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**FROM HUMAN RIGHTS TO HUMAN WRONGS:
THE DRAMATIC ROUND-ABOUT-TURN OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN
PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

INTRODUCTION

The international Pentecostal movement is a young movement but it has already come a long way. If one of the pre-1910 Pentecostals could have taken a ninety-year-long sleep like the legendary Rip van Winkle, only to wake up in 2004, he would probably experience the modern day Pentecostal movement negatively. All the 'religious' practices that they left in their old churches and opposed vigorously are back: big buildings called churches, professional ministers addressed as *Pastor*, state recognition, young baptized Pentecostal girls and even pastor's wives wearing jewellery and make-up, Pentecostals participating in organized sport, churches participating in the war efforts of their countries and assemblies with a homogenous ethnic and racial composition.

This study is about the last two mentioned changes that occurred in the movement in South Africa. The early Pentecostal movement cared for the poor, it denied the extreme claims that nationalism imposed on citizens and it knew no racial barriers.

The Pentecostal Movement took root in a black church in Los Angeles, USA. One of its first leader was William Joseph Seymour, the son of liberated slaves. He had no education, yet drew literally thousands to his meetings in an old deserted AME building situated at 312 Azusa Street in downtown Los Angeles. Despite severe Jack Crow segregation laws, white and black

worshipped together. One of the early observers of the movement commented that *the color line was washed away in the blood*. (Bartlemann 54)

Even more miraculous, the whites came to be prayed for by Seymour and his black co-workers. Walter Hollenweger (1989) retired missiologist, and lifelong researcher of Pentecostal history and practice, calls the non-racialism of the initial period the real miracle and most significant development in spirituality rather than the phenomenon of speaking in tongues.

In the same radical way, the American Pentecostals were pacifists. And their pacifism was not of the other worldly, highly spiritual type. Frank Bartleman called World War I *the result of pride, greed, jealousy, hatred, hypocrisy, etc..kings and leaders, capitalists are chess men* (Bartleman, quoted in *Robins*, 11).

When the break with the past came, it was sudden and just as radical. Within a decade nearly the whole movement rejected pacifism.

Non-racialism did not fare much better. Seymour, the father of almost all Pentecostal denominations around the world, was soon rejected by the movement which he placed on the map. By the time the first major denomination was formed out of the Pentecostal revival in 1914, Seymour was not even invited. Neither were most of the other black leaders. And those who were invited were eventually ostracised during the Jesus Only controversy four years later (Nelson 253). By then the North American Pentecostal church was fully segregated.

The South African Pentecostals have a similar history. The movement started as a multi-cultural one (co-incidentally also in a black church) but it soon divided along colour lines. In apartheid South Africa the white Pentecostals took racial segregation a step further than their American and European counterparts.

I have confided myself to the Apostolic Faith Mission of SA, single section (formerly known as the white section). It was not a paternalistic choice to exclude the black churches. However, until the mid-eighties the black, Indian and so-called colored sections were all subordinates of the white section.

The South African situation, where apartheid was introduced more or less while the second generation Pentecostals worldwide were starting to climb the social and economic ladder, is in many ways a microcosm of the world. Here the results of the co-option of the movement into mainstream society are more visible than elsewhere in the world, e.g. in the United States, where the period of integration into society coincided with the civil rights movement and the social integration of African-Americans.

THE BIRTH OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

John Lake arrived in Cape Town on his South African Mission with a team, including his co-worker Tom Hezmalhalch. When Lake arrived in Johannesburg, the Apostolic Catholic Church in Zion was already well established in South Africa (Burger 110).

The black Zionist church in Doornfontein, Johannesburg, invited Lake and his team and he started his first meetings there. The meetings were not restricted to blacks and the white Zionists soon started flocking to the church. When the hall in Doornfontein became too small, Lake and his group moved to a white Zionist church at 88 Bree Street, Johannesburg.

JOHN LAKE AND APARTHEID

John Lake's position on racial issues is somewhat dubious. He is both praised as the proclaimer of a non-racial historical Pentecostal gospel (Burton 30) and the father of segregation

policy in South Africa (Burger 151). There seems to be some truth in both views. Gordon Lindsay wrote a book on the life of John Lake, based on interviews with the latter. According to one of these oral traditions, Lake was the brain behind the segregation laws of the Union of South Africa. Lake gained influence with the Prime Minister, Genl. Louis Botha, after he had assisted him during a national crisis. General Botha later invited Lake to address the parliament on the racial issue.

I outlined a native policy and submitted it to the Government. On receipt of this I was invited to come to Cape Town and address the Parliament on this issue [.....]. This policy, as outlined by me was practically adopted by the Boer party in toto. (quoted in Lindsay 54).

De Wet (158) concludes from this that Lake was a proponent of racial segregation. However, a more balanced view would be that Lake supported political segregation, but not necessarily church segregation. There is ample evidence that Lake did not conduct segregated meetings. He started his ministry in Johannesburg in a black Zionist church in Doornfontein. At Lake's second meeting, the first whites already attended (Burton 50) and after moving to the white Zionist church in Bree Street, Lake did not tolerate discrimination against blacks in his church (Burger 146, Burton 52 – 53).

Lake was paternalistic, and possibly a proponent of political segregation, but he was not a racist. In one of his early letters to the Upper Room Mission in Los Angeles, Lake complained that the Afrikaner has, like the Southerner, a strong prejudice against blacks, but added that God is changing the hearts of many white workers and caused them “*to love the natives*” (quoted in Burton 55 - 56.)

One has to agree with De Wet (160) that “never in his wildest dreams would Lake have

foreseen that the practical arrangement he advocated would change into the rigid apartheid ideology.”

RACE POLICIES: THE AFM AFTER LAKE LEFT

PL le Roux, who succeeded Lake as president of the AFM in 1913, was a missionary all his life. He studied at the feet of Andrew Murray, well-known Scottish dominee who made a tremendous impact on the church life and theological direction of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) (Burger 217).

The issue of divine healing and baptism, but also the ‘liberal’ way in which Le Roux dealt with the black people in his congregation, made him a target for the church board of the local white Dutch Reformed Church. He and his black congregation left the DRC and initially joined the Apostolic Catholic Church in Zion of John Dowie (Burger 222).

When Le Roux heard Lake and Hezmalhalch, he left the Zionist movement, joined the AFM and soon became one of the leaders of the movement. When Lake left South Africa in 1913 a Brother Greeff acted as president for a while before Le Roux became president, a position he held until 1943.

The foundation for a segregated church was already laid under the leadership of Lake shortly after the formation of the AFM when they decided to separate the baptism of blacks and whites. Burger (176), historian and president of the AFM, sees a socio-political reason for this decision:

.. during the first few months White and non-White (sic) were even baptised together. At the end of 1908 some Afrikaans speaking brothers came on the executive council. The fact that they understood the history and the nature of the

racial feelings in South Africa better, possibly contributed to the gradual separation of the races (Burger 175). Translation NH.

Neither the pioneers nor Burger tried to give a theological reason for the separation or even question its validity. The pioneers possibly deviated from non-racialism because of white racist pressure rather than theological conviction.

The decisions of 1908 to separate the baptism of blacks and whites took its cause and at an executive council meeting of 1917 it was decided, “*White, Colored and Native peoples have their separate places of worship. Further that in the case of certain worthy colored families attending at the Central Tabernacle the matter be left in the hands of the Spiritual Committee*” (AFM Minutes of the Executive Council 1917, 161). The term *worthy colored families* is not defined. At the same meeting it was also decided, “*that we do not teach or encourage social equality between Whites and Natives*” (161). While the AFM did not follow the political route of the big Dutch Reformed Church in developing the political ideology of apartheid, decisions like the above placed the church in a position where they found it easy to plug into the policies when apartheid was introduced after World War II.

THE EARLY ATTITUDES TOWARDS PACIFISM: 1908 UNTIL WORLD WAR I

Social issues were almost completely absent in the early minutes of the AFM. The first reference to any political issue is probably to be found in the minutes of the executive council on 19th August 1914. The executive noted that one of its members was to visit Genl. Koos De La Rey (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council, 1914, 161).

No reason is given for the visit to Genl. De la Rey, a Boer general during the Anglo/Boer War. With other generals, they led a rebellion against the government of the prime minister, Genl. L Botha, who declared war against Germany in solidarity with Britain in 1914. The council also appointed a delegation to attend the “*Union*”, probably a reference to the government (ibid. 162). It seems as if the executive wanted to be in contact with both the government and the rebels.

At the same meeting the executive moved that the church should send a circular on the subject of war to the members and a letter to the government, noting their objection to taking up arms, but “willing to serve in other capacities if it becomes imperative” (ibid. 163).

From the minister’s answer (quoted in AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council, 1914 165) and from the standard declaration that members submitted to the government, it is clear that the AFM did not only want exemption from service in a combatant unit, but “*exemption from military service*” The “*willingness to serve in other capacities*” seems to mean that the AFM considered alternative extra-military duties and not service in a non-combatant unit.

According to Burger, the executive council decided that young men could join the forces in non-combatant units. (Burger 269) However, he gives no reason why the “*other capacities*” should be interpreted in such a way. The initial AFM position was rather one of total non-participation in war.

BETWEEN WORLD WAR I AND II

The pacifist stand remained the official position of the AFM after the war. In December 1923, after the government had changed the Defence Act, the executive for the first time

accepted non-combatant service in a memorandum to the minister. (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council, 709). However, the memorandum states that the church accepts “*our obligation to assist in bearing (the government’s) burdens in times of peace and war and not object to do so, but only in a non-combatant capacity*” (ibid. 709). Although total exemption from military service is still ideal, the church accepts the possibility of non-combatant service in the army.

WORLD WAR II

When war in Europe became an acute possibility at the end of 1938, the executive decided to endorse the position taken in an article printed in a publication of the Assemblies of God in the USA, Pentecostal Evangel (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council, 2045). In The Comforter of 15th November 1938, an article written by E S Williams (4) was published in paraphrased form as the official position of the AFM on war.

Like the earlier position of PL Le Roux, Williams rejects war because the AFM “as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace believes in unconditional obedience to His Godly commands and instruction [.....]” (4).

But the Mission also states its “unswerving faithfulness” to the government and assures it that the church will be subjected and “assist wherever it is humanly possible in accordance with our Faith” (ibid. 4). More significant is the fact that the church states that it does not see it as the right of a Christian church to dominate the conscience of the individual, but only wants to give its members guidelines in connection with military service (4).

This article marks an important change of course for the AFM. Non-combatant service is no longer just a possibility under extreme circumstances, but has become the official position and members are even allowed to go to war if their conscience allow them to do so.

In August/Sept 1939 an anonymous article on war and military service, claiming to be the view of the AFM, appeared the *Comforter* (*Oorlog en Militêre Diens [War and Military Service]* 5 -7).

The article was a restatement of the radical non-involvement position of the AFM. It concludes by saying that Christians are commanded to love their enemies and not to seek revenge (Rom. 12; 19). Therefore, the choice is clear: The World or Christ? (7).

It seems as if the executive did not approve of the article. At a meeting on 12 September, 1939, it was decided to reprint the Williams's moderate article and the consequent declaration of the executive and to forward a copy to the minister of defence. (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council , 12 September 1939, 2138).

However, the 'classical' Pentecostal position was not to be suppressed so easily. In Jan/Feb. 1940 the *Comforter* reprinted an article by AL Heywood from the official publication of the Assemblies of God in the UK (Heywood 9).

In the March/April 1940 issue of the *Comforter* another article, written by Donald Gee, the British Pentecostal leader, was reprinted from *Redemption Tidings* (18). Gee also expressed the anti-participation sentiments. He points to the inconsistency of making shells, bombs, aeroplanes, etc. and then object later to personal military service (18).

With the war escalating, the Comforter published another article by a British Pentecostal, Fred Squire, in Sept./October. 1940 (3 - 6). This article is the first attack on total pacifism that ever appeared in AFM literature.

Squire finally opts for non-combatant service, but he questions the morals and wisdom of many conscientious objectors (3, 5) and he explicitly states that nobody has the right to condemn those who wish to join the forces (5). Although Squire still maintains a preference for non-combatant service, the movement towards the approval of direct combatant military service is clear.

The article caused a stir in the AFM. On 3 December, 1940, the executive decided to publish a statement in the Comforter, claiming that the article was not published with any political motives (AFM Minutes of the executive council 2250). The statement was published in the Comforter, November/December, 1940 (DJ du Plessis, 5). The general secretary also appealed to “God's people not to associate themselves with any political movement” .

However, it was not Squire's article, but rather the practical war situation that moved the AFM towards a militarised position. Many members joined the forces not only in non-combatant units, but also in combatant capacity. Since the middle of the war, testimonies of soldiers started to appear in the Comforter (Putter 19)

In the executive meeting of 5th January, 1942, it was decided to approach the government "for the appointment of full time chaplains in the army" (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council 2342) In the Comforter of February, 1942, the general secretary reported that brother H A De Vries of Pretoria volunteered to be the first chaplain to the troops in the North and was on the point of leaving (15) .

During the rest of the war, the question of pacifism or non-combatant participation was never raised again. P J van den Berg, the second chaplain, died after only a few months in North Africa.

Although the AFM remained theologically faithful to the pacifist tradition in the thirties and forties, it is obvious that several radical changes appeared in the practices of the church. Progressively, the church moved away from pacifism.

RACE POLICIES BETWEEN THE WARS

While politics was not high on the agenda between 1920 and 1948, the political sentiments in the church favoured the more liberal ruling United Party to the right wing National Party. When GR Wessels, who later became vice-president and Nationalist senator, was elected on the executive council in 1927, he was the only pro-Nationalist on the council (Personal interview between Burger and Wessels, quoted in Burger, 325).

Afrikaner nationalism flourished in the forties. The centenary celebrations of the Great Trek¹ in 1938 gave rise to a new enthusiasm. The link between nationalism and the memory of the Great Trek inevitably brought an amount of racism with it. Pentecostals were not impressed by Afrikaner nationalism. In his Christmas message of 1938, PL Le Roux compares the enthusiasm for the Trek centenary with Christian attitudes. (*Christmas Message from the President and Others* 1). His message is clear: Pentecostal Christians should not share their loyalty to the gospel with a national loyalty.

¹ The pioneer movement of mainly Afrikaner settlers to the northern parts of southern Africa in an attempt to escape British rule.

Two months later, in the face of growing Afrikaner nationalism, Le Roux wrote a second article. (*Die Gees van die Tyd en die Gees van God [The Spirit of the Age and the Spirit of God]* 6, 7) He dedicates the first section of the article to the threat of Nazism and Fascism to the world and South Africa (6). Le Roux sees a clear relationship between "*the spirit of the time*" and the policy of some great Afrikaners. He mourns the fact that Christians fail to see the dangers in this policies and do not understand that this message is contrary to the gospel. Le Roux rejects the Hitler worship of the Germans, anti-Semitism and fascist policies before addressing the South African situation (7)..

There can be no doubt that the Afrikaner leaders - whom Le Roux saw as proponents of *the spirit of the time* - were in his mind also connected to Nazism. He says that the enemy (Satan) knows that South Africa is a Christian nation and it is a sign of his shrewdness that he uses former ministers (probably dr. DF Malan, then leader of the Afrikaner nationalist National Party) to spread this spirit. Le Roux concludes that many churchgoers amongst the Afrikaner nation are clearly ripe for the deceit of the anti-christ. They are only waiting for a strong leader (6).

One would expect that this anti-National Party attitude would have lead to support for the war efforts of Genl. Smuts in 1939. However, the executive maintained a pacifist position despite strong pressure from the international Pentecostal movement. One can only conclude that President Le Roux and the executive opposed both the pro-German, pro-Nazi sentiments of the National Party and the pro-war sentiments of the government from a Pentecostal, theological perspective.

When president Le Roux retired in April 1943, an era came to an end.

THE POST-WAR PERIOD: THE END OF PACIFISM

During the first two decades after World War II very little had been said about war. Initially the church maintained its non-combatant stance. In 1949 the general secretary A. Schoeman wrote a letter to inform the congregations that members of the AFM could get exemption from military service in a combatant unit (Vrystelling van Militêre Opleiding [Exemption from Military Training]1949).

However, in 1955, Pastor J T du Plessis, minister of Krugersdorp and member of the executive council circulated a "*provisional*" viewpoint on several issues on behalf of the spiritual committee. According to Du Plessis the state has the right to command his subjects to do military training because God gave the power of the sword to the King (Du Plessis, JT. 3).

Military service is not against Scripture: Soldiers who came to the Lord, were not commanded to leave the army, but only to be good Christian soldiers. (ibid. 10)

This statement is the first example of partial pacifism in the AFM. The church or the individual can only refuse military service if the government is unjust. Both total pacifism and non-combatant pacifism are rejected and the critical attitude towards the state is almost completely lost.

The next step was to appoint a full-time military chaplain. In 1961 the AFM requested the government to appoint an AFM pastor as chaplain. (AFM. Minutes of the Executive Council 5757) and in January, 1964 commandant Pastor WJ Rheeders, a former police sergeant, was appointed as the first full-time military chaplain of the AFM (ibid 6259).

Pastor Rheeders did not write much, but from what he wrote in the Comforter and from what was written by and about him, he seems to have been a chaplain in the mould of Pastor De Vries, rejoicing in the salvation of soldiers rather than encouraging them to be good soldiers

(*Geestelike Werk in die Weermag* 11, *Ons Pinkster Jongmanne Presteer* 12 and Du Plessis, PW 9 - 11).

After the death of Past, Rheeders, Pastor JJ Liebenberg succeeded him in Pretoria, while Pastor SF du Plessis became chaplain in the Cape (*In die Weermag* (author unknown) in *Comforter*, May, 1970, 24). Liebenberg wrote several articles for the *Comforter*. Shortly after he took up his new position, he wrote an article, in the *Trooster/Comforter* (19 - 20). His article is an apology for the Defence Force. Instructors have a good knowledge of people, they are not hard people, and they want the best for the servicemen. Only people without discipline who do not want to bow will have trouble in the forces. (ibid. 19)

Liebenberg wrote several other pro-war articles in which he propagated a right-wing, anti-communist, pro-apartheid militarism. Although these articles were not official statements of the AFM, it was nevertheless printed in the official organ of the church.

The roundabout turn of the AFM is nowhere better illustrated than in an article F P Möller (jr) (4 - 7)..

This is not an official statement by the AFM, but nevertheless portrays an important viewpoint in the church. Möller was a member of the influential Committee for Doctrine Ethics and Liturgy and vice-rector of the theological college of the AFM. Möller rejects the idea that aggression and violence can never be legitimate for a Christian. He identifies a pacifist (wrongly spelled as a passifist) as a person with "*hang shoulders and a halo over his head*".

This ignorance of someone as influential as Möller, is a clear indication of the full turn of the wheel in Pentecostal attitudes and ethics. Pacifism or a non-violent lifestyle is not only

completely unknown to one of the most prominent and influential theologians. He even describes it as a false doctrine.

THE AFM AND AFRIKANER NATIONALISM AFTER THE WAR: THE RISE OF THE NEW ORDER

In the period immediately after the war the AFM underwent several drastic changes; its attitude towards war and politics being two of the most important. The changes were spearheaded by an unofficial group of young Pastors, commonly called the *New Order* who wanted to improve the image of the AFM in society. *The new order* was personified by two prominent Pastors, G R Wessels, who became vice-president of the AFM in 1943 at the young age of thirty, and JT Du Plessis who became Pastor of Krugersdorp in 1946 and member of the executive in 1949.

The *New Order* quickly gained momentum under the leadership of vice-president G R Wessels, general secretary, A J Schoeman and JT Du Plessis. In a letter to Prime Minister J G Strydom in 1956 asking him to appoint G R Wessel as a senator, Pastor Du Plessis states that the AFM has not been the bearer of Afrikaner culture. He adds that GR Wessels, his brother David du Plessis and others have done important work to incorporate the AFM into the national life of the Afrikaner, and concludes: "Today, thank God, the AFM is a pure Afrikaner church". Translation NH (Du Plessis, JT, *Letter to prime prime_minister JG Strydom*).

The influence of the *New Order* can be seen very clearly in the drastic changes that took place in both the attitudes and the practices of the church since 1946. Burger (130) does not subscribe the changes to the influence of the *New Order*. He nevertheless calls it times of *many changes*.

It was in the attitude of the church towards the government that the biggest changes took place. While the AFM has never been a reactionary church and while it supported the old United Party, it nevertheless kept a critical distance. Therefore, the church was able to maintain its own opinion on important matters like military service and insemination. Burger (310) correctly links the acceptance of combatant service with this new attitude towards government.

The *New Order* did not stay clear of party politics. On the contrary, it soon became evident that they had a definite political agenda. They soon involved the church very deeply in the political ideology of the National Party. In as early as 1952 Pastor GR Wessels joined forces with the government in their then popular fight against communism. He preached advertised sermons against communism in halls all over the country. These meetings drew big crowds and Pastor Wessels became a well-known figure (Burger 326).

Although the AFM still had a strong English-speaking contingent in the late 1940s, the New Order concentrated mainly on the Afrikaners. The New Order wanted to change the church on two fronts: they wanted to bring the liturgy and worship of the church more in line with Reformed liturgy, and they wanted to link the church closely to Afrikaner culture (Burton 30).

The election of GR Wessels as a Nationalist senator in 1955, gave the good intentions of the “New Order” a fatal blow. His election was both politically and spiritually controversial. The National Party gained power in 1948 with the election promise to implement “apartheid”. One of their first aims was to remove the so-called coloreds from the common voter’s roll. The removal could only be done by changing the constitution of the Union of South Africa, and in order to change the specific article, a two-thirds majority was needed in a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament. After several unsuccessful attempts to change the constitution, the National Party

decided to extend the senate in order to give them the necessary majority. GR Wessels was one of the new appointed senators.

The heartbreaking stories of the influence of apartheid on the people come from the assemblies. In the early fifties the general secretary sent a circular to all assemblies, both white and so-called colored, asking them to see to it that white members worshipping in so-called colored assemblies should be encouraged to join white assemblies, since joint worship was not the policy of the government (it was the time of the implementation of the Group Areas Act and the hated Separate Amenities Act) and neither socially acceptable (Schoeman Circular from the General Secretary).

The spirit of the letter soon gained its own momentum and colored believers worshipping in white congregations became the target. Goodwood, today one of the biggest assemblies in the so-called single or white section, is a good example of how apartheid was enforced in the assemblies. At a special church board meeting on Friday July 20, 1956, the color issue was recorded for the first time in the minutes (AFM. Minutes of the church board of the AFM Goodwood, 75). A so-called colored sister wrote a letter requesting an audience with the church board. She felt that she was pushed aside by the assembly because of her color.

It was decided that we notify Sister Willemse officially that she is no longer a member of this assembly, and as far as the color issue is concerned, it was she who raised the idea, which was never mentioned by the Pastor or the church board (75).

On Sept. 7, 1956 it was decided to seek the face of the Lord for guidance on the color issue (ibid. 77).

This pattern was followed in several other assemblies. To my knowledge, Potchefstroom (Bezuidenhout) and Oudtshoorn (Isaacs) were among the assemblies who soon followed the example of Goodwood.

The attempts of the New Order were not without success. The AFM was invited to conduct short devotions on the radio, the church gained a good image in the white society and it built good relations with the government.

But the price was very high. Du Plessis laments the close relations that developed between the church and the National Party, which he feels is paralyzing the church today (Theron 308). He has confessed his own participation in this process at several .

Throughout the years of Verwoerdian apartheid, the AFM never raised its voice against the crude oppression of the vast majority of the people. The forced removals of 3,5 million people, the banning of hundreds, if not thousands, without a chance to defend themselves, the detentions of thousands without trial and the vulgar implementation of the dehumanizing Mixed Marriages Act and art. 16 of the Immorality Act, never even raised an eyebrow amongst white Pentecostals. On the contrary, there are indications that the white section of the AFM actively supported the system.

The clearest sign of the church's insensitive political approach of those years is to be found in the new constitution of 1961, which stated that members are white baptized members, while the church also has "*non-white (sic), that is Indian, colored and Bantu followers*" (Private Law No. 24 of 1961, articles 1 and 2 of the statutes).

The AFM never had these pressures from the international world. On the contrary, in 1955 GR Wessles, vice-president of the AFM of S.A., was one of the key speakers at the International Pentecostal Conference in Stockholm (Lederle 29).

However, in the same year Pastor Wessels was also elected as a National Party member of the extended senate on the South African Parliament with the blessing of the AFM.

The international Pentecostal community remained silent. According to Hollenweger there were some delegates in Stockholm who were disturbed by Wessels' involvement in politics, but the issue was never raised in the open sessions because "we did not want to quench the Spirit".²

CONCLUSION

It was only when the era of reform started in South Africa that the AFM took a second look at itself. In Sept. 1990 the three black sections (colored, African and Indian) gave expression to the declaration by merging. After the democratization in South Africa, the African National Congress won the first democratic elections in 1994. The change of power and the end of minority rule changed the attitudes in the white church. Within two years they merged with the black churches and prepared a confession for the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions sittings on the churches and apartheid. This second round-about turn requires a study on its own. Suffice it to say perhaps the realities of Nelson Mandela as the first black president, and his reconciliatory attitude was the real reason for the changes in the AFM. Or it might be that the church did not want to be marginalised

Developments in South Africa can only partially explain the paradigm shift of Pentecostals worldwide. The AFM and other white Pentecostal churches were clearly influenced by the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, the policies of apartheid and the general political atmosphere in South Africa after World War II. However, South African internal politics do not explain a similar

² A comment he made on my paper, **THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN APARTHEID: THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE REDISCOVERY OF THE BLACK ROOTS OF PENTECOSTALISM FOR SOUTH AFRICAN THEOLOGY**, Printed in J. Jongeneel, op. cit., 117-139, at the European Pentecostal and Charismatic Research Conference in Utrecht, 1989.

move from pacifism to supporters of war efforts in the United Kingdom, which did not experience a nationalist revival comparable with that of the Afrikaners.

Neither does it explain the almost ideological racism of the white American Pentecostal movement after the war. Even when the civil movement under Martin Luther-King and others transformed American society in the sixties, the Pentecostals were some of the last to come to the party.

One tends to accept Tinney's theory that Pentecostalism is racist in definition (32). This theory, however, ignores the fact that Pentecostalism started as a non-racialist and multi-ethnic movement. Similarly, rival theologies (especially Calvinism) look at Pentecostalism as an otherworldly spiritual movement with its head in the clouds. There is of course evidence to support this view.

The emphasis on *saving the soul*, the money and effort that go into evangelism, and the almost total rejection of social action, defines Pentecostals as a political irrelevant movement. Since heaven is the final objective and destiny of Pentecostals define in this way, human rights and human dignity stand in the back of the row.

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