Research question
How did the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa enable the state to enforce apartheid planning through church separation and the provision of religious justifications?

Church justification of apartheid

Church separation
The separation of the Dutch Reformed Church into racialized congregations served as a model for the way in which society could be separated under apartheid. Church separation occurred prior to the emergence of a theology of racial separation within the NGK; rather it was the result of white lobbying, and was contrary to the accepted principle at the time (1857) of unity in worship.

Apartheid theology
Church division required a ‘moral’ justification. What developed was a theology of separation or ‘apartheid’, which extended beyond church practice to apply to the spatial separation of racial groups in all spheres of life.

Apartheid theologians depended on biblical passages and experiential proofs to cultivate ideas like “pluralism,” an idea removed from its original context to support the ‘diversity’ of peoples, their invisible (religious) ‘unity’, and the need for their separation.

Bible passages used to support apartheid

- Deuteronomy 32:8 (The Canticle of Moses)
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- Genesis 9:21-25 (The Curse of Ham)
- Genesis 11:8 (The Tower of Babel narrative)

State implementation

The Dutch Reformed Church influenced the state through:
- informal relationships
- involvement with the secret Broederband society
- church publications
- military chaplaincy
- sermons
- provision of social services

Transnational planning institutions today

Today rationalism and capitalism have replaced religious rhetoric as legitimizing forces for planning actors. The stated goals of this South African neo-liberalism often include countering historical inequalities, however the impacts often re-inforce apartheid exclusions.

And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without... done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.
- Genesis 9:21-25 (The Curse of Ham)

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of the earth.
- Genesis 11:8 (The Tower of Babel narrative)