. But they pay for apartheid in the forms of high taxes, army service, sporting and cultural isolation and a pervading sense of fear, insecurity and isolation. Black anger and militancy is boiling over. Rising expectations demand to be met now. The Western world is indignant and repulsed by statutory racism and is bringing increased pressure to bear upon South Africa. The government points out that it can change laws but not attitudes, and that it can reform structures only a step at a time, slowly.

*In 1977 I was sent to Holy Trinity Church in Pietermaritzburg to begin my ministry which was to last for the next 30 years. Living in KwaZulu-Natal, I wanted to get involved in our missions and so my life was turned inside out. I established some incredible friendships with George Kubheka, Lot Ntuli, Moses Ndlovu and our C.E.S.A. ministers; they became my brothers.*

*I then encouraged our Church Council to raise the money and build a Church, a rectory, and put in a windmill in the Sweetwaters area. Once a week we would run a soup kitchen at the local school. At that time, in the 80's the political situation was horrendous. I would need to get a Police permit to visit my dear friends in Sweetwaters and one day was surrounded by a Zulu Impi. I thought they were about to kill me, but after some discussion, I prayed for them and went on my way. My deep love for the black people was growing, I managed to build a number of Churches all around the Province and the black people were now my priority as I clearly saw the evil of apartheid.*

***My conscience was plaguing me so much so, that in 1988 I preached a sermon at Holy Trinity Church, on the evils of Apartheid and Racism.***

*I had not slept for 2 days ... I was about to deliver my sermon... The Church was packed, people were standing in their hordes outside; lawyers and politicians came to hear what this young white conservative man was preaching. It was electric as I poured out my heart from the Bible. A local attorney was so moved he sent a copy to the President of South Africa, Mr. F.A. de Klerk and his Cabinet. I was labelled as becoming involved in politics, people left the Church, but I was at peace ... Later I became the Bishop of KwaZulu-Natal Province and tried to do all I could for the black members of our Church. I opened a Bible College, initially Trinity Academy Pietermaritzburg, now the KwaZulu-Natal Missionary and Bible College, for the training of pastors and missionaries for Africa. By the grace of God, I had now become a Bishop with no colour.*

It is clear that the apartheid social system has caused untold suffering to black people. It is a social experiment – social engineering of enormous proportions and of monstrous consequences. It is hardly possible to deny that these structures have become demonic in their evil effects. What has made matters worse is that sections of the Church of Jesus Christ have attempted to provide religious and biblical legitimization for this evil system thus discrediting the Gospel. In fact, the religious under girding of apartheid has rightly been called a heresy by world church bodies.

## 1. BIBLICAL ARGUMENTS USED FOR APARTHEID

### a. Genesis 9:18-29 – The Curse of Canaan

The curse was not on the Hamites, said by some to be the originators of the black races, but on Canaan from whom came Canaanites, the traditional enemies of the Israelites. In any case the words were spoken in a drunken curse and were not a divine decree. They were spoken by Noah not by God.

### b. Genesis 11:1-9 – The Tower of Babel

Here is portrayed God's plan to restrict human ambition and pride. He brought about a multiplicity of people and tongues, and established the human race over the face of the earth. This passage has no relevance to the question of apartheid as such.

### c. Genesis 21:10-21 – the Casting out of the Bond Woman and her Son.

This incident illustrates the evils of polygamy, and explains the later antagonism between Hebrews and Ishmaelites. However, there is no question here of different races since Ishmael was within the community, and had been circumcised by Abraham (Gen 17:11, 25).

### d. Joshua 9:23, 27 – hewers of wood and drawers of water

This story is recorded as a fact of history explaining how and why the Israelites imposed a servile status on the Gibeonites. It cannot be quoted as a justification of why coloured peoples should be regarded as being destined to serve white people all their days.

George Hoffman:

*“Certainly neither biological examination nor the Biblical evidence gives any support whatsoever to any form of discrimination on the ground of colour alone.”*

## 2. THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Apartheid is a theological issue:

a. It impinges on the doctrine of **GOD**

His justice  
His impartiality

Romans 2:11 “for God does not show favouritism”

b. It impinges on the doctrine of **MAN**

Romans 5:12 “as by one man sin entered into the world ...”

The unity of the race in Adam

c. It impinges on the doctrine of **REDEMPTION**

Rev. 7:9 “a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne.”

d. It impinges on the doctrine of the **CHURCH**

Galatians 3:28:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek – RACIAL  
Neither bond nor free – SOCIAL  
Neither male nor female – SEXUAL  
For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Therefore, theologically speaking, apartheid and racism is:

- ❖ Affront to God
- ❖ Evil System
- ❖ Discredited the Gospel
  - God
  - Man
  - Redemption
  - Church

### **3. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON RACE**

The Old Testament recognizes the fundamental unity of all mankind. Adam was made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Mankind is one in nature and experience. All men are a mixture of goodness and evil; all die; all are subject to moral and spiritual laws. As Creator, God is Father of all men, and recognizes in all races and peoples those who seek Him (Acts 10:34, 35). The Bible presupposes only one standard of final judgment. Men are judged in God's sight by their own inherent worth, and not by any outward differences. All people have a common origin and there is no basic difference in their biological make-up. (Acts 17:26)

God's saving purposes encompass all men (1 Tim. 2:4). Man's basic need is the same whatever colour of his skin, and God's provision to meet that need is in the one Cross (Rom. 3:22; 5:18; John 3:16). The physical appearance of man is an aspect of his life which concerns God least (Psalms 147:10). Different patterns of skin pigmentation have developed among men, but they provide no rationale for segregation. The Bible does not support a doctrine of inherent racial superiority.

When Israel was chosen by God to be a "special people unto Himself", this was not for her own sake but for the sake of all nations, that through her all the families of the earth should receive a blessing (Gen. 12:3). The prophet Amos made it clear that Israel's calling was not a capricious reward given to a favourite (Amos 3:2; 9:7). The 8<sup>th</sup> century prophets pointed out that since Israel as a nation had not been faithful to her high calling, God's promises and purposes would be fulfilled through a faithful remnant. The real calling of Israel was that she should be "a light to the Gentiles" (Isa. 42:6). It was never in the purpose of God that the people should give way to a narrow and vindictive nationalism. In the book of Jonah, we have a protest against such nationalism. Jonah was forced to realize the wideness of God's mercy shown in his compassion to the infant children of Nineveh, and even to the cattle there.

Our Lord, whilst recognizing the special relationship which Israel enjoyed (Matt. 10:6), nevertheless gave to His followers a worldwide commission (Matt. 28:19). In His personal dealings with men and women He showed a complete lack of racial prejudice (John 4:7; Luke 10:33).

Pentecost was a further illustration of the worldwide scope of the Gospel, although even the apostles were reluctant to shed their characteristic Jewish prejudices (Acts 10:34; 11:19).

The Apostle Paul goes out of his way to emphasize that with the Christian Church racial barriers lose their significance (Gal. 3:28, Eph. 2:11-16; Col. 3:11). The issue was sorted out at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:12-29). The reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in the unity of the Church was a sign to the world of God's eternal purpose to sum up all things in Christ. If as Paul states God is "no respecter of persons", He can even less be a respecter of

colour. The non-elect is not the Negro but the Gentile, whatever his race or colour. The Christian Church does not ignore differences such as sex, social status, race, etc., but in the power of the Spirit seeks to transcend them in a common relationship to the one Lord. Racialism may be defined as what happens when people recognize racial differences but do not accept the common humanity behind them.

#### 4. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### a. FOR THE CHURCH

The Church's Prophetic Responsibility.  
(Primarily to the State, not the media).



- i. The Condemnation of Apartheid as contrary to the Word of God.
- ii. The Exhortation to remove the Structures of Apartheid, in obedience to the Word.
- iii. The Support and Encouragement of the State in its efforts to obey God on this matter.

The Church's Priestly Responsibility (of Prayer)

- i. Praying for the Removal of Unjust structures
- ii. Praying for the State and its representatives that they might be encouraged and empowered for the work of reform.

##### b. FOR US INDIVIDUALLY

- i. A definite commitment to Biblical principles
- ii. Be welcoming:  
We ought to make positive attempts to reach out to other ethnic groups and where practicable to bring them into the fellowship of the local Church.
- iii. Be natural
- iv. Be hospitable
- v. Cultivate friendships across racial lines
- vi. Be alert to social needs



## **5. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR MULTI-RACIALISM**

We turn from the realities of racial mythology, prejudice and tension in the contemporary world to the biblical vision of a multi-racial society. It was thoroughly developed by the apostle Paul in his famous sermon to the Athenian philosophers (Acts 17.22-31). Ancient Athens was a centre of ethnic, cultural and religious pluralism. From the fifth century BC it had been the foremost Greek city-state, and when it was incorporated into the Roman Empire, it became one of the leading cosmopolitan cities in the world. As for religions, it is easy to understand Paul's comment that the Athenians were 'very' religious', for according to a Roman satirist, it was 'easier to find a god there than a man'. The city was crammed with innumerable temples, shrines, altars and statues.

What then was Paul's attitude to this multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious situation? He made four affirmations.

1. Firstly, he proclaimed the unity of the human race, or the God of Creation. God is the Creator and Lord of the world and everything in it, he said. He gives to all human beings their life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth, so that human beings would seek and find him, thought he is not far from any of us. For 'in him we live and move and have our being' and 'we are his offspring'. From this portrayal of the living God as Creator, Sustainer and Father of all mankind, the apostle deduces the folly and evil of idolatry. But he could equally well have deduced from it the folly and evil of racism. For if he is the God of all human beings, this will affect our attitude to them as well as to him. Although in terms of an intimate personal relationship God is the Father of those he adopts into his family by his sheer grace, and our brothers and sisters are fellow members of his family, nevertheless in more general terms God is the Father of all mankind, since all are his 'offspring' by creation, and every human being is our brother or sister. Being equally created by him and like him, we are equal in his sight in worth and dignity, and therefore have an equal right to respect and justice. Paul also traces our human origin to Adam, the 'one man' from whom God made us all. This is confirmed by the known homogeneity of the human race, which is asserted even by scholars who have no belief in Adam. Here is the statement of Ashley Montagu, the physical anthropologist: 'Concerning the origin of the living varieties of man we can say little than that there are many reasons for believing that a single stock gave rise to all of them. All varieties of man belong to the same species and have the same remote ancestry. This is a conclusion to which all the relevant evidence of comparative anatomy, paleontology, serology and genetics points. As for human blood, apart from the four blood groups and the Rh factor (which are present in all ethnic groups), the blood of all human beings is in every respect the same.'

This human unity is not destroyed by interbreeding. We should totally reject the fears of miscegenation entertained by Afrikaners, and Hitler's biological myth which is being revived by the National Front. In 1964 John Tyndall launched the "Greater Britain Movement, whose official programme said: "For the protection of British blood, racial laws will be enacted forbidding marriage between Britons and non-Aryans ... A pure, strong, healthy British race will be regarded as the principal guarantee of Britain's future. There is no such substance as 'British blood'.

2. Secondly, Paul proclaimed the diversity of ethnic cultures, or the God of History. The living God not only made every nation from one man, that they should inhabit the earth, but also 'determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live' (verse 26. Cf. Deut. 32.8). Thus the times and the places of the nations are in the hand of God. We cannot use this fact to justify the conquest and annexation of foreign territory, although even these historical developments are not beyond God's sovereign control. Probably Paul is alluding to the primeval command to multiply and fill the earth. For such dispersal under God's blessing inevitably resulted in the development of distinctive cultures, quite apart from the later confusing of languages and the scattering under his judgment at Babel.

Now culture is the complement of nature. What is 'natural' is God-given and inherited; what is 'cultural' is man-made and learned. Culture is an amalgam of beliefs, values, customs and institutions developed by each society and transmitted to the next generation.

Human cultures are ambiguous because human beings are ambiguous. 'Because man is God's creature, some of his culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because he is fallen, all of it is tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.'

Scripture celebrates the colourful mosaic of human cultures. It even declares that the New Jerusalem will be enriched by them, since 'the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it', and 'the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it'. (Rev. 21.24, 26). If they will enrich human life and community in the end, they can begin to do so now. Paul was a product of three cultures. By descent and upbringing a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews', he also possessed Roman citizenship and has absorbed Greek language and concepts. We too can enhance our human life by learning other languages and experiencing other cultures. We need to ensure, therefore, that a multi-racial society is not a mono-cultural society.

We must simultaneously assert both the unity of the human race and the diversity of ethnic cultures.

The South African Nationalist Party makes much of this diversity. South Africa, they argue, has never been a single nation, but a kaleidoscope of distinct racial groups, each with its own national and cultural identity. What is needed, therefore, they deduce, is not a single integrated state (the 'melting pot' model, but 'multi-national development' or 'separate freedoms', i.e. apartheid, each racial group preserving and advancing its own uniqueness. 'We do not want intermingling of racial groups in South Africa,' Professor Dr. J.C.G. Klotze has written, 'It is in accordance with Scripture that the ideal situation would be for each people to inhabit its own country' (Acts 17.26). Apart from the question whether 'nationalists' and racial groups' are the same thing, and whether 'nations' includes the latter, the South African apartheid policy seems to depend on two other errors. First, the assumption is that distinct cultures can be preserved only if racial groups are segregated from each other. But this is patently untrue, as we know in Britain where the Irish, Welsh, Scottish and English intermingle, while their cultural distinctives also survive. Not only is it unnecessary to keep apart in order to preserve our own cultures, but it is impossible to do so if we are to enjoy each other's, as God surely means us to do. Secondly, the assumption underlying the policy to segregate racial groups in order to preserve them is that to integrate them would inevitably mean to destroy them. But integration is not the same as assimilation, and does not necessarily lead to it. On the contrary, although intermarriage should be fully permissible, natural affinities and cultural tensions are likely to keep the number of mixed marriages comparatively small.

3. Thirdly, Paul proclaimed the finality of Jesus Christ, or the God of Revelation. He concluded his sermon with God's call to universal repentance because of the coming universal judgment for which God has both fixed the day and appointed the judge (verses 30, 31). Paul refuses to acquiesce of religious pluralism of Athens or applaud it as a living museum of religious faiths. Instead, the city's idolatry provoked him (verse 16) – probably to jealousy for the honour of the living and true God. So he called on the city's people to turn in repentance from their idols to God.

We learn, then, that a respectful acceptance of the diversity of cultures does not imply an equal acceptance of the diversity of religions. The richness of each particular culture should be appreciated, but not the idolatry which may lie at its heart. For we cannot tolerate any rivals to Jesus Christ, believing as we do that God has spoken fully and finally through him, and that he is the only Saviour, who died, and rose again, and will one day come to be the world's Judge.

4. Fourthly, Paul proclaimed the glory of the Christian Church, or the God of Redemption. It is clearer in some of the apostle's letters than it is in Luke's record of this sermon that Jesus died and rose to create a new and reconciled community, his church. Thus the flow of history is being reversed. The Old Testament is the story of human scattering, of nations spreading abroad, falling apart, fighting. But the New Testament is the story of the divine ingathering of nations into a single international society. It is hinted at here in verse 34 in which we are told that a few men believed, one of whom was named Dionysius, and a woman named Damaris, and a number of others. So here was the nucleus of the new community, in which men and women of all ages, and of all racial, cultural and social origins, find their oneness in Christ.

Since God has made every nation and determines their times and places, it is clearly right for each of us to be conscious of our nationality and grateful for it. But since God has also brought us into his new society, he is thereby calling us into a new internationalism. Every Christian knows this tension, and nobody more keenly than Paul who was at the same time a patriotic Jew and the apostle to the Gentiles. Christian 'internationalism' does not mean that our membership of Christ and his church obliterates our nationality, any more than it does our masculinity or femininity. It means rather that, while our racial, national, social and sexual distinctions remain, they no longer divide us. They have been transcended in the unity of the family of God (Gal. 3.28). Raymond Johnston is right that 'a proper understanding of nationhood calls attention to the human need for *roots*, as security and an identity mediated by the community, on the basis of which each individual knows that he "belongs" ...' Yet it needs to be added that in Christ we have found even deeper roots, and an even stronger security and identity, for through him God has called us into a new and wider unity.

The church must therefore exhibit its multi-racial, multi-nationalist and multi-cultural nature. There has been considerable debate in recent years whether a local church could or should ever be culturally homogeneous. A consultation on this issue concluded that no church should ever acquiesce in such a condition: 'All of us are agreed that in many situations a homogeneous unit church can be a legitimate and authentic church. Yet we are also agreed that it can never be complete in itself. Indeed, if it remains in isolation, it cannot reflect the universality and diversity of the Body of Christ. Nor can it grow to maturity. Therefore every homogeneous unit church must take active steps to broaden its fellowship in order to demonstrate visibly the unity and the variety of Christ's Church.' The Report goes on to suggest how this might be done.

## CONCLUSION

Only a true theology, the biblical revelation of God, can deliver us from racial pride and prejudice. Because he is God of Creation, we affirm the unity of the human race. Because he is the God of History, we affirm the diversity of ethnic cultures. Because he is the God of Revelation, we affirm the finality of Jesus Christ. And because he is the God of Redemption, we affirm the glory of the Christian church. Whatever policies for racial integration may be developed, we should try to ensure that they will reflect these doctrines. Because of the unity of mankind we demand equal rights and equal respect for racial minorities. Because of the diversity of ethnic groups we renounce cultural imperialism and seek to preserve all those riches of inter-racial culture which are compatible with Christ's lordship. Because of the finality of Christ, we affirm that religious freedom includes the right to propagate the gospel. Because of the glory of the church, we must seek to rid ourselves of any lingering racism and strive to make it a model of harmony between races, in which the multi-racial dream comes true.

