

The history of Calvinism in Africa dates back to the landing of Dutch Governor Jan van Riebeeck in Table Bay (in what became Cape Town) 1652.

The 16th and 17th centuries were primarily a battle for survival for the Protestants. During the first century of Protestant history the world powers were Spain and Portugal. These Roman Catholic empires dominated the seas and the overseas possessions of Europe. Only after the English defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 did the possibility arise of Protestant missionaries crossing the seas. As the Dutch and British grew in military and naval strength they were able to challenge the Catholic dominance of the seas and of the new continents.

Under King Philip II of Spain more than 18,000 Protestants were executed in the Netherlands. At that time Spain was the most powerful country in the world. Holland was occupied by Spain. In 1566 Philip II issued a proclamation demanding that all his subjects in the Netherlands accept the decrees made by the Council of Trent. In 1567, to crush the flourishing Protestant faith in Holland, Philip sent in the Duke of Alva who unleashed a reign of terror upon the Dutch Protestants. In 1568 the Inquisition condemned all 3 million inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as "heretics."

Under the leadership of William Prince of Orange the Dutch Protestants rose up in resistance against Spain. William of Orange and the courageous Dutch resistance fighters became the inspiration of Protestants worldwide. The courage and tenacity of these Dutch Davids resisting the Spanish Goliaths attracted admiration and support, particularly from Protestant England.

Although they were heavily outnumbered, the Dutch succeeded in outmaneuvering the Spanish, especially at sea. In 1581, the united seven northern provinces of the Netherlands declared independence from Spain. The Dutch Protestant fight for freedom continued until 1648 when their independence from Spain was finally recognised. It was just four years later that the once colony of Spain, Holland, was able to send out Jan van Riebeeck to establish a settlement in Table Bay. The first act of the Dutch Governor upon landing at the Cape in 1652 was to kneel down and pray that this outpost would be for the glory of God, and for the establishment and dissemination of the Reformed Faith throughout Africa.

This Dutch settlement was later strengthened with an influx of French Huguenot settlers, fleeing from persecution in France. The Huguenots enriched the Cape with their culture and fervent

Reformed Faith, although they willingly assimilated culturally with the Dutch, joining the Dutch Reformed Churches and adopting the Dutch language.

With the arrival of the English at the Cape in 1795 the Church of England, and later Congregational, Presbyterian and Baptist congregations were established in the Cape Colony. The Scottish Presbyterian Murray family greatly enriched the Dutch Reformed churches particularly through the dynamic ministry of Andrew Murray. The Cape was blessed with a tremendous spiritual Revival in 1860. Next year we will be commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of this event.

Andrew Murray is still the most prolific author that South Africa has ever produced. There are more books available in more copies, in more languages, written by Andrew Murray, than by any other South African.

As the pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church in Wellington, Andrew Murray set up the Africa Institute which trained missionaries under the slogan "*Afrika vir Christus.*" Hundreds of Reformed missionaries were sent throughout Africa from this missionary training college in Wellington.

In 2004, when I was ministering in Nigeria, the Tiv people were celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the arrival of the Reformed Faith amongst their people. Missionaries from Andrew Murray's Africa Institute in Wellington had come to Eastern Nigeria and by God's grace the entire Tiv tribe had been converted.

I have come across the graves of Dutch Reformed missionaries from South Africa all over Africa as far afield as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Nigeria and Kenya.

After the Second Anglo Boer War (1899 - 1902) there was a revival of missionary vision in the Dutch Reformed Church and many hundreds of DRC missionaries were sent out throughout Africa and even further afield.

By God's grace there are many millions of Reformed Christians throughout Africa as a result of

the dynamic Dutch settlement established at the Cape in 1652.