

**Podium and/or Pulpit?
D.F. Malan's role in the politicisation
of the Dutch Reformed Church, 1900-1959**

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Introduction

Since 1994, the Dutch Reformed Church has had to come to terms with its apartheid legacy.¹ Not only has it had to apologise for providing the apartheid-ideology with a theological justification, but it has also tried to shed its image as “the National Party at prayer”. In a recent newspaper article, theologian George Hofmeyr described the legacy as follows:

Die ... kernprobleem vir die NG Kerk in die vroeë jare van apartheid was dat die Nasionale Party en die kerk gevaarlik na aan mekaar beweeg het ... die preekstoel [is] te dikwels vir die parlamentsbanke verruil ... In die proses het die NG Kerk se dominerendste dominees (afgelei van die Latynse dominus) die redakteurstoel as die gou(e) middeweg tussen die teologie en die politiek beskou.

Dit was in 'n stadium toe predikantestatus, redakteurstatus en ministeriële status die Afrikanerdom (soms letterlik die dom Afrikaner) verblind het. Dié betrokke drie fases was toepaslik op dr. D.F. Malan as grondlegger en deels op dr. H.F. Verwoerd as hoofargitek van apartheid, asook op dr. A.P. Treurnicht.²

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1. F.M. Gaum, *Die verhaal van die Ned Geref Kerk se reis met apartheid, 1960-1994 n getuienis en n belydenis* (Hugenote Uitgewers, Wellington, 1997).
2. *Rapport*, 2 Oktober 2005: “The core problem for the Dutch Reformed Church in the early years of apartheid was that the church and the National Party moved dangerously close to one another ... the pulpit [was] too often exchanged for the parliamentary benches ... in the process, the DRC's most dominating *dominees* (taken from the Latin *dominus*) regarded the editor's chair as the golden [quick] mean[s] between theology and politics. This was at a time when ministerial status, editor's status and cabinet status blinded the *Afrikanerdom* (sometimes literally the dumb Afrikaner). These particular three phases were applicable to Doctor D.F. Malan as founder, partially to Doctor H.F. Verwoerd as main architect of apartheid, as well as to Doctor A.P. Treurnicht.”

The common perception that has been created, is that ministers of the church did not respect the division between church and state, which made it easy for many of them to enter politics. According to this view, the Dutch Reformed Church, to which the majority of Afrikaners belonged, colluded with the National Party in order to strengthen both its own position, as well as the domination of the Afrikaners in South Africa.

To date, hardly any research has been undertaken to substantiate these perceptions. Some work has been done with regards to the relationship between the origins of apartheid and the Dutch Reformed Church,³ which generally focuses on the church's mission policy in the nineteenth century as the origin of segregated worship. In contrast, little has been written about the church's relationship with the National Party. Church historians have, in fact, been especially mum on the issue. Indeed, although the church seems to be preoccupied with shaking off its apartheid legacy, hardly anything has been written about this period in the church's history. The most recent general history of the Dutch Reformed Church consists of the four volumes by Van der Watt. These volumes were published through the course of the 1980's and are written in an Afrikaner-Nationalist vein.⁴ The most important and most recent work on the Dutch Reformed Church and apartheid is the book edited by Johann Kinghorn, *Die NG Kerk en apartheid*,⁵ which was published twenty years ago.⁶ Anyone searching for a more recent perspective of the Dutch Reformed Church's history, has to be content with extracts from the general works by Hofmeyr and Pillay,⁷ or Elphick and Davenport.⁸

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3. For example: H. Giliomee, "The weakness of some: the Dutch Reformed Church and White Supremacy", *Scriptura*, 83, 2003, pp 212-244.
 4. For example: P.B. van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1824-1905* (NG Kerkboekhandel, Pretoria, 1980).
 5. J. Kinghorn (red.), *Die NG Kerk en apartheid* (Macmillan Suid-Afrika, Johannesburg, 1986).
 6. Other works that deal with the issue, but which unfortunately are not comprehensive enough, are T. Sundermeier (ed), *Church and Nationalism in South Africa* (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1975); R.T.J. Lombard, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en rassepolitiek, met spesiale verwysing na die jare 1948-1961* (NG Kerkboekhandel, Transvaal, 1981); as well as the highly polemic work by J.H.P. Serfontein, *Apartheid, change and the NG Kerk* (Taurus, Emmarentia, 1982).
 7. J.W. Hofmeyr and G.J. Pillay (eds), *A History of Christianity in South Africa I* (HAUM Tertiary, Pretoria, 1994).
 8. R. Elphick and T.R.H. Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa a political, social & cultural history* (David Phillip, Cape Town, 1997).

Nothing has been written about D.F. Malan's relationship with the church after he left the pulpit in 1915, but allusions are aplenty. Dunbar Moodie has dubbed him the leader of the *Volkskerk* position within the Nationalist movement,⁹ and few historians have failed to mention his ministership when pointing to the close relationship between the Dutch Reformed Church and the National Party.¹⁰ The common perception which emerges from such allusions, is that Malan left the pulpit for the podium in order to preach to the entire Afrikaner *volk*. His close links to the church meant that he supported the church's campaigns for issues such as the banning of mixed marriages and the elimination of racially mixed residential areas,¹¹ in return for support for his political party. The impression that one therefore forms, is one of Malan the politician, as a church insider, thus drawing the church into the political sphere. The problem with this perception is that it leads the reader to assume that Malan was an active member of the church intelligentsia and that he represented the views of the Dutch Reformed Church and vice versa.

Closer examination of documentary evidence reveals that Malan was a far more complex figure than this stereotype allows. He was a critical and independent thinker, without ever being a disciple of any particular system or ideology – apart from Afrikaner Nationalism which, as this article will show, he never regarded as an ideology in the first place, but rather as a belief-system. His relationship with religion and the church was nuanced and not as closely tied to the church's structures as one would be prone to believe. He did not keep up with developments in theology and philosophy after he entered politics in 1915, and therefore missed out on the intellectual watershed brought about by the First World War. Thus he was forced to draw on the intellectual reserves that he had built up before 1915.¹² His inner circle did not include any leading clergymen,¹³ which further rules him out of active membership of the

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9. T.D. Moodie, *The rise of Afrikanerdom Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980).
 10. For example: P.J. Furlong, "Improper Intimacy: Afrikaans Churches, the National Party and the Anti-Miscegenation Laws", *South African Historical Journal*, 31, November 1994, p 67; G. Hofmeyr (red.), *NG Kerk 350 Eenhonderd bakens in die geskiedenis van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1652-2002* (Lux Verbi BM, Wellington, 2002).
 11. Gaum, *Die verhaal van die Ned Geref Kerk se reis met apartheid*, pp 9-10.
 12. University of Stellenbosch, J.S. Gericke Library, Document Centre (hereafter US Library), D.F. Malan collection (hereafter DFM), 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", p 11.
 13. H. Malan – L. Korf, 10 February 2005; Notes compiled by H. Malan, 9 February 2007.

church intelligentsia, and, as this article will show, his views were sometimes at odds with those of the church on points of theology and even the apartheid policy. While his background in theology might have shaped his world-view – and as a result many of his views would inevitably have been similar to those of the Dutch Reformed Church – making him the leading representative of Dutch Reformed opinion in the Western Cape would be overstating the case.

This article focuses on D.F. Malan's relationship with the Dutch Reformed Church by re-examining his views on religion, nationalism, church, and state, in order to provide the reader with a more nuanced view of his relationship with the church. In order to do this, this article argues that Malan made a distinction between systems of belief on the one hand, and formal institutions on the other. In Malan's view, there was a difference between the church and faith, as there was a difference between the ideology of nationalism and the formal arena of party-politics and government. However, in his mind, these formal institutions, although institutionally separate, had to be based on the same belief-system, Reformed Christianity and Afrikaner Nationalism, thus bringing them together as different branches of the same tree.

Malan's theological background

D.F. Malan was born in 1874 to a Western Cape wine-farming family.¹⁴ The family's religious orientation was Evangelical Reformed,¹⁵ which was typical of the era since the Great Revival, led by such men as Andrew Murray, had swept through the area only a decade prior to his birth.¹⁶ The Great Revival left the Cape Afrikaners fervently pious. There was a strong emphasis on personal conversion and the highly charged emotional experience that accompanied it. In order to avoid eternal doom, the individual was required to make drastic changes in his or her life, while those who had not yet been converted, were regularly reminded of God's wrath and the inevitable suffering in Hell.¹⁷ Not surprisingly, the most hallowed books in the Malan household were the Bible and Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*.¹⁸

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14. D.W. Kruger (red.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek III* (Tafelberg Uitgewers, Kaapstad, 1977), p 577.
 15. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", p 3.
 16. H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners Biography of a People* (Tafelberg Publishers Limited, Cape Town, 2003), pp 208-210.
 17. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 208-210.
 18. H. Malan – H.B. Thom, 4 July 1980, p 10. Re the importance and impact of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, see: I. Hofmeyr, *The portable Bunyan a transnational history of The Pilgrim's Progress* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2004).

The young Malan was interested in studying law, but his intensely religious parents refused, stating that lawyers were paid to tell lies. After completing a BA Mathematics and Science at Victoria College, Malan entered the Stellenbosch Seminary to study theology. He had a critical mind and completed a Master's Degree in Philosophy at Victoria College, while studying theology at the seminary, with a dissertation that dealt with Immanuel Kant. In later years, his professors told him that he was more of a philosopher than a theologian.¹⁹

The Stellenbosch Seminary owed its existence to a group of theologians who, in earlier decades, had dubbed themselves the "Orthodox group" and scored a tactical victory over the "Liberals". The members of the Orthodox group had all studied in The Netherlands at the height of the Réveil movement, a romantic movement that rejected the rational study of the Bible in favour of a return to a "pure" Reformed faith and Calvinist principles, with a focus on the inner-life of the believer. This meant that, at the time of Malan's enrolment into the Stellenbosch Seminary, the theology taught there was a few decades behind movements in Europe, and focused on faith and the individual's experience of religion, rather than on an academic approach to the Bible. Their approach was infused with Romanticism, which manifested itself in their explicitly patriotic approach to religion.²⁰ These men had all played a prominent role in the Great Revival and they all subscribed to Afrikaner Nationalism.²¹ Afrikaner Nationalism and the Dutch Reformed religion therefore became one at Stellenbosch.²² In the words of Professor J.I. Marais, a professor at the seminary under whom Malan studied, "Patriotism without piety is of little value."²³ This approach could clearly be seen in Malan's views in later years.

It is important to note that these were the years before Abraham Kuyper's Neo-Calvinist theology made itself felt in

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19. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32687, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", pp 3-4, 7-8; *Calendar of the Victoria College, Stellenbosch. Session 1896-1897*, p 44; US Library, DFM, 1/15/5, MA Report.
 20. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 205-206; G. Thom, "The development of theology at Stellenbosch from 1859-1919." DPhil thesis, Rhodes University, 1989, pp 70-72, 295; G.W. Brink, "Daniel Francois Malan (1874-1959): An Ecclesiological study of the influence of his theology." DTheol thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1997, pp 83-84, 87.
 21. Van der Watt, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk*, pp 16-17; P.H. Zietsman, *Die taal is gans die volk* (UNISA, Pretoria, 1992), p 10.
 22. Thom, "The development of theology at Stellenbosch", pp 78, 127-130, 207-208, 261, 264-265, 274-276, 306, 308-310.
 23. Thom, "The development of theology at Stellenbosch", p 274.

Stellenbosch. Kuyparianism was far more entrenched amongst Northern theologians, although its influence in the South should not be discounted.²⁴ The most significant aspect of Neo-Calvinist thinking was the concept of *soewereiniteit in eie kring*, or sovereignty in each sphere. According to this view, life was composed of various independent spheres – *lewenskringe* – which were independent of each other, but were each subject to God and the guidelines that He had set.²⁵

Shortly after the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, Malan left the Cape Colony to commence further studies in theology at the University of Utrecht in The Netherlands²⁶ – not at the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, which was founded by Abraham Kuyper and espoused his views on Neo-Calvinism.²⁷ It was in Utrecht that Malan's true academic formation took place – not in the lecture halls of the university as may be supposed, but in the living-room of his landlord, Professor J.J.P. Valeton, who was a member of the university's Faculty of Theology.²⁸

Valeton was an Ethical theologian. This branch of theology did not focus on dogma, but on the nature of truth. According to the Ethical theologians, all truth was revealed truth, which God revealed to the believer through his or her conscience.²⁹ The implication of such an approach, would be that one would never doubt one's conscience, thus making truth intensely individual and subjective and wholly indisputable. According to the Ethicals, only a believer was capable of knowing truth.³⁰

Valeton taught Malan that critical enquiry never threatens one's faith, thus enabling the young man to practice both. Valeton practiced the Historical Critical method, which is also referred to as Higher Criticism. This approach focused mainly on studying the context in which the books of the Old Testament were written. He would find that, for instance, the book Isaiah was written by two different prophets, but this fact did not

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24. For a discussion on the Potchefstroom Kuyparians as a sub-group within the Nationalist movement, see: Moodie, *The rise of Afrikanerdom*, in particular pp 60-62.
 25. G.J. Schutte, *Nederland en de Afrikaners adhesie en aversie* (T. Wever, Franeker, 1986), pp 146-151, 154-158.
 26. B. Booyens, *Die lewe van D.F. Malan die eerste veertig jaar* (Tafelberg-Uitgewers, Kaapstad, 1969), pp 60-61.
 27. Schutte, *Nederland en de Afrikaners*, pp 154-158.
 28. US Library, DFM, 1/1/205, D.F. Malan – Cinie Louw, 5 November 1902; DFM, 1/1/210, D.F. Malan – Nettie Fourie, 1 Februarie 1903.
 29. Brink, "Daniel Francois Malan (1874-1959)", pp 87, 120-123.
 30. O.J. de Jong, *Gesiedenis der Kerk* (Uitgeverij G.F. Callenbach BV, Nijkerk, 1980), pp 320-321.

diminish the book's existence or its meaning to the individual believer.³¹ Malan embraced this approach: in later years he gave a lecture in which he stated that the book of Jonah was not based on actual events, but consisted of myths and legends that God used to convey particular lessons to his flock in the same manner that Jesus used parables in the New Testament.³² The result was that Malan did not interpret the Old Testament literally. His eldest son also studied theology and when in later years he told his father that archaeologists had discovered the city of Nineveh, Malan was taken aback and did not know how to react.³³ This reaction does not fit the stereotype of an old-school *dominee*.

Malan's promoter in the Netherlands, Hugo Visscher, was a Kuyperian,³⁴ but Malan never made any mention of him in his correspondence. Instead, he lauded Valeton and later quoted him when delivering a lecture on Higher Criticism at a highly controversial symposium which was organised by Johannes du Plessis.³⁵

The topic that he chose to pursue for his doctoral thesis was more of a philosophical than a theological nature: he dealt with the Idealism of the philosopher Bishop George Berkeley.³⁶ The philosophers who influenced him most, however, were the German romantics Hegel, Fichte and Schopenhauer. Romanticism fed his nationalism and his reverence for the *volk*. Due to the influence of these Romantic philosophers, Malan's view of society was organic. This means that he was opposed to the Enlightenment notion of society as a piece of machinery that could be manipulated in any direction. Rather, he adhered to the view that society was an organism, subject to spontaneous growth over which no control could be exerted. For this reason, D.F. Malan cannot be placed in the same category as the social engineers, such as Hendrik Verwoerd. Social engineering was alien to Malan's world-view.³⁷

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31. Anoniem, *In Memoriam, Prof. Dr. J.J.P. Valeton Jr.* (Firma H. Ten Hoet, Nijmegen, 1912), pp 14, 19.
 32. US Library, DFM 1/1/299, "Referaat gelewer by geleentheid van 'n teologiese simposium, gehoude te Montagu ongeveer 1910."
 33. Danie Malan – B. Booyens, 7 November 1965; US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", pp 76-77.
 34. Brink, "Daniel Francois Malan (1874-1959)", p 111.
 35. US Library, DFM 1/1/299, "Referaat gelewer by geleentheid van 'n teologiese simposium, gehoude te Montagu ongeveer 1910"; Brink, "Daniel Francois Malan (1874-1959)", pp 202-203.
 36. D.F. Malan, "Het Idealisme van Berkeley." DD thesis, University of Utrecht, 1905.
 37. L. Korf, "D.F. Malan: an intellectual biography, 1874-1915." MA dissertation, University of Johannesburg, 2005, pp 48-53, 62-75.

Malan emerged from his education, not as the follower of any particular system or theory, but as an eclectic thinker. He was able to combine principles from the jumbled assortment of ideas presented to him, in order to formulate an approach to any situation he faced.

As an individual, Malan was intensely pious. To him, faith was a private affair and, while a student, he expressed his disapproval at the Dutch's treatment of religion as a national and traditional affair, rather than a personal experience.³⁸ In this instance, it is possible to discern the influence of the Murray-brand of evangelism which had dominated his childhood. His son later recalled that his father hardly ever prayed by himself when in the presence of others, including his sons, and that, surprisingly, family prayers and bible readings were not a common ritual in the Malan household. He would undertake these rituals only if requested, and on special occasions. His wife later told his son, however, that when he prayed by himself, he became childlike in his piety.³⁹ Although he regarded the *practice* of religion as a private affair, Malan still looked at the world through religious eyes, and valued the influence of religion and the role that it had to play in the life of the *volk*.

Malan's student letters were dominated by his concerns about the position of the Afrikaners in South Africa. He knew that he wanted to work for his *volk*,⁴⁰ but he was as yet unable to explain how he would wed that to his career as a minister. These conflicting concerns led him to grapple with the relationship between church and *volk*, as well as religion and politics. To this must be added the influence of the Anglo-Boer War: it radicalised him, and his fervent Afrikaner Nationalism subsequently grew by the day.

Malan's views on religion and nationalism

Many people associate nationalism with politics. Malan, however, was able to combine it with his faith, turning it into a belief-system, rather than a political ideology.

God, according to Malan, used history and the unique circumstances of every country to shape nations, and since all nations were his creations, they had a right to existence. Malan believed that it was impossible to read the history of the world without coming to this

38. US Library, DFM, 1/1/205, D.F. Malan – Cinie Louw, 5 November 1902.

39. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", p 41.

40. US Library, DFM, 1/1/986, C.V. Nel – D.F. Malan, 2 Maart 1933; Excerpt from letter: D.F. Malan – C.V. Nel, 9 April 1903.

conclusion. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were dominated by British Imperialism, but by reading history, it was clear to Malan that God was opposed to imperialism, which sought to remove the differences between nations. He believed that, throughout history, disintegration in a society was far more likely to take place than integration; that the forces that break down empires were always stronger than the forces that build empires. According to Malan, the Bible story of the Tower of Babel, where God divided humanity into different nations and scattered them throughout the world, was an expression of this deep-seated psychological and historical truth: that the division in humanity in the shape of different nationalities, was the work of God and should be revered as such.⁴¹

At this point, it is important to re-emphasise that Malan never interpreted the Old Testament literally. To him, the story of Babel was not an actual event, but rather a myth that explained the existence of nations and the fact that they were God-created. Malan believed that the story ranked alongside the story of Adam and Eve, as part of the creation story. His son, who also studied philosophy and theology, later pointed out to him that the story of Babel was not part of the creation-story, but a later historical development, rooted in sin. Creation ended with Adam and Eve's exile from paradise, and thereafter history began developing. Hence, people were originally united, but sin compelled God to scatter them in order to prevent them from uniting in rebellion against Him. After listening to this argument Malan was clearly shaken, but he refused to let go of the firmly held theological view that had served him for so many years. To his son, he just repeated: "*God het die volkere in hulle verskeidenheid geskape*",⁴² thus ending their discussion. Malan did contemplate what he had heard and returned with an answer that justified his belief: the Reformed dogma *creatio continua*. God not only created at "The Beginning", but continued his creation task through his guidance of historical events. By guiding history, he was still creating and therefore, through the historical event at Babel, God had created nations.⁴³ By diverting the debate to whether or not God created only at the beginning, Malan managed to avoid the central criticism: that the division among nations was the result of human sin, and not part of God's original design.

41. US Library, DFM, 1/1/303, D.F. Malan speech, "Taal en Nationaliteit", 7 April 1911.

42. "God created the nations in their diversity"

43. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", pp 49-50.

God, according to Malan, *wanted* every nation to be different, just as he wanted every individual to be unique, since he had a special destination and calling for every individual and every nation. Therefore, because it was God who had created the Afrikaners, Malan stated that: “*Mijn nationaliteitsgevoel berust in de laatste instantie op een godsdienstige grondslag.*”⁴⁴

Just as nationalism and religion were synonymous to Malan, so history and religion were two sides of the same coin in his opinion. Malan believed that it was the hand of God that had guided the *volk* throughout its history, and continued to guide them in times of trouble.⁴⁵

*Met 'n volk is dit soos met 'n enkeling. Die vraag of ons volk reg van bestaan het, is ontsettend. Daar is egter nog 'n dieper vraag wat aan die wortel daarvan lê. En dit is dit Erken ons in ons volksgeskiedenis die hand van God? Dat ons as 'n volk bestaan, dat ons in die loop van die jare 'n volk geword het, is dit God se werk of is dit mensewerk? Is daar agter ons volksbestaan 'n ewige Godsgedagte wat aan ons volkslewe bestemming en roeping gee, of is dit alles 'n doellose, blinde noodlot? Dit is 'n vraag om diep oor na te dink. Maar nie net dit nie. Dit is 'n vraag van die beantwoording waarvan alles afhang. Erken en verheerlik God in ons wording en bestaan, en ons ganse volkslewe verkry daardeur hoë waarde en doel en krag en heiligheid. Breek aan die ander kant met die geskiedenis of behandel die geskiedenis op 'n onware, oneerlike of ongelowige wyse, verwyder met ander woorde God daaruit, en die ganse volkslewe versink daarmee in die diepte van onverskilligheid en karakterloosheid.*⁴⁶

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44. US Library, DFM, 1/1/303, D.F. Malan speech, “Taal en Nationaliteit, 7 April 1911”: “My nationalism rests in the final instance on a religious base.”
45. US Library, DFM, 1/1/342, D.F. Malan, “Concept Voorstellen”.
46. D.F. Malan, “Dan Kom Ek Om”, in S.W. Pienaar, *Glo in U Volk D.F. Malan as redenaar* (Tafelberg-Uitgewers, Kaapstad, 1964), p 16: “With a nation, it is as with an individual. The question of whether we as a nation have a right to existence, is cataclysmic. There is, however, a deeper question that lies at the root of it. And it is this: do we acknowledge the hand of God in our nation’s history? That we exist as a nation, that we have become a nation over the course of many years, is it God’s work or is it man’s work? Is there an eternal Godly idea behind our nation’s existence that gives our national life a destiny and a calling, or is it all aimless, blind fate? It is a question to reflect on. But not only that. It is a question on whose answer everything depends. Acknowledge and glorify God in our formation and existence, and our whole national life attains, through that, high value and purpose and strength and sanctity. On the other hand, reject history or treat history in an untruthful, dishonest or faithless manner, in other words remove God from it, and the entire national life sinks into the depths of indifference and characterlessness.”

Malan believed that recognising the work of God in one's history was an act of worship. If God was not given his due recognition, the *volk* would perish.

To Malan, it was a law of nature that independence of spirit would lead to an independent language. Language was an expression of the *volkziel*;⁴⁷ the two of them were inseparable. It was not just a means of communication between individuals, language was also the bond between the individual and the *volk* – through language, the individual became one with the *volk*. Not only was the individual bound to the *volk* through its language, but also

*De taal is het cement dat alles wat aan het volk eigen is – godsdienst, karakter, gewoonten, geschiedenis, kunst, literatuur – aan elkander bindt en dat aan het gebouw van het nationale leven vastheid geeft.*⁴⁸

It would therefore appear that Malan believed the *volk* to have a life of its own, with individuals having bonds with the *volk*. It had a national life, which one could liken to a public life, the sphere in which all the aspects that made up the *volk*'s identity – such as literature, art, history, and the like – came to play. Religion was also considered to be one of these aspects. This is an interesting contradiction since, as a student, Malan placed so much emphasis on religion being a private affair. He believed that religion should play a role in the *volk*'s national life, but it would rest on the piety of each of its members. Thus, Malan believed that the Afrikaners had to follow God out of personal conviction, not simply because it was a national tradition. This was his central criticism against the Dutch, but it may also be regarded as a contradiction in terms.

In Malan's world-view, language, religion and history formed the three legs of the tripod that was nationalism. It is impossible to examine any one of these aspects without keeping its interrelation to the others in mind.

At this point one understands that, to Malan, nationalism – as an offshoot of religion – was a system of belief, not simply a political ideology that found its expression exclusively in political institutions. He grappled with nationalism and religion as systems of belief, not as the formal institutions of church and state.

47. “the soul of the nation”

48. Malan, “Dan Kom Ek Om”, p 16: “Language is the cement that binds everything that is the nation's own – religion, character, habits, history, art, literature – together and gives stability to the building that is the national life.”

The position of the church

When Malan formulated his views regarding the formal institutions of church and state, it was in response to the 1914 Rebellion, which shook Afrikaner society and especially the Dutch Reformed Church. Some congregations wanted to censure the rebels, while others wanted to do the same to government troops who had acted against the rebels. In the face of a looming schism, Malan presented his views in the form of a list of suggestions to the Council of Churches which sat in Bloemfontein in February 1915.⁴⁹

According to Malan, the Dutch Reformed Church had a calling. Besides its work as a Christian church, God had also given it a special obligation to

*... het Hollandsch-sprekend Afrikaner volk met welks bestaan zij op zulke innige wijze verbonden is en dat het daarom ook altijd als haar plicht beschouwd moet worden om zelve nationaal te zijn, om te waken voor onze bijzondere nationale belangen en om aan ons volk te leeren in zijn eigen geschiedenis en wording de hand God te zien en verder om bij het Afrikaner volk levend te houden dat besef van nationale roeping en bestemming waarin gelegen is de geestelijke, zedelijke en stoffelijke vooruitgang en kracht van een volk*⁵⁰

One should keep in mind that, by asking the church to further the Afrikaners' national interests, Malan was not assigning a political duty to the church. In his eyes, nationalism was God-given, a belief-system, and therefore had nothing to do with politics.⁵¹

49. D.F. Malan, *Afrikaner Volkseenheid en my ervarings op die pad daarheen* (Nasionale Boekhandel Beperk, Kaapstad, Bloemfontein en Johannesburg, 1961), pp 19-27.

50. US Library, DFM, 1/1/342, D.F. Malan, "Concept Voorstellen": "... the Dutch-speaking Afrikaner nation with whose existence she is so intimately bound, and therefore she must always regard it as her duty to be national herself, to guard over our particular national interests, and to teach our nation about its history and formation at the hand of God, and furthermore, to keep alive in the Afrikaner nation the realisation of a national calling and destiny, in which is located the spiritual, moral and material advancement and strength of a nation."

51. US Library, DFM, 1/1/344, D.F. Malan – Redakteur, *De Zuid-Afrikaan verenigd met Ons Land*, 18 Februarie 1915.

When it came to formal institutions, Malan strongly believed in the separation between church and state – a point that he asserted in his farewell sermon in 1915:

*Nou wil ek vir geen oomblik ontken dat kerk en staat twee aparte inrigtings is en dat kerksake en staatsake daarom nie met mekaar verwar moet word nie. Elk het sy eie opdrag van God ontvang. Die staat mag daarom nooit bloot 'n werktuig van die kerk word vir bloot kerklike doeleindes nie. En die kerk op sy beurt mag nooit 'n speelbal van die staat, 'n onderafdeling van die politiek word nie. As reël is dit daarom baie gewens dat 'n dienaar van die kerk nie tegelyk 'n dienaar van die staat sal wees of hom sonder baie gewigtige redes met die partypolitiek sal inlaat nie.*⁵²

Malan had an initial disdain for party-politics, especially in relation to religion. He believed that religion ought never to be used for political gain. Political gain implied keeping quiet about things that may be considered inappropriate, draping facts in different colours, hiding others, and sometimes approving of and even lauding criminals. In contrast to political principles, religious principles had to further and uphold truth and justice and even defend these principles in the name of God. Religion had to expose and condemn anything that was criminal and unjust, both in friend and foe, individual and *volk*. Dragging religion into politics was to give preference to temporary interests over eternal ones and would, in fact, disgrace religion.⁵³ To Malan, it was better to be left outside in the political cold with one's principles intact, than to gain political ground on the basis of sacrificing one's principles.⁵⁴

Malan was able to find a way to rehabilitate party-politics by placing church and public life on the same plane, but in different branches, under God:

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52. Malan, "Dan Kom Ek Om", p 12: "Not for a moment do I want to deny that church and state are two separate institutions, and therefore that church affairs and the affairs of state should not be mistaken for one another. Each has received its own directives from God. Therefore, the state may never become an instrument of the church purely for the purposes of the church. And, in turn, the church may never become a puppet of the state, a sub-section of politics. As a rule, it is therefore advisable that a servant of the church is not simultaneously a servant of the state or that he becomes involved in party-politics without momentous reasons for doing so."
53. US Library, DFM, 1/1/216, D.F. Malan – D.F. Malan Senior, 4 Junie 1903.
54. US Library, DFM, 1/1/231, D.F. Malan – Steyn, 25 Mei 1904.

Die gangbare beskouing dat die Kerk alleen God se gebied is en dat die breëre volkslewe die gebied is van die wêreld, dat 'n mens God aan die een kant van die lyn moet dien en dat 'n mens dit nie doen of hoef te doen of kan doen aan die ander kant nie, druis regstreeks in teen die gereformeerde opvatting van Gods Woord, waaraan ons vashou ... Dit maak inbreuk op die ere Gods. Dit tas God se soewereine reg as Koning van die konings aan ... die volk moet ... met sy ganse volkslewe in al sy vertakkings voor die aangesig van God staan.⁵⁵

Malan therefore believed that politics should also honour God. It was, however, in Malan's view impossible for the state to serve God as long as the *volk* believed that politics were unholy, a terrain where it was impossible to serve God. By adhering to this ill-conceived belief, the *volk* was wrongfully releasing the government from its duty to ensure that it kept God in mind above all else.⁵⁶ Therefore Malan believed that the nature of the political sphere had to be changed. It had to be brought back to where it had belonged in the first place, namely under God's supervision and authority.

At this point, one may be tempted to point to the similarity between Malan's statement and the Neo-Calvinist principle of sovereignty in each sphere. Without being pedantic, the reader needs to appreciate that the difference lies in the metaphor. Malan and the Neo-Calvinists both drew from Reformed doctrine, but while the Neo-Calvinists referred to sovereign spheres, Malan spoke of branches and roots. He had an organic view of society, thanks to the influence of Romantic philosophy, an aspect not dealt with here, but which merits an article of its own. At this juncture, one can see how Malan, the eclectic thinker, combined Calvinism and Romanticism.

Malan drew inspiration from the Bible in terms of how politics had to be conducted. He contrasted Ahab, the clever political strategist, who gained position through conciliation politics (a not-too-subtle stab at the Botha-Smuts government), but lost his nation and his soul, with Elijah, the principled prophet of truth, who held on to God and, in spite of

55. Malan, "Dan Kom Ek Om", p 12: "The common perception that the church alone is God's domain and that the broader national life is the domain of the world, that one has to serve God on one side of the line and that one does not or does not have to or cannot do so on the other side, goes directly against the reformed view of God's Word, which we cling to ... It infringes upon God's honour. It infracts upon God's sovereign right as King of all kings ... the nation must ... stand before the face of God with its entire national life in all its branches."

56. Malan, "Dan Kom Ek Om", p 13.

persecution, finally won the day.⁵⁷ Politics, according to Malan, had to be conducted according to principles. He believed that the church's method of reaching agreement was far better than the methods used in the political arena. In politics the method of compromise meant that something had to be sacrificed, while within the church agreement was reached by adhering to the infallible Christian principles which everybody shared. Christian principles were an anchor in troubled times.⁵⁸

As far as Malan was concerned, it was impossible for any of the *volk's* most pressing problems, such as the issue of education and the Poor White problem, to be solved if they were addressed without God in mind. The only way in which there could be harmony between English-speakers and Afrikaners in South Africa was if both learnt to serve God in their political doings. Similarly, the only way in which the breach between the government and the *volk* could be healed (in the aftermath of the 1914 Rebellion), was if the both *volk* and government began to serve God. “*Die erkenning van God is die wortel van alle gesonde, kragtige volkslewe.*”⁵⁹

At this point, attention is drawn to the fact that Malan believed in the separation of the formal institutions of church and state, but that, in his eyes, they were equal before God and had to serve him according to a set of principles that formed part of a system of belief – they could function as separate branches, but the root of their actions had to be the same.

Malan's relationship with the church

The question that arises at this juncture is if Malan made such a clear distinction between belief systems and formal institutions, and asserted that the formal institutions had to remain separate, why then did the perception arise that he wedded the Dutch Reformed Church to the National Party?

A survey of Malan's documents reveals that he formulated his views in private correspondence, as well as a few of his speeches before he entered the political arena (in other words, before he acquired a broad

57. US Library, DFM 1/1/308, “De Profeet Elia en zyne beteekenis voor den tegenwoordigen tyd.”

58. US Library, DFM, 1/1/344, D.F. Malan – Redakteur, *De Zuid-Afrikaan verenigd met Ons Land*, 18 Februarie 1915.

59. Malan, “Dan Kom Ek Om”, p 13: “The acknowledgement of God is the root of all healthy, robust national life.”

audience). After he entered the political arena, he avoided speaking out on issues regarding the church itself, but his approach to politics was explicitly religious. In this way he wedded politics and religion in the minds of his supporters, who were never treated to a full exposition of his views on church and state. This perception was strengthened by Malan's promotion of informal cooperation between the two institutions, which in his mind did not contradict his dictum that the *formal* boundaries had to be respected. Instead, through informal cooperation, both institutions were acting on their common ground: their shared belief-systems of the Christian faith and Afrikaner Nationalism. Several isolated incidents between Malan and the church through the course of his political career (which spanned the years 1915-1954) form a pattern which reveals that he was not as close to the church as one would assume – but not as far away either.

Although Malan had strong views with regards to religion and nationalism, as a minister, he did not use the pulpit as a political platform. Instead, his sermons dealt with human sin. Twenty of his sermons have survived, but only one can be said to contain explicitly nationalist statements.⁶⁰

Upon entering politics in 1915, Malan relinquished his position as minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. The Rebellion of the previous year had shocked and divided Afrikaners and Malan was coaxed into becoming the first editor of the new daily, *De Burger*, as well as leader of the Cape National Party, by group of influential Western Cape intellectuals.⁶¹ Malan justified his leaving the pulpit by stating that God could be served in more than one manner, and that the extenuating circumstances created by the Rebellion necessitated this move.⁶²

Malan was one of a number of talented young *dominees* – one of the rising stars in the church – who was able to exert some influence in the aftermath of the Rebellion, when he urged the Council of Churches to not censure the rebels, to distance itself from politics, and to educate the *volk* about their calling. Malan's proposals were accepted but, at the Cape Synod meeting at the end of 1915 when Malan had already left the pulpit, his suggestions were toned down. Notably, the suggestions which were toned down, were those which contained references to the church's

60. US Library, see DFM 1/45/21, "Afgeschreven van aantekeningen van een preek door Dr. D.F. Malan, 16/9/11."

61. C.F.J. Muller, *Sonop in die Suide* (Nasionale Boekhandel, Kaapstad, 1990), pp 59, 61, 74, 79, 81, 85, 89, 107, 114-115, 119, 136, 138-139.

62. Malan, "Dan Kom Ek Om", pp 14-15.

national calling, and the *volk*'s national interests, in order to not offend Afrikaners who were not Nationalists.⁶³

With Malan as editor, *De Burger* carried explicitly religious content. However, very few of these articles came from Malan's own pen. A survey of his editorials through the course of 1915 reveals that he only wrote about the church once, which was when he defended it from political "attacks" by Louis Botha and other SAP leaders.⁶⁴ However, it cannot be denied that Malan's status as a former minister gave him political legitimacy in the eyes of ordinary Afrikaners, a factor on which his followers capitalised as much as possible.⁶⁵

After Malan had entered politics, the Dutch Reformed Church began to move in a theological direction that was different to the one that he belonged to. This process began with the appointment of the Kuypertian theologians, E.E. van Rooyen and B.B. Keet at the Stellenbosch Seminary in 1919. The *zeitgeist* of the nineteenth century, within which Malan's theology was shaped, also ended with the watershed of the First World War.⁶⁶ After 1915, Malan was unable to keep up with new trends in theology and philosophy and as a result, stagnated with regards to these two fields.⁶⁷

After Hertzog's National Party won the general elections in 1924, Malan became a cabinet minister, with the portfolios of Interior Affairs, Health, and Education. When the Dutch Reformed Church urged him to support a measure that would allow tertiary institutions to interrogate the religious beliefs of academics before appointing them, he refused, as it clashed with his own views on the issue. He did, however, tell the church that he would not stand in its way if it chose to pursue such a measure.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, he also supported a motion to include God's name in the preamble to the South Africa Act, which for all intents and purposes served as the Union's constitution, arguing that the *volk* wanted to see that the government acknowledged God's leadership.⁶⁹

63. J.S.J. Swart, "Die kerklike begeleiding van die Afrikanervolk soos wat 'De Burger' dit in sy aanvangsjaar stel." MTheol tesis, Universiteit van Stellenbosch, 1990, pp 167-168.

64. *De Burger*, 7 September 1915; *De Burger*, 11 September 1915.

65. *De Burger*, 18 September 1915.

66. Thom, "The development of theology at Stellenbosch", p 12.

67. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, "Herinneringe aan my Vader", p 11.

68. *Die Burger*, 3 November 1928.

69. *HAD*, 3 March 1925, column 553.

The Johannes du Plessis heresy case, which dominated the early 1930s, is an example which serves to demonstrate the fact that, as far as theology was concerned, Malan and the church occupied different positions. Du Plessis was a professor at the seminary in Stellenbosch who was accused by a group of Kuyparian theologians of undermining the authority of the Bible by distinguishing between sanctifying knowledge and purely historical passages. He was also condemned for accepting the results of Higher Criticism – a theological method to which Malan had adhered, and which the latter had openly endorsed and practiced while still a minister. Malan openly declared his support for Du Plessis.⁷⁰

Throughout his political career, Malan used religious metaphors in his rhetoric, and was conscious of the effect that they had on his audience. This is best illustrated by his deliberate depiction of a wartime alliance with communist Russia as an alliance with Beelzebub himself.⁷¹ He never tried to disguise his religious beliefs, thus cementing his image as a *Volksman* and a *Godsman*.⁷²

A contentious aspect of the relationship between the National Party and the Dutch Reformed Church, is the church's role in the formulation of the apartheid policy. Various arguments have been offered as to the origins of the apartheid policy, which cannot be dealt with within the confines of this article.⁷³ One of the important arguments to have been made, is that the apartheid policy developed out of the Dutch Reformed Church's mission policy, which in turn had been influenced by German romantic nationalism. This approach dictated that communities had to be converted to Christianity, but their cultures had to be kept intact. This could only be done if each community had its own, separate church structures.⁷⁴

During the 1940s and even earlier, the church itself regarded the race issue as one of utmost importance and did not hesitate to insist on

70. A. Olivier, "Die NG Kerk versus Du Plessis", in G. Hofmeyr (red.), *NG Kerk 350 Eenhonderd bakens in die geskiedenis van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1652-2002* (Lux Verbi BM, Wellington, 2002); Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 415-416.

71. Pienaar, *Glo in U Volk D.F. Malan as redenaar*, p 2.

72. "Man of the People" and "Man of God".

73. For example: S. Dubow, *Illicit Union Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995); D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948-1961 Conflict and Compromise* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991).

74. For an in-depth discussion, see: Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 447-486.

government action.⁷⁵ In February 1947, for example, a deputation from the Transvaal synod lobbied government and opposition leaders to cooperate in formulating a racial policy outside the realm of politics. Such a policy had to guarantee the survival of both races, black and white, and enable them each to develop themselves in order to reach a higher plane. Of paramount importance was that the survival of the white race was ensured, and that the policy would not lead to its bastardisation or demise.⁷⁶

In his reply to the delegation, Malan stated that church and state had to work together to solve issues around race relations. He also pointed out that the church's race policy and that of the National Party was, in fact, similar. The church was the one to establish the principle of apartheid by applying it in the field of education, an example which the state was following. According to Malan, the National Party had already formulated a policy with regards to the coloured community, and a commission had been appointed to formulate its policy towards Asians and blacks, which provided grounds for cooperation between the party and the church community.⁷⁷

This cooperation was in no small way achieved via the theologian G.B.A. Gerdener, who served on the commission that produced the Sauer Report, in which was articulated the National Party's racial policy in the run-up to the 1948 election. The commission invited submissions from ministers, missionaries, farmers, academics, professionals, and senior journalists, thus leaving more room for the church, as an interested party, to participate. Due to Gerdener's influence, doubtlessly, the Sauer Report contained a section on missions.⁷⁸ It stated that it would encourage all "non-whites" to make the Christian faith the basis of their lives and, more importantly, that it would not tolerate interference from any church, denomination, or movement which sought to undermine the principle of separate development⁷⁹ by means of creating confusion, or the

75. For example: Furlong, "Improper Intimacy".

76. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2273, "Memorandum oor die Kleurvraagstuk in Suid-Afrika, met die oog op die onderhoud van die Inligtingsdienskommissie van die Sinodale sendingkommissie van die N.H. of G. Kerk met Politieke Volksleiers te Kaapstad, 4 tot 6 Februarie 1947."

77. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2274, "Kort samevatting van die antwoord van Dr. D.F. Malan aan die Transvaalse deputasie, insake rasseverhoudings, op 5 Februarie 1947."

78. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 476-477.

79. It is interesting to note that the Sauer Report uses the term "*aparte ontwikkeling*", which is so similar to Verwoerd's later term, "*afsonderlike ontwikkeling*".

propagation of *volksvreemde*⁸⁰ viewpoints.⁸¹ This was assuredly a stab at the Ethiopian movement, as well as the English churches. The latter had been moving towards the ideal of a common society since the 1920s by providing a mission education that was based on the British model, and promoted Westernisation as well as a good command of the English language.⁸²

The section on missions was included in the abbreviated version of the Sauer Report which Malan released to the press on behalf of the party.⁸³ Interestingly, however, even though Malan incorporated aspects of the Sauer report into his own 1948 election manifesto, he did not refer to Christianity, missions, or the church when setting out his race policy.⁸⁴

One should take care not to overstate the influence of the Sauer Report,⁸⁵ or the influence of the church's ministers in its formulation. The head of the commission, Paul Sauer, one of Malan's closest confidantes, was far from religious – even his highly sympathetic biographers went so far as to label him “agnostic”.⁸⁶ As Giliomee points out, the apartheid idea was conceived by Western Cape journalists and politicians who formed part of D.F. Malan's inner circle and took shape between the 1943 and 1948 elections.⁸⁷ Yet Gerdener was not a member of Malan's circle and was not part of the endless stream of visitors to the Malan household. The only minister who regularly visited the Malans, was the minister of the local church, A.F. Louw, to whom Malan was related through marriage, and whose church the Malans attended.⁸⁸

The 1948 election took place in the middle of Pentecost. The church was less than thrilled at the prospect of politics dominating a period which it normally devoted to prayer and reflection. However, it responded to the dilemma by devoting its prayer meetings to prayers for the upcoming elections. Through the *Kerkbode*, the Cape church asked its members to pray that God would give them a government and a

80. “Alien”.

81. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2256, “Verslag van die Kleurvraagstuk-kommissie van die Herenigde Nasionale Party”, p 4.

82. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, pp 455-457.

83. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2255, “Nasionale Party se kleurbeleid”.

84. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2390, “Verkiesingsmanifes, 1948”.

85. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid*, pp 1-8.

86. D. & J. de Villiers, *Paul Sauer*, (Tafelberg-Uitgewers Beperk, Kaapstad, 1977), pp 105-106.

87. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p 465.

88. Conversation with H. Malan, 9 February 2007: Malan's older sister, Cinie, was married to A.F. Louw's brother, the missionary A.A. Louw.

leadership who would profess their belief in Him and who would endeavour to uphold the *volk*'s Christian basis and character. For this reason, members were asked to support Christian candidates. In letters to the *Kerkbode*, readers stressed the need to pray for God's protection against bolshevism and, in the light of the *Roomse Gevaar*⁸⁹, to make sure that their candidate was Protestant.⁹⁰

Die Voorligter was far more explicit: the editor, William Nicol, placed photographs of a stern Smuts and a smiling Malan and wrote about the state's God-given authority – which each citizen had to respect – but that the state, in turn, had the responsibility of ensuring that the environment was favourable for the growth and expansion of God's kingdom.⁹¹

Upon assuming the position of Prime Minister in 1948, Malan broadcasted a speech on national radio. In it, he acknowledged his party's and his government's dependence on God and the valuable contribution made by the Christian faith and churches to the *volkslewe*.⁹² On this note, he stated that he would seek cooperation with the church and asked the church to take an interest in the government and to pray for it.⁹³ It could effectively be said that Malan appointed the church as the government's watchdog.

The church was delighted that a former minister, who acknowledged his dependence on God, was at the helm. *Die Voorligter* placed a photo-article about Malan's walk from proponent to premier, and *Die Kerkbode* wrote about the close ties between church and state – parliament was flanked by the *Groote Kerk* and Saint George's Cathedral, and that bond was reflected by the manner in which the election was approached: “*Ons Christelike volk [het] in baie gevalle uit die biduur en uit die binnekamer na die politiek vergaderinge en die stembus gegaan ...*”⁹⁴ The Transvaal church responded to Malan's request for prayers by organising a special dedication-service for the entire cabinet in the Bosman Street church in Pretoria.⁹⁵

89. “Roman Catholic threat”

90. J. Lubbe, *Kleur Verskil – n perspektief op die NG Kerk in 1948 en apartheid as kerklike beleid* (Barnabas, Bloemfontein, 2002), p 22.

91. Lubbe, *Kleur Verskil*, p 23.

92. “National life”

93. US Library, DFM, 1/1/2409, “Radio Toespraak, 4 Junie 1948.”

94. Quoted in: Lubbe, *Kleur Verskil*, p 24: “Our Christian nation in many instances went from the prayer meeting and from the inner chamber to the political meetings and the ballot box.”

95. Lubbe, *Kleur Verskil*, p 24.

No doubt due to its mission legacy, the intellectuals within the church grappled with the policy of apartheid. In 1950, as a result of efforts by G.B.A. Gerdener, the church organised a conference on the racial issue which was attended by representatives from all of the “mother” and “sister” churches in the Dutch Reformed family, as well as the *Gereformeerde* and *Hervormde* churches. The conference decided to call on the government to institute total apartheid, which entailed the setting up fully independent African homelands, and the removal of Africans from “white industrial life”.⁹⁶

Malan, however, had long regarded total apartheid – which rested on the idea of fully independent black homelands – as impractical. He at one time related to his son that it was a theory far removed from reality – the fruit of late-night deliberations in the comfortable studies of two Stellenbosch academics, Piet Schoeman and A.C. Cilliers.⁹⁷ Therefore, when the church approached him with their conference deliberations, he rejected their suggestion of total apartheid as diplomatically as he could, stating that he regarded apartheid as formulated by the conference as the ideal, but impossible in practice.⁹⁸

Malan’s government never interfered in the affairs of the church. Its successor, however, did. In 1957, Verwoerd, as Minister of Native Affairs in the Strijdom government, passed a measure that allowed him to forbid blacks to attend church functions in white urban areas.⁹⁹ This upset Malan, as he believed that the state had crossed the line by interfering in the affairs of the church. However, since he was retired, there was nothing that he could do.¹⁰⁰

In 1960, a year after Malan’s death, Verwoerd rejected the decisions of the Cottesloe Conference, in which the church had questioned the wisdom of the apartheid policy in the wake of the Sharpeville massacre. This marked a turning point in the church’s history: over the next few decades, the church did not dare to question the government and silenced those in its ranks who did.¹⁰¹

96. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, p 484.

97. University of the Free State, Institute for Contemporary History, Sound Archive, PV 193, Tape 122, Interview: Reverend D.F. Malan.

98. Lombard, *Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerke en rassepolitiek*, pp 99-100.

99. Lubbe, *Kleur Verskil*, p 36.

100. US Library, DFM, 1/1/32689, Danie Malan, “Herinneringe aan my vader”, p 83.

101. H. Giliomee, “The Leader and the Citizenry”, in R. Schrire (ed), *Leadership in the Apartheid State* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1994), p 108.

During the Vorster and Botha eras, church and party moved even closer together. In 1979, it came to light that the church had secretly been receiving government funding to counteract opposition to apartheid at the World Council of Churches. The church's moderator, Vorster's brother doctor J.D. Vorster, justified the funding by stating that the church had accepted the money in order to fight the "enemies of our *volk*", thus blurring the distinction between church and *volk*¹⁰² in the same manner that Malan had done when he addressed the Council of Churches in the aftermath of the 1914 Rebellion.

Conclusion

To D.F. Malan, nationalism was a system of belief derived from God himself. To others, it was, and is, simply a political ideology. Although he fervently believed in the separation between the formal structures of church and state, he brought the institutions closer together when he stated that they should both adhere to God and the belief systems derived from God, namely Christianity and nationalism. On this basis, the two institutions could cooperate on matters of mutual interest, while still respecting each other's boundaries. This was evident from his invitation of the church's interest, cooperation, and prayers after the 1948 election victory. His invitation to cooperation, however, was more of a symbolic gesture. He never explicitly stated what form the cooperation would take and, once in power, rebuffed the church's attempts at becoming involved in the development and application of the apartheid policy. When it came to contentious issues, he was never a slave to the church, nor did he ever try to enslave it, as can be seen in the instances of the Johannes du Plessis case, academics' religious beliefs, and the church's suggestion of total apartheid.

By approaching politics religiously, Malan inadvertently wedded religion and politics in the minds of his supporters. He never explained the distinction that he made in his own mind between belief systems on the one hand and formal institutions on the other to his audience. It is doubtful whether his audience made the same distinction, which helps to explain how the impression of the Dutch Reformed Church as the National Party at prayer, was initially formed.

The realities of party politics also need to be taken into consideration. The church was a powerful lobby group, and the majority of Malan's supporters were church attendants. Malan was a schrewd

102. Giliomee, "The leader and the Citizenry", p 125.

politician and would not have been so blind as to alienate his constituency – since he made no distinction between church and *volk*, he was never in danger of doing so. It can be said, however, that he had more respect for the formal boundaries between church and state than his successors did. Just as apartheid was never a static phenomenon, but instead went through a number of phases, likewise the relationship between the church and the National Party was never static, and took on a new dimension after Malan's death. It can be said that during the Malan-era, the party and the church were courting. After Malan left the stage, the relationship became more intimate.

Abstract

The Dutch Reformed Church has been regarded as an apartheid collaborator due to its close relationship with the National Party, earning it the label “The National Party at prayer”. This perception is strengthened by the fact that a number of prominent Afrikaner Nationalist politicians were former clergymen. One of the most prominent, was D.F. Malan, the first of the apartheid prime ministers and the only former Dutch Reformed minister to occupy the position of head of government. The assumption is easily made that Malan exchanged the pulpit for the podium in order to preach to the entire *volk*, thus drawing party and church closer together. This article examines Malan's views on church and state, as well as his relationship with the church after his entry into politics in 1915. It finds that he supported the separation of the *institutions* of church and state, but believed that both institutions were accountable to God and hence, had to adhere to the same *belief-system*: God-given Afrikaner Nationalism. Malan never explained this distinction in his thinking to his followers. In his political dealings, he refrained from interfering in church affairs, but vaguely referred to *cooperation* between the institutions, although that never took any concrete form.

Opsomming

Podium en/of Preekstoel? D.F. Malan se rol in die verpolitiserings van die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, 1900-1959

Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde (NG) Kerk dra die beeld van apartheid meeloper danksy dié kerk se noue bande met die Nasionale Party, soveel so dat daar spottenderwys na die kerk as “Die Nasionale Party in gebed” verwys is. Dit word versterk deur die feit dat 'n aantal prominente Afrikanerpolitici eertydse predikante was, met D.F. Malan as die voorbok:

die enigste voormalige NG predikant wat regeringshoof geword het. Die aanname word maklik gemaak dat Malan die preekstoel vir die podium verruil het sodat hy vir die hele volk kon preek – en sodoende die kerk en die party bymekaar gebring het. Hierdie artikel ondersoek Malan se denke ten opsigte van kerk en staat, sowel as sy verhouding met die kerk ná sy toetrede tot die politiek in 1915. Die bevinding is dat hy die skeiding tussen die *instellings* van kerk en staat ondersteun het, maar terselfdertyd geglo het dat kerk en staat tot dieselfde *geloofstelsel* verbind moet wees, naamlik God-gegewe Afrikanernasionalisme. Malan het nooit hierdie fyn onderskeid aan sy volgelinge verduidelik nie. Wat sy politieke optrede aanbetref, het Malan nooit by kerksake ingemeng nie, maar wel vaagweg voorgestel dat die twee instellings moet *saamwerk*, hoewel die voorstel nooit enige tasbare vorm aangeneem het nie.

Key words

1914 Rebellion; 1948 election; Afrikaner Nationalism; Afrikaners; apartheid; church; D.F. Malan; *Die Burger*; Dutch Reformed Church; history; National Party; Nationalism; Neo-Calvinism; religion; Romanticism; Sauer Report; South Africa; state; Stellenbosch; theology.

Sleutelwoorde

1914 Rebelle; 1948 verkiesing; Afrikanernasionalisme; Afrikaners; apartheid; D.F. Malan; *Die Burger*; geskiedenis; godsdiens; kerk; Nasionale Party; Nasionalisme; Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk; Neo-Calvinisme; Romantisisme; Sauerverslag; staat; Stellenbosch; Suid-Afrika; teologie.