

**"SUBVERSIVE SUBSERVIENCE":  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RESPONSES OF  
TIYO SOGA AND MPAMBANI MZIMBA TO THE  
SCOTTISH MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**in the**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

**BY**

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**AUGUST 2000**

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*The Financial Assistance of the Centre for Science Development and the Mellon Foundation Scholarship towards this research is gratefully acknowledged. Opinions expressed in this work are, however, those of the author and are not to be attributed to the Funders.*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study represents the culmination of many years of my spiritual journey and reflection upon the meaning thereof. It does not represent the end, nonetheless, but one significant station on that journey. Otherwise, the journey continues. The study reflects my thoughts and direction at this stage. Others are welcomed to take these and build upon them, or otherwise.

A marathon is a team effort and cannot be run alone. I am thus deeply indebted to a few people; for their inspiration, support and encouragement, without whom this journey would have been impossible.

**FEDSEM:** My learning experience and intellectual journey in academic theology began with Fedsem in February 1981. Fedsem laid the foundation upon which I stand in my theological endeavours. It was there that my life was fundamentally transformed, and the roots of my African consciousness were planted. Fedsem marked the beginnings of my earliest multiracial and multicultural encounters. This was a crisis as much as it was a challenge. I began to learn to think in multi terms, not only this, but also the experience to compete on equal terms regardless of race. Enabling this thought process were fellow students and academic staff alike. Amongst the latter, I would like to mention particularly Mazwi Tisani, Ian Thomson, Drs. Lizo Jafta and Khoza Mgojo. They wetted my academic appetite, for which I am grateful.

**ABERDEEN:** My journey into further multicultural, multiracial, and academic encounters continued into the land of the Scots in 1990. The Church of Scotland sponsored my studies at Aberdeen University, and I thank them for this kindness. In Aberdeen I discovered the other side from my previous South African experiences. I am grateful to the Faculty of Theology with Religion for contributing to my academic learning process. Professor David Ferguson and Dr. Gary Badcock encouraged me towards doctoral studies. This is the fruit of their trust.

**UCT:** The Christian Studies community at the Department of Religious Studies provided a good environment for creative work. The post-graduate seminar group was invaluable in shaping and expanding my ideas. It afforded me a rare experience of discourse with some of the worthy *alumni* of the Department like

Barney Pityana, Rueben Arendse, Steve Martin and others. RICSA provided valuable skills and resources in many ways.

My special gratitude goes to my supervisor, Prof. John W. de Gruchy, from whom I learned so much. The first *imbizo* we had about this thesis was in Edinburgh, Scotland, back in 1993. I was still at Aberdeen University, and Prof. de Gruchy was a visiting professor at Edinburgh University. There have been countless other *iimbizo* since then which resulted in this study. Prof. de Gruchy took a holistic interest in me and understood all my struggles. It is through his support and confidence in me that this thesis has seen the light of day. He helped me in terms of improving my writing skills, sharpening my focus and directing my research. It was a rare honour to work with him. I could not have worked with a better supervisor, *nangamsa* Prof.!

To the former RPCSA family I would like to record my indebtedness, particularly to the late general secretary, the Rev. Samuel Bekumusa Ngcobo. He made the Aberdeen sojourn possible, and stood by me always. Also to the late Rev. Wilson Vuyisile Masinda, thank you Rhadebe for believing in me. Last but certainly not least, to a dear friend friend and colleague, Vuyani Vellem, who shared valuable insights with me on certain aspects of this thesis, *ndibamba ngazibini* Msimango.

Finally to that woman who sacrificed much during the writing of this thesis, Zuki, my dear wife, I owe this to you Mancuthu. And to my lovely kids who had to endure long periods of my absence; this one is for you.

## ABSTRACT

My thesis is that early African Christians engaged in critical dialogue with their missionary counterparts in a variety of ways and forms which served to challenge and enrich the Christianization process in South Africa, eventually giving rise to the emergence of African Christianity and theologies. My aim is to show that African Christians talked back in the long conversation with the European missionaries, "a conversation full of arguments of words and images."<sup>1</sup> Early African Christians used various strategies and ways of responding to the missionary encounter ranging from overt to covert forms of resistance and negotiation. These were related to conditions on the ground. African Christian responses thus contradict any assertion of total conformity to the colonial missionary praxis. The classics debate at Lovedale, for instance, reveals that despite the apparent conformity and obedience to orthodoxy at the official level there was an awareness of ambivalence at a secondary (hidden) level. It is this awareness rather than the obvious ambivalence that is crucial to us.

My study explores the manner and extent of the role of African agency in the process of "translation" and "vernacularisation" of the missionary message.<sup>2</sup> However, it aims to do this from beyond the 'normal' constructions cast in Western perspective by adopting an Afrocentrist bias. Tinyiko Maluleke has argued for the need to formulate the African Christian commentary on missionary Christianity "not from the point of view of the 'senders' but from the point of view of the 'recipients.'"<sup>3</sup> It is the aim of this study to highlight the 'recipients' commentary and assess the manner of their reaction to their Christianization. This will be done through particular case studies focused on Tiyo Soga and Mpambani Mzimba. We shall interrogate the nature of their appropriation of the Scottish Christianity and the manner and extent of their critical distance thereto in the

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<sup>1</sup> Comaroff Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989); K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995); T. S. Maluleke, 'Black and African Theologies in the New World Order: A Time to Drink from our Own Wells', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, No. 96, November 1996 (pp. 3 - 18).

<sup>3</sup> S. T. Maluleke, '"A Morula Tree Between Two Fields": The Commentary of Selected Tsonga Writers on Missionary Christianity', unpublished D.Th. thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, p. 36.

maintenance of their African cultural identity. In their interaction with the Scottish missionaries Soga and Mzimba were active agents rather passive partners or subservient receivers. They appropriated yet questioned, relativised and even subverted the missionary message in various ways and instances. They seized many of the signifiers of the Scottish mission which they sometimes, in Comaroffs' words, "refashioned, put to symbolic and practical ends previously unforeseen, certainly unintended"<sup>4</sup> by their missionary colleagues. Their critical appropriation of Scottish Christianity and interaction with public issues have become foundational to the development and agenda of Black and African theologies. Subsequently, it has been the nature of African Christianity while appreciative of culture to engage also with pertinent social issues.

The primary reason for my choice of both Soga and Mzimba arises out of the recognition of the reality of various and even divergent African Christian responses to the missionary enterprise. Soga and Mzimba represent divergent yet complementary roles in their interaction with the Scottish mission. Also, they represent two strands of African Christian reaction to European Christendom, namely, accommodationist (integrationist) and rejectionist (nationalist). However, despite their different emphases the two strands were never mutually exclusive. In engaging Soga and Mzimba I am conscious of the obvious ambiguities and even contradictions in their responses. This is the acknowledged reality of the nineteenth century African Christian elite. While it is possible to read the roles of Soga and Mzimba as having been timid and subservient,<sup>5</sup> their discourse and praxis also reveal the other side of a subtle and careful dialogue, even subversion of Scottish Christendom. Both were very appreciative of the positive contribution of the Scottish mission to education yet they were highly critical of its cultural excesses and racial assumptions. Thus while remaining faithful to the missionary message they were not enslaved by it but contested and engaged it in various forms. Thus their responses can be characterised as "subversive subservience",<sup>6</sup> hence our use of this pregnant metaphor as the leitmotiv and title of this study.

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<sup>4</sup> Comaroff Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, op. cit, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. D. M. Balla, 'The Historical Roots of Black Theology', *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 8, No. 2, November 1994, pp. 84 - 85.

<sup>6</sup> This is the title of one of the chapters in L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1996), pp. 105 - 140.

## INTRODUCTION

### *YOUR CATTLE ARE GONE* (IWW Citashe - 1800's)

*Your cattle are gone  
 My countrymen!  
 Go rescue them! Go rescue them!  
 Leave the breechloader alone  
 And turn to the pen.  
 Take paper and ink,  
 For that's your shield.  
  
 Your rights are going!  
 So pick up your pen,  
 Load it,  
 Load it with ink.  
 Sit in your chair –  
 Repair not to Hoho,  
 But fire with your pen.*

Sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century the Xhosa-African praise-singer and poet Citashe, saw European guns around him and witnessed the testimony of their effect; the defeat of his people. All over Southern Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape, Africans were losing their land in defeat. Essentially responsible for their defeat was the superior weapon of the invader: the gun. In this context, left with few options, he looked at his pen, and saw the possibility of another kind of war, fought with a different kind of weapon, and wrote the above poem. It is a poem that represents a genuine and fundamental reassessment. This dissertation is an attempt at cataloguing that reassessment, particularly that of two pioneer Xhosa-African Presbyterian leaders in the Eastern Cape; Tiyo Soga and Mpambani Mzimba. This is due to the fact that, it will be argued, their reassessment strategies and tools offered a benchmark to successive generations of Xhosa-African Christians.

Soga and Mzimba provide case studies for viewing this historical past and assessing the role of the African Christian agency therein. My interest in these two figures is due partly to the critical position they assume in South African mission history generally and, more particularly, in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition in the Eastern Cape. They were pioneering figures; being the first and second ordained African Presbyterian ministers in South Africa. While representing the first and second generations African Christian responses to the encounter with the European Christendom, their significance is in that they introduced new African forms of dialogue

and resistance to European domination when the military alternatives had failed. In this way they shaped new African Christian responses to the Christian faith which had lasting relevance. This moral imperative to seek appropriate means of response to particular problems for each successive generation compels us to revisit their legacy.

Soga belonged to the first generation of amaXhosa-African Christians to emerge out of the Scottish missionary enterprise in the Eastern Cape in 1821. After the pattern of Ntsikana, who is regarded as father of Xhosa Christianity, the Soga family was among the first to embrace the Scottish European influence at Tyhume, in the Eastern cape. Actually, Tiyo's father became the first Xhosa-African to appropriate aspects of Euro-Christian civilisation like the plough, irrigation and trade. On the other hand he partly renounced aspects of amaXhosa culture and did not allow Tiyo to go to the initiation school. However, he remained a loyal *iphakathi* (counselor) to the amaRharhabe-Xhosa chiefs Ngqika and Sandile until his death in 1877. Thus selective appropriation of aspects of Euro-Christian civilisation and adherence to African systems were not seen as mutually exclusive, certainly not from the traditional perspective. This made it possible for successive generations of Africans to embrace aspects of modernity while remaining consciously African.

Emerging from this historical location, Tiyo Soga's participation in the missionary enterprise was not regarded as conflictual but complementary. This was certainly the case before the land crises resulting from military defeats of the amaXhosa. Intercultural experience, as we shall see, was a welcome part of the amaXhosa life. Lovedale, on the other hand, which had an integral part in the formation of Soga's consciousness, was committed to promoting racial integration and complementarity among its inhabitants and beyond. The Rev. William Govan, who was principal at this time, was already anticipating the reality of a multi-racial modern South Africa. This vision was, in turn, shared by Lovedale's products not least of which Tiyo Soga was its most vocal proponent. However with the diminishing independence of the amaXhosa people on the one hand and, on the other, the emergence of Social Darwinism in Europe and its influence in South Africa there was a radical paradigm shift from this initial vision of an integrated racial equality to racialism.

Mpambani Mzimba belongs to the second generation African Christians; those who lived and experienced the unfolding of this paradigm shift. This occurred mainly during the period following the ultimate military defeat of the amaXhosa at the hands of colonists after a hundred-year resistance. During this period, the missionary enterprise was increasingly influenced by Social Darwinism, with its emphasis on racial difference and inequality. Even Lovedale, now under the principalship of Rev. Dr. James Stewart, was influenced by racialist ideologies. The classics debate, as we shall see, confirmed that this is how it was viewed by an increasing number of African Christians. Subsequently, the paradigm shift towards overt forms of racism served to revive self-consciousness and nationalist sentiments among the African Christian elite. Mzimba is representative of this new nationalist consciousness.

We shall argue that although situated in different historical periods, Soga and Mzimba need to be considered together because they represent two distinct yet complementary roles in African Christian reactions to the Christian faith; namely accommodations and rejectionist responses. The former emphasized integration while the latter accentuated nationalism. Our view is that it is incorrect to perceive these responses as being mutually exclusive in the Xhosa-African Christian history. It is in this regard that we contend that Soga and Mzimba complement each other. Both Soga's and Mzimba's approaches were necessary: they were occasioned by the increasingly permanent European reality on their doorstep with which they had to come to terms.

Soga advocated what was deemed unachievable in amaXhosa society; the recognition of the European enemy. Mzimba's response went beyond what was considered possible during the European missionary era. Soga operated in a frontier context when the critical mass of the African Christians did not exist. Thus his response to Scottish Christendom assumed a literary form through which he fulfilled an intellectual and philosophical role which was foundational to the following generation's institutional forms of response. This conscientisation approach, which aimed at persuading his amaXhosa compatriots, translated into practical reality through Mzimba. Soga's intellectual resources thus gave substance to Mzimba's institutional response. Without Mzimba's institutional innovation, however, Soga's contribution would have remained abstract. This is why they are complementary.

We recognise that Tiyo Soga has been substantially researched,<sup>1</sup> but not Mpambani Mzimba.<sup>2</sup> However, the list of these researchers is a commentary on the domination of the white liberal tradition in the study of Soga. This is not a value judgement rather an observation and a recognition of an objective fact. Despite the amplitude of literature Soga, in our view, remains a badly neglected figure in black scholarship. Donovan Williams expressed hope that "now that Black history is fleshing out the story which hitherto has been mainly a White one," Tiyo Soga would receive an appropriate African resurrection.<sup>3</sup> Thus Williams himself, who has done a sterling job in reviving the Soga tradition, and helped put him in proper perspective, recognised the need for Soga to be read with African eyes. Jeff Guy expressed similar sentiments for an Afrocentric reading of South African history: "without the insights into South Africa given by those who have been brought to maturity inside an African language, inside

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<sup>1</sup> *Inter alia*: J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga: A Page of South African Mission Work* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1878); H. T. Cousins, *From Kafir Kraal to Pulpit: The Story of Tiyo Soga, First Ordained Preacher of the Kafir Race* (London: Paternoster Row, 1899); S. M. Burns-Ncamashe (ed.), *UTiyo Soga* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1969); D. Williams, *Umfundisi: A Biography of Tiyo Soga, 1829 - 1871* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1978); D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Rev. Tiyo Soga* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1983); W. Saayman, 'Tiyo Soga and Nehemiah Tile: Black pioneers in mission and church', *Missionalia*, Vol. 17, No. 2, August 1989 (pp. 95 - 102); G. Thom, 'Tiyo Soga - The first black minister' in (ed.) D. Crafford, *Trail-Blazers of the Gospel: Black Pioneers in the Missionary History of Southern Africa* (Pretoria: Institute for Missiological Research, 1991); L. de Kock, 'Textual Capture in the Civilising Mission: Moffat, Livingstone, and the Case of Tiyo Soga', *English in Africa*, Vol. 21, Nos. 1 & 2, July 1994, (pp. 33 - 58); W. Saayman, *Christian Missions in South Africa: Political and Ecumenical* (Pretoria: UNISA, 1995); D. Attwell, 'The Transculturation of Enlightenment: The Exemplary Case of the Rev. Tiyo Soga, African Nationalist' in (ed.) P. Denis, *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995); L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Textual Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1996); M. G. Khabela, *Tiyo Soga, The Struggle of the Gods: A Study in Christianity and African Culture* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> *Inter alia*: L. N. Mzimba, *Ibali Lobomi Nomsebenzi Womfi uMfundisi Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1923); S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale: A reappraisal of missionary attitudes and African response in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1870 - 1905', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1974 (pp. 344 - 429); D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution, 1899 - 1930', Unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Natal, 1979 (pp. 117 - 145).

<sup>3</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, Introduction, p. xix. M. G. Khabela's book is an attempt at an evaluation of this African Christian appropriation of Soga. Mine is a complementary effort at re-claiming that African Christian heritage.

African culture, I understand South Africa less. I need an African perspective."<sup>4</sup> Thus, African historical figures still need to be rediscovered by the Africans themselves. This serves to reclaim an African cultural heritage for the deepening of African image and the enrichment of African Christianity. My study is a contribution to this project.

The other weakness of previous Soga researchers has been methodological, i.e. viewing Soga in isolation either from his traditional cultural context or from the rest of the African agency in the Eastern Cape. Soga did not operate in a cultural vacuum, or totally within the Scottish European mission confines. He was a mediator, and too sophisticated a personality for such simple categorisation. Thus Soga cannot be entirely removed from his Xhosa cultural context for, despite his rejection of the initiation rite, he was never disowned by his people according to the appropriate custom of *ukuhlanjwa*.<sup>5</sup> Soga will thus be read from within a traditional context in this study. Obviously the traditional amaXhosa were not often too enthusiastic about him because he had become so much a part of the missionary culture. However, it is precisely because of this ambiguity that Soga offers a benchmark for understanding, in turn, the ambiguities of African Christianity in South African history.

Our research on Mzimba is aimed at correcting the prevailing situation. Mzimba will be seen in relation to Soga, in terms of their similarities, dissimilarities and complementary roles. Mzimba viewed Soga as one who began the African Christian struggle for self-assertion in the midst of Scottish missionary domination. He perceived his structural reformation as an inevitable fulfilment of Soga's Africanisation quest. Accordingly, he defended his break with the Free Church of Scotland mission and the formation of an African institution:

I am not at war with the missionaries, they are my colleagues who have contributed to the black upliftment. But it has become clear to me that the black man in Africa must stand up his own in religious matters just as other nations have done. He has long been dependent on the white man but now the time has come when, if the word of God is to expand in this land, he must cease being dependent on others. The time has now come when the black man must be self-confident as the white man is. ... This is a God-given duty which we must follow, as God has given the black

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<sup>4</sup> J. Guy, 'I Need an African Perspective' in (ed.) P. Denis, *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa*, op. cit, p. 187; also John W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Collins Publications, 1986), p. 206.

<sup>5</sup> This is a ritual for officially and publicly disowning misfits either in family or community contexts among the traditional amaXhosa.

Christian the crave for independence. ... In the Presbyterian Church I am the one who should particularly pioneer this way of self-reliance and independence. For I am the first African minister to follow in the steps of the late Rev. Tiyo Soga, I can still recall his (Soga) exhortation when he confirmed me into church membership.<sup>6</sup>

Thus Mzimba perceived himself in direct continuity with Soga's tradition in more than just a historical manner; he was the fulfiller of Soga's vision. However, in Mzimba Soga's mediatorial and integrationist tradition breaks, and is complemented by the nationalist and Africanist strands. In our study Mzimba will serve as Soga's interlocutor.

## 2.

Mine is thus an endogenous approach to mission history reading. To achieve this objective, my methodology is interdisciplinary, combining social historical analysis, the perspectives of anthropology, and theological reflection. This has been shaped partly by John and Jean Comaroffs' conflictual mission discourse reading style, and partly by Kwame Bediako's conception of Christianity as an African religion. While the Comaroffs and Bediako serve as our thesis and antithesis my study seeks to provide a synthesis of the two positions. The Comaroffs' reading of mission history as sources from which they make their deductions, and their observation that participation and resistance interacts, will inform our reading.<sup>7</sup> The Comaroffs' remark of the encounter between the Europeans missionaries and the Africans is pertinent:

Colonial evangelism in South Africa hinged upon the effort of a few men, with closely shared social origins, to impose an entire worldview upon their would-be subjects; that is to contrive reality for them as a coherent and closed, uniform and universalistic order. In the long conversation to which they gave rise - a conversation full of arguments of words and images - many of the signifiers of the colonizing culture became unfixd. They were seized by the Africans and, sometimes refashioned, put to symbolic and practical ends previously unforeseen, certainly unintended. Conversely, some of the ways of the Africans interpolated themselves, again detached and transformed, into the habitus of the missionaries. Here, then, was a process in which signifiers were set afloat, fought over, and recaptured on both sides of the colonial encounter.<sup>8</sup>

The Comaroffs' paradigm of "the long conversation" is useful in helping us rediscover the complexities of human encounter and subsequent social formations. As much as missionaries were the purveyors of European worldview and modernity in addition to

<sup>6</sup> Cited in L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 71 - 72.

<sup>7</sup> Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, op. cit, pp. 1 - 43; Jean and John Comaroff, 'The colonization of consciousness in South Africa', *Economy and Society*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 1989, (pp. 267 - 295).

<sup>8</sup> Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, op. cit, pp. 17 - 18.

the gospel message, the implications of their Christian message went further than anticipated as the African converts subverted the gospel for their own ends, according to the Comaroffs. We will seek to test the validity of this theory in our study by asking to what extent did Soga and Mzimba “subverted the gospel for their own ends”.

While the Comaroff's adopt a power struggle analysis in their understanding of these unintended consequences thus opting for a conflictual view of the encounter, Bediako assumes a functional view. For Bediako, the Africans' response to the Christian message arises out of free will and is due to the fact that they relate meaningfully thereto. African conversion is both genuine and voluntary. This is how Bediako explains the “massive and unavoidable (Christian) presence” in Africa: “the phenomenon of African Christianity in the twentieth century, therefore, far from signifying an acute Westernisation of African life, may rather be the evidence of how much African peoples feel at home in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”<sup>9</sup> This is what makes the Christian faith, in his view, a “non-Western religion”; a religion that shares affinity with Africa more than it does with Europe. Bediako thus takes us beyond the Comaroffs' essentially adversarial stance on the encounter. We shall equally test Bediako's theory as we ask to what extent was Soga and Mzimba's participation genuine and voluntary.

While interacting with these respective theorists we shall, however, adopt a theological truism that conversion is never absolute. The colonization of African consciousness was never total in spite of the Africans' voluntary embrace of the European faith and civilisation. Africans were not clean slates upon which missionary-colonial discourse was smoothly inscribed. They talked back to the missionaries in whatever means and form that were available. There were both overt and subtle modes of negotiation and contestation of European missionary hegemony. These forms may have been implicit and covert but they disprove the notion of a *tabula rasa* with regard to the African appropriations of the Christian faith. Simon Maimela argues that while many Africans resisted conversion to Christianity, when they did convert their conversion was never absolute. African Christians found

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<sup>9</sup> K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, op. cit, p. 62 and p. 4.

“expressions of resistance to total conversion to Christianity that is (sic) devoid of African cultural underpinnings.<sup>10</sup> While taking on forms of the Christian faith African Christians found strategies of resistance to Western cultural and religious imperialism while continuing the traditional memory. Our interest is in highlighting these forms of appropriation on the one hand, and modes of contestation, on the other.

### 3.

South African history has entered a new landscape following the 1994 democratic elections. On the ecumenical front the post-apartheid years has seen an urgent ecumenical revival particularly within Presbyterianism in South Africa. The historical quest to unite the Presbyterian strands of Scottish origin has received a new lease of life through the formation of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) by the Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC) and Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) in September 1999. Both constituent Churches have a direct claim to Soga's legacy through their Scottish roots and South African location. Their union should thus be seen as the ecumenical vindication of Soga's dream, for he was a great exponent of ecclesiastical ecumenism and religious dialogue. It clearly displays Soga's continuing relevance, as he was critical of racialist mission and denominationalism, as we shall see.

But what about Mzimba's concerns? He was rightly concerned about racial domination of one group by the other in a multi-racial church. Is racial integration or multi-racialism the best strategies of dealing with racism? Has the formation of the UPCSA effectively addressed Mzimba's concerns? On the basis of the continuing disquiet and the pockets of dissent currently happening within the Amathole Presbytery in the Eastern Cape<sup>11</sup> for instance, we need to inquire: is the UPCSA sustainable? Regrettably, the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA) was not invited to be part of the union and so has been left out

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<sup>10</sup> S. Maimela, 'Religion and Culture: Blessings or Curses?', *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 1, May 1991, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> The Amathole Presbytery, named after the historical Amathole Mountains, is located within the geographical home areas of both Soga and Mzimba. At the time of writing this introduction, the Presbytery was torn apart along former RPC and PCSA lines, with both moderator and clerk having resigned their positions. The differences seem to be constitutionally inclined, with one party suspicious of being procedurally absorbed and dominated by the other. However, the fact that the conflict is along old denominational lines is regrettable, and is a commentary on the precarious state of the Union, at least within this Presbytery.

of this attempt at rewriting Presbyterian history in South Africa. Is this the liberal tradition's conspiracy of "outing" the Africanist element?<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, is there still a racial or nationalist justification for the PCA's continued separate existence? Should the peculiarly African structures now disband in favour of racial integration, or continue to exist independently in order to safeguard the African interests even in the New World order? If so in what form? Are the black caucus movements, like the Presbyterian Black Leadership Caucus (PBLC), the Black Methodist Caucus (BMC), the African Catholic Priests Solidarity Movement (ACPSM) a permanent feature of multi-racial Churches? On the one hand, the latter are indications of the African Christian need to drink from their own wells, which is not fully met in the Mission Churches. On the other, they are a comment on the state of integration in these Churches.

#### 4.

I must confess to a personal interest in the subject of this dissertation; personal struggles and concerns drive it. The fact that I am an African and I am a Christian who is genuinely concerned to embrace both strands of my identity in a harmonious fashion. I have a long history of exposure to various and formative influences in my entire life. I grew up in an environment where it was quite normal to accept 'mainline' Christian beliefs and lifestyle under the rubric of Presbyterianism. However, my parents also practised certain African traditional rituals like *ukubuyisa* (the ritual re-incorporation of the living-dead), *imbeleko* (ritual inclusion of babies into the clan), *ukwaluka* (rite of passage into adulthood), and *lobola* to mention only a few. To be sure, this was necessary as response to a range of peculiar African experiences and

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<sup>12</sup> Despite the fact that it was black the former RPCSA had been viewed as a Mission Church, and also as sharing the Scottish liberal theological tradition and ethos with the former PCSA. I thereby view their union as unity of the (former Scottish) liberal tradition in South Africa. On the debate about the liberal origins of the (Bantu) Reformed Presbyterian Church see, *inter alia*, D. W. Van der Spuy, 'The Origins, Growth and Development of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa', unpublished B. D. dissertation, Rhodes University, 1971; D. D. Stormont, 'The Bantu Presbyterian Church', The Blythswood Review, Pamphlet No. 2, n.d.; The Rt. Rev. W. P. T. Ndibongo, Moderatorial Address to the General Assembly of the Bantu Presbyterian Church, Orlando, Johannesburg, 1959, unpublished paper; D. E. Burchell, 'The Origins of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa', South African Historical Journal, Vol. 9, 1977 (pp. 39 - 58); Vuyani Vellem, 'Whatever is True, Whatever is Honourable, Whatever is Just: The Unique Traditions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa', unpublished paper presented at a Ministers' Refresher Course, Tabong, 27 November 1996.

beliefs that were ignored in the mainline Church. However, this latter dimension in my parents' identity was exercised discreetly in the home or community environment outside the Church. To the individual the co-existence of the two systems was real even though for the Church the African one did not exist. Apparently, the inevitable predicament arising from this did not appear as a problem for them as it does for me. Thus, my parents belonged to two worlds. However, as I began to reflect on my own African Christian identity I discovered that I had inherited a legacy of identity conflict. The problem for me was that "the other" dimension which acknowledged my African traditional heritage operated in disguise and was somewhat tagged on to my Christian identity. This resulted in what seemed to be a split personality and an identity crisis on my part.

The second phase of crisis in my identity was during my three-year stay in Aberdeen, Scotland. Aberdeen is a remote city Northeast of Scotland where the African presence was virtually nil. The problem here was that, although my African identity was not questioned, channels of its expression were very limited. While appreciating the Scottish culture dynamic I also needed the expression of mine. Thus my days were filled with the yearning to speak my language, eat my staple food, and participate in other own cultural experiences. This is when I developed an academic interest in issues of cultural identity, consciousness and social formation. Thus my personal interest in this study is about finding appropriate forms of relating ethnicity or national identity and Christianity. It is, therefore, this "peculiar sensation," to use W. E. B. Du Bois' expression, "this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others"<sup>13</sup> that I share with my parents that I wish to explore in this study. The answer to such issues will provide answers to my own personal dilemma and Christian role.

## 5.

To facilitate a smooth navigation through the study the following summary of chapters is offered. Chapter one deals with selected aspects of the amaXhosa-African pre-colonial cultural identity, and the impact of the encounter with the Scottish Christendom. This in order to show both continuities and discontinuities between the

two. We explore the missionary education strategy as a tool of evangelization and colonising the African mind in Chapter two. Following Chapters three and four are a focused case study of Tiyo Soga, highlighting his biographical details and assessing his contribution to the Scottish mission. This is continued in Chapters five and six where the focus is on Mpambani Mzimba's history and contribution to the Christian mission. The final Chapter seven engages in a critical comparative analysis of Soga and Mzimba's responses. This follows the complementary paradigm that we have adopted regarding their contributions. Finally, the study is divided into three subsections with the first two Chapters providing a historical setting of the study. Chapters three to six constitute the body of our study in the form of focused and detailed case studies. The final Chapter seven belongs to the third section that seeks to draw the implications of Soga and Mzimba's responses for each other, for their times, and for our own context.

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<sup>13</sup> W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fwacett, 1961). Originally published in 1903, p. 16.

## CHAPTER ONE

### EVANGELIZING 'THE NATIVE' - SCOTTISH MISSION ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER

The isiXhosa-speaking peoples are usually traced to the lineage of the Nguni people in South African academic history. This is partly due to the fact of religious, cultural and linguistic commonalities between the so-called Nguni tribes constituted by the amaXhosa, amaZulu and amaSwati.<sup>1</sup> Some writers even went further to hold that Xhosa was the brother of Zulu and Swati and that they were all sons of Mnguni. They held that the core of amaXhosa, as with all the other Nguni tribes, is descended from one progenitor, Xhosa.<sup>2</sup> This view was influenced by the perception that all culturally related peoples belong to a single genealogy. This being the case then, 'Xhosa' became a comprehensive term of classification of the peoples living in a particular geographical location, sharing similar linguistic and cultural features. It evolved from being a linguistic to a generic term designating the people who spoke the language themselves. Thus people who spoke the isiXhosa language became known as amaXhosa. Consequently, 'Xhosa' was to be adopted as the ethnological term to describe a loose congeries of people in the eastern part of the Cape sharing basic cultural and linguistic practices. This in turn led to the objectification and reification of these peoples and their culture into tribal history and tradition. This would play itself out more clearly during the apartheid era.

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<sup>1</sup> For an interesting discussion of the etymology and politics of the 'Nguni' designation see John Wright, "Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the 'Nguni'" in (ed.) Tom Lodge, *Resistance and Ideology in Settler Societies - Southern African Studies*, Vol. 4 (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), pp. 96 - 111.

<sup>2</sup> The first complete history of the amaXhosa ever written is one by J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu: AbeNguni, AbaMbo, AmaLala* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930). J. H. Soga is one of those writers who hold the view of a single descend of amaXhosa, presumably from a person known as 'Xhosa'. See *The South-Eastern Bantu: Abe-Nguni, Aba-Mbo, Ama-Lala* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1930); *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, n.d.).

Shifting social-political power relationships in South African history has also been reflected in ethnic terminology which has evolved, for instance, from Kafir to Native to Bantu to Black to African as designations for the indigenous peoples.<sup>3</sup> For the Eastern Cape the adopted terminology in reference to its indigenous peoples assimilated the above designations but also variably shifted between Kafir, Nguni, Bantu, and Xhosa. These followed not only historical conditions but also ideological considerations of the time. The terminology reflects both the detribalization and retribalization of South African indigenes. Also, it carried a truncated connotation. On the one hand, early designations were invariably meant to refer to all the black indigenous peoples in the quest for their assimilation to Eurocentric modes of perception, thought and being. On the other, they reflect a later disillusionment with this quest and a deliberate revamping of earlier ethnic divisions. The motive on both occasions was not innocent but rather meant to serve the centre of power, which was in fact responsible for fashioning these designations. The act of naming and renaming reflected power relations and was thus mainly the prerogative of the European centre in the colonial setting. The indigenous peoples on the peripheries of South African history did not necessarily refer to themselves in this way.

Peires disputes the theory of a single genealogy for the Xhosa-speaking peoples.<sup>4</sup> He correctly asserts that "any (Xhosa-African) genealogy which includes the name 'Xhosa' is clearly fictitious in part because there was never any such person."<sup>5</sup> AmaXhosa are not descendents of an ancient hero ancestor known as Xhosa, nor is Mnguni the progenitor of the Nguni tribes. John Wright argues

<sup>3</sup> Cf. T. Mofokeng, 'Black Theology in South Africa, op. cit, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Although other historians following George Theal trace amaXhosa kingdom back to chief Togu in the late 1680's, e.g. Charles Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press and Durban: Killie Campbell Africana Library, 1977, p. 434 - (first edition published by The Lovedale Press, 1896), Peires' argument for a much earlier date far back to chief Tshawe is compelling and must be followed - J B Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of their Independence* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1981), pp. 17 - 19. It is Tshawe rather than Togu who has in Xhosa popular imagination become synonymous with the foundations of amaXhosa kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 14, fn. a.

that "nowhere among these peoples was Nguni used in a generic sense."<sup>6</sup> Further, there is evidence to suggest that the designation 'Xhosa' itself may have been derived from the Khoi word '//kosa'. That the KhoiSan languages had direct influence on Xhosa language especially the innovation of clicks is widely accepted. Consequently one sixth of all the isiXhosa words currently contain clicks which have no isiZulu cognates.<sup>7</sup> The implications of this is that if language is a constituent part of a people's perception and consciousness, then we can talk of one component of the amaXhosa identity as having been integrated. This presupposes a real interaction between amaXhosa and the KhoiSan people. Indeed the interaction did not occur merely at the linguistic and cultural levels but also with regard to religion<sup>8</sup> and economy.<sup>9</sup>

This had further ramifications for the political constitution of the isiXhosa-speaking people as an ethnic group. The boundaries of amaXhosa society were neither constant nor immutable but rather continually changing. The dynamics of this expansion followed both centrifugal and the centripetal forces. With regard to the former, "the boundaries of Xhosaland expanded every generation with the departure of the sons of the reigning chiefs to found new chiefdoms of their own."<sup>10</sup> This mechanism also served the purpose of putting at ease political tensions at the centre of the kingdom and the rivalry between father (ruling chief) and son (potential chief), as the amaXhosa proverbial saying goes: "*awunakuba neenkunzi ezimbini esibayeni esinye*" (you cannot have two bulls in one kraal). Having been initiated into manhood through the rite of circumcision, the young prince was

<sup>6</sup> John Wright, "Politics, Ideology, and the Invention of the 'Nguni'", op. cit, p. 96.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the KhoiSan influence on isiXhosa language see inter alia Ludwig Alberti, *Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa in 1807* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1968), p. 44; J B Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 13; 22 - 24. J H. Soga, however, strongly disputes such theory of linguistic borrowings - *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, pp. 93 - 97. The reason is probably that he distinguishes between the so-called Bushmen and Hottentots. However, he concedes that the phonetic additions to isiXhosa language are derived from the former and not the latter. For J. H. Soga the central core of amaXhosa social structure is formed by the clans of amaCira, amaJwara and amaTshawe, who were initially the ruling clans. Around this core are then 'the refugee clans who form the commoners' status. See *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs*, op. cit, pp. 18 - 19.

<sup>8</sup> J. Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1982)

<sup>9</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, chaps. 5 and 7, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Op. cit, pp. 19 - 20.

married to his first wife after which he moved off with his age-mates to establish his own Great Place in virgin territory. The age-mates (who would normally be his father's councilors' sons but could also include sons of the commoners) who went into initiation school together with the prince would then become his first councilors. He could also draw and co-opt representatives of the new local inhabitants into his council. The dispersion of the young chief thus extended the territory of and assisted in the subordination of other commoner clans to the Xhosa nationhood. However, this depended on continued cordial relations as decentralization in an era of poor communications could lead to decreasing political cohesion between the new territory and the old centre.

With regard to the second dynamic, the size and composition of Xhosa nationhood fluctuated also through centripetal tendencies. AmaXhosa had acquired the skill of forming alliances with their neighbours, particularly the KhoiSan chiefdoms west of their borders. This was extended also to the eastern and northern border neighbours of abaThembu and abeSotho, respectively. Peires observes that "by the middle of the seventeenth century, the Xhosa had acquired a loose political ascendancy over most of the coastal Cape Khoi extending to the very fringes of the Cape Peninsula"<sup>11</sup>. However, this was not a one way process. In turn the KhoiSan influence extended into amaXhosa religion and culture. KhoiSan beliefs and aspects of the deity, for instance, were assimilated. Similarly, the *ingqithi* (the cutting off of the tip of the little finger) and *isivivane* (throwing stones on wayside cairns) practices were directly borrowed from KhoiSan culture.<sup>12</sup> The interaction at the higher level was consummated at the lower levels with intermarriages and other social engagements.

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<sup>11</sup> Op. cit, p. 22. This ascendancy was, however, broken as a result of the Dutch advance from the Cape and disappeared after the British decision to retain the Cape after 1806. Consequently, the next Frontier War in 1811 - 1812 (being the Fourth) was "brief but of unprecedented ferocity" by the Europeans upon the amaXhosa people - op. cit, p. 65. Having dealt with the immediate KhoiSan neighbours in the West the European colonial wars were extended further East resulting in the 100 years' Frontier conflict with the amaXhosa.

<sup>12</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 64 - 65.

The alliances between amaXhosa and their immediate neighbours, however, occurred both voluntarily and involuntarily depending on power relations at a given time. Some KhoiSan clans like amaGqunukhwebe, amaGiqwa and amaNtinde were able to associate themselves with amaXhosa nationhood. But others like the Gona, Dama, Hoengiqua and Inqua were vanquished and assimilated as amaSukwini, amaGqwashu and amaNqarwane.<sup>13</sup> Peires argues that the KhoiSan clans who entered Xhosa society "did so on terms of distinct inferiority."<sup>14</sup> However, this inferiority only lasted the initiation period and passed within the course of a generation. This is because, crucially, it was "expressed in economic terms and not in social or racial ones."<sup>15</sup> Once the economic conditions improved, following initiation, the insider-outsider distinctions were removed. Cultural-racial differentiation was to be a new experience through encounter with Europe. The process of absorption of the Khoi groups "in the transition from free non-Xhosa to full-fledged Xhosa", according to Peires, "moved from 'informal influence' to 'direct penetration' in Khoikhoi affairs to 'incorporation' in Xhosa society."<sup>16</sup> The extent of the integration could be seen in that it was possible even to confer Xhosa royal membership on deserving outside commoners, as was the case with the Gqunukhwebe chiefs.<sup>17</sup> The vanquished, in the words of Peires:

Were not expelled from their ancient homes or relegated to a condition of hereditary servitude on the basis of their skin colour. They became Xhosa with the full rights of any other Xhosa. The limits of Xhosadom were not ethnic or geographical, but political: all persons who accepted the rule of the Tshawe (Xhosa royalty) thereby became Xhosa.<sup>18</sup>

Further, the amaXhosa interaction included other racial and ethnic groups like the European travelers and the amaMfengu. With regard to the former amaXhosa encountered many of the European survivors from shipwreck along the coast. Some individuals were in the process absorbed into the amaXhosa society. During the colonial settlement some refugees from the colony also

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit, p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit, p. 23.

<sup>15</sup> Op. cit, p. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Cited in L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society: The Ciskei Xhosa and the Making of South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1993), p. 374, fn. 5.

<sup>17</sup> J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, pp. 116 - 119; *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs*, op. cit, pp. 11 - 12.

found home within the amaXhosa. Before the competition for land at the turn of the seventeenth century, "Xhosa, Khoikhoi, San, and white have mingled between the Kei and the Gamtoos for nearly three centuries."<sup>19</sup> In most instances the interaction occurred voluntarily without the approval of the Dutch East India Company and its government. Coenraad de Buys, who was helpful in providing interpretation between Dr. Van der Kemp and Chief Ngqika later, was one of the Dutch-Boer refugees who had chosen to live among the amaXhosa.<sup>20</sup>

The amaMfengu were to become reluctant neighbours with the amaXhosa even after their gradual absorption into the latter. The amaMfengu are regarded as having been *Mfecane* refugees mostly from the amaHlubi, amaBhele, and amaZizi chiefdoms of Natal who arrived in the part of the country belonging to amaXhosa from about 1822 onwards. This was the East Side of the Kei River. As we have observed with the KhoiSan process of absorption, the amaMfengu occupied a subordinate position within amaXhosa society, "but certainly were not 'slaves'."<sup>21</sup> The amaMfengu sought a place to build security and make a new life, on the one hand, and the colonists needed allies and frontier guards in their conflict with the amaXhosa, on the other hand. Consequently, at the invitation of the Cape Governor D'Urban about 17 000 amaMfengu crossed the Kei between June 1835 and the middle of 1837 to settle on expropriated amaXhosa lands.<sup>22</sup> Thus they were established in the Colony and introduced to amaXhosa and colonial politics. Subsequently, the amaMfengu supported the Europeans in the 1846 and 1850 land wars with the amaXhosa. Thus, although in language and culture they were close to the amaXhosa, the amaMfengu formed alliances with the European settlers in their common search for new local identity. Their colonial identity became fixed eventually as amaMfengu, with accentuated differences from the amaXhosa.

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<sup>18</sup> Op. cit, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa: South Africa to 1870*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 236.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 240; J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 52.

<sup>21</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 249.

<sup>22</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 249; C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order: White Supremacy and Black Resistance in the Eastern Cape, 1770 - 1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 117.

Going a step further, as a result of their European alliances the amaMfengu-Xhosa became the first African ethnic group to acquire a power base in the Cape political system. There were visible rewards for their collaboration, as Peires noted:

They had been given documents stating that they were British subjects from the 1830s, ... They occupied much of the best land in the African locations, and they had apparently over-taken the Rharhabe Xhosa as the biggest African ethnic group between the Fish and Kei by the 1880s. The African Christian community was dominated by mission-educated Mfengu at this time, and Mfengu headmen were key intermediaries between colonial administrators and the mass of rural African householders. Their cooperation was essential, since they were empowered to allocate land, maintain order, and help administer the locations.<sup>23</sup>

The amaMfengu thus provided another layer in the overall history of the amaXhosa interaction with their neighbours. However, Wilson and Thompson rightly observe that the interaction and cleavage was not monolithic, as there were diversities and contradictions within each group.<sup>24</sup> The amaMfengu and amaXhosa were, for instance, later to intermarry and assimilate within a singular ethnic group.

AmaXhosa society, then, should be viewed as having been characterized by heterogeneity rather than homogeneity from the onset. It was constituted by no single genealogy but by various clans drawn together. Just as they were not the biological descendents of a single ancestor amaXhosa clans should not be thought of as blood relations or as exclusively genetically distinct from their neighbours in every case. AmaXhosa nationhood was thus more of a political concept than an exclusively ethnic one. Theirs was an open system that incorporated and integrated, influenced and was influenced by, changed and in turn was changed by those with which it came into contact. Crucially, every aspect of the amaXhosa system opened itself to the possibilities of these encounters. In this way amaXhosa successfully managed to draw most of their neighbours into a network of reciprocal social relations.

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<sup>23</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, op. cit, pp. 139 - 140.

Naturally the amaXhosa approached every European encounter, colonist or missionary, with this spirit of African hospitality.<sup>25</sup> They saw no reason why amaXhosa and Europeans could not merge into a single society after the pattern of their early encounters with the KhoiSan. Indeed amaXhosa sought to include the Europeans within their economic, political and social networks. They expected the same from the European; however, the latter would not reciprocate. Subsequently, one of the most shocking realities of the new encounter with the European Christendom for the amaXhosa was the realization that unlike the KhoiSan the new European neighbours:

Would not intermarry with them, would not share their wealth with them, would not even accept their common humanity. Small wonder that the Xhosa perceived the Europeans as standing outside the moral community. Small wonder that the polite term *abantu basemzini* (people of another house) was replaced in Xhosa popular usage by *amagwangqa* (pale beasts) or even *amaramncwa* (beasts of prey).<sup>26</sup>

This was particularly the case at the turn of the eighteenth century as land demands escalated the conflict between the amaXhosa-Africans and their new European neighbours. It is our contention that the traditional amaXhosa community thus had the bases for an integrated, multicultural, non-racialist and pluralist society. However, this potential and dynamic could not be developed on the basis of the commitment of one partner alone in the encounter. Multi-culturalism required mutual commitment and reciprocity. The contemporary renaissance of the African cultural heritage, respect for all humanity and the accommodation of difference, *ubuntu*, has roots which can be traced back over three centuries. This is, however, to anticipate.

#### THE SCOTTISH MISSION AND THE RHARHABE FACTOR

It is estimated that it was in the 1720's that the two sons of the amaXhosa Chief Phalo, namely Gcaleka and Rharhabe, were born. These were subsequently to split the Xhosa nation into two great divisions, namely amaGcaleka-Xhosa and amaRharhabe-Xhosa, with the River Kei running in

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<sup>24</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 270f.; J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 53f.; M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 121.

<sup>26</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 44

between.<sup>27</sup> This is why today we specifically speak of the amaGcaleka-Xhosa of the Transkei and the amaRharhabe-Xhosa of the Ciskei. The two clan designations are adopted from the names of their respective chiefs Gcaleka and Rharhabe, the two sons of Phalo. Phalo was not a strong chief and he actually came to be overshadowed by his two sons even in his own lifetime. It was in fact, according to amaXhosa tradition, during his reign that the division between Great House and Right-Hand House was created.<sup>28</sup> The Great House was situated on the East Side of the Kei River, and this is where Gcaleka remained, while the Right-Hand House was established on the West Side with Rharhabe as its chief.

The Right-Hand House, according to J. H. Soga, thus emerged as result of a direct protest to Gcaleka's act of usurpation of rule. Gcaleka, being naturally restless and divisive, brought about 'bickerings and faction fights' at the Great House. In these events Rharhabe stood on the side of his father. Naturally, this brought about great social upheavals that altered the organization of amaXhosa political system. Despite such developments Gcaleka's position as heir-apparent remained intact. However, great enmity and a state of hostility remained between the two brothers such that Rharhabe consequently "turned his eyes toward the West, or in other words, across the Great Kei River, and prepared his section of the tribe to remove to a new country, his father Phalo being in favour of this step."<sup>29</sup> In J. H. Soga's view this was Rharhabe's assertion of independence from the Great House. Thereby the extension of the Right-Hand House outside the jurisdiction of the Great House or the creation of amaRharhabe-Xhosa was made permanent. However, for

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<sup>27</sup> For a discussion of the events that led to this division see J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, pp. 128 - 156; J. B. Peires, 'The Rise of the "Right-Hand House" in the History and Historiography of the Xhosa' in *History in Africa*, Vol. 11, 1975, pp. 113 - 125; also *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 45 - 53.

<sup>28</sup> J. H. Soga however disputes this theory of the emergence of amaXhosa house system on the grounds that such an ingrained institution as this could hardly be an overnight innovation - *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, pp. 36 - 37. Soga elsewhere implies that Gcaleka instead was responsible for the division - op. cit, pp. 140f. The usefulness of this tradition, however, is in enabling us to adequately explain the division of the two Houses.

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit, p. 129. However, J. B. Peires disputes Soga's version of Rharhabe's loyalty to his father and a voluntary migration across the Kei River. In his view Rharhabe was defeated in the ensuing battle between the two brothers and thereby forced to establish himself elsewhere - *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 46f.

Alberti it was Rharhabe who sought to trick Gcaleka of his inheritance.<sup>30</sup> Being the aggressor Rharhabe was forced to leave home and settle elsewhere, thus dividing the kingdom. Peires follows this view.<sup>31</sup>

Whatever view is taken our interest lies with Rharhabe. J. H. Soga approvingly observes that he "early exhibited a strong personality, being a man of public weight, wisdom, and superior courage."<sup>32</sup> Resulting from events alluded to above Rharharbe began to establish himself west of the Kei. Here he got into violent conflict with various tribes including the KhoiSan, amaGwali, amaNtinde, amaMbalu. ImiDange and amaGqunukhwebe. However, he failed to win the support of the latter tribes as their loyalty remained with the Great House. It is thus crucial to note that Rharhabe's authority was never extended over a significant number of tribes west of the Kei. Conversely these tribes did not view themselves as his subjects.<sup>33</sup> From the amaXhosa side, Rharhabe was responsible for inventing the tradition of entering into alliances and forming pacts with the Europeans. His grandson chief Ngqika was much in favour of this strategy. They were motivated for so doing by the quest to centralise the amaXhosa chiefdoms west of the Kei. When the first Frontier War (1779 - 1781) became imminent between the colonial authorities and amaXhosa tribes of amaGwali, amaNtinde and imiDange "Rharhabe sent word to the Boers dissociating himself from these disturbances, and declared himself neutral and stating that these sections were acting independently of his authority."<sup>34</sup> He had thus apparently entered into an alliance between himself and the Colony in 1780. This he did because he sought no quarrel with the whites with whom he, according to J. H. Soga, "had steadily maintained peaceful relations with the

<sup>30</sup> L. Alberti, *Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa*, op. cit, p. 98.

<sup>31</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 46f.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128

<sup>33</sup> This was a fact that Colonial authorities were either ignorant or oblivious of in their insistences to make one chief responsible for policing all amaXhosa clans west of the Kei - J. H. Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs*, op. cit, pp. 26f.; M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 250f.

<sup>34</sup> J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, p. 130

Europeans down to his death."<sup>35</sup> However, Rharhabe died in a battle against abaThembu in 1787 at the age of sixty.

In Peires' assessment, "it was Rharhabe's son, Ndlambe, who was the real architect of Rharhabe greatness."<sup>36</sup> Indeed there is nothing remarkable about the history of Rharhabe to warrant the designation of a huge section of a tribe after his name. He was not even successful in mobilizing all amaXhosa tribes west of the Kei to rally behind him. This was to follow after his lifetime. However, there are other landmarks that stand in favour of chief Rharhabe's greatness, depending on one's perspective of these events. Firstly, he initiated the strategy of entering into peaceful negotiations with the Europeans, as we have indicated, thereby establishing a long tradition of non-violent confrontation and peaceful settlement between two cultures. Because this was a frontier situation the agreements did not always yield the desired results, however, and were much open to manipulation and misapplication. Also, questions should be asked as to whether it was useful and credible to cry peace with the Europeans when bloody wars were the order of the day. However, the full task of assessing the merits of such alliances is beyond the parameters of this dissertation.

J. H. Soga's tribute that Rharhabe "left the (amaXhosa) tribe united, and in good order, with its laws and customs an honored tradition, and Gaika (sic), his grandson, when he came to the Chieftainship, found the Ama-Rarabe firmly established as a legacy from his grandfather"<sup>37</sup> is an exaggerated claim. Although there is some truth in the observation, with the benefit of hindsight, it is more to Rharhabe's legacy than his person that it applies. Nonetheless, and this is his second claim to greatness, his relation to the Great House helped forge stability for his people in their quest for a differentiated identity. Here was the beginning of a new system that was designed to go beyond the strict traditionalism of the Great House east of the Kei. This was necessary so as to meet new challenges that were a result of the encounter with Europe. The fact that the amaRharhabe-Xhosa resisted hostile European settlement on their land for a whole hundred years is

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<sup>35</sup> Op. cit, p. 132

<sup>36</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 50.

<sup>37</sup> J. H. Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, p. 132.

an indication that their system indeed worked. They, and not the east of Kei branch of amaXhosa, bore the brunt of concerted Colonial onslaught upon their land, culture and national identity.

Thirdly, and most significantly for us, it is after Chief Rharhabe that the Scottish mission, when it was organized into a Presbyterian denomination in the Eastern Cape, was named. The isiXhosa name for the Presbyterian Church since then has been *Rhabe*, a short version of Rharhabe. Although it is not certain when exactly the act of naming occurred, it was the best thing that could be done in honour of Chief Rharhabe who had shown such an accommodating attitude to the Western agents to have Scottish Presbyterianism in South Africa named after him. This was a tremendous act of appropriation and Africanisation by both amaXhosa-Africans and Scottish-Europeans. With regard to the former, Africans have always viewed the church as a potent symbol of European power. Thus an Africanisation of this symbol was an act of domesticating its power for local benefit. The Presbyterian Church, in a sense, was being appropriated from its Scottish purveyors into African hands. It was now, as it were, no longer to be viewed simply as a Scottish Church but an African Church, no longer as the Presbyterian Church but as Rharhabe Church, and no longer as a foreign institution but a (local) people's institution. For Rharhabe as the Chief stood for and represented the people. This is even better expressed in isiXhosa - *iCawe yamaRha(rha)be*, meaning, the amaRha(rha)be people's Church.

However, the act of appropriation served the missionary cause as well. The chief was at the centre of Xhosa-African life; he was revered as principal custodian of the national heritage, clans were designated after his name, in short he embodied the identity of the tribe. What could be more strategic than transposing the office of the chief for the institution of the church! It was indeed a masterstroke on the part of Scottish missions. Symbolically, the church had come to substitute the chief; the church rather than the chief was to be placed at the centre of African life, the church rather than the chief was to be the new custodian of people's norms and values, the church rather than the chief was to be the new focus of loyalty. This was an act of exchange of symbols, and its implications were thus potent. AmaXhosa of all kinds and orientation are traditionally inclined

towards valuing their Royal House. Thus to purvey the church in royal terms as a traditional royal institution was certainly an effective strategy in winning the consideration and affiliation of the people. AmaXhosa were now to express their identity through the church, they were to be designated no longer as Rharhabe's people but as the Church's people, no longer as amaRharhabe but as Christians. People did not accept this as an European institution merely expressed in local terms, for, even if it was a European institution it could not stay that way for long. It had to be a people's institution, by the people and for the people just like traditional chieftaincy had been. Thus the seeds for its transformation towards being a people's church were contained in this very act of appropriation of symbols. To this we shall return.

### VAN DER KEMP, WILLIAMS AND THE AMARHARHABE-XHOSA

A survey of the formation of Scottish Presbyterianism in the Eastern Cape begins with Johannes van der Kemp as a precursor to the Scottish missionaries. But the history of Presbyterianism in South Africa can only be fully appreciated within the wider context of British imperialism. For instance, the first Presbyterian Church in the Cape emerged from within Scottish military regiments stationed therein. Hitherto, Calvinists (both Congregational and Presbyterian) and Methodists worshipped together until a disagreement resulted in members from the Scottish regiments forming a Calvinist Society in 1807.<sup>38</sup> In his report to the London Missionary Society in 1812 the Rev John Campbell noted that this religious society was "composed almost entirely of soldiers."<sup>39</sup> Actually "the presence of British military personnel was important for the establishment of most denominations in South Africa,"<sup>40</sup> with earliest religious missions often taking the form of chaplaincy to the regiments, before extension to civilian settlers and then the indigenes in the Cape. Different regiments bore their home church identities and, in turn, this began to imprint itself on the South African soil as well. Thomas Jones of Captain Hext's Company, 1<sup>st</sup>

<sup>38</sup> J. W. Hofmeyr, J. A. Millard, C. J. J. Froneman (eds.), *History of the Church in South Africa: A Document and Source Book* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991), p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> J. W. Hofmeyer and G. J. Pillay (eds.), *A History of Christianity in South Africa*, Vol. 1, (Pretoria: HAUM Tertiary, 1994), p. 47; also C. Villa-Vicencio and R. M. Petersen, *Christianity and the Social History of South Africa: Christianity and the Colonization of South Africa*, Volume 1, Essay 11, (forthcoming), p. 6.

Battalion, 83<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, for instance, indicated in his conclusion to a letter written from Cape Town on 9 November 1812 that "the Gospel has spread amazingly in this place during the two or three last years. Two large societies are formed here. One is composed of Calvinists, the other of Methodists."<sup>41</sup> This is, therefore, one of the early roots of denominationalism in South Africa. The Calvinist members were later mobilized by the Rev George Thom, who in 1812 had been asked to work among them, and who established a Presbyterian Church in 1813. Presbyterianism, however, was short-lived as this Congregation disbanded with the withdrawal of the Highlander's Regiment in 1814 until the formation of St Andrew's Church in Somerset Road, Cape Town, with the Rev James Adamson as its first minister, in 1829.<sup>42</sup> This event is regarded as the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the Cape, and consequently, South Africa.

In the Eastern Cape amongst amaRharhabe-Xhosa particularly, the Christian mission was introduced through the work of a London Missionary Society<sup>43</sup> (hereafter LMS) missionary, namely Dr. Johannes Theodore van der Kemp.<sup>44</sup> He arrived with John Edmonds at the Great Place of amaRharhabe-Xhosa chief Ngqika on 30 September 1799.<sup>45</sup> Ngqika had now firmly established his authority as one of the leading chiefs of the amaXhosa clans west of the Kei who were loyal to the Rharhabe legacy. He had

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<sup>41</sup> Cited in J. W. Hofmeyr, J. A. Millard, C. J. J. Froneman (eds.), *History of the Church in South Africa*, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94f.

<sup>43</sup> This Society was founded on 21 September 1795 as an offshoot of the so-called 'Evangelical Revival' in England. Although dominated by Independents or Congregationalists, it was interdenominational in character and autonomous of church authority. It boasted of some of the great missionaries like Van der Kemp, Dr. John Philip, James Read, J. J. Kicherer in its membership, and fine mission stations like Bethelsdorp, Kuruman, Theopolis. See J. W. de Gruchy, *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa: Historical essays in celebration of the bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa, 1799 - 1999* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1999; (eds.) J. W. Hofmeyr, J. A. Millard, C. J. J. Froneman, *History of the Church in South Africa*, op. cit., pp. 103 - 104; Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp, 1747 - 1811: Missionary pioneer and protagonist of racial equality in South Africa* (Cape Town/ Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1988).

<sup>44</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions of the Free Church of Scotland in India and Africa* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, Paternoster Row, 1873), p. 343; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa: The Story of a Century, 1841 - 1941* (Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1940), pp. 10 - 12.

<sup>45</sup> Van der Kemp and Edmonds arrived in the Eastern Cape at the beginning of the first Frontier War (1799 - 1781) and, consequently, could not gain immediate entry

located his Great Place at the confluence of the rivers Tyhume and Mgwali. Close to the Great Place lived 'old Soga',<sup>46</sup> the father of Tiyo, and one of Ngqika's chief councilors who must have witnessed this encounter. After the necessary formalities the two missionaries were invited to settle and conduct missionary work in the area. However, Edmonds soon despaired and left the Cape for Bengal in India on January 1, 1800. In the words of Enklaar, "psychologically the latter (Edmonds) was not up to the living conditions he considered barbarous."<sup>47</sup> It was van der Kemp who laboured on and, despite his failure to attract large-scale converts, he left a permanent legacy of Reformed Christianity in the area.<sup>48</sup> But, even van der Kemp's enterprise among the amaRharhabe-Xhosa was of short duration: after about sixteen months he shifted his attention to the Khoi people at Graff Reinet in May 1801.<sup>49</sup>

On one level, van der Kemp's early religious experience with the amaXhosa was shaped by the stereotype of other Europeans who had a negative opinion of African religion and were quick to dismiss it. Much earlier the German historian Alberti had failed to 'discover' the slightest evidence of religion among the amaXhosa. This was because he could not observe any familiar religious institutions and structures. Therefore, he concluded that "among the Kaffirs (sic) there is simply no conception of God, or any invisible Being, to whom they ascribe a powerful influence over themselves or on nature in general."<sup>50</sup> Thus what he did not see did not exist in his imagination, and his error was in judging what he

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into chief Ngqika's Great Place - see Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 86ff.

<sup>46</sup> There does not appear to be a record of the name of Tiyo's father. He is sometimes mistakenly called Jotelo, but this was the name of his own father instead; eg. J. A. C. (halmers), 'Tiyo Soga: Minister' (translated from isiXhosa by H. Jimba) in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century: South Africa* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1973), p. 50.

<sup>47</sup> Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 98.

<sup>48</sup> For appraisal of Van der Kemp's legacy among amaRharhabe-Xhosa see Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 97 - 106; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 10 - 12; Janet Hodgson, 'Do We Hear You Nyengana? Dr J. T. Vanderkemp and the first Mission to the Xhosa' in *Religion in Southern Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 1, January 1984. Van der Kemp was popularly called "Nyengana/e", a Xhosafication of his name, by amaRharhabe-Xhosa. There are various theories regarding the exact origins of this term of reference - Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 94 - 95.

<sup>49</sup> For van der Kemp's work at Graff-Reinet see Jane Sales, *Mission Stations and the Coloured Communities of the Eastern Cape, 1800 - 1852* (Cape Town/ Rotterdam: A. A. Balkema, 1975).

<sup>50</sup> L. Alberti, *Account of the Tribal Life and Customs of the Xhosa*, op. cit, p. 47.

did not know. Van der Kemp accepted this denial of African religious reality. Perceived religious trends in amaXhosa cosmology were deemed irrational superstition. In his own words, "if by religion we understand reverence for God, or the external action by which that reverence is expressed, I never could perceive that, speaking nationally, they had any religion, nor any idea of the existence of a God."<sup>51</sup> Van der Kemp was a man of his time.

Despite this, van der Kemp's brief encounter with the amaRharhabe-Xhosa served as anticipation of later positive encounters with other, if not all, missionaries. In the words of Jane Sales, "in later years the fund of goodwill created by Vanderkemp during this period enabled other missionaries to start work among Ngqika's people."<sup>52</sup> Indeed, van der Kemp typifies the earliest missionary attempt to do mission from the perspective of the weak and marginalised. There was something genuine about his actions, and he would not compromise the truth for racial or political expediencies. Despite early suspicions, he established good rapport with Ngqika such that the latter refused to allow van der Kemp to depart for Graaf Reinet. Similarly, Ngqika had begun to negotiate the appropriation of van der Kemp's Christian God for the benefit of his people.<sup>53</sup> Enklaar argues that van der Kemp should be credited with introducing the common missionary policy of ethnography with regard to their subjects.<sup>54</sup> He made concerted efforts and was, in fact, successful at the study of the Xhosa language.<sup>55</sup> With regard to Ntsikana, the first known Xhosa Christian convert, Enklaar insists that van der Kemp sowed the seed that Williams was to nurture.<sup>56</sup> Ntsikana met with van der Kemp but it was during Williams' time that he publicly embraced the Christian faith.

However, it was at the Bethelsdorp mission station that van der Kemp became a shining example of the Christian ethic of love, compassion and solidarity. Whether in derision or appreciation literature on van

<sup>51</sup> Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 105.

<sup>52</sup> Jane Sales, *Mission Stations and the Coloured Communities of the Eastern Cape*, op. cit, p. 14; also Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 105.

<sup>53</sup> See, Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 99 - 102.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104 - 105.

<sup>55</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 104.

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 106.

der Kemp takes note of his vigorous and explicit stance on behalf of the Khoi people. The conflict between van der Kemp and the colonial government was mainly about the perspective each had of the Khoi people. To the former the Khoi were human beings with full dignity and rights, whereas to the latter they were objects to be exploited at will for cheap labour and slavery. Du Plessis' view offers a summary of issues at stake:

The principles according to which Van der Kemp governed the Hottentots (sic) at Bethelsdorp were not, indeed, such as recommended themselves to either the Batavian or the English Governments. Penetrated as he was with the doctrine that the Hottentots were free men, with all the rights and privileges of free citizens, he refused to use compulsion in his dealings with them. ... Van der Kemp positively refused to send to the neighbouring town of Uitenhage such Hottentots as the magistrate desired to employ on public works. Views and actions like these were, of course, highly repugnant to the Government, as well as to the surrounding farmers, and Bethelsdorp was looked upon by them as a hotbed of indolence and vice.<sup>57</sup>

Van der Kemp's principled stand got him into deep conflict with colonial authorities such that he was summoned to Cape Town by the Governor in April 1805, after which he was prohibited to return to Bethelsdorp.<sup>58</sup> This was reversed only with the change of colonial rule from the Dutch to English. In his continued stay at Bethelsdorp van der Kemp pressed on with his "eccentric" life-style, as his detractors are so fond of labeling it. In an era when action really spoke louder than words or motives, van der Kemp adopted the life-style, habits and culture of the subjects of his mission. His stay among the South African indigenes was characterized by the lived quest for social equality, and he exercised patriotic love and commitment to his adopted country and people. The level of his commitment to racial equality is indicated not just by his own marriage to a former slave Khoi woman, for which he has been lambasted by his critics, but also through his general practice of encouraging 'mixed marriages' at Bethelsdorp.<sup>59</sup> Subsequently, his colleague-successor, James Read was persuaded into an African marriage as well.

<sup>57</sup> J. du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1965), pp. 126 - 127.

<sup>58</sup> Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, pp. 152 - 153. For a record of the proceedings of the meeting with the Governor see *ibid.*, pp. 153 - 155.

<sup>59</sup> Enklaar points out that there were three of these already in 1807, op. cit, p. 170. Critically, for us, here we have an antecedent to Tiyo Soga's own mixed marriage in 1857. To our knowledge van der Kemp is the first European missionary to have married an African woman. His African marriage was deplored morally by his colleagues but acceptable in the socio-political context of his time. It was with the rise of 19<sup>th</sup> century Social Darwinism that it was then viewed as despicable and

Thus in the biblical sense, he sat where they sat (like a Jeremiah) ... so that he, like St. Paul, might save some for Christ. Or in du Plessis' unwitting observation, "to the Hottentots (sic) he became as a Hottentot."<sup>60</sup> The genius of van der Kemp is in that for him this choice was not "merely for the sake of possible effect."<sup>61</sup> His was the pioneering instance of missionary kenosis and solidarity with the subject people. Popular criticisms of his mission enterprise may be that "perhaps he was too original for a land whose heart does not warm to singularity, and was too often a giant among pigmies (sic) to be popular or even understood."<sup>62</sup> His lasting legacy is that, not only did he initiate the tradition of literary protest to the international community,<sup>63</sup> but that his critique of the colonial government's unjust policies would influence the thinking of both European critics and African nationalists in South Africa for a long time to come.<sup>64</sup> He was the first of a new generation of missionaries who truly forged "the breakthrough into a continual struggle for just relations between the races, for equality and humanity."<sup>65</sup> It is our earnest wish that we had more European missionaries like him. Obviously, the history of Western Christian missions would have been different. However, his legacy did serve as an inspiration to others.

After a period of missionary inactivity among the amaRharhabe-Xhosa, there was another brief revival of the LMS missionary enterprise led by Joseph Williams who arrived in April 1816.<sup>66</sup> Williams was recommended by the Governor Charles Somerset to Chief Ngqika, "in an impressive manner,"<sup>67</sup> and was, in turn, introduced by James Read and Dyani Tshatshu.<sup>68</sup> Somerset's motives for this gesture were

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unforgivable, and his views of racial equality scoffed at - cf. J du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions*, op. cit, p. 128.

<sup>60</sup> J du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions*, *ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>61</sup> Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 204.

<sup>62</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 181

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 208.

<sup>66</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 343; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 14 - 17.

<sup>67</sup> D. Williams, *When Races Meet: The Life and Times of William Ritchie Thomson, Glasgow Society Missionary, Government Agent and Dutch Reformed Church Minister, 1794 - 1841*, (Johannesburg: A.P.B. Publishers, 1967), p. 19.

<sup>68</sup> Dyani was the son of chief Tshatshu who was entrusted to the care of van der Kemp at an early age, and became an informant and interpreter to a host of missionaries including van der Kemp, Joseph Williams, John Brownlee, etc. He had remarkable responsibility considering the critical nature of the role of

far from innocent. It was his aim to manipulate both the missionary and the chief into serving his own imperial interests in that region. When his scheming failed because Williams could not deliver, Somerset had him summarily dismissed as having been "timid and illiterate" and lacking in the task he was supposed to have undertaken.<sup>69</sup> In July 1816 Williams took up residence and began a mission on the Kat River area. He soon started not only evangelism but also a school and agricultural work. After about a year the mission station could boast of about 138 KhoiSan and amaXhosa residents.

Joseph Williams died in August 1818, and was succeeded by John Brownlee.<sup>70</sup> Despite his brief and unremarkable stay Williams is credited with having been the missionary who made a lasting Christian impression on Ntsikana.<sup>71</sup> Hunter observes that "after his (Williams) decease, a Christian meeting was kept up by one of his converts called Unstikana (sic), in a small kraal or hamlet, for nearly two years"<sup>72</sup> until the arrival of Brownlee. Whereas Williams may have died believing that he had failed, his legacy was established through the legendary contributions of Ntsikana to African Christianity.<sup>73</sup> Ntsikana continued to exercise influence on the Christian faith and lead Williams' converts in prayer meetings and gatherings. In his report to Dr. Philip, Brownlee notes how Ntsikana gathered Williams' converts around him, meeting "twice a day for worship," and leading them through the difficult time in the experiences of early Xhosa-African Christians.<sup>74</sup> Not only this but his popular and influential 'Great Hymn' was the anchor of faith for this group of people and it expressed the earliest beginnings of an African theology in

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interpreter at the time as bridge between two cultures - Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 141; J B Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 77.

<sup>69</sup> D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit, p. 19; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 15ff.

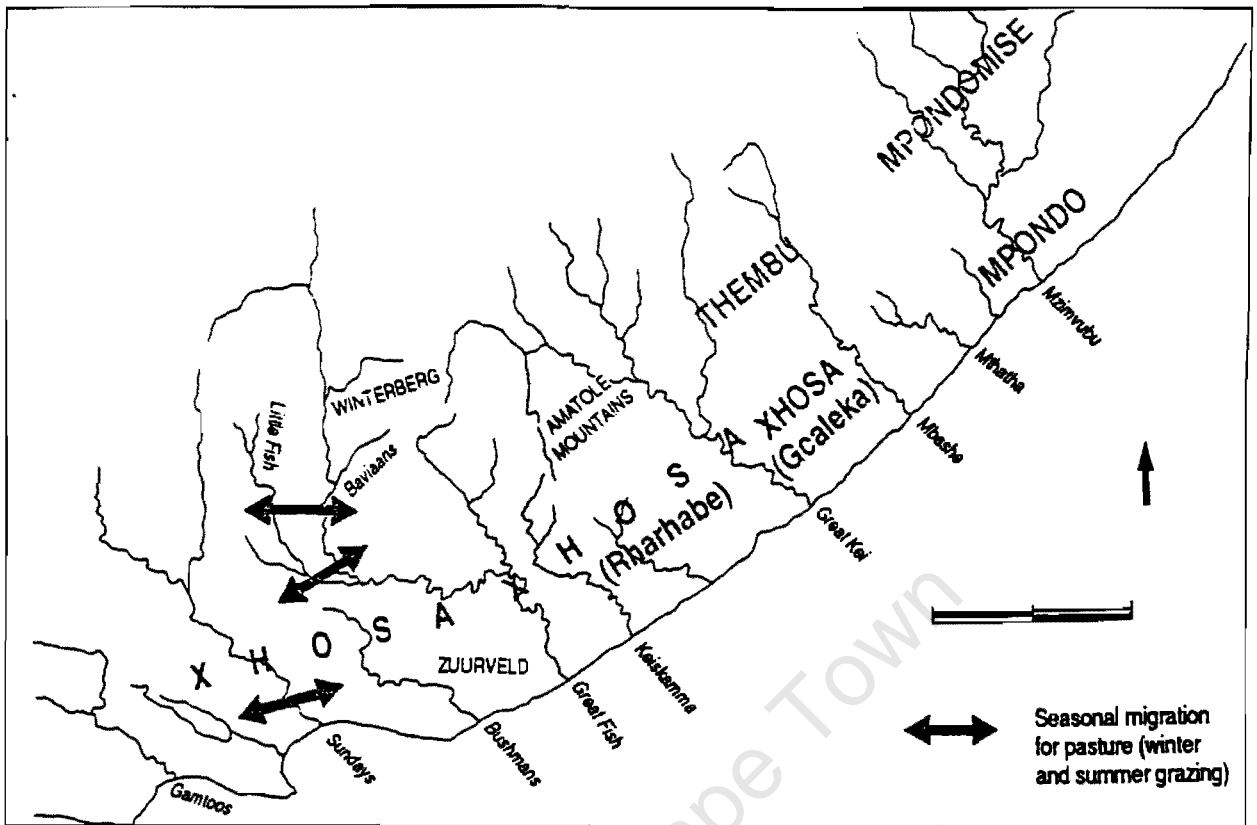
<sup>70</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 343; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, *ibid.*, pp. 21 - 22.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Ido H. Enklaar, *Life and Work of Dr. J. Th. Van Der Kemp*, op. cit, p. 106.

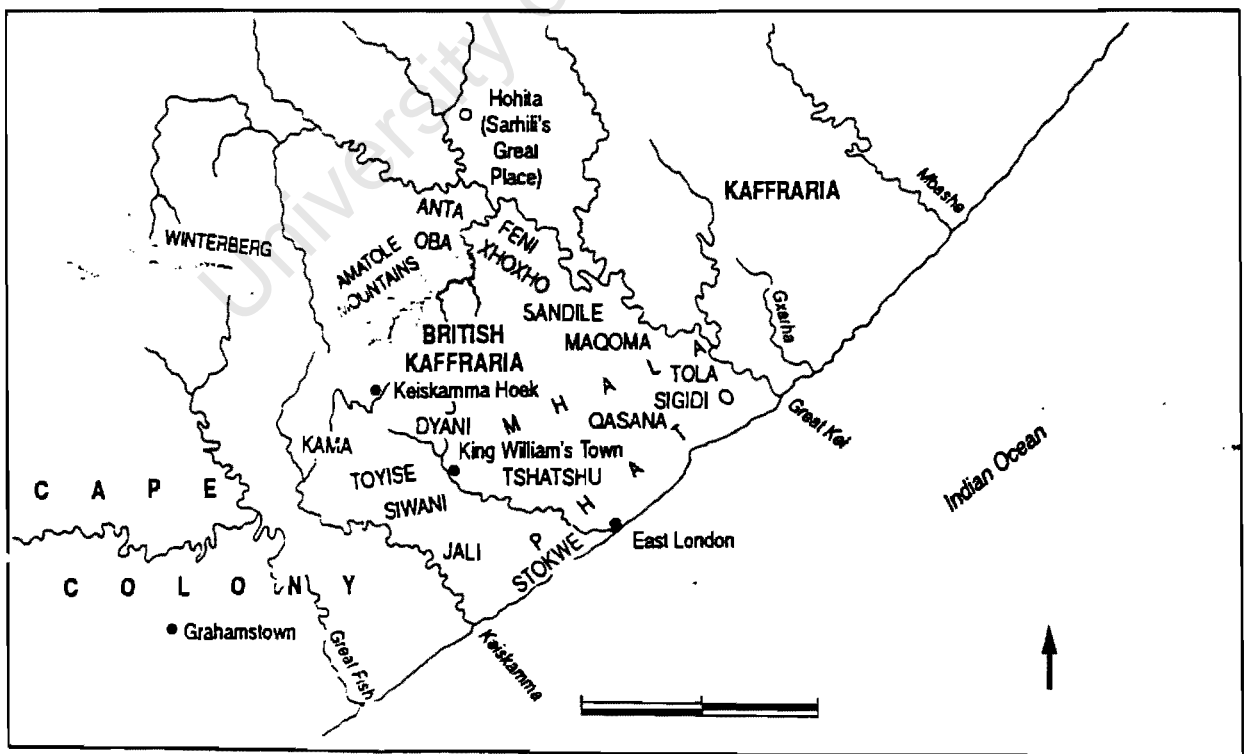
<sup>72</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 343; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 19 - 21.

<sup>73</sup> For an assessment of Ntsikana's contribution to the Christian faith see J. Hogson, *Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn': A Xhosa Expression of Christianity in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Eastern Cape* (Cape Town: Centre for African Studies, UCT, 1980); M. C. Hoza, *Ntsikana's Great Hymn: A model for change*, unpublished paper; MS 9069, 'Ntsikana's Great Hymn' (Lovedale, May 6, 1839), Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>74</sup> B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border: A Life of John Brownlee, Pioneer Missionary in South Africa* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1976), pp. 23 - 24.



Map showing Xhosa settlement and chiefdoms in 1779



Map showing Xhosa settlement and chiefdoms of British Kaffraria in 1856

Southern Africa.<sup>75</sup> It was the first Xhosa-Christian hymn ever composed. Thus, the faith of Joseph Williams was now being appropriated, owned and transmitted by a Xhosa-African himself, with the consequences that for the next generation "Christianity was well and truly planted among the Xhosa as an African religion brought not by missionaries but by Ntsikana."<sup>76</sup> With Ntsikana, the role of the African agency in the transmission of the Christian faith had truly and naturally begun.

### THE 1820 BRITISH SETTLEMENT

The year 1820 is crucial for understanding Scottish Presbyterian missionary settlement and activity in the Eastern Cape.<sup>77</sup> It is, therefore, necessary for us to digress and place their history in the larger context of other events that were happening simultaneously in the region. Holt offers an explanation:

(the) incursion of British Settlers west of the Fish River took place, it will be noticed, at the same time that Brownlee was crossing that frontier to take the Gospel to these same Xhosa. In fact on the very day that Brownlee entered Xhosaland - June 6, 1820 - Thomas Pringle and others were assisting at the laying of the foundations of the first house of a new town at Algoa Bay, which Sir Rufane Donkin, the Acting-Governor of the Cape, named Port Elizabeth after his deceased wife.<sup>78</sup>

A great deal was also happening simultaneously on the Eastern frontier the results of which contributed to the increasingly hostile amaRharhabe-Xhosa and European relations. The amaXhosa had been irresistibly driven out of the Zuurveld area after the Fourth Frontier War (1811 - 1812), and the land between the Fish and Keiskamma Rivers, which was unilaterally declared a 'neutral' territory by the British Cape Colonial authorities, was annexed in 1819. This great vacuum was to be filled according to the 1820 settlement plan. So the year 1820 saw a massive arrival of British Settlers in the Eastern Cape. Mostert observes that hitherto "the white colonial community in South Africa had numbered around

<sup>75</sup> J. Hogson, Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn', op. cit, pp. 3 - 5.

<sup>76</sup> J. B. Peires, 'Nxele, Ntsikana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction' in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1979, pp. 51 - 61.

<sup>77</sup> The 1820's are of particular significance in that they mark a distinct stage of development in the Xhosa-African and European-Settler relationship, the beginning of a protracted process that had lasting socio-political and religio-cultural implications on all the parties involved in the Eastern Cape scenario.

<sup>78</sup> B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, p. 35. Thomas Pringle was a poet, writer and leader of the only Scottish party among the 1820 Settlers.

40,000. At one step it was augmented by one-eighth, and all of this on the sparsely populated eastern frontier."<sup>79</sup>

Britain, as well as Europe generally, was experiencing problems of over population in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. One solution to this was encouraging mass migrations of its citizens to under-populated colonies where large tracts of fertile land were being made available. Also, there was a raging economic depression round about this time as a result of the European ethnic and religious wars. Further, the mechanization of factories and industry resulted in consequent labour redundancy. This, in turn, led to civil disquiet and instability. Hard pressed to deal with such conditions one solution was mass migrations into acquired colonies. The British already in the Cape by then, collaborated with home government to prepare the ground for the 1820 settlement.<sup>80</sup> In July 1819 the British Government voted a sum of 50 000 pounds for the Cape Emigration Scheme. With this scheme the 1820 Settlers were induced to venture into South Africa's Eastern Cape, and became "the first major input of British people into the permanent population of southern Africa."<sup>81</sup>

The Scheme had a three-fold purpose.<sup>82</sup> Firstly, it was intended to settle the disputed Eastern Frontier with an agrarian farming community whose presence would discourage Xhosa-African pastoralists from crossing the colonial boundaries. Secondly, it was intended to increase the English-speaking population of a recently acquired colony that was still predominantly Dutch in its colonial language and customs. Thirdly, as already alluded to above, it was an expedient gesture on the part of a shaky government to

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<sup>79</sup> N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992), p. 524; also A. Ross, John Phillip: *Mission, Race and Politics* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), p. 82.

<sup>80</sup> The Cape Governor Lord Charles Somerset, for instance, during his visit to Britain from January 1820 to December 1821 urged the authorities in London to embark on a project of sending settlers to the Eastern Cape Colony. See D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit, pp. 35f.

<sup>81</sup> A. Ross, John Phillip, op. cit, p. 81.

<sup>82</sup> For a summary of issues around the 1820 British settlement in the Eastern Cape frontier see inter alia, M. D. Nash, *The Settler Handbook: A New List of the 1820 Settlers* (Diepriver: Chameleon Press, 1987); J. L. Basson (ed.), *Aided immigration from Britain to South Africa: 1823-1867* (Pretoria: HSRC, 1991); A. Ross, John Phillip, op. cit, pp. 81ff.

ease political tensions in Britain that had been stretched to snapping point by post war strife, economic depression and industrialization. Due to European internecine wars Britain was left with a huge surplus population many of whom were jobless. To relieve herself of this political burden Britain encouraged a substantial number of these people to consider emigrating to colonies abroad.<sup>83</sup>

Nash reckons that this last object was the most urgent of the three. She argues that "faced with mass protest meetings, strikes and the threat of riots, the British government was anxious to make a show of doing something for the people. Emigration was seen by many as their chance for a better life."<sup>84</sup> Settlement in colonies thus served as an outlet for expanding population and unemployment pressures at home. As the incentive to this proposal these emigrations would, among other things, be granted free sea passages and provision during the voyage both for themselves and their servants. On arrival they were to be given land in the proportion of 100 acres for each man. Full title to their estates would be given to them after their land had been occupied and cultivated for three years.<sup>85</sup> With this act the British settlement in the Eastern Cape was made permanent.

One consideration in the choice of the Southern Hemisphere colonies was that they were considered much healthier than the home country, Britain. Indeed Hunter points out that the mortality rate was higher at home in Britain than in the Cape. The Eastern Cape provided an even lower rate of mortality for British settlers. "The deaths among a thousand soldiers in Britain were sixteen in a year, whilst Cape Town had but ten, and the eastern frontier of Cape Colony only nine, the last-named district being at that time the most healthy region in the world occupied by the British army."<sup>86</sup> Thus it was with such great

<sup>83</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 31.

<sup>84</sup> M.D. Nash, *The Settler Handbook*, op. cit, p. 12; also R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, *ibid.*, pp. 31f.

<sup>85</sup> M.D. Nash, *The Settler Handbook*, op. cit, p. 12. Andrew Ross argues, however, that the land allocated to the Settlers was not suitable for agricultural purposes but only for ranching. Being agriculturally inexperienced most of the Settlers failed to benefit from the land and soon began to drift into surrounding towns where they pursued other trades. In his view the settlement was a disaster - A. Ross, *John Phillip*, op. cit, p. 83.

<sup>86</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 339. Interestingly, the debate that the Southern Hemispheres' climatic conditions are healthier continues to date. In a recent Cape Times article University of Bristol researchers point out in a *British Medical Journal* publication not only at the physical health benefits of

expectations that the large contingent of about 4 000 British Settlers landed in Port Elizabeth harbor and soon spread out eastward. With such grand expectations in the minds of the Settlers, and with the amaXhosa population already settled in the area, the Eastern Cape was ripe for a frontier-type conflict situation. Indeed as a frontier territory the Eastern Cape became "the scene of constant conflict between the Xhosa and the encroaching European colonists to whose number had recently been added the British settlers."<sup>87</sup> The next Frontier war broke out fourteen years after the arrival of these Settlers, according to Wilson and Thompson, and three times within the next thirty years, i.e. 1834 -5; 1846-7; 1850-1.<sup>88</sup>

To reiterate, the Cape authorities had long needed a buffer zone in what had been regarded as a troublesome frontier. As Williams points out, "the military force was patently insufficient to secure tranquility even on the Eastern Frontier."<sup>89</sup> Thus a strategy of peopling the region through British settlers was viewed as a soft option towards this goal. It would serve the imperial purpose of Anglicizing the region and thus claim it for the British Empire from both the Xhosa-African and Dutch religio-cultures. Williams is precise in his description:

In this area the British Government was trying to foster its rule. To curb a restless frontier and mould wild characters to accept unaccustomed restrictions was a prime necessity. It was not, essential to promote Christianity among the Hottentots (sic) and Kaffirs (sic) and generally to alleviate the lot of coloured (sic) people, except in so far as it was necessary to satisfy religious feeling in England and the personal predilections of individual governors.<sup>90</sup>

Thus, the 1820 settlement was not only aimed at curbing a restless frontier but *mutatis mutandis* was an extension of Britannica in the region.<sup>91</sup> Mostert describes the operation as having been "probably the

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the exposure to sunlight but also that "spending time in the sun has also been shown to have a positive effect on mental health" - 'Too little sun can be harmful - UK study', Cape Times, 09 July 1999.

<sup>87</sup> L. Bean and E. van Heyningen (eds.), *The Letters of Jane Elizabeth Waterston, 1866-1905*, (Cape Town: Second Series, No. 14, Van Riebeeck Society, 1983), p. 1.

<sup>88</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit., p. 244.

<sup>89</sup> D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit., p. 20

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>91</sup> An 1820 Settlers' Monument was built in Grahamstown and an annual Festival was initiated to commemorate this event of British settlement in the Eastern Cape. Ideally it should be a celebration of cultural diversity and racial integration. However, after 25 years since the inception of the Festival in 1974 it is still viewed as a "gathering of the elitist (white) tribe". In a recent review of the

most callous act of mass settlement in the entire history of (British) empire."<sup>92</sup> That it was provocative and also failed to secure the frontier is obvious.<sup>93</sup> But despite this fact, the invidious plan of establishing close-knit groups ostensibly to guard the frontier against the amaXhosa was repeatedly followed. In 1829 some 250 KhoiSan community was established in the fertile Kat valley in what was known as the Kat River Settlement; still in 1835 over 17 000 amaMfengu people were placed along the frontier from Keiskamma mouth to the Tyhume valley and later north of the aMathole mountains; further in 1857 a large contingent of German legionnaires and their families were settled west of the Kei in a chain of communities from Dohne and Stutterheim in the north to Cambridge and Panmure in the south.<sup>94</sup> Thus was the colonial strategy to win alliances and alienate the amaXhosa from their land. It was within this atmosphere of serious cultural and military conflict that the Scottish Presbyterian mission in the Eastern Cape had to operate. Forces of modernity had conveyed their intention with brutal clarity that they were in Africa to stay, and with this step would begin a process of new social formation for the African. Thus the 1820 settlement brought its own worldview; the merchant (trade), the magistrate (law) and the missionary (religion), and these would invariably be imposed or insinuated upon the indigenes over time. Crucially, this process depended upon the institutions and agents of the new system to succeed.

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Festival Phylcia Oppelman points out that it has in "subsequent years drew criticisms of Eurocentricity". She observes that others find "the distance between the townships surrounding Grahamstown and the town repulsive". Further, the town of Grahamstown represents the disparate worlds, "the neat little stacks of box houses and the quaint university town. ... Grahamstown and its townships represent two worlds gliding past each other and the spin-offs will never materialise beyond a seemingly endless number of young boys begging for small change in the town's streets." In conclusion she decries the fact that both the organisers and participants have been unable to "satisfactorily define a vision of a new South African festival", and that this will continue unabated unless an "anarchic vision is realised and the whole thing gets blown to smithereens and a new festival, baggage free, is born" - 'Festival gathering of the elitist tribe', Sunday Times, 04 July 1999, viewed @ <http://www.suntimes.co.za/1999/07/04/insight/in02.htm>

<sup>92</sup> N. Mostert, *Frontiers*, op. cit, p. 533.

<sup>93</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 244; N. Mostert, *Frontiers*, *ibid.*, pp. 541 - 550.

<sup>94</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 244 - 249; C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, op. cit, p. 197.

### JOHN BROWNLEE AND BEGINNINGS OF THE SCOTTISH MISSION

Regarded as 'the father of Kaffrarian Missions', John Brownlee marked the beginning of Scottish missionary thrust into amaXhosa society on both sides of the river Kei, beginning with the amaRharhabe-Xhosa. Born on May 1, 1791 in Lanarkshire in Glasgow, Scotland, Brownlee arrived in Cape Town in 1817. His arrival in South Africa coincided with that of the famous founder of the Kuruman mission, Robert Moffat. Originally designated to work in the Northern interior of the Cape, Brownlee was re-assigned to assist Joseph Williams at the Kat River mission. He was, however, delayed in the Cape due to some government regulations regarding cross-boundary mission work.<sup>95</sup> In the meantime Brownlee severed his connection with the LMS and his resignation was duly accepted in March 1819.<sup>96</sup> As a free agent Brownlee thus accepted an appointment to serve as a government agent and missionary to the Eastern Cape, as Williams' replacement.<sup>97</sup> Eventually Brownlee assumed this position and he arrived at chief Ngqika's Great Place in June 1820 to begin work among the amaRharhabe-Xhosa.

Brownlee established the Tyhume mission station that was to become the centre of the Scottish mission in the Eastern Cape, with the assistance of Williams' converts who served as his first followers. They numbered about thirty all together. Ntsikana's followers were soon to join Brownlee at Tyhume as well after his death about a year later. With the personal help of Dyani Tshatshu Brownlee started a church school, evangelical work and some agricultural practices.<sup>98</sup> Two years later the converts at Tyhume mission station numbered two hundred, the majority of which were the followers of Williams and Ntsikana. Thus, conversions were not fast in happening. Brownlee himself, in fact, had commented that "the (amaXhosa) people were very conservative," and he thought that the mission cause would have been much better served were missionaries placed "not too near Gaika (sic)."<sup>99</sup> He laboured on, nonetheless, not only among the amaRharhabe-Xhosa but went further afield even to the amaGcaleka-

<sup>95</sup> B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, p. 11.

<sup>96</sup> Brownlee later rejoined the LMS in 1825. See C. P. Brownlee, *Reminiscences of Kafir Life and History*, op. cit, p. xiii; B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>97</sup> For a summary of the contents of the letter of his appointment from the Colonial Secretary see B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, pp. 14ff.

<sup>98</sup> B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, *ibid.*, pp. 22 - 23.

<sup>99</sup> Op. cit, pp. 29 & 23, respectively.

Xhosa as well. As such Brownlee "was the very first missionary to take the Gospel beyond the Kei River."<sup>100</sup> But by then there were other actors on scene.

While Brownlee laboured on as a missionary and government agent at Tyhume the Cape Governor Somerset and Dr. Thom were hard at work in Britain to find an assistant for him in the Eastern Cape. The mantle fell upon a young Scotsman by the name of William Ritchie Thomson.<sup>101</sup> Thomson had already set his sights on South Africa and had actually planned to accompany the 1820 Settlers as their pastor. When this failed to materialize, as if fate would not be denied, Thomson accepted the Cape Government's invitation for appointment to the Eastern Frontier as Brownlee's assistance. Accompanying Thomson was John Bennie, an unordained missionary of the Glasgow Missionary Society,<sup>102</sup> (hereafter GMS) who was to play a formative role in the reduction of isiXhosa into writing and the translation of the bible thereto. They joined Brownlee at Tyhume mission station on 15 November 1821, and out of the three was officially born the Scottish Presbyterian missionary enterprise and its legacies in the Eastern Cape. Holt observes that "between the three of them, Brownlee, Thomson and Bennie were to give one hundred and seventy years of missionary service to the Bantu!"<sup>103</sup>

The choice of Tyhume for a mission station had both geographical and ideological advantages for the missionaries. About the former, Williams observes that "at the mission station itself there was an abundance of natural resources: good water, fertile soil and much timber, all of which had made the establishment of the station easier."<sup>104</sup> Otherwise the rest of the surrounding areas were not so richly endowed. On the latter, Shepherd has this to say, "a missionary could establish himself in it with ease and

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<sup>100</sup> Op. cit, p. 33.

<sup>101</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 344. For a detailed account of Thomson's career see D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit

<sup>102</sup> The Glasgow Missionary Society was established in Scotland to cater for the Presbyterian foreign mission. Hereafter cited as GMS.

<sup>103</sup> B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, p. 27 - emphasis original. However, the first ever missionaries sent out from Scotland to Africa were Duncan Campbell and Robert Henderson in April 1797 to Sierra Leone, although they were unsuccessful in their mission. See Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 27 - 28; R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 7.

<sup>104</sup> D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit, p. 43; also R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, *ibid.*, pp. 33ff.

at the same time be in close touch with the Colony and with the Bantu (sic) tribes."<sup>105</sup> Shepherd's view resonated with article four of the GMS charter regarding missionaries in foreign countries, that "if circumstances permit, they should be strongly recommended to the notice and protection of such as are in power in the place whither they are sent."<sup>106</sup> Thus, the Tyhume mission station provided both the missionary potential and the military protection for missionaries. The 1820's GMS missionary enterprise, therefore, served to perpetuate the idea of association between missionary and colonist.<sup>107</sup>

In the meantime the GMS continued to reinforce their presence on the Eastern Frontier with the arrival of John Ross in December 1823 at Tyhume. Ross' arrival strengthened the hand of the Scottish Presbyterian missionary enterprise on three counts. Firstly, the quorum for a presbytery was reached, and thereby the first GMS Presbytery in the Eastern Cape, the Presbytery of Kaffraria, was constituted shortly thereafter on 1 January 1824.<sup>108</sup> Williams points out that it was the practice of the Church of Scotland to express loyalty to the government of the day. Scottish missions on the Eastern Frontier thus felt compelled to continue this practice. Consequently, the newly constituted Presbytery members proceeded to express their loyalty to Governor Somerset, thereby confirming their mutual relationship with the colonial government.<sup>109</sup> The year 1823 is crucial for other events as well. This was the year in which the first Reformed/ Presbyterian sacraments were introduced in the Eastern Cape.<sup>110</sup> The first baptisms occurred on 29 June 1823 whereby five Xhosa-African converts were baptized into the Christian faith. Subsequently, for the first time the bread was broken and the cup shared in Christ's memory on Sunday, November 3, 1823. For the first time in their history, five Xhosa-African Christians

<sup>105</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 33; R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 348.

<sup>106</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 25.

<sup>107</sup> For a fascinating discussion of an association between missionaries and colonial government in the Eastern Cape, its motives, successes and failures see D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit

<sup>108</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit p. 345. However, this Presbytery was constituted by Thomson, Bennie and Ross as Brownlee dissented from this decision. For reasons of his dissent see D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit, p. 56.

<sup>109</sup> Ross to Somerset, 04 September 1824, cited in D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, *ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>110</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 59 - 62; B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, pp. 46 - 48.

sat down at the Communion Table with the European missionaries. This was a symbolic expression and visualization of the oneness of Christian believers and the multi-cultural character of the Christian faith. Further, a church had thereby been instituted among the amaRharhabe-Xhosa.

Secondly, for the missionaries to succeed in their work of converting the amaXhosa to Christianity it was essential that they had a good knowledge of the local language and culture. The successful transmission of the Christian faith to the Xhosa-African context depended entirely upon its complete vernacularisation, and the availability of tools and material for this purpose. With regard to the language question Ross had brought with him "a small Ruthven printing press, with a supply of type, paper and ink."<sup>111</sup> The enthusiasm of missionaries at the acquisition of this tool can be seen in that after only three days of its arrival it had been set to work and 50 copies of the alphabet were already printed. Subsequently, *The First Elementary Book* in isiXhosa was co-produced by the four missionaries, followed by part of a catechism, hymns and the Lord's Prayer. In a correspondence to GMS authorities Bennie wrote prophetically that, "through your instrumentality a new era has commenced in the history of the Kaffer (sic) nation."<sup>112</sup> Indeed the written word was soon to assume unchallenged authority in the development of events not only in that region but countrywide. It was a potent tool in both the Christianizing and civilizing mission of Africa by Europe.

Thirdly, the arrival of Ross boosted the manpower supply necessary to extend the missionary enterprise in the area. Exactly a year after Ross' arrival a second mission station was inaugurated about twelve miles southeast of Tyhume on the banks of Incera river.<sup>113</sup> Bennie and Ross were designated to run this new mission station. Another year after the founding of Incera mission station the director of GMS, Dr. Love, died. It was decided to rename the mission station Lovedale in his honour as one of the founders, the second Secretary and the President of the GMS. Also it was during the term of office of Dr. Love

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<sup>111</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 62.

<sup>112</sup> Bennie to Dr. Love, 20 Dec. 1823, G.M.S. Report 1824, cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, ibid., p. 63; also R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 345.

<sup>113</sup> R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, p. 345; R. H. W Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, p. 64.

that the GMS took an interest in South Africa. The Lovedale mission station was destroyed in the 1834-5 Frontier War, after which it was rebuilt on the east bank of the Tyhume River. Out of the Lovedale station evolved the Lovedale Missionary Institution which was opened in 1841 and subsequently served as the centre of Scottish Presbyterian missionary activity in the region. On the other hand, as it was the case with Tyhume, "Lovedale was very much in a 'frontier situation' geographically and politically."<sup>114</sup> Subsequent developments therein were to prove this point.

### MISSION STATIONS AS SACRED SPACES OF DISRUPTION

Since the inception of mission station practice by the Moravians, missionary enterprise operated under two central systems and structures, namely, mission station and elementary school. Scottish missions followed this pattern. Both the Tyhume and Lovedale mission stations were organized as live-in communities for African converts, and included elementary schools. The former was necessary for and served as sacred spaces for Christian rituals and routine. With regard to the latter, elementary schools were the most potent weapons for the civilizing mission. To the missionaries, the enterprise needed a nucleus that would serve as a base to transform the whole society. Thus, mission stations were developed to impact upon traditional society and to serve as alternative communities. What is unfortunate about this is that they were imposed as alternatives; working not in conjunction with but in competition with traditional societies. In missionary perception mission stations were cast either as sacred spaces because Africa had none, or as new sacred spaces to replace the old ones. This resulted in the loss of opportunities for dialogue and/ or integration. The simplistic casting of traditional communities in the negative and missions stations in the positive displays the dualistic mind of the European missionary. This further presented difficulties for missionaries, as the two worldviews could never be reconciled in their minds. Faced with the two seemingly opposed cultures, ethnocentric considerations had the upper hand as most missionaries chose what was familiar and known. This choice had serious repercussions for mission stations' praxis and its subjects.

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<sup>114</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale: A reappraisal of missionary attitudes and African response in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1870-1905', unpublished

Echoing these sentiments James Laing, a GMS missionary at Lovedale, argued that "to the missionaries it seemed they would ask too much if they expected converts to live a Christian life amid the down-drag of their heathen environment, so that some arrangement for accommodating them within the bounds of a mission station seemed a necessity."<sup>115</sup> Thus, to the missionary mind the Christian life could not possibly be lived within traditional communities. Consequently, they created their own sacred spaces strategically placed at the center of traditional societies and near the chiefs' royal places. Herein converts were expected to follow their teachers into this new way of life. Also, since the underlying motif of gathering converts into mission stations was to isolate them from their traditional environment, it presupposed the rejection of traditional customs and rites. To this end a rigorous Christian routine was prescribed for converts as a way of adapting them to the 'Christian' way of life.

This adaptation was aimed at both the internal and external being of African converts. With regard to the internal aspect, it is interesting that the original identity of the first group of African converts baptized at Tyhume is unknown to us, for at receiving baptism these individuals were deprived of their African names in favour of bogus Christian names that were actually English (European). The three male candidates were renamed Robert Balfour (after the first secretary of the GMS), John Love (the GMS secretary), Charles Henry (the first names of the colonial governor, Somerset), respectively, while the females were to be known as Elizabeth Love (wife of John Love) and Mary Ann (unknown status) after their baptism.<sup>116</sup> Being engrafted into the body of Christ, which the sacrament of baptism symbolizes, portrayed the dangerous impression of incorporation into Eurocentric modes of seeing, being and doing. It seemed that it was not Christ who was at the centre of baptism but European culture. This practice was encouraged by the lack of insight into the connection between names, meaning, and being integral

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Ph.D. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1974, p. 14.

<sup>115</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 57.

<sup>116</sup> See R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 61; R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, pp. 344 - 345. Not only the first but also the family names of Xhosa-African converts were changed into English, thus indicating the totalitarian nature of missionary re-creation of the African which sought to efface every trace of their offensive past. For a glance at the Xhosa identity of the first two converts see B. Holt, *Greatheart of the Border*, op. cit, p. 47.

within the traditional worldview. This is how (European Christian) baptism would have a disruptive, disorienting and denationalizing effect on the part of native converts. Similarly, this is how it sought to recreate their consciousness.

What is regrettable here is not the missionaries communicating what they had themselves appropriated and knew. Rather it is the mistaken notion that what they perceived, knew or liked was God's will as well. The impression they created was that their motives and actions were in fact sanctioned by God. They had no insight into the cultural appropriation and communication of faith. The insistence on English names as Christian names, and not English, is an instance of this. In the missionary mind it had nothing to do with the fact that they found it difficult to pronounce African names, and that the reason they had David, Joseph, Mary or Paul in their bibles was because these were English translations. The early deculturation praxis occurred because the missionaries sincerely believed that this "was what God knew and preferred."<sup>117</sup> They would have denied that this was using the name of God in vain, however.

With regard to the external aspects of native conversion, the inward change of heart had to be witnessed to through an outward change of habits and appearance. Thus, as an outward sign of conversion what was African was jettisoned in favour of what was European - the red ochre gave way to European cosmetics, the traditional dress was given up for German print, and rondavels were replaced with square houses. There was already a street of thirty square houses built at Tyhume by 1827. This was because, despite the rondavels' practical usefulness such as being warmer for people who did not depend on clothes for their warmth and having better acoustics for the musically oriented traditional African, missionaries had already pronounced that "the Kafir (sic) hut is a hotbed of iniquity; and as long as that kind of dwelling exists, such evils will continue to check the progress of the Gospel."<sup>118</sup> Henceforth the missionaries made it their task to square the African circle. Unwittingly, Thomson captures this praxis extremely well in his GMS report about the 'missionary state' at Lovedale:

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<sup>117</sup> Mathatha Tsedu, 'Black Eye', Cape Times, Monday, March 6, 2000, p. 10.

<sup>118</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga: A Page of South African Mission Work*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot/ London: Hodder & Stoughton/ Glasgow: David Bryce & Son/ Grahamstown, Cape Colony: James Hay, 1878), p. 263; also R. Hunter, *History of the Missions*, op. cit, pp. 340-341.

A neat little village has been formed, inhabited by those who a little while ago roamed the world at large, as wild and savage as their old neighbours, the lions and tigers of the forest. They imitate us in all things-even in their dress; and now beads and baubles have fallen in the market and old clothes are in demand. The bullock's skin dress is laid aside. Others of the people begin to imitate our people in their building, gardening, dress and manners. If you except the black faces, a stranger would almost think he had dropped into a little Scotch village. It is pleasant on Sabbath to see so many coming to church - *trig, brow* and clean, with their Sunday clothes on.<sup>119</sup>

Williams points out that the use of European clothing was an early feature of mission stations and that as early as June 1823 two of the first converts baptized at Tyhume wore European clothing.<sup>120</sup> However, not only Eurocentric clothing was being adopted but a whole range of European civilisation values like architecture, agriculture, commerce, medicine and education began to substitute for their African equivalents.<sup>121</sup> In the 'long conversation' between European missionary and colonial representatives, on the one hand, and indigenous Africans, on the other, there were a series of transformations of Africa to the European image - from the African hoe to European plough, from the African cattle and land based economy to Western money economy, from the African traditional healers to Western modern doctors, from the African educational traditions to Western systems of education, from the African religion to the Christian faith, and so on. Noting this outward transformation Ross concurred with Thomson that "it was agreeable to see the Bantu (sic) adopting the dress as well as the thoughts and feelings of civilized life."<sup>122</sup> Thus, the evangelical enterprise, with its inward emphasis, needed the balance of the outward emphasis of the civilizing mission. This is how evangelical missionaries became civilizing agents as well.

The mission stations served as sacred spaces and demarcated locations where this praxis played itself out. They were one of the means through which European missionaries got a footing into traditional societies for the pursuance of their mission. According to Tisani, they also served as a point of contact for colonial officials with the outlying areas and as such became "stop-overs for military personnel as the latter intruded deep into the territories that still belonged to African people."<sup>123</sup> Their integrity was compromised by the direct or indirect links they had with colonial structures. This happened, for

<sup>119</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 67.

<sup>120</sup> D. Williams, *When Races Meet*, op. cit, p. 75.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 67 - 68.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>123</sup> N. Tisani, 'Gender Relations in Mission Stations', unpublished paper, Rhodes University, July 1992, p. 6.

instance, through the military protection system that the colonial government afforded to all Europeans during times of war. However, it would be fair to say that despite these exigencies the chief concern of missionaries was Christianisation. Their respective denominational or political outlook did not make them forego this initial commitment.

Despite their disruptive role from a traditional perspective, however, mission stations also served as havens of hope for the marginalised both within traditional structures and colonial world. According to Etherington, "the mission station provided a refuge and an opportunity for individuals who detached themselves from old relationships or who had already been torn away from those relationships by circumstances beyond their control."<sup>124</sup> Places like Genadendal, Bethelsdorp, Lovedale stand out as good examples of alternative communities and spaces of refuge from the injustices of both traditional and colonial societies. They became champions of the transformation of traditional African societies, and not always to the detriment of the latter. Also, by virtue of the make-up of their residents mission stations were multi-cultural centres. In addition to European residents, mission stations were generally made up of diverse conglomeration of people from the Khoi, San, amaXhosa groups and nationalities. Thus, the Euro-Christian cultures vied for hegemony with the indigenous cultures. There were also other sub-cultures in the making to contend with.

Mission stations became a microcosm of the dawn of the new era and as such, according to Tisani, they were in a way "melting pots in which new cultural alloys were being fashioned."<sup>125</sup> They were places where new beings and identities were forged, as Etherington observed, "without the necessity for a single sermon on the special status of Christian communities, *kholwa* children found they had only one really meaningful identity. They were simply African Christians."<sup>126</sup> Thus, to the multi-ethnic and multicultural character of the amaXhosa society referred to earlier, they added a new dynamic. Mission stations became the earliest working experiments of a racially inclusive multiculturalism and non-

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<sup>124</sup> N. Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835 - 1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), p. 174.

<sup>125</sup> N. Tisani, 'Gender Relations in Mission Stations', op. cit, p. 6.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., p. 174.

racialism. The mission station practice continued until the second half of the nineteenth century when most missionaries began to encourage native converts to remain among their own people. As we know, by the late nineteenth century the Eastern Frontier had been vanquished and the amaXhosa society as a whole was in the process of being Christianized.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 'COLONIZING THE MIND': THE LOVEDALE EXPERIMENT

By the 1840's the dynamic and shape of amaXhosa society was unavoidably being re-oriented as the amaXhosa were gradually sucked into the vortex of advancing European colonialism. Three times already since 1800 they were evicted from their land and their territory appropriated by the colonial authorities. Their land was disappearing, their independence was shrinking fast and crises of all sorts were consequent. It was no longer possible, for instance, for the sons of chiefs to extend the kingdom by founding new virgin territories westward. Instead, the amaRharhabe-Xhosa were driven across the Fish in 1812, out of the strategic Kat River territory in 1829, and right past the Keiskamma boundary in 1847.<sup>1</sup> Then there were the 1834-5, 1845-7, and 1851-3 Frontier Wars climaxing with the catastrophic Nongqawuse prophecy in 1856-7. Thus the era between the early 1830's and late 1850's was the most critical period in amaXhosa history, the one in which they lost their land, cattle and national identity.

The expulsion of Chief Maqoma from the Kat River valley in 1829 was followed by other colonial action that was aimed at undermining the authority of chieftainship. These led to Maqoma consulting and getting the approval of the amaXhosa King Hintsa on the possibility of declaring war. This led to the sixth Frontier War (1834 - 35). This particular War is significant for various reasons. The initiative for it was taken by the amaXhosa. This was embodied in the popular war-cry *ilizwe lifile* (the land is dead, i.e. in a state of war) as amaRharhabe-Xhosa consulted with the amaGcaleka-Xhosa and all agreed to declare war on the colonist settlers. Chiefs were the custodians of the land and embodiments of traditional identity. To cause indignity to them was to cause injustice to the land and people. It was, in fact, tantamount to destroying the whole nation, hence the war-cry. Thus this was a War in which all the amaXhosa tribes

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<sup>1</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op cit, p. 162

(amaGcaleka and amaRharhabe) joined together against colonialism.<sup>2</sup> Further, the consequences of the War affected the whole amaXhosa nation, east and west of the Kei River.

However, united as they fought the amaXhosa could not sustain their resistance against superior European firepower. By May 1835 their initiative had been subdued with untold consequences. Responding to Governor D'Urban and Colonel Smith's pressure to bring about peace and compensate the bereaved settlers to the extent of 50 000 cattle and 1 000 horses Hintsa was lured into the British camp for negotiation. Having received assurances of his personal safety he entered the camp on 29 April 1835. He was never to leave the camp alive. Hintsa was ordered to bring about the surrender of chiefs Maqoma and Tyhali, which he refused. He was not prepared to save his life by betraying his nation. Hintsa was then held hostage, and in an attempt to escape he was shot through the back of his head. As if this was not enough his body was mutilated with his head severed by the British soldiers.<sup>3</sup> Thus died the king of the amaXhosa in great dishonour.

With their paramount chief murdered, 4 000 men killed, "their houses burnt, their crops destroyed, (and) their (60 000) cattle dead" the amaXhosa surrendered.<sup>4</sup> Equally, the loss of their independence was forecast as Governor D'Urban planned remove all the amaRharhabe-Xhosa across the River Kei. In turn, the amaXhosa land was allocated to the amaMfengu who were to serve as bulwark between the amaXhosa and colonial settlers. Further, Governor D'Urban initiated a plan to erect colonial forts throughout the land right up the banks of the River Kei as protection bases for Europeans who were to be settled there. He subsequently annexed the land between the Keiskamma and the Kei rivers to the British Colony under the name of the Province of Queen Adelaide.<sup>5</sup> This was planned, in the words of Peires, "to be a sort of internal machine for civilizing

<sup>2</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op cit, pp. 94 and 109f.

<sup>3</sup> The debate regarding Hintsa's head re-surfaced recently with chief Gcaleka undertaking an unsuccessful trip to Britain in search of the head. Cf. S. Marks, *Rewriting South African history: or the hunt for Hintsa's head* (London: Queen Mary & Westfield College, Department of History, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 158f.

<sup>5</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 84ff.; J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 112ff.

the Xhosa."<sup>6</sup> However, it was to take much more than just a single plan and more frontier wars to realize this colonial ideal. Other strategies were necessary for the attainment of the grand dream of civilizing the native. European missionary education was to be one of these.<sup>7</sup>

Sarhili, Hints'a's Great Son, thus succeeded his father as the amaXhosa King at the age of twenty-six years. He continued the previous tradition of co-operating with the Right-Hand House amaRharhabe-Xhosa by opening his country as a refuge to the latter during the long war of attrition. On west of the Kei River Chief Sandile desperately attempted to impose his leadership on a deteriorating situation. The Seventh Frontier War, 1845-7, began with a pre-emptive strike by the Colony on the amaRharhabe-Xhosa. It was the intention of the Colonial Government to annex all the land west of the Kei. Peires noted that this was the first war in which the amaXhosa made extensive use of firearms and horses.<sup>8</sup> Thus, they were ready to adapt their warfare methods, as conditions required.

The War ended with amaXhosa defeat in October 1847. Some of the landmarks of the results of this War became permanent.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the power of the chiefs was effectively broken with some of these being successfully coerced to work for the colonial authority. Although they were allowed to continue as chiefs they were forced to surrender their power and integrity in the after-war settlement with their tasks now delegated to the Commissioner, his assistants and the magistrates.<sup>10</sup> Further, the territory between the Tyhume and Kei rivers, formerly called the Province of Queen Adelaide, was now renamed British Kaffraria. Reserves were created for loyal amaXhosa tribes within this region, but now with the Queen as their 'paramount chief'. These were

<sup>6</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 113; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 85f. The area was later renamed the British Kaffraria.

<sup>7</sup> Ironically, the GMS missionaries at Tyhume could not wait to congratulate Governor D'Urban on his return from the inspection of results of War in June, 1835 - R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, p. 85.

<sup>8</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 155f.

<sup>9</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, *ibid.*, pp. 114 - 117; J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, *ibid.*, pp. 162 - 169.

<sup>10</sup> British Kaffrarian Records - 1/23, Government Archives, Cape Town.

later to form the nucleus of the Ciskei homeland. This marked the beginning of the balkanization of South Africa into black and white areas and the subsequent flow of labour from the former to the latter. British Kaffraria was eventually annexed to the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope in 1866, by which time the Eastern Cape frontier was closed with the establishment of British hegemony and the political focus had moved on to KwaZulu.

Thus, west of the Tyhume River became a white man's land, known as the District of Victoria East, with the banishment of African rights therein. A town was 'founded' adjacent to Lovedale, called Alice, after Princess Alice, second daughter of Queen Victoria. Similarly, the largest fort in the border country with a capacity of 560 infantry and 100 cavalry was built which "would stand as guardian" over the region.<sup>11</sup> This was subsequently called Fort Hare, after Colonel Hare, a former Lieutenant Governor<sup>12</sup> of the Eastern Province and commander of the British forces. More than half a century later, Fort Hare, the British forces' fort, became the first University for Africans in South Africa. Thus, after 1847 the landmarks for total colonial hegemony, so it seemed, were irreversibly in place.

Only five years the Eighth Frontier War, 1851-3, began. Crais remarks that this war "was exceptional in the ruthlessness with which it was prosecuted and for the devastation which followed in its wake."<sup>13</sup> It was thus the most violent and destructive war to date. Although both sides sustained losses the amaXhosa were soon outgunned. For the first time the amaXhosa were devastatingly and convincingly defeated militarily. Henceforth, the colonial reconstruction of the amaXhosa society proceeded without great impediment. Governor George Grey was the main architect of this reconstruction. To him we shall return shortly. Henceforth, the amaXhosa were to adopt new strategies of resistance to colonial incorporation. If the Seventh Frontier War (1845-7) brought about devastation and the loss of land for the amaXhosa, the Eighth Frontier War (1851-

<sup>11</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 116.

<sup>12</sup> In 1860 the post of Chief Commissioner was expanded to that of Lieutenant Governor of British Kaffraria, and a Secretary appointed to assist the Lieutenant Governor - British Kaffrarian Records - 1/23, Government Archives, Cape Town.

3) finalised their loss of independence and national identity. Military resistance had failed to deal with the European encounter. This required fresh strategies and methods of negotiating the encounter. Thus in this era resistance leadership passed from the hands of chiefs into the hands of prophet-figures. In other words, there was a significant shift in emphasis from political to religious. A similar shift had happened in the years following the 1812 crises on the Eastern Frontier with the emergence of Nxele and Ntsikana, both prophet-type figures. This was repeated in the 1850's with the leadership focus shifting to Mlanjeni and Soga. However, they were prophet-type figures who adopted distinctive views of the amaXhosa crises.

Mlanjeni was about eighteen years old in 1850.<sup>14</sup> As Ntsikana had been a contemporary of Nxele so was Soga that of Mlanjeni. They were also rivals. Like Nxele, Mlanjeni lived in the Ndlambe chief Mqhayi's location though he frequented the kraals of various chiefs. Also, Mlanjeni rose to national prominence as a prophet-type reminiscent of Nxele. To maintain his ritual cleanliness Mlanjeni spent a good bit of time in a pool on the Keiskamma River, hence his name, which means "the Riverman". Although his message was nationalist it was couched in religious terms. He began to teach a form of traditional religion with an emphasis on witchcraft and ritual cleanliness. He taught that a great event was about to take place in the amaXhosa history and that, in order to bring it into fruition, the people must get rid of 'witchcraft' that was poisoning the country. Thus, he began to prepare the nation for what he considered the final war against the European foreign element in Xhosaland. The amaXhosa army received a ritual treatment from Mlanjeni before the 1851-3 War aimed at rendering them invulnerable to British guns and artillery. Further, he charged that as the result of the ritual cleansing "the guns of the British would shoot water, their bullets would do no harm, and their gunpowder would fail to ignite."<sup>15</sup> However, the results of the 1851-3 Frontier War, which became known also known as 'The War of Mlanjeni', have already been told. Of critical importance to note is the paradigm shift from exclusive military response to a quasi-religious strategy. Furthermore, Mlanjeni's final legacy to

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<sup>13</sup> C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, op. cit, p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989), pp. 1 - 12.



1885



*Nongqawuse (right) with the young prophetess, Nonkosi*

the amaXhosa nation was his last promise that all those killed during this war would rise up again.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Mlanjeni's message betrays his early Christian influence which he now sought to integrate with traditional beliefs.

There was to be a revival of the prophet-type response to the European encounter, and a reenactment of Mlanjeni's national resurrection promise just three years after his death. This happened through the Nongqawuse prophecy in 1856-7.<sup>17</sup> Indicative of the shift from the military to prophetic emphases, in no time six new prophetesses emerged after Mlanjeni, all preaching a cattle-killing and the national resurrection message. The most famous of these were Nongqawuse (15 years old), Nonkosi (11 years old) and Nombanda.<sup>18</sup> The three prophetesses, like the previous millennial figures, combined old (traditional) and new (Christian) ideas in their message. While firmly rooted in pre-colonial cosmology they incorporated symbols of Christian eschatology, and thus were able to appeal to both traditional and modernising amaXhosa. Their message was rational and simple; amaXhosa were to kill all their cattle and destroy their crops in anticipation of the resurrection of their dead and the double-fold return of the cattle and the crops. In turn the Europeans would be driven back to the sea from where they originated. The validity of the message was ensured by the fact that it was said to be from the ancestors. Sacrifice was recognised by the amaXhosa as the only effective method of communicating with the spirit world. Thus the prophetesses' appeal evoked a huge response among the amaXhosa. They were successful largely because they, in Peires' words, "tapped a deep-seated emotional and spiritual malaise resulting from material and military defeat,"<sup>19</sup> of the previous wars.

It is generally held that the Nongqawuse prophecy was successful because it became a popular uprising indicative of the quest for new modes of resistance in the 1860's. Their strategy was that

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<sup>15</sup> J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, op. cit, pp. 10 - 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Op. cit; Zakes Mda, 'Valley of the believers', *Sunday Times Lifestyle*, 14 May 2000, pp. 10 - 11.

<sup>18</sup> Zakes Mda, 'Valley of the believers', *ibid.*, p. 10; C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, op. cit, pp. 204ff.

<sup>19</sup> J. B. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise*, op. cit, p. 138.

of combining history and myth as new tools of resistance. According to Crais, "if Xhosa had once used guns and spears in their protest against colonialism they now employed the full weight of the past in the poignant rejection of an oppressive present."<sup>20</sup> Thus Mlanjeni and Nongqawuse formed part of an alternative 'resistance movement' whose aim was to deal with the white problem, recover the land, and restore traditional independence.<sup>21</sup> The results of the prophecies are well documented. In short, the consequences of the 1856-7 prophecy were that more than half of the amaXhosa population perished mainly from hunger and malnutrition. It saw a huge disintegration of their society, a loss of national identity, and the breakdown of traditional authority. The chiefs never fully recovered their power after the 1856-7 event.

The Colonial Government was at hand to exploit the situation, and George Grey, the new Governor, personally supervised the colonial exploits. Appointed the Cape Governor in 1854 to 1861 Grey had grand plans for transforming the social and political structures of African society. In this process he started with the institution of chieftainship. In his March 1857 report to the Colonial Office Grey declared his intentions: "tribes continue to break up and numbers are still entering the Colony to be (employed) as servants. ... The power of the chiefs is now so destroyed that (from now on) we may govern the country ourselves, the chiefs being ... dependent on us."<sup>22</sup> Subsequently Grey rounded up and imprisoned to Robben Island chiefs Maqoma, Siyolo and Xoxo, while he sent a military patrol to king Sarhili in order "to capture or drive him to such a distance from our borders that he will never be heard of in this quarter again."<sup>23</sup> Eventually, the magistrates were to substitute the chiefs in terms of authority although the latter were allowed to continue in ceremonial fashion. The practice was that more favourable ones replaced those chiefs that were considered hostile to the colonial government.

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<sup>20</sup> C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, op. cit, p. 210.

<sup>21</sup> M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 260.

<sup>22</sup> Grey's report to the Colonial Office, Despatch No. 39, 25 March 1857, Colonial Office 48/381.

<sup>23</sup> Grey's report to the Colonial Office, Despatch No. 18, 9 March 1858, Colonial Office 48/388.



*Xhosa chiefs in exile on Robben Island after the prophecy*



*Chiefs Maqana, Siyola and Xhoxho after their release from Robben Island*

Grey's next move was that of incorporating the amaXhosa territory into colonial society through a European-style industrial civilisation. This would take shape through revolutionizing the agricultural and industrial capacity of the amaXhosa. The inculcation of European agricultural and industrial habits within the African society would be critical in the light of the 1870-80's industrial revolution. This was so they could form a civilized labour force productive to government needs. In pursuance of this ideal the Secretary to the High Commissioner issued a circular to all interested parties for their views and support. In it the government aimed at:

- Finding the best method of exciting in the Caffres (sic) a desire to cultivate their lands by the plough.
- Inducing them (Africans) to follow habits of industry.
- Impressing upon them the necessity of wearing (European) clothes.
- Encouraging the use of money gained by labour. etc.<sup>24</sup>

Of particular interest to us in the circular is the appeal for missionary assistance in this quest for African industrialization, and the latter's responses to the appeal. They were being urged to lead by example. "The missionaries are the most proper persons to assist and direct both, chiefs and people, that they may indeed realize the benefit which is intended for them by your Excellency's generosity,"<sup>25</sup> the circular declared. Therefore no effort should be spared by missionaries in encouraging the African to "cultivate his land" and to adopt "habits of industry" as the initial step towards civilization.

That the missionaries heeded this call can be seen in their responses to the circular. Showing enthusiastic determination to civilise the natives' agricultural habits one missionary placed urgent "orders for six ploughs with chain trek, yokes and reins to be forwarded immediately."<sup>26</sup> Similarly McDiarmid, a GMS missionary, argued that the government plan "would, at no great expense to Government, encourage such parties and make them to feel that His Excellency had a fatherly care

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<sup>24</sup> John Ross' response to circular, May 17, 1848, British Kaffrarian Records, No. 443, op. cit

<sup>25</sup> Government Circular, 17 April 1848, British Kaffrarian Records, No. 443, op. cit

<sup>26</sup> Tempest Waters to Sir George Grey, 14 October 1856, British Kaffrarian Records - 1/23, op. cit

over them and lead them to feel esteem and attachment to the Government."<sup>27</sup> His other GMS colleagues shared his sentiments. In their response, Laing and Weir pronounced categorically that "it is certainly desirable that these rude Africans should adopt improved methods of cultivating their lands."<sup>28</sup> They commended the judicious distribution of a few ploughs by the government. However, John Ross was more perceptive as he observed that although "the instances of cultivation by the plough are rare indeed beyond the inhabitants of Missionary Stations ... much can be done with the plough."<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, an increasing number of civilizing Africans was witnessing better results with the use of the plough. Tiyo Soga's father is an early instance of this shift from traditional farming habits to the adoption of European modes of production. Peires points out that (old) Soga was actually the herald of this new age of adoption of the market and the plough in amaRharhabe-Xhosa history. Missionaries applauded his break with tradition in this regard and his acquisition of European culture and technology:

Soga had moral courage enough to break through this bad custom as well as some others; he would not allow the other Caffres (sic) to work for him without wages, and when they came to beg of him, he told them, that he paid them for their work, and they must pay him for his corn. In case he slaughtered an ox, he also sold its flesh, and refused to give it away, according to the common custom of his nation.<sup>30</sup>

Governor Grey's other area of interest in the transformation process of the amaXhosa was that of education. Consequently, Grey offered generous financial grants towards native education and, also, initiated the expansion of the Lovedale Institution opened in 1841 to incorporate industrial departments at government expense.<sup>31</sup> Subsequently, the industrial emphasis became a prominent

<sup>27</sup> S. McDiarmid's response to circular, May 17, 1848, British Kaffrarian Records, No. 443, op. cit - emphasis original.,

<sup>28</sup> James Laing and James Weir response to circular, June 6, 1848, British Kaffrarian Records, No. 443, op. cit - emphasis original.

<sup>29</sup> John Ross' response to circular, May 17, 1848, British Kaffrarian Records, No. 443, op. cit - emphasis original.

<sup>30</sup> Cited in J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 108.

<sup>31</sup> W. Govan, *Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev James Laing, Missionary of the Free Church of Scotland in Kaffraria* (Glasgow: David Bryce & Son, 1875), p. 155f.; R. Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed* (London: J. M. Dent & Son, 1875), p. 155f.

feature of Lovedale's curriculum. After the loss of land and the demise of the amaXhosa independence, schools multiplied in Kaffraria and education became a renewed area of missionary focus. In this emphasis on the education of Africans Governor Grey and missionaries, as Crais puts it, "looked to the colonization of the mind."<sup>32</sup> Education served the purpose of consolidating European hegemony on the Eastern Frontier. In this process it was necessary that the Africans themselves believe in the benevolence of European civilising mission. Their education would serve to influence their mindset towards this goal. Inadvertently to the European design, education became the new terrain upon which African Christian resistance to and conversation with missionaries was to happen. It constituted part of modern Africans' responses to European colonisation.

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LOVEDALE

The proposal for a Scottish Presbyterian education centre in the Eastern Cape by the GMS missionaries therein was favourably entertained by the GMS Board of Directors at a meeting in May 7, 1839. It was resolved that a Seminary should be constructed at Lovedale as requested. Subsequently, work began and structures put up for a multi-purpose Seminary on a piece of land allocated by chief Tyali, a younger brother of chief Maqoma.<sup>33</sup> Thus it was that, twenty years after the introduction of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries to the Eastern Frontier the Lovedale Missionary Institution was eventually constituted on Wednesday, 21 July 1841, with William Govan as its first principal.<sup>34</sup> The opening was an inter-denominational and multi-cultural

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Co., 1902), pp. 80ff.; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 132ff.

<sup>32</sup> C. C. Crais, *The Making of a Colonial Order*, op. cit, p. 200; also M. Wilson and L. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford History of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 261.

<sup>33</sup> F. Wilson & D. Perrot (eds.), *Outlook on a Century: South Africa, 1870 - 1970* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1973), p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> Viewed as 'a model establishment' in the whole of Southern Africa the Institution was itself modeled on another Scottish higher education mission system initiated by Dr. Duff in Calcutta, India in the 1830's. Lovedale followed similar principles with South African modifications, however. Dr. Duff was himself to play some part in the later development of Lovedale. It was hoped that the Asian experience would similarly work in Africa. - see M. Warren, *Social History and Christian Mission* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1967), pp. 100 - 102.

occasion and celebration, characteristic of the ethos of the Institution. Christians, colonists and settlers, Europeans and Africans mingled and formed part of the gathering honored to witness this momentous occasion - again characteristic of Lovedale that the near and the distant should meet "as to some common sanctuary, and for some common end."<sup>35</sup> There were already twenty potential pupils at the opening constituted by nine sons of European missionaries and eleven Africans. From the outset Lovedale aimed at being inter-denominational and inter-racial, with staff and students membership alike open to members of all denominations. However, those pupils from non-GMS background were charged a nominal fee. European and African pupils joined together in class and other extra-curricula activities but sat at separate tables in the same dining room and slept in separate dormitories.<sup>36</sup>

These were indeed great beginnings considering the context of the times. Foundations were being slowly but surely laid for the evolution of a multi-racial and multi-cultural church and society, and as such were fine signposts towards such a future. However, precisely because they were set in an increasingly denominational and racial society they were bound to be ambiguous. This is revealed by, for instance, Andrew Smith, one of the Lovedale staff, when he extolled the virtues of the Institution as being the first of its kind in these words:

*The brigading of Europeans and Natives together in their true relation to one another. ... It will be seen that they are brought into a true relationship with each other, and also that they not mixed up. ... The African, like a rude country lad who goes to a city to mix with young gentleman at college, learns civilized usages from the European, while the latter, separated as the British officer from the private by the strict regulation of Mess, loses nothing by contact.*<sup>37</sup>

Indeed, Smith captures the essence of what Lovedale idealized, nurtured and sought to implement. In the context of the escalating conflict between Africans and Europeans in the 1840's Lovedale wanted to become a reservoir of racial co-operation; in a situation of the fragmentation of African societies Lovedale sought to become an island of peaceful co-existence between cultures; and in the midst of increasing European frustrations in the 1850's regarding African adaptability to

<sup>35</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale, South Africa, op cit, p. 96.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 97 - 102.

<sup>37</sup> Op cit, pp. 98 - 99, emphasis original.

modern conditions Lovedale was saying there is hope for the African future. The establishment of Lovedale signaled, as it were, that the European arrival on the African Continent was a reality that could no longer be ignored or wished away. It was for this reality that Lovedale wanted to prepare its alumni. That the future of Africa was now black and white was inevitable. Lovedale aimed at maintaining this 'and', so that both black and white were given a chance to share in this future together. At Lovedale both Africans and Europeans were being equipped to live together as citizens in the same country. Yet, Smith's comments clearly reveal the inherent contradictions of the multi-cultural encounters of the time at Lovedale. Lovedale aspired, according to Smith, to a 'true relation' between European and African pupils. However, the classroom situation, where they were allowed to meet on equal basis, was not conducive to the social aspect of this achieving any real socialization. The social aspect of a 'true relation' was only possible between people who shared meals and sleeping facilities together. What Smith, or Lovedale to be precise, lacked was the insight into the value of a shared meal in the African context. Thus separation at meal times for instance, the most social and hospitable moment in the African worldview, must have sent different signals to African students at Lovedale. Cultural encounters require insight into and appreciation of the other.

Smith was echoing the dominant discourse as espoused at the opening of Lovedale. It was the common assumption that the coming together of African and European students at Lovedale was so that the former could learn from the latter, and that the latter 'loses nothing by (this) contact'. Earlier in an opening address James Laing had argued that the Seminary aimed at "allowing and enabling the educated Native to drink at the English fountains."<sup>38</sup> Africans themselves, according to Laing, had internalized this view when they enthusiastically concurred; "let us, said several intelligent Kaffres (sic), have access to knowledge in English, for it is as a river, and unlike our (African) rivers, it is ever flowing and ever full."<sup>39</sup> Having quenched their intellectual thirst in

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<sup>38</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale, South Africa*, op. cit, p. 96.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

English wells, in Laing's opinion, the Native agency was then expected to duplicate and perpetuate this English culture, albeit through a vernacular medium.<sup>40</sup>

What is interesting in this discourse is its dependency upon its subject for authentication. Africans themselves had to be reined in and portrayed as actually being the ones who were thirsting for the English wells. Africans, and 'several intellectual Africans' for that matter, had opinioned thus, and to think otherwise was to be foolish and in the minority. The African desire for the English fountains was not for the sake of compatibility and dialogue but assumed to be due to deficiencies in their own systems. In this scenario the African 'rivers', unlike the European ones, were not 'ever flowing and ever full'. When they ran dry, as was assumed to be the case in the 1840's, Europe was at hand to substitute these with its own. African wisdom was to be found in acknowledging this process of African self-insufficiency, on the one hand, and European benevolence, on the other. The habit of European representation of the African had thus begun.

The GMS missionaries at Lovedale were echoing the sentiments of their sending Society. The Directors had set the tone for this kind of discourse in the public *apologia* they published in their *Autumn Quarterly Intelligence* in 1841. The *apologia* was addressed to the Scottish public "for the opening of a place of higher education at Lovedale among so backward a people as the South African Bantu."<sup>41</sup> Thus, after a mere twenty years with the Bantu the GMS had formed a categorical opinion. The rest of the *apologia* was dominated with arguments that show how "Africa is now what England and Scotland once were" in the scale of civilization, and that with time it would also attain to the positions of the latter.<sup>42</sup> The Seminary would thus serve as the means for transformation towards this end. This reveals, in the words of de Kock, "the notion of cyclicity in the progress of civilization. As the Greeks and Romans were responsible for the transformation of the Anglo-Saxon, so the Victorian Christians will transform the Cape

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<sup>40</sup> Op. cit, p. 96.

<sup>41</sup> Op. cit, p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> Op. cit, p. 102.

Africans."<sup>43</sup> Behind this thinking were not just Enlightenment ideas but a firm belief that this was the natural order of things as predestined by God.

The encounter between Africa and Europe, with Lovedale as its microcosm was viewed as that of unequal partners. Consequently, relationships were skewed despite Lovedale's attempts at leveling the grounds. Its efforts at social equality were to be constantly bedeviled by this kind of thinking, which expressed itself at times more clearly than others. Despite its multi-cultural outlook, Lovedale lacked the intercultural skill and understanding necessary for managing diversity. Lovedale directors worked from the premise that Africans had no educational systems, deduced from the absence of formal and technical learning institutions in Africa. In turn, since missionary appreciation of African culture was obviously artificial the educational value of the latter was ignored. Consequently, Saayman argues, this led to the subordination and relegation to a peripheral role, at most, of the African educational systems. This failure to integrate the European and African educational systems by missionaries has thereby left a permanent legacy in contemporary educational system.<sup>44</sup>

Let us now explore the expressions of Scottish Presbyterian Christianity at Lovedale as exemplified by William Govan and James Stewart, its first two principals. Tiyo Soga and Mpambani Mzimba, in our case studies, received their Christian experiences and educational training at the hands of Govan and Stewart, respectively. As the latter are our two exemplars of African Christian responses to Scottish mission Christianity so the former are our examples of European Christianity in the Eastern Cape. It is mission through education that interests us, as it was the introduction of their system of education that had the greatest transformative impact in the process of this encounter.

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<sup>43</sup> L. de Kock, 'Drinking at the English Fountains': Missionary Discourse and the Case of Lovedale', *Missionalia*, Vol. 20, No. 2, August 1992, p. 127.

<sup>44</sup> W. Saayman, 'Who owns the schools will own Africa': Christian Mission, education and culture in Africa', *Journal for the Study of Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 2, September 1991, pp. 29 - 42.

### WILLIAM GOVAN: TEACHER OF SOGA

Although not himself particularly endowed with outstanding intellectual/academic talents, to William Govan was given the honour of developing the first comprehensive school for Africans in South Africa. In recognition of his other endowments GMS directors appointed him the first principal of Lovedale while still completing his theological course.<sup>45</sup> As proof of his courage Govan accepted the appointment and proceeded to lead the Seminary with distinction, inaugurating a number of distinctive features which "were maintained until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>46</sup> Prominent among these was the undenominational and multiracial nature of the Seminary, which we have previously mentioned. Govan cherished these features and would not compromise them for anything. Govan personally determined these two principles which were acted upon almost throughout Lovedale's early history.

Born in Paisley, Scotland in February, 1804 William Govan did both his arts and theological education at the Glasgow University.<sup>47</sup> He was subsequently ordained to the ministry on 21 July 1840, exactly a year before the opening of Lovedale Institution. Together with his wife he arrived at Lovedale for the appointed task on 16 January 1841, six months before Lovedale opened. In the meantime Govan assumed responsibility for completing the Seminary buildings and studying the isiXhosa language which he saw as necessary for his task. The Rev James Laing was appointed to assist Govan in 1843 and they became close colleagues for the ensuing years. Much later still, Govan compiled from Laing's own journals the "Memorials of Laing" for publication in 1875. The Seminary admitted the first scholars the following morning after the opening and soon settled into the routine of its life and work even though there was little progress at the beginning. Three years

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<sup>45</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 93; David Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution, 1890 - 1930', unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1979, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', *ibid.*, p. 3

<sup>47</sup> This may be why he chose the Glasgow University for Tiyo Soga. Also we need to note that Govan had business and classics background which he utilized in the administration of Lovedale. Further Govan seems to have come from a family of illuminaries, as there was a "Govan School", "the Govan Press" and the "Govan Literary Society". See *The Blythwood Review*, A South African Journal

later progress with the students themselves, also, did not meet Govan's academic expectations. Although disappointed Govan laboured on and planned to increase the intake of African students at Lovedale in 1844. Through this step, though unknown to him at the time, Govan paved the way for Tiyo Soga to get to Lovedale and beyond.

Govan understood the paucity of African attendance to be the result of financial difficulties imposed on the non-GMS African students who were expected to pay at least 12 pounds per annum for board and education. Thus, in order to increase the African students' intake and to relieve the cash strapped non-GMS African families Lovedale agreed to Govan's proposal to receive two candidates from other denominations free of charge. Also this would serve to enhance the non-denominational character of the Institution and maximize the input of other Societies. Although Shepherd characterizes this as "Govan's large-heartedness" both John Chalmers and Young point out that the decision was taken by Govan "with the full concurrence of his colleagues."<sup>48</sup> However, as the principal Govan assumed greater responsibility for the move and sure enough his empathy for the African financial plight got him into trouble with the Foreign Mission Committee (hereafter FMC) in Scotland. They strongly disapproved of this action and eventually it had to be dropped. In protest Govan offered his resignation.

Among those who took advantage of Govan's ecumenical gesture was the Rev Chalmers of the Tyhume mission station from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (hereafter UPC).<sup>49</sup> In July 1844, he proceeded to send for admission to Lovedale two boys from his mission. One of these was Tiyo Soga. However, as if fate would not have him he did not impress in the admission examinations. The young Soga was so nervous his arithmetic fell apart. Chalmers' confidence in Soga prevailed, however, as he negotiated with Govan for an arrangement for him to be allowed

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of Religious, Social and Educational Work, Vol. IX, No. 97, January 1932, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> R. Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed*, op. cit, p. 55; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 25; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 105.

<sup>49</sup> R. Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed*, *ibid.*, pp. 55 - 59; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 26 - 30.

to study at Lovedale. Thus, Soga's training at Lovedale almost did not happen! But for the keen eye of Chalmers and the benevolence of Govan history was in the making. Soga did not disappoint their confidence and worked so hard that Govan took a particular interest in him, and bonding between the two occurred. Subsequently, the boy who initially struggled to make the grades at Tyhume and Lovedale was to become the first black South African graduate pastor. Govan must have been proud, for Soga became "the most striking vindication of his belief in the capacity of Africans to benefit from higher education."<sup>50</sup>

The rest of the Scottish mission was suspended during the course of the 1845-7 war. In a follow up to his intention to resign from Lovedale Govan took the option of returning to Scotland at the outbreak of War. He took with him four boys from his class at Lovedale, namely, Bryce and Richard (sons of John Ross), William (son of W. R. Thomson) and Tiyo Soga. Henceforth, the bond between Govan and the latter was sealed. Govan thus continued to show his belief in the capacity of the African mind. The Seminary itself was temporarily forced to close during the war until re-opening on 17 July 1849. The GMS missionaries at Lovedale immediately sent a memorandum to Scotland recalling Govan to his former position. The substance of their submission was that Govan "was a tried and approved man and one who, under God, 'could do much to give Christianity a permanent hold of the Native mind.'"<sup>51</sup> If Soga is the measure of the depth of this claim then this was surely a remarkable compliment to Govan's credibility. Subsequently, with the backing of other friends in Glasgow as well Govan resigned his congregational charge to resume duties at Lovedale by February 1850.

Other developments at Lovedale resulted in the establishment of a fully-fledged printing and bookbinding department at the insistence of Govan in 1861. Govan had encouraged vernacularisation as far back as 1844 with the introduction of the short-lived periodical *Ikwezi*

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<sup>50</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 6

<sup>51</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, p. 119.

(The Morning Star).<sup>52</sup> This was succeeded by the popular and influential *Indaba* (The News) first published in 1862. Shepherd comments that its circulation was between five and six hundred.<sup>53</sup> Tiyo Soga later made good usage of *Indaba* for commentary on critical issues and the printing press for publication of his writings including his translation of Pilgrim's Progress (*uHambo lomHambi*) in 1867. Burchell argues that Lovedale was, thus, more extensive and diversified in its educational approach in that it offered both academic and technical education. Lovedale further established an agricultural curriculum and the development of a female department already in Govan's era. In this regard, therefore, "Govan certainly cannot be regarded as being merely academically orientated."<sup>54</sup> But, more crucially for our purpose, Govan initiated the resilient Lovedale culture of periodicals for promoting vernacularisation and intellectual discourse.

Last but not least, Govan understood the politics of the land. Thus he initiated a scheme for land purchase as an endowment for the Lovedale Institution.<sup>55</sup> When he left in 1870 he delivered to his successor "titles of land granted in trust to the institution, to the extent of nearly a thousand acres, purchased partly from Government, and partly from private individuals."<sup>56</sup> This should be viewed in line with earlier land developments, as noted above. When the amaXhosa were forbidden to live west of Tyhume River in the District of Victoria East their land was appropriated and new land ownership rights were introduced. Some land was given to the church to own while some was put up for sale at the government's disposal. The government's proclamation on 23 December 1847 had authorized the missionaries that "the land of their mission stations shall be held from Her Majesty, and not from any Kafir (sic) chief whatever."<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 February 1906; R. Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed*, op. cit, p. 83.

<sup>53</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 145.

<sup>54</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 9

<sup>55</sup> W. Govan, *Memories of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing*, op. cit, pp. 215 - 217; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, *ibid.*, pp. 151 - 152.

<sup>56</sup> W. Govan, *Memories of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing*, *ibid.*, p. 216.

Thus, the land formerly given to missionaries by and held in trust on behalf of the chiefs was now theirs to own on behalf of government. Subsequently, mission stations were perpetually to keep and add upon their lands as they found favour with successive governments. Thus, the current legacy of land ownership by the church was instituted. The policy of the privatization of the land, hitherto unknown within traditional practice, became the norm. Consequently, a Land Commissioner was appointed in 1857 "for the just and equitable assessment of quitrent on land in British Kaffraria which may become alienated from the Crown, (and) for the settlement of all claims on such land."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, a 'Transfer and Deeds Registry Office' was established on 24 July 1858. These were some of the mechanisms that served to further entrench the African exclusion to land rights, the legacy of which still prevails.

Pursuing the new land policy procedures Govan conducted correspondence negotiations with the Chief Commissioner between July 1859 and 1865 for the sale of land on behalf of the civilizing Africans.<sup>59</sup> In certain circumstances authorities acquiesced to granting individual titles to the inhabitants not only of mission stations and other Africans that met the criteria. However, Govan was not satisfied with the limited government offer of four acres per family as he protested; "no head of family ought to receive less than six acres, while the chief men, as well as those distinguished by industry and a tendency to improve ought to receive more."<sup>60</sup> In spite of these small concessions, however, Saunders reminds us that "African occupation of land in the Ciskei was still precarious in the 1880's as various pretexts were advanced by whites for the seizure of land in African occupation."<sup>61</sup> It may be argued in this context that Govan thus placed himself in the tradition of those church leaders who protested against the erosion of the African land rights. Soga was to utilize this culture of literary protest against the excesses of missionary-colonial praxis, as we shall see.

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<sup>57</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 117.

<sup>58</sup> *British Kaffrarian Records* - 1/23, op. cit

<sup>59</sup> *British Kaffrarian Records*, No. 92, op. cit

<sup>60</sup> Govan to Chief Commissioner, September 1864, *British Kaffrarian Records*, No. 92, op. cit

<sup>61</sup> C. Saunders, 'Early Days: 1870 - 1900' in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 17.

### JAMES STEWART: TEACHER OF MZIMBA

James Stewart belonged to the second generation of Scottish Presbyterian missionaries in the Eastern Cape. His desire to be a missionary was inculcated in him quite early in his life. As a boy it was his undying wish that "I shall never be satisfied till I am in Africa with a Bible in my pocket, and a rifle on my shoulder to supply my wants."<sup>62</sup> Indeed his wishes were fulfilled when Stewart landed at Lovedale to assume the principalship of that institution on 2 January 1870, after a short spell in Central Africa.<sup>63</sup> The fact that at 39 years he was appointed principal of Lovedale and was already a medical doctor is a reflection on his leadership and intellectual capacities. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland on 14 February 1831 Stewart comes from a middle-class background. It was from his mother that he received his pious, educational and work ethic influences.<sup>64</sup> He married Mina Stephen on 1 November 1866 and they had seven children, 6 daughters and 1 son. Stewart was well traveled and it was through these that he received influences that were to shape his life. His adventures took him to many countries in Europe.<sup>65</sup> He was deeply influenced by David Livingstone whom he later joined in Central Africa in 1861 for 18 months. This experience was to shape his view of Scottish missions in Africa.<sup>66</sup> Also, Brock notes that Stewart was intimate companion of other influential key-figures in the Anti-Slavery movement, like John Kirk and Horace Waller.<sup>67</sup> Stewart may have received the social engagement aspect of his ministry from there. On the other hand these men were also advocates of British imperialism in Africa. This left its mark on Stewart as well, as we shall see.

In 1855 Stewart began his theological studies at New College, Edinburgh. While studying, Livingstone's *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa* had a profound impact on him

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<sup>62</sup> J. Wells, *The Life of James Stewart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1909), p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 13.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>65</sup> J. Wells, *The Life of James Stewart*, ibid., p. 1; *The Christian Express*, 1 February 1906.

<sup>66</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 171 - 172.

<sup>67</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 12.

and it re-enforced his ambition for mission in Africa.<sup>68</sup> At the end of his course he was licensed as a preacher of the Free Church of Scotland in 1860. For the next six years he was involved in a variety of things until his departure for South Africa.<sup>69</sup> Late in 1866 he proceeded together with his wife and Jane Waterston to Lovedale. The latter was assigned to open a girls' school at Lovedale which she did in 1868. Stewart's first choice area of mission, however, remained Central Africa. So he had accepted the Lovedale appointment with the proviso that this would be temporary until he could find a way back to Central Africa.<sup>70</sup> In the meantime Stewart assumed his place as a member of the Lovedale staff.

It is not necessary for our purposes to document here the details of Stewart's tenure at Lovedale. We will, however, touch on salient issues later when we consider the so-called 'classics debate' and the role which Stewart played. For the moment we will consider Stewart's missionary philosophy as this can be ascertained from his own reflections in later life. This is done in order to create an understanding of the role of Lovedale under Stewart's direction, on the one hand. On the other, Stewart's philosophy rubbed off his students and shaped their actions and reactions. Mpambani Mzimba, whom we shall consider later, is an example of this influence.

In recognition of his talents and contributions to the Presbyterian tradition Stewart was elected to the moderatorial chair of the Free Church of Scotland's General Assembly of 1899-1900, and was head of this large body of Scottish Presbyterians at the turn of the nineteenth century. Similarly, he was appointed Duff lecturer in 1902 and delivered a series of lectures on aspects of Evangelical Theology to divinity students at Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen Universities, respectively. Also, he is said to have been one of the key figures whose influence was felt at the 1899 General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches in USA.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 February 1906.

<sup>69</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 170ff.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172; S. Brock, 'Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 12 -13.

<sup>71</sup> J. Wells, *The Life of James Stewart*, op. cit, p. 311.

In his Moderatorial address to the Free Church General Assembly in 1899 Stewart explicitly displayed his evangelical standpoint.<sup>72</sup> Wells holds also that in the address Stewart “expounded the great historic Scottish ideas of Christ's Crown and Covenant, the Headship of Christ over nations, and the Crown rights of the Redeemer.”<sup>73</sup> Emphasizing the tenets of his evangelical belief Stewart argued that “the religion of Jesus Christ is the religion best fitted for all mankind in all countries, conditions and climates” and that “all the world is the real area of missionary interest.”<sup>74</sup> In his address he appealed to the Western nations, particularly Britain and USA to unite in their support of missions for the sake of the advancement of “the kingdom of Him who is the real King and Ruler of this world.”<sup>75</sup> Further, Stewart perpetuated the typically evangelical individualistic approach to Christianity. He held that “the conversion of the individual soul to God is the result of highest value, is our greatest anxiety, and is regarded as the aim most worthy of effort, and to which all other efforts are properly and justifiably subordinate.”<sup>76</sup>

In what could be viewed as Stewart's doctrine of God, God is perceived predominantly in terms of kingship, power and conquest. The implication of this theology is that it lends itself to Christian imperialism. Wells bears evidence to the fact that Stewart was in fact a “Christian Imperialist.” He graphically writes of Stewart that:

He thought that the Gospel was more likely to spread in Africa from the South than from the North. One of his dreams was about a chain of Lovedales stretching to Khartoum and beyond. He asked Rhodes to give him a site in Rhodesia for one of them. He thought imperially.<sup>77</sup>

The fact that this comes from a sympathetic critic lends credence to our argument. Shepherd concurs that, being the missionary imperialist that he was, Stewart aimed at uniting all Scottish centres like Livingstonia, Blantyre and Blythswood in a federation, the controlling centre of which

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<sup>72</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, F3, Archives Library, University of Cape Town

<sup>73</sup> J. Wells, *The Life of James Stewart*, op. cit, p. 304.

<sup>74</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, F3, *ibid*.

<sup>75</sup> J. Wells, *The Life of James Stewart*, op. cit, p.311.

<sup>76</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, D1, op. cit

<sup>77</sup> Op. cit

was to be the Lovedale.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, his clashes with his colleagues at Blythwood were often as a result of his view of that institution as "a Lovedale on a smaller scale and on exactly the same lines."<sup>79</sup> Clearly, Stewart was a great centralist who had little or no time for diversity and heterogeneity. This expressed itself often in quite authoritarian or patronizing ways.

Stewart's theology gave rise to his stance on a number of issues like the Anglo-Boer War and his view of the African. His militant evangelicalism comes forth categorically in his pro-British and anti-Boer stance during the War, and this led him to believe that the War was simply just for the British.<sup>80</sup> At the beginning of the War he modestly argued that:

I am not a man in favour of war. I think that if God means to punish us we shall suffer defeat. ...Still I do not see any other way out of the difficulty than by war, if the Boers resist our just claims. War may be the only thing which will clear the air and enable us to get along comfortably together.<sup>81</sup>

However, he became more passionate as it progressed. The War was just for him precisely because it sought to protect his two interests, namely, British Christian civilization and African liberty. "That is exactly our aim - justice for the whites because they are entitled to it, and for the blacks because they have natural rights to it"<sup>82</sup>, he charged. For him these 'great interests' were non-negotiable:

There are questions that lie or should lie as much outside of party politics as the stars are outside of this earth. The authority of the Queen within her own dominions and the freedom of four million native Africans are two of these questions."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 February 1906; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 188.

<sup>79</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, I 19, p. 10, op. cit

<sup>80</sup> Pro-British/ anti-Boer sentiments were not confined to Stewart alone however. Cuthbertson observes that most of the English-speaking missionaries were anti-Boer, but he ascribes such a stance to the influential missionaries like Stewart. See G. Cuthbertson, 'James Stewart and the Anglo-Boer War, 1899 - 1902: A nonconformist and missionary perspective' in *South African Historical Journal*, No 14, November 1982, pp. 68ff.

<sup>81</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, L14, op. cit

<sup>82</sup> Op. cit

<sup>83</sup> Op. cit

For him, there could never be a just settlement of these two issues between the British and the Boer except through the total capitulation of the latter to the former. The Anglo-Boer crisis was thus "a conflict of two policies, so radically opposed that peace will never be possible until one is driven off the field."<sup>84</sup> This led him to severely sanction any apparently pro-Boer sentiments, as the Boers were clear aggressors in the conflict. Stewart, therefore, impatiently dismissed such sentiments as:

All Lies, Lies always and everywhere and to everyone. ...Krugerism and Pro-Boerism are two as good examples of wickedness and weakness of a certain kind as can be seen walking on the World's highway today...Some more devout will thank God that the blast of War has driven off the earth one of the most rapacious shamelessly dishonest, and infamous administrations that has ever been dignified with such a name. It touched nothing which it did not turn to vile uses.<sup>85</sup>

Clearly for Stewart British suzerainty was the more responsible authority for the protection of Christian civilization and African liberty from the raging Boer nationalism. British victory was thus essential in order to serve the two principles which were inextricably bound together. Africans, in his view, could enjoy their freedom only under the British monarchy.

Stewart clearly believed that the British were the chosen superior race, with the missionaries being the divine instruments to bring about God's plan for humanity. He held that one could not look at Britain's "apparent destiny as the greatest and most successful colonizers the world had seen since the days of Imperial Rome"<sup>86</sup> without believing that there was a guidance from above for its success. This is imperialism *par excellence*; imperialism in the sense of its presumption of the European presence in Africa. Further still, Cuthbertson correctly observes that the inclusion of Africans (the native question) in the debate was merely a belated ploy. It did not feature in the pre-War debate but was used eventually to justify the War by European sympathizers. Even when it was included "the argument was usually couched in paternalistic sermonizing and often with mission work in mind."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Op. cit

<sup>85</sup> Op. cit

<sup>86</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, p. 202.

<sup>87</sup> G. Cuthbertson, 'James Stewart and the Anglo-Boer War', op. cit, p. 73.

That Stewart was, in his own paternalistic way, concerned about the lot of the Africans cannot be denied totally. This can be seen in his insistence on African franchise in one of his terms for a genuine War settlement. In his memorandum he submitted that Africans in the Boer republics (Orange Free State and Transvaal) should be given limited franchise and a right to individual ownership of land and heritable property. He vigorously sought the removal of the invidious 9th article of the Transvaal Constitution which said, "the people (Boer population) will suffer no equality in Church and State" as he felt that "by that article the native becomes something between a man and a four-footed creature."<sup>88</sup> However, it needs be pointed out that it was probably more of the religious equality that Stewart envisaged and not political equality as such. The latter, in his view, "cannot be asked for the ordinary native in his present condition."<sup>89</sup> It seems, then, that Stewart's motives were somewhat self-seeking and ideologically oriented.

It is thus difficult not to view Stewart as an enlightened reactionary. His heavy handedness in dealing with divergent views must have served to further polarize and antagonize others. His typically harsh reactions to processes that seemed to be out of his control must have caused him to lose sight of the essence of these. His militant nationalism would naturally breed similar forms of nationalism. His own talents and achievements may have been responsible, in the final analysis, for his lack of appreciation of the same in other people. Mzimba was influenced and shaped by some of these characteristics of his mentor and, eventually, reacted against them in a similar way.

#### THE 'CLASSICS DEBATE': EDUCATION FOR EQUALITY OR 'COLONIZING THE MIND'?

It is against this background that the 'classics debate' on education between Govan and Stewart at Lovedale should be viewed.<sup>90</sup> The dispute had to do with the fact that missionaries carried with them to Africa their own particular religious and cultural values, and these were crucial in

<sup>88</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, L4, op. cit

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, pp. 155 - 163; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit pp. 100 - 123; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 12 - 18.

determining the form and value of African education. The fact that missionaries shared divergent views is indicative of the diversity within their own religio-cultural background. There was no singular motive or cultural uniformity that missionaries represented, as much as mission societies differed in aims, policies, and attitudes. Similarly, these cultural values in turn influenced and shaped a particular missionary's view of the African. The 'classics debate' is a reflection of European cultural reality and its changing shifts and perceptions. The dispute had to do with the understanding of the content and purpose of education for Africans. With regard to Govan and Stewart each had his own ideas of what this should be. The unfolding of this process became, in the words of Shepherd, "a drama which was to run down the curtain on Govan's life at Lovedale,"<sup>91</sup> and introduced Stewart's era. Such was the intensity of the debate and the extent of the value of education in the missionary enterprise.

The process that led to the 'classics' dispute started with the respective visits of Stewart and Duff at Lovedale in 1863.<sup>92</sup> They both considered reform necessary at the Institution and Dr. Duff, now Convenor of the Foreign Mission Council, regarded Stewart as the person most suited to introduce these reforms. Henceforth the future of Lovedale was determined and, towards this goal, Stewart was encouraged by Duff to assume a permanent position at Lovedale and abandon the Central Africa dream. Subsequently Stewart arrived at Lovedale in 1867 with a series of instructions from the Council aimed at introducing administrative and academic changes thereto.<sup>93</sup> Hitherto Lovedale offered a quality education of high standard to both European and African students. This occurred through the medium of classical subjects. According to the new changes this was to be reversed, with the classics being scrapped from the African students' curriculum and substituted with the English language. Also there was to be less focus on offering high educational standards to Africans, and rather a more missionary oriented approach was to be encouraged. Thus with Stewart's administration, according to the Foreign Mission Council's 1867 instructions, not only quality education through the medium of classical subjects but the racial equality in education

<sup>91</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 152.

<sup>92</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit pp. 100ff; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 12ff.

were to be sacrificed. The 'classics debate' therefore represented a perception of African education as shaped by the social circumstances of the time.

Switzer has observed that the pioneer missionaries in the Eastern Cape discriminated on the basis of culture rather than race.<sup>94</sup> However, there was a paradigm shift away from this at the turn of the century towards racial emphases.<sup>95</sup> Contributing to this rather sudden change were ideological factors like those of Social Darwinism emanating from Europe, on the one hand, and socio-economic developments like the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa, on the other. The Social Darwinist theory of racial subordination, rather than the pioneer missionaries' quest for racial integration, "was more acceptable to the mission enterprise in the later colonial period."<sup>96</sup> The rise of Social Darwinism characterised through "Anglo-Saxon race pride" led to notions of European racial self-sufficiency and supremacy. In the Social Darwinist scheme the Africans were regarded as inherently inferior to Europeans at best and were rendered superfluous at worst. To be sure, Africans were still needed but as subjects and commodities rather than equal members of the human race.

The industrial revolution in South Africa from the late 1860's meant that Africans were drafted into colonial society as cheap labour for the mines. Governor Grey's civilisation policy based on European industrialisation was aimed exactly towards this end. Thus the colonial practice of the time, riding on the failure of the 1856-7 Nongqawuse prophecy, sought to entrench the European view of Africans as inferior human beings suited to manual labour. In this regard, the hierarchical worldview propounded by Social Darwinism served to undergird the industrialising South Africa's needs of property ownership and cheap labour. Subsequently, Africans would be viewed as commodities and inferior citizens fit only to serve this need. The consolidation of settler society in

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<sup>93</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 153ff.

<sup>94</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, op. cit, p. 116.

<sup>95</sup> D. Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, op. cit, pp. 312f.

<sup>96</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, *ibid.*, p. 139; J. Cochrane, *Servants of Power*, op. cit, p. 19.

the 1860's and the rise of Afrikaner nationalism later,<sup>97</sup> led to a European cultural arrogance which considered Africans and their systems as being inferior and inadequate thereby requiring European supervision and substitution.<sup>98</sup> Thus, the second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by an increase of ideologically motivated racial discrimination and changing socio-economical conditions, all of which impacted upon the Christian mission.

Admittedly, not all missionaries went out to espouse overt racist stances, nor did their mission reflect total political or ideological capitulation. Theirs was the simple task of the gospel, which did not encourage such easy affiliations. However, there can be little doubt that most were uncritical admirers of European civilisation and Western imperialism. In fact, most missionaries were convinced that they were bringing to Africa the advantages of Christian Western civilisation. In this context, according to Moorhouse, missionaries had generally been "no more exempt from this feeling than traders, though their professional ethic had given them a vocabulary and gestures which allowed them to camouflage their racialism with unlimited euphemism."<sup>99</sup> This fact did tend to make them in practice, if not in intention, agents of European cultural imperialism, which should be seen as a by-product of their main task. Our contention is that this cultural chauvinism was now being predominantly couched in and driven by racial considerations. Missionaries thus became purveyors of European racialism in this period, and due to their close proximity to the indigenous people, their impact was more serious. Ironically, the fact that they were men of God meant that African Christians would hardly tolerate their racism. Indeed it was within the Christian mission itself that the most radical African Christian responses to racism actually occurred, as we shall indicate.

With the education being an indispensable component of the missionary enterprise and a potent tool of colonising the African mind it was bound to come under the impact of the current

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<sup>97</sup> S. Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), p. 57.

<sup>98</sup> E. McDonagh, *Church and Politics: From theology to a case history of Zimbabwe* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), p. 106.

ideological circumstances of the time. Indeed, the 'classics debate' is indicative of European missionary practice to order African education accordingly. Lovedale's original quest to make education serve as a tool racial integration and equality was abandoned at the turn of the century. Following the Social Darwinist hierarchy of races Africans were not deemed worthy of quality education as Europeans as they were now being prepared for an inferior role in society. The transition from Govan to Stewart at Lovedale meant that African education therein would be suited to this new design.

In Govan's own words, the primary objective of Lovedale Institution had been that of "giving a higher education to a portion of the native youths, to raise up among them what might be called an educated class, from which might be selected teachers of the young, catechists, evangelists, and ultimately even fully qualified preachers of the Gospel."<sup>100</sup> From beginning to end it was Govan's sole intention to promote equality of races through education at Lovedale. In his time, despite the fact that they slept in different dormitories and ate at separate tables, African and European students attended the same classes and followed the same curriculum. In order to compete with the more advantaged European students it was thus necessary for Govan to identify African students with potential in this regard. These would, in turn, constitute a class of the African intelligentsia for the upliftment of their own people, on the one hand, and their equal competition with the Europeans in the service of this country on the other. Thus Govan's aim had been to provide bases for an equal society irrespective of race. Further, the foundation of this society would be the Lovedale's products who had received quality education to prepare them for meaningful roles therein.

At the bottom of Govan's thought was the belief that "the Bantu (sic) were so mixed up with the Europeans in South Africa as to render it necessary for them to be placed on an equal footing in

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<sup>99</sup> G. Moorhouse, *The missionaries* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1973), pp. 282 - 283.

<sup>100</sup> W. Govan, *The Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing*, op. cit, p. 155.

matters of education."<sup>101</sup> For him, therefore, education was the necessary tool for leveling the ground between Europeans and Africans in their common citizenship of the country. Thus Govan embraced a broad vision of education that would prepare the Africans "not only in the office of the ministry, but also in the various positions in society, secular as well as ecclesiastical."<sup>102</sup> Education was the vehicle towards attainment of adequate human resources necessary for the developing South Africa. In Govan's view, significantly, this development was the responsibility of all its citizens, Africans and Europeans equally. Hence his emphasis on a quality education for all. A classical education was aimed at this objective of racial equality and assimilation of purpose in Govan's view.

By comparison, Stewart, with Foreign Mission Council's approval, proposed to shape the whole course of African students' instruction with special regard to the particular needs and conditions of a racist society. Thus contrary to Govan's quest for the creation of African intelligentsia, Stewart aimed at "a practical education, giving what is thought will best fit those who receive it for their special work, and omitting much that may perhaps be generally useful, and even desirable, as belonging to a classical education."<sup>103</sup> His main interest was in providing an elementary education for the many, the content of which would be practically oriented. If Govan aimed at producing teachers and preachers, and in the process an African intelligentsia, Stewart's purpose was the other way round. For him the creation of the latter was not essential, as his pressing need was that of providing basic education for the many in order to suit the evangelistic and industrial purposes. Thus, the teaching of the classics was redundant in his scheme.

Stewart wanted to accentuate the missionary rather than academic character of Lovedale. As such the missionary aim of education, being that of assisting in the mass evangelisation of Africans was over-emphasized. Consequently, Lovedale's curriculum would be adjusted to meet the very basic and practical needs of the African communities. To be sure, European students would still be

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<sup>101</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 163.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>103</sup> R. Young, *African Wastes Reclaimed*, op. cit, pp. 110 - 111.

welcomed but only under this new objective of the Institution. The classics were to make way for English, which was deemed essential for the basic literary needs of illiterate Africans. In the process the multi-racial character of Lovedale was sacrificed as Europeans obviously would not be interested in an inferior education.

As viewed by the Foreign Mission Council in Scotland, to which both Govan and Stewart had made submissions of their visions of African education in 1868, the issues were:

Whether it should be the aim of the Seminary to give such an education as will attract Europeans as well as Natives, and place Native pupils on the same educational level as European pupils, while seeking to impart to the whole a Christian tone and direction, or whether it should be the aim of the Seminary directly to meet the need of general as well as Christian instruction which prevails among the Natives by making Christian truth the central subject of instruction and seeking to train up Native preachers and Native teachers?<sup>104</sup>

With Dr. Duff clearly supporting Stewart's view the ultimate decision was a foregone conclusion. Shepherd observes that Govan was not a match against both Dr. Duff's enormous prestige in Scotland and Dr. Stewart's growing influence in South Africa. Naturally, therefore, the Council viewed things Stewart's way. It went on to state categorically that the classical languages should be sacrificed in favour of English at Lovedale. And that it was necessary to inculcate a scholarly love of vernacular in African students and "to appoint English as their Classical language in lieu of Latin or Greek."<sup>105</sup> With this decision in place Govan could not see his way clear to continue as principal of Lovedale. For him this was a matter of principle that could not be sacrificed. He, therefore, resigned in July 1870 to return to parish ministry in Scotland. Stewart, in turn, viewed this as a personal victory.

The decision marked a crucial turning point in the development of Lovedale, and had negative consequences for the future of African education at Lovedale and beyond. Govan, having been made a scapegoat, was lost to the Institution. It was not impossible, for instance, to integrate both

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<sup>104</sup> The minute of 16 February 1869 cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 160.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

Govan and Stewart's visions for the betterment of Lovedale. But the Foreign Mission Council had already had its mind made up. Burchell puts it succinctly:

They and Stewart were determined to make the Seminary focus primarily on the wants of the African generally, with particular emphasis on their evangelization. They were thus inaugurating an early experiment in adapting education to the contemporary position of the African.<sup>106</sup>

With the introduction of the new policy Africans were cut off from the mainstream of Victorian education<sup>107</sup>, as they would be from all other mainstreams in the development of South Africa. It could be argued that, indeed, herein we have the precursor to the apartheid government's systems of race differentiation. Unwittingly, Stewart provided the rationale and moral sustenance for the subsequent ideology of separate development aimed at the maintenance of white superiority. Indeed the General Superintendent of Education for the Cape, Langham Dale, echoed such sentiments as early as 1889:

The only way to enable the groups (Africans and Europeans) to do their parts respectively in the social world is to provide instruction adapted to the needs of each; for the Native races ordinary school instruction and training in the workshop and in domestic industries ... If the European race is to hold its supremacy, the school instruction of its children must not only be the best and most advanced, but must be followed by a systematic training of the young colonists in directive intelligence ... The majority of natives may be, at the best, qualified to do the rough work of artisans; but even this work must be under the direction of the guiding eye and hand of the skilled European.<sup>108</sup>

Further, although there may have been merit in Stewart's approach as Brock argues,<sup>109</sup> the paternalistic attitude with which he advocated his vision was unacceptable. This was demonstrated in his common use of a cynical and descriptively crude and condescending language when he talked to and about the Africans and their education.

<sup>106</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 16.

<sup>107</sup> C. Saunders and R. Derricourt (eds.), *Beyond the Cape Frontier: Studies in the History of the Transkei and Ciskei* (London: Longmans, 1974), p. 206; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 119.

<sup>108</sup> Cited in T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans in the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational and Anglican Churches in South Africa from 1860 to 1960', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Rhodes University, 1977, p. 45 (Hereafter cited as 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans'); cf. J. Stewart, *Lovedale South Africa, Illustrated* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1894), p. 19.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 118ff.

When African students at Lovedale insisted on classical education as a means towards quality education and racial equality, Stewart told them that "any education which is not practical in its character is of no real value to you at your present stage of civilization."<sup>110</sup> He had argued elsewhere that it was impossible to "expect those just emerging from barbarism to shew the steadiness, industry, and trained power of hand and brain which have become the possession of other races by one or two thousand years of training."<sup>111</sup> It was immaterial to him that Govan had successfully experimented for the last thirty-five years with equal education for all races. In his view Africans did not "have ideas beyond the average,"<sup>112</sup> which is why they deserved a practical rather than intellectual approach to education. Thus, whereas Govan had sought to overcome it Stewart was intent on widening the chasm between African and European students, and, subsequently black and white South Africans.

Further still, despite the precedence of Tiyo Soga, for "the career of Soga became crucial for both protagonists and antagonists of black education,"<sup>113</sup> and the recent history of African success at Lovedale Stewart could still forcefully maintain that:

The mind of the African is empty, and he has a great idea of what he calls 'getting knowledge'. ... His desire, therefore, is to learn whatever the white man learns. ... Hence there is strong desire, almost amounting to a craze, for Latin and Greek among a few, though the amount of knowledge gained of such subjects is, of course, useless.<sup>114</sup>

With such strong ideas Stewart forced African students to abandon their dreams of racial equality. Convincing them that this was 'a very large question', probably for their intellect, he dismissed it as the strange notions of the so-called educated native young men foreign to their elders. Consequently, Africans were advised to channel their energies to the practical issues for which

<sup>110</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, D29, op. cit

<sup>111</sup> J. Stewart, Lovedale South Africa, Illustrated, op. cit, p. 19.

<sup>112</sup> J. Stewart, 'Experiment in Education', January 1880 in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, Outlook on a Century, op. cit, p. 64.

<sup>113</sup> T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', op. cit, p. 34.

<sup>114</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, D16, op. cit

they are competent. They were now being encouraged to jettison academic or personal pursuits in favour of common purpose in life. This was, simultaneously, being expressed in terms of the Protestant work ethic: "nothing will lift you to any equality with other nations except that which the majority of the race do not like, and that is hard work."<sup>115</sup> He preached the value of work expressed in daily manual labour, however not in and of itself, but rather to demonstrate that "Christianity and idleness are incompatible."<sup>116</sup> Indeed pontificating on the theme of the Protestant work ethic was one of Stewart's favourite pastimes as he took serious exception to what he conceived as "the natural indolence of the African."<sup>117</sup> Elementary education was aimed precisely at changing such uncivilised habits, in Stewart's view. Its objective was synonymous with that of preparing the Africans for a literate labour at the mines. He was, therefore, in the habit of chiding his African students:

True Christianity is incompatible with the aimlessness of savage life; the pith of the Christian life is in the will and the means to be doing; what can be the outcome of all the teaching, religious and secular, if recipients are left to the unrestrained licence and apathetic indolence of a mode of living that makes no account of the responsibility of man, and offers no sphere for self-improvement, much less for self-control, which is the basis of morality?<sup>118</sup>

James Stewart was truly a Victorian child. However, there were reactions to and criticisms of Stewart's policies which resulted in lasting divisions and hostilities between Stewart and most Scottish missionaries in and around Lovedale. The majority of Scottish missionaries in Kaffraria were clearly opposed to his so-called reforms. While the Presbytery minuted its disapproval of Stewart's changes at Lovedale,<sup>119</sup> individual missionaries like Laing expressed similar sentiments and concerns about the future implications of the new policies.<sup>120</sup> Stormont was more forthright in his endorsement of Govan's approach: "it is highly desirable that a class of propertied and educated people should arise among them (Africans) for such can become conservative leaders to

<sup>115</sup> J. Stewart, 'What is Education?', June 1884 in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 75.

<sup>116</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, D3, op. cit

<sup>117</sup> J. Stewart, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p.18.

<sup>118</sup> Stewart's Papers, BC 106, D30, op. cit

<sup>119</sup> S. Brock, *James Stewart and Lovedale*, op. cit, pp. 109 - 114.

<sup>120</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 164 - 165.

their weaker countrymen, and must wish that order and peace be kept in the land, out of consideration of their own prosperity."<sup>121</sup>

The Africans were naturally drawn into the debate. Both former and current Lovedale's African students voiced their protest against these developments. In a letter to Ross in January 1870, Tiyo Soga spoke out in favour of his former teacher: "it seems to me that they are doing all they can to dim the lustre of Mr. Govan's name in connection with that Seminary. ... I wash myself of all these Stewart, Bennie (?) - Weir managements."<sup>122</sup> A majority of the other African students also defended Govan's system and accused Stewart of introducing an inferior and colour-conscious education. They persisted in their desire for a full European education which placed them on equal par with white students. In a jubilee address in 1891 John Knox Bokwe made reference to Africans as being "kept in a subordinate position" which they should not accept.<sup>123</sup>

Significantly, the founding of the first fully independent African newspaper *Imvo ZabaNtsundu* (The African Opinion) by John Tengo Jabavu in 1884 opened a popular channel for creative African Christian dialogue with Lovedale on the classics. This was the same year in which Stewart had made his public address to the African students at the Lovedale Literary Society, titled 'What is Education'.<sup>124</sup> In the article, as the title suggests, Stewart sought to give a definitive view of education. In his own words, he wanted to correct "wrong and defective ideas on the subject." However, he did this through a polemic castigating the advisability of teaching the classics to Africans. Subsequently, he indulged in self-blame for having assented "to a Theological curriculum for native preachers, shaped exactly on the home model," but was glad "I never agreed for a day to the teaching of Latin to promiscuous classes of native lads, some of whom have never risen higher than day-labourers and grooms ..."<sup>125</sup> In a dismissive gesture he pointed out that the classics experiment with Africans has failed: "whether it was the fault of the

<sup>121</sup> Stormont's Papers, MS 7512, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>122</sup> Soga to Ross, 20 January 1870, MS 9206, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>123</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale', op. cit, p. 50.

<sup>124</sup> June 1884 in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, pp. 65 - 76.

native scholar or of the classic he studied, or both, we may each determine for ourselves. At any rate it had failed to raise him - in any considerable numbers at least."<sup>126</sup> However, he went on to blame the "weakness of native students" for "hankering after higher subjects" while they fail to manage the basics.<sup>127</sup> Through the dismissal of the teaching of classics to Africans Stewart, significantly, dismissed the underlying notion of racial equality:

When we talk of the equality of race, we are talking on a very large question. There are certain God given rights by which all men whatever be their colour, are in a true sense equal. But by equality of race here, we mean present capacity for self-government, training, and power to advance in the arts of civilisation, and past achievements arising out of these developed powers. Starting but as yesterday in the race of nations, do you soberly believe that in the two generations of the very imperfect civilisations you have enjoyed and partially accepted, you can have overtaken those other nations who began the race two thousand years ago, and have been running hard in it for a thousand years at least?<sup>128</sup>

With the dream of racial equality rendered impossible by the two thousand year gap, in Stewart's view, African students were told to focus on inferior roles in society as it was "by labour not by Latin, by the Gospel and not by Greek you will rise,"<sup>129</sup> Stewart told them. Thus consciously Stewart promoted an education for race distinction and subordination. Education became ideologically determined following Social Darwinist racial hierarchy with Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom. Education principles and objectives were re-ordered to promote and prove this belief.

*Imvo* made its first reaction to Stewart's address in 1885 openly denouncing the address. A lively debate then ensued between *The Christian Express* and *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*. Echoing Stewart's views the *Christian Express* had charged in April 1885 that the teaching of classics to Africans at Lovedale "ha(d) been found to do no special good but to produce positive evil."<sup>130</sup> *Imvo* responded at length in its May 1885 editorial:

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<sup>125</sup> Op. cit, p. 69.

<sup>126</sup> Op. cit, p. 69.

<sup>127</sup> Op. cit, p. 70.

<sup>128</sup> Op. cit, p. 76.

<sup>129</sup> Op. cit, p. 76.

<sup>130</sup> *The Christian Express*, April 1885.

We shall be extremely sorry to say anything which may appear to charge the Editor of the *Christian Express* with hostility and unfairness to Natives. With all due respect to the worthy and esteemed Principal of Lovedale Institution, we ask, what positive evil have classics produced to Natives trained at Lovedale? We desire information and light on the subject. The native lads are complaining loudly to their parents and guardians that they do not enjoy the advantages now in the Lovedale classes that the European lads enjoy. This difference has been made quite recently. They cannot understand why the difference is being made. Among students of the same class, who have reached the same standard in examinations of their teachers and Government Inspectors of Schools, a difference is made. The European are given other subjects to study, but Natives are prohibited, even when they express a desire to study those subjects. These are classical studies. The Parents know nothing of Latin and Greek, but would like to be informed as to why the difference is made. The *Express* has partially told us the reason for this. It does not arise from unwillingness to see natives enjoying the same advantages as the white race, but in the native mind classics produce positive evil!<sup>131</sup>

In a stroke of genius *Imvo* thus turned Stewart's view upside down by arguing that the classics had produced no positive evil among the Africans, and it went on to show how past students had in fact benefited through the study of classics. Its argument was based on the fact that a system that had produced numerous African pioneers in almost every field within the South African community could not be said to have failed. Shortly after *Imvo's* editorial were published, another correspondent, 'Lovedalian' from Kimberley, wrote a detailed polemic in which he mentioned by name many Africans educated in classics who now occupied high positions in church and society. In a June 1885 article 'Lovedalian' sought to display the usefulness of the classics with regard to Africans. He introduced his argument thus:

With all respect to Dr Stewart, who holds a very honourable position in this country, I submit that this statement is not only unjust but very incorrect. Yes, I go further and say it is a *suppressio veri et suggestio falsi*. I am saying this advisedly, believing that I shall be able to prove by positive and indisputable facts that, all things being equal, classics instead of producing evil have produced positive good.<sup>132</sup>

The thrust of 'Lovedalian's' article was to show that the *Christian Express's* charge was based on opinion rather than facts, as these proved otherwise. It sought to throw the onus back at Lovedale to support its claims and prove how the classics were unsuitable for Africans. In a letter to *Imvo* in July 1885 the *Christian Express* responded, taking exception at the "impudence" of 'Lovedalian's' challenge to Stewart. *Imvo* in turn published the letter, in which it was charged that "if this is the effect of classical education Lovedalian received at Lovedale, the manner of his letter - if not the

<sup>131</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 4 May 1885.

matter itself - has proved beyond doubt that to *gentlemen* of common sense 'too much attention to Classics' in his case at least 'has produced positive evil.'<sup>133</sup> In August 1885 the *Christian Express* was ready with a full reply to 'Lovedalian' in an article which concluded as follows:

But we may, in taking leave of this subject, be allowed to make a single suggestion to the *Imvo Zabantsundu*, which is the great champion of classical education for natives, and also of higher education, as it understands that question. It has the ear of that not very large portion of the native people who read. What should it tell them, if it really desires their welfare, if it loves them both wisely and well? Tell them this - that the life and death question of the native people in this country now, is not classics or even politics - but industry; that the foothold the natives will be able to maintain in this country depends almost entirely on the habit of steady conscientious work; and that it is of more consequence for them to understand this, than to be able to read all the lore of the ancients.<sup>134</sup>

Thus spoke the *Christian Express* with familiar authority and pronounced verdict on African rights. Instead of proving a factual proof of its claims it sought to rely on its absolute authority to tell Africans what's right and wrong. However, *Imvo* would not leave the matter to rest as it is, and so published a corrective:

It (the *Christian Express*' editorial) is so good, and we look at it as a compliment to ourselves. It is not with the object of detracting from it that we propose to offer an observation or two on it, but rather to point out some errors into which the writer, unintentionally, to be sure, would seem to have fallen, so as, if possible, to improve it. To begin with, our mentor starts with the idea that this paper is 'the great champion of classical education for natives, and also of higher education'. It does not follow because we are thorough believers in the doctrine that, as a rule, the more a man is educated the better fitted he is for whatever post it may please God to call him, we are therefore 'champions of classical education for natives', and so forth. In connection with the educational controversy, in which some have understood to imply, if not suggest that 'conscience has a colour and quality of work a hue' and who were for the equipping of the Native for the future in such a manner as to lead one to believe that the contrary were the fact. So minded then, we have merely claimed for our people a 'fair field and no favour' in the matter of classical or higher education.<sup>135</sup>

Such was the nature of the discourse between mission educated Africans and the missionaries at the turn of the nineteenth century. In their reaction the Africans were to realize the empowering element inherent in the civilising process and utilize it for their own purposes. The irony of the matter is that it was the products of Lovedale themselves, using the tools acquired there, who eventually critically questioned the missionary discourse. So that, with Berman, "the mission

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<sup>132</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 17 June 1885.

<sup>133</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 1 July 1885.

<sup>134</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 August 1885.

<sup>135</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 19 August 1885.

schools and churches contributed to their own ultimate demise by helping to create an elite which challenged continued European dominance."<sup>136</sup>

Gqubule has rightly argued that at the heart of the Africans' struggle for a classical education was the defense against the erosion of their rights as Africans.<sup>137</sup> In adherence to the biblical and philosophical values of equality they were defending their African right to full humanness. In their quest for the classics, according to L. N. Mzimba, "all the Africans wanted was a fair field and no favour, as a matter of justice, since we are also God's children."<sup>138</sup> In this regard by defending the status of classics at Lovedale Africans were thereby defending their human rights. The classical education, in their view, empowered them with similar tools as Europeans thus making competition and equality possible. This empowering sense of classics that Africans adhered to was in turn influenced by the value attached to classics in British education. The latter placed high emphasis on quality education in which the classics were a major component. This was necessary for the promotion of British image and cultivation of educated citizens who would make valuable contribution to society and nation building.

Thus the idea behind the classics was quality education rather than a hankering after dead subjects as Stewart put it. For the Africans the study of classics were not merely a labour of love or love of European languages rather were viewed as serving the means towards knowledge, empowerment, and equality. The issue for them was both a proper education which they deserved and equality in education which they demanded - not an education for an inferior place in society determined by colour. Obviously classical education was elitist but, significantly, non-racial. This option the Africans preferred rather than for the racially determined mass education. Such were the options and choices that faced missionaries in their quest for the education of an illiterate African society

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<sup>136</sup> H. Berman, *African Reactions to Missionary Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1975), p. XV.

<sup>137</sup> T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', *op. cit.*, pp. 52ff.

<sup>138</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Ibali Lobomi Nomsebenzi womfi uMfundisi Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba* (Lovedale: Lovedale Institution Press, 1923), p. 10. (Hereafter cited as *Umfundisi*)

at the turn of the century. It poses interesting questions regarding the ideology, objectives, and strategies for education in a given context. With these observations, and understanding of the nature of the interaction in the search for new strategies, we now turn to our two case studies, Soga and Mzimba, respectively.



TAYLOR AS A YOUNG MAN

## CHAPTER THREE

### TIYO SOGA: STRADDLING TWO CULTURES

#### EARLY FORMATION AND THE LOVEDALE EXPERIENCE

The birth of Tiyo Soga is officially located in 1829. Born some eight years after the settlement of the first GMS missionaries in the Eastern Cape, Tiyo's birth is dated by the event of the expulsion of Chief Maqoma from the Kar River territory in 1829. His mother had informed him that he was born during the course of this event. Soga himself made the discovery of the actual year-date of the event while perusing some historical records of the Cape Colony.<sup>1</sup> Still he could not establish the exact month and day in which he was born. Traditional African people date their history from significant events they wish to commemorate. They depend on the power of memory to 'register' when the specific event happened. Even the names of children often correspond with the particular event around which they were born. That the event which marked the year of the birth of Soga was significant in the collective memory of amaXhosa people is attested to by John Chalmers<sup>2</sup> himself "the year of Tiyo's birth is memorable in the annals of Kafir (sic) history."<sup>3</sup> Critically, for us, Tiyo was thus born and lived his life in a frontier context.

Another significant insight surrounding Tiyo's birth is his name, and the fact that he maintained his African name from beginning to end. It was normative for African converts to be given and, henceforth, he referred to by so-called Christian names, which in reality were European names. A perusal of African Christian history reveals this reality. Even the names of key African figures like Edward Wilmot Blyden, Samuel Ajayi Crowther, James 'Holy' Johnson, James Africanus Horton, Nehemiah Tile, Bernard Mizeki, Isaiah Shembe, Barnabas Lekganyane, Nelson Mandela, Robert Sobukwe, Steve Biko, Desmond Tutu, and

<sup>1</sup> John A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga* (1967), pp. 4.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Chalmers, *The people, the people's son of the Dutch East India Company*, William Chalmers who joined the GMS missionaries in the Eastern Cape in 1827, was Tiyo Soga's grandfather and he baptised the infant Tiyo of Hawaii as follows in a letter of 18 December 1850. This was the first biography of Soga's life, written by him, and it is found in the archives of the GMS, also see Dr. Williams, *Introduction to Biography of Tiyo Soga* (1970), 197.

<sup>3</sup> *Notable Xhosa and Zulu Leaders*, 1970, 1970, pp. 51-52.

others betray their missionary-colonial past. Although it was at the centre of the Black Consciousness Movement, it was not until the current democratic dispensation in South Africa that Africans are finding pride in their African identity. Hitherto, European was Christian and vice versa, and it was something to be emulated as normative in Christian tradition. This is why it is fairly common for theological initiates to imagine that Tertulian, Augustine, Cyril and other African church fathers must have been Europeans. The history of the transmission of Christianity in Africa encourages this mistaken foreign notion. Significantly, baptised as an adult in Glasgow, Scotland on 7 May 1848 Soga maintained his African name, Tiyo! Thus, Soga made a symbolic contribution to the process of redeeming the African language and identity within a Christian context.

There is no particular major significance regarding the actual meaning of the name 'Tiyo' in isiXhosa language.<sup>4</sup> Chalmers observes that the initial name given to Tiyo by his mother was *Zisani* (What bringest thou?) but it was changed to Tiyo by his father, "after an influential Galeka (sic) councillor who was brave on the battlefield, and wise in his counsels at the great place."<sup>5</sup> Unwittingly for his father, Soga became a hero on another battlefield and his wisdom therein has become timeless. Williams speculates, however, that the name 'Tiyo' may have been a derivation from 'Theo', short for Theodore. This is conceivable in view of the fact that Tiyo's family was one of the first to come into contact with and embrace the 1820's Scottish missionary enterprise in and around Tyhume, after their initial encounter with Ntsikana. However, if the theory is correct, although there is no evidence for it, its significance is in that, during the time of popular Eurocentric tendencies in Tiyo's case it was the other way round. The European 'Theo' was transculturated into an African 'Tiyo'. If this was the case, it was also an act of symbolic appropriation. In trying to integrate both views, then it may be that Chalmers' warrior counsellor's name was the one derived from 'Theo', in which case our conclusions of an act of Africanisation remain the same.

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<sup>3</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 4; also D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 10; D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal and Selected Writings of the Reverend Tiyo Soga* (Cape Town: A. A. Balkema, 1983), p. 1; also T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', op. cit, p. 33.

As if unwittingly to emphasize his traditionalist background Chalmers's opening sentence in *Tiyo Soga* is that Soga's father was a polygamist. Popularly referred to as Old Soga, Tiyo's father had eight wives with thirty-nine children. Polygyny was a sign of high honour and dignity in traditional amaXhosa culture. In his instance, therefore, polygyny was a practice befitting his rank and official status. Indeed, old Soga, the son of Jotelo of the amaJwara clan, was one of the chief councillors of amaRharhabe-Xhosa Chief Ngqika. Also, the amaJwara clan had royal blood links in the traditional amaXhosa kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, as an indication of his closeness to Chief Ngqika, Councillor Soga was "invested with a kind of magisterial authority by his chief."<sup>7</sup> He was delegated to investigate the affairs surrounding the conversion to Christianity of Ntsikana by his chief.<sup>8</sup> Instead, this turned out to be a conversion experience for Councillor Soga as he returned to recommend that Ntsikana's message should be accepted by the amaXhosa. Also, he himself began to introduce family and morning prayers in his own village after his return from this mission. From this period many of Ntsikana's adherents came from the amaJwara clan of which Ntsikana's wife was also a member.

Indeed, Ntsikana's influence ran deep in the Soga family. Tiyo Soga's missionary career is thus traditionally viewed as a follow-up and successor to Ntsikana's mission. Tiyo himself was very fond of and indeed popularised Ntsikana's music.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Ntsikana obviously influenced Tiyo Soga's own perceptions and responses to the European missionary enterprise, as we shall further explore. It is due to this perceived connection between Ntsikana and Soga that Bokwe maintains that the original last line of Ntsikana's Great Hymn, which reads '*Lomzi ka Konwana Siwubizile*', (The village/ homestead of Konwana

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<sup>5</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, pp. 14ff.

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 162; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, p. 110.

we have called) was in fact Ntsikana's tribute to the Soga family for their lead in adopting his message.<sup>10</sup> Konwana was one of the great-grand fathers of Tiyo.<sup>11</sup>

Taking the Christian faith one step further Councillor Soga decided that Tiyo should not go to traditional initiation school. This was extremely controversial and foreign to amaXhosa traditional culture. Under even more controversial circumstances, Tiyo himself was to defend his father's decision and face the consequences of a departure from tradition. However, to this we shall return. Indeed, the adherence of Soga's family to the new religion was so strong that forty years later some members of it formed the nucleus of Tiyo's congregation at Mgwali.<sup>12</sup> Also, one of Tiyo's brothers, Festile<sup>13</sup> became a teacher at the local Struther's school. Further still, the Soga's were the first to introduce agriculture and industry among their village.<sup>14</sup> Williams concludes that, in the area of education, agriculture and industry, "the Sogas thus prospered under missionary influence."<sup>15</sup> However, Councillor Soga was something of a paradox, for despite his innovative embrace of aspects of civilising mission he remained a traditionalist who was loyal to his chief to the end. Peires puts it thus:

(Councillor) Soga, lived outside the mission and fought against the Europeans in wartime. Nevertheless, his adoption of the market and the plough was more subversive of the old ways than the activities of any single Colonial spy.<sup>16</sup>

Khabela argues that there were both political and cultural considerations for Councillor Soga's refusal for wholesale immersion in the Christian faith.<sup>17</sup> Politically, he had witnessed what the civilising mission had accomplished in terms of the loss of land and traditional political status by amaXhosa. On the cultural side, the new religion had undermined

<sup>10</sup> J. K. Bokwe, *The Story of an African Hymn* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1904); 2<sup>nd</sup> edition *Tsikana, The Story of an African Convert* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1914)

<sup>11</sup> See the family tree of Tiyo Soga in Siphon M. Burns-Ncamashe, *UTiyo Soga* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1969), p. xvi.

<sup>12</sup> More particularly Tiyo's brother, Festile, and Dukwana, Ntsikana's son who both became elders at the Mgwali Church.

<sup>13</sup> In missionary writings this mistakenly appears as 'Festiri'.

<sup>14</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 6ff; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 8ff; J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, ibid., p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> J. B. Peires, *The House of Phalo*, op. cit, p. 164.

<sup>17</sup> M. G. Khabela, *Tiyo Soga: The Struggle of the Gods* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1996), p. 10. (Hereafter cited as *The Struggle of the Gods*)

valuable aspects of traditional identity and values. Thus, significantly, Councillor Soga preferred to follow the selective appropriation of the civilising mission.

With regard to his mother, Tiyo was the seventh of nine children of Councillor Soga and Nosuthu,<sup>18</sup> his great wife. Nosuthu belonged to the amaNtinde clan under Chief Jan Tshatshu, whose son Dyani Tshatshu was the well-known missionary interpreter and companion we have referred to above. Tshatshu was a Christian chief who must have influenced his people towards adopting a favourable disposition to the Christian faith. This certainly rubbed off on Nosuthu for she was a very devout woman who played a key role in guiding Tiyo towards his future career. Her Christian status meant that she could not remain officially involved in a polygamous marriage. Nosuthu, thus, became one of the 'widows' who found the mission station alternative community attractive. Consequently, she gradually severed her ties with the traditional structures and became more endeared towards the new religion. As his father had eight wives and royal commitments Tiyo naturally became closer to his mother. Nosuthu, together with her six-year old son Tiyo, sought shelter in the Amathole Mountains during the 1835-6 War. Nosuthu continued to support her son throughout up to the point of his departure for Scotland in 1846. In a characteristically Hannah fashion Nosuthu gave consent for her son to be taken away from her to Scotland:

My son is the property of God; wherever he goes, God goes with him: he is the property of God's servants, wherever they lead he must follow. If my son is willing to go I make no objection, for no harm can befall him even across the sea; he is as much in God's keeping there as near to me.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, his family background provided Tiyo with rich diversity which he continued to cherish throughout his life.

Williams observes that the Sogas demonstrated flexibility and freedom to experiment between traditional African and European cultures.<sup>20</sup> The limited but significant facets of western culture with which his family experimented and adopted must surely have had some influence upon Tiyo, on the one hand. Whereas the traditionalism and superior role of his

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<sup>18</sup> Nosuthu was also the name of the wife of Chief Sandile, son of Ngqika, of the amaRharhabe-Xhosa lineage. They also shared the same Tshatshu clan background. Also see *United Presbyterian Record*, 2 March 1874, pp. 52 - 53.

<sup>19</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 39.

father at the 'Great Place' confirmed his African rootedness, on the other. Tiyo's later consistent adherence to the institution of chieftaincy, as we shall see, must surely be traced to this home influence. Indeed Tiyo went through the processes of traditional life like all African children such as shepherding his father's cattle and sheep. Further, he followed the *imbeleko* rite of passage, for instance, whereby a young child is introduced to ancestors for adoption and confirmation as a new member of the family. Chalmers described the incident thus:

Tiyo Soga, in his infancy, passed through this fire of Moloch, underwent this baptism of smoke, this baptism into heathenism; a bullock was sacrificed, and the household gods were supposed to be appeased!<sup>21</sup>

Tiyo was later baptised into the Christian faith. It would be interesting to know whether the second baptism could totally efface the first. It is our view that Soga in fact lived his life between these two baptisms, contrary to Chalmers' categorical insistence that Tiyo completely shed himself of all vestiges of his original identity:

The promptings of the Spirit within him (Soga) led him to make an open profession of the Christian religion, and publicly to avow his faith in the Living Saviour. As a stranger in a strange land, he renounced all faith in the superstitious beliefs of his forefathers, severed the links which bound him into heathenism, and received the seal of adoption into the family of Christ, by being publicly baptized by Dr, Anderson in John Street Church on the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1848.<sup>22</sup>

To his rich traditional childhood experience Tiyo added the benefits of western education. Having begun his early education at the Struthers mission school under his brother Festile, he proceeded to Lovedale in 1844.<sup>23</sup> It was while a student there that the Frontier War broke out in 1846 and forced the closure of and the withdrawal of missionaries from Lovedale. Soga, together with his mother, were taken by the GMS missionaries to Fort Armstrong on the Kat River territory for refuge under the colonial protection.<sup>24</sup> This was about the last time at this stage in his life that Soga had close contact with his fellow African people. Henceforth, he joined Govan's company to Scotland to pursue further studies in Glasgow.

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<sup>20</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 11 - 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit*, pp. 26 - 32.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit*, pp. 36ff.

Thus for a period of about ten years, beginning with his passage to Scotland in 1846 until his final return in 1857,<sup>25</sup> Soga was almost exclusively in contact with European culture.

Soga's first real experience with a culture other than his own was at Lovedale. He registered as a student in 1844. His hard work and progress brought him to the attention of his principal, William Govan. Although younger than the rest of his classmates he came top of his class in every subject except arithmetic. He had a special affinity for historical subjects and the classics in particular. Tiyo was one of the original Lovedale students to benefit from Govan's multi-racial and inter-denominational policies. This meant that his cultural and religious outlook was obviously less sectarian. Chalmers observes that at Lovedale Tiyo related more freely to the European students who were not bothered by his uncircumcised state. In turn, this extended his multi-cultural experience.

Lovedale offered quality education to all its students with a broad curriculum that included isiXhosa, Mathematics, Latin, and Greek, with English as the medium of instruction. His study of Hebrew and Greek was to be useful later in the pursuance of his interest in Biblical Studies. Later still, this proved crucial in his sterling work of the translation of the bible into isiXhosa. Soga was one of those African students whom Govan was preparing for full equality with their European counterparts. Evidence shows that he did not shy away from this challenge, even though he was frustrated by numerous obstacles in the way of its complete realisation. The 1846-7 War brought an abrupt end to his studies at Lovedale, but they resumed and completed in Glasgow. In Chalmers' characterisation, Soga's admission to Lovedale was a "drifting slowly away from heathen life."<sup>26</sup> His passage to Scotland was portrayed by Chalmers as "farewell to war and bloodshed; to sneezewood fires and smoky huts! He is now to see for himself that wonderful world across the sea where the good men and women live who had sent to his people the glorious gospel."<sup>27</sup> Chalmers painted contrasting pictures. Once more we see what de Kock, after Frantz Fanon, calls the 'Manichean discursive order' so characteristic of much of missionary-colonial discourse with

<sup>25</sup> Tiyo Soga had a brief return to South Africa, however, between January, 1849 and June 1851.

<sup>26</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39 - 40.

its construal of the world as bipolar.<sup>28</sup> Operating within this Manichean model most missionaries perceived the world predominantly in dyadic terms of good - evil, civilised - savage, Christian - heathen, diligent - slothful, light - dark, European - other.

### THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

The danger facing African converts was that of totally internalising the whole civilising message. This translated into a naivete which Soga displayed when "he rushed to the conclusion that every citizen of Glasgow was pre-eminently good, and free from every form of evil."<sup>29</sup> However, the theft of a piece of his luggage at Glasgow made him aware of the reality of human depravity in all cultures. This must have made him realise that the Europeans also needed something of the moral values that missionaries were preaching to his fellow compatriots. Soga experienced the extent of western secularism. It was an eye opening for him to learn that "there is no such thing as a Sabbath day here"<sup>30</sup> with Sundays being business as usual. Further still, the idea of an African at a university was just as shocking to his Logic Professor, Robert Buchanan, who on seeing him in class exclaimed, "what! One of the barbarians who have been fighting against us!"<sup>31</sup> This 'comic surprise' was, however, to develop into hardened racism occasionally. As an African in Glasgow at that time Soga experienced racial abuse by being called a "blackie",<sup>32</sup> mistaken for a slave,<sup>33</sup> and floored by a racist student's blow.<sup>34</sup>

After he had concluded his studies the Kirk Session of the congregation that had supported him throughout his stay in Glasgow, the John Street Church, "felt that it would be good for the cause of missions if Mr. Soga could be licensed to preach the Gospel after the ensuing session of the Hall, and thereafter be sent through the churches for six months, to excite an interest in the Kafir (sic) mission."<sup>35</sup> Although Soga consented to these and other similar engagements out of a sense of courtesy and modesty he, however, was 'bored' by being a

<sup>28</sup> L. de Kock, 'Drinking at the English Fountains', op. cit, pp. 123 - 131.

<sup>29</sup> J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 44.

<sup>30</sup> Soga cited in J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, ibid., p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> Cited in D. Williams, Umfundisi, op. cit, p. 23.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit, p. 26.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit, p. 27.

novelty on display for European consumption and by such lionisation of a 'model Kaffir'.<sup>36</sup> He would rather be regarded as a true Kaffir, "a countryman of the world-famous Makomo (sic)"<sup>37</sup> without pretext.

Indeed, Tiyo cut through such superficiality and red tape and sought rather to establish more genuine interactions and friendships. This is how he got to win the acceptance, admiration and respect of friends in Glasgow. This extended to his personal relations and negotiations of cultural encounters. In this regard, he demonstrated a respect and sensitivity towards different racial groups and cultures which he expected in return.<sup>38</sup> Williams points out that "Tiyo Soga's sojourn in Scotland also taught him something of metropolitan attitudes to colonies and colonial policies."<sup>39</sup> This translated into a keen ability to 'read' people, as Robert Johnston, one of his University friends, confirmed: "he could go beneath the outward appearance as well as most men, and gauge true worth."<sup>40</sup> This gave him an insight into and understanding of multicultural relationships. Throughout his ensuing life, Tiyo was to capitalise on this talent to win friends and influence people.

For instance, it was through Tiyo's influence that Robert Johnston opted for missionary work in the Eastern Cape as Soga's fellow worker.<sup>41</sup> They were to continue a long-time friendship as missionary colleague in the Eastern Cape. Similarly, another fellow student, Rev. T. Campbell Finlayson, apparently caught on the manner of Soga's management of cultural diversity in his remark: "he made us feel that distinctions of colour and race were as nothing in (?) presence of the uniting and equalizing force of a common spiritual faith and sympathy."<sup>42</sup> Thus, it appears that one of Tiyo's strategies for managing cultural difference was to focus on common grounds and interests. In this way he was able to distinguish between the essence and trivia of multi-cultural encounters. This, in turn, paved the way for cultural breakthrough and the formation of genuine multicultural relationships.

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<sup>35</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 86ff and 90.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 24.

<sup>37</sup> Cited in D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup> See Soga to Kayser, 7 April 1858, cited in (ed.) D. Williams, *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 45.

<sup>39</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 435.

<sup>41</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 80.

Soga made the best of his stay in Scotland both in academic and cultural terms. Williams notes that it was actually much more than just academic benefits for which Tiyo was grateful to Scotland. The social aspects of his experience also meant a great deal. As an African in Europe it mattered more to him that "he had been accepted by its people."<sup>43</sup> He pointed out that what warmed his heart to Dr. Anderson was not his nice sounding words, rather, in Soga's words, "it was his exceeding *fellow-feeling* towards a strange boy that won my heart."<sup>44</sup> Tiyo was to remain loyal to this relationship throughout his life. In his farewell address to Glasgow University friends and colleagues Soga indicated the extent of his acceptance by the Scots, and vice versa, by referring to Scotland "as my second home."<sup>45</sup>

The feeling was indeed mutual as Soga, in turn, came to appreciate the Scottish cultural experiences as his own. For, as Williams rightly observes, "the spell of Scotland was strong, and Tiyo Soga cherished a lifelong affection for it, as well as for the culture, institutions and trappings of Britain."<sup>46</sup> Tiyo was to further express this emotional attachment to Scotland in various significant ways. He was attracted to British royalty and was fond of making parallels between this and the amaXhosa institution of chieftaincy. Also, he fell in love with its women. His Scottish wife must have been always a visible presence of his Scottish experience. Further still, most of his children adopted Scottish names in memory of his critical moments in Scotland.<sup>47</sup> This act of naming of his children was a seal of the continuing commemoration of the Scottish world in Soga's family life. Lastly, he sent his children 'home' to Scotland for their education and orientation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 86.

<sup>43</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 25; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 45 - emphasis original.

<sup>45</sup> Op. cit, p. 85.

<sup>46</sup> D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> See the section dealing with Soga's family below.



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## HIS ORDINATION AND MARRIAGE

Having proved that "the gift of a fine mind is not the monopoly of climate or colour"<sup>49</sup> in completing his theological studies necessary for ordination Soga was prepared, first, for his licensing to preach the gospel and, secondly, for ordination into the Presbyterian ministry. The former occurred on Wednesday, 10 December 1856 and the latter on Wednesday, 23 December 1856. Two critical events occurred at his ordination. Firstly, the sermon was preached by one of his Glasgow University professors, Professor H. Calderwood of Moral Philosophy, on the text 1 Corinthians 3:7; "So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."<sup>50</sup> The Reformed, Christocentric emphasis on God's initiative and the response of human agency was appropriate for one going to the mission field. But implicit were other important emphases. When reflecting on his ordination in certain moments of his later ministry the sermon must have elicited a sense of humility from Soga. Evidence shows that he always put Christ at the centre of his actions and himself last. But even more critically, the text must have empowered him to challenge the deep-seated ethnocentrism of some of his fellow colleagues in the field. And this he was to do, as we shall see.<sup>51</sup>

The second, incident, is that of the ordination prayer of Dr. Anderson,<sup>52</sup> the minister of the congregation that hosted Tiyo throughout his Glasgow sojourn. Chalmers uses superlatives to describe it. He remarks that it was "the most distinguishing feature of that service, and the most memorable part of the evening's programme. ... (It was) one of the most extraordinary prayers that ever fell from human lips"<sup>53</sup>. In his prayer Dr. Anderson began with the formal ordination supplications for the ordinand and "then there was a sudden break to this thrilling devotion, and something followed very (?) like a tirade against the colonial policy of England."<sup>54</sup> In this second *ex tempore* part of his prayer Dr. Anderson lambasted British colonial policy and its effects upon South African indigenes. He enumerated on the

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<sup>48</sup> See J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 289.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>50</sup> The Revised Standard Version.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 246.

<sup>52</sup> For a full narrative of this event see J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 89.

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 89.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 89.

"blundering acts" of the Colonial Secretary which were criminal to the natives and their chiefs. "In marked contrast ... *the noble Kafir (sic) chieftain*" Chief Sandile was elevated as the moral custodian of his people.

Chalmers' narrative of the ordination is revealing. It shows how, his interpretation was conditioned by and perceived through his cultural lenses. Whereas he had superlatively described the first part of Dr. Anderson's ordination prayer as a "thrilling devotion" he failed to describe the second part. His use of 'devotion' to describe the first part implicitly suggests that the latter part was not devotional; that there was a "break" from devotion. Perhaps the reason for this was that the first part was formal, and true devotion was associated with formality in Chalmers' mind, while the second *ex tempore* part of the prayer was thoroughly contextual. Chalmers' pious understanding must have separated spiritual devotion from worldly affairs. Or perhaps, he deemed the second part of the prayer as unpatriotic. As a result he "instinctively felt" that Chief Sandile was being too idealised, and that his mention was occasioned by "the presence of the Kafir" (sic) who was the guest of honour in the service, Soga.<sup>55</sup> Little did Chalmers realise that Dr. Anderson was praying in a way that related so profoundly to Soga himself.

This takes us to another aspect of the second part of the prayer, the fact that it was *ex tempore*. Chalmers himself suggests the departure by Dr. Anderson from the known (formal) to unknown (*ex tempore*). Indeed, *ex tempore* prayers were not a normal feature of such formal occasions, hence Dr. Anderson's departure from tradition and his startlingly innovative prayer must have come as a bit of cultural shock. This may be why, despite his inability to exactly pin down all the facets of this narrative, Chalmers recorded the experience *simpliciter*. Dr. Anderson's departure from Scottish tradition and his intercessory innovation must be attributed to Tiyo Soga himself. As they had been together for a period of almost eight years Dr. Anderson was a second father-in-faith, after Govan, to Tiyo. That he took exceptionally keen and personal interest in Tiyo is well known. Not only did he pay for his education through his congregation, they also hosted and befriended him. But the

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<sup>55</sup> Op. cit, p. 89.

learning was not one way. Soga's worldview and experience apparently strongly influenced his host, as the following instances reveal.

In his prayer, according to Chalmers, Dr. Anderson "seemed wild with excitement."<sup>56</sup> Thus, he showed an emotional dynamism in worship generally associated with Africa. Also, Dr. Anderson digressed from the 'text' of his prayer as the Spirit led him. *Ex tempore* prayers speak from the heart and reveal the depth of one's soul, even though they may easily be construed as digressing. Further, Dr. Anderson contextualised his prayer in a way that touched issues of life and death to Soga, biased as it was in favour of the African's perspective. Putting it otherwise, Africa was receiving preferential option to Britain. Thus, in a moment of deep emotion and spontaneity Dr. Anderson's deep feelings came into the open on the other side of colonialism. Surely Soga must have been his chief informer and must have provided an alternative and updated version to the missionary, colonial, and traveler's narrative. This would have been strengthened by Soga's recent two and a half year visit back to the Eastern Cape, from January 1849 to June 1851, a period following the 1846-7 War and amidst the beginning of the 1850-1 War. We shall consider this return and its significance shortly.

Soga's ordination was, as Chalmers remarked, a 'memorable night' for him and the realisation of his dreams, for he was now fully equipped as a preacher of the gospel.<sup>57</sup> However, he was only partially equipped. The remaining aspect was that of marriage! This was taken care of when he married a Scottish woman two months later, Janet Burnside, on 27 February 1857. For Williams, "Tiyo Soga's marriage set the hallmark on his acceptance of western culture."<sup>58</sup> Indeed it was felt by some that this was an act of ingratiating himself with the white (Scottish) race. However, this is debatable. Not only had Tiyo been initially engaged to an African-American woman, named Stella, who died soon thereafter, but also he had already immersed himself within Scottish culture. Further, by the time of his marriage he had matured sufficiently through age and experience to be aware of the implications of a mixed marriage from the perspectives of both cultures. So this must have

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<sup>56</sup> Op. cit, p. 89.

<sup>57</sup> Op. cit, p. 89.

<sup>58</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 26.

been a very conscious act of racial integration in any case, for Soga had little regard for bigotry.<sup>59</sup>

Not much is known, regrettably, regarding Janet except that she unwaveringly endured the burdens of the cross she had chosen by going as Soga's 'white wife' to the African mission field. It was reported in *The South-Eastern Bantu* that she was a "daughter of a Glasgow burghess."<sup>60</sup> Chalmers remarks that "she was honourable, thrifty, frugal, devoted, and marched heroically and faithfully by her husband's side through all the chequered scenes of his short life."<sup>61</sup> Thus, he focuses more on the personal qualities of Janet that may have prepared her for being wife of a missionary. Williams, likewise, observes that "she was of sterling character and was to endure with fortitude the loneliness of isolated mission stations on an uneasy frontier, as well as the loneliness of a white woman married to a Black man in a colour-conscious society."<sup>62</sup> Williams' emphasis is thus more on the ability of Janet to withstand racial pressures in an increasingly racist South African society from the 1860's. Janet outlived Soga and she continued to fulfill her responsibilities towards their children, although she returned to Scotland after his death. In this marriage they were blessed with four sons and three daughters, "some of whom were to leave their mark in the history of South Africa."<sup>63</sup> Tiyo loved his children a great deal, and he was particularly concerned about their future well being in a racist South African society. It was in this spirit that he left as a legacy the sixty-two maxims he had formulated under the title 'The Inheritance of my Children', "for the guidance of his sons and daughters through the difficulties of life in general and of racial prejudices"<sup>64</sup>. Judging by the diverse contributions of her children to the South African society, as implied in their successful careers, it appears that they were truly guided by their father's wishes.

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<sup>59</sup> Three of Soga's four sons got married to European women.

<sup>60</sup> J. Henderson Soga, *The South-Eastern Bantu*, op. cit, p. xi.

<sup>61</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 94.

<sup>62</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 26.

<sup>63</sup> John Henderson Soga is helpful in providing us with the personal and career details of this remarkable family - *The South-Eastern Bantu*, *ibid.*, pp. xii - xv.

<sup>64</sup> Op. cit, editor's introduction, p. viii. Also J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, pp. 429 - 434; Sipho M. Burns-Ncamashe, *UTiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 100 - 103.

### AN AWAKENING OF AFRICAN CONSCIOUSNESS

It is not very clear why Soga abruptly cut short his stay in Scotland in 1848 before the completion of his studies and ordination, and returned home. Chalmers thinks that it may have been nostalgia on Tiyo's part.<sup>65</sup> However, Soga himself had not vocally expressed the desire to return to South Africa. In any event, he departed from Scotland and arrived in South Africa on 31 January 1849. He was in the company of a Rev. George Brown who was coming to join other GMS missionaries in the Eastern Cape. For some time during this period Soga was employed as Brown's interpreter after their arrival. The latter had a high opinion of Soga's skill at this task, and pronounced that "all competent judges declared that he (Soga) rendered my language with wonderful accuracy and force into the Isixosa (sic)."<sup>66</sup>

Soga found that "Caffraria was not as he had left it. ... Tyhume (mission station) had been razed to the ground",<sup>67</sup> due to the recent war. Soga began to help in the reconstruction of mission work. Thereafter, he laboured between Tyhume and Igqibira stations both as an interpreter and catechist to Brown in the employ of the John Street Congregation's Juvenile Missionary Society at a salary of twenty-five pounds a year. However, Soga's message of Christian repentance and redemption seems to have been largely ignored by his compatriots, as they were more interested in the issues of land and political autonomy. This was when Soga encountered Mlanjeni who was successfully canvassing for a military option against the colonial government, as opposed to Soga's peace offering message. Drawing a parallel, Khabela claims that Mlanjeni stood for tradition with all its idealism of past glory while Soga stood for modernity with all its threatening consequences.<sup>68</sup> Their differing approaches to the challenge of European colonisation further entrenched the two classic models of amaXhosa-African responses, namely, integrationist and nationalist. The former presupposed cultural integration leading to assimilation and non-racialism, and included among its exponents both Ntsikana and Soga. The latter assumed cultural nationalism, among its adherents were Nxele and Mlanjeni. To press the point further, it may be argued

<sup>65</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 47.

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>67</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 19; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 58.

that the two types of responses generally crystallised into the later ideological perspectives of the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress.

After six months of unsuccessful dialogue with Mlanjeni at Tyhume and Igqibira, Soga was hired by Robert Niven, a Scottish missionary, to teach at Uniondale local school. This may have helped to bail him out of an embarrassing situation as he was losing the moral battle for the heart of amaXhosa to Mlanjeni. However, Tiyo again met with the increasing nationalist feelings of amaXhosa and their militant opposition to European agencies even at Uniondale. The community, parents and students, at Uniondale began to pick on Soga's lack of patriotism shown through his association with Europeans and his disregard for tradition through failure to undergo the initiation rite of circumcision. Significantly, Soga began to write his first hymns at this time in Uniondale. Most of his meaningful hymns are those composed during such times of crises. This includes the famous *Lizalis' idinga lakho* which was composed in the aftermath of the Nongqawuse prophecy as Soga agonised with appropriate response to the disaster. It seems that literary composition was Soga's strategy for releasing his creativity and expressing his frustrations of being the first African Christian leader on the Frontier.

Subsequently, Soga was forced to leave Uniondale for fear of his life, having chosen to disregard the nationalist call of his people in favour of European missionaries. Together with other Scottish missionaries in Kaffraria Soga sought refuge at Grahamstown. Williams reminds us that:

Once again, as in 1846, Tiyo Soga declared in favour of the Colony and European culture and values. He had grown too far away from traditional Black society to throw in his lot with their protest. Yet he was still one of them and in due course would identify himself with their search for 'national' identity and consolidation against White territorial and cultural encroachment.<sup>69</sup>

However, the missionaries were not accepted in the colonial Grahamstown as their loyalty to Colonial authorities was in doubt. Thus Soga found himself in the invidious position of rejection and isolation by both his traditional community and the imperial colonists. As if to seal his opposition against the amaXhosa, just before he escaped, Chief Maqoma had asked

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<sup>69</sup> Op. cit, p. 21.

Soga to translate some confiscated colonial letters which would have provided strategic information about colonial troops. Soga refused to comply. This act, together with his clubbing with the missionaries at the times of crises, placed him within the colonial world. However, there was another significant refusal by Soga. He was offered a job as Government interpreter at this time, which Soga refused. His non-conformism then seems impartial. That is, if one thinks that Soga was correct in equaling the two sides in the conflict.

The issues were more complex. We are not told by either Chalmers or Williams why Soga refused to co-operate with either side.<sup>70</sup> They assume that the second refusal was a proof of his commitment to the missionary enterprise but the first refusal is not explained. The key to understanding these refusals may be found in what the Comaroffs call "the genre of negation."<sup>71</sup> In situations where there is no clear articulation of resistance to hegemony and domination such struggles may still occur, according to the Comaroffs. But they are likely to take the form of negation, characterised by refusal, reversal and other gestures; "gestures that sullenly and silently contest the forms of an existing hegemony."<sup>72</sup> Far from being mere reflections or expressions of historical consciousness, these refusals "are a practical means of *producing* it."<sup>73</sup> Soga's two acts of refusals were conscious acts of tacit refusal symbolically aimed at defying the *status quo*, and Soga was content to live with this apparent contradiction. If the Comaroffs are correct in arguing that "consciousness is never free from contradiction,"<sup>74</sup> then Soga provides a significant example.

In short, Soga was refusing to let anybody but himself define his own identity. Thus, in a Frontier context of slippery boundaries and definitions of cultural identity he objected to having his consciousness reified, and in turn defied such intentions. This is how, in our view, Soga struggled to manage his two worlds at this stage; he sought to be loyal to both and yet to be confined to neither. In Comaroffs' terms, at this stage in his life, Soga was in

<sup>70</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 68; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 21 & 22.

<sup>71</sup> Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, Vol. 1, op. cit, p. 27.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>73</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 31 (emphasis original).

"that liminal space of human experience in which people discern acts and facts but cannot or do not order them into narrative descriptions or even articulate conceptions of the world."<sup>75</sup>

This would occur later in his life, as we shall show.

Williams alludes to this later emotional and intellectual development when he observes that "Tiyo Soga's (African-Consciousness) discovery was probably made somewhere between 1861 and 1864."<sup>76</sup> This suggests that there was a gradual shift from the liminal space between consciousness and unconsciousness to clear perception and articulation in Soga's career. Indeed, there is ample evidence of 'narrative description' and 'articulate conceptions' by Soga as his career unfolded. Robert Johnston's comments support this observation. After a period of over fifteen years of common experience Johnston could make a reliable assessment of his colleague.<sup>77</sup> Significantly, after Chalmers has shown evidence of Soga's 'intense patriotism' in the narrative he lets Johnston speak of 'Tiyo Soga's Kafirhood' (nationalism):

Tiyo Soga had an honest pride in his manhood as a *pure Kafir* (sic). He was disposed to glory in his Kafirhood. He would not bow down before any one, because of his own black face. ... Hence he was not disposed to demean himself, when treated shabbily, by a fearful or slavish submission. He seemed to grow taller before you, as if he would say 'I also am a man! a gentleman! a Christian!'<sup>78</sup>

This is a glowing description of Soga's nationalist pride. But, it also suggests that the development of Soga's nationalist-consciousness was gradual. According to Johnstone, Soga's sensitivity (nationalism) was particularly visible from the time "he went (back) to Scotland, in 1852, till his death in 1871."<sup>79</sup> His experiences during this visit, like the encounter with Mlanjeni at Igqibira and the cultural rejection at Uniondale, in turn revived a

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<sup>74</sup> Op. cit, p. 36.

<sup>75</sup> Op. cit, p. 29.

<sup>76</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 2; also M. G. Khabela, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Chalmers reveals that Soga and Johnston's friendship was "as strong as that betwixt David and Jonathan. No two men confided more in each other, and unbosomed more fully their individual difficulties and trials than did Robert Johnston and Tiyo Soga." One of Tiyo's brothers, Festile, named his first child 'Johnston Festile'. See, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 182 - 183.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 435 - emphasis original

<sup>79</sup> Op. cit, p. 436.

sense of nationalism in Soga. However, "at that time it must have been comparatively in the germ."<sup>80</sup>

Following Johnstone it is our contention that Soga's gestures of refusals were early manifestations of contestation and self-affirmation. More specifically, they were a negation of both traditional demands and colonial favours. They were the practical means through which his incipient consciousness was produced. They were signs of a growing seed of an identity search, re-negotiation and self-affirmation, which was to fully germinate in the 1860's. By then Soga would display a full shift from the liminal space to a more fixed position. This is the discovery that Soga made on his first return home, a discovery which undoubtedly influenced the prayer at his ordination and his second stay in Scotland. We can reasonably conclude then that Soga's African-consciousness, which Williams says occurred in the late 1860's, actually began to develop during his first return home in the early 1850's.

#### THE FINAL RETURN

To return to our narrative, Tiyo and his wife Janet embarked on "The Lady of the Lake" bound for South Africa on 13 April 1857.<sup>81</sup> Robert Johnston, his old-time University colleague, was with them. Soga himself wrote a detailed narrative of his journey and first impressions of Kaffraria in his journal. They landed at Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth, on 2 July 1857. Johnston reports that Tiyo was apprehensive as he "did not know how he, the first civilized and educated Kafir (sic), might be received."<sup>82</sup> Added to his apprehension was the fear of how his mixed marriage would be perceived from both traditional and colonial perspectives. The memories of his previous visit home must have been still fresh in his mind. He had then witnessed both cultural and racial stereotypes regarding national identity.

The Sogas were soon introduced to harsh realities of South Africa, for as they were walking with friends down the street of a colonial town shortly after their arrival they attracted attention of local Europeans. Conversation was suddenly and abruptly stopped, followed by

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<sup>80</sup> Op. cit, p. 436.

<sup>81</sup> *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 2 November 1857, pp. 193ff.

<sup>82</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 436.

loud whispers and then a repeated shout, "Shame on Scotland."<sup>83</sup> This was obviously in reference to their marriage. Johnston points out that the marriage of the Sogas generally excited hostile interest "throughout the Colony."<sup>84</sup> Thus, realities of racial prejudice hit home as soon as the Sogas landed in South Africa. It was almost impossible for them to secure hotel accommodation, for instance, and when they did it was usually a dreadful back room.<sup>85</sup> While they were viewed with curiosity by Africans, on the one hand, they were regarded as absurd by the Europeans, on the other. Racial stereotypes were fixed on the pretentious 'Kafir' and the Scottish lassie who "showed a strange taste."<sup>86</sup> Soga was aware that they were perceived as objects of scorn and ridicule in the colony, and he reported some of these concerns to Dr. Anderson a month later:

If you knew the state of feeling towards colour in this Colony, you would understand better why I entertained such fears. You will not be surprised to hear that preaching, under the circumstance related above, was more trying to me than in Scotland. There I was sure of the sympathy of many; here I could calculate only on the sympathy of few.<sup>87</sup>

Johnston argues that these hostile racial encounters came upon Soga like a stinging blow, which further re-enforced his African-consciousness, "after them he sometimes felt tempted to eschew all colonial society, and to shut himself up entirely with his own people."<sup>88</sup>

Although he did not give in to the former it is our contention that Soga moved towards the latter more and more. Khabela argues that it was this welcome to the land of his birth that "possibly engendered in him a subtle form of militancy indicative of some form of nationalism."<sup>89</sup> These encounters were, thus, threatening forces that generated an increasing reaction of self-awareness in Soga. Subsequently, however, Soga resolved that it was actually necessary to interact with colonial society so as to disprove its prejudices. Following up on this philosophy Soga began to accept invitations to preach in various denominations and to all races on his way into the interior. For instance, in Uitenhage he preached in both the Methodist and the Dutch Reformed Churches, in the Independent

<sup>83</sup> Robert Johnston cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 438; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 32.

<sup>84</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 438.

<sup>85</sup> Op. cit, pp. 131 - 137; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 31 - 32.

<sup>86</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 389.

<sup>87</sup> Op. cit, pp. 135 -136.

<sup>88</sup> Op. cit, p. 439.

(Congregational) Churches in Algoa and Uitenhage, respectively, and in Trinity Church in Grahamstown.<sup>90</sup> Although Soga preached to crowded congregations he was, however, not insensitive to the ridicule and cynicism of some of his audience. He expressed such sentiments to Campbell Finlayson:

I have preached to crowds, and have not the slightest doubt that many men in these audiences did not believe that a single ray of light, moral or intellectual, could ever penetrate the thick skull, and into the modicum of brain possessed by one of sable countenance. It was a great trial to face such men.<sup>91</sup>

By comparison, Soga explained that his reception "by my own countrymen, both in the Colony and Caffreland (sic), was warm, respectful and highly enthusiastic."<sup>92</sup> Although they were not too sure initially as to his nationality, due to 'civilised' appearance, he identified himself when he spoke to them isiXhosa. After telling about his racist experiences, Soga continued, "I cannot describe the emotions with which I contemplated them when I preached in the native church at Algoa Bay."<sup>93</sup> He then began to unfold his mission statement, echoing Luke 4:18 - 19, to his African audience:

I could not but adore, on their behalf and mine, the grace of the Gospel which has come not only to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are (spiritually) bound; but also to elevate and enlighten, and to remove all the barriers that have interposed between man and man, by uniting all the bonds of a common brotherhood.<sup>94</sup>

Echoing Jesus' liberative mission statement Soga's statement reveals nationalist sentiments. But his understanding of nationalism had developed beyond sectarian ethnic, cultural and racial confines. It encompassed racial difference and multiculturalism over against narrow patriotism and sectarianism.

On the way to Mgwali Soga found a skeleton of the country he had left behind and the appalling sights of devastation the like of which had never been seen before. "We are seeing

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<sup>89</sup> M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 2 November 1857, pp. 194; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 135.

<sup>91</sup> Soga to Rev. T. C. Finlayson, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>92</sup> Cited in (ed.) D. Williams, *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 73.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>94</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 73.

sights that are making our hearts bleed and our eyes weep,"<sup>95</sup> he declared to another South African. He was witnessing the devastating results of the aftermath of the prophecy of Nongqawuse. Soga elaborated on the consequences of this event to Dr. Anderson:

Famine has depopulated the land. I cannot exactly say the rate at which they are dying from sheer starvation in Kafirland, for I do not wish to exaggerate. But many have died and many are dying. Thousands have taken refuge in the Colony. ... The proudest people on the face of the earth have been compelled by the severity of the present distress, to do things at which they would formerly have shuddered. ... Under the circumstances which I have just related, the continued existence of the Kafirs, as a nation, has become problematical.<sup>96</sup>

In his missionary report Soga told the Scottish mission that he anticipated good prospects of mission work as a result of the Nongqawuse devastation: "yea, I see in the present affliction the means by which he (God) is working out their ultimate redemption."<sup>97</sup> However, on the other hand, tradition has it that it was at this time that he composed his famous hymn *Lizalis' idinga lakho, Thixo Nkosi yenyano* (Fulfil thy promise God, Lord of truth). He entertained hope that, in his own words, "God, I trust, has purposes of mercy yet in store for my afflicted countrymen."<sup>98</sup> Thus Soga's response to the Nongqawuse disaster, although expressed in Christian terms, is ambivalent.

Subsequently, Tiyo together with Janet and Johnston, in the company of the Ngqika Commissioner, Charles Brownlee, son of John Brownlee, and John Cumming, reached Mgwali on 11 September 1857 to begin his mission. The Mgwali mission was situated in the vicinity of the Great Place of amaRharhabe-Xhosa Chief Sandile. It was a deliberate and strategic choice. It was hoped that it would service and thereby influence the Chief and his people. In turn, Soga was to involve the chiefs in the affairs of the Mgwali mission. It brought back reminiscences of the old days of growing up as the son of the Chief's prominent councillor. Subsequently, the Sogas and Johnston were welcomed by the Chief who is reported as having simultaneously asked them, upon seeing the son of one of his councillors, to arrange for the education of his four eldest children.<sup>99</sup> With a few refugees and Dukwana,

<sup>95</sup> Op. cit, p. 70.

<sup>96</sup> Soga to Dr. Anderson, 7 August 1857, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 137 - 139; *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 2 November 1857, pp. 205 - 207.

<sup>97</sup> *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 2 November 1857, p. 207.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>99</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 153; cf. p. 189.

Ntsikana's son, together with some members of Tiyo's own family, including Nosuthu, his mother, and Festile, his teacher brother, he began his mission work at Mgwali.

The first Holy Communion service at the Mgwali Church was held in April 1858, with great emotion and excitement occasioned by the re-union of the people following the Eighth Frontier War and the Nongqawuse disruption. Appropriately, Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn' was sung at the closing of the service producing, in Soga's words, "a most thrilling and touching effect" upon the people such that "one old man" was seen "bursting out into tears and weeping bitterly."<sup>100</sup> In another context Soga remarked yet again on the effect of this particular hymn:

It was the favourite hymn of the Chumie (sic) people. Their exile gave them few or no opportunities of singing it. It awakened hallowed associations of the past and recalled the memories of those who once joined them in its melancholy notes.<sup>101</sup>

It became common practice, therefore, to sing this hymn, and always with thrilling effect upon the people as it "awakened in their minds the memories of the past."<sup>102</sup> Soga was conscious of what those past memories were and their implications for the present as well. The fact that the hymn was frequently sung indicates that he encouraged this 'dangerous memory'. His own reflections on the amaXhosa history, values, traditions, music, emerged from such inspiration.

In pursuance of his dream of non-racialism Soga introduced and maintained English services for the neighbouring Europeans as well.<sup>103</sup> It is reported that they valued these

<sup>100</sup> Tiyo Soga's journal entry, 10 April 1858, *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, AC 8162 (161402).

<sup>101</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 160. In a letter from Soga to Mr. Miller we learn that he had in fact continued to sing Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn' in Scotland as well, with a bit of accompanying humming from his Scottish friends! - Op. cit, p. 160.

<sup>102</sup> *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, AC 8162 (161402), op. cit

<sup>103</sup> The Ngqika Commissioner, Charles Brownlee, nicknamed '*Ramncwa likulu*' (the Great Monster) by amaXhosa, and his family were also members of Soga's European flock. Mrs. Brownlee was fond of visiting the African services, although she did not understand a word of the service, merely "for the sake of the singing" - J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 388. Also, William Ritchie Thomson or even one of his sons, John, who became a magistrate, possibly attended services here - D. Williams

services which were "to them like an oasis in the desert."<sup>104</sup> These continued for the eleven years that Tiyo stayed at Mgwali resulting in profound relationships and mutual respect between the pastor and his English congregation.<sup>105</sup> Membership of Soga's congregation included also the amaMfengu-Xhosa, "a number of Hottentots" and "one Bechuana" (sic).<sup>106</sup> Significantly, Soga deliberately adopted ecumenical, multicultural and multiracial emphases in his ministry. It was out of this experience that Soga was later to speak of a non-tribal and non-racial African consciousness.

The tenure of Soga's ministry at Mgwali seems to have been so arranged as to meet his long-time ideal of non-racialism and multiculturalism. For, while Soga sought a perpetuation of some traditional African values he also wanted to promote multi-racialism through his representation of Africans in the white community. Khabela offers an explanation:

His (Soga) over-sensitiveness impelled him into total commitment and devotedness to a ministry of racial reconciliation between black people and white people. He had come to accept white people as a permanent part of South Africa. Thus in a realistic way, he had also come to accept the realities of the trials and tribulations of his people as a conquered race.<sup>107</sup>

Soga thus sought to strike a balance of interests between a commitment both to Africans and Europeans. This was a challenging task particularly in view of the 1850's increasing African despondency, on the one hand, and European arrogance, on the other. It was proving difficult to pull both the forces of tradition and modernity in the same direction while they, in turn, seemed to be pulling him apart. It is, therefore, a credit to Soga's genius that he continued with his efforts to straddle these two worlds.

With the amaRharhabe-Xhosa by the 1860's a conquered race, the Scottish missionary enterprise shifted its focus to yet another frontier. The GMS missionaries resolved to extend its missions across the River Kei to the amaGcaleka-Xhosa. In a follow-up to this commitment Richard Ross and John A. Chalmers were sent on a reconnaissance mission, to

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(ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 21 and fn. 31, p. 203.

<sup>104</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 380.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381f.

<sup>106</sup> D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 84, 93 and 104, respectively. 'Bechuana' is a seTswana speaking person.

assess the chances of establishing the gospel there. Their report to Presbytery was positive. The amaXhosa Paramount Chief Sarhili's response was affirmative. Being in forced exile with absolutely no chance of fighting back there was little option for Sarhili to think otherwise.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, he agreed to invite a Presbyterian missionary to his country, or what was left of it. Probably the presence of a favourable missionary could be turned into a final desperate effort to negotiate something for his people with the colonial government, as missionaries always carried such a possibility in the perception of chiefs.<sup>109</sup>

Subsequently, Bryce Ross and Tiyo Soga were delegated to visit Sarhili in July 1865 to set up the arrangements for the new mission. Soga has minutely recorded the details of their mission plan visit.<sup>110</sup> His overall assessment is frank and revealing:

In my opinion the Galekas (sic) will now, more than ever, resist the introduction of the Gospel. They may not prevent the establishment of mission station, but they will oppose the progress of the Gospel among the people. The prevalent opinion in that tribe is, that missionaries are the emissaries of Government, to act upon the minds and feelings of the people, with an instrument which they call '*the Word*'; and that those who become affected by the Word, and exchange Kafir customs for those of the white men, become subjects of the English Government. Thus white men plan to get a footing in their country, which they afterwards take altogether. These are the views of not a few of Kreli's (Sarhili) people.<sup>111</sup>

Soga showed considerable insight into the intricacies of the colonial-missionary praxis and its representation in the minds of the Africans. Even as he participated in the venture for the extension of mission to the amaGcaleka-Xhosa frontier he was conscious of its implications. Missionary reputation had preceded them. The people were suspicious not only of missionary motives but of 'the Word' as well. This had been articulately expressed already by Mahamba, an amaMfengu *igqirha* (traditional doctor), in one of his disputations with Soga. Having showed an early fascination for 'the Word' Mahamba told Soga of his

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<sup>107</sup> M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 44.

<sup>108</sup> King Sarhili and the amaGcaleka-Xhosa were expelled by Governor Grey in 1858 from their land between the Kei and Mbashe Rivers to the east of the latter, a territory formerly occupied by the abaThembu-Xhosa. The appropriated amaGcaleka-Xhosa land was in turn given to the amaMfengu-Xhosa. Even when the former were allowed to return to their former land in 1865, they had to share it with the latter.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 328; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 45ff.

<sup>110</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 1866, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, pp. 315 - 326. Dr. Somerville was the Secretary of the Foreign Missions Council of the United Presbyterian Church from 1846 to 1868.

summation, "*I think there is some bewitching influence proceeding from the preacher!*"<sup>112</sup> Soga's analysis of the amaGcaleka-Xhosa perception of missionaries and their message, in turn, reveal his own ability to distinguish between the gospel and the 'civilising mission' of European missionaries.

In spite of his critical insights Tiyo voiced no objections to the mission extension plan. Subsequently, Soga and Govan paid another visit where the latter presented their mission objective to Sarhili. They would introduce 'the Word' to the amaGcaleka-Xhosa, teach them to read and write the English language and train some as teachers to the rest. Also, they would introduce some of the useful arts, if the Paramount Chief and the people so desired. In conclusion, Govan assured Sarhili that potential converts:

Would continue under the authority of the chief in all lawful things; we would not introduce any person into the country, without the chief's consent, and would claim no control over any land in his country, except such as may be allowed to the missionaries and teachers, for houses and agricultural purposes.<sup>113</sup>

With Soga's and Govan's known commitment to African interests in mind there is reason to believe the seriousness of their mission statement. However, the Paramount Chief was not impressed. He expressed his skepticism by reminding the GMS men that all missionaries made such nice sounding words and promises, but subsequent history tells another story. Plans were eventually wrapped up, with the mantle to take the gospel to heart of Xhosaland permanently falling upon Tiyo Soga.

Preparations for Soga's departure from Mgwali to Tutura, outside Butterworth, ensued. In agreement to Soga's wishes Presbytery sent William Govan, John A. Chalmers and Charles Brownlee to formally inform the amaRharhabe-Xhosa Chief Sandile of Soga's imminent departure. It is reported that the Chief had little to say, except to regretfully acknowledge the news. By the time Soga left the Mgwali mission, after a period of almost eleven years of challenging service, it had become a crucial component of the GMS mission in the Eastern Cape. It had progressed from the humble beginnings of gathering dismembered fragments

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<sup>111</sup> Op. cit, p. 327.

<sup>112</sup> Op. cit, p. 239 - emphasis original.

<sup>113</sup> Op. cit, p. 372.



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and refugees of the 1850's double catastrophes of the amaXhosa to become, in Soga's assessment, "the head-quarters of our mission."<sup>114</sup>

Soga sacrificed all this to take up permanent residence in his new mission at Tutura in June 1868. It is said that the new site was not conducive to his infirm state of health as it was exposed to the mist and dampness which perpetually rise from the nearby Centane sea. However, its proximity to the sea and beautiful scenery provided a stark contrast with the landlocked Mgwali geographical area. There were other contrasts as well that Soga was to experience in the new field. He missed the Christian community already established at Mgwali, as he was now back to the basics. Also, he had moved from a comfortable manse to a wattle and daub hut. This had serious consequences for his health. Lastly, he had left behind a relatively friendly community in favour of a new and hostile environment. Subsequently Soga met with resistance and indifference at Tutura as had happened during the initial stages at Mgwali.

In Soga's assessment, the most stubborn resistance came from people who had been forced into mission stations in the aftermath of Nongqawuse prophecy and had now 'backslid'.<sup>115</sup> Expressing his rejection of the civilising mission to Soga one of these former 'converts' protested how he was sickened by the sound of the church bell, he had "been sickened with it in the past, and I care not although I never hear it again."<sup>116</sup> The other contentious issue for Soga was the strong adherence of people to the *amagqira* (traditional doctors). The latter, as had happened with Mlanjeni in 1850's, once more posed a formidable challenge to his message and mission. Another issue of conflict with the Christian message was that of the traditional African philosophy of cause and effect. In dismay, Soga felt that "this was the most formidable obstacle which the devoted missionary had to encounter, and it met him at every turn in his path, greatly hindering all his efforts to elevate and christianize the Galekas (sic)."<sup>117</sup> Whereas Christianity attributed evil to a remote concept of the fall, the traditional

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<sup>114</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 379.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 394 - 399.

<sup>116</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 395.

<sup>117</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 395.

conception was existentialist. For instance, the people understood their current situation in terms of colonial defeat by Europe rather than moral depravity and need for the gospel.

The traditional amaGcaleka were baffled by what they perceived to be the irrationality of the Christian faith. Preaching Christ, 'the Son of God', as 'the Way' to God's redemption they wanted to know from Soga whether he thought they were lost. In response he enumerated on the Christian doctrine of sin and human fall to a people who had no prior conception of this. Their major credulity was how could an omnipotent, omniscient and the loving Father of Jesus Christ that Soga proclaimed allow sin with all its destructive consequences to happen. They inquired from him:

Do you not say that (the Christian) God created all men; that He knows all things, even such as my hands do and my eyes see? Where had He gone to, when we lost our knowledge of Him, that He did not come and enlighten us? Why does He allow this being, the devil, to come and ruin us without putting forth any effort to prevent him?<sup>118</sup>

Soga had no answer to such penetrating and pregnant questions. At Mgwali when engaged in similar discourse he had appealed to his Reformed Christian tenets to extricate himself. One man had tried to point out to Soga the foreignness of the Christian faith by arguing on the traditional premise of transmission, "why was the Word not sent to our forefathers, so that we should have received it from them in the natural course of things? We do not like the idea that the thing which is considered so good to us should have been withheld from them."<sup>119</sup> Soga was defensive in his reply, "that mode of arguing will not do. We cannot cross-question God's modes of dealing with His creatures. We may depend upon it that He has done right to our forefathers, even as He has done right to us in sending us His Word."<sup>120</sup> His silent response at Tutura reveals that Soga had a clearer realisation of what he was up against and, therefore, the need for relevant tools. Hence there was no subterfuge this time.

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<sup>118</sup> Op. cit, pp. 394 - 395; also Soga's journal entry, 5 November, 1869, The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga, AC 8162 (161402), op. cit

<sup>119</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, *ibid.*, p. 242; also D. Williams (ed.), The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 36.

<sup>120</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, pp. 242 - 243; also D. Williams (ed.), The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga, *ibid.*, pp. 36 - 37.

Shortly after transferring to Tutura Tiyo Soga's infirm health gradually deteriorated to the extent that his friends and colleagues both in Scotland and Eastern Cape were alarmed.<sup>121</sup> In a personal letter in February 1869, John F. Cumming, John A. Chalmers and James Davidson advised him to consider "removal from Tutura without delay, to another and more congenial locality."<sup>122</sup> Soga's response shows the extent of his commitment to his mission, even at personal risk to himself. He was categorical in his reply:

No, I would not, though I had been dying here, make another change of place, I would prefer to finish my course, and the ministry which I hope I have received of the Lord Jesus, among mine own people, and in mine own appointed sphere of labour. ... I hope that you will believe that I have written in all brotherly kindness, fidelity, and sincerity. On the inexpediency of abandoning my present post, though God were cutting off my day at once, I need not enlarge.<sup>123</sup>

He continued to labour at Tutura to the end of his life. Such was the extent of Soga's resolve and single-mindedness. In his own mission assessment, there were no major quantitative additions there.<sup>124</sup> There was small steady growth in membership, the local school was up and running with the isiXhosa and English languages in offering with Margaret, Janet's sister, as the teacher at this school.<sup>125</sup> The new church was opened on 16 April 1871, "*free of debt*,"<sup>126</sup> to Soga's great satisfaction. Soga had concluded in his state of the mission report shortly before his death that "everything is still on a small scale,"<sup>127</sup> but plans were on the ground for a great future.

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<sup>121</sup> It seems that it was common for Africans who had spent some time in Europe (Britain) to consequently suffer from illnesses and deaths relating to high exposure to cold and wet conditions. See, *The Lovedale News*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 21 March 1877, about the death of Tause Soga from similar ailments. Also David Paterson, 'Xhosa Youths in England, 1859 - 1864: An Experiment in Evangelization' in *Bulletin of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies*, New Series, 6 - 7, 1990 - 91, pp. 54 - 63.

<sup>122</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 404; also *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 1 December 1871, p. 693.

<sup>123</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, pp. 408 - 409. This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that Soga was earlier willing to exchange places with John A. Chalmers at Mgwali, although he had added that 'my heart lies at the Emgwali' - See D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 65.

<sup>124</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 427f.; D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>125</sup> D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 139 & fn. 40, p. 208.

<sup>126</sup> Op. cit, p. 141 - emphasis original.

<sup>127</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 427.

At the age of 42 years, at about 2.45 p.m. on Saturday, 12 August 1871, Tiyo Soga died in the arms of "one of his most intimate associates in mission work, the Rev. Richard Ross,"<sup>128</sup> at the Tutura mission. He was buried the following Tuesday, 15 August 1871, with the funeral services in both English and isiXhosa.<sup>129</sup> The English service at home was led by John Cumming, John Sclater and John Longden, with John A. Chalmers conducting the vernacular service in the church which, in his description was, "the saddest service it has ever been my lot to perform."<sup>130</sup> Richard Ross was responsible for the internment. There was a flood of tributes from Soga's colleagues, friends and acquaintances. John Cumming, who was one of the three missionaries who had earlier expressed their concern at Soga's deteriorating health condition, voiced his sadness that "such a one should be cut down in the very noontide of his days and of his usefulness!"<sup>131</sup> John Sclater, another GMS missionary from the Paterson station, noted that Soga's "end was sudden and unexpected."<sup>132</sup>

Finally, John A. Chalmers felt "broken in spirit, and wounded by a sorrow none can tell."<sup>133</sup> His last words of tribute to his dear friend were perceptive and meaningful to many: "it is a loss common to us all. The United Presbyterian Church has lost its brightest jewel in the Caffre mission; we (European missionaries) have lost the one man who seemed the most qualified in every respect for the important post he held. You (Africans) have lost one of your worthiest sons."<sup>134</sup> The last word, however, should go to Peter Davidson, a GMS missionary at Adelaide to whom the news of Soga's death fell 'like a crash of thunder', who spoke prophetically regarding Soga's value to African Christian history: "no one will ever fill the place of Tiyo Soga. In the Old Testament we have but one Moses, and in the New,

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<sup>128</sup> J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 485; *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 1 December 1871, p. 695. Richard was one of the two sons of John Ross, one of the Scottish missionary pioneers at Lovedale. He went into Lovedale with Soga and they travelled together to Scotland in 1846 and he, like Soga, returned to work as his fellow missionary in the Eastern Cape.

<sup>129</sup> *United Presbyterian Missionary Record*, 1 December 1871, p. 699.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 699.

<sup>131</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 694.

<sup>132</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 694.

<sup>133</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 699.

<sup>134</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 699.

one John the Baptist. We have but one Martin Luther, and for Scotland only one John Knox; and for Caffraria we can have only one Tiyo Soga."<sup>135</sup> He was right.

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<sup>135</sup> Op. cit, p. 698.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SOGA: LITERARY RESPONSE TO EUROPEAN CHRISTIANITY

#### EXPRESSIONS OF AFRICAN IDENTITY

We have argued, in the previous chapter, about the evolution in Soga's sense of African awareness. Here, we want to take that argument further to its logical conclusion, and to concretize it. It is our contention that, due to Soga's inhibited and modest personality which often hid his real self, it was during the crises moments in his life that his African consciousness indisputably came through. These forced out of him, as it were, a decisive choice towards a recovery of his African identity. Despite Soga's success at Mgwali in missionary terms, his eleven-year experiences there were critical in pushing him towards a delineation of his own particular role and a clear articulation of his views. Two events in Soga's life in the 1860's led to a paradigm shift and his repositioning towards a personal African renaissance. The first of these was the series of challenges to his Xhosa-Africanness and the Christian message which he represented. This occurred at Mgwali during the early 1860's. The second instance was that of a racist attack on his people and a personal betrayal by his biographer, colleague and a close friend, John A. Chalmers, in 1865. The former, a rejection by his own people, led to a serious identity crisis and a re-evaluation of his role within European Christianity. The latter, a treachery by his adopted people, shifted Soga towards an explicit affirmation of his African identity and open criticism of European missionary racialism.

Williams observes that there was a serious resurgence of nativism at Mgwali in the early 1860's, which posed the first critical challenge to Soga's ministry and Xhosa-African identity.<sup>1</sup> The first of these series of personal challenges to Soga was connected with the sudden high mortality rate that befell the people of Mgwali. No fewer than eight adults died in 1861 alone as the result of this sickness, and seven of these were Soga's converts. That the death mostly affected converts aggravated the matter causing a crisis of faith. Consequent to the amaXhosa-African cause and effect philosophy, the diagnosis for this was found to be the presence of the Mgwali mission station

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<sup>1</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 84 - 86; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 261 - 269.

within their community. Thus, there was a general feeling among the people that they "should neither locate themselves near to it, nor attend the house of God, lest they should fall victims to disease."<sup>2</sup> Subsequently, there was a general backsliding of Soga's church members. This led to an overt reversion and stronger adherence to traditional customs and practices as means of protection against this mortal disease. Other cultural practices like lobola and initiation rites, hitherto dormant, began to re-surface. Thus African alternatives, rather than Christian solutions, were sought.

Further, Soga reported to Somerville of yet another crisis that emerged during the following year, 1863; that of the "sons of members of the church, who practised upon themselves the heathen rite of circumcision."<sup>3</sup> According to Soga, not only was the rite of passage observed but the youths went out of the way to embrace "all the *ceremonies* of heathen circumcision" including the "superfluous piece of heathenism" practice of the white-washing of the body. Soga was incensed:

If they had wished to be *men*, they required only to perform the rite, without adopting the other degrading (ceremonial) customs. How to deal with these young men was a most perplexing matter. My difficulties would have been lessened or removed, had they submitted to the conditions upon which they could be tolerated within the confines of the station.<sup>4</sup>

This suggests that the rite of circumcision was not precluded totally in the mission station, but modified under certain agreements. There seems indeed to have been an arrangement in place between Soga and the Mgwali church leadership.<sup>5</sup> It would seem that the circumcision rite of passage could be tolerated although not explicitly encouraged. One of the principles of this arrangement, we may deduce, was an agreement that if practiced at all the rite of circumcision would be without 'the other degrading' ceremonial customs, like the long isolation from the community to be under the influence of *ikhankatha* (counsellor); the extended dwelling in the *ibhoma* (the initiates' hut); the white-washing of the body; etc. Soga's dilemma, it appears, did not result from the mere observance of the rite *per se* but rather from the breach of the arrangement regulating a modernised version of circumcision rite at the mission station.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 11 March 1862, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 4 March 1863, *op. cit.*, p. 264.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 264 (emphasis original).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 267; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> If our reading of Soga is correct, and we are convinced that it is, it was the ceremonial aspect of some of the amaXhosa traditions that he discouraged

Instead, the *abakhweta* (the initiates) under question chose to go the full traditional route. Further, their parents sided with them when Soga threatened them with suspension and expulsion from the mission station. Certain church elders were, in addition to the parents, behind the resistance. He was further horrified and embittered "when the long-concealed vicious practices came to light at the Mgwali, showing that church members and schoolmasters had been their staunchest supporters."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Soga reports, "the station was divided into two parties who refused even to exchange words with each other. The greater part approved of my action; the others were against me."<sup>8</sup> There was open defiance of Soga's authority at the station, as the *abakhwetha* flaunted themselves before the very door of Soga's house "with their bodies white-washed and robed in their (traditional) blankets."<sup>9</sup> That the act was clearly meant to undermine and provoke Soga can be seen in that traditionally *abakhwetha* do not walk about in public view. That they did was a deliberate device to undermine his manhood.

In desperation Soga did the impossible within the Presbyterian Church procedure; he appealed in vain to civil authority to intervene in the crisis. Nonetheless, the situation continued more or less the same indefinitely as the civil authority did not interfere in what they considered a domestic matter. In the mission report to Dr. Somerville, Soga pointed out that these developments at Mgwali "did

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most and not the actual act itself in every case. Perhaps his Reformed suspicion of ceremonials led him to believe that these were unnecessary elaborations and celebrations of heathenism. We could conclude, therefore, that here we have the beginning of the division into traditional and modern modes of practices of the African rites. Indeed, regarding the circumcision rite of passage today we have the traditional mode which is performed by a *ingcibi* (traditional surgeon) and is usually elaborate (*umcimbi*). Also, we have a modernised version whereby a modern doctor performs the circumcision act, followed by a brief celebration (*idinala*) at home. With the latter, there is no white-washing of the body or long isolation from the community, necessarily. The modernised version was generally followed, if at all, during the missionary period when the rite was discouraged. There has been an increasing shift towards the former, recently. The moral struggle between the two modes today is that one is regarded as authentic while the other is not, at least within the traditional perspective. There are serious health concerns that are raised regarding the traditional mode. This lies behind the current debate about the amaXhosa circumcision rite.

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 263.

<sup>8</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 4 March 1863, op. cit, pp. 265 - 266.

<sup>9</sup> Op. cit, p. 266.

incalculable injury to the Lord's work."<sup>10</sup> There was, subsequently, "much falling away" from church membership either through backsliding or cases of discipline.<sup>11</sup> Writing to Cumming in September 1862 Soga indicated the extent of the division at Mgwali: "some of the people I am not yet on good terms - the young men themselves - with the exception of one or two who have come in and confessed their guilt - look upon me as their enemy."<sup>12</sup>

The Mgwali experience was an indication, not only of a resurgence of nativism as Williams argued, but also that the adoption of the Christian faith was not *tabula rasa* and that conversion was not total. These events at Mgwali also took their toll upon Soga's health. He was so emotionally distressed that he became physically ill. For the first time we get an indication of the weak nature of his health.<sup>13</sup> All told, the Mgwali rejection was a landmark event in Soga's life as alluded to in his confession to his old friend, Johnston:

I have much to depress me. I sometimes feel as if I should leave these people altogether. I have disappointment after disappointment. ... This year 1862, if I live longer on earth, I shall ever have cause to remember in connection with the ordeals to which my feelings have been subjected; and this is the bitterest of them all.<sup>14</sup>

Revealing the underlying effects of the crisis, Soga again expressed similar sentiments to Cumming in September 1865. In this instance he went a step further even to the extent of regretting his missionary role:

I have sometimes great regrets that I ever went to Scotland and entered the ministry - Not alone for its *trials* here but for its solemn responsibilities and yet had I not (?) would I have been a better - less responsible man to Government in another profession? I wish sometimes I could go to some dark spot of earth - live and reside there alone.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Op. cit, p. 267.

<sup>11</sup> Op. cit, p. 269.

<sup>12</sup> Soga to Cumming, 18 September 1862, MSB 139,5 (137), The South African Library, Cape Town.

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 269ff.

<sup>14</sup> Soga to Johnston, 1862, op. cit, p. 261.

<sup>15</sup> Soga to Cumming, 18 September 1862, MSB 139,5 (137), The South African Library, op. cit - emphasis original. It is interesting that Chalmers omits this correspondence in his narrative. It seems that he wanted to show only the positive aspects in his 'Model Kaffir'. If this is the case, however, the extracts about Soga's agony contradict this view in our reading.

Chalmers' narrative of this period reveals similar currents and undercurrents of untold agony in Soga's life, a cynicism regarding his participation in European Christianity and a new resolve to redeem his Africanness despite his continued participation.

Rather curiously there is no record of these extracts which present Soga in a state of alarming emotional turmoil in his own journal, which lasted about four years to be precise, despite Chalmers' lengthy transcriptions of these confessional passages.<sup>16</sup> Although there are references in the journal where Soga acknowledges doubt, notably about his vocation, these are, interestingly, only two short passages written in isiXhosa.<sup>17</sup> As nothing on the scale presented by Chalmers is found in the journal, so we are dependent on his text alone for our evidence and analysis. Chalmers probably freely edited these parts of the journal, and he himself acknowledges that they were "never intended to be seen or read by another."<sup>18</sup> This is one instance of "the cruel irony that Soga's legacy had to come to us via Chalmers."<sup>19</sup> Yet, Chalmers' narrative is invaluable as a historical record without which a whole history of Soga is impossible.

Coming back to our thesis that Soga's identity struggles reached a critical stage simultaneously with the Mgwali upheavals, an analysis of the detailed extracts from Soga's journal in Chalmers' narrative prove this assertion. A journal entry of January 1862 reveals extreme signs of agony:

I have to complain of one grand defect in my character - irresolution. I cannot tell how many times I have resolved and re-resolved to be, under God, a better man than I know myself to be. All my resolutions in this respect have miserably come to naught. I have in reference to my state before God, to complain of the following things:- Although I know myself to be *a great deceiver*, although I know the consequences of this awful sin although I know that I have a most responsible burden, *in having taken unadvisedly upon myself the work of the ministry*, although I know that *all that I have hitherto been doing in that ministry has been*

<sup>16</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 217 - 279.

<sup>17</sup> D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 22 and 35.

<sup>18</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> D. Attwell, 'The Transculturation of Enlightenment: The Exemplary Case of the Rev Tiyo Soga, African Nationalist in (ed.) Philippe Denis, *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), p. 51; also D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, Introduction, pp. xiii - xx; (ed.) D. Williams, *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 11.

*hypocrisy and insincerity*, I have to lament my deadness and hardness of heart in reference to these sins. When I attempt to peruse the Word of God, it has no effect upon my mind. I remain unmoved.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, after three years of a successful ministry since late 1857, Soga shows uncertainty of the worst kind by dismissing 'all' that he has hitherto done as being 'hypocrisy and insincerity'! Read within the Mgwali context of this period the statement contradicts his entire missionary work in a single phrase - "hypocrisy and insincerity". As one who undeniably participated within the missionary orbit Soga hereby reveals a conflict of a most serious kind with that *status quo*. Further still, it appears that there is a sense in which Soga internalised the Mgwali people's cynicism regarding the Christian faith and his own role therein. He has difficulty resolving how to be 'under God', presumably as previous resolutions to that effect had been contradicted by the Mgwali crisis and thereby have 'miserably come to naught'.

Soga continued to express this affliction in most serious terms, "I have reason to fear that I have been living the life of a mere formalist. ...The blood of these souls, O Lord, Thou wilt most assuredly require at my hands."<sup>21</sup> He feels that he had been confined to a prescribed and expected code of behaviour. Could it be that circumstances had compelled him to participate in missionary-colonial praxis while his heart and soul were elsewhere? Could it be that he felt his consciousness had been colonised by the European Christianity? Soga surely shows consciousness of his colonisation.

In May 1862 Soga again shows exasperation regarding the performance of his Christian duties:

I have been gravitating back to indifference and unconcern as to my state. What is the radical cause of all this? ... I feel even religious duties a burden; preaching and exhorting a burden; reading God's Word a burden; prayer a burden. Through some of these duties, during the whole of the last two weeks, I have gone mechanically.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> 5 January 1862, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 272 (emphasis mine).

<sup>21</sup> 29 April 1862, op. cit, p. 274.

<sup>22</sup> 14 May 1862, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 275 - 276.

Writing to Cumming in September 1862 he gives reasons for a communications breakdown "especially in this year of trouble and trial."<sup>23</sup> One of these is that subsequently he felt "inclined to keep my thoughts of men, and things to myself."<sup>24</sup> Soga was thus not too revealing about his struggles to his missionary brethren. In November 1862 Soga still emphasized his mechanical participation in the missionary role: "the Gospel has all that time been preached by me in hypocrisy."<sup>25</sup> Significantly, this trend of thought is continued into the following year, with Soga recording in May 1863 that:

It is impossible to conceive of anything more awful than the state of the human heart - *my* heart - when it can so much resist and oppose what God has done and said. Pray then, my soul, for a holy reverence for God; for the forgiveness of my sin of sins - unbelief and hardness of heart; for light and faith in the testimony of God concerning Himself, and His Son, Spirit, and Word.<sup>26</sup>

Robert Johnston observes of Soga that "were all the facts known, a very interesting, but painful chapter might be written of him."<sup>27</sup> Reminding us of Soga's reticent personality, he "never thoroughly unbosomed himself to any one,"<sup>28</sup> Johnston leads us to conclude that what we have above may have been just a tip of the iceberg. In turn, Chalmers would also not have known the real meaning of the above extracts for Soga. Thus, his interpretation is tentative, and opens up the narrative to contestation. To put it otherwise, the explanation for Soga's conflict, as perceived by Soga himself, should be found precisely within his statements, and not in Chalmers' interpretation.<sup>29</sup> In Chalmers' own interpretation Soga's agonies in these extracts are cast as "dark shadows"<sup>30</sup> in a life of faith. They "are the struggles of a faith, conscious of its weakness, and yet earnestly desiring to be strong."<sup>31</sup> Chalmers concludes that Soga's 'trials drove him to the throne of grace, and to the searching of his own heart':

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<sup>23</sup> Soga to Cumming, 18 September 1862, MSB 139,5 (137), op. cit

<sup>24</sup> Op. cit

<sup>25</sup> 11 November 1862, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>26</sup> 24 May 1863, op. cit, p. 278.

<sup>27</sup> Op. cit, p. 435.

<sup>28</sup> Op. cit, p. 435.

<sup>29</sup> Hence the lengthy quotations of Soga's own words so that we can contest their interpretation.

<sup>30</sup> This is the title of the chapter in which these extracts are found in Chalmers - Chapter XV, p. 257. Interestingly, the following one is titled, 'Glimpses of Sunshine', Chapter XVI, p. 280.

<sup>31</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 279.

During these months of painful suspense, when he was crossed and harassed by some of the darkest dispensations of providence, we find in his private journal some most pathetic cries of an earnest soul yearning after a closer union with God in Christ. These depressing experiences drove him to seek comfort from his Saviour. These short records reveal the humility of his spiritual nature.<sup>32</sup>

That there was self-introspection on Soga's part is obvious; crises lead to turning points in people's lives. It was particularly so with Tiyo Soga. However, Chalmers' claim to solve 'the mystery' of these statements through appeal to, in de Kock's words, "the Ignatian tradition of excoriating spiritual reflection,"<sup>33</sup> offers an inadequate explanation of Soga's situation. It fails to appreciate fully his historical conditions. While the abstract view is permissible we prefer the historical option. Chalmers lends credence to a Christian solution but ignores the African aspect. Thus we want to add to Chalmers' conclusions that these 'trials', in our view, drove Soga to the centre of his Africanness, which had been largely incipient and hitherto on the margins. They pushed him to a self re-assessment of his being, the result of which was the reclaiming of his African identity. Hence the emphases on identity crisis which is so obvious in these extracts. Soga was being pulled apart by the two extremely opposed worldviews that he was straddling at Mgwali. He was revealing a mind and soul torn apart, almost to schizophrenic proportions, by the Christian and African demands, which has since been the lot of African Christians.<sup>34</sup>

The revelation is not surprising to African Christians as many have lived with this apparent contradiction, especially in situations when it was not deemed acceptable to seek integration of the African and the Euro-Christian worlds. However, even when this was desirable the colonization of the mind persisted. Hence Setiloane's famous 'confession':

The question as to why we are still in the Christian fold can be answered in different ways. For myself, first, I am like someone who has been bewitched, and I find it difficult to shake off the Christian witchcraft with which I have been captivated. I cannot say I necessarily like where I am. Second, I rationalize my position by taking the view that to be Christian I do not have to endorse every detail of western Christian theology.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

<sup>33</sup> L. de Kock, 'Textual Capture in the Civilising Mission: Moffat, Livingstone, and the Case of Tiyo Soga' in *English in Africa*, Vol. 21, Nos. 1 & 2, July 1994, p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. D. M. Tutu, 'Black Theology/ African Theology - Soul Mates or Antagonists' in (ed.) D. W. Felm, *Third World Liberation Theologies* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), pp. 256 - 264; S. M. Maluleke, '"A Morula Tree Between Two Fields"', op. cit

<sup>35</sup> Gabriel M. Setiloane, 'Where Are We in African Theology?' in (eds.) K. Appiah-Kubi and S. Torres, *African Theology en Route: Papers from the Pan-*

Being a lonely figure on the frontier Soga did not have the option for such rationalisation despite the consciousness of his own 'bewitchment' by European Christianity. Instead he used his own categories, which were frank and blunt. 'Hypocrisy' and 'unbelief', which seem to have been the source of Soga's inner conflict, appear five<sup>36</sup> and four<sup>37</sup> times, respectively, in these extracts. So that in a fundamental manner Soga perceived his participation within the missionary-colonial praxis and his disregard for the African cultural heritage as being hypocritical. Of credit to Soga in his unique historical position is precisely his awareness of Euro-Christian captivity, on the one hand, and the traditional African pull, on the other. For without the consciousness of the existence of these two opposed forces there would have been no internal struggle. He would be simply and happily immersed in one or the other. The turmoil that we witness in the extracts is a direct consequence of the awareness of the two conflicting demands in his life. Soga's conformity was thus by no means total, as he was aware of the ambivalence pertaining to his unique position. De Kock's observation is perceptive:

Even in one so comprehensibly 'converted' as he (Soga), no sovereign or fully 'present' Christian consciousness was possible. In these terms, Christian converts could never be what the missionaries wished to believe they were - re-made people, thoroughly in possession of a consciousness imbued with eternal grace.<sup>38</sup>

Chalmers should be credited for recording this valuable piece of information, which actually runs counter to his thesis of Soga as the 'model kafir' as it contradicts the perception of total Euro-Christian hegemony over Soga. It has been through these 'confessions' that we validated our claim that Soga's consciousness is not reducible to Euro-Christian orthodoxy, despite its discernible effects on him. There were other layers in his consciousness attributable to an African awareness. Evidence suggests that Soga increasingly shifted towards the latter from this period onwards with 1865 becoming the landmark.

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African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17 - 23, 1977, Accra, Ghana (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1979), p. 64. Exactly twenty years later, Tinyiko S. Maluleke re-iterated this position in an address given at the celebration of twenty-five years of The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa hosted jointly with RICSA at Cape Town University on Thursday, 6 November 1997.

<sup>36</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 272, 273, 277 (x2), 278.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 273, 276, 277, 278.

<sup>38</sup> L. de Kock, 'Textual Capture in the Civilising Mission: Moffat, Livingstone, and the Case of Tiyo Soga', *English in Africa*, Vol. 21, Nos. 1 & 2, July 1994, p. 47.

The second event of crucial significance in the articulation of Tiyo Soga's African consciousness is that of John Aitken Chalmers' racist offensive upon the amaXhosa people in April 1865. Chalmers' statement reveals the paradigm shift towards racialism in missionary praxis during the second half of the nineteenth century. Throwing light into Chalmers' cultural background, Attwell argues that he was a progressive who had already advocated the civilisation of natives through industrialisation, even before this was fashionable. Attwell concludes that Chalmers was thus a transitional figure who "lived out the decline of liberal humanitarianism and the consolidation of racism."<sup>39</sup> Thus Chalmers' bitter attack and condemnation of the amaXhosa nation to extinction was occasioned by these factors.

In an article entitled 'What is the Destiny of the Kaffir Race?' published on 3 April 1865 in the *King Williamstown Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner* Chalmers charged that unless the amaXhosa-Africans adopted wholesale habits of European civilisation they were doomed to extinction as a race to be forgotten forever. Chalmers based his prediction on three reasons; indolence, indifference to education, and addiction to European drink. On the first one, Chalmers charged that amaXhosa-Africans preferred to keep things as they were in an era of great change and high mobility. Thus, they would be left behind to perish in their ignorance unless they adopted European civilisation. Echoing general colonial-missionary misunderstanding of African cultural systems, he viewed these as giving reason to indolence. The lack of enthusiasm by amaXhosa-Africans to adopt Euro-Christian systems was thus perceived as proof of their inability or laziness to adopt change. Exasperated by their stubborn conservatism he concluded that:

Nothing so deadening, nothing which keeps down a nation, nothing so unnatural as to keep things fixed when all the world is by the very law of its creation in external progress; and the cause of all the evils among them may be traced to that natural but most deadly error of indolence; their business seems to be to preserve their old slothful habits whilst their present circumstances call loudly for an improvement. This undoubtedly will lead to ruin.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> D. Attwell, 'The Transculturation of Enlightenment: The Exemplary Case of the Rev Tiyo Soga, African Nationalist' in (ed.) P. Denis, *The Making of an Indigenous Clergy in Southern Africa* Publications, op. cit, p. 48.

<sup>40</sup> *King Williamstown Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner*, 3 April 1865.

Elaborating on the second charge Chalmers argued that the amaXhosa-Africans' indifference to education would eventually lead to their decline and extinction. He then went on to extol the virtues of Western education, which he promoted as the alternative to traditional culture. Education, in his view, was the only step towards civilisation and modernity. It was the only means of participation in European progress, otherwise the unlearned would in this process go the wall. Contrary, the amaXhosa-Africans, in Chalmers' opinion, preferred the darkness of their culture to the light of European civilisation systems:

*Steeped in ignorance, every year must witness a gradual sinking until they lose their nationality and become offscourings of society, as were the Hottentots (sic) before them. ... Imperceptibly, by their disregard to education and its advantages, they are going headlong to ruin, rising only to the unenviable position of waggon-drivers and grooms.<sup>41</sup>*

On the third score, the amaXhosa-Africans were alleged to be showing more interest in the vices rather than virtues of European Christendom. Decrying the fact that British vices were imported into the colonies, thus revealing that the Empire did have weaknesses after-all, Chalmers charged that the amaXhosa-Africans were more interested in drink than the gospel. He concluded that, where the weapons of British warfare have failed, European liquor would most effectively succeed.

As if the general attack on the amaXhosa-Africans' traditional culture was not enough Chalmers went on to make further personal insinuations regarding Tiyo Soga's integrity. He wrote that, "when a Kaffir (sic) youth has got a smattering of knowledge ... he wishes nothing more. His ambition then is to be a gentleman, a sort of peacock bedizened with ornaments of the gaudiest hue."<sup>42</sup> Soga was representative of the educated Africans in this period and, therefore, the insinuation was personal. Not only was the personal attack unwarranted but it was also inaccurate and misrepresentative of Soga, for it was contrary to his personality and conduct. That he was hurt by Chalmers' innuendo is revealed in a letter to Cumming in May 1865 where he brought the attention of the latter to Chalmers' article. Soga told Cumming that he has published "a long article, in answer

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Op. cit

200 miles in 19 Sept. 1865.

- The Kaffir Race -

Mr. G. van der Merwe - more than his predecessor, has examined us  
in detail at the Natal Provincial Chamber - on the basis of my  
case - without disputing his superior language and prolixity, observed  
his errors - for myself - whether in the word is included - the Kaffir dialect  
of - Tumbor-Ries - Mafodis - Mupindumid - Mubomand - Galatid -  
Zulu's - elladingi - Ndwabe and all pure Kaffir dialects - some  
languages - manners with but slight differences - If in this domain  
is included -

Printed and sold by T. G. S. JOURNAL 25 APRIL 1865

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to that of Chalmers" as it had caused "a good deal of pain" to him.<sup>43</sup> Yet, Soga contained himself on this occasion, and only relieved his hurt emotion through an entry in his journal.<sup>44</sup>

However, when Chalmers had his article re-published, thus proving that the earlier *Indaba* publication was not an irrational mistake but a calculated move, Soga resolved that this cried out for a response. Soga published his response in the *King Williamstown Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner* of 11 May 1865. Writing under the pseudonym of 'Defensor'<sup>45</sup> Soga responded to the article by questioning the arrogance of the writer, establishing the origins and history of the African race, and finally asserting amaXhosa permanence in Africa. Soga crafted his response as follows:

Africa was of God given to the race of Ham. I find the Negro from the days of the old Assyrians downwards, keeping his 'individuality' and 'distinctiveness', amid the wreck of empires, and the revolution of ages. I find him keeping his place among the nations, and keeping his home and country. I find him opposed by nation after nation and driven from his home. I find him enslaved - exposed to the vices and the brandy of the white man. I find him in this condition for many a day - in the West Indian Islands, in Northern and southern America, and in the South American Colonies of Spain and Portugal. I find him exposed to all these disasters, and yet living - multiplying 'and never extinct'. Yea, I find him now as the prevalence of christian and philanthropic opinions on the right of man obtains among civilized nations, returning unmanacled to the land of his forefathers, taking back with him the civilisation and the christianity of those nations. (See the Negro Republic of Liberia). I find the negro in the present struggle in America looking forward - though still with chains in his hands and with chains on his feet - yet looking forward to the dawn of a better day for himself and all his sable brethren in Africa. Until the Negro is doomed against all history and experience - until his God-given inheritance of Africa be taken finally from him, I shall never believe in the total extinction of his brethren along the southern limits of the land of Ham. The fact that the dark races of this vast continent, amid intestine wars and revolutions, and notwithstanding external spoliation, have remained 'unextinct', have retained their individuality, has baffled historians, and challenges the author of the doom of the Kaffir race in a satisfactory explanation. There has been observed among these races the operation of a singular law, by which events have readjusted themselves when they threatened their destruction. I believe firmly that among the Negro races of South Africa events will follow the same law, and therefore neither the indolence of the Kaffirs, nor their aversion to change, nor the vices of civilization, all of which barriers the gospel must overthrow, shall suffice to exterminate them as people.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Soga to Cumming, 21 May 1865, MSB 139,5 (138), The South African Library, Cape Town.

<sup>44</sup> Soga's journal entry, 25 April 1865, titled 'The Kaffir Race', The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga, AC 8162 (161402), op. cit

<sup>45</sup> Soga was a constant contributor to print media awareness and intellectual debate of his time through articles to local newspapers on various issues. He often wrote anonymously or under the *nom de plume*. His favourite pseudonyms were the "Defensor" (uMkhuseli) and "uNonjiba waseluHlangeni" (the Dove of the Nation). The pseudonyms are clearly suggestive of what Soga himself perceived his role to be. With regard to the former, he wrote on behalf of those who could not write to defend their interests. This was in line with the traditional concept of shared wisdom. With the latter, Soga imposed upon himself the daunting task of talking peace and justice in the strife-torn Eastern Frontier.

<sup>46</sup> *King Williamstown Gazette and Kaffrarian Banner*, 11 May 1865.

Connecting the amaXhosa people with other African ethnic groups on the Continent, Soga sought to show the cultural and national unity of the African people, thus seeking to transcend tribal and cultural divisions. Also, he pointed to the resilience of the Africans who, despite slavery and war, have survived and continue to grow in numbers and potential as a race. These unique experiences have, instead, created rich diversity for Africans, as in the Diaspora, and also served as tools for solidarity in their continued struggles. Further still, Soga appeals to divine justice as the basis of African claim to Africa. Thus he justified African territorial and cultural integrity on biblical claims of origin of races; Africa God has given to Ham, and not to Europeans imperialists.

Notwithstanding the legitimacy of the Hamitic hypothesis,<sup>47</sup> it served Soga's purpose in some measure. Disputing the racialist interpretation of the sons of Noah myth, David Aaron argues that there was no racial or linguistic distinction between the sons of Noah and the terms themselves did not designate race or nationality. It is due to post-biblical and modern ideological considerations that, "an artificial distinction between the peoples was created by attributing them to different Noachide sons."<sup>48</sup> In this racial classification the sons of Ham came to include the Africans. Biblical and modern slavery found their justification through a racialist understanding of the Hamitic hypothesis. In Soga we see an inversion of this ideology. Thus, by explaining the origins of a people one could explain their history and culture. By the same token Soga asserted the amaXhosa claim to humanity and independent identity against Chalmers' forecast.

Williams asserts that Soga's response to the issues raised by Chalmers was "the first writing which reflected Black consciousness and laid the foundations of negritude in South Africa."<sup>49</sup> The points to which Soga referred, like the massive size of the Continent, the growth and resilience of its indigenous inhabitants, and the connection on both sides of the Atlantic "underpinned Black

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. Genesis, chapters 9 and 10. For some discussion of issues around the Hamitic theory see D. H. Aaron, 'Early Rabbinic Exegesis on Noah's Son Ham and the so-called "Hamitic Myth"' in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. LXIII, No. 4, Winter 1995, pp. 721 - 752; E. R. Sanders, 'The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origins and Functions in Time Perspective' in *Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1969, pp. 521 - 532.

<sup>48</sup> David H. Aaron, 'Early Rabbinic Exegesis', op. cit, p. 734.

<sup>49</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 91.

nationalism in southern Africa during the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."<sup>50</sup> As such, then, Soga was part of the nineteenth century process that laid roots for the 1960's Black Consciousness.<sup>51</sup> Soga's nationalism was supra tribal as well as African, which became the direction of modern African nationalism. Saayman concurs with this view of Soga. For him, Soga's legacy in the modern development of Black Consciousness and even Pan-Africanism emerged out of his concern for the quality of life of his people in the oppressive colonial context.<sup>52</sup> Because of this basic concern for people Soga served as a symbol of unity. Saayman adds that Soga's "encompassing Africa-consciousness therefore carried in itself the seeds of the unity of the African church."<sup>53</sup>

De Kock, on the other hand, thinks that the evidence for making such a claim about Soga is thin. He is not happy about what he perceives as Soga's explicit missionary bias, or his reference to Hamitic theory for the justification of African integrity. He argues that for Williams to conclude merely on the basis of his response to Chalmers "that Soga was propounding 'Black Consciousness' in the modern sense seems to me to be forcing the point."<sup>54</sup> For him Soga's consciousness was too ambivalently stranded to be thus credited. His own conclusion is that Soga may have been a progenitor of Black nationalism, as claimed by Williams, "but perhaps in a far more ambiguous and agonistic manner than Williams allows for."<sup>55</sup> In any event, Soga's 1865 response to Chalmers remains a landmark in understanding Soga.

Attwell makes three points in his reading of Soga's response to Chalmers; amaXhosa-Africans' incorporation into a global and teleological history, the retention of racial distinctiveness, and adaptability to change.<sup>56</sup> On the first one, he argues that Soga was always an exponent of the

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>51</sup> Op. cit, p. ix.

<sup>52</sup> W. Saayman, *Christian Mission in South Africa: Political and Ecumenical* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1993), p. 63.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> L. de Kock, 'Textual Capture in the Civilising Mission, op. cit, p. 52.

<sup>55</sup> L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians: Missionary Narrative and African Response in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Alice: Lovedale Press, 1996), p. 183. ; also D. M. Balia, 'The Historical Roots of Black Theology', *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 8, No. 2, November 1994, p. 85.

<sup>56</sup> J. Attwell, 'The Transculturation of Enlightenment', op. cit, p. 50.

incorporation of his people in the modernising tendencies of European Christendom. He was always aware of the forces of globalization that were impinging on Kaffraria and advocated their embrace. However, Soga did not seek incorporation at any price and, therefore, his accommodation was qualified. The amaXhosa would "embrace modernity - in the form of Christianity and civilisation - while preserving their cultural memory."<sup>57</sup> Thus, contrary to Chalmers, Soga argued that the amaXhosa-Africans were not averse to recognizing the need for interaction with other cultures. The amaXhosa participation in the process of globalization would be done precisely as themselves, i. e. preserving their cultural identity. They would not lose their distinctiveness as a result of accommodation to other cultural forces. It is precisely this uniqueness of African culture that demands its preservation. Thus the Africans had the right to be different in this global village. This difference did not infer inferiority, for Soga believed that "God has made from creation no race of men mentally and morally superior to other races. They are all equal in these respects; but education, civilisation and the blessings of Christianity have made differences among men."<sup>58</sup> This was contrary to Victorian missionary imperialism which systematically sought to efface difference in the name of Christian civilisation. National identity based upon and informed by cultural distinctiveness and uniqueness of societies.<sup>59</sup> African pride, therefore, needed aspects of historical identity for its anchorage. Soga was aware of these connections. In fact, Soga refutes Chalmers' allegations of amaXhosa-Africans' indifference to change by showing just how adaptable African cultures are. This versatility has been the reason for their continuing survival. But adaptability for Soga did not mean total assimilation to European culture, anymore than a distinct African cultural identity implied non-adaptability. Adaptability presupposed reflection, livelihood, and dynamism, contrary to Chalmers' consistent presentation of traditional African society as dull and lifeless.<sup>60</sup> Three years previously in August 1862 Soga had presented the amaXhosa-African society and homestead as hubs of activity, and the people as vibrant conversationalists in an *Indaba* newspaper article. To an assessment of Soga's other literary role we now turn.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 54; also M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 52.

<sup>58</sup> Soga in 'The Inheritance of my Children', par. II, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 431.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. F. Fanon, 'On National Culture' in (eds.) R. R. Grinker and C. B. Steiner, *Perspectives On Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 650 - 652.

<sup>60</sup> See J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 12.

### LITERARY CRITIC

That Soga became increasingly drawn to take active interest in specific African matters from the critical Mgwali period onwards is clear. Henceforth, he made a habit of collecting isiXhosa fables, proverbs, legends and folklore from oral sources and reducing them to writing for posterity. Regrettably, all this work on African heritage has been lost. Further, Soga was involved in the 'Native question' discourse that was beginning to surface at the time. He reminded Johnston in 1863, "when you take up the 'Kafir (Native) question' in your Mutual Improvement Society, I would be glad to have an epitome of your discussion. I am, as you can believe, deeply interested in that question."<sup>61</sup> Apparently, under debate at that time regarding the 'Native question' was the issue of stock theft. The amaXhosa-Africans were always alleged of stealing colonial cattle on the frontier. Expressing his cynicism on the one-sidedness of the colonial view Soga protested, "much noise is made about this vice, when practised by my poor countrymen."<sup>62</sup> He showed the need for a holistic treatment of the matter instead:

This general thieving is construed by some into an evidence that Kafirs as of yore are meditating mischief; but just now it is simply the result of want, or covetousness, and not of warlike purposes. ... What we require therefore at the head of affairs in this country for the preservation of peace is a wise, cautious, unimpulsive administration.<sup>63</sup>

The 'Native question' issue had been brought into prominence, among other things, by the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly in this period. Soga showed admirable vigilance and awareness of social developments in the colony, especially with regard to how they affected Africans.<sup>64</sup> In this instance his critical eye focused on the media, which critiqued for its racist bias:

The most deplorable feature of our affairs, which I have long observed, is the tone of the public press in British Kaffraria, on native questions. It keeps up in the country a constant state of unfriendly feeling. The most groundless fiction is seized upon and proclaimed as an event '*ominous*' and the '*shadow of coming events*'. It is

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 289 - 290.

<sup>62</sup> Op. cit, p. 290.

<sup>63</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 4 June 1864, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 308.

<sup>64</sup> Soga makes reference to the Diamond discovery in the country in one of his state of the mission reports - *Missionary Record of United Presbyterian Church*, 2 January 1871.

easy to see through this thin disguise. There are interested parties who like this kind of thing, and would not regret a rupture. It is exceedingly unfair.<sup>65</sup>

Soga showed keen awareness of the role and influence of the media in reflecting on and shaping the beat of society. Thus, taking on the press he alleges that it is fanning racial tension and promoting Afro-pessimism in the country. He was, significantly, aware of the wider implications of his letters and reports. The latter were not private. Surely, other people in Scotland would be interested in gathering perspectives on South Africa from these reports and correspondence. The above piece of correspondence from Soga was too critical for Somerville to keep to himself. Thus, he took the liberty of publishing Soga's report on the role of the South African media in an Edinburgh newspaper, thereby reaching a wider audience. Chalmers reports that this publicity "gave him (Soga) an unenviable notoriety, from the free criticisms that were passed upon his temerity"<sup>66</sup> back in colonial South Africa

Soga was, however, undaunted in the task of literary protest on behalf of his compatriots. He was increasingly vocal in his criticism of the colonial exploitation of his people:

To the chains of heathen customs and practices, which hold my countrymen in bondage, there have been added others, heavier and still more destructive. I say with regret that these are the results of contact with civilization. My faith in civilization alone, if it does not follow in the wake of Christianity, is gone. The civilization of civilized men, who care nothing, and do nothing, for the moral, physical, and intellectual improvement of ignorant men in barbarous countries, with whom they come into contact, is destructive.<sup>67</sup>

Soga's racial critique was not only directed to colonial society but also against the prejudices of some European missionaries. His mission report in 1865 addressed this concern warning Somerville about "the cold-hearted missionary who pandered to colonial prejudices":

Prepare the new missionaries to beware of the hostile influence of many in the Colony against missionary work. They will meet with some persons who will bid them 'God speed', as in the mother country. Other, good people too in their own way, will shake their heads knowingly, and tell them it is all romance; that the charm will wear off when they come to know what people they have to deal with; and that it is no use teaching these natives, who are ungrateful and wicked, &c (etc.) Some may even go the length of declaring that they do not believe

<sup>65</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 4 June 1864, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, p. 309. This is particularly interesting in view of our own ongoing process of focus on racism in the media through the Human Rights Commission.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>67</sup> Soga to Rev. Henry Miller, 1863, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, p. 288; also D. Williams (ed.), *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 169 and 182.

there is one converted native at all; ... They are likely to hear all these things, and much more. Some colonial ministers, as slaves to their congregations, may also echo these statements; nay, some missionaries are even tinged with it. ... They do not like the elevation of the natives, whom they would fain keep down as men and maid-servants, and do little for them. It reflects upon their Christianity. They cannot, therefore, bear to see any one doing anything for the natives. Provided they cannot rise upon their ruin, they would let them 'go to the wall!'"<sup>68</sup>.

That his colleagues did not take kindly to the critique is seen in Chalmers' remarks that Soga's statement was "somewhat arbitrary, and such as many men in the mission field might decline to endorse," and added that Soga is "expressing *his own view*."<sup>69</sup> Surely there were many men on the other side of racialism who would endorse Soga's view.

While exploiting the tradition of literary protest and spreading awareness on crucial social issues to sympathetic audience in Europe, Soga did not ignore the local scene. He wrote a series of instructive articles and became one of the major contributors to an early Lovedale newspaper, '*Iphapha leeNdaba zaseKhaya*' (A National Newspaper) in short *Indaba* (The News), which emerged in August 1862 and lasted until February 1865. *Indaba* was part English and part isiXhosa, and it offered the first literate generation of Africans the opportunity to articulate their feelings. Further, it gives us an insight into the thinking of Soga and his literate contemporaries. Among the latter were the following notable names, all *Indaba*'s correspondents: Govan Khoboka - an interpreter;<sup>70</sup> Ntibane Mzimba - father of Mpambani;<sup>71</sup> John Muir Vimbe - one of Lovedale's first eighteen group of 1841;<sup>72</sup> S. P. Mpondo - a teacher and translator;<sup>73</sup> Gwayi Tyamzashe - first African Congregational minister;<sup>74</sup> John Mazamisa - headman and political leader;<sup>75</sup> Barnabas Sokabo - political leader;<sup>76</sup> Petrus Madikane;<sup>77</sup> Hendrik Hintsas;<sup>78</sup> Tiki Gcaleka.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 14 December 1865, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *ibid.*, pp. 312 - 313.

<sup>69</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 312 (emphasis original).

<sup>70</sup> *Indaba*, January 1863, p. 92; May 1863, p. 155.

<sup>71</sup> *Indaba*, May 1863, pp. 154-5; July 1863, pp. 186-7; February 1864, p. 299.

<sup>72</sup> *Indaba*, December 1864, pp. 454-5; January 1865, pp. 474-6.

<sup>73</sup> *Indaba*, July 1863, p. 186; May 1863, p. 351.

<sup>74</sup> *Indaba*, May 1864, p. 351.

<sup>75</sup> *Indaba*, June 1863, pp. 170-1; December 1864, p. 456.

<sup>76</sup> *Indaba*, February 1865, p. 494.

<sup>77</sup> *Indaba*, December 1862, pp. 75-6.

<sup>78</sup> *Indaba*, February 1864, pp. 104-6.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 456.

The group was multi-tribal and predominantly ex-Lovedalians. Their correspondence was deliberately in the vernacular, thus propagating isiXhosa journalism, with Soga's own article clearly set within the traditional amaXhosa cultural milieu.<sup>80</sup> A glance at the themes of their correspondence gives us an insight into the thought of the earliest literate Africans. These touched on a wide range of issues that were at the heart of traditional society like chieftainship and pre-colonial worldview on the one hand, and, on the other, they addressed themselves to the issues of European modernisation like education and industrialisation. Thus the earliest African elite was concerned with building bridges between their African heritage and the European Christendom. Through this they began to forge a new national identity comprising elements of both. The role of education in all of this cannot be overemphasized, for it enabled them to develop uniform aspirations, values, outlooks and desires across ethnic frontiers. This made the language and reality of African nationalism possible. It is this pioneer African Christian elite that laid basis for the fact that African Christianity could not be separated from social and political issues.

In an emotional article welcoming the advent of *Indaba* in August 1862 Soga, writing in the vernacular, presented a positive appreciation of the African cultural heritage. He presented the amaXhosa as having an 'essential nature' which included the art of conversation, a sense of humour, a gesture of hospitality, and the weakness of exaggeration:

Uthi kanene namhla sizelwe yinkqo yelasekhaya na iphepha leendaba? Uthi namhla ziza kungena ezindlwini zethu na iindaba? Into emnandi, usitsho njalo akuyivanga! Thina maXhosa siluhlanga oluthanda kunene ukuncokola, nokuncokolelana. Ukuhlala kakuhle emhlabeni thina kukuva iindaba. Uthi akufika emzini umfo onazo, umfo oncokolayo, aphekelwe ngende imbiza; kube kusithiwa ke maze adle ahlukhe, buthi ubumnandi besisu buye kuvula imfiziyo, athi onke amakhwiniba abengaphakathi afe. ... Sinjalo ke, thina maXhosa. Nawe, mfondini weendaba, ube ungaze uyibone into, uhambele ekhaya kwaXhosa. Kube kungathi, kuvakele ukuba uyindoda enamazwi, akungunge onke awakowethu, ithi imiqo yezangcozi, nemixhaxha, nemivubo, ukhohlane nayo loo mpahla. Ndithi ke kumnandi namhla; kuba lisiza nje elo phepha lakho sizelwa lincoko. Ayephi na awakowethu? Wuhlabe ube banzi, alingunge elo ncoko, uthi, "Nantso ke into yenu, mathanda zindaba!"<sup>81</sup>

So we are to have a national newspaper! The news will come right inside our huts. This is really welcome news. We Xhosas are a race which enjoys conversation. The sense of well-being among us is to hear something new. When a man who has things to relate comes to a home a meal is cooked in a tall pot because the people

<sup>80</sup> J. J. R. Jolobe translated Soga's article in *Indaba*, see J. J. R. Jolobe Papers, ACC 123, No. 10.3.3.1-7, Documentation Centre for African Studies, University of South Africa; also PR 2458, pp. 151 - 153, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>81</sup> *Indaba*, August 1862; W. G. Bennie (ed.), *Imibengo* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1935), pp. 28 - 29.

want him to eat to his satisfaction so that the happiness which is the result of a good meal will open his heart and the sore parts will heal. ... That is the essential nature of the Xhosa people. You too Mr. Editor, will confirm this opinion the day you visit our homes in the rural areas. Once our people realise you are a man of words, a conversationalist, the tribesman will surround you. Stiff pumpkin and pit-corn porridge, a pumpkin and maize dish, a mixture of sour milk and broken bread will be placed before you to eat to your fill. So I anticipate great happiness from the publication of the newspaper. We shall be having a visitor who will converse with us very agreeably. Where are our fellow-tribesman? Sound the horn and invite our people to swarm round him. Say to them, 'Here you are! You lovers of conversation'.

This is a marvelous passage, not only for its revelation of Soga's sentiments of traditional loyalty, but also, in de Kock's words, "in view of its *textual* celebration of *oral* culture."<sup>82</sup> This is continued into the next extract where Soga is lyrical in his discussion of aspects of history, nationality, and culture of which he saw himself as part:

Enye indawo ekuyole ngayo, ziza kungena ekhaya nje namhla iindaba, asuke amaxokana onke aphelele phezu kwethu. Siginyiswa iintwana zonke ngamahamba-nandaba. Umzi ke wonakele ngale ndawo. Singabantu abasileyo. La akowethu, ndikuxelele mfondini weendaba, ngamabandla axoka agqibele. ... Sizelwa ziindaba nje namhla, sizelwa yinene. Into esiya kuyiva ngeendlebe zethu, siyibone ngamehlo, iya kuba yiyo. Usigxothela ulwimi namhla. Kumnandi ke, siyabulela. ... Ziphi na izisele, ziphi na iintlanti, ziphi na iityeya, ziphi na iingxowa, iphi na imibhinqo, yeembali, neendaba namavo ohlanga lwamaXhosa nolwamaMfengu? Ndithi ke, hayi ke namhla! Kuba kwelo phepha lendaba ngathi ndibona isitya esihle sokulondoloza iimbali, neendaba, namavo asekhaya. Izenzo zohlanga zingaphezu kweenkomo, nemali, nokudla. Ubefanele ukuthi, oya kulizuzela elophelaphela, amane ukuwalondoloza amaphepha ngamaphepha, aze athi akwanela awase kubabophi beencwadi, enziwe imiqulu ngemiqulu, zize ke ezo ncwadi zihlale zisisitya esibekelwe usapho ilifa lamavo. Kulungile namhla! Lingwevu zakowethu nezaseMbo mazizityande izisu; ihlanzelwe phandle yonke into. Ithi into eyayiyintsomi ivele, ithi into eyayilibali, nelivo lakudala, ivele; ithi into eyakha yabonwa, yaviwa, yenziwa, ilisiko lohlanga, iphume, iye kweso sitya sasekhaya namhla, iye kubekwa khona. Besingenazizwe na kudala? Iphi na imbali yazo, yamasiko azo amabi namahle? Besingenazinkosi na? Amavo ezo nkosi zohlanga aphi na? Alele emangcwabeni ndawonye nazo na? Akukho unakho na ukuvumbulula into kuloo mangcwaba? Bekungekho zimbongi na kudala? Bezibonga obani na? Akukho bangakhe bathabathe nendawo na kobo buciko? Kudala bekungathakathwa na? Loo magqwira, amagama awo ibe ingobani na? Akukho kuthiwa ambelwa na? Akukho banokwazi izinto ezinjalo na, ezibe zingamasiko esizwe? Bekungaliwa madabi na kudala? Alwelwaphi na loo madabi? Babengobani na abafu abakhaliphileyo? Ziphi na izindwe ezibe zithwalwa yimpi yakomkhulu? Iphi na imbali yamagora abethwala eso sivatho sihle kunene? Bekungazingelwa na kudala? Zabe zitheni na izifuba zeempofu nezeenyathi, le nto bezidliwa lomkhulu kodwa? Bayephi na abantu, bavuse la mavo angaka ohlanga? Mabavuswe oNgconde, noTogu, noTshiwo, noPhalo, noRarabe, noMlawu, noNgqika, noNdlambe. Mayivuke imishologu yohlanga lwamaXhosa nolwamaMfengu, ize kusishiya nelifa elikhulu lamavo. Loo mavo ke makaze kubekwa kwesi sitya seendaba zasekhaya.<sup>83</sup>

(One advantage we shall reap with the coming of this journal is that we will be confident that the people now will get the truth about the affairs of the nation. As people who are always hungry for news often we find ourselves dupes of deceivers under the guise of relating genuine facts. We are fed with half-truths by travelers who pass near our areas. We are unreliable people Mr. Editor, to speak confidentially, because we like to exaggerate. ... Today with your newspaper you are initiating an enterprise for banning falsehood. So we are pleased and grateful. ... What are the corn-pits, the cattle kraal, the boxes and the bags? What are the skin skirts' pockets, and the banks for the stories and fables, the legends, customs and history of the Xhosa (sic) people and Fingo (sic) people? This is a challenge, for I envisage in this newspaper a beautiful vessel for

<sup>82</sup> L. de Kock, *Civilising Barbarians*, op. cit, p. 180.

<sup>83</sup> *Indaba*, August 1862; W. G. Bennie (ed.), *Imibengo*, op. cit, pp. 29 - 30.

preserving the stories, fables, legends, customs, anecdotes and history of the tribes. The activities of a nation are more than cattle, money or food. A subscriber to the journal should preserve the copies of successive editions of *Iindaba* and at the end of the year make a bound volume of them. These annual volumes in course of time will become a mine of information and wisdom which will be a precious inheritance for generations of growing children. All is well today. Our veterans of the Xhosa (sic) and Embo (sic) people must disgorge all they know. Everything must be imparted to the nation as a whole. Fables must be retold; what was history or legend should be recounted. What has been preserved as tradition should be related. Whatever was seen, heard or done under the requirements of custom should be brought to light and placed on the national table to be sifted for preservation. Were there not several tribes before? Where is the record of their history and customs good or bad? Had we no chiefs in days gone by? Where are the anecdotes of their periods? Were these things buried with them in their graves? Is there no one to unearth these things from the graves? Were there no national poets in the days of yore? Whose praises did they sing? Is there no one to emulate this eloquence? In the olden days did not some people bewitch others? What were the names of the men of magic? Is it not rumoured that some were tortured severely and cruelly? Are there no people who have an idea of matters of this nature which happened under the cloak of custom. Are there no battles which were fought and who were the heroes? What feathers were worn by the royal regiments? Are there no anecdotes connected with the brave men who wore decorations. Were there no hunting expeditions in those far-off days and why were the breasts of the eland and the buffalo eaten only by those at the great place? We should revive and bring to the light all this great wealth of information. Let us bring to life our ancestors; Ngconde, Togu, Tshiwo, Phalo, Rharhabe, Mlawu, Ngqika and Ndlambe. Let us resurrect our ancestral fore-bears who bequeathed to us a rich heritage. All anecdotes connected with the life of the nation should be brought to this big corn-pit, our national newspaper, *Iindaba* (The News).

The evoking of amaXhosa chiefs, particularly, must have aroused profound nationalist memories among his audience. As a child of the new era, Soga was aware of the value of literary material and literature in preserving and handing on a nation's heritage. His intention with the accumulation of literary sources was to benefit the posterity, "my object is simply to preserve anything of interest that relates to our people, and when after generations perhaps see what I have written they will be able to say, 'ah! thus and thus did our forefathers.'"<sup>84</sup>

Soga confirmed this conviction about creating an awareness in the younger generations to his own children through 'The Inheritance of my Children'. This was a small note-book of sixty-two short pithy maxims for the orientation of his children, which imparted to them on the eve of their departure for education in Scotland. In this material, Soga placed himself squarely on the side of Africans, and urged his children to do likewise when faced with this choice. Furthermore, not only were they to cultivate this Afrocentric option within themselves but also to infuse it in other fellow Africans as well. It is worth citing Soga in full:

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<sup>84</sup> Soga's journal entry, 16 January 1861, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 239.

Among some white men there is a prejudice against black men; the prejudice is simply and solely on account of colour. For your own sakes never appear ashamed that your father was a Kafir, and that you inherit some African blood. It is every whit as good and as pure as that which flows in the veins of my fairer brethren. ...I have also myself seen the desire of half-coloured people to be considered altogether white. You will ever cherish the memory of your mother as that of an upright, conscientious, thrifty, Christian Scotchwoman. You will ever be thankful for your connection by this tie to the white race. But if you wish to gain credit for yourselves - if you do not wish to feel the taunt of men, which you sometimes may be made to feel - *take your place* in the world as *coloured*, not as *white* men; as *Kafirs*, not as *Englishmen*. You will be more thought of for this by all good and wise people, than for the other. ... As men of colour, live for the elevation of your degraded, despised, down-trodden people. My advice to all coloured people would be: Assist one another, patronize talent in one another, prefer one another's business, shops, &c, just for the reason that it is better to prefer and elevate kindred and countrymen before all others. ...Should Providence make you prosperous in life, cultivate the habit of employing more of your own race, than of any other, by way of elevating them. For this purpose prefer them to all others - I mean all black people.<sup>85</sup>

This is a classic text for successive generations of modern Africans. It goes straight to the heart of identity issues. Anticipating an increasing racial polarisation and social stratification in the country Soga offered his own way of dealing with such realities. He told his children to value their African integrity, build African solidarity, and maintain a patriotic sense. This would result in a self-reliant African community which would provide an alternative to colonial society. Thus Soga sought to give content to his view of African renaissance. These are the foundations of African nationhood as espoused by Soga and their future implications cannot be overemphasized.

That all this was a crucial matter for Tiyo Soga is seen in the two follow-up letters to his boys in Scotland reminding them of the need to follow this advice. To William Anderson, the eldest son, he directed the responsibility to implement the counsel: "I hope, Willie, you have not forgotten, when you are all alone, now and again, to read from the book I have written for you and them. Do not make light of it. Read it often together, and God's blessing will be upon you."<sup>86</sup> To emphasize the point Soga wrote again six months later to John Henderson, the second son, on the same subject: "I was much pleased to find that you remembered what I said to you when we parted. Try to keep it along in remembrance, my dear boy."<sup>87</sup> In his last correspondence to his children in 1871, Soga

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<sup>85</sup> 'The Inheritance of my Children' *ibid.*, pp. 430, 433 and 434 (emphasis original).

<sup>86</sup> Tiyo Soga to William Anderson Soga, 8 June 1870, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, p. 425.

<sup>87</sup> Tiyo Soga to John Henderson Soga, 28 December 1870, *ibid.*, p. 426.

reminded them that they are "the children of a poor missionary."<sup>88</sup> However, 'The Inheritance' was the real treasure he could endow to his posterity.

### LITERARY CONTRIBUTION

Tiyo Soga had a deep love for cultural-history and a passion for language and literature. Although he was exposed to other English literature in Glasgow, like Shakespeare, Milton and Tennyson, it was "'The Pilgrim's Progress' (that) was Tiyo's constant companion during his academic career."<sup>89</sup> This was going to be a lasting companionship. Soga firmly established his literary ability with his historic translation of the first part of John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" entitled *uHambo lomHambi*. The translation work into isiXhosa, which Soga had actually begun during his student days, was accomplished with a profound sense of satisfaction on 21 November 1866 at "quarter past nine o'clock, night - finished, through the goodness of Almighty God, the translation of the first part of Pilgrim's Progress, my fingers aching with writing."<sup>90</sup>

The book was published by the Lovedale Press, and appropriately dedicated to his old mentor, who had been the first person to expose Tiyo to the rich English literary heritage:

TO  
THE REV. WILLIAM GOVAN,  
THE FOUNDER AND SUPERINTENDENT  
OF THE  
LOVEDALE FREE CHURCH MISSIONARY INSTITUTION  
ONE OF THE LONG TRIED, UNWEARYING, CONSTANT FRIENDS  
AND BENEFACTORS OF THE  
NATIVE RACES OF SOUTH AFRICA  
THIS TRANSLATION INTO THE KAFFIR LANGUAGE OF  
JOHN BUNYAN'S RENOWNED WORK  
IS DEDICATED  
WITH MUCH AFFECTION, ESTEEM, AND ADMIRATION  
BY HIS FRIEND AND PUPIL

TIYO SOGA<sup>91</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Op. cit, p. 460.

<sup>89</sup> Op. cit, p. 75.

<sup>90</sup> Op. cit, p. 340.

<sup>91</sup> T. Soga, *UHambo lomHambi* (The Pilgrims' Progress: From this World To the World To Come by John Bunyan), Translation, Part 1, (Lovedale: Lovedale Institution Press, 1868), p. 6. We have maintained Soga's formatting style.

In John Bunyan, Tiyo saw "umfundisi, isicaka sika Tixo senene,"<sup>92</sup> whom he probably sought to emulate. Soga's fascination with Bunyan's work was due to the latter's convincing depiction of the struggles of a Christian, in which Soga saw parallels not only with his own life but with that of Africans in Kaffraria generally. Thus, he wanted to communicate to the latter Bunyan's major theme that "umntu noko axakekileyo, makangafumane abuncame ubomi bakhe; makawenze amazwembe-zwembe."<sup>93</sup> This must have been a potent message to amaXhosa-Africans in the context of the 1860's. That Soga had, indeed, undertaken the translation for the benefit of his compatriots is clearly shown in the introduction:

Makowethu! Nantso incwadi, kaniyihlole. Ibalisa ngoMhambi ohamba indlela abanga abaninzi benu bangayihamba. Kanimpelekelele ke, nicoto-cotozise ngokufundana kwenu - nihambe nisima, ninqumama; nibe nipulapula into azitetayo, nanibalela zona; nide nisuke niye kumngenisa apo waya wangena kona, ekupeleni kolo luhambo lwake. Incwadi esenze amalinga okuniguqulela, kwi ncwadi ezibalwe ngabantu, yona inganeno kwaleyo iliLizwi likaTixo - Izibalo Ezingcwele.<sup>94</sup>

Fellow countrymen! Here is a book, explore it. It tells about a Pilgrim who undertakes a journey that many of you would like to take. Accompany him, take time to read what he says - pause where necessary, and listen to what he is saying and writing to you, until you reach his destination. This is our attempt at the translation of one of the best books by any human, which is second only to the Word of God - the Bible. (My own translation)

Thus, for Soga the value of the Pilgrim's Progress was next to that of the bible. It served as a necessary piece of vernacular literature in Christian mission. Indeed, some missionaries read portions of *uHambo loMhambi* to their congregants at their weekly services, and lectured on it as well, according to Williams.<sup>95</sup> The African Christian community was exhorted to accompany, listen to, pause, walk slowly, until they arrived with the Pilgrim at the destination of their faith. Soga did this by exploiting the powerful imagery of the original book, which was meaningful to a traditional African mindset, impacting directly on that worldview. The implications thereof are drawn out by Khabela, "even the Red Blanketed ones began to understand traditional gods in the light of the images in *Uhambo Lomhambi* such as *Sifubasibanzi* (the Broad Chested One),

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 7 - A minister, a faithful servant of God.

<sup>93</sup> *UGxuluwe NabaThwa* ('Gxuluwe and the Bushmen'), in (ed.) W. G. Bennie, *Imibengo*, op. cit, p. 36 - Even though s/he is in a tight corner, a person should not give up her/his life cheaply; s/he should try every conceivable plan to survive.

<sup>94</sup> T. Soga, *Uhambo Lomhambi*, op. cit, Intshayelelo, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 107.

*UdaliDiphu* (the Maker of the Deep) and *Napakade* (the Everlasting One)."<sup>96</sup> Similarly Williams, "Bunyan's characters were rendered in 'euphonious Kafir', such as Sir Harry Greedy, *Bawela*, and Worldly Wiseman, *Sazingazwe*."<sup>97</sup> Chalmers spoke for many when he perceived the translation as a rich legacy for the amaXhosa people.<sup>98</sup> Almost a century later Gqubule reiterated the literary value of *uHambo lomHambi* for isiXhosa: "this peerless translation has had almost as great an influence on the Xhosa language as the Authorized Version of the Bible upon English."<sup>99</sup>

That *uHambo lomHambi* was regarded as a standard work in isiXhosa is attested by its lasting power. A second edition of the book appeared in 1875, four years after Soga's untimely death, and further editions in 1889 and 1946. The most recent edition appeared exactly one hundred years later in 1975. They were all published by the Lovedale Press. The translation became the standard work to be emulated by subsequent African writers and translators. Brian Willan, Sol Tshekisho Plaatjie's biographer, makes the comparison with the latter's *Diphosho-phosho*,<sup>100</sup> and considered the two translations to be "veritable treasure-houses of the linguistic riches of their respective languages," showing "to a remarkable extent their authors' felicity for grasping not merely the language but the thought of the European originals and expressing that thought in idiomatic and vigorous prose."<sup>101</sup> Further still, according to Ramoshoana, these two classic translations finally put to rest the misconception that European writers' language and ideals are above the Africans' intellectual scope and, therefore, defy translation into the African languages. European and African languages, notions and outlook do not differ so irreconcilably that Africans cannot penetrate the mysteries of European abstract conception, concludes

<sup>96</sup> M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 114.

<sup>97</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, ibid., p. 107; J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 342f.

<sup>98</sup> J. A. C. (Chalmers), 'Tiyo Soga: Minister', in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 51.

<sup>99</sup> T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', op. cit, p. 32.

<sup>100</sup> This was the title of Sol. Tshekisho Plaatjie's translation of William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*, which was published by the Morija Mission Press in July 1930.

<sup>101</sup> G. P. Lestrade cited in B. Willan, *Sol Plaatjie: A Biography* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), p. 330.

Ramoshoana.<sup>102</sup> Such was the potent quality of Soga's translation - it was an impeccable translation which defied cultural boundaries and racial stereotypes, and was accordingly widely acknowledged and praised.<sup>103</sup>

Tiyo Soga himself was conscious of the potentially enriching possibilities of his translation. He deliberately wanted to contribute to the literary heritage of amaXhosa people, on the one hand, and the empowerment of amaXhosa-Christians, on the other. With regard to the former, Soga acknowledged the challenges pertaining to the translation task, and wrote of his own method in this process.<sup>104</sup> He argues that the common mistake with translations is either to be too literal or too free. In his view, "the former method is apt to cramp the capabilities of the language into which the translation is made, while the latter is apt to lead to unwarrantable liberties being taken with the author's modes of thought and expression."<sup>105</sup> Soga, in his own words, strove to avoid both of these extremes, allowing his readers to judge whether he was successful or not. Judging by the permanent value of his work, he seems to have been remarkably successful. Speaking in 1871 Laing was prophetic in his tribute: "his translation of the Pilgrim's Progress into his native Kafir, will remain a monument of his exquisite skill in that language, and will perpetuate his name with gratitude to generations yet unborn."<sup>106</sup>

With regard to amaXhosa-Christian empowerment, Soga sought to create an isiXhosa-Christian vocabulary and provide vernacular resources thereby deepening and enriching isiXhosa-Christianity. He even appended a short list of theological terms used in 'Pilgrim's Progress' at the end of the book translated into isiXhosa.<sup>107</sup> In Soga's words, the intention was that with these terms, "Kafir scholars should consider, with the view of fixing their signification"<sup>108</sup> for isiXhosa Christianity. Thus, Soga knew precisely what he was doing. Being aware of the contestation of

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 331.

<sup>103</sup> See J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 341f.; D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 107.

<sup>104</sup> Tiyo Soga, *Uhambo Lomhabi*, op. cit, preface to the first edition, p. 12.

<sup>105</sup> Op. cit, p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> Laing's Lovedale Jubilee address, 15 November 1871, cited in W. Govan, *Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev. James Laing*, op. cit, p. 353.

<sup>107</sup> Tiyo Soga, *Uhambo Lomhabi*, op. cit, pp. 185 - 187.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

Christian concepts and meaning in each context, he did not fix the meaning of the terms for all time. Thus Soga did not seek to cramp the creativity of successive Xhosa-Christian theologians, and the dynamism of isiXhosa. The translation was deliberately intended to cater for future needs, so that each generation of Xhosa-Christians could carve out a new meaning for themselves. The book would have a special place then in the annals of Xhosa Christianity. Which may be why, on receiving a copy of the 1946 edition Shepherd, manager of the Lovedale Press, remarked: "I do not know of any other book which will have a more honoured place in the Lovedale museum."<sup>109</sup> That honour has not been surpassed.

Soga's literary achievements, which also included translation of scripture, numerous contributions of articles to newspapers and magazine, etc. were acknowledged when he was recommended by his Church as their nominee to represent them at the Board of Translators in 1868,<sup>110</sup> two years after finishing his *uHambo lomHambi* translation. Soga was very keen on this new task, and expressed the same to Dr. Somerville, "the most important part of my missionary work is yet to be told: the translation of the Word of God into Kafir."<sup>111</sup> The first full edition of the isiXhosa bible appeared in 1865, the Appleyard version.<sup>112</sup> This version did not meet with wide ecumenical approval. Consequently, at an annual Missionary Conference held that year Soga was "requested to prepare a paper to read at the (next missionary) Conference, on this new and *improved* translation, as it was assumed to be."<sup>113</sup>

However, Soga could not attend the next Missionary Conference held in January 1866 due to ill health. But he had prepared the paper as requested, and this was duly presented by "a friend" on his behalf. Soga showed in the paper, with general approval it seems, that "the translation

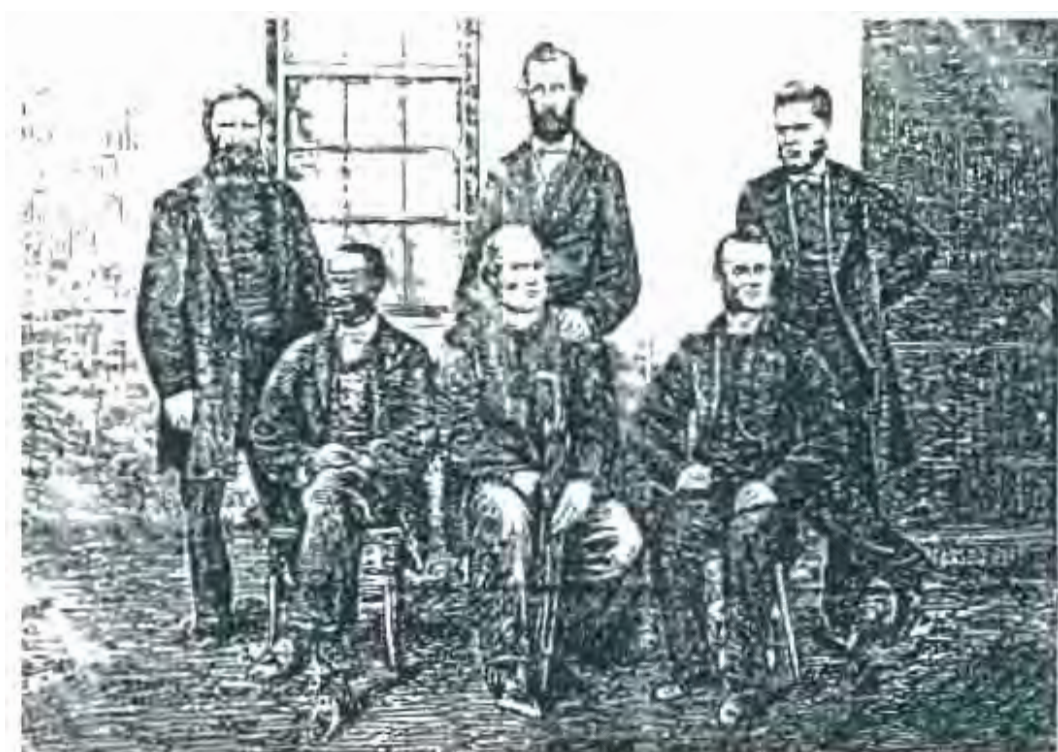
<sup>109</sup> Shepherd to Wood, 12 February 1946, MS 9148, *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> The Board was composed of a representative from each of the seven denominations who had missions to the Africans in the Eastern Cape at the time. Their express task was the revision of the Xhosa Bible starting with the Gospels - J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, p. 361.

<sup>111</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, p. 362

<sup>112</sup> W. Govan, *Memorials of the Missionary Career of the Rev James Laing*, *op. cit.*, p. 264. John W. Appleyard was a Wesleyan missionary at Mt. Coke.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265 (emphasis original).



Mr. Harriet    Mr. ...    Mr. ...    Mr. ...    Mr. ...    Mr. ...  
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(Appleyard's version) was far from satisfactory."<sup>114</sup> The Conference resolved to begin the process of revision of this version. Consensus was sought from all missionary societies in the Eastern Cape after the Conference for an endorsement of this decision. The responses seem to have been positive. Even Appleyard eventually gave his approval for "a thorough revision of the Kafir Bible" as suggested.<sup>115</sup> Subsequently, a fully ecumenical Board of Translators was established, constituted of members appointed by each of the following missionary bodies: the LMS, the Moravians, the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission, the Wesleyans, the Berlin Missionary Society, and the Episcopalians. It was hoped that their work would result in a translation that would be received by all "as truly the *authorized* version of the Kafir Bible."<sup>116</sup> Regrettably, "Messrs. Appleyard and Soga, who may be described as the most prominent, and the most important, members of the Board"<sup>117</sup> both died before the new revision appeared.

Arguably then, it was Tiyo Soga who began the process of the establishment of a fully authorized and ecumenical isiXhosa bible through his January 1866 Missionary Conference paper. His views gave rise to the quest for a more acceptable translation. His exquisite translation skills were recognised as he was given the critical task, together with Bryce Ross who had editorial and publication skills, for "the forming of the text, *that is* the composition into Kaffir", after ascertaining the meaning of the original Greek.<sup>118</sup> In this task, he says of himself and Bryce Ross, "we may be considered inexorable."<sup>119</sup> That he was concerned about the quality of the product shows through his preference for translation from Greek rather than English. Thus, his study of Classics under Govan at Lovedale was bearing relevant fruit. Of his special task with Bryce Ross he observed to the credit of the isiXhosa language, "we often find that the Kafir idiom comes nearer to the Greek than the English; and this we must preserve, although we may

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<sup>114</sup> Op. cit, p. 266.

<sup>115</sup> Op. cit, p. 267.

<sup>116</sup> Op. cit, p. 268 (emphasis original).

<sup>117</sup> Op. cit, p. 268 - 269; J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, p. 366.

<sup>118</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, Tiyo Soga, op. cit, pp. 363 - 364.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 365.

now and then be dragged down towards the English idiom."<sup>120</sup> Govan, and not Stewart, was right after-all!

Soga's love for his linguistical heritage is seen in his uncompromisingly high standard for the task at hand:

On this matter (of the forming of the text) we are very particular, I may almost say *determined*, to allow nothing but what is pure and idiomatic into our future Kafir version. I have no faith in a translation into any foreign language, which has been the work of *one* translator; and I have no faith if that translation has been made by a man who acquired the language, into which he translates, after he was 17 years of age. There may, of course, be men of great mental endowments and capabilities; but no man can acquire such a thorough knowledge of a foreign language, after he is 17 years of age, as to know it better than those to whom it is their vernacular. I began the study of English when I was 15 years old, and any man who would say that I am more competent to give a pure version of the English Bible for the English people than an English-born man, commits a great mistake. Were I to claim a perfect knowledge of the English language, I would be considered by English people to be beside myself, and they would judge rightly.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, Soga spoke authoritatively from personal experience. The extract makes indirect reference to Appleyard's version, which was almost a one-man translation.<sup>122</sup> It contains obvious innuendoes about some of his colleagues' stereotypical and presumptuous attitudes. For Soga, the isiXhosa bible required as strict linguistic applications as the English version. The best judges of these criteria would be the indigenous people themselves, and not the isiXhosa second language speakers. Also, nobody could make pretensions about the mastery of a second language despite their intellectual acumen. Thus, Soga sought to protect the integrity of the translation and to safeguard his linguistical primacy and the cultural territory of his people. He was vocally satisfied with the results of the proposed new translation, as he himself, tongue in cheek, described it to his colleagues, "the Kafir of our present version is *Saxon* Kafir, as you English people say of your purest writings."<sup>123</sup> Although he did not live to see the final publication and circulation of the four gospels, as we have indicated, when they came out in 1874 Soga viewed his participation in this venture as having been "the most important work,"<sup>124</sup> of his career.

<sup>120</sup> Op. cit, p. 365.

<sup>121</sup> Soga to Dr. Anderson, op. cit, p. 364.

<sup>122</sup> Appleyard had single-handedly translated the New Testament in 1854, and he and Kropf completed the Old Testament in 1857. Kropf was a German missionary of the Berlin Missionary Society.

<sup>123</sup> Cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 365.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.



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To sum up, we have argued about Soga's appreciation of Xhosa-African history and culture. We have also pointed out his critical role in the preservation of this cultural heritage and the development of isiXhosa-Christian resources through his literary genius. Notwithstanding his hierarchical rhetoric, let Chalmers have the last word regarding the merit, thus far, of Soga's literary responses:

Such were some of Tiyo Soga's efforts to influence his countrymen for good; and such were some of his literary labours on their behalf. What greater work can any man achieve, than to assist a fellow-mortal to see in the four Gospels, and in the Pilgrim's Progress, how he may 'rise on stepping-stones to higher things?' If Tiyo Soga has, through the press, done such work, it cannot be gauged by any human standard, as the day of the Lord *alone* shall disclose the full results.<sup>125</sup>

### SONGS OF PROTEST

Tiyo Soga composed and wrote some of the best hymns in the *Rhabe* tradition, following in the footsteps of Ntsikana, who composed, arguably, the most popular hymn in the history of Xhosa-Christianity. He is rightly revered as the father of Xhosa-Christian music. However, Ntsikana cannot be placed within the *Rhabe* tradition, or even the LMS tradition to which he may owe the beginnings of his Christian faith through the ministry of van der Kemp. He defies such denominational categorization through his being a transitional figure, as the early 1820's were a period of great transition in the amaXhosa history. Thus, unlike Soga, he was not constrained by denominational doctrines and allegiances. With Tiyo Soga, Ntsikana's legacy of vernacularisation through music was revived and confirmed, but now within a more specific theological tradition.

Soga's hymn-writing career took off at Uniondale in the period between 1849 and 1851, during his first home visit from Scotland. Williams argues that Soga was inspired to write vernacular hymns by the missionary tradition initiated by John Bennie at Lovedale in the 1820's. Bennie has the highest number of hymns by a single author in the *Rhabe* Hymnbook (*Incwadi yamaculo aseRabe*), with fifty-one hymns to his credit. Aiming at meeting the increasing need for

vernacular church hymnody Bennie published a small hymnbook in 1839, which was later enlarged in 1841.<sup>126</sup> Another isiXhosa hymnbook was published in 1850, which included a few of Soga's first hymns. However, even this hymnbook did not serve the needs of native congregations. Therefore, Soga initiated a move to revise and compile a new hymnbook for the African Church in the late 1860's. This initiative resulted in the publication of the hymnbook, *Incwadi yamaCulo okuvunywa, yezikolo zikaKristu, ezisemaXhoseni* (A Book of Hymns to be sung in Christian Schools in Kafirland) in 1873 by the Lovedale Press. It was the first isiXhosa hymnbook with a complete collection of hymns extant in isiXhosa. Soga contributed ten original hymns.

This hymnbook was also revised in 1929 as the present isiXhosa Presbyterian Hymnbook under the title *Incwadi yamaculo esiXhosa* (isiXhosa Hymn Book). Soga bequeathed 26 hymns altogether to this hymnbook, the largest number of hymns by a Xhosa-Christian. Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn', which has remained in its original traditional setting even after being reduced to writing, is the opening hymn. Regrettably, Soga reported, "all the hymns admitted perhaps with the exception of three or four favourites of the Natives - are in accordance with the (European) laws of versification."<sup>127</sup> Most of his hymns were adapted to the measure of English tunes, resulting in losing the accentuation when the words are spoken. He was far more successful when he "disregarded this necessary evil, and sought rather to preserve the natural flow and rhythm of the Kafir language."<sup>128</sup> Chalmers further noted that Soga's "hymns are not mere translations," but show outstanding originality and natural flow.<sup>129</sup> Coming from Chalmers, these are significant remarks indeed. Soga's natural creativity and vernacular linguistical acumen were fully realized when he wrote in the isiXhosa language.

Tiyo Soga's hymns encompassed a variety of themes and subjects. To mention just a few : he wrote hymns on creation (hymn 3), on scripture (hymns 22, 122, 127, 136), on the advent of Christ (39), on Christ's death (50, 57), on the gift of Christ (92, 159, 229), on Christian

<sup>125</sup> Op. cit, p. 366.

<sup>126</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 110 - 111.

<sup>127</sup> Cited in D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 111.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 358.

discipleship (98, 206, 230), on death and dying (232), about heaven (246), prayer for the nation (278, 279, 282), for the rain (316), for the new year (324) and sacramental hymns (300, 301).<sup>130</sup> Khabela argues that the meaning of Soga's hymns cannot be understood independently of the amaXhosa milieu of the time, and that "the underlying message in all Tiyo Soga's hymns is 'the promise of God.'"<sup>131</sup> Khabela is correct with regard to his first assertion but too general with regard to the second. The theme of Soga's hymns cannot be placed entirely within the framework of what he calls "Calvin's theology of the Holy Communion."<sup>132</sup> Although Soga is admittedly constrained by the Reformed theological tradition and functions with its categories, he also allowed for free expression of his African milieu and its categories. The theme of some of his popular hymns emerged out of the local context which occasioned their composition.

Soga's best known and most popular hymn is *Lizalis' idinga lakho Thixo, Nkosi yenyanoiso* (Fulfil Thy promise God, Lord of truth). Gqubule has rightly dubbed this great hymn as "almost a national anthem."<sup>133</sup> It was during the intense periods of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa that *Lizalise* proved its socio-political relevance. It was found by countless African Christians and activists alike to be a source of inspiration and a statement of defiance of the *status quo*. In it both individuals and groups found a genuine and appropriate expression of their aspiration and prayer for liberation to God. The hymn was significantly sung at the inaugural conference of the South African Native National Congress (later the African National Congress) in 1912.<sup>134</sup> It was also sung at the opening of the Faith Community Hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in East London in November 1997.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, p. 358.

<sup>130</sup> I compiled these statistics from the present isiXhosa Presbyterian Hymnbook, *Incwadi Yamaculo AmaXhosa*.

<sup>131</sup> M. G. Khabela, *The Struggle of the Gods*, op. cit, p. 119.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

<sup>133</sup> T. S. N. Gqubule, 'An Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', op. cit, p. 32.

<sup>134</sup> P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912 - 1952* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1970), p. 35.

<sup>135</sup> Cf. J. Cochrane, J. de Gruchy & S. Martin (eds.), *Facing the Truth: South African faith communities and the Truth & Reconciliation Commission* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1999).

Due to its lasting usefulness and relevance the hymn was adopted by many African denominations in South Africa, and is to be found in their hymnbooks sometimes with slight variations. Thus, it has become ecumenical in its appeal and is generally sung on special Christian occasions as a sort of African Christian national anthem. *Lizalis' idinga lakho* has truly become a theological summary of Soga's faith and commitment. This is Soga's legacy, which obviously contributed to the Ethiopian spirit of the 1880's. Similarly, it also laid the foundation for the development of African nationalism during the same era, of which Mzimba was part. These provide, for us, then the basis of Williams' assertion that "Black nationalism in South Africa was thus born of the Christian church."<sup>136</sup> It is thus for his literary response and contribution, in the form of translation and composition that Soga is best acknowledged. The great respect and admiration that is accorded to his hymns in the African Church confirm that this is so. Soga is thus only second to Ntsikana in this regard, and there is significantly none to equal his feat in succeeding African Christian generations even though it was Enoch Sontonga who later wrote the hymn that has since become the national anthem in most of the Southern African countries.

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<sup>136</sup> D. Williams, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 128.



Mpambani Mzimba as a young man

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### MPAMBANI MZIMBA: CHRISTIAN AND AFRICAN NATIONALIST

#### EARLY FORMATION

Mpambani<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah Mzimba was born about 1849 or 1850 according to his biography, which does not give an exact date.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly puzzling, considering that his own son wrote it. Also, it is inexplicable in view of the fact that Mpambani's parents were literate. Further complicating the issue is a letter by Mpambani himself stating a different date.<sup>3</sup> In the letter Mpambani seems to be responding to an inquiry about his resume, in which he states categorically, "I was born in June, in the year 1848, about the time the War of 1846 ended which lasted for nearly two years."<sup>4</sup> With regard to the meaning of his name he states:

The custom generally of Fingoes (sic) in giving their children names is to take it from a certain event connected with the time and place. The circumstances my name was derived from, was the state of the people at the time. They had no proper place for residence, as it was immediately after the war, and were wandering about; some going to their old places, and others seeking for new ones, and by so doing passing each other. *Pambanani*, means pass each other, *ukupambana*, to pass, to differ. The former meaning is actually the one my name is from. This name among the Fingoes (sic) is very common, and they have attributed various meanings to it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is generally written as *Pambani* in most of the English literature. Even the biography by his own son, perpetuates this stereotypical Anglicization of the name. Mpambani Mzimba himself habitually referred to himself as P.J. Mzimba in his correspondences, e.g. MS 8491, 8496 and 9098, Cory Library, Rhodes University. However, we prefer to retain the name in its original isiXhosa shape and meaning. The name literally means 'at crossroads' - see the quote for fn. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Mzimba's biography does not state the actual year of his birth. An estimation is made between these two years - See Livingstone Ntibane Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 2. Cf. J. M. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa, 1883 - 1916* (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup> There is no doubt regarding the authenticity of the letter, although there is no addressee - 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, Rhodes University. We shall count his years from this date.

<sup>4</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, *ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit*

He was born at Ngqakayi location, on the outskirts of Lovedale, which according to Mzimba "is about 20 miles South of Alice."<sup>6</sup> He was the first-born child of Ntibane, his father, and maDlomo, his mother. His family belonged to the amaMfengu-Xhosa clan.<sup>7</sup> This was to become significant in Mzimba's life later on. His father Ntibane was born from the amaMfengu-Xhosa east of the Kei, i.e. the Transkei area. He was one of the scores of the amaMfengu-Xhosa clans who benefited from Governor Grey's land policy acts after the 1835-6 Frontier War. After this War, to reiterate, amaRharhabe-Xhosa were forced out of their land as being troublesome to colonial government. The amaMfengu-Xhosa were then resettled on this land, to serve as a bulwark between the amaRharhabe-Xhosa and European settlers.

The process of the resettlement of the amaMfengu-Xhosa from Transkei into British Kaffraria was commonly referred to as, in the words of Livingstone Ntibane Mzimba, "*siya emlungwini*"<sup>8</sup> ( we are going to the white men's land). Thus, they had come to accept the political events of the time as unchangeable and the transference to the European hegemony was, in their minds, complete. Further, that they viewed the European interference on their behalf as both divine and beneficial can be seen from L. N. Mzimba's interpretation of this process as a mix of pain and gain:

Yaba yintsikelelo enje nakuma-Melika amnyama amaninzi, ate ngexesha lubukoboka afumana nentsikelelo ezinje ngezi, kanti ngalonto ngati ayiqondakali nje kukuza kuvela kwekwezi.<sup>9</sup>

(This was the case also with most of the African-Americans, who despite the slavery experience also received benefits. What was to them a fateful experience was, simultaneously, to be a morning star in their lives. - *own translation*)

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<sup>6</sup> Op. cit

<sup>7</sup> Mzimba, 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op cit; South African Native Affairs Commission, (SANAC) Minutes of Evidence, 1903 - 1905, Vol. II (Pretoria: Government Printers, 1904), p. 790.

<sup>8</sup> L. N. Mzimba, Umfundisi, op cit, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

Thus, likening the amaMfengu-Xhosa experience to what he perceived as the eventual beneficial consequences of the African-American exile to the New World, the biographer adopts a positive view of his grandfather's experience. This he says in view of the civilising influence that the amaMfengu-Xhosa gained due to their accommodating attitude and proximity to the Europeans.

Ntibane, Mzimba's father, married a teacher, maDlomo, after which they settled at Ngqakayi, where an aggregation of the amaMfengu-Xhosa were settled in British Kaffraria under their chief Luzipo. It is pointed out by his grandson that his wife played a great role towards the elementary education of her husband, Ntibane.<sup>10</sup> Mpambani Mzimba reveals as much, "after my father and mother had been married and converted, my mother taught him to read"<sup>11</sup>. Further, it was whilst here that Ntibane was baptized and confirmed by the GMS mission, which had crystallized into the Free Church of Scotland. He was baptized, together with his son, Mpambani, by the Rev. James Laing in 1852. Mpambani points out that already "at the time of (1846-7) war my parents had been to the religious instruction, principally by Mr. Laing."<sup>12</sup> However, some of the amaMfengu-Xhosa were later removed to Sheshegu. The Mzimba family was part of this group.

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<sup>10</sup> Op. cit, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Mzimba, 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

At Sheshegu, "which derives its name from a little stream, about 11 miles south-east of Alice,"<sup>13</sup> there was already a GMS mission station. Mpambani points out that "when the missionaries at Lovedale found two or three Christian men at Sheshegu (they) made it a missionary station."<sup>14</sup> It was here that Ntibane was ordained as a deacon and also appointed as a teacher in the local school.<sup>15</sup> Mpambani began his early education here, "I went to school in 1853 at Sheshegu."<sup>16</sup> He was thus taught by his father. He informs us that although his school attendance was intermittent "on the account of herding", eventually "I was able to read Kafir (isiXhosa) & little of the English Testament."<sup>17</sup> However, the Mzimba family was soon on the move again, as Mpambani reveals: "as the rumours of War commenced they left, for Alice, here they remained 4 years till the War was over after which they returned to Sheshegu."<sup>18</sup> Thus, they were part of the African group that sought refuge with the colonial authorities during the time of war.

Later still, Ntibane moved with his family to settle permanently at *Ngcwazi*, the present Middledrift area, within the Burnshill congregation.<sup>19</sup> James Laing was the missionary at Burnshill at this time. This was, however, a voluntary move. Mzimba continued with his education here as well, "learning Kafir Testament & beginning Addition."<sup>20</sup> Typically of mission schools, Christian religious education was a fundamental component of the curriculum. Meanwhile, his father continued with his teaching vocation and mission work. Mpambani indicates that "my father became an assistant by being an elder and a teacher here"<sup>21</sup>. Due to his hard work and discipline, which his grandson says was the result of European influence,<sup>22</sup> Ntibane was later ordained as an elder of the Burnshill mission, and was subsequently appointed as an Evangelist by the British Kaffraria Presbytery.

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<sup>13</sup> Op. cit

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit

<sup>15</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 3.

<sup>16</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Op. cit

<sup>19</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 5 and 7; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 346.

<sup>20</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Op. cit

On becoming an itinerating Evangelist, Ntibane was interchangeably appointed to work at Lovedale in 1866, then back at Burnshill, and also at Gxulu, in Keiskammahoek and kwaMathole, outside the present Dimbaza area between 1868 and 1883.<sup>23</sup> With further amaMfengu-Xhosa relocations into the Transkei, Ntibane was re-deployed to work in a new mission at the present Qumbu area, north of Umtata, in 1884. It was here that he itinerated in his work and subsequently died tragically in 1887. He was drowned, apparently misjudging a strong current, while trying to cross a river. According to the isiXhosa tradition whereby victims of accidental deaths are not transported back home for burial, Ntibane was buried on the Riverbanks of Mbashe where he had drowned.<sup>24</sup> Mpambani was later to follow in the footsteps of his father in continuing the extension of Scottish missionary enterprise into the eastern parts of the Region.

Mpambani's mother, maDlomo, who was in domestic service in Somerset East when she got married, was a woman of strong civilising tendencies. Mzimba reveals that "my mother was under the service of an English lady. Here she was taught how to read. At her leaving she got the present of a bible."<sup>25</sup> We have already indicated that she taught her husband, thereby contributing to his teaching and mission agency career. Further still, she insisted on proper clothing, i.e. a European code of dress, for her children. Her grandson has this to say about this influence, "*yaye icaca impembelelo nengqeqesho ayifumeneyo emlungwini basoloko bahlukile abake abantwana.*"<sup>26</sup> (Due to a clear European influence and behaviour, her children were always differently behaved from the rest of other children. - *own translation*). Through her influences, the whole family adopted the main tenets of European Christian civilisation, education and mission. L. N. Mzimba, in paying tribute to his grandparents, observes about that, "*yena nowakwakhe baba ngumzekelo kwabaninzi abantu ekuqeqesheni abantwana babo nasentlatweni yobu-Kristu.*"<sup>27</sup> (He and his wife led an exemplary Christian life and extended similar discipline to their children. - *own translation*.)

<sup>23</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>26</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p 3.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit*, p. 8.

Significantly, then Mpambani Mzimba was born into a civilising and very strong Christian family background.<sup>28</sup> On the other level, however, he was born during the time of the amaXhosa upheavals following the 1834-35 Frontier War, in the period between the 1846-47 and 1851-53 Wars. Like Soga, who dated his year of birth to the time when Paramount Chief Maqoma was forcibly removed from his land as the result of the Kat River settlement, Mzimba dates his birth from similar incidents of great social mobility forced upon Africans by the colonial authorities. He was thus born into the critical 1840-50's on the Frontier. In African traditional philosophy, the events and circumstances around which a child is born are believed to influence and shape the destiny of that child.

As members of the amaMfengu-Xhosa clan the Mzimba family was very supportive of the cause for Christian mission and, in fact, sacrificed their own lives working for it. Mpambani grew up out of this devout Christian background and was afforded unique insights into the Christian faith quite early in his life. In 1866, he was confirmed into full church membership probably by Tiyo Soga himself, or at least Soga was present and apparently preached at the service. Mzimba was later to say, "*ndingowokuqala ebufundisini kwabantsundu, owalandela umfi u-Rev. Tiyo Soga, ndisayazi nanamhla intshumayelo yake mhla wandingenisa eramenteni.*"<sup>29</sup> (I am the first (Presbyterian) African minister after the Rev. Tiyo Soga, and I can still remember vividly his preaching when he confirmed me into Church membership. - *own translation*) This was a memorable beginning to his adult Christian life.

Having done his primary education under the tutelage of his own father at the local mission schools at Sheshegu and Burnshill, Mzimba proceeded to Lovedale for his post-primary and senior education in 1860.<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, Mzimba stayed with the Rev. Richard Ross family for some time during his early education at Lovedale. He notes that, "after three months without any school I came at Lovedale stopping with Mr. B. Ross as I was not able to come to the Institution. I was with Mr. Ross about 5 months. When I was able to read a little, simple 'Lesson' & 'Addition'. Then in 1860 I came to the

<sup>28</sup> Cf., *Indaba*, May 1863; February 1864.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72 and 12.

<sup>30</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, *op cit*; L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *op. cit*, p. 9.

Institution."<sup>31</sup> His biographer gives his youthful age as the reason for this arrangement with the Ross' family, as later Mpambani joined the rest of other students at the hostel. The ground was being prepared already for a close association with the missionaries. Significantly, Mzimba maintained a close relationship with Bryce Ross throughout his Scottish ministry.

### THE LOVEDALE EXPERIENCE

Mzimba had a first-hand taste of Govan's administration, which was reaching its last decade at Lovedale. Writing with the benefit of hindsight, Mzimba's biographer makes a pertinent comparison:

Kwangeloxesha isinnala leyo yati yanika imfundo entle, ecwengekileyo, nepangaleleyo kubantu abantsundu ngapezu kwezinye indawo. Lonto yacaca kwangezomini obungawubonayo nangoku umahluko pakati kwabeloxesha lika Rev. Govan xa batelekiswa nabexesha elisemva koko. Ngoko kwakungekho kuyiponononga imfundo ngenxa yebala labo.<sup>32</sup>

(At the time the Institution was giving the best quality education to African student. This was evidently clear as manifested through a comparison of the quality of the Rev. Govan's students with those of the successive period. During his time education was not classified according to one's race. - *own translation*)

Mpambani registered for a Printing Course in 1865, which he completed and then served an apprenticeship course in the Printing Department in 1871. Livingstone Ntibane Mzimba explains that Mpambani formed a solid friendship with Mr. R. Stocks, who was in charge of his apprenticeship. Paying tribute on the occasion of Mzimba's death, Stocks is reported as saying, "ndiziva namhlanje ndingathi ndingumntu owahlukeneyo mpela nabantu abantsundu. ... Bendimcingela ndimamkele njengonyana wam."<sup>33</sup> (I feel as if I have lost permanent contact with the African people. ... I regarded and accepted him as my own son - *own translation*). Thus the mediation role of the civilising Africans, begun with Soga, was set to continue with Mzimba as well. The following year in 1872 Mpambani registered for the Telegraph Course, which he pursued for the next two years. Somehow at this stage he met and became friends with Elijah Makiwane with whom he would later join in the Presbyterian ministry. They were the first Scottish mission Africans to be admitted and

<sup>31</sup> 4 November 1869, MS 9098, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit, p. 12.

qualify for this course. Subsequently, Mzimba went on to become the first African minister in the Presbyterian tradition to be completely trained and ordained in South Africa.

Mpambani Mzimba was to join the first theological class at Lovedale in preparation for a vocation in the ministry, thus, making him one of the pioneering African ministerial candidates at Lovedale. By 1870 the Lovedale institution was under the new principalship of James Stewart, the second principal of the institution since its founding in 1841. Thus Mzimba's period of theological training coincided with the beginning of Stewart's principalship of Lovedale. The Presbyterian theological course and requirements for the ministry were rigorous and lengthy, and only two candidates reached the end of the course, namely, Mzimba and Elijah Makiwane. At the same meantime, Mzimba worked for two years as a telegrapher at the local telegraphic office opened in 1872 together with Elijah Makiwane while waiting to finish his studies, which he did in 1874.<sup>34</sup>

While a student at Lovedale Mzimba developed outstanding leadership qualities. He was known for his "diligence and exemplary conduct" as a student,<sup>35</sup> and acknowledged for his responsible conduct. The Lovedale Education Board awarded him a certificate of merit for his fine abilities and good character indicative of:

The value set by the Education Board on the general moral influence which they believe his character has exerted on others, and also their satisfaction with the manner in which he has endeavoured to promote the interests and welfare of the Institution by spontaneous and ready activity and uniformly unselfish conduct.<sup>36</sup>

Furthermore, Mzimba participated in and was at one time even elected as the president of the multi-racial student group known as the "Lovedale Literary Society."<sup>37</sup> His maturity of mind, responsible attitude and influential character were acknowledged by students and staff alike. Through this hard work and positive personality he endeared himself deeply into the hearts of many within the wider Lovedale community. Indeed, Mzimba's outstanding qualities were acknowledged by both Europeans and Africans, alike. Wells, Stewart's

<sup>34</sup> Cf. R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 174.

<sup>35</sup> J. Stewart, *Lovedale Past and Present*, op. cit, p. 251; E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op cit, p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177; L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op cit, p. 17.

biographer, noted that "the Rev. P.J Mzimba had been one of the leading pupils of Lovedale"<sup>38</sup>. Similarly his old-time friend, Makiwane, paid tribute to Mzimba's qualities:

As a scholar he was not clever but he was earnest and diligent and persevering. Both then and in after years, his strength lay in his character rather than in his gifts. There was an undefinable something about his personality which drew boys to him (at Lovedale) and won their confidence.<sup>39</sup>

Such were Mzimba's intellectual and leadership qualities. Altogether, Mpambani spent fifteen years as a student at Lovedale from the time that he started in 1860 until he finished his theological course in 1874.

With his theological training completed Mzimba was duly licensed to preach by the Free Church of Scotland in South Africa in January 1875, and was, subsequently, ordained into the full ministry of that church on 1 December 1875, having received a pastoral call from the Native congregation at Lovedale.<sup>40</sup> This made him the first fully trained and ordained African minister within the Scottish Presbyterian tradition in South Africa, Soga having been trained and ordained in Scotland. It was around this time that the Lovedale Native congregation was separated from the larger and predominantly European congregation in town, and was granted autonomy and a right of call.<sup>41</sup> The Rev. G Robertson, who was a missionary there at the time, was transferred to Transkei and Rev. J.B. Moir instead was appointed as the Interim Moderator while the congregation was contemplating a call for a permanent minister.

The Lovedale church was the outgrowth of early Scottish mission work started in 1821, and it was created as a result of the merger of the original Tyhume and Lovedale mission stations. By 1875 it had developed into a vibrant local church catering for the needs of both the African and European communities around Lovedale, and the members of student body and staff at the Lovedale Institution. The mission work was at this time under the patronage of such influential Scottish missionaries as B. Ross, J. Laing, R. Ross, G. Robertson, J.

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<sup>37</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 17.

<sup>38</sup> J. Wells, *James Stewart*, op. cit, p. 295.

<sup>39</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 177.

<sup>40</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, pp. 18 and 24.

<sup>41</sup> Op. cit, p 21.

Calderwood and J. Stewart. In order to facilitate growth and easier administration of the Lovedale church it was thus resolved to separate the native section of the church to form their own Native congregation from the rest of Lovedale institution. The two would as a rule, however, continue to work in close co-operation with each other.

This meant that the Lovedale missionaries would be involved in the steps leading to the call of a minister to serve in the Native congregation, and its subsequent developments. The Presbytery of Kaffraria, thus, resolved that the Native congregation would be better served by an African minister. The availability of Mzimba and Elijah Makiwane made this possible. It would not be far-fetched to conclude, therefore, that the minister serving the Native congregation at Lovedale would be the one with a favourable disposition towards the Scottish missionaries there. This would be due, partly, to the nature of the relationship between the Lovedale Institution and the Native Lovedale church, and also to the vested interests that the missionaries had in developments within the Lovedale church.<sup>42</sup>

The Lovedale church, emerging from the early Scottish mission there in 1821, was the oldest and most eminent of all the Scottish missions in the Eastern Cape at the time. It had the historical status of being "the Mother Congregation of the Free Church of Scotland Mission in South Africa."<sup>43</sup> It was thus appropriate that the process of appointing an African minister to a Scottish Mission congregation should start there, however long overdue that process was. In as much as the process was overdue and also welcomed, it should equally be seen as an experiment from the Scottish missionaries' perspective. It was also a situation forced upon them by the national development of events in the 1870's, and thus these developments were probably by some reluctant acquiescence to this external pressure. Other missions had long preceded the Presbyterians in training and appointing African ministers to

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<sup>42</sup> See Stewart to Don, 3 September 1880, Stewart Papers, LB40, Archives Library, University of Cape Town.

<sup>43</sup> T. M. Skota, *The African Yearly Register*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, (Johannesburg, n.d.), p. 72.

serve local churches. Though, as Campbell points out, "after a flurry of ordinations in the 1870's and '80's, the growth of the African ministry slowed in every major denomination."<sup>44</sup>

The Scottish Presbyterian mission was ostensibly in a better moral and theological position to press on with the African ministerial formation, through the historical precedence of Tiyo Soga. But, the reverse happened. The eighteen-year break from the time of Soga's ordination in 1856 to Mzimba's own ordination in 1875 shows a reluctance on the part of the Scottish mission to encourage African agency and ministry. Campbell argues that, ironically, "Soga's mastery of the theological curriculum at Edinburgh probably inhibited future ordinations by convincing church leaders that African ministerial candidates should be evaluated on the same criteria as Europeans."<sup>45</sup> In his view, the high level of theological education insisted upon by the Scottish mission thus placed at a disadvantage scores of African evangelists who had been in the vanguard of missionary outreach but who did not meet such advanced theological requirements.

There were a few further African ordinations after Mzimba, but only twenty-two were in fact ordained within the Scottish Mission in the period between 1856 and 1910!<sup>46</sup> This was because, "from the 1880's on, the (Scottish mission) church virtually discountenanced African ordinations."<sup>47</sup> Consequently, African Presbyterian ministers "were a thing which was not known" in South Africa in the 1890's, as Makiwane noted. He relates this painful reality:

To many if not to all Europeans a native minister, to whom the name was not to be mere compliment was very strange and either excited laughter or anxiety or curiosity. To the native people it was just the same. Some of the strongest epithets for expressing contempt in Kafir I hear for the first time when (M)Pambani was proposed to be minister of the native congregation at Lovedale. The two licentiates were as much at loss what to think of themselves and their positions as all the rest. If the ministry had been regarded by them as a profession and not a call they would have drawn back then.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 108.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>46</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>47</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>48</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

Such was the magnitude of the opposition they had to confront in terms of attitudes and role expectations. In our view, Soga's ministry was only taken seriously after his death. Throughout his lifetime he remained merely a test case as to whether an African ministry was sustainable. Soga himself was aware of these expectations and apprehensions, which further complicated his life as he tried to live between being true to himself and expected roles. Referring to the European missionary increasing apprehension regarding African agency, L. N. Mzimba reveals that, "no-Rev. T. Soga ngokwakhe wayelindelwe ukuba abuyele ebuhebenini ngabanye aqabe."<sup>49</sup> (It was expected that even the Rev. T. Soga would fail in the ministry and backslide from the Christian faith. - *own translation*). Not only does this show the incipient encroachment of hardening attitudes on the part of European missionaries but also, more importantly, that they understood the implications of ordination very well. For, "to grant ordination to the African clergy was to signal their ecclesiastical equality with the white missionaries."<sup>50</sup> The dynamics of power were clearly a factor in church life at the time.

Campbell observes that the L. M. S. and Reformed/ Presbyterian polities made it particularly difficult for European missionaries to ordain Africans. In the nature of these two polities, a congregation has a certain degree of autonomy and its minister is not under the direct supervision of a bishop or higher authority structure. The demands of these polities placed considerable responsibility in the hands of local ministers in all areas of administration, including the finance. Campbell's observation that, "if there was one constant in nineteenth century South Africa, it was whites' conviction that Africans could not handle money,"<sup>51</sup> is borne out by ample evidence. Mzimba's separation from the European mission was, as we shall see, related to finance. European missionary paternalism made it difficult to completely entrust Africans with authority. When they did it was on the assumption that there was a European mechanism for monitoring the progress.

<sup>49</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, op. cit, p. 123; J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, op. cit, p. 108.

<sup>51</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, *ibid.*, p. 108.

Experimenting with an African minister at the Lovedale Native congregation thus contained potential risk for confirming the view of European and Native skeptics alike. However, as the Native congregation was within the embrace of the Scottish missionary contingent at Lovedale so the encouragement of a native minister thereto was a welcome compromise. Their monitoring, whether direct or indirect, could continue. Brock argues that Stewart may have been behind the appointment of Mzimba to Lovedale, where he would be within the easy reach of control. According to Brock, "Stewart's request for the establishment of a congregation within the Institution may have stemmed from his distrust of Mzimba's influence on Lovedale pupils."<sup>52</sup>

Natives themselves had internalised an Afro-pessimism and Euro-indispensability. Even Mzimba felt in need of Stewart's ubiquitous attention at his Lovedale Native congregation. When he thought that this bond was weakening due to Stewart's other commitments, he childishly complained to the latter that the Lovedale Native church was "drifting away as it were from your direct influence and guidance which I feel the want of very much."<sup>53</sup> Stewart was thus implored to undertake occasional sermons at the church, at least once a quarter, in order to maintain this influence. Thus, ironically, Mzimba needed Stewart's courtesy appearances at his congregation thereby reinforcing missionary domination.

Similarly, the Native members of the congregation were totally shameless in their determination to avoid an African minister, thus safeguarding European hegemony at Lovedale. Having been coerced by the Presbytery to call a native minister,<sup>54</sup> the process began in 1875. The Rev. J. B. Moir, of the European congregation in town, was appointed to interim-moderate this process. When the congregation gathered for the purpose of selecting a (native) minister of their choice, it was strongly divided on the issue. The more elderly and conservative membership was most vocal in their protest against the advisability of an African minister, and a young African minister at that! The general opinion of the congregation was:

<sup>52</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *op. cit.*, p. 353.

<sup>53</sup> Mzimba to Stewart, 13 February 1889, BC 106, C1763, Stewart's Papers, *op. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

Siyoyika, aba ngabantwana, baya kutinina ukusipata? Kananjalo, siqele abafundisi abamhlophe abasancedayo nabasibuzelayo nase burulumenteni, basitetelele nakwizinto ezisixakayo. Aba bafana ke abasayi kuba nako ukusipata njengoko besipetwe ngabamhlophe, nemali asisayi kuba nayo yokuxasa umfundisi kakuhle, kuba singamahlwempu, abe lomfundisi ezakuxaswa siti sedwa namhla.<sup>55</sup>

(We are apprehensive, these are very young (Mzimba and Makiwane), how could they rule over us? Furthermore, we are familiar to European ministers who also mediate with the government on our behalf. These young men cannot minister to us as the European pastors did, we are incapable of the financial support of a minister, as we are required to maintain the native minister on our own from now. - *own translation*)

Others expressed their preference for Moir, despite his repeated objections. Apprehension, prejudice and financial considerations were all advanced as reasons for reluctance. Eventually, the gravity of the situation was such that the moderation of the call had to be abandoned, and the matter reported to Presbytery for its intervention.<sup>56</sup> Thus, even African Christians were unsure as to how to view this new species of African ministers. They were mostly viewed with suspicion and hostility, for such ministry had always been associated with Europeans. As a result, Mzimba and Makiwane found themselves in an uncomfortably ambivalent position. L. N. Mzimba is perhaps being modest in saying that his father understood this hostility.<sup>57</sup> That it must have been intimidating and unsettling is more apt, as Makiwane admits.<sup>58</sup>

Presbytery arbitration was thus sought in order to resolve the matter of the call. A Presbytery meeting was constituted at Lovedale with the Native congregation, with Bryce Ross as the moderator. The members of the congregation once again, proposed the name of Moir. When the moderator objected to this, the members turned around to say, "oh, sinyula wena ke."<sup>59</sup> (oh, then we propose your name) Bryce Ross obviously called them to order on this regard. It seemed that anything would be tried in their attempt to avoid an African minister. After much persuasion Mzimba was, eventually, chosen over Makiwane, thereby becoming the first (homegrown) Presbyterian African minister of the first Presbyterian African

<sup>55</sup> Op. cit, p. 22.

<sup>56</sup> Op. cit, p. 22.

<sup>57</sup> Op. cit, p. 22.

<sup>58</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 177.

<sup>59</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 23.



Mpambani Mzimba as a young man



Mpambani Mzimba as an older man

congregation. Thus the missionaries' opinion prevailed in the end and the matter was finally settled.

Makiwane was modest in his defeat as he accepted Mzimba's appointment as being 'most natural,' and attributed this to his friend's outstanding leadership qualities. He, in turn, viewed Mzimba's ultimate victory as something of his own doing rather than attributable to missionary influence. Although there is no dispute about Mzimba's personal qualities we the influence of the missionaries in his appointment should not be underestimated. Mzimba was inducted to the pastoral charge of the Lovedale Native church to assume duties on 5 December 1875. Bryce Ross, as moderator, presided over the service and preached on the Exodus 14:15, 'why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward.'<sup>60</sup> This liberation theme was to be prophetic of Mzimba's later act of taking 'the new people of Israel' forward into the Independent African Presbyterian church. It is noted that Mzimba received a warm welcome at Presbytery, although like the Tiyo Soga, he was the lone African until Makiwane was ordained.<sup>61</sup>

Soon after, in 1876, Mzimba married a progressive woman by the name of Martha Kwatsha. She also came from the Middledrift area, Mzimba's newly adopted home, and was a descendent of one line of the Soga family tree. She was one of the original class of African women allowed to study at Lovedale under the tutelage of Dr. Jane Waterston.<sup>62</sup> She was also one of the very few African women at the time to go abroad for study purposes. After she finished her teachers' course at Lovedale, Martha went abroad to Britain where she spent some time in Glasgow and London. She did further studies in Glasgow for two years between 1874 and 1876, thus meeting Tause Soga, eldest daughter of Zaze and a niece to Tiyo Soga.<sup>63</sup> It seems that a certain Mrs. Thomas from Lovedale was instrumental in effecting the arrangements for the trip. The experience abroad is said to have been useful in

<sup>60</sup> The Revised Standard Version

<sup>61</sup> L. N. Ntibane, *Umfundisi*, op cit, pp. 35 -36.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>63</sup> *The Lovedale News*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 21 March 1877; J. Stewart, *Lovedale Past and Present*, op. cit, pp. 435 and 491.

developing her leadership skills. Martha was to be later involved in the formation of the Mother's Union in 1893.<sup>64</sup>

While abroad Martha Kwatsha developed a close friendship with Tause Soga, returning to South Africa together, and also became the bridesmaid at her wedding. For some reason a Rev. Mr. Russell of the Presbyterian Church married them in Cape Town.<sup>65</sup> Mzimba, Martha and Tause were the only African members present at the ceremony, otherwise the rest were the local white members of the congregation. Tause Soga was Martha's bridesmaid while a Mr. James Scott, former theological student colleague, was Mpambani's best man. Present at the wedding ceremony was also Charles Brownlee, Secretary for Native Affairs, who entertained the guests at his home after the ceremony. Brock observes that, in this manner, Mzimba "enjoyed the benefits of acceptance by white society and (in turn) actively sought to be included in it."<sup>66</sup> Mpambani and Martha were blessed with eight children from their marriage; six daughters and two sons. Not much is known about their children, except for Livingstone Ntibane who graduated at Lincoln University in the United States and later joined the ministry. He became one of the outstanding leaders of the African Presbyterian Church, and also made a literary contribution.<sup>67</sup>

Although most missionaries did manage to successfully learn the indigenous language of the people among whom they worked, the same can hardly be said of most colonial government officials. The latter still depended a great deal on the interpretation by the locals for cross-cultural communication. Thus, at the recommendation of Charles Brownlee, the Ngqika Commissioner, Mzimba was approached to consider accompanying the Governor of the Eastern Cape in order to interpret for the latter during his official tour of the wider Eastern

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<sup>64</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 52. The date is assumed by the Mother's Union of most African Presbyterian Churches, such that the Women's Christian Association (WCA) of the former Reformed Presbyterian Church celebrated their centenary at Lovedale in 1993.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>66</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 345.

<sup>67</sup> He published his father's biography in 1923, as we have indicated, and an article titled, 'The African Church' in (ed.) D. Taylor, *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa: A Year-Book of South African Missions* (Lovedale: The Lovedale Institution Press, 1933).

Cape towards the end of 1877.<sup>68</sup> However, the Lovedale Native congregation refused to allow its minister to engage in this tour for pastoral reasons. They needed their minister more, and under the Presbyterian system of governance they had the right to make a prior claim. We have no record of how Mzimba himself felt about the government offer. However, Mzimba participated in numerous Presbytery ventures to establish missions in the eastern Transkei.<sup>69</sup> It was during one of these trips that he was arrested and sent to prison for illegal firearm possession, although he had papers for the weapon.<sup>70</sup> He was released after a direct colonial government intervention established his status as a minister. As we are not given a reason as to why he carried a gun we may assume that it was for self-protection during his long trips to the Transkei.

A positive result of Mzimba's Transkeian mission was the establishment of two GMS congregations at Qumbu and Tsolo.<sup>71</sup> Mzimba was charged with the task of supervising the setting up of various missions in the Transkei by his Presbytery. This meant that he had to be away on such errands from time to time. After the Transkeian mission Mzimba proceeded north of the country, where he was instrumental in the establishment of the Johannesburg congregation of the GMS in 1890.<sup>72</sup> Even when there were domestic problems in the congregation he was delegated to intervene on behalf of Kaffraria Presbytery, as this congregation was peculiarly under the latter's jurisdiction. He is the one who made a recommendation for the appointment of a resident minister to this congregation, which led to the appointment of the Rev. E. Tsewu. To this discussion we shall return later.

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<sup>68</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 44.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44ff.

<sup>70</sup> After the 1877-79 Frontier War Africans were disarmed and excluded from firearm possession by the colonial government through the 1878 Gun Act. It was thus declared illegal for Africans to own firearms and also they could not be given licenses to that effect.

<sup>71</sup> The two Congregations developed strong emotional attachment to Mzimba and they were to follow him into his secession later. The two Congregations, further, sent an amount of about 20 pounds towards Mzimba's trial expenses during the secession court case, as a gesture of their solidarity with his cause. Thus, the Transkei connection that Mzimba had established at this time was consistent in its support.

<sup>72</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 349f.

Mpambani seems to have been interested in joining James Stewart on the latter's planned mission trip to Central Africa in 1876.<sup>73</sup> Four Lovedale graduates, all contemporaries of Mzimba, accompanied Stewart on his second visit to Malawi to help establish the Livingstonia Mission. The first party of men had arrived in the country to start a Scottish mission in 1875. The 1876 contingent of four were selected from amongst several Lovedale volunteers, one of whom was Mzimba. Mpambani apparently disclosed his willingness to be part of the delegation to Stewart in private. According to his biographer, Stewart leaked the information to the Lovedale Native Congregation, causing unhappy reactions and resulting in Mzimba's eventual withdrawal from the trip as the congregation would not let him go.<sup>74</sup> Also, the Presbytery does not seem to have been informed of his intention before the consent of congregation was sought. Subsequently, the Presbytery refused to release Mzimba for this trip as it thought he was too indispensable to the Mission. In 1881 Mzimba again expressed his desire to go, but again to no avail.<sup>75</sup> Stewart blamed the Presbytery for Mzimba's failure to participate in the 1876 trip:

The fair prospect of Mzimba going to Livingstonia for three years is fairly wrecked in the Presbytery. I thought I was listening to a Moderate Presbytery of 100 years ago. That is to say from the most be-missionarized region on the face of the earth, namely South Africa, they refuse to let one go the west of Lake Nyassa, where there is not a single missionary, nor a single Bible, church or school.<sup>76</sup>

However, Mzimba voiced his displeasure to Bryce Ross about the manner in which Stewart leaked the news.<sup>77</sup> The whole matter seems to have been handled on grounds of personal relationships between Mzimba and Stewart, and not in terms of the Presbyterian procedure. Thus, when it came into the open neither Presbytery nor the Lovedale Native Congregation were in its favour, resulting in Mzimba missing the opportunity to spread the gospel to his fellow Central Africans. It seems that there were other considerations beneath the surface in the area of relationships and co-operation between Mzimba and Stewart, on the one hand,

<sup>73</sup> MS 8500, Cory Library, Rhodes University; L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op cit, p. 46; J. McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1879 - 1940* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977); T. J. Thompson, *Touching the heart: Xhosa missionaries to Malawi 1876 - 1888* (Pretoria: UNISA, 2000).

<sup>74</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 46.

<sup>75</sup> T. J. Thompson, *Touching the heart*, *ibid.*, pp. 16 - 17.

<sup>76</sup> Stewart to Stephen, 14, June 1881, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 350; *The Lovedale News*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 8 May 1876.

<sup>77</sup> Mzimba to Ross, 12 May 1881, MS 8500, Cory Library, op. cit

and Stewart and Presbytery, on the other. Indeed, Brock argues that there were the Ross' and Stewart factions at Presbytery.<sup>78</sup> Some of the reasons for the faction went way back to disagreements over the classics debate at Lovedale Institution. Mzimba was mostly to be found on the side of the Ross' faction, and subsequently, the relationship between Mzimba and Stewart was characterised by a cool respect for each other.<sup>79</sup> That there was also animosity between the two was obvious, according to Brock, but this need never have become overt. There was, therefore, no reason why "Stewart chose to look on Mzimba's schism as a personal insult."<sup>80</sup> We shall return to this debate later.

### THE VISIT TO SCOTLAND

Mzimba's record of success at tasks to which he was assigned from time to time, established him as an effective leader of his Church and people, and earned him respect from his European missionary colleagues too. His leadership abilities received further recognition when he was asked to represent the GMS missions in South Africa at the Free Church of Scotland's Jubilee in 1893. The decision was warmly welcomed by his congregation who were pleased that their minister had been honoured in this manner. This meant that Mzimba was actually the first African to be a guest of honour of a Church in Scotland and to sit in its General Assembly.<sup>81</sup> Indeed it seems that Mzimba's rise to positions of responsibility in the GMS in Kaffraria was remarkable.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, as minister of the Lovedale congregation Mzimba had "every consideration and such a position of influence as few men could hope for."<sup>83</sup> However, his biographer remarks that "bayenza lonto ngokucinga ukuba lonto iyakuwutetelela umsebenzi wabo, kuba sisiqhamo sabo esi sokuqala."<sup>84</sup> (He was delegated as an exhibit and product of the GMS in South African mission, as he was the first instance of a homegrown minister. - *own translation*). Despite such ulterior motives on the part of his colleagues, he received a fairly good amount of support from them. Furthermore, he was

<sup>78</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 344 and 352.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 351ff.

<sup>80</sup> Op. cit, p. 354.

<sup>81</sup> Although Soga was the first African to visit the Presbyterian Church in Scotland he did so as a student and not as an ordained minister. Thus, whereas Soga visited Scotland as a beneficiary, Mzimba, in turn, visited as an equal.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 349.

<sup>83</sup> Fred J. Brisco(?) to Stewart, 10 November 1898, BC 106, C 167.26, Stewart's Papers, op. cit

allowed a substantial degree of independence to exercise his gifted leadership. Unknown to the missionaries, however, was the fact that this move would have lasting repercussions upon their future relations with Mzimba, seven years after the jubilee.

Mzimba solicited funds during his extended trip abroad, managing to raise a considerable sum of money, about 1200 pounds, for his congregation. Mzimba's fundraising strategy was based upon the economic deprivations of his people. In one appeal he stated:

The Lovedale Congregation in numbers is the largest in the Free Church Kaffraria (it being the name given to the Free Church district of South Africa) Mission but it is very poor. It is chiefly made up of widows and women who have no way of supporting themselves but are maintained by their male relatives and heathen husbands. The congregants also supported its minister.<sup>85</sup>

The dispute over the custody and use of these funds was one of the reasons cited for Mzimba's subsequent secession from the Scottish mission six years later. Mzimba uncompromisingly claimed the right to manage and use the money for the original purpose of erecting a church hall. The Presbytery, on the other hand, vigorously denied him this power of decision. This brings us back to the question that, in the final analysis, Mzimba suited the interests and purposes of the missionaries without really owning much power. To be sure he was consulted and trusted with a variety of responsibilities, but he was deprived of the power to really influence the organisation of the Scottish mission in the Eastern Cape. Freedom of action is not necessarily the possession of power, especially when that freedom is prescribed. For as long as Mzimba played along with missionary interests he was fine, but he could not really be trusted with an independent view. We shall return to this issue later.

Mzimba returned, after spending almost the whole of 1893 in Scotland, at the time when Ethiopian sentiments were at its peak. The first visible move towards an unambiguous articulation of these had been the separation of Nehemiah Tile from the Wesleyan mission to form the Thembu Church in 1884. Tile's independence and the founding of the African Church was the first of its kind in the sub-continent, thereby serving as a model for

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<sup>84</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 49.

<sup>85</sup> Cited in J. M. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa*, op. cit, p. 70.

successive African Church formations.<sup>86</sup> However, Mzimba does not appear to have responded in any way to these developments at this stage.<sup>87</sup> In the meantime he got back to his work at the congregation and continued with the rest of his programme. For instance, responding to the need for a new church hall the Lovedale Native church's women organised themselves into founding a Women's Association (Mothers' Union) in 1893, whose main objective was:

Ukufaka igxalaba kulomsebenzi obonakala unzima kubafundisi nabashumayeli belizwi, wona aza kusebenza kwabanye abafazi nase zintombini zawo, enze nemali zokuxasa ilizwi.<sup>88</sup>

(To lend a hand to the daunting task confronting the clergy and laymen by organising within the ranks of women and young ladies, and raising funds for the furtherance of the Word. - *own translation*)

This was the first real initiative was assumed by the women in the history of the Scottish mission, one which sought to involve women entirely in such action. Hitherto they had been mostly on the fringes of church leadership but here was an opportunity for them to get involved in something that they could actually own and manage. The Mothers' Union has, over the years, proved to be one of the most resilient church organisations, one which persists today in all African Churches, albeit with more articulated objectives and advanced organisation.

### SOCIAL LEADERSHIP

There is no doubt as to Mzimba's resounding success as the minister of the Lovedale Native church. Although dogged by uncertainty and controversy at the beginning he became very popular with and respected by the congregation in his twenty-two year stay with them from 1876 until 1898. He had the ability to transform earlier negative attitudes against him as an African minister, and proved himself more than worthy of the challenge. Some of those who objected to his appointment in 1875 probably even followed him in the 1898 secession.

<sup>86</sup> C. Saunders, 'Tile and the Thembu Church: Politics and Independency on the Cape Eastern Frontier in the late Nineteenth Century' in (eds.) J. D. Fage, J. R. Gray and R. A. Oliver, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. XI, No. 4, 1970, pp. 553 - 570.

<sup>87</sup> Indeed as late as 1903 he denied association of any kind with the Ethiopian movement at the Native Affairs Commission - see SANAC, *op cit*, par. 10, 900, p. 793. However, Mzimba did meet with Dwane shortly before his own secession in 1898. But his own denomination remained separate from the Ethiopian Churches.

<sup>88</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *op. cit*, p. 52.

Makiwane observes that "his own people not only respected him but loved him as few ministers are loved."<sup>89</sup> As a preacher he was neither eloquent nor dynamic and his sermons contained mainly simple messages of 'the love of God in Christ.'<sup>90</sup> He seems to have preferred topical preaching, and did not abrogate responsibility in addressing the current issues of the day. L. N. Mzimba puts it at thus:

Ezintshumayelweni zake ebefunda amaxesha ezinto, ezilungelelanisa namaxesha nemeko yezinto, akwazi ke ngoko ukubacebisa, nokubaluleka abantu, ngendlela, ngezifo, ngemfazwe, ngezasembusweni, ngezintlalo. Iramente yake ibisiza kubuza kuye nayipina into yavela, nokuba yeyaluphina uhlobo; azimisele ukuba abafundise into kulonto ivelileyo<sup>91</sup>.

(In his sermons he moved with the signs of the times, applying a Christian mind to current issues so as to advice his parishioners accordingly on topics such as poverty, diseases, wars, politics, social welfare. His members could talk to him about any given issue; he was determined to inform them. - *own translation*)

Makiwane reveals that Mzimba's sincere personality, power of persuasion, and the conviction of truth were characteristics that appealed more to his congregation than eloquence, which he lacked. Paying tribute to Mzimba he noted that through his commitment the latter "made his congregation grow not only in numbers but also in Christian activity and the grace of giving, which is so lacking in many native congregations."<sup>92</sup> His biography speaks about the strong sense of resolution that was characteristic of Mzimba, "ubenga teti enye into, aze ayekwenza enye."<sup>93</sup> (He did not say one thing, and do the other). Thus, once his mind was made up Mzimba was determined to achieve his goals.

Mpambani Mzimba also served on Lovedale's Education Board as Presbytery representative for a number of years.<sup>94</sup> The Education Board was responsible for the management of Lovedale Institution, and Mzimba served to liaise between the Presbytery and the Institution. Brock argues that Mzimba was vocal and tended to have a clash of ideas with Stewart at the

<sup>89</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 178.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 178.

<sup>91</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 85.

<sup>92</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 178.

<sup>93</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, ibid., p. 85.

<sup>94</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 55 - 56; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 350 - 351.

meetings of the Board.<sup>95</sup> He was critical of Lovedale's new education policies under Stewart, as he was in favour of Govan's methods and a classical education for Africans. Writing in confidence to Bryce Ross, Mpambani made his stand crystal clear in the debate over classics:

I wish the various members of Presbytery to be very careful about the motion Dr. S.(tewart) gave notice of. I think it should be tabled before discussing it and let it lie for three months. Theological education at present is in a sad state and almost a failure. ... The Presbytery is to be saddled with the failure of this class since it is supposed that the members of it have done all they could to oppose it and especially Mr. B. Ross. Now if it turns out during the discussion that there is something to lay hold of in this, that shall go direct to the Foreign Mission Committee. Dr. S. escapes the blame. The Presbytery should have a good share also in the failure. ... I may be wrong in all this - but I fear this is the aim and object of that motion. I write in confidence.<sup>96</sup>

That Mzimba may have got an upperhand on Stewart in this instance is evinced by further developments. Stewart presented his revised curriculum at a Presbytery meeting in July 1883. The discussion of the matter was deferred until the following meeting in January 1884. At this meeting Mzimba attacked the proposed curriculum as not sufficient for ordination. He re-iterated his stand on the classics. Subsequently, the Presbytery rejected the proposed curriculum and refused to be party to what they perceived as Lovedale's lowering of standards.<sup>97</sup>

Such were the domestic politics of Presbytery. Mzimba's continued vocal criticisms of Lovedale's education, particularly with regards to the Africans brought him on a collision course with Stewart. This precipitated his resignation from the Education Board. His biographer alleges about Mzimba's resignation, "akuvananga ke nalapho ati amacebo ake ayefanele ukuba luncedo ekupatweni nase kulaulweni kwamadodana nentombi ezifunda kona akamkelwa akeviwa."<sup>98</sup> (There was no agreement (between Mzimba and the Board) on many critical issues, as his useful advises and views regarding the education of students at Lovedale were ignored - *own translation*.)

<sup>95</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *ibid.*, pp. 352f.

<sup>96</sup> Mzimba to Ross, 16 April 1880, MS 8494, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>97</sup> Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, 16 January 1884, MS 9040, *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 55.

His genius, however, was best seen in the administrative and organisational roles. He was hardly to be outdone by anyone in this regard and, as a result, "his congregation became an example"<sup>99</sup> to all the other Scottish missions. He was a positive force to be reckoned with in Scottish mission circles as "he naturally became the spokesman where native interests required to be expressed by a native."<sup>100</sup> Subsequently, his influence was felt beyond the boundaries of his own congregation as he began to establish himself as the champion of African rights. His influence also extended well beyond ecclesiastical matters, into socio-political ones as well.

Thus, during his short trips to the Transkei Mzimba became involved in those socio-political issues which were affecting Africans at the time. He brought these issues out into the open through protest correspondence. Writing to Bryce Ross he noted with sympathy the rebellious state of the people at Idutywa, Transkei, as a result of forced colonial government actions. The people were rebellious because "they want to get rid of the Magistrate" and his colonial policies.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, he was engaged with the social conditions of the African people at home. He noted with concern the effect of the tax laws of the 1880's upon the Africans at Lovedale. He reported to Bryce Ross again that Gaga, one of Lovedale outstations, "is very dry and food is very scarce and the taxes are pressing hard on the people."<sup>102</sup> His engagement with pertinent issues regarding his people subsequently won him respect and admiration as their leader.

Makiwane's assessment of him is that "by being recognised as standing for Native rights he became a great power and came to be recognised even in political circles as a man to be considered."<sup>103</sup> He was thus established as a public figure with great concern for and influence in matters affecting the African people. At the same time, he was a thorough church leader. Through his persistent devotion to the cause of the church, "the native ministry became respected and became a power." And also by the genuine service rendered

<sup>99</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op cit, p. 178.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>101</sup> Mzimba to Ross, 11 November 1880, MS 8497, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>102</sup> Mzimba to Ross, 10 July 1880, MS 8495, *Ibid.*

to his people they became "indebted to him for the manner in which he ... made a Native to be appreciated and considered."<sup>104</sup>

His special interest was in the field of education, and here he was one of the earliest propagators for advanced education for Africans. During Lovedale's classics debate he was certainly known for his often-expressed view that the classics were indispensable to a complete education of the Africans. He was thus vocal in his critique of Lovedale's education policies under Stewart, noting that the "theological education at present is in a sad state and almost a failure."<sup>105</sup> He argued that Stewart should not escape the blame and censure of Presbytery. Yet he also felt that the Presbytery itself shared in the failure. However, Mzimba did not stop at criticism. When, in his view, the Lovedale experiment failed, he pursued his conviction by becoming an active advocate for Africans receiving a North American education. To this end, after his split with the mission, he inaugurated a scheme whereby a good number of Africans were financed for further education at African-American Colleges. Campbell observes that:

In 1901 P. J. Mzimba, founder of the Africa Presbyterian Church, arrived in America with eight young men whom he enrolled at Lincoln University. By 1903 close to two dozen of Mzimba's followers were studying in the United States, not only at Lincoln but at Tuskegee, where their presence stunned the visiting James Stewart, Mzimba's former superintendent.<sup>106</sup>

Black South African thinking at this time seems to have been fascinated with the North American African-American experience. Campbell argues that although the former had no personal contact with the latter generally they were well acquainted with African-American history, which they sought to assimilate in many ways. Africans seem to have held romantic notions of the advancement of African-Americans:

America was the place where blacks had attained their 'freedom', a place where black people become judges, bishops, doctors, and 'members of Parliament'. How all this had come to pass, and precisely

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<sup>103</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>104</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, *ibid.*, pp. 178 - 179.

<sup>105</sup> Mzimba to Ross, 16 April 1880, MS 8494, Cory Library, op. cit.

<sup>106</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, op. cit., p. 256; J. T. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa*, op. cit., pp. 122 & 126.

what lessons Africans might draw from it, would remain subjects of considerable debate. African American progress was variously ascribed to unity, education, defiance, cooperation, political assertion, and political submission.<sup>107</sup>

Hence civilising Africans at the turn of the century were driven by these imaginative possibilities to emulate their soul brothers across the Atlantic. For many, "America remained an enchanted place, the stuff that dreams were made of,"<sup>108</sup> in Campbell's view. Consequently, a wide spectrum of people sought to appropriate some form of Afro-Americanism, invoking its models for local purposes, and finding ideological support for the notions of African transformation and progress. But above all, as Campbell notes, "Africans almost invariably attributed blacks' 'progress' in the United States to one factor: education. Whatever African Americans were presumed to be, it was education that had made them that way."<sup>109</sup> Subsequently, Black South Africans would devote their energies to emulating this model for their own contexts. Mpambani Mzimba was a notable pioneer in this field.

#### THE EDUCATION DEBATE REVISITED

At the turn of the century a debate was raging within African Christian circles regarding suitable methods and ideologies for the African advancement in South Africa. Mzimba is said to have argued, somewhat surprisingly, for the separation of education from politics by Africans in an address given in 1886.<sup>110</sup> On that occasion he encouraged Africans to put education first and politics last:

Let the White man rule, and the South African (black) people be out of politics. Let us be content to be ruled by the colonist. Let us only have to do with politics in order to encourage those white men who desire to give us schools and books. Could we prevent the colonists from depriving the native of the franchise? No ... The ignorant, poor, and superstitious native cannot rule the intelligent, experienced, wealthy colonists, however few in number.<sup>111</sup>

But Mzimba's advice was in order that Africans should through education gain empowerment and so political power would follow. As amongst African-Americans where there was no political participation by the masses, a few intelligentsia arising to claim their rights, so should it be the case amongst Black South Africans. The educated elite would then

<sup>107</sup> Op. cit, p. 210.

<sup>108</sup> Op. cit, p. 210.

<sup>109</sup> Op. cit, p. 131.

<sup>110</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 30 December 1886; 'National Education and the Franchise', PR 1611, Cory Library, Rhodes University.

<sup>111</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 30 December 1886; *ibid.*; PR 1611, op. cit

begin to challenge the racial assumptions upon which their exclusion was based, thereby allowing for African mass participation. Mzimba concluded by saying, "race prejudice is bound to give way before the influence of character, education and wealth."<sup>112</sup> Thus, Africans should mobilise and co-ordinate their resources in anticipation of a future political franchise.

Mzimba's evolutionary approach in the context of the 1880's socio-political situation was, even by the standards of the European controlled *The Port Elizabeth Telegraph and Eastern Province Standard* newspaper, rather "startling advice."<sup>113</sup> Typically, however, the newspaper went on to affirm that it was "good advice notwithstanding."<sup>114</sup> The newspaper, obviously with ulterior motives, supported Mzimba's views in its encouragement of Africans to "study politics" before they even contemplate dabbling in politics. The basis for accepting the advice was that, according to the *Telegraph*, it was "from a Kafir to Kafirs, spontaneous, undictated to, unsuggested."<sup>115</sup> Mzimba's advice was fed into African readership by other newspapers as well. The *Cape Argus*, according to Chirenje, proclaimed that the advice "ought to allay the fears of whites who imagined that blacks wanted to sit in the Cape Colony Parliament."<sup>116</sup> Likewise the Afrikaner paper *De Zuid Afrikaan* also expressed its "great regard" for Mzimba's advice. However, the *Port Elizabeth Telegraph* was more realistic in its overall assessment that "the dissemination of his (Mzimba) views will gain him kudos amongst the opponents of Kafir education. For ourselves, we are disposed to regard his lecture as important."<sup>117</sup> At least, it showed awareness of the controversial nature of such views at the time.

The kudos did not come from just the opponents of African education, however. There was a heated reaction from fellow African intellectuals who did not regard Mzimba's advice as being helpful. John Tengo Jabavu, the editor of *Imvo zabaNtsundu* (The African Opinion)

<sup>112</sup> *Imvo ZabaNtsundu*, 30 December 1886; op. cit; PR 1611, op. cit

<sup>113</sup> *The Port Elizabeth Telegraph and Eastern Province Standard*, Thursday, 6 January 1887, PR 1611, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Op. cit

<sup>116</sup> Cited in J. M. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa*, op. cit, p. 32.

newspaper was vocal in his critique.<sup>118</sup> Despite the Port Elizabeth *Telegraph's* support for Mzimba's view, Jabavu was vocal in his criticism of the latter. Mzimba's argument for Africans "to shut their eyes (to politics) and open their mouths (to education)" was branded as a "extremely benevolent and juvenile advice", to which Africans must be "very chary to follow", according to Jabavu.<sup>119</sup> In Jabavu's opinion "anything more injudicious, in view of the vital interests of the Native people has, we submit never, been uttered by the lips of (an African) man."<sup>120</sup>

Jabavu could not fathom how any African would be favorably disposed towards views that would promote that element of the Colonial Government's whose intent was "to make the black man feel 'that the white man is Baas?'"<sup>121</sup>. For Africans to follow Mzimba's advice, according to Jabavu, it would mean "the total weakening of the English element in the Cape Parliament and the eternal ascendancy of the Dutch and Dutch notions, which whatever they will be in the future, have at present a retrogressive and mischievous tendency."<sup>122</sup> Thus, *ipso facto*, the withdrawal of Africans from politics would lead to the ascendancy of the Dutch whose rule would mean "the enslaving of the black man and the return of the reign of the sjambok."<sup>123</sup>

Jabavu's preference for British rule, which he perceived as being "representative and free to a fault,"<sup>124</sup> is obvious. Similarly, his love for "her Gracious Majesty - long may she reign"<sup>125</sup> was not surpassed. In contrast, therefore, he castigated Mzimba's preference of the American model, commenting that "our reverend mentor seems to be unaware that the American institutions are Republican and have for a long time been a sort of 'Lot's wife' to all countries

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<sup>117</sup> The Port Elizabeth *Telegraph* and *Eastern Province Standard*, Thursday, 6 January 1887, PR 1611, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>118</sup> Cited in 'Political Natives', Uitenhage Times, PR 1611, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Op. cit

<sup>121</sup> Op. cit

<sup>122</sup> Op. cit

<sup>123</sup> Op. cit

<sup>124</sup> Op. cit

<sup>125</sup> Op. cit The Jabavu's were always more inclined towards the British Empire in their politics and preference. Prof. D. D. T. Jabavu, the son of John Tengo Jabavu, *Imvo zabaNtsundu* (The African Opinion) owner and editor, was a graduate of Cambridge University, for instance.

aiming at having decent forms of government."<sup>126</sup> *Imvo* thus dissented from Mzimba's views. Such was the nature of the heated debate on African education at the close of the nineteenth century among the African intelligentsia. Significantly, it shows a variety of views and preferences, including Republican and imperial notions. Organic methods and strategies had not yet clearly emerged.

In many reports Mzimba echoed the ideas of the African-American historian George Washington Williams' *History of the Negro Race in America*, which he directly cited in his address,<sup>127</sup> and the similar sentiments of Booker T. Washington "from his vantage point at Tuskegee Institute Alabama."<sup>128</sup> Such views, as we have indicated, were not shared by all literate Africans at the time, but Mzimba did not bother to respond to the controversy and the lively debate his position provoked. He seems to have learnt well from his mentor, Stewart! Nonetheless, in retrospect the debate had, in Chirenje's view, "the cumulative effect of encouraging Africans to be their own spokesmen and masters on political and religious issues that affected African life."<sup>129</sup> Indeed, Mzimba himself was, twelve years later, to dissent from Scottish patronage and advocate African nationalist sentiments. Furthermore, the debate reveals that there was no homogeneity of opinion among educated African Christians themselves regarding a plan of action for African mass transformation. For Campbell, the primacy of education in civilising African's discourse of the time reveals their captivity missionary ideals:

Even as they rejected mission governance, African Christians retained many missionary assumptions, especially about the relationship between education and racial progress. Indeed, much of the popular resentment against European missions stemmed from the perceived inefficacy of their schools. Missionaries were accused of artificially limiting African educational preferment, of relying too heavily on vernacular languages, of dispensing pabulum rather than knowledge and skills that blacks needed to survive in the emerging colonial order.<sup>130</sup>

Thus, despite the rhetoric and, undoubtedly, commendable efforts at independence, African Christians like Mzimba often remained children of the missionaries.

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<sup>126</sup> Cited in 'Political Natives', Uitenhage Times, PR 1611, Cory Library, op. cit

<sup>127</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, op. cit, p. 127.

<sup>128</sup> J. T. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa*, op. cit, p. 32.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>130</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, *ibid.*, p. 210.

Mzimba's concern for the lot of the African people led to him being considered sensitive and cautious about European-African relationships. Makiwane reveals that he keenly felt what he considered a slight either on himself or his people and often could neither eat nor sleep after a meeting of the Board of Education or Presbytery.<sup>131</sup> As we have argued in the case of Soga, this caution and sensitivity concerning African-European interaction reveals a growing self-awareness and race-consciousness on Mzimba's part. He was in the process of developing a fuller grasp and comprehension of the socio-political situation, even if there were cover-ups within the church itself. And naturally, the person who would be considered 'sensitive' over the subject of race is the one who is on the receiving end of racism. Considering the admittedly worsening situation of race relations in the 1880's, this race awareness largely contributed to the subsequent souring of the relations between Mzimba and the Scottish missionaries, and also to the eventual secession from the European controlled Mission in favour of an African Church.

The founding of the African Presbyterian Church by Mzimba, to which we shall turn shortly, was the direct result of the latter's growing nationalism. Makiwane remarks, "I regard the movement he (Mzimba) headed not so much as the formation of a native church as a protest against the treatment of Natives which regards the Native merely from his commercial value."<sup>132</sup> Thus, Mzimba walked out of the Scottish mission because of a profound appreciation of himself and his people whom he could not afford to see being exploited on the grounds of race. Often compared to the so-called understanding and moderate Elijah Makiwane, his long-time friend and colleague, for example, this step places Mzimba among the more radical African Christian nationalists of the 1880's, like Nehemiah Xoxo Tile, Mangena Maake Mokone, and James Matha Dwane. We will continue to explore this radical aspect of Mzimba's nationalism in the next chapter.

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<sup>131</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 178.

<sup>132</sup> E. Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 180.

## CHAPTER SIX

### MZIMBA: STRUCTURAL RESPONSE TO MISSIONARY DOMINATION

Mpambani Mzimba, we recall, was one of the second-generation of African clergy in the Scottish Presbyterian Mission after Soga. He was the next African to be ordained into Scottish Presbyterian ministry in South Africa, and this was twenty years after Tiyo Soga. As we previously mentioned, the process of African ministerial formation in the Scottish mission was exceedingly slow. During the seventy-nine years of its existence in the Eastern Cape between 1821 and 1900 the Mission ordained just a handful of African ministers.<sup>1</sup> However much the GMS was committed to developing an African ministry, there was a continuous goal shifting from an earlier commitment by the missionaries. As late as 1866, the Foreign Mission Council had reiterated its principles:

We are then temporarily to introduce the gospel; its outward maintenance and perpetuation must be left to the natives themselves. So soon therefore as native congregations are formed, the care of them ought as speedily as possible to be consigned to the native pastorate, and the general supervision of them to educated ministers - while the missionaries should be free to pass on to the regions beyond and pioneer the way for new congregations to be in time delivered over to additional native pastors.<sup>2</sup>

Etherington asserts that proven "African abilities and avowed missionary intentions ought to have combined to produce scores of black clergy for southeast Africa."<sup>3</sup> However, the opposite was true as missionaries developed a visible lack of confidence in the former. The problem was that even those who believed in the African potential saw this as something to be realised in a distant future. The Africans in their view were not ready to assume positions of total responsibility. Stewart echoed the general sentiments:

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<sup>1</sup> These include Mpambani Mzimba (1875), Elijah Makiwane (1876), Edward Tsewu (1885), Andries Ontong, Joseph Dambuza, Ndongo, Petwell, and the Matshikwe brothers - all ordained in 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in J. Wells, James Stewart, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

<sup>3</sup> N. Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

I believe in the vitality of the Kafir race. ... It may be a mistake, but I cannot help believing that God has some purpose yet to serve with the African race. ... It is not impossible, either, that God in his own time may raise up, even out of such unpromising material, men of commanding influence to do His work in His own time.<sup>4</sup>

An African ministry was essential, and indeed a prerequisite, for the establishment of a sustainable Christian church in Africa. The Christian faith needed local agents for the ultimate evangelisation of the local indigenes. This was necessary to facilitate the process of adaptation of Christianity and the church to its newfound context, and to foster a sense of belonging to and ownership by the majority of its indigenous membership. However, one major obstacle was the increasingly hardening attitude of missionaries themselves, rather than unreadiness of Africans. Each time they advanced more excuses why the African ordinations could not yet be implemented. Full African agency was always yet to be realised.

Indeed, it is a widely held view that, of all the Foreign Mission Council missionaries, those in South Africa were perceived as being completely indifferent, if not outright opposed, to the Africanisation of the Reformed Christianity.<sup>5</sup> The Scottish missionaries in South Africa were, *ipso facto*, one of the least supervised by their mission bodies. They were given a good deal of freedom to operate as they wished on most occasions.<sup>6</sup> Thus, they were free to offer unchallenged assumptions on native people and issues alike. There was always the Soga factor for consideration in the debate on African ministry. In a clear reference to him Stewart soberly observed that "we may be thankful that we have at least one native preacher of the Kaffir race, and who has already given sufficient proofs of what the race is capable."<sup>7</sup> This should have facilitated the implementation of a programme of African clergy formation. Instead, Tiyo Soga's precedence as incentive for general African ordinations was largely ignored, as he was regarded as the exception rather than the rule of African capacity.

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<sup>4</sup> BC 106, H2, Stewart's Papers, op. cit

<sup>5</sup> See B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 30 - 31; E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), p. 77.

<sup>6</sup> BC 106, I 18, Stewart's Papers, *ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> BC 106, H2, Stewart's Papers, op. cit

To reiterate the GMS missionary attitudes and praxis of this period certainly reveal the growing shift towards racialism. We have discussed in chapter two the paradigm shift in missionary enterprise at the turn of the nineteenth century. This period was characterised by hardening racial attitudes of European missionaries towards their African Christian subjects. The initial practice of sympathetic consideration and value of Africans was substituted with racially arrogant and paternalistic praxis. Significantly, Piggin observes that the Scottish missionaries were, due to their nationalist background and higher levels of education, more prone to the new ideological shift towards racism:

They impressed as over-confident, assertive, opinionated, dogmatic. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that some Scottish missionaries were among the most confident and dogmatic of British missionaries; their Gospel was undergirded by a coherent philosophy and compounded with cultural nationalism. ... The Scots were more tempted than others to equate cultural aggression with missionary activity.<sup>8</sup>

Let it suffice to provide just one example of the racist thinking of the time as expressed in the *Christian Express*, the organ for articulation of GMS missionary ideas. As late as August 1897 the *Christian Express* maintained the view of the inadequacy of African agency in Christian mission:

Let us be frank in our statements. Christian missions have not yet raised through training, and education from among those who have been rescued from heathen thralldom, sufficient men to carry on in safety the work of upbuilding the Church and of evangelising the sweltering masses of heathendom. ... No continent requires the foreign missionary to guide, to control, and to organise into Churches its peoples more than Africa. ... Years must elapse before the efforts of missionaries can be successful in training converts from African heathenism in the qualities and habits that are required in those who would rule in the Church, and would guide and direct the efforts of evangelisation. For many years to come, the African must be guided and trained by the educated foreigner. Today this is seen as clearly as the sun at noonday by those Christian Africans who are not carried away by sheer infatuation and dense ignorance, or through false optimism and patriotic sentiment.<sup>9</sup>

In a rare expression of an awareness of the need for an African Church and Christianity the Rev. E. Jacottet, missionary of the Paris Evangelical Mission in Lesotho, expressed the profound opinion that:

Christianity is here (South Africa) far more foreign and exotic than it ever was among the Saxons and the Slavs. If ever it should exert on the bulk of the Native races the same attraction it did once in Europe, so as to draw them into its bosom, it must needs become thoroughly African and present itself to the Africans in such a form that they will be able to understand it and accept it as something of their own. This is the reason why we should have

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<sup>8</sup> S. Piggin, *Making Evangelical Missionaries, 1789 - 1858: The Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India* (The Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984), p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

in this country, as in China or Japan, national, or, if you prefer the word, racial Churches where an African type of Christianity, and, I add, of Church government, would be evolved, more adopted to their needs and to their ways of thinking than ours ever can be.<sup>10</sup>

However, Jacottet put his neck on the block by expressing views that were so contrary to the general thinking of most missionaries at the time. Disappointingly, it was a Presbyterian missionary, and the son of one of the Scottish pioneer missionaries in the Eastern Cape at that, who chopped off Jacottet's head, so to speak. Exactly ten months later Brownlee J. Ross, a third generation GMS missionary from the famous Ross family in the Scottish mission, published an article in which he directly refuted Jacottet's suppositions, thereby seeking to dismiss their relevance. While the title of his article was revealing, "African Type of Christianity?", its contents were downright condescending:

Considering the situation of the African people we see the absurdity of looking for an African type of Christianity and an African contribution to the life of the Church. They lack a literature, an intellectual tradition, and all that comes through heredity. Theirs is a primitive, sadly limited and concrete language. Above all they are in closest contact with the civilization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and they lack that first essential for the growth of a national literature, and thought, national independence and self-government.<sup>11</sup>

Brownlee Ross' sense of history, both secular and sacred, is suspect. For instance, Soga's literary work had put paid to the idea that the isiXhosa language was "sadly limited and concrete", as Ross charged. Instead, Ross put on racist spectacles and discarded historical evidence and his own life experience in Kaffraria. Jacottet had argued for an indigenous African Church on the grounds that an African brand of Christianity and church governance would evolve to meet the real needs both of the Christian faith and the local context. This is theologically and historically sound, hence Ross' vehement attack on the idea is puzzling to say the least. That it was merely an expression of the new racist arrogance is revealed by Ross himself who regarded Jacottet's opinion as "an attempt to adhere to the views and methods of our grandfathers."<sup>12</sup> Ross' furious attack on a missionary who expressed a belief in African Church and Christianity thus reveals his ideological departure from "our grandfathers" assimilationist tradition. Likewise he concluded, "this really sets one a-wondering if

<sup>10</sup> E. Jacottet, 'Separate Churches?', July 1907, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 379.

<sup>11</sup> Brownlee, J. Ross, 'African Type of Christianity?', April 1908, cited in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, ibid., p. 387. Brownlee Ross was a son of Richard Ross, and a grandson of John Ross.

<sup>12</sup> Op. cit, p. 387.

Mr. Jacottet truly thinks that the Natives have minds that can remember and reason at all."<sup>13</sup> Clearly it was not the relevance, or otherwise, of Jacottet's idea rather racial considerations that were at work.

The GMS missionary intransigence in this period was manifested in the handling of particular mission cases regarding congregations like Burnshill and Johannesburg specifically. In both cases Presbytery refused to have an African appointed as they were regarded as being unfit for these appointments. Also, the desperate conditions of African clergy reveal the reality of racial inequality in the Christian mission. These eventually led to an African reaction in the form of nationalism expressed through rejection of the European mission and the founding of African Initiated churches.

#### BURNSHILL, JOHANNESBURG AND THE TSEWU FACTORS

The Foreign Mission Council recommended in 1885 that William Stuart be transferred from Burnshill Mission to Tsolo and Qumbu in the Transkei, with Elijah Makiwane succeeding him. Stuart was willing and, interestingly, had expressed the need for an African minister at Burnshill. However, the Presbytery of Kaffraria was not yet ready for such move. Subsequently John Don, clerk of the Presbytery, prejudged the matter with his negative remarks to Stewart:

I cannot (formulate?) a positive judgement about Elijah Makiwane, but negative. I should be glad to find that he does possess the necessary qualities; and for ( ? ) I know, he may. But it is plain to me that the Burnshill station needs a man well raised above the people morally and spiritually to keep them up. I should almost say they need a European. What I mean is they need a man with the amount of energy, power of initiative, and ( ? ) of personal character, more likely to be found in a European than among the educated natives at their present stage.<sup>14</sup>

As the result the Presbytery flatly refused Stuart's suggestion, and went on to object to the Council's recommendations. The reasons given to the Foreign Mission Council were:

There are stations the peculiar circumstances of which can only be known by those on the spot and Burnshill is such a station. The district is peopled partly by Fingoes between whom there has been a very strong tribal antipathy. ... It is also hemmed in by other missionary bodies than the Free Church and there can be no doubt that the mere presence of a European missionary at Burnshill does much to preserve the place from aggression. ...

<sup>13</sup> Op. cit, p. 387.

<sup>14</sup> Don to Stewart, 27 November 1879, BC 106, C58.2, op cit - (emphasis original).

Territorially our stations on this side of the Kei are at present continuous and this is no slight advantage in working them. To lose Burnshill in whole or in part would destroy this continuity and break up our mission.<sup>15</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Presbytery's view succeeded and the Foreign Mission Council gave in. Subsequently James MacDonald from Ngqamakwe, Transkei, was transferred to Tsolo and Qumbu instead, and William Stuart stayed at Burnshill. Gqubule notes that Stuart had become "an old, ineffective European missionary,"<sup>16</sup> thus making his replacement necessary. Yet again the Lovedale missionaries militated against Home policy in their reluctance regarding African clergy. The Presbytery clearly distrusted the African ability to maintain the unity and continuity of the church and to conserve the tradition of Burnshill.

Even Presbyterian polity, which did not allow for direct ministerial supervision of the other, was perceived as a handicap. This was because, according to common missionary view, Africans could not deliver on their own without missionary assistance and oversight. Don, once more led the assault against the African capacity; "there is a sluggishness and inertia about our native brethren that militates against them."<sup>17</sup> Stewart echoed similar sentiments: "it may be asked why Native workmen do not afterwards produce work of the same quality, and of their own accord. The reply to that is, that as yet, European direction seems a necessity as to design, accuracy of measurement, and finish."<sup>18</sup> This was backed by an ideological view which, despite Lovedale education, regarded the African clergy as "the new ministers taken from the plough to the pulpit."<sup>19</sup> Missionary opinion against African ministerial capacity was totally negative.

<sup>15</sup> Cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *op. cit.*, p. 42 - 43.

<sup>16</sup> T. S. N. Gqubule, 'Examination of the Theological Education of Africans', *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> J. Stewart, *The Lovedale Catalogue of Articles Exhibited at the Cape Industrial Exhibition, September 1884* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1884), Introductory note.

<sup>19</sup> MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, Cory Library, Rhodes University; cf. the title of H. T. Cousins' book written in this period, *From Kafir Kraal to Pulpit: The story of Tiyo Soga, first ordained preacher of the kafir race* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., 1899).

The fact that African ministers had received good theological training at their hands at Lovedale did nothing to alter the attitudes of missionaries about their capacity. They were continually perceived as intellectually unfit and temperamentally unable to handle complex church situations and procedures. Don was quite categorical in his disapproval of the African capacity: "a native is not fit to occupy the position of a missionary in charge of an old station with its schools, its finances and manifold relations to the European community and to the government by passing through the educational mill".<sup>20</sup> It seems that some kind of job reservation applied with regard to certain congregations! This was confirmed by another insensitive Presbytery incident.

In order to appreciate the Johannesburg congregation matter we need to put it in broad perspective. Edward Tsewu, whom we briefly mentioned earlier, was now the minister of the congregation. Ordained in 1884, Tsewu was appointed to a congregation in Idutywa, Transkei, at the beginning of 1885. In response to Mzimba's recommendation to Presbytery in 1890 for the appointment of a minister to Johannesburg, Tsewu was then transferred. Mzimba had been seconded to facilitate the establishment of the Johannesburg congregation and, after spending about six months there, presented his report to Presbytery. Thus, it should be noted that Tsewu's translation to the Johannesburg congregation in the first place had been occasioned by Mzimba through the Kaffraria Presbytery. Although outside the geographical boundaries of Kaffraria, the Johannesburg congregation was placed under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Kaffraria. The reason for this anomaly was the bigotry of the local white Presbytery of the Transvaal which, according to Brock, "would not give Tsewu an equal place in that court"<sup>21</sup> as Presbyterian polity required.

Tsewu belonged to the amaRharhabe-Xhosa, as he himself testified at the Native Affairs Commission in 1904, "I am an Amaxosa (sic), a Gaika."<sup>22</sup> According to his tribute, written by Samuel Edward

<sup>20</sup> Don to Smith, 24 January & 14 March 1898, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 185; also R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, pp. 214ff.

<sup>21</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>22</sup> Tsewu's evidence, 14 October 1904, SANAC, Vol. IV, paragraph 43, 754, p. 803; S. E. K. Mqhayi, 'Umfi U-Mfundisi Edward Tsewu' (A Tribute to the Rev. Edward Tsewu), *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.

Krune Mqhayi,<sup>23</sup> Tsewu was born at Gqumashe, outside Lovedale, to Christian parents of the Scottish mission.<sup>24</sup> His father was Mbilini Tsewu, *iphakathi* (counsellor) of Chief Maqoma, of the amaJingqi clan. His mother came from the amaDala clan. Mbilini Tsewu resided at Bofolo, Fort Beaufort, with his family until a forced relocation after the 1851-53 Frontier War. They were then resettled at Gqumashe, a mission station near Lovedale. In addition to having been *iphakathi* (counsellor), his father was also a deacon at the Lovedale Native church.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Tsewu and Mzimba families at one stage were both members of the Lovedale church. It was here that Edward was born in 1855, *ngoweMofu* (in the year of the cow disease), according to *Umthetheli* newspaper.<sup>26</sup> He studied at Lovedale for all his education,<sup>27</sup> beginning with a teacher's course in 1871, after which he started with a teaching career at Khobonqaba, Adelaide, in 1876. Two years later he returned to continue with higher education leading to matric, which he received in 1879. He began his theological education in 1880 until 1884. He was ordained in 1885, exactly ten years after the ordination of Mzimba, thus becoming the fourth African minister within the Scottish mission.

In terms of his personality, Tsewu had an acute legal mind, "kodwa wayenani angafundeli ubugqweta?,"<sup>28</sup> according to Mqhayi. While he associated freely with white neighbours in Johannesburg and elsewhere, and was respected for his dignity, he exhibited patriotic and nationalist sentiments and was responsible for the successful fight for land rights on behalf of Africans in

<sup>23</sup> S. E. K. Mqhayi was the foremost traditional and literary poet of the amaXhosa. He successfully combined the two styles of poetry. His poetry, oral and written, and other vernacular writings were a socio-political commentary. Deeply influential and a nationalist figure, he became known as *Imbongi yeSizwe Jikelele* (The national Xhosa praise-singer).

<sup>24</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Millard, 'A study of the perceived causes of schism in some Ethiopian-type Churches in the Cape and Transvaal, 1884 - 1925', unpublished D.Th. thesis, University of South Africa, 1995, p. 209.

<sup>26</sup> The event in the year in which Edward Tsewu was born was known as *unyaka weMofu*. It was widely held that the cow disease which ravaged the amaXhosa cows was caused by an imported Dutch bull of a certain type. The bull was brought to the Eastern Cape in 1855 by the colonial authorities. AmaXhosa believed that this was a deliberate attempt to destroy their cattle. See C. C. Crais, *The Making of the Colonial Order*, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>27</sup> T. D. Mveli Skota, *The African Yearly Register*, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.

Johannesburg.<sup>29</sup> At the Native Affairs Commission Tsewu expressed his opposition and disapproval of the government's proposed forced removal of Africans from a location that was "about two miles" from Johannesburg to a new township "twelve miles" away.<sup>30</sup> As Tsewu said to the Commission: "I have studied the scheme and have read it through, and have written a protest to the Town Council against removing us from where we are, taking us twelve miles away, and not paying us full compensation for our houses. That I have done."<sup>31</sup> He consistently argued that people needed to be nearer their places of work, and that the new township would militate against this and would also prove costly to Africans in terms of travel. Contrary to the Commission's insistence that the new township would be comfortable to Africans, Tsewu maintained that "the Native's opinion on his comfort is that he is comfortable enough where he is now, except for the water supply, and with regard to that water supply, they are going to approach the Council, to ask for water where they are now."<sup>32</sup>

Mqhayi reminds us about Tsewu's affinity with the traditional chiefs. He notes that Tsewu buried Chief Gomna Sandile of the amaRharhabe-Xhosa at Kliptown where he had died. Such association with the chieftaincy was a radical and subversive act in colonial-mission circles where it was generally suppressed. But Tsewu defended the chieftaincy and traditional worldview at the Native Affairs Commission. He corrected the Commission's misconceptions about the chieftaincy<sup>33</sup>, and positively reviewed the pre-colonial African worldview. Africans, he declared:

Were governed by their own laws, and those laws, I think were carried on very beautifully, as far as I can remember. The Natives obeyed their Chiefs and they loved their Chiefs, because their Chiefs ruled them well. Now, since the Natives have come under the English government, there have been great many changes, which I do not think are beneficial.<sup>34</sup>

When Tsewu died, after seventy-six years, on 1 November 1931. Mqhayi paid a traditional poetic tribute to him, praising his achievements and character:

<sup>29</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.; SANAC, Vol. IV, op. cit, pp. 787 - 788.

<sup>30</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, *ibid.*, pp. 801 - 805.

<sup>31</sup> Op. cit, paragraph 43,744, p. 802

<sup>32</sup> Op. cit, paragraph 43,747, p. 802.

<sup>33</sup> Op. cit, pp. 799f.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit, pp. 793 - 794.

Ayifanga ibiziwe,	(He has not died but called,)
Ubiziwe um-Jingqi!	(MJingqi has been called!)
Wabizwa ne rele,	(Called together with his sword,)
Ne kaka no mpongolo.	(With his shield and ...?)
Itol' lama gora liye kwa manye.	(A young hero has joined other heroes.)
Sulan' inyembezi maKwemta;	(Wipe your tears maMkwemta,)
Nawe ma-Cisana, Ndebe, Nkomibomvu!	(Even you maCisana, Ndebe, Nkomibomvu!)
Makube luvuyo, ipakanyiswe, -	(Let there be joy, let him be elevated.)
Iye kulw' amadabi isenyangwaneni! <sup>35</sup>	(He has gone to fight the battles above!)

*Own translation.*

As already mentioned Tsewu was transferred, at the recommendation of Mzimba, to the pastoral charge of the Johannesburg congregation where his ministry, according to Millard, "appeared successful."<sup>36</sup> From humble beginnings he achieved much at the congregation, including building a town Church hall at Albert Street.<sup>37</sup> Trouble surfaced in 1895. As a city church at the centre of the country's social and political melting pot the congregation, as Brock notes, "was beset with difficulties from the beginning; it was exposed to all the pressures of the city, to anti-African legislation and discrimination, to inter-tribal conflict and the instability of migrant labour."<sup>38</sup> Not surprisingly problems regarding inter-tribal conflict, church building, and financial discrepancies ensued. The Congregation seems to have been, as a result, divided into two factions. At a Presbytery meeting at Burnshill in November 1895 the faction opposed to Tsewu laid charges against him. The Presbytery resolved to appoint a commission of inquiry comprising Stewart (Convener) with Mzimba as one of the members to investigate. In the meantime, Presbytery agreed to transfer Tsewu from the congregation, as it had been decided that the charges against him were of a serious nature thus warranting urgent action.<sup>39</sup> Tsewu opposed Presbytery's decision to transfer him with a petition of support from his followers begging for his non-transference.

<sup>35</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.

<sup>36</sup> J. A. Millard, 'A study of the perceived causes of schism', op. cit, p. 209.

<sup>37</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932; Cf. the negative view of Tsewu in *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

<sup>39</sup> For the list of the charges see *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

The commission submitted their report at the December 1896 meeting of Presbytery, resulting in Tsewu being cited to appear at a King Williams town meeting on 22 February 1897.<sup>40</sup> Tsewu failed to appear before Presbytery, which felt compelled to libel him. This the Presbytery did in the harshest terms possible, "... for deceitfulness and actual lying, cooking of reports, doubtful action in pecuniary matters unconstitutional and tyrannical action towards office bearers and people and insistent defiance of the Presbytery."<sup>41</sup> The commission had discovered that Tsewu got himself involved, together with a good number of his members, in the Ethiopian movement. They were themselves implicitly agitating for independence from the Scottish mission.<sup>42</sup> Subsequently, the Presbytery recommended Tsewu's deposition. In response Tsewu appealed to the Synod, which in turn upheld the Presbytery of Kaffraria's findings and thus deposed him from the Scottish mission. Tsewu accused Stewart of bias as head of Commission and exacerbating the split in his congregation.<sup>43</sup> He then issued a ten-page pamphlet in his own defence, and, in turn, indicting Stewart for his role as the Convener and his damning report to Presbytery.<sup>44</sup>

Tsewu, subsequently, left with a few members of the congregation to form the Independent Native Presbyterian Church.<sup>45</sup> Despite its low profile on mission records, this marked the first African declaration of independence from the Scottish mission.<sup>46</sup> More significantly it had a direct influence on Mzimba, providing a concrete example of African independence within the Presbyterian tradition. Whereas the Ethiopian influence on Mzimba is purely a matter of conjecture, according to Brock, the Tsewu paradigm was not.<sup>47</sup> As Saunders points out, despite Mzimba's contact with the Tile Church in the Transkei in the 1880's, it was the Johannesburg experience in 1896 that had "probably the

<sup>40</sup> *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>41</sup> Don to Smith, 12 April 1897, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 361.

<sup>42</sup> Mzimba to Stewart, 12 August and 11 September 1896, BC 106, C167.8, Stewart's Papers, op cit; *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>43</sup> *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>44</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932; *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>45</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, op. cit, paragraph 43,561, p. 787; T. D. Skota, *The African Yearly Register*, op. cit, p. 79.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. *The Christian Express*, 2 August 1897.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 359.

stronger influence on his decision to found his own church."<sup>48</sup> But Mzimba, Stewart's fellow commissioner, had not condoned the state of events at the Johannesburg congregation either. Indeed, he did not escape castigation by Tsewu who felt that his behaviour at the commission was 'unchristian'.

Nonetheless, despite Mzimba's support for the commission's report his experience of and exposure to the realities facing the African in an urban, multi-cultural and European dominated context heightened his appreciation and sympathy for the African struggle for independence from European domination:

If the harshness continues God knows what good will come of it. I do not know myself and do not want to predict the future. This I know that the natives are exceedingly restless just now in these parts. They do not intend to fight against any government but they have become more interested in education and religion than they have ever been before.<sup>49</sup>

The fact that his Johannesburg experiences preceded his own secession meant that they had a bearing upon his view of the Lovedale experiences. Henceforth, Mzimba was to exercise more sensitivity towards the manner of the European treatment of Africans. Brock argues that it may have given him another perspective for dealing with the negative Presbytery experiences: "it is plain, however, that his experiences of conditions in Johannesburg forced Mzimba into a sharper definition of his own attitudes which, in turn, made him more ready to resort to resignation."<sup>50</sup> Burchell is more categorical; "his visit to Johannesburg could have been a decisive turning point in his life."<sup>51</sup> Indeed, early in the year following the Johannesburg 'learning experience', Mzimba split from the Scottish mission.

There was, however, one final test of European missionary character that remained before Mzimba followed Tsewu's example. This was whether the Johannesburg troubles would be viewed as a result of African inefficiency and, therefore, lead to the appointment of an European successor to Tsewu, or

<sup>48</sup> C. C. Saunders, 'Tile and the Thembu Church', op. cit, p. 567.

<sup>49</sup> Mzimba to Stewart, 1 September 1896, BC 106, A30, op. cit

<sup>50</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 362.

whether they would be regarded as social in character requiring another African as most suitable to deal with. The Scottish missionaries opted for the first alternative, thereby failing "so miserably to meet this test," as Brock puts it. At a Synod meeting on 19 July 1897 the matter of the Johannesburg congregation's vacancy was discussed and resolved thus:

Owing to the variety of races and tribal jealousies and especially owing to the harsh treatment of the natives at Johannesburg, and the disabilities under which a native minister labours because of that treatment, the work there will be carried on most efficiently and satisfactorily by a European missionary.<sup>52</sup>

This was clearly reminiscent of the Burnshill discourse, with clear racial overtones, and it was perceived in this way by Mzimba. Not surprisingly he alone at the Synod had entered his dissent from this decision. Makiwane was incidentally not at the meeting otherwise it would be interesting to know how he would have voted at the time. But three months later in October Makiwane did express his opinion when he wrote to *Imvo zabaNtsundu* to express his dissent.<sup>53</sup> He charged that this was "the third occasion that statements were made selecting colour lines as the grounds of the unfitness of a missionary."<sup>54</sup> So, even the moderate Makiwane had been silently displeased at the racially motivated decisions. Despite Presbytery's public utterances regarding the necessities of a European minister in Johannesburg, real motives were revealed in private, thus vindicating Mzimba and Makiwane's racial perception of the Synod's resolution. Don was once more categorical in his view:

... We cannot afford to act upon the assumption that the native is really equal to the European. ... I have been notoriously a friend, if you will, a partisan of the native ministry, but have sorrowfully modified some of my earlier ideas owing to larger experience and more intimate knowledge. They are at their best as assistants or as ministers working under the surveillance of Europeans.<sup>55</sup>

The Synodical resolution shattered the Africans' confidence in the Scottish mission's commitment to racial equality. Not even the highest Presbyterian Church Court, the Synod, would receive them on

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<sup>51</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 121.

<sup>52</sup> Synod Minutes, 17 July 1897, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 363.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 365; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 123.

<sup>54</sup> Cited in Mzimba's resignation letter, paragraph. 18, L. N. Mzimba, Umfundisi, op. cit, p. 59.

equal status. For them this was the final straw, and served to put the final nail in the coffin of race relations within the Scottish mission church. It confirmed the suspicions they held all along that the African would never receive equal status in colonial society, even though they hoped for racial equality at least within the household of God. For, Mzimba and Makiwane belonged to that generation of the African clergy during the 1880's who were, in Mills terms, "stunningly hopeful and expectant that prejudice and inequality would disappear"<sup>56</sup> from the mission enterprise. Henceforth, it was left to the Africans themselves to take matters into their own hands. Makiwane, on the one hand, resolved to give the Scottish mission a fourth chance. He was a steady Presbyterian,<sup>57</sup> of the '*ungangxami ungaphumli, mKrestundin' usendleleni*'<sup>58</sup> type. On the other hand, Mzimba took the issues by the scruff of the neck, so to speak, by choosing to 'drink from his own well.' In his own words, "our experience is that the missionaries of the Free Church are at present unable to understand the South African native or to work with him."<sup>59</sup>

#### THE FORMATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AFRICA

It has been assumed that Mzimba's secession was the direct result of his exposure to the free culture of Scotland during his visit in 1893 and by his acquisition there of money, as was the case with Dwane.<sup>60</sup> For Sundkler:

Mzimba was, like Dwane, widely traveled. He represented his race at the Jubilee Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1892, and after founding his Church he visited America in 1902. One of the reasons why Mzimba broke with his mission and with that great missionary statesman, Dr. J. Stewart of Lovedale, was that he had been

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<sup>55</sup> Don to Lindsay, 24 January 1898, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 364.

<sup>56</sup> W. Mills, cited in L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, op. cit, p. 125.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *ibid.*, pp. 370f.; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> These are words from one of the popular hymns in the isiXhosa Presbyterian Hymnbook, meaning 'do not hurry do not tarry, you Christian pilgrim'.

<sup>59</sup> Cited in S. Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906 - 1908 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 179.

<sup>60</sup> B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 42f.; R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 246; Paper on Ethiopianism, MS 10 697, Stormont's Papers, op. cit; A. Lea, 'Native Separatist Churches' in (ed.) J. D. Taylor, *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 79.

given considerable sums of money in Scotland. On returning to South Africa, he claimed the right to allocate these sums to such objects as he pleased, without regard to the opinion of the Lovedale presbytery.<sup>61</sup>

Sundkler's statement reveals more about his admiration for Stewart than the facts about Mzimba's secession. Similarly, Stormont observed earlier about Mzimba, "he has been to Scotland and has met ladies and gentlemen there who have given money and subscriptions for the *black* men of South Africa."<sup>62</sup> The obvious conclusion is that both Dwane and Mzimba broke away from the Mission church in protest against European restrictions on the use of such funds. But the causes for the formation of African Churches cannot be reduced to monetary factors even though the administration of money and property were significant factors in the process of secession. We have indicated above that money was the one issue about which missionaries could not completely trust Africans. However, monetary issues were not fundamental causes of permanent disagreement between African Christian leaders and the European mission. In the words of Brock, they were merely the "occasion and excuse" for the separation.<sup>63</sup> Brock offers a fascinating study of possible facts and circumstances which led to the breaking point between Mzimba and the Scottish mission.<sup>64</sup> Suffice for us to confine ourselves to the issue of the building project at Lovedale and how, together with the Tsewu case, they were the reason for Mzimba's split from the Scottish mission. The two issues, for us, adequately reveal the real undercurrents and grievances that led to the active protest against missionary domination. They are, thus, a window into the more fundamental causes of separation.

Mzimba was delegated at a Presbytery meeting on 3 February 1893 as a representative at the jubilee celebrations of the Free Church of Scotland. Before he left he asked for authorization to fundraise on behalf of the Lovedale Native church building project concurrently with the jubilee celebrations. This was granted by Presbytery. In Scotland he solicited help from various people, one of whom was Robert Howie, Convener of the General Assembly of Church of Scotland's Committee on Home Missions. Incidentally, Howie was also a personal friend of Stewart. When Mzimba failed to realize the target towards end of the year, Howie took up the fundraising appeal on his behalf.

<sup>61</sup> B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 42 - 43.

<sup>62</sup> MS 7514, Stormont's Papers, op cit; *The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899.

<sup>63</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 355.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 355 - 379.

Pambani Mzimba is a splendid specimen of what the grace of God can produce in the African race. For ability, manliness, geniality, preaching power and evangelistic zeal he is surpassed by few of the ministers of the Home Church. ... By his instructive and impressive addresses, he has given a great impulse to the cause of Foreign Missions.<sup>65</sup>

Moreover, John White, a Wesleyan missionary on furlough from the Transvaal, was also willing to lend his support to Mzimba's cause.<sup>66</sup> However, the Presbyterians were mainly responsible. Mzimba brought home with him about eight hundred and seventy two pounds; six hundred pounds from Howie's appeal and about two hundred and seventy two pounds from the Home Missions Committee. Two years later, the Foreign Mission Council remitted to James Weir, Kaffraria Presbytery Treasurer, a sum of about one thousand one hundred and eighty six pounds for Mzimba's building project. So that in the end he was more than able to meet the two thousand pounds target required for the building.

Brock notes that it was the Foreign Mission Council's policy to remit funds to and through Presbytery rather than directly to individual recipients.<sup>67</sup> Presbytery control was deemed necessary for transparency in the use of funds. This was the case with Mzimba's funds as well. Despite this Presbyterian tradition, Mzimba was not pleased with the Presbytery restrictions placed upon the administration of the fund. Subsequently, there began to emerge problems as to the custody, the use of the funds, and eventually over the whole building project of the church hall.<sup>68</sup> This resulted in a prolonged controversy, thus widening the gulf between Mzimba and the European missionaries at Presbytery. We do not think, however, that it was special treatment with regard to Presbyterian procedures that Mzimba wanted. He was too much of a Presbyterian himself to undermine these. It appears, rather, that the application of Presbytery administrative procedures were not always fair.

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<sup>65</sup> Robert Howie, 29 September 1893, cited in S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *op. cit.*, p. 355.

<sup>66</sup> J. M. Chirenje, *Ethiopianism and Afro-Americans in Southern Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358f.

<sup>68</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *op. cit.*, pp. 52 - 55.

For instance, some missionaries were continually raising objections regarding aspects of the building project, thus resulting in unnecessary delays. The old building was in a hazardous state of disrepair adding to the urgency of the project.<sup>69</sup> The congregation felt a sense of grief about what they perceived to be (European) Presbytery's disregard of their urgent plight. The first of these objections was with regard to the chosen site. There were delays in deciding on a suitable site from three alternatives. Secondly, when a site was finally chosen, there were further objections to the building plan. There were deep perceptions regarding Presbytery objections to the architectural plans, with the congregation forming the opinion that Stewart had criticised the proposed building as being rather extravagant and "too beautiful for Africans."<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, the Presbytery had disapproved of the plans due to cost factors, as they would cost more than the money at hand to build, according to Stewart.<sup>71</sup> Eventually approval was granted by the Presbytery to commence building, "at the intervention of the late Dr. Ross,"<sup>72</sup> according to Mzimba. However, this was not the end of the episode.

The building project had already begun when John Lennox, Interim Moderator of Lovedale European congregation, raised objections about certain incorrect alignment in the plans. In his view, the building was "too close to the street and was going to look ugly"<sup>73</sup>. His view was, however, defeated by the Building Committee when discussed. Lennox was nonetheless adamant, " wati nokuba sendidodwa nina ningamashumi amatatu andinakujika."<sup>74</sup> (I don't care whether I am alone against the thirty of you I will not alter my view - *own translation*). Subsequently, he wrote to Don, Presbytery Clerk, to put his case, resulting in a tragic travesty of Presbyterian procedures. Despite the approval having already been granted by Presbytery for the building to start, without consulting either the Presbytery, the congregation, or the Building Committee, and without seeing the site for himself the

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<sup>69</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 52; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 357.

<sup>70</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, p. 61;

<sup>71</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *ibid.*, p. 357.

<sup>72</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, paragraph 10, p. 58. 'Dr.' Ross is a reference to Bryce Ross.

<sup>73</sup> Op. cit, p. 58.

<sup>74</sup> Op. cit, p. 54.

Clerk unilaterally took a decision in favour of Lennox. In a reply telegraph the Clerk of Presbytery categorically stated, "mna Don no Weir sivumelana nento etetwa ngu Mr. Lennox."<sup>75</sup> (I, Don, and Weir (Presbytery Treasurer) align ourselves with Mr. Lennox's opinion - *own translation*). The builders were consequently instructed to act according to Lennox's directive. In protest, the congregation's members of the Building Committee resigned in disgust saying, "mabaqhube ke abafundisi."<sup>76</sup> (Let the missionaries continue with their thing - *own translation*).

The Native congregation of Lovedale was clearly suspicious of the Presbytery, and their mistrust was particularly evident in this instance. Mzimba himself echoed their sentiments in his list of grievances against the Scottish mission as the reasons for the secession.<sup>77</sup> Further, his biography confirms that the circumstances around this building project precipitated Mzimba's withdrawal from the Scottish mission. While alluding to other unstated causes his biographer remarks that "kodwa ke eyona nto yakaulezisa ukupuma kwake yaba yincukumiso yalotylike eyayisakiwa ekute njengoko senditshilo ukuti kutetwe ngayo iminyaka kungavunywa ngabafundisi kwada kwati naxa sekuvunyiwe sekusetyenzwa kwakuxa kanti luzakuhla udiwu. Seyimbiwe ne 'foundation.'"<sup>78</sup> (But what precipitated his secession was the manner in which the church building project was handled, taking years to materialise due to missionary objection, even when the approval to build had been granted conflict just started. The foundation stone already laid - *own translation*).

Mzimba refers at length to both the Lovedale Native church building project dispute and the Tsewu incident as reasons for his discontent in his letter of resignation to Presbytery on 6 April 1898.<sup>79</sup> It was these events which precipitated his decision to exit from missionary domination under the Scottish mission enterprise, and declare his independence. The opening paragraph of the letter provided the framework for much of what followed. Mzimba stated that:

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<sup>75</sup> Op. cit, p. 54.

<sup>76</sup> Op. cit, p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> For the list of the reasons see op. cit, pp. 56 - 59.

<sup>78</sup> Op. cit, p. 56.

<sup>79</sup> Op. cit, pp. 52 - 64; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 379 - 385.

Emva kokucela ngomtandazo e-Nkosini ukuba indalalise eyona ndlela ndosebenza ngayo ukulihambisa ilizwi kwizizwe zakowethu apa e-Afrika, kutyileke kum ngokucacileyo ukuba ndiliroxise igama lam ekubeni ngumfundisi opantsi kolaulo lwe-Presbitari. Namhla iminyaka ingapezulu kwamashumi amabini anesibini ndingumfundisi, ndibonile ndoyiseka ukuba siyakuhlala sipazamisana nabafundisi izinto sidla ngokuzibona ngendlela engavaniyo.<sup>80</sup>

(After a prayerful soul-searching as to which course of action to take in the furtherance of the Word among my African compatriots, it has become clear to me that I should withdraw my name from the ministry of the Presbyterian mission. Today, after twenty-two years of ministerial service, I am convinced that the missionaries and myself shall always hinder one another, we generally see things differently thus causing mutual ill feelings and distrust - *own translation*.)

In a direct reference to the building project dispute Mzimba, aligning himself with the sentiments of the members of the Building Committee who also resigned in protest, expressed his irritation about Lennox' fuss and the manner in which Don and Weir responded to it.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, the Tsewu incidence is summarized with reference to the manner in which the July 1897 Synod resolved on the matter:

Nditunukele izilonda ebezingapolanga kuba ndenzakala kwi-Sinodi eyabe ise-Monti ngo-July 1897. Isigwebo esati ibandla elintsundu leFree Church e-Johannesburg lifanele umfundisi omhlope yedwa alimfanele ontsundu. Baza abafundisi abamhlope baxasa bonke elozwi, ndasala ndedwa mna mfundisi untsundu ungasivumiyo eso sigwebo siketa ibala.<sup>82</sup>

(The building project dispute resuscitated my grief about the July 1897 Synod's resolution in East London where it was resolved that the Free Church's African congregation of Johannesburg was not fit to be served by an African minister, and that only European missionaries could do so. With this decision all the European missionaries concurred and I alone, black minister, dissented from this prejudiced resolution - *own translation*)

On a conciliatory note, Mzimba's biographer argues that it was never his initial intention to leave the Scottish mission, however, such experiences as above conspired to put unbearable pressure on him to withdraw from the Scottish mission.<sup>83</sup> The resignation heralded a lengthy battle over property ownership, which, according to the *Christian Express* included buildings, title deeds to land, and the sum of one thousand three hundred and sixty pounds, together with the records and documents of the church.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Cited in L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 56, cf. paragraph 16; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 122

<sup>81</sup> Cited in L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, ibid., p. 58, paragraphs 14 & 15.

<sup>82</sup> Op. cit, p. 58, paragraph 17.

<sup>83</sup> Op. cit, p. 62.

<sup>84</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 October 1903.

Eventually a protracted legal action ensued,<sup>85</sup> as Mzimba objected to Presbytery claims on property. A case was lodged on 12 December 1898 at the Supreme Court of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope by the Kaffraria Presbytery, represented by Stewart, Don, Stormont and Weir against Mzimba and others.<sup>86</sup> Characteristically, it became known in short as *Stewart and others versus Mzimba and others*.<sup>87</sup> A court interdict and petition against Mzimba were issued by the Court against which he defended himself.<sup>88</sup> In a eleven-page response Mzimba argued why he did not consider the property as belonging to the Scottish mission.<sup>89</sup> Henceforth a tedious case of allegations and counter-allegations between the two parties continued, with interest to many in the colony. In short, Mzimba eventually lost the case with costs. The total court expenses were one thousand two hundred pounds. But as there was a good harvest in 1899, according to L. N. Mzimba, this debt was easily paid off by the new Church within a year.<sup>90</sup> There was further financial assistance from people who had aligned themselves with Mzimba from the Transkei missions, Qumbu and Cala.<sup>91</sup> The matter rested with the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War diverting interest from it.<sup>92</sup>

Mzimba had written a follow-up letter to his resignation intimating that he had returned the church records that were in his custody to Presbytery, and asked the same to relieve him of the pastoral ties with the Lovedale Native congregation.<sup>93</sup> Stormont was subsequently appointed minister in charge of the congregation in August. Millard observes that, "after a schism in the mission church the authorities tended to replace the break-away black minister with a white minister in the hope that the

<sup>85</sup> MS 14 758, *Supplement to The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 380 - 385; L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 65 - 69; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 130ff.

<sup>86</sup> Correspondence of the Case between *Stewart and others v. Mzimba and others*, CSC 2/1/1/357, Government Archives, Cape Town.

<sup>87</sup> MS 14 758, *Supplement to The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56f.

<sup>89</sup> Mzimba's affidavit, 17 January 1899, CSC 2/1/1/357, Government Archives, op. cit

<sup>90</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 69.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>92</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 385.

<sup>93</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 62 - 63.

flow of church members to the independent church would be stopped."<sup>94</sup> In this she is correct, for Tsewu was replaced by Rev. C. B. Hamilton, a GMS missionary from Scotland, in Johannesburg as well.<sup>95</sup> Stormont gave 'The State of the Mission' report subsequently, in which he stated that the mission work at Lovedale after Mzimba had been "re-organized not only upon paper but also in fact."<sup>96</sup>

Meanwhile Mzimba began to prepare and mobilise for the formation of his own denomination, which was eventually established under the 'grandiloquent name,'<sup>97</sup> The Presbyterian Church of Africa. Almost two-thirds of the congregation, predominantly the amaMfengu-Xhosa compatriots, had split with Mzimba in April.<sup>98</sup> In November Mzimba published an open letter to the Christian community explaining his position and inviting those in a similar position to join with him.<sup>99</sup> Both Mzimba's biographer and the *Christian Express* note that there was much interest in the movement.<sup>100</sup> Mzimba consolidated his new Church at a meeting of its first Presbytery at Gaga, outside Lovedale, followed by a Synod at Sheshegu, once his home location, a week later on 27 December 1898.<sup>101</sup> The first General Assembly of the new Church met shortly thereafter, "with two ministers (Mzimba and C. Kupe) and six congregations. At the end of the Assembly there were six ministers and seven

<sup>94</sup> J. A. Millard, 'A study of the perceived causes of schism', op. cit, p. 216, fn. 55.

<sup>95</sup> *Umthetheli*, 25 January 1932.

<sup>96</sup> MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, op cit; MS 14, 758, *The Supplement to The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899.

<sup>97</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, *Lovedale South Africa*, op. cit, p. 247. Shepherd used the term rather sarcastically, however, it does not detract from its positive attributes. Conversely, it may have been a grudging admiration of the appropriateness of the name Mzimba chose for his Church.

<sup>98</sup> J. A. Millard, 'A study of the perceived causes of schism', op. cit, p. 219; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 134.

<sup>99</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 73; J. A. Millard, 'A study of the perceived causes of schism', op. cit, p. 219.

<sup>100</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, p. 73; *The Christian Express*, 1 October 1903.

<sup>101</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 73.

congregations."<sup>102</sup> It was at this first General Assembly that the name of the new Church was endorsed as The Presbyterian Church of Africa.<sup>103</sup>

The Presbyterian Church of Africa (hereafter PCA) was immediately joined by ordained ministers of other Churches like the Revs. Gqamane, Masiko, Buchanan,<sup>104</sup> and the Rev. Solomon Matolo, of the Congregational Church.<sup>105</sup> Further, the PCA proved a suitable home to two theological students who were finishing their course at Lovedale during the period of the process of Mzimba's resignation, namely, William N. Bottoman and Reuben Damane.<sup>106</sup> For Brock, these two joined with the PCA as neither "wished to wait four years for their official reception into the ranks of the clergy," as was the practice in the Scottish mission.<sup>107</sup> As a result they were in charge of the congregations of Port Elizabeth and Qumbu, respectively, within six months of the completion of their theological studies and acceptance into the PCA. L. N. Mzimba, however, implies another reason for the desertion of the Scottish mission and attraction to the PCA by Bottoman and Damane. Having been at Lovedale during the period of Mzimba's dispute with the Kaffraria Presbytery over the building project, and also during his resignation process, they were exposed to such experiences not only at a distance but were themselves forced to be involved from time to time:

Bakuva ngezabo indlebe bonke ubuhlungu benteto balibona nebala lamadoda xa abambene ngezihlwita, bebotshwe izandla bengenakunceda nangalupina uhlobo. Wada u-Mr. Bottoman kwelinye ituba wala ukutolika ngenxa yokuba engenako ukukupha inteto ebuhlungu ngowake umlomo ayisingise kubantu bakowabo.<sup>108</sup>

(They witnessed first-hand (Mzimba's) painful experience and the bitterness of a racial dispute. However, their hands were tied to do anything at the time. Mr. Bottoman was once asked to interpret for a missionary but objected because he could not bring himself to repeat the missionary's painful utterances about his own people - *own translation*)

<sup>102</sup> Op. cit, p. 74.

<sup>103</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 71 - 78; Article titled 'Constitution of the Church of Africa', CSC 2/1/1/357, Government Archives, Cape Town.

<sup>104</sup> Not much is known about these three regarding their first names or their former denominations.

<sup>105</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 73.

<sup>106</sup> Op. cit, p. 74; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 391; Paper on Ethiopianism, MS 10 697, Stormont's Papers.

<sup>107</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', *ibid.*, p. 391.

<sup>108</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 74.



Mpambani Mzimba as a minister



A group of people

Seemingly their minds were already made up, for "*into abayenzayo bamana ukungena emabungeni kanye nabantu bakowabo basuke emva koko bapuma, baza kungena ku Mr. Mzimba.*"<sup>109</sup> (What they did rather was to join the occasional secret meetings of their own people - at the Lovedale Native church - until they left the Scottish mission to join with Mr. Mzimba - *own translation*). They had already taken sides and, thus, their acceptance was merely a confirmation of where their heart and soul had been. Thus, racial grievances and nationalist sentiments were real factors as well in the PCA's attraction. Both Damane and Bottoman were to play critical roles later in the leadership of the PCA. The two of them, together with the four ministers we have mentioned previously, were accepted at the first General Assembly of the PCA. Thus born the PCA henceforth grew from strength to strength.<sup>110</sup> By 1902 Mzimba indicated that the PCA had a membership of 6, 500 with 20, 000 adherents.<sup>111</sup> Comparably, that same year the Scottish mission had a membership of 16, 044 with 8, 182 adherents in 1902 according to Stewart.<sup>112</sup> The current trend of decline in Mission Churches and the growth of African instituted ones was already taking place. In 1904 the PCA claimed to have 14 ordained ministers, 425 lay preachers, 43 church buildings and the enrolment in their schools was 2000, with congregations in the Cape Colony, Rhodesia, Orange River Colony, Transvaal and Natal.<sup>113</sup>

Mzimba died on the evening of 25 June 1911, and was buried on Wednesday, 28 June after thirteen years of service in the PCA.<sup>114</sup> He was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan S. Mazwi of Tholeni, outside Butterworth, as the Moderator of the PCA Synod.<sup>115</sup> Mazwi had initially joined the PCA from the

<sup>109</sup> Op. cit, p. 74.

<sup>110</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 89 - 91; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 389 - 404; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 140f.

<sup>111</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, op. cit, p. 794, paragraphs, 10, 912 and 10, 915; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 392. The numbers are slightly inflated in Burchell to 7 000 members and 28 000 adherents. However, his figures are for 1904, thus indicating a continuing growth - Op. cit, p. 140.

<sup>112</sup> J. Stewart, *Dawn in the Dark Continent*, op. cit, pp. 376 - 377.

<sup>113</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 140; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 392; L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, *ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>114</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, pp. 87 and 88.

<sup>115</sup> Op. cit, p. 90.

Moravian Church.<sup>116</sup> His son, L. N. Mzimba, transferred from the Tyhume-Xesi congregation to succeed him at the Lovedale congregation.<sup>117</sup> By this time, the PCA had grown to 33 congregations, 28 ministers, 270 preaching stations, 13, 335 members, 12 licentiates and evangelists.<sup>118</sup> With regard to the financial aspect, Mzimba held at the Native Affairs Commission that they derived the money which supports their Church "from the contributions of Church members and adherents. ... (and) Entirely from that."<sup>119</sup> Even Stewart had conceded the financial viability of the PCA.<sup>120</sup> The PCA had reason indeed to proclaim, as L. N. Mzimba noted, "kude kwalapha u-Tixo esinceda"<sup>121</sup> (hitherto, the Lord has helped us - *own translation*). Tradition has it that even Stewart had secret admiration for the efficient growth and the inter-denominational appeal of the PCA, as he indicated during a visit at the Wilberforce University, United States.<sup>122</sup>

L. N. Mzimba suggests that the PCA drew membership from the unconverted as well as the Moravian, Anglican, Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in its rapid growth:

Yaba yinto emangalisayo, nenga zange ibeko. Ewe ama-Tiyopiya ayeseleko; kodwa ke wona abako epuma e-Wesile kupela, kwaye nangoku ukwanda kwawo kusahambe kwangelo kondo lokuqala. Kodwa ke le intshukumo eyabangelwa leli-Bandla, lahlanganisa ityalike - manditi iramente ebezahlukene zimanyane kwityalike enye. ... Kwangena intlanga zonke ezibala limnyama kwangena nabebala.<sup>123</sup>

(This particular aspect was a remarkable development because when compared with the Ethiopians who seceded from the Wesleyans, the new Church (PCA) attracted greater attention and a wider membership than did the Ethiopians. This new Church, therefore, united in itself people who came from a variety of denominations. ... It was joined by all the African tribes and even Coloureds - *own translation*)

Proselytising is a commentary on the popularity and unpopularity of churches, respectively. Positively, such growth was an indication that the PCA had struck a relevant chord in the hearts of the people. The fact is that Africans across a broad social spectrum found in the PCA an acceptance and

<sup>116</sup> Paper on Ethiopianism, MS 10 697, Stormont's Papers.

<sup>117</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 90.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90; Cf. Z. K. Matthews, 'The Late Rev. Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', *Imvo zabaNtsundu*, 8 July 1961.

<sup>119</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, p. 797, paragraphs 10, 963 and 10, 964.

<sup>120</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, p. 909, paragraph 44, 967.

<sup>121</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 93.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77; cf. D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 129.

<sup>123</sup> Op. cit, p. 77; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 392f.

an inclusivity they no longer found in the European Mission, if indeed they ever had. Mzimba had created for many a religious place they could call home. Thus, despite the tribal charges that are usually leveled at the PCA,<sup>124</sup> there is evidence to show that it was multi-ethnic. It sought to unite the indigenous people of Africa. However, the *Free Church Record* was correct in its observation that, "while this church (PCA) would not recognise any sectarian differences in creed or organisation, it would so far recognise race differences."<sup>125</sup> For, although the PCA outgrew its initial amaMfengu-Xhosa base, and transcended tribal differences and barriers it was still African as opposed to European. This was a result of the racial differentiation practices of the time.

### COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY REACTION

European reaction to the formation of the PCA was generally negative and ambivalent. But perhaps more unfortunately, the PCA and its ministers were not officially recognised by the colonial governments.<sup>126</sup> Government policy was that "no (African) Church is 'recognized' until it has been in existence for at least ten years and can supply satisfactorily answers to a number of questions concerning the educational qualifications of its ministers, the number of its institutions and the qualifications of its workers."<sup>127</sup> Its ministers were refused the status of marriage officer.<sup>128</sup> They were not allowed to address public gatherings of Natives. No grants were given to their schools, despite their qualification for this. Also, the PCA was alleged to be disseminating teaching contrary to Mission churches, and was disloyal to the government. The latter proved false.<sup>129</sup> Mzimba himself defended his movement from such allegations of disloyalty.<sup>130</sup> Nonetheless, the PCA struggled to get land upon which to build its churches.<sup>131</sup> The European appropriation of land was by this time almost

<sup>124</sup> See Brock who holds that charges of tribal division and proselytism against the PCA can be sustained - op. cit, p. 387.

<sup>125</sup> *Free Church Record*, August 1899.

<sup>126</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, op. cit, paragraph 10, 933, p. 795; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 394ff.

<sup>127</sup> G. B. A. Gerdener, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field* (London/ Edinburgh: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1958), p. 195.

<sup>128</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, op. cit, p. 794, paragraph 10, p. 927.

<sup>129</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 395.

<sup>130</sup> *Supplement to The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899, p. 53.

<sup>131</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 140.

complete, awaiting the introduction of the Natives Land Act in 1913. There were further complaints that PCA members were victimised over salaries and lack of promotion in the civil service.<sup>132</sup> There were obviously influences working against them, as Burchell noted.<sup>133</sup> Undoubtedly the Lovedale missionaries played a role in all this. Mzimba himself was aware of some of this when he stated that, "whenever I wanted a Church site, a letter from Lovedale was in my way"<sup>134</sup>.

However, the colonial government eventually realised the foolishness of suppressing the quest for ecclesial independence.<sup>135</sup> Merriman, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony just before Union, had referred to the early church example as he remarked that "repression will be like the blood of the martyrs - the seed of the Church."<sup>136</sup> Subsequently, he and Dower, Secretary for Native Affairs, both promoted controlled recognition of the African initiated Churches. In 1909 they legislated policy granting recognition to these Churches if they met certain merits.<sup>137</sup> The PCA was deemed qualified to meet these.<sup>138</sup> Subsequently, Mzimba was granted the status of marriage officer in 1907, and partial recognition was given to the PCA. Further marriage officer status was granted to four ministers between 1908 and 1909.

Mzimba's declaration of independence and Africanness was met with bitterness by the Scottish missionaries particularly around Lovedale. Those in Transkei, however, were able to view things at a more objective distance, and some had always been sympathetic to Mzimba. The Presbytery of Kaffraria refused even to consider the possibility of a re-union with either Tsewu's or Mzimba's Church. This was after Mzimba had applied for recognition of the PCA by the Scottish mission. Tsewu and Mzimba always emphasized independence rather than secession in explaining their

<sup>132</sup> Op. cit, p. 136, f.n. 78.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>134</sup> *Supplement to The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899, p. 53.

<sup>135</sup> B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 66ff.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>137</sup> Op. cit, p. 68.

<sup>138</sup> Op. cit, p. 67; G. B. A. Gerdener, *Recent Developments in the South African Mission Field*, op. cit, p. 195.

move.<sup>139</sup> Giving occasion to his recognition application, Mzimba had stated during the Lovedale property trial:

When I was asked by the Free Church Presbytery, why I wanted to leave, I said I wished to remain a member of the Free Church, but not to be connected with the Kaffrarian Presbytery any longer; and when I was informed that I could not remain a minister of the Free Church unless I was under a Presbytery, then I said that I wished to remain a Presbyterian. My intention was to leave the (Lovedale) district. When I reached Mafikeng, however, I found that there were letters from Lovedale adverse to me which hampered me.<sup>140</sup>

It seems that there was a genuine desire for co-operation with the Scottish Mission, suggesting that Mzimba's secession was not merely for its own sake rather was meant to address the racial concerns in the Scottish mission. Once these had been addressed, re-union with was not precluded. The Scottish mission, however, felt that to grant recognition to the PCA would create a bad precedent to the remaining Africans in Mission Churches.<sup>141</sup>

Invariably missionaries took turns to express condemnatory attitudes toward Mzimba's Church. Stewart, meanwhile maintained his lack of confidence in the ability of Africans to manage their own affairs. He did not believe that the Native had it in his genes to cope without the European overlord. Which is why even the success of Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee University, whom he admired, was explained by Stewart in racial terms. Pressed at the Native Affairs Commission on his expressed belief of the administrative successes of the African-Americans Stewart responded categorically that, "Booker T. Washington's father is believed to have been a white man, and the bulk of his staff are not what we would call Natives. ... They have been also largely helped from the North."<sup>142</sup> Mzimba was, consequently, castigated in harshest possible terms. The "white men had made him what he was,"<sup>143</sup> charged Stewart, but Mzimba had abused these abilities. Compared to the moderate Makiwane, for instance, Stewart held that:

<sup>139</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, op. cit, p. 793, paragraph 10, 893 and p. 796, paragraph 10, 956; SANAC, Vol. IV, op. cit, p. 787, paragraph 43, 561 and p. 803, paragraphs 43, 758 and 43, 772.

<sup>140</sup> Supplement to *The Christian Express*, 7 March 1899, MS 14 758, p. 53.

<sup>141</sup> *The Christian Express*, 1 February 1899; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 138.

<sup>142</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, p. 911, paragraph 44, 981; J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, op. cit, p. 307.

The one man makes a good use of his education - his name is Makiwane - and the other makes a thoroughly bad use of it (his name is Mzimba). What are we to make of this contradictory result unless we resolve it into the perversity of human nature and its tendency to abuse good things ... I cannot explain it further than by saying that there were two men who sat on the same bench for four or five years; the one held on steadily at his work - the abler and more intellectual of the two - and the other ran amok ecclesiastically and caused us the loss of 1, 600 (pounds).<sup>144</sup>

Stewart summed up his view of the African initiated Churches by saying, "no Churches succeed without a spiritual element, and that element was not conspicuous in the Ethiopian or in any other such movements. This predicts what may be the future history of these movements as Churches."<sup>145</sup> Despite evidence to the contrary, for Stewart there was no good to be found in these Churches.<sup>146</sup> Stewart continued to exercise such value judgements upon non-European missionary initiatives, and eventually heaped the African initiated Churches together into the rubbish bin of history as "a Cave of Adullam for the restless and dissatisfied ... without unity or leadership ... that makes for a carnal Christianity."<sup>147</sup> More privately, Wells observed that the "matter aged Dr. Stewart perceptibly. ... (and) left a scar upon his heart that I believe he felt each day until he died."<sup>148</sup> Burchell observes that Stewart never was the same afterwards, as the secession turned him "into a reactionary."<sup>149</sup> Though, as we shall note, he was more positive about these developments towards the end of his life.

Stormont also became more positive, but initially and rather prematurely, he somewhat gleefully poured scorn upon Mzimba's Church:

Mzimba's movement is a spent force. The Government have seen through it, and have refused sites, marriage officerships and so on with the result that the whole business is a gigantic - but growing a little farce. ... As we expected it has wrecked itself on money as well as on morals. The 'new movement ministers' (sic) - I have had it - and Mzimba's among them - have been starving or have been as near starvation as they possibly could get. The

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<sup>143</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, p. 906, paragraph 44, 952.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p. 910, paragraph 44, 975.

<sup>145</sup> Op. cit, p. 910, paragraph 44, 977; *The Christian Express*, 1 August 1882.

<sup>146</sup> SANAC, Vol. IV, p. 906, paragraphs 44, 949 and 44, 950.

<sup>147</sup> Cited in J. Wells, James Stewart, op. cit, pp. 292 and 293.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>149</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 132.

people, who promised 'big things' have given almost nothing, and so the whole fiasco has completed its course except in one or two places.<sup>150</sup>

Adopting the moral high ground Stormont noted that he had heard rumours that "Mr. Mzimba has no knowledge of business or economics,"<sup>151</sup> the implication of which was to confirm that the latter should not be taken seriously as his sums did not add up. Subsequently Stormont implored other missionaries to save African church leaders "from the consequences of their mistaken beliefs and vain imaginations."<sup>152</sup> Shepherd was not to be outdone, as he expressed his own disgust at Mzimba who had "lifted up his heel" against "one who owed him more than could be stated,"<sup>153</sup> namely, Stewart. He summarily dismissed Mzimba's movement as a passing phase in mission history. He was wrong.

However, once the smoke had cleared, there was much soul-searching and a re-assessment of the situation by the Scottish Mission. Some blame was even put on the main role-players within the Presbytery of Kaffraria. Brownlee Ross, for instance, revived the matter of the Presbytery of Transkei's support of Mzimba at the July 1897 Synod and blamed the Presbytery of Kaffraria for having forced Mzimba into a corner. Lennox bore the brunt of much criticism. Which may be why in 1909, seven years after his earlier charges of "race-hatred, vanity, dishonesty and falsehoods" against Mzimba, he turned around on self-criticism of the Mission:

(W)e offer the native church the finest product of our thinking and experience, while at the same time we remove from them the discipline of thinking out these great questions in relation to their own traditional life. ... We could do no greater disservice than to do all their thinking for them. They must take their responsibilities on their own shoulders. ... They must cast themselves on the future in faith and must garner and use the lessons of their own experiences. ... They are not ... to be reckoned failures."<sup>154</sup>

There were similar conciliatory sentiments from other Lovedale missionaries. Even Stewart was more sober in his later comments, and offered a more nuanced analysis of Mzimba's movement: "the origin of the movement is somewhat complex. The agitation for independence on the one hand and the

<sup>150</sup> Private Journal, MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, op cit; also R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, p. 247.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> The State of the Mission, MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, ibid.

<sup>153</sup> R. H. W. Shepherd, Lovedale South Africa, op. cit, p. 247.

advocacy of native rights on the other, have had something to do with it; while some blame must attach to the failure of the (Mission) Church to exemplify in practise the unity of the races in Christ Jesus."<sup>155</sup>

By 1902, Stewart was singing the praises of the African church leaders, "their genuine religious warmth, their directness of effort, their gentleness and patience with their converts and adherents, are known to all who have come into contact with them."<sup>156</sup> He had come to find high missionary qualities in their leadership. Stormont, likewise, adopted a more positive view of the phenomenon of African initiated Churches, "the Ethiopian Movement can only be rightly judged when one comprehends it as part of the great S.(outh) African question, whose answer is the problem of the future, the question namely, how the relation of the white people to the native people shall be arranged."<sup>157</sup> Henceforth, Stormont focussed his energies on studying the Native Question, which he correctly perceived as being of far greater relevance and permanency to South Africa. Thus European missionaries at Lovedale had learnt some lessons from their African interlocutors. Indeed, the next generation of missionaries had come to realise Africa's claim to the gospel. As one Scotsman warned, "I fear the evangel which denationalizes."<sup>158</sup>

### AFRICAN REACTION

Not all Africans agreed with Mzimba's decision. Their reaction was both critical and supportive. We have already indicated the heterogeneous nature of African discourse in this period when we discussed the question of education. The indigenous church movement raised similar intense interest and divergence of opinion. John Tengo Jabavu was once again Mzimba's nemesis. The former did not

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<sup>154</sup> Cited in R. H. W. Shepherd, 'The separatist churches of South Africa' in *International Review*, 1937, p. 463; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 133.

<sup>155</sup> *Free Church Record*, June 1901, p. 267.

<sup>156</sup> J. T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion*, op. cit, p. 209.

<sup>157</sup> Paper on Ethiopianism, MS 10 697, Stormont's Papers.

<sup>158</sup> Donald Fraser, cited in E. W. Smith, *The Christian Mission in Africa: A Study based on the work of the International Conference at Le Zoute, Belgium, September 14<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 1926* (London/New York: The International Missionary Council, 1926), p. 48.

approve of Mzimba's direction, from the moment of his dissent from the 1897 Resolution of the Synod until his resignation in 1898.<sup>159</sup> Jabavu's opposition to all such African church leaders remained resolute. He described the African Church movement as a second Nongqawuse disaster ("Mania Number Two") that was bent on the self-destruction of the Africans.<sup>160</sup>

At the mission level, Makiwane felt the direct influence of Mzimba's movement even at his own congregation at MacFarlan.<sup>161</sup> Despite his obvious sympathies with Mzimba's quest, Makiwane did not approve of what he considered Mzimba's unPresbyterian methods. Makiwane acted more the role of a church statesman in his insistence that Mzimba's actions were contrary to the Presbyterian system of handling such matters as the one under discussion. He was strongly of the opinion that "Mr. Mzimba should take his grievances and objections to the Presbytery and from thence to the Synod and finally to the Assembly."<sup>162</sup> Makiwane charged that Mzimba had failed to follow this Presbyterian procedure of taking his appeal "from one grade to another" and instead Mzimba had "precipitated a position of affairs that was never intended."<sup>163</sup> Makiwane clearly loved his Presbyterianism and would not sacrifice it for anything. He was quite comfortable to work from within the system rather than join forces with what he perceived to be unconstitutional procedures of addressing concerns. He was analytical in his overall assessment: "I regard his methods as having created greater difficulties than he removed and as having retarded the object we all have in view and estranged some who had sacrificed much to help us."<sup>164</sup> But despite his disapproval of his methodology, Makiwane shared in Mzimba's quest. He was in touch with the real motives that were behind Mzimba's movement. In a glowing tribute to his friend and colleague Makiwane remarked: "I

<sup>159</sup> *Imvo zabaNtsundu*, 14 December 1897 and 5 May 1898; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 365f.

<sup>160</sup> Cited in E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, op. cit, p. 86.

<sup>161</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 135 - 138; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 369ff.

<sup>162</sup> Mr. Makiwane on the Inception of the Mzimba Movement, MS 7531, Stormont's Papers, op. cit

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Elijah Makiwane, 'Pambani Jeremiah Mzimba', August 1911, in (eds.) F. Wilson and D. Perrot, *Outlook on a Century*, op. cit, p. 180.

regard the movement he headed not so much as the formation of a native church as a protest against the treatment of Natives which regards the Native merely from his commercial value.<sup>165</sup>

The remaining members at the Lovedale Native congregation were quick to condemn Mzimba and distance themselves from his actions. They reassured the Scottish mission of their unwillingness "to be led astray by this new movement" and advanced their reasons "for remaining faithful to the Free Church of Scotland or in other words to the white missionaries."<sup>166</sup> They reviled Mzimba for his unfaithfulness and, in turn, expressed their own eternal indebtedness to the Scottish mission for redeeming them out of the "perfect darkness" in which they previously lived. In short, as Burchell noted, "the secession prompted a fairly widespread conservative reaction"<sup>167</sup> from the rest of the remaining Presbyterian Africans. However, it is clear that such sentiments were expressed mostly out of fear for reprisals and possible intimidation. By their own admission:

We felt that such an attitude was fraught with danger politically to us as the subject race, and that if we followed the example of the American Negroes by setting ourselves up in defiance of the Europeans it would be more serious with us than it is with the Negroes. ... That would certainly not help to raise the Africans but it would cause their destruction - body and soul.<sup>168</sup>

Thus, even as they cast their lot with the missionaries, Lovedale's African Christians were role-playing for the missionary ear as well. Avoiding the consequences of following Mzimba they were driven by fear and insecurity into roundly condemning his movement, and into seeking socio-political expediencies with the missionaries.

#### WHITHER THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AFRICA?

Mzimba's reformation was a potent symbol of African intolerance towards foreign domination and racial suppression. In many ways such symbolism was more far reaching than the actual success of the African alternative to European mission. This is because Mzimba's establishment of the PCA was

<sup>165</sup> Op. cit, p. 180.

<sup>166</sup> Lovedale Kirk Session to the FMC, MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, op. cit

<sup>167</sup> D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 133.

<sup>168</sup> Lovedale Kirk Session to the FMC, MS 7512, ibid.

a watershed in Scottish Presbyterian mission as it struck at its heart, Lovedale. This is clearly the difference between Tsewu and Mzimba's actions. As a symbol of resistance to European mission, even the choice of the name for the new Church much was poignant. It was a clear statement of African aspirations and a declaration of intent. Mzimba's desire to complete Soga's process of the Africanisation of Reformed Christianity was being established. The Presbyterian tradition was being rooted on African soil and within the hearts of African people in a way it had not been hitherto.

In as much as "theology as an intellectual exercise was not a feature of Mzimba's movement,"<sup>169</sup> according to Brock, traces of efforts at theological contextualization can be found rather in missionary statements of this period. That there were attempts to re-emphasize and re-interpret passages of scripture to suit the new context is evidenced by Stormont's advice to the remaining members of the Lovedale Native congregation "not to use those who had left us as illustrations or texts. ... I am sorry that our former friends and members have not followed the same method."<sup>170</sup> The common trends of this new theologising, as commented on in missionary literature, seem to have been a biblical justification for and the affirmation of the African cause, and textual criticism of the missionary praxis. This we deduce from the missionary complaint:

The origin of the perverted interpretation of the Scripture...that has supplied an ignorant people with their defence of colour and race. We have furnished them with texts; the white missionary has had his descent traced from Esau, while the seceders have had their vanity gratified by being named and naming themselves 'the Israelites who were spoiling the Egyptians'.<sup>171</sup>

From this it already appears that liberation themes were popular in the new African initiated Churches in their struggle to own the bible and its interpretation. That the missionaries disapproved of these new ways of theologising was made absolutely clear. Defending their biblical hegemony they deliberately sought to undermine these new theological trends:

Systems of theology have been made in Germany and in many instances have had reason for their existence. ... But today we are beginning to face theology as made by the American Negroes and history as read and

<sup>169</sup> S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, p. 377.

<sup>170</sup> The State of the Mission, MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, op. cit

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

interpreted by their methods of historical criticism. Needless to say that the theology is dark and the history is vain for the American negro is peculiar.<sup>172</sup>

Dark Christians produce dark theology while white Christians produce white theology, and in missionaries' binary world 'dark' was always the personification of evil. The African Christian efforts at drinking from their own theological wells were clearly being demonised in perpetuation of the European theological hegemony.

The genius of the African Presbyterian Church was, however, not in producing a new theology, constitution, or liturgy, but precisely in its assertion of African independence. Its basis was summarized by L. N. Mzimba: "it was to plant a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating African Church which would produce a truly African type of Christianity suited to the genius and needs of the race."<sup>173</sup> Underlining the sense of independence as the key to understanding the turn of the century African Christian movement James Cone rightly asserts that:

*Independent black churches were not separatist in the strict sense. They were not separating themselves from whites because they held a different doctrinal view of Christianity. Without exception, blacks used the same articles of faith and polity for their churches as the white denominations from which they separated. Separation, for blacks, meant that they were rejecting the ethical behaviour of whites - they were rejecting racism that was based on the assumption that God created blacks inferior to whites. Blacks also wanted to prove that they had the capacity to organize and operate a denomination just like whites. In short, black Christians were bearing witness to their humanity, which they believed God created equal to that of whites.*<sup>174</sup>

The quest for African independence as the objective of the movement was emphasized by Mzimba himself:

*I am not at war with the missionaries, they are my colleagues who have contributed to the black upliftment. But it has become clear to me that the black man in Africa must stand up his own in religious matters just as other nations have done. He has long been dependent on the white man but now the time has come when, if the word of God is to expand in this land, he must cease being dependent on others. ... In the Presbyterian church I am the one who should particularly pioneer this way of self-reliance and independence. For I am the first African minister to follow in the steps of the late Rev. Tiyo Soga, I can still recall his (Soga) exhortation when he confirmed me into church membership.*<sup>175</sup>

<sup>172</sup> The State of the Mission, MS 7512, Stormont's Papers, op. cit

<sup>173</sup> L. N. Mzimba, 'The African Church', in (ed.) J. D. Taylor, Christianity and the Natives of South Africa, op. cit, p. 89.

<sup>174</sup> J. H. Cone, Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare (Fount: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), pp. 6 - 7, (emphasis original).

<sup>175</sup> Cited in L. N. Mzimba, Umfundisi, op. cit, pp. 71 - 72 (own translation). For similar sentiments see Mangena and Xaba's letter in Paper on Ethiopianism, MS 10 697, Stormont's Papers, op. cit

From this statement it is evident that Mzimba regarded himself as taking up and continuing Soga's legacy of the Africanisation of Christianity. He perceived himself as the successor to Soga in more than just a historical manner. His rallying cry was that the complete evangelisation of Africans and the indigenisation of the church could be done adequately only by other Africans. Thus, Mzimba could argue that his cause was not only humanly essential but was necessary for the good of the gospel as well.

All of this marks the continuation of an African Christian consciousness that emerged in Soga. Christianity as understood through Mzimba and others like him became a catalyst for the expression of an African national identity. It began to forge consensus, unity and common identity upon and around which Africans could rally. Thus the contribution of the African Church to African nationalism, as Walshe notes, is one of its most illuminating aspects.<sup>176</sup> Even by later Black Theology's standards, the early African Church movement was viewed as being "among the greatest bases for black nationalism until the appearance of the African National Congress, its Youth League and the Pan African Congress."<sup>177</sup> This occurred, in Mofokeng's view, through the solidarity of African initiated Churches with the African masses and their aspirations, on the one hand, and by the appropriation of the symbolism of the church as the alternative and empowering community, on the other. The church, which had been the symbol of European control and its assault upon African cultural identity was now being inverted into a cradle of African nationalism and independence.

African initiated Churches, at that time, were the only truly African organisation of significance, inter-tribal and nationalist in character. Johannesburg and Pretoria, as the country's industrial capitals, served to bring Africans from diverse cultural backgrounds into closer contact, and the Church served

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<sup>176</sup> P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa: The African National Congress, 1912 - 1952* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1970), pp. 9f.; D. Williams, 'African Nationalism in South Africa' in *Journal of African History*, Vol. XI, No. 3, 1970, p. 381.

<sup>177</sup> T. Mofokeng, 'The Evolution of the Black struggle and the role of Black Theology' in (eds.) I. J. Mosala and B. Thlagale, *The Unquestionable Right to be Free: Essays in Black Theology* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1986), p. 121.

to facilitate this contact, and provide a community for expressing this new identity and inter-tribal solidarity. In this context, Roux is correct to remark that "the first Bantu mass movement on truly national lines was a religious one,"<sup>178</sup> namely, the African initiated Church movement. Similarly, the *Cape Argus* newspaper described the latter as being "in many respects the most important native development that had ever taken place since (Western) civilisation was first introduced into the frontiers of South Africa."<sup>179</sup> This new inter-tribal solidarity and self-reliance, which the African initiated Churches fostered, proved a worthwhile opposition to missionary hegemony. Henceforth the hostile missionary campaign was on the wane, as the missionaries were, for the first time, put on the defensive and made more aware of the need to avoid unnecessary provocation.<sup>180</sup> Such that one of the direct results of the African initiated Church movement was to propel missionaries towards the relinquishing of authority and establishment of African Mission Churches.<sup>181</sup>

It is beyond the perimeters of this discussion to investigate these phenomena, or to look at the current position of the African Presbyterian Church in the South African history. For we are not dealing with the PCA *per se*, rather with Mzimba as a *dramatis persona* in that phenomenon. Suffice it for us to state that, unlike the Donatist (North African) Church which failed to adapt to the Maghrebian (Berber) culture and subsequently perished, and like the Coptic Church which assimilated the local cultural and nationalist outlook and survived, the PCA lived to celebrate its centenary in 1998. This was a celebration of a hundred years of African Christian leadership and organisation, a lasting heritage of Mzimba.

<sup>178</sup> E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*, op. cit, p. 77.

<sup>179</sup> J. D. Taylor (ed.), *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 150.

<sup>180</sup> W. Mills, 'Missionaries, Xhosa Clergy and the Suppression of Traditional Customs' in (eds.) H. Bredekamp and R. Ross, *Missions and Christianity in South African History*, op. cit, p. 167.

<sup>181</sup> See D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, pp. 146 - 190; D. W. Van der Spuy, 'The Origins, Growth and Development of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa', unpublished B. D. thesis, Rhodes University, 1971.



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## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **A COMPARISON OF SOGA & MZIMBA'S RESPONSES TO THE SCOTTISH MISSION**

In our final chapter we shall construct a comparative analysis of the responses of Soga and Mzimba; their significance for their time, and their relevance for us. We shall begin with a brief survey of their responses and strategies of dealing with colonial experience, then link these up with some contemporary reflections, and round off with a short discussion of some theoretical implications for (South) African Christianity. The comparison is not an obvious one. Soga and Mzimba lived at different historical times, even if somewhat overlapping socio-political and religious situations. There is little evidence of contact between them, as Soga died when Mzimba was at the beginning of his theological training. So whatever influence there was between them came exclusively from Soga's side. Nonetheless, Mzimba stands both in continuity and in contrast to his elder brother and predecessor. They were alike in many ways yet differed sufficiently to make an interesting and informative comparison.

To re-iterate, Soga's Lovedale was non-racial in practice, providing the best mission education of the time. Its community was characterized by the quest for equality, integration and non-racialism. The quality of education both at Lovedale, and later in Glasgow broadened his outlook and universe. He was enthusiastic in his openness to modern European culture and foreign influence. At this level then, Soga learned the value of education as a potent way of helping oneself - the way to assert oneself and to become a missionary leader himself. Soga was clearly a product of integrationist thinking, which he himself cherished and promoted throughout his entire life. Indeed, he went on to become the only African-Presbyterian minister to actually benefit from it: there is no known case of any other counterpart who ministered to both an African and European congregation after Soga, until very recent times. Similarly, out of these experiences emerged Soga's dream of African

and European integration in a non-racial South Africa. This would be achievable in his view, however, through the Africans' adoption of European educational and religious systems.

Soga believed that the African success in education, European morality and the Christian faith would eventually cause Europeans to accept them as fellow human beings and equal partners. It was quite easy for him to imagine that "civilised" Africans would be acceptable to the colonists and to be optimistic that subsequently integration could be realised because he himself was a concrete embodiment of its realization. His own social acceptance by Europeans both at Lovedale and Glasgow and his assimilation into their value-system had a strong influence upon him. Subsequently, he believed that if other Africans were given the same opportunity as he had they too would manifest a similar social and educational development. Henceforth he encouraged his compatriots towards acquiring the habits of European Christian civilisation as the key to acceptance and participation in the new world-order that was irretrievably engulfing their country. However, the weakness of Soga's theoretical view of integration is that it was predominantly one way. It involved largely the sacrifice of traditional African values in favour of the European world. In his readiness to accept the Europeans as a permanent feature of the new South Africa in the making we have no evidence of him explicitly encouraging them to acquire the African habits. Surely, Africa's new citizens had to be prompted to assimilate something of their new context and environ.

Soga earnestly sought to build his dream of a common humanity between the Africans and Europeans. The European reality on the African landscape did not worry him. He was a good Christian, well educated, culturally experienced, and politically matured to make a realistic assessment of historical developments. He admitted the impossibility of a military solution after almost a hundred years of conflict that was not yielding permanent positive results on the part of the Africans. Also, he had sufficient intellectual power not to be intimidated by the European settlement, as long as it respected his humanity. Soga believed that fear and ignorance about the African on the part of Europeans were the primary reasons

for colonial racism and Afro-pessimism. Equally, his tiresome ecumenical efforts, which are quite outstanding for an African Christian of his time, were in the pursuit of this dream. He was critical of a dual approach to mission: "other denominations had successfully linked colonial and native work; and why could not the Presbyterian do the same, instead of isolating itself by devoting its energies to native work exclusively?"<sup>1</sup>

Strategically, Soga sought to address the European fears of the African by encouraging bridge building between the two communities. He consciously engaged in this by encouraging those Europeans who were considered sympathetic to the African course to present their case to the hostile colonists:

I cannot shut my eyes to the importance of the natives having representatives and advocates in the Colony, and especially in Grahamstown, where the feeling was formerly so strong against them. The feeling still exists: but my coming into the country, and preaching with a degree of acceptance, of which also (Colonial Governor) Sir George Grey gave a flattering notice, has somewhat lessened it. Unless I am greatly deceived, my friend, Mr. Johnston, will do much for the interests of the poor black people here. His (white) people know his missionary spirit and his sympathy with the natives. In the long run, God blessing his efforts, I anticipate not a little assistance from Brother Johnston. The step which he has taken has also been approved of by competent men in connection with its influence upon the natives.<sup>2</sup>

Thus Soga was keen to exploit every conceivable opportunity to prove the worth of Africans and thus undermine colonial racial prejudice. This was prompted by his belief that the latter would change their views and attitudes about blacks once they got to know them. For Soga, therefore, prejudice was only changed but by a deliberate contact aimed at the rediscovery of the other. It is nearly impossible not to discover some object of appreciation in the other when we get to know them well. This becomes a liberating and transforming experience from our previous fears and misconceptions. Thus Soga sought to transform misplaced colonial prejudices by reaching out in dialogue rather than withdrawal into his own world. Soga continued to mediate between colonists and compatriots, seeking to educate and conscientise the former and thereby creating opportunities for the latter in the colony. All the while he was laying the building blocks for a co-operative and non-prejudiced South Africa.

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<sup>1</sup> J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 181 - 182.

Ultimately, Soga's choice to remain within the Scottish mission must be seen in relation to his belief in maintaining contact with and, thereby, conscientising Europeans. Taking this to its logical conclusions, this meant that, for Soga there should be only one church constituted by the people of God, Africans and Europeans alike. Black and White Churches that came to characterize the development of Christianity in segregated and apartheid South Africa would have been anathema and a trivialisation of the Christian faith for him. This theme of a common humanity sharing a common destiny is evident throughout most of Soga's writings. Right from the onset, he had interpreted his own missionary task as not only that of release, elevation and enlightenment of African people (to Western Christian civilisation standards) but also "to remove all the barriers that have interposed between man and man, by uniting all the bonds of a common brotherhood."<sup>3</sup>

By the time of Mzimba, in comparison, Lovedale had come to accentuate a subtly racialist approach both in its curriculum and its ethos. Most of the white students had left or were in separate classes, thus, depriving Mzimba of this social contact opportunity. The introduction of a racially determined curriculum and the abandonment of the classics must have caused a sense of exclusion to Mzimba and his colleagues. They could not do what others did - like study the classics, have equal education with whites, or socialize with them freely, simply because they were black. This experience must have communicated notions of racial inequality and social distinction such that racial stratification, rather than integration, would become Mzimba's realistic expectation of South African society. Conversely, this experience must have served on the whole to strengthen Mzimba's sense of African consciousness and self-reliance. Thus it was perhaps not something to be unexpected when Mzimba later developed such explicit nationalist sentiments.

Whereas Soga stands out as a disciple of integration, ecumenicity, and a mediator, Mzimba in contrast belongs to an era that was fast rejecting both the ideals of integration and inter-

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<sup>2</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 3 October 1859, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 - 184.

<sup>3</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 1 March 1858, cited in (ed.) D. Williams, *The Journal of the Reverend Tiyo Soga*, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

racial ecumenical efforts. During the latter's period there was, generally, a growing chasm between blacks and whites as much as between the African Christians and European missionaries. It began to look like the Lovedale's experiment was failing and its dream was turning into a nightmare. Indeed developments at Lovedale, as the centre for the intellectual and social formation of the new era, had a bearing upon the way things were turning out to be during Mzimba's era. With Stewart's administration African hopes for the same education as Europeans which would enable them to participate as their equals in a common church and society were dashed to the ground. Thus, as the original ideals of Lovedale, viz. non-racialism and non-denominationalism were departed from this had far-reaching consequences for the future church and society.

One way of viewing the consequences of a differentiated theological training, for instance, is that it would ultimately impact on church ministerial relationships. It would curtail the free activity of African ministers, preventing them from ministering to white congregations. Their perceived mediocre training would be viewed as inadequate for ministry in white but not in the black congregations. Thus, a differentiated theological training necessarily militated against the church's ability to foster amicable race relations. The other implication would be that of a church hierarchy that was dominated by the better-educated European ministers. One of the fundamental complaints of the 1880's African Christian leaders was precisely that church relationships were characterised by unjust inequality. Subsequently, it must be argued that given the potent role of education in social formation Lovedale's later approach, in our view, served to increase the African agitation and contributed to the growing African Christian and European missionary polarisation of the time.

Lovedale was not the only mission institution that moved away from an integrated education and began to reflect the dominant racial stratification of colonial society. With both society and educational institutions displaying racist outlook church and mission failed to show how African and European could live together as equal citizens in God's household, and regrettably, became contaminated. This brought to the fore an African consciousness which

had been pushed into the background by the initial integrationist approach in rebellion against this state of affairs. This had been the result partly of the pioneer missionaries' assimilationist policies. When this integration dream failed African consciousness was awakened, thus, emerging as a reaction to racially exclusionist policies and domination attitudes. Consequently, African nationalism also tended to be generally exclusionist, reflecting the exclusivity of its object.<sup>4</sup> Mzimba made the point in his justification of his action, "it is clear to me that the African must stand on his own in matters of religion here in Africa as in other countries, and not rely on the white man."<sup>5</sup> L. N. Mzimba echoed these sentiments of African self-sufficiency: "all would admit that for Africa's redemption, the African must be the chosen instrument."<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Mzimba walked out of the Scottish mission in protest against racist missionary domination to found an African institution.

What would be interesting to know is the extent to which Soga, on the other hand, would take his protest against racism had he lived during Mzimba's time. As we have suggested in chapter four, Soga's nationalism was increasingly revealing exclusionist elements by the late 1860's, despite the restraints of his Christian conscience. However, evidence suggests that, like Elijah Makiwane, he probably would have opted to fight it from within the colonial ecclesiastical structures than secede. His thoughts, nonetheless, may have influenced the following generation of African Christians' resolve towards self-affirmation and ultimately independence from the European mission. However, both Soga and Mzimba encouraged African self-reliance and self-support in varying degrees and modes. Soga advised his fellow Africans to work for the elevation of each other, assist each other, patronize each other's talent, support each other's business and trade; "just for the reason that it is better to prefer and elevate kindred and countrymen before all others."<sup>7</sup> Mzimba's formation of an indigenous Church where African had a sense of belonging and control could be viewed as a realisation of Soga's wish, even though Soga would probably not have left the Scottish

<sup>4</sup> N. Sithole, *African Nationalism* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 37.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 71.

<sup>6</sup> 'The African Church' in (ed.) J. D. Taylor, *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 89.

Mission. The African Church was where Soga's ideas would receive real animation. Mzimba thus transformed what was a vision in Soga's case into a reality.

On the other level, education was the key towards improving the quality of life of their people and for the full realisation of the African potential for both of them. To this end Soga not only sent his own children for education in Scotland with an explicit condition to return home after their studies, but he encouraged young Africans to take up education as a strategy for the future:

I see plainly that unless the rising generation is trained to some of the useful arts, nothing else will raise our people, and they must be grooms, drivers of wagons, hewers of wood, or general servants. But let our youths be taught trades, so as to earn money, and they will increase it, and purchase land. When a people are not land-proprietors, they are of no consequence in this country, and are tenants on mere sufferance. We cannot purchase land, as we have no means, no trade, no education. Our boys must be taught trades if we are to continue a people. ... When their education was finished, we would turn our energies towards others, and so on, until an influence was brought to bear upon the whole race. Give me your advice. I am anxious to do something to arrest the *waste* of intellect, energy, and ability among our rising generation. I must not stand alone. Unless something is done speedily, they will be lost for ever.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, Soga believed in the potential of his people whom he sought to develop through education, and for the realisation of this objective he would not depend upon their parents or missionaries. His grand plans were not followed through, however, due to tedious missionary demands, ill health, and his untimely death. Subsequently, Mzimba was at hand to share and follow-through this vision. To this effect he began an educational scheme to send a number of promising young Africans to North America for higher education, as we have indicated. Most of these were fully funded by the PCA itself, while other arrangements were made for others.<sup>9</sup>

Another crucial similarity between the two was in their view of the chieftainship, which was an important aspect of their nationalism. They both appreciated the significance of this

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>8</sup> Soga to Dr. Somerville, 2 April 1861, cited in J. A. Chalmers, *Tiyo Soga*, op. cit, pp. 249 - 250.

<sup>9</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, p. 797, paragraph 10, 963; SANAC, Vol. IV, p. 909, paragraph 44, 967.

institution in the preservation of the African cultural heritage. Their interest was more than just sentimental; they held that the chiefs represented the social cohesion of the African nation and served to keep its patriotism alive. It was, therefore, for this reason that the chiefs were to be admired by all; African Christians and Europeans alike. Soga strongly rebuked those African Christians who felt that they were no longer under the allegiance of chiefs once converted. To these he demanded: "we want to know if you greet your chiefs with their traditional salutations you who are converts to Christianity, you the dwellers in Mission stations."<sup>10</sup> That he took exception against those African Christians who had neglected their traditional roots can be seen in a significant statement made to *Indaba*:

A person who has become a convert should not look only in one direction in his self-regard and in his actions. If he follows that method he may think he has fulfilled all the laws of God, while in fact he will have broken them in the middle into two parts. A person who does this we can liken him to a lame person who walks with one leg and drags the other. He is also like a one-eyed person or one who hears with one ear or one who uses only one arm.<sup>11</sup>

This is a loaded statement with possibilities of all sorts! Was Soga advocating double-allegiance to the Christian faith and chieftainship? Was he supporting a double-consciousness, i.e. to be Christian and African simultaneously? Was he laying foundations for Christian appropriation while preserving elements of African cultural practices? Was he suggesting an insufficiency of the Christian faith with regard to the Africans? These are all possible issues in the reading of the statement.

Similarly, the chiefs were an integral component of the PCA,<sup>12</sup> as well as all other African Initiated Churches. This is because the chieftaincy was the embodiment of tribal self-identity and independence, as the constitution and parliament in modern democracy. According to Hodgkin, "nascent African nationalism might be expected to express itself rather through tribal organisation, reasserting traditional claims and values, apocalyptic religious

<sup>10</sup> *Indaba*, June 1864; also 'AmaKristu neeNkosi' in (ed.) W. G. Bennie, Imibengo, op. cit, p. 50;

<sup>11</sup> *Indaba*, June 1864; also 'AmaKristu neeNkosi' in (ed.) W. G. Bennie, Imibengo, op. cit, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup> L. N. Mzimba, *Umfundisi*, op. cit, p. 89; S. Brock, 'James Stewart and Lovedale', op. cit, pp. 369; D. Burchell, 'A History of the Lovedale Missionary Institution', op. cit, p. 136.

movements, or underground resistance and revolt."<sup>13</sup> The association with chieftainship, thus, symbolised a return to pre-colonial Africa's period of dignity and freedom.<sup>14</sup> Mzimba's Church sought to integrate the Christian spiritual tenet of the Lordship of Christ with the traditional national element of chieftainship in its quest to fulfil the need for continuity with their pre-colonial identity. The chieftainship, which embodied succession between generations from time immemorial, for there was no time when African societies had no chiefs, came to be viewed as the visible representatives of Christ, the timeless Word that was there in the beginning. This served to build a sense of continuity between the African past and the Christian present for African Christians. Thus, even as they Africanised their Christian legacy people like Mzimba sought to Christianise their African heritage. Further, despite the fact that the African church leaders of this period did not embark on a large-scale return to their cultural heritage as was to happen with the Zionist Churches later, their appropriation of the traditional symbol of the chieftainship indicates a shift towards this direction.

African Christian national pride had to be rooted in tangible forms of their African heritage such as history, culture and language. The chieftaincy was the embodiment of all these forms. Hodgkin observes that the appeal to African history is a recurrent theme in nationalist thought.<sup>15</sup> Soga's almost lyrical appeal to the amaXhosa-African history and culture in his *Indaba* article must, therefore, be seen in this perspective. In his numerous contributions he sought to counter the European myth that Africans were a people without a history by invoking the memory of a number of amaXhosa pre-colonial chiefs, together with the qualities and achievements of traditional society. Soga, obviously conscious of the instrumentality of history in raising consciousness and national pride, meant to revive an Africanist memory in his readership. History would then become an instrument for self-assertion and a weapon to fight against European domination. Thus Soga and Mzimba did not use their own unique examples but those of their forebears in order to gain credibility in

<sup>13</sup> T. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1957), p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, op. cit, pp. 102ff.

their nation-building exercise. The chieftainship, then, was a crucial component in the reconstruction of African unity, and its revival served as a bulwark against the colonial divisive policies. Also it would be the common ground between the civilising and traditional Africans, giving further expression to African unity.

Further, it was possible for African nationalists to employ traditional symbols as expression of religious dissent. Traditional African thought boasted a holistic worldview where the language of politics was at the same time the language of religion, and vice versa. Clearly, the issues impacting upon Africans in this period were not easily separated. This is partly the reason why missionaries ignorantly condemned the African Church movement as neither religious nor political. Inadvertently, this was a profound compliment. Yet for various reasons, Mzimba was quick to dissociate his Church from overt political claims at the Native Affairs Commission, "ours is purely a religious matter, and arose out of religious difficulties."<sup>16</sup> What Saunders said of the Ethiopian church movement was equally true of the PCA as well. It was characteristic of some of African initiated Churches to draw membership "from different parts of South Africa" which "had neither a special attachment to one chiefdom nor a narrow regional appeal."<sup>17</sup> Significantly, the non-denominational and inter-tribal nature of these Churches contained enormous potential for African unity, about which the colonists were restless: "they feared the implications of any African institution that refused to recognize European sovereignty."<sup>18</sup> The African church leaders were aware of this fact as they sought to build their Churches across narrow denominational or tribal barriers and upon broader indigenous lines instead. They were the first ones to realize that fundamental principle adopted by later generations of African nationalists in South Africa, that "white power should be opposed by black unity."<sup>19</sup> Mzimba's strategy shows his

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<sup>15</sup> T. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, *ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>16</sup> SANAC, Vol. II, p. 793, paragraph 10, 901.

<sup>17</sup> C. C. Saunders, 'Tile and the Thembu Church' in *The Journal of African History*, *op. cit.*, p. 566.

<sup>18</sup> L. Switzer, *Power and Resistance in an African Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>19</sup> A. Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu!: The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1984), p. 24.

awareness of the crucial lesson of confronting "structure with structure."<sup>20</sup> The formation of PCA served as a structural protest "against the destruction of the Christian faith because of racism"<sup>21</sup> within the European structures. It was, in manner, an act in defence of the faith from its European missionary distortion. It is in this regard that "the African Churches believed that they, rather than the mission Churches, were the true exponents of Christianity."<sup>22</sup>

Structures are the necessary vehicle for the implementation of ideas and the diffusion of thought. Mzimba's structural innovation was that it proved that Christianity is not necessarily connected to European Christianity and its missions. It could exist, as it had done in North Africa before, independently of the European colonial-missionary agency. Africans Christians could institute a church, preside over it, and direct its development just as the European counterpart had done. Christianity was not the exclusive prerogative of any single nation or race but rather was adaptable to any given context as L. N. Mzimba stated: "Christianity can and does adapt itself to all races and individualities."<sup>23</sup> Yet much adaptation and development in this period was, as de Gruchy explains, "demanded by changes in the existential experiences of blacks in South Africa."<sup>24</sup>

Shifting our focus back to Soga, another important part of his contribution to the formation of African ecclesiastical institutions included providing the resources of translation and vernacularisation. The value of vernacular, according to Bediako, is that it "not only facilitates access to the particular communities speaking those languages, but also creates the likelihood that the hearers of the Word in their own languages will make their own

<sup>20</sup> Archie Mafeje cited in J. W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Collins, 1986), p. 182.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>22</sup> J. F. Ade Ajayi & E. A. Ayandele, 'Writing African Church History' in *The Church Crossing Frontiers: Essays in honour of Bengt Sundkler*, *Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia XI* (Gleerup: Almqvist & Wiksells, 1969), p. 104.

<sup>23</sup> L. N. Mzimba, 'The African Church', in (ed.) J. D. Taylor, *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*, op. cit, p. 89.

<sup>24</sup> J. W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, op. cit, p. 156.

response to it and on their own terms."<sup>25</sup> Thus, in this regard, the African Church was empowered through direct divine communication in their own context, and thereby enabled to shape participation within the Christian faith on their own terms. This is because vernacular serves as bridge to the traditional world-view and enables the Christian community to wrestle with traditional issues and challenges.<sup>26</sup> In this manner then vernacularisation serves as a potent tool of empowerment and becomes the single most crucial element for building an indigenous Christian tradition.

The fact that the gospel message could be carried through and heard in the indigenous language and idiom had profound implications. One such implication was that vernacularisation promoted indigenous agency in mission that in turn rendered the European missionary prerogative problematic and eventually dispensable. It served to subvert missionary hegemony over the gospel and to create some dialogue and interdependence between them and the Africans. Using the local expressions and idioms to communicate the Christian faith, to a certain extent, divested it of its foreignness and enabled African participation. Soga's vernacular resources, correctly understood, served to enable later generations of African Christians to realize their full potential within the Christian faith and begin to take initiative thereof. In this context Soga becomes a representative Christian figure who set in motion a silent revolution in Xhosa Christian history. The new interest in creating vernacular Scriptures for societies that had no Scriptures of their own ushered in a fundamental revolution, with new religious structures coming into being to preside over the changes. The structural response to European Christianity, in which Mzimba was to be involved, can be said to have its ideological roots in the process set off by Soga.

However, despite the centrality and usability of vernacular hymnody in popularising the faith, particularly within the African initiated Churches, there has not been a deliberate effort to theologically exploit this resource. Brian Castle bemoans this oversight: "it must certainly

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<sup>25</sup> K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, op. cit, p. 62.

be the case now that more people can quote from hymns than from the Bible. ... Yet the mainstream churches hardly seem to take hymnody seriously as a way of spreading and nurturing the Christian faith."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the church needs to rediscover this genius of music as the musicologist A. P. Merriam defines it:

Music is a human phenomenon produced by people for people and existing and functioning in a social situation. ... Mythology, legend and history are found in song texts and song is frequently used as an enculturative device. ... Songs provide the student of human behaviour with some of the richest material he (sic) has for analysis, but their full potential remains to be exploited.<sup>28</sup>

The challenge is more urgent for the African component of the church in which hymns are clearly vehicles of doctrine, due to widespread illiteracy. If the hymns are theological, social and cultural statements, as Brian Castle holds,<sup>29</sup> the hymnody is a tool for the theologising of the laity. Indeed, through hymnody the shift from professional to informal or narrative theology is achieved. Kwesi Dickson warns of the need to accelerate this shift:

... Informal theologising is done in various ways, such as in song, prayer and preaching. This is a point which cannot be made forcefully enough, for with the blossoming of theological exposition in recent years, particularly in the so-called Third World, there is a possibility - yea, a real danger - that Christians in Africa, and elsewhere, might come to associate theology solely with a systematic articulation of Christian belief.<sup>30</sup>

In this regard, then, Soga's vernacular resources, rightly understood, served to enable later generations of African Christians, lay and professional, to realize their full potential within the Christian faith and to begin to take the initiative thereof.

Soga chose to remain loyal to the Scottish mission until he died, thus providing a role model for successive Presbyterian African Christians. Crafford and Millard suggest

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp. 66ff.

<sup>27</sup> B. Castle, 'Hymns: Blue-Prints for Mission', in *Missionalia*, Vol. 21, No. 1, April 1993, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> A. P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 185 & 13.

<sup>29</sup> B. Castle, 'Hymns: Blue-Prints for Mission', op. cit, p. 21.

<sup>30</sup> K. Dickson, *Theology in Africa* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), p. 109.

reasons why a number of important black pioneers remained within the structures of the mission system. They conclude that:

The black pioneers who stayed with the mission churches saw those churches as their own and felt a loyalty to them. They were able to find their spiritual freedom within the bounds of their chosen denomination and did not feel a need to start an independent group. They laid the foundation on which many of the churches of today are built. ... They are the unsung heroes of the history of the church in South Africa, about whom the average member of the congregation today knows nothing.<sup>31</sup>

Critically, both Soga and Mzimba, despite their varying responses operated within the framework of the Christian faith. It is incorrect, therefore, to perceive Mzimba within the African rejectionist tradition of cultural nationalists, and Soga within the accommodationist strand. At least not without qualification. For us, they should be viewed as foundational and complementary contributors in keeping the necessary tension and connection between the integrationist and Christian nationalist traditions in South Africa. Soga and Mzimba both offered an internal and external critique of European Christianity, but did not reject it entirely. This is because they made a conscious choice to be both Christian and African, thus providing models of how to be both. Neither may have been radical enough in terms of exploring the Christian relationship to African traditional religious institutions. Indeed, they were mostly ambivalent in this regard. They did not embark on the task of replacing European images and representation of Christianity with African images of God and black Christs. This was left for latter generations. However, Soga and Mzimba were African theologians of both multiculturalism and African nationalism, and, as such, both made foundational contributions to African Christianity and anticipated current attempts at cultural renaissance.

### CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

How do we appropriate Soga and Mzimba's legacies in the context of South Africa's new democracy? The post-apartheid era has brought to the surface a plethora of issues which are of critical importance for the mission of the church in the new South Africa. The challenge

for African Christians and Christianity is to maintain relevance through engagement with contemporary issues, and in the light of lessons of the past. We live, after all, in a continuum. This is particularly true in South Africa where most of our contemporary challenges are a direct result of the past. Language and education, for instance, remain the terrain of struggle that they had been during Soga and Mzimba's time. This is because language is an integral part of the national and cultural makeup of a people. It is crucial for the common identity of a communal people, for "language is the vessel in which the entire cultural heritage is maintained and transmitted."<sup>32</sup> Language breaks ethnic and racial boundaries as much as it builds community. It is critical in the dissemination of ideas and values, and in this sense therefore, language makes nationalism possible. It contributes to the development of a sense of being and becomes the vehicle of nationalist sentiments and self-consciousness. It creates a nation and nationalism. Ethnic self-identity is dependent upon the distinctive language of that particular group and not on the common language of the whole. Thus, in our own context, language is at the very heart of the nation-building process in the new South Africa. We have shown how language has in the past been exploited as a weapon of coercion and domination on the one hand and, on the other, resistance and consciousness. It became a much contested and politicised sphere.

More recently, this came vividly to public attention in the 1976 "Soweto Resistance". The consequences of denying linguistical freedom to particular language-groups and imposing one's own instead were thereby made clearly visible. However, it was the Afrikaans' association with apartheid that Africans were reacting to. It was the Afrikaans of Afrikaner nationalism that was being rejected rather than the Afrikaans language *per se*. Also, it was not education that was at stake here but oppressive linguistic nationalism for, another settler language, English, was still preferred as the language of tuition. This is

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<sup>31</sup> D. Crafford & J. Millard, 'The contribution of the black pioneers' in (ed.) D. Crafford, *Trail-Blazers of the Gospel*, op. cit, pp. 200 & 199.

<sup>32</sup> J A Ross, "Language and the Mobilization of Ethnic Identity" in (eds.), G Giles & B Saint-Jacques, *Language and Ethnic Relations* (Pergamon Press, 1979), p. 5.

precisely because, unlike in the nineteenth century, English had now been overtaken by Afrikaans as language of domination. However, it would be correct to conclude that English as the language of tuition was preferred not because it had become an African vernacular but rather out of the political-educational realities of the time. Rather than press for an African language as the medium of education Africans were prepared to settle for an English compromise. This compromise was preferred in turn because it promised the African participation at the universal or global level. Both the earlier and the recent struggles were aimed against ethnic or particularistic forms of education. They wanted an educational system that, though rooted within their own specific context, would allow African participation at the universal level. The earlier struggle defended the use of classics as means of participation in the universal discourse while the latter rejected the Afrikaans medium as incapable of achieving the same. Both reached their fullest vindication with the recent introduction of democratic governance committed to an inclusive people's education.

In the new South Africa language, however, still needs to be liberated from this negative perspective of "the grammar of violence" and "the syntax of destruction"<sup>33</sup> to being a symbol of liberation and affirmation. Language equality is crucial if we are to avoid any future threat of linguistic nationalism and domination. The South African constitution allows cognizance of our plurality of language and culture. However, considering the socio-cultural significance of language, the status of the English language as the *lingua franca* of an African country is contestable. This is the ambiguity of much of colonial Africa that most of its post-colonial nations continue to be identified through the language of their former colonial powers. Obviously colonial English brought many diverse linguistic groups together; it made it possible for Africans across the continent to share their aspirations and ideals. The English language in this sense became a vehicle for the dialectic between the universal and the local.

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<sup>33</sup> "Inside" magazine, Sunday Times, 17 November 1996, p. 32.

Probably the argument about the expediency of English language for national and international relations is worth considering. But while the suitability of English language as the *lingua franca* in Africa is still being debated at various national levels, we want to argue that the English language as such has to be divested of its cultural and imperialist pretensions. It should be deflated of all its other hegemonic baggage so that it remains a purely functional language. Further, the English language should play only a modest, largely functional role rather than being "a primary defining characteristic of a collectivity."<sup>34</sup> The question of a national language then is about representativeness. To what extent does the national language represent norms and values of all the citizens of a particular country? The non-representativeness of one's language in any sphere of national activity implies their exclusion which in turn results in their alienation. Alienation leads to restlessness and instability. The relation of English as South Africa's "national" language to the ethnic languages thus needs further clarity. If language equality is not always feasible in every sphere of life, then the onus is on the usable language/ s to divest it/ themselves of their consequent hegemony. Admittedly in the short term English as defined above cannot but be continued as the language of tuition. The realities of the situation as of now are such that English remains our national and academic *lingua franca*. This not because it is the exclusive language of learning but rather due to its historical preeminence and economic expediency.

This preeminence and expediency need to be Africanised nonetheless. This, for instance, could be done primarily by ensuring that although English remains the language of the classroom, an African environment is created around the school. The mood and culture in centers of learning should be transformed in order to be more deliberately African. Similarly, while lectures may be offered in English, it would be of great help towards this objective to make available tutorials of the same courses in own languages. In this manner the rainbow constituency of our classroom would, at least to some extent, each feel equipped and affirmed. On the other hand, this would serve to displace the English

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<sup>34</sup> J A Ross, "Language and the Mobilization of Ethnic Identity", op.

hegemony in the academy, and thereby maintain our model of the functional use of English. This is and should be made achievable in the short term.

At the centre of the struggle between European missionaries and civilising Africans, like Mzimba, was the ultimate refusal of the latter to imbibe a European cultural education. Their reaction was not directed against education as such, to the contrary, Mzimba was one of the better exponents of formal education. Rather it was aimed at the cultural aspect inherent in the curricula that was being offered. They craved after an education that would at least be so shaped as to meet their African worldview. The subsequent streams of Africans to Black American Institutions should be viewed in this regard. These began after people like Mzimba had unsuccessfully sought to overhaul the Lovedale curriculum to meet the African needs. The black American education promised to satisfy this hunger for an African-oriented curriculum. However, as we observed, they were to be disillusioned in this regard as well. Indigenous forms of education could not be imported but would emerge from local initiatives and context. Current processes aimed at reshaping education in South Africa seek precisely to address this realisation.

Another important theme that links with our research in contemporary discourse is that of nation-building and reconstructing new identities under democracy. What is the language of nationalism in this context? President Thabo Mbeki's answer has been the introduction of the concept of the "African Renaissance".<sup>35</sup> In introducing the concept Mbeki continues a long history of Africa's struggle for own identity and self-sufficiency. Set within the non-racialist tradition Mbeki's African Renaissance is characterised by a sense of inclusive nationalism and multi-culturalism: "we refuse to accept that our Africanness shall be defined by our race, colour, gender or historical origins."<sup>36</sup> Mbeki's definition of African Renaissance on the bases of orientation and commitment to Africa rather than any visible or

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cit, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Thabo Mbeki, "I Am An African", The Deputy President's Statement, on Behalf of the ANC, at the Adoption of South Africa's 1996 Constitution Bill, 8 May 1996, Cape Town.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

historical realities resonates with Soga's all-encompassing vision. Operating within this paradigm, Mahmood Mamdani argues that a Renaissance cannot happen without an intelligentsia to drive it and that the African Renaissance requires an Africa-focused intelligentsia for this purpose.<sup>37</sup> However, this should not imply a reduction of the concept to some sort of elitism. The role of intellectual leadership in a transitory period has been emphasised in our discussion on Soga.

Kwesi Kwaa Prah, on the other hand, offers an alternative to the above definition.<sup>38</sup> For him Africans are in the first instance a cultural product. Contesting the idea of "commitment to Africa" for an African definition he quips, "what is this commitment? What does it amount to? How is it to be measured? ... Are there any of the major peoples of this globe which define their nationality on the basis of 'commitment'? Of course not. ... What is happening is that, being African is conceptually equated with citizenship. This is not only confusing, but can be construed as mischievous. ... (If everybody is African, then nobody is an African."<sup>39</sup> Significantly, however, Kwaa Prah debunks the notion of a racial definition of African: "it is culture, history, attachment to these and consciousness of such identity, and not skin colour which primarily defines the African."<sup>40</sup> For him, while recognising the global village as a world of hybrid cultures and identities, the African Renaissance should seek to forge a preponderantly African identity as the locus of action and reflection. Obviously, these sentiments are closer to Mzimba's African nationalism. Thus, the debate on national identity ranges on between both sides of the pendulum in the new South Africa. The aim throughout my discussion has been to find a synthesis of the two positions as they are not exclusive in my view.

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<sup>37</sup> M. Mamdani, 'There Can Be No African Renaissance Without An Africa-Focused Intelligentsia', unpublished paper delivered at the African Renaissance Conference, Johannesburg, 28 - 29 September 1998.

<sup>38</sup> K. Kwaa Prah, 'African Renaissance or Warlordism: Notes on the Idea of an African Renaissance', unpublished paper presented to the African Renaissance Conference, Johannesburg, 28 - 29 September 1998.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Op. cit, p. 4.

At the center of the debate is whether a new South African national identity is to be shaped vis-à-vis Europe or Africa. Basically the questions to ask using our own models would be: Are we to follow Soga's European-Africanist or Mzimba's Africanist approach? Are we to follow global trends or put more emphasis on African solutions in dealing with our problems? It seems to be the question of choice between universalism and particularism. However, do we have to make a choice? Our answer is no. We do not need to necessarily adopt an either or position. Our position could be a combination of the two held in dialectic tension. Ours is an increasingly global village where it is no longer tenable to live in isolation with integrity. In the global village there are no sterile or sacrosanct cultures; we affect inasmuch as we are affected by interculturalism. National identities should thus be built in relation to the rest of humanity instead of in exclusive laagers. A positive assessment of the world around us is, therefore, necessary if we are to forestall our claustrophobia and its dreadful consequences. We are a part of the much wider world upon which we are dependent in a variety of ways. Defining ourselves in dialogue with the rest of humanity has positive benefits for us in that we are enabled to influence them about who we are, as much as we are influenced by them. Our natural stereotypes about them, like xenophobia, are corrected as well as we correct their misconceptions, like Afro-pessimism, about us. This can only contribute towards better human relationships and a just world order.

However, one of the common dangers of an universalist approach is when it remains just that, universalist. While we extol the positive benefits of this approach we should always be reminded of our specific location. We should guard against forms of European modernity that in seeking to establish themselves globally negate indigenous cultures. International racism today is linked to modernity and thus globalisation. In this sense globalisation becomes a modern form of colonisation. The singularity of frameworks on the global stage easily becomes another Western tools of domination and exclusion. An hermeneutic of suspicion against new forms of imperialism that seek to colonize our coherent conception of the world and distort our consciousness and historicity. This is

especially true of Africa, which has been perpetually made to fit into the shoes of others. Africa has suffered excessive foreign interference and hostile domination for centuries from which, arguably, it has not completely recovered. This is one of the underlying principles of President Mbeki's "African Renaissance" discourse; that Africa needs to shed itself of any vestiges of colonial legacy. Yet Mbeki's African Renaissance is premised upon Africa's global participation. On this global stage Mbeki sees the possibilities of Africa's emancipation through the Renaissance. Thus, despite inherent contradictions Mbeki has focused on the emancipator possibilities of globalisation. However, even he seems to have done this within a context of underlying Africanism.

Further, racism has proved to be one of the enduring and ubiquitous problems of all time. It is depressing to realise that the new South Africa is no exception. Racism seems to be too deeply embedded in South African society and history. This is further complicated by the resurgence of racism on the international stage. Thus, one of the critical tasks for the church of our time is to oversee the process of the de-racialization of our nation, both at the individual and institutional levels. While African Christianity needs to engage in issues of economic and racial justice, the challenge for African theology in this regard is to incorporate race critique in its social commentary and critique. African theology has a lot learn from Black theology in this regard, and complementarity of the two theological streams could further enrich African Christianity's quest for continuing relevance. Here, too, our dialogue with Soga and Mzimba is of critical importance. We have adopted a complementary approach in our discussion precisely because we refuse to accept a truncated view of our problems and strategies to deal with these.

In my view, however, economic justice has turned out to be an enduring threat, arguably, even more than racism. In our current obsession with racism we should not overlook the fundamental economic sources of contemporary conflict. The post-apartheid South Africa is still dominated by unjust economic structures which alienate blacks from the central economic activity. The 1994 compromise, aptly described by Ali Mazrui as some kind of

"you wear the crown, we'll keep the jewels"<sup>41</sup> arrangement, has a long way to go towards addressing the socio-economic legacy of apartheid. Thus, despite the political freedom gained as a result thereof, there is still an urgent need for economic integration, "to create the conditions for participatory economy, thereby transforming the economy so that it is in the service of the people."<sup>42</sup> A major source of conflict is the competing economic systems: a market economy versus a command economy, privatization versus nationalisation. These largely override racial divisions. The fundamental shift in government's policies and the consequent tensions within their alliance with the trade unions and the SACP bear this out. Some of the apparent opposites that have to be reconciled in a balanced economy are low deficit versus low development, flexible labour policies versus trade union control, free enterprise economic development versus transformation. The challenge is for a strong leadership that will seek to lift the conflicting perspectives and debates from an adversarial to a negotiation style. This would lay lasting foundations for building a better society for all.

Lastly, it is clear that democracy has also initiated its own tensions and challenges, both continuous and discontinuous with those of the past. There are no clear options and solutions, however. Vigilance and engagement should be one of the imperatives of African Christianity in its quest to maintain continuing relevance. That part of the South African church which had been on the vanguard of the struggles of the poor, has an urgent role here. African theology and Christianity could make significant contributions toward contemporary discourse and other nation-building processes. This in the promotion of social justice for all. We are thus ever challenged, in the search for a just system, to side with the weak, the poor, the minority, and to maintain our criticality.

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<sup>41</sup> Cited in M. Mamdani, 'There Can Be No African Renaissance Without An Africa-Focused Intelligentsia', *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> D. Mosoma, 'Economic Reconciliation: Foundation for a Just Society', *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, Vol. 11, No. 2, November 1997, p. 67.

## CONCLUSION

In this study we have attempted to be both critical and eclectic. Selective of our case studies and critical of Western categories sometimes "wrongly" applied to interpret them. In other words, positive appropriations and critical rejections characterise this work. My aim has been to offer a pivotal framework for "rewriting" our history in South Africa without being intimidated by what used to be viewed as "gigantic" purviews of African history. I have realistically tried to acknowledge impediments deposited on the banks of Africa through heavy streams of colonisation. At best, I am suggesting that intercourse between these "two worlds" has been and continues to have consequences which could be hazardous if not seriously engaged with. In my treatment of Soga and Mzimba, which is about a lived historico-cultural and political milieu, I have highlighted a few themes: a challenge to singularity, the experience of the colonised, and the vitality of this discourse in the new world order.

On the challenge to singularity, it is not by accident that I have refrained from focussing on one or the other of the two case studies but treated both of them, i.e. Soga and Mzimba. This is because I deliberately refused to give precedence to one and not the other of the two African Presbyterian "ancestors", for there is no such a precedence in the African understanding of *izinyanya* (ancestors). Thus my diagnostic procedure in treating Scottish mission and African Presbyterianism in the Eastern Cape has been that of evoking *izinyanya* (ancestors) and not *isinyanya* (ancestor). This diagnosis of the African Presbyterian past is accordingly dialogical and synchronic rather than diachronic. In our treatment of Soga and Mzimba we have discovered that both reveal trajectories of colonisation as well as consciousness of that colonisation. Both men voluntarily participated in and were enthusiastic agents of European mission, on the one hand. Equally, they revealed strands of pre-colonial consciousness that did not fit too comfortably within the colonial discourse, on the other hand. Thus both the Comaroffs and Bediako's theories of conflict and harmony with regard to the African Christians' transaction with European Christendom are challenged. No singularity of understanding

could be applied to Mzimba and Soga's experiences, for they contain crucial elements of both. Their experiences are characterised with serious ambivalences and even contradictions, not uncommon in the experiences of those who are colonised. This is because the insidious nature of colonialism is that it internally replicates in the lives of the colonised. However, in spite of this reality in the lives of Soga and Mzimba it is equally possible to find the emancipatory possibilities of this colonial experience. It is these possibilities that I have sought to highlight in the study. This is of pertinent relevance in the New World order. Taking the problem of racism, for instance, this is how we begin to look at racism. We look at the emancipatory possibilities of race, and as such we are challenged not to be racist. We refuse to see racism as a category of domination but a springboard of emancipation. It is hoped that this study will move us away from a racist concept of whiteness and blackness to a cultural ethnic concept that is not divisive but a celebration of diversity.

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- Doreen Solomons
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- Willie Willemse