

THE 10-DAY synod of the white Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), which begins in Pretoria today, will be the most important meeting in the 300-year history of this church.

Representing some 65 percent of all Afrikaners and 40 percent of the whites, it is the most powerful and influential church in South Africa because of its very close ties with the Government and various Afrikaner national political parties.

The synod takes place at a time of tremendous ferment, the debate and tensions inside the NGK about its racial policies, relationship with the Government and with the

NGK synod

/\fâ\200\230/â\200\230.){. ,â\200\230"(i/ /1L â\202¬F Lol

under a cloud.

Fia
1) 19492
i

[tfp { (Z;/

OpenS RP|1982 _I-lo-12

~

cof argument on

racial policies

this week that in view of this decision by â\200\230its eldest daughter churchâ\200\231, the church was experiencing â\200\230its most serious crisis of

three black NG churches. | e
The NGK is facing grow- O Science:
ing international and do- Doctor Pierre Rossouw,
By

Hennie Serfontein

mestic ecumenical isolation because of two recent important Church meetings which directly affected the position of the NGK.

Six weeks ago at Ottawa the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) declared apartheid a heresy in conflict with reformed tradition and the
| Scriptures, and suspend-

(ed the membership of the / NGK.

And a few days ago, at Belhar, Cape Town, the synod of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk (for coloureds) confirmed the Ottawa decision. It declared apartheid â\200\230a theological idolatry and heresyâ\200\231.

Reconciliation

Reconciliations and continuous links with the white church would only be possible if the NGK repented and â\200\230confessed its guilt for providing the moral and theological foundations for apart-

. heidâ\200\231.

The Keikbode, the offi-

cial mouthpiece of the . NGK, said in an editorial

the chief executive officer and director of ecumenical affairs of the church, said that the eyes of the world, and in particular of

the member churches of

the WARC would be focused on the Pretoria synod.

Although the agenda and the reports of the synod are still confidential, it is an open secret that a number of contentious reports affecting sensitive political and racial issues

â\200\230will be debated.

These include matters such as the Immorality and Mixed Marriages Acts, church unifications and the relationship with the three black churches, and its support for apartheid in church and politics as stated in the booklet Human Relations and the SA Scene in the Light of the Scripture.

But the NGKâ\200\231s synod also faces serious criticism by a small group of theologians, ministers and lay persons from inside the church itself.

In the controversial book Stormkompas, and in the open letter signed by ministers and theolo-

gians, apartheid in church and politics was categorically and unequivocally rejected on scriptural grounds.

And last week 33 lay persons called on the synod for a reflection after the Ottawa decisions on â\200\230the practical implications of neighbourly loveâ\200\231.

Professor Willie Jonker,

the moderate theologian of the University of Stellenbosch, said in an interview in the Kerkbode that the deadlock between the NG Kerk and the black NG churches could be broken only by the white church. He stated that the key to break the deadlock was the qualifications added by the NGK to its support for separate development, it

~ must comply with the demands of justice and neighbourly love.

Professor Jonker urged that the NGK should not merely confine itself to an abstract discussion of sep-

arate development. It should look at the application of Government laws in practise and how this was viewed by the black churches.

Humiliation

He warned: "The many concrete examples of racism in our church and political life and the humiliation and suffering which that caused (the blacks) make it impossible for them to believe our honest intentions."

However, the chances

| that the NGK synod will

respond to the urgent

| pleas of this small hand-

ful of concerned members are remote in view of the refusal of the moderation officially to receive the open letter.

It is most unlikely that any major decisions will be taken, or that there will be any fundamental policy changes, or that there will be serious criticism of and rejection of Government policies and

natianc

Answer needed

All these contentious matters will probably be referred to a special theological committee with the task of reviewing the existing policies on racial

| and political matters. This committee will then probably have to report back to a special synod | two years later. (NGK synods meet only once every ! four years). !

| However, a clear answer must be given in response to the Ottawa and Belhar decisions, and on the NGK's relations with

! the black churches. In-

tense debate on these

matters is expected. -

Membership of the secret Afrikaner Broederbond â\200\224 to which more than 50 percent of all NGK ministers belong â\200\224 will also be discussed. About 550 delegates from all four provinces, Namibia and Zimbabwe will elect a moderator on the first day. The strongest candidates are: Dominee Kobus Potgieter, the present acting moderator, strong conservative and a senior Broederbonder; the moderate Professor Johan Heyns |

(also a Broederbonder); the hard-line conservative Dr Dirk Fourie, the present actuary (also a Broederbonder); and Dr

! Pierre Rossouw, a moderate conservative who is a non-Broeder.

Whoever is elected will make no difference to the main line of thinking to be followed by the NGK.

!Nï~\201DE MAIL

IN AN SABC-TV interview at the weekend the Minister - of Defence, Mr Magnus Malan, defined destabilisation as â\200\234actions aimed at creating a situation in a country whereby you can disrupt the country or overthrow the Governmentâ\200\235.

The governments of the African Frontline States â\200\224 such as Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe â\200\224 are convinced this is precisely the policy South Africa is following in Southern Africa â\200\224 particularly in respect of their countries.

. In recent months there have been numerous reports in the overseas Press dealing with South Africaâ\200\231s alleged destabilisation of its neighbouring states and its support and backing for the rebel guerrilla Unita movement in Angola and the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR) .

â\200\230There is growing concern in Western diplomatic circles about South Africaâ\200\231s clandestine activities in its neighbouring states which are optically hostile to the public.

The Western concern is connected mainly to efforts directed at achieving an internally-acceptable settlement in South West Africa.

However, frequent strikes by the SADF into southern Angola and the recent shooting down of a Russian MiG aircraft over Angola have raised fears in some quarters that South Africa could be preparing the climate for a

. full-scale invasion of Angola along the lines of Israelâ\200\231s

in recent occupation of Lebanon if diplomatic efforts to

?c.l;mve a\Cuban withdrawal
ail.

Evidence that there was
ificial South African in-

RAND DAILY MAIL, Tuesday, October 12, 1982

ate destabilisati
reports.

volvement in the abortive
Seychelles coup attempt last
year, and the killing of SADF
troops in Zimbabwe in
August, described by the
SADF as an â\200\234unofficial mis-
sionâ\200\235 has done nothing to dis-
gglthewidely held belief that

uth Africa is following a
policy of deliberate destabili-
sation in its neighbouring
states.

Recent pronouncements
by the Prime Minister, Mr P
W Botha, that a Cuban pres-
ence in Angola cannot be tol-
erated and that South Afri-
caâ\200\231s â\200\234sphere of influence
extends to all its neighbours
in southern Africa has led to
intense speculation that
South Africa could have
adopted a more hardline for-
eign policy stand â\200\224 dictated
by military thinking.

The provocative comment
by the Minister of Defence,
Mr Malan, after the shooting
down of a Russian MiG air-
craft â\200\224 that the MiG pilots
â\200\234better watch it or we'll clob-
ber themâ\200\235 â\200\224 has lent further
credence to the theory that
South Africa has adopted a
more aggressive approach to
the presence of communist
tranns in southern Africa.

Detence Minister Mr Magnus Malan's comment after a Russian MiG was shot down â\200\224 that
the pilots had

â\200\234petter watch it or we'll clobber themâ\200\235 â\200\224 is being seen as signalling a more aggressive approach.

B e R

NEâ\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224e e]

Malanâ\200\231s retort: who is destabilising'

The appearance of the Minister of Defence, Mr Magnus Malan, on television at place against the background of mounting allegations that the SADF is pursuingap on of South Africaâ\200\231s neighbours. Political Correspondent JOHN

hom?

the weekend took

olicy of deliber-BATTERSBY

Reports from Washington
â\200\230that the US CIA chief, Mr
â\200\230William Casey, had visited
South Africa recently to
work out a plan to create a
cordon of states bordering

South Africa free of infiltra-
tion by the banned African
National Congress indicate
more than an academic
interest on the part of the
United States.

The deal is believed to

involve the exchange of as-
surances that the Frontline
States will ensure that any
ANC presence in their coun-
tries is limited to political
activity while South Africa
will cease its incursions into

neighbouring states.

I%: a recent speech, the For-
eign Minister, Mr Pik Botha,
said South Africa could not
tolerate the existence of a
ring of Soviet-suppo_. 'ted
Marxist states around South

Africa. ;i

While Western countries,
other than the US, have

become sceptical of denials
by South Africa that it is
involved in a policy of desta-
bilisation, there will be gen-

commâ\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224â\200\224

/72 -10-82

eral relief at Mr Malan's dismissal of the option in Angola.

Mr Malan said that such a move by South Africa would be playing into the hands of the Soviets.

Have you thought what would happen if we moved into Angola at this stage and if we wanted to prop up a government there with South African soldiers?

It would mean enormous economic expense for this country and we would be going into a Vietnam situation.

I think it is the best situation that could come about for Russia which is in the process of confronting a Vietnam in Angola though the Cubans and it (Russia) is a powerful country.

I would rather grant Rus-

sia that position than lead South Africa into that pot-hole, Mr Malan said.

Mr Malan said that while militarily the SADF was lambasting Swapo, the solution would have to be a political and not a military one.

He said that with the 40 South West African internal parties arguing amongst themselves there was not much chance of a victory against Swapo.

And that is part of the

- reason why we must get the

Cubans out if we want to find a solution in this area, he

Mr Malan said that the political struggle could only

won if you could create a

political striving and formulate goals that would unite the entire population and give them something they were prepared to stand up for.

Then only can you win.
Otherwise you cannot no
matter how strong you are
militarily, he said.

Mr Malan denied that
South Africa was pursuing a
policy of destabilisation of its
neighbours and said that, on
the contrary, it was countries
like Mozambique, Zimbabwe,
Angola, Zambia and Lesotho
that were bent on destabilis-
ing the Republic through acts
of terror and allowing their
countries to be used as pas-
sages for terrorist
organisations.

significantly, Mr Malan
referred to guerrillas of Un-
ita and the MNR as freedom

1

fighters and said that those |

organisations were making
progress of such a nature
that the governments of
those countries blamed South
Africa as a destabilising fac-
tor to divert attention from
those freedom

organisations.

ut perhaps the key to
South Africa's strategy was
revealed in Mr Malan's dis-
tinction between politically
mature nations such as
Swaziland, Malawi, Bots-
wana, and the four in-
dependent homelands and po-
litically immature nations
such as Zimbabwe, Mozam-
bique, Angola, Zambia and
Lesotho. ®

The mature nations rea-
lised that it was in their in-

terests to co-operate |
economically and in other

spheres with South Africa
while continuing to argue
their political differences.

The immature nations re-
fused to co-operate with
South Africa in any sphere
and committed themselves
to overthrowing the minor-
ity regime in the south and
to supporting organisations

such as Swapo.

i