

EXPLORATION OF COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS GEORGENHOLTZ MISSION STATION AS A HERITAGE RESOURCE

by

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NMHTSH001



Figure 1: Aerial view of Georgenholtz Mission Station and farm (Source: Google Earth, 2017).

SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
MPhil (Conservation of the Built Environment)

**Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

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January 2018

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AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

I am submitting this 60-credit research project (mini-dissertation) in partial fulfilment of the degree of MPhil in the Conservation of Built Environment (CBE). The course code is APG5071S. All other courses in the programme have been completed. The work in this document was undertaken during the second semester, that is between July 2017 and January 2018.

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DEDICATION

My mother, Ms. Kristina Nemaheni, née Nephalama (1924-1974).

My aunt, Ms. Thalitha Nenungwi, née Lalumbe (1920-2017).

My little daughter Miss Tshilidzi Nemaheni (born 4 February 2010).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this mini-dissertation was made possible by many people, who deserve special mention in this paragraph. They are as follows:

- My supervisor, Associate Professor Alta Steenkamp, for guidance, support and encouragement, from the beginning to the end-level that enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject.
- Associate Professor Stephen Townsend, the coordinator of the Conservation of Built Environment Programme within the School of Architecture and Geomatics, Faculty of Engineering, and Built Environment at UCT, for his guidance, which led to the formulation of the research proposal, which led to the production of this work.
- Ms Naomi Gihwala- Administrator at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Geomatics, was of great assistance throughout the duration of my study at UCT.
- Ms Lufuno Kgamedi, an archivist at the University of South Africa (UNISA) Library Archive's Hesse collection of the Berlin Missionary Society, assisted and guided me through UNISA's archive collection. Without her, I would not have completed this work. I thank her for providing me with the old Georgholtz Mission Station picture collection with notes at their back indicating year and identity of people identified. Equally, Ms Ncendiswa Alicia Peter (an archivist), Olivia Baloyi and Sakhile Mngomezulu (Information Technology interns) played a similar role while Ms Anri van der Westhuizen guided them as the manager of the UNISA archives. Ms Annete Le Roux who is UNISA Archival Collections Developer played a significant role in scanning glass slides (in the wooden box) into clear and visible pictures of the Georgholtz Mission Station parsonage.
- Special thanks go to all the community members I interviewed, that is from the Lutheran Church leadership, the youth, Chief Tshilidzi Masikhwa and the community of Ha-Luvhimbi.
- My family deserves special mention, as I spent most of my time attending classes at UCT and travelling to Georgholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi village in Venda (Limpopo Province).

ABSTRACT

The turn of this century has been characterised by a flurry of research activities taking place around the history of Mission stations and missionaries in South Africa (SA). In Venda, in the Limpopo Province of SA, research about the Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) also gained momentum. Most of the researchers working in the area relied mainly on diaries, letters, annual reports, and limited published materials written by the BMS missionaries who worked at various mission stations in the area. These researchers focused on historical, educational, and religious developments, as captured by the Berlin missionaries. Of these historical accounts, the voices of the local communities have been hushed. Most of the stories available in written sources are from the viewpoints of the missionaries. At the same time, the focus of researchers in the heritage conservation fields has been on the physical condition of heritage properties, where the intention was to arrest deterioration of material. While there is a change in thinking in the heritage field to take into consideration the involvement of relevant stakeholders, the focus is still on the challenges related to the physical condition of heritage properties. Researchers in the heritage field have come to realise that conservation cannot unify or advance with any real innovation or vision if there is a continuation to concentrate the bulk of conservation discourse on issues of physical condition.

This study addresses the issue of community participation in research by responding to the following question: What is the impact of community attitudes and perspectives towards Georgenholtz Mission Station (GHMS) as a heritage resource? Various community groupings were given the responsibility of airing their views regarding the Mission station as a heritage resource. In doing so, they were able to identify and articulate the values they associate with the mission station. Without an understanding of these values, practitioners, managers, and communities would be unable to act in respect of the gradual but rapid deterioration of the same heritage resource. Because of these values, communities were able to recommend what actions would be to the benefit of all of them.

The research question of this study is answered through one-on-one oral interviews the researcher conducted with respondents. These respondents are divided into four categories of communities namely the youth, Lutheran Church leadership, Ha-Luvhimbi

community leaders and members of families with historic ties with the Berlin Missionary Society. Individual respondents from these community categories were asked to comment upon the history of the Berlin Missionary Society and the development of Georgenholtz Mission Station from 1877 to the present times. They were also asked to broadly identify and explain the heritage significance of Georgenholtz Mission Station. The last question they were asked relates to what communities would like to see happening with Georgenholtz moving forward. The responses that came from these respondents show that Georgenholtz Mission Station has extensive connections to Mission history in rural South Africa which assists in conveying the significance of this Mission station beyond its importance to Ha-Luvhimbi village. Communities could identify various values attached to the Mission station, including amongst others, historical, aesthetic and architectural, social and economic values that should be preserved for the benefit of current and future generations. The results from this study indicate that communities interviewed regard Georgenholtz Mission Station as their heritage resource that should be taken care of and that there are economic benefits that could be derived from the adaptive reuse of the Mission station. The study concludes by outlining recommendations for further and extended research on the subject by other researchers.

KEYWORDS

Communities, community, heritage, outstations, church, clinic, parsonage, land, Georgenholtz, Ha-Luvhimbi, and Tshivhase.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHC	Australian Heritage Commission
BMS	Berlin Missionary Society
CBE	Conservation of Built Environment
COH WHS	Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site
ELCSA	Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa
GHMS	Georgholtz Mission Station
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
Jnr	Junior
JSTOR	Journal Storage
KNP	Kruger National Park
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MNP	Mapungubwe National Park
NDP	National Development Plan
NLHR	National Liberation Heritage Route
NHC	National Heritage Council
N. Tvl	Northern Transvaal
RIM	Robben Island Museum
SA	South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHRA	South African Heritage Resources Authority
SANParks	South African National Parks
Snr	Senior
TB	Tuberculosis
UCT	University of Cape Town
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
UK	United Kingdom
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
Wits	University of the Witwatersrand
WW1	First World War of 1914 to 1917
WW2	Second World War of 1939 to 1945

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Context and Introduction

I became a heritage practitioner in the mid-1990s, when the heritage practice was changing to include the views of the public. My experience in working with a variety of communities at Thulamela Heritage site¹ in the Kruger National Park (KNP), Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (COHWHS), Robben Island Museum (RIM) and Mapungubwe National Park (MNP) instilled an interest in me to work with communities. My background as a person whose family in Ha-Makuya village are historically staunch Lutherans also motivated me to pursue a study focusing on Georgenholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi.

My interest in pursuing this project is mainly in exploring the impact that community perspectives or attitudes can have on a heritage site such as the Georgenholtz Mission Station. My choice of Georgenholtz Mission Station was motivated by the fact that, typically, most of the writers of Venda history around the Berlin Missionary stations in Venda relied on limited Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) records.² It is clear in these available records that the “most strident voices, demanding to be heard, have been those of the missionaries. However, hidden behind this have been the quieter voices of African rulers and their people.”³ The fact that most of the BMS documents in Germany are in the German language and are inaccessible to most researchers⁴ is a cause for

¹ Thulamela Heritage site is an Iron Age stonewalled settlement found in the far northern part of the Kruger National Park. The researcher first worked here as a heritage practitioner in the mid-1990s. Thulamela became a good example of community participation in heritage matters in South Africa's post-Apartheid-era; thus, making it a shining example in Southern African heritage management.

² Maanda Mulaudzi, review of *Capturing the Soul: The Vhavenda and the Missionaries 1870-1900*, by Alan Kirkaldy, *Kronos* 32 (November 2006): 264-268, <http://www.jstor/stable/41056571>.

³ Alan Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul: The Vhavenda and the missionaries 1870-1900* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005), 11.

⁴ Aeneas Chigwedere, *The Karanga Empire* (Harare: Books for Africa, 1985), 134.

concern. This research therefore reveals that despite limited documentation regarding Georgholtz Mission Station, communities are not only available to express their feelings about their heritage, there are ethical and intellectual imperatives for these voices to be heard and taken seriously. All these feelings or values may determine the future of Georgholtz Mission Station.

1.2 The notion of ‘Community.’

Because this study is around exploring community perspectives on Gergenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource, the notion of “community” becomes central to the whole study. It is thus important to unpack the term “community” from the outset. According to Peter Schmidt, the question of what “community” is has been at the forefront of community studies in the heritage practice for some time now.⁵ The most important task is to look at how various researchers define and explain the concept of “community.”⁶ The term “community” is a fluid concept which some researchers such as Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton see as problematic defining it in the heritage discipline. Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton warn of the inherent dangers of assuming that “communities” are a “homogenous unit.”⁷ Similarly, “community” can be defined as local, and geographically based.⁸ In this case, individuals could belong to more than one community.⁹ While there are communities that define themselves geographically, communities may be defined and linked by a range of social and cultural experiences, and political experiences and aspirations that transcend geography and are, in fact, geographically widespread.¹⁰ A good example is of shared experiences influenced by ethnicity, class, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation and political beliefs. These are factors around which communities may define themselves.¹¹ While there are various definitions about “community,” it is important to acknowledge that individuals may belong to more than one community at any one time.¹² Internationally,

⁵ Peter R. Schmidt, *The Nature of Heritage in Africa: Unveiling Local Research and Development Initiatives* (London: Routledge, 2017), 6.

⁶ Amy Roberts, “Review of *Heritage, Communities and Archaeology* by Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton, *Australian Archaeology* 69 (December 2009), 84-85.

⁷ Roberts, review of *Heritage*, 69& 84.

⁸ Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton, *Heritage, Communities, and Archaeology* (London: Duckworth Publishers), 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 45-46.

¹⁰ Smith and Waterton, *Heritage*, 18.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 2002 defined “community” as “people who share a self-ascribed sense of connectedness, manifested, for instance, in a feeling of identity or common behaviour, as well as activities and territory.”¹³ As a result, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003.¹⁴ However, dealing with communities has its challenges such as the disregard of the roles that communities could play in research. This disregard of local or indigenous communities has undoubtedly left the vast majority of the population with “forgotten” histories and cultures.¹⁵ The UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognises new and non-Western ways of understanding heritage.¹⁶ This places community participation in the right place within the heritage practice.

1.3 Problem Statement

The study to determine the different views of community groups regarding Georgholtz Mission Station and how the groups value the mission station is not an easy one. Preliminary findings in respect of the Mission station indicate that initially, the Mission station comprised a Mission school, students’ boarding facility, church, small traditional thatched hut, cemetery, an avenue of bluegum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) trees and a much bigger parsonage. Currently, the church, parsonage, an avenue of bluegum trees and cemetery remain. However, the avenue of trees is getting smaller and smaller as some of the big trees fall. The cemetery, which was reserved for Lutheran Church members from the beginning, now includes other people, whom missionaries referred to as the “heathens.” The burial of other people in the historically Lutheran Church only cemetery might be a sign of a divergent view of the mission station by certain sections of the community. The parsonage is badly dilapidated and has been completely vandalised, abandoned, and left to collapse. The church is gradually disintegrating, with visible cracks in the walls, a collapsing bamboo ceiling, and disintegration of the foundation because of heavy rainwater, which could lead to its final demise. The old Church is currently abandoned because the congregation moved

¹³ Janet Blake, *UNESCO’s 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage: The implications of community involvement in “safeguarding.”* eds., Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (New York, Routledge Taylor Francis Group, 2009), 45-73.

¹⁴ Smith, *Uses*, 13.

¹⁵ Amarensvar Galla, *Social Ecology report of Cultural Conservation Capacity Building Workshop, 09-19 November 1998* (Kruger National Park: South African National Parks, 1998), 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

to a newly-built Church structure. This turn of events at the Georgenholtz Mission Station could be viewed differently by different community groups, depending on what is of value to them and not to others.

1.4 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore and establish the impact of various community perspectives and attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi as a heritage resource. The research also intends to close a gap in unravelling the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station. Most importantly, this qualitative research proves that, if consulted, local communities or stakeholders could play an important role in heritage research.

1.5 Research Question

The main question to be investigated in this study is the impact of community views on Georgenholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi, Venda as a heritage resource. It is therefore proposed that the concepts of “community” and “heritage resource” be defined in full in this study to support such choice to this study. This question will be explored further to establish community attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station by means of their participation¹⁷ in this research. I also examine whether the values attached to the mission station could further determine its future preservation.

1.6 Research Approach and Design

This research followed the qualitative approach, which is described as an “umbrella phase covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode and translate data and it is fundamentally a descriptive form of research which can be used successfully in the description form of research.”¹⁸ The qualitative method of research, which is described as “an approach rather than a particular design or set of techniques”¹⁹, was followed for this research. The main focus of qualitative research includes viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people being studied. Researchers provide a detailed description of what is going on and emphasise

¹⁷ For this research, participation refers to the expression of communities’ versions of their past, their assessment of heritage values and vision on the usage of the historic buildings in the future.

¹⁸ Wellman C, Kruger F and Mitchel B, *Research Methodology*, 3rd ed. (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2005), 188.

¹⁹ Chigwedere, *The Karanga Empire*, 134.

the need to understand and explain social behaviour in the specific environmental context.²⁰ The qualitative approach is also a means of exploring and understanding the meaning that groups ascribe to a social or human problem.²¹ In this approach, data is typically collected by means of documentary survey and oral interviews with a variety of communities.²²

1.6.1 Desktop Study/ Document Survey

This research started off by conducting a document survey and desktop study relevant to the history of Georgholtz Mission Station and community involvement in heritage matters. It thus became the first phase of information gathering.²³ Written sources provide theoretical background to the study and establish the links between what a researcher is proposing to examine, and what has already been studied. When using documents as a data collection source, the researcher should focus on all types of written communication that may shed light on the phenomenon he is studying.²⁴ In general terms, the ‘documents’ used in this research cover a very wide range of various kinds of sources.²⁵

The point of departure for this study is the history of Georgholtz Mission Station that has not been published and researched separately or independently from the BMS documents and publications. In this case, relevant data about the BMS and mission stations were accessed at the University of South Africa (UNISA) Library Archives of the Berlin Mission titled “Hesse German Africana Collection, Accession 89.” The “Hesse Collection of German Africana” was donated to UNISA by Helga Giesekke and Caroline Jeannerat in 2007, 2013 and 2016. Giesekke and Jeannerat compiled a comprehensive archival collection of the work on the Berlin missionaries in Venda from 1867 to 2005. The collection includes, among other things, diaries, books, manuscripts, publications, journals, magazines, and sound recordings of the Berlin missionaries who operated in

²⁰ Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, *Research Methodology: Business and Management Contexts* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2015), 46.

²¹ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (Los Angeles, SAGE Publications, 2009), 4.

²² Ibid.

²³ Catling C. and Bahn P, *The Illustrated Practical Encyclopedia of Archaeology: The key sites, who discovered them and how to become an archaeologist* (London: Annes Publishing, 2009), 18.

²⁴ Jan Nieuwenhuis, *Qualitative research designs and data gathering techniques*, ed. Kobus Maree et. al (Pretoria, Van Schaick Publishers, 2007), 69-97.

²⁵ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), 544.

Venda, including at Georgenholtz Mission Station. Georgenholtz Mission Station photographs were also provided in print and in glass slide forms. The glass slide photographs are unfortunately under threat as they are starting to develop cracks, but they provide important information on the earliest period of the history of the Mission station. A few glass slide photographs and those in the Fobbe collection are populated by stickers indicating photograph numbers. According to Annete Le Roux who is an Archival Collections Developer at UNISA, “removing the stickers when scanning them may negatively affect the chemicals on the surfaces of glass slides- thereby rendering the quality of scanned photographs poor.” Her suggestion is that stickers should not be tempered with to preserve the completeness of the pictures. Some of these photographs were used in this mini-dissertation (Figures 11-13, 24-25 and 42) and some stickers are still visible on them. Removing these stickers was going to affect the qualities of images.

Data was also collected from Helga Giesecke’s compilation of what her great grandfather, missionary Ludwig Giesecke,²⁶ kept as a family collection. One of these documents consulted for this study is in the form of a family history document titled *The Schwellnus-Giesecke family between 1873 and 1973*. Members of these two families have a history of being placed at the Georgenholtz Mission Station. Another comprehensive document that is was put together by Helga Giesecke is titled *The Berlin Mission in Venda (1872 to 1901)*. Helga Giesecke has also contributed to UNISA an *Informative Translation of the Berlin Mission Reports Concerning Venda* that was translated from German into English. These documents are also available in CD-R formats. This compilation of reports also includes old maps of Georgenholtz and the surrounding areas.

Many researchers in South Africa, and Venda in particular, were and are still interested broadly in the activities of the BMS. Their contribution in researching the BMS was used to inform this research. Historic documents at the Institute of Historical Research at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in Pretoria could not be accessed as

²⁶ Missionary Ludwig Giesecke was one of the very few and earliest BMS missionaries to have been posted at Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi between 1906-1908 and 1909- 1919. He assisted Theodor Schwellnus in setting up the Mission station during the first three years of its set up. He served the people of Ha-Luvhimbi and the surrounding areas for almost 14 years before he was redeployed to Tshakhuma Mission Station.

initially planned. Library and Information staff members at the HSRC informed the researcher that the Institute of Historical Research is no longer part of the HSRC. They unfortunately did not know where the Institute was relocated to. The researcher could not use the sources at the HSRC as initially planned. His efforts to trace the new location of the institute yielded no positive results.

Documents in the form of official letters, minutes and memoranda from the National Archives of SA in Pretoria were used in this study. Survey sketches obtained from this archive depot also contributed to the narrative of the history of Georgholtz Mission Station. Letters and official communication regarding land acquisition for the Georgholtz Mission Station were obtained from the National Archives depot in Pretoria. Khorommbi N.L, Mathivha N.R's (1985) Masters dissertations and Mathivha M.E.R's Doctoral Thesis (1970) were useful. In addition to these sources, books and journal articles also shed more light on the history of education and religion in Venda. In addition, online journals were also accessed from Journal Storage (JSTOR) and other online journals.

Because there is a growing trend of community involvement in heritage matters in Southern Africa, researchers have taken great care to not exclude communities from matters that affect them. Australian researchers and heritage practitioners are in the lead as regards involving communities in heritage research. This trend shows signs of phenomenal growth internationally in countries such as the USA, Canada and New Zealand. The works of Laurajane Smith, Emma Waterton, Peter Schmidt and Innocent Pikirayi were extensively consulted and they served as a baseline for this study.

While all these sources were consulted, not all of them could provide the much-needed answers with which to fill the lacunae. Interviewing of various categories of communities associated with Georgholtz Mission Station (local communities, youths, Lutheran Church Leadership and prominent families) became a necessity. Their perspectives and attitudes towards this mission station became essential.

1.6.2 Interviews

In order to complement documentary sources, individual members of various community categories were identified for interviews. Interviewing is the prominent data collection strategy in qualitative research²⁷ and it is a technique of gathering data from humans by asking them questions and getting them to react verbally.²⁸ Unlike documentary and archival sources which contain readily available data existing without the involvement, facilitation and instigation of the researcher,²⁹ interviews provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives, for indepth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located and for very detailed subject coverage.³⁰ Many documents can be useful simply by the nature of the details they contain like spellings of names, titles, specific dates to events, specific language used in mottos, slogans, mission statements and other communications.³¹ If no humans remain alive to provide primary evidence, then documents are the only source of data.³² In turn, these documents may provide confirmatory evidence and strengthen the credibility of the results of interviews conducted.³³ With interviews, researchers can be able to access observations of others and learn about places that one have not been to and the settings in which one has not lived.³⁴

Thus, interviews provide deep, rich, individualised and contextualised data that are centrally important to qualitative research.³⁵ Interviews can also supplement written records, complement what has been documented in formal history- can provide information about the past that exists in no other form.³⁶ This is the reason why the

²⁷ Alan Bryman and Emma Bell, *Research Methodology* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012), 215.

²⁸ Potter W. J, *An Analysis of Thinking, and About Qualitative Methods* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1996), 96.

²⁹ Sharon M. Ravitch and Carl Nicole Mittenfelner, *Qualitative Research: Bridging the Conceptual, Theoretical and Methodological* (London: SAGE Publications, 2016), 147.

³⁰ Jane Ritchie, "Documentary Analysis," in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 35.

³¹ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish* (London: The Guilford Press, 2011), 149.

³² Potter, *An Analysis*, 95.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, "From the individual interview to the interview Society," in *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Methods* (New York: SAGE Publications, 2003), 8.

³⁵ Ravitch and Carl, *Qualitative Research*, 146.

³⁶ B. Allen and W.L. Montell, *From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research* (Nashville, Tennessee: The American Association for State and Local History, 1981), 15.

researcher had chosen interviews to get communities perspectives on Georgenholtz Mission Station because when people talk about local history, they draw on personal experiences, first hand observation of changes in the community and knowledge gleaned from all sorts of written documents and printed paterials.³⁷

When choosing this tool for data collection, the researcher is also mindful of the importance of a real discussion on memory and meaning. It is important to note that the formal sources for documenting local history are often incomplete and inadequate. Thus, much information about the past can be salvaged only by tapping the memories of those who lived through it or remember hearing older members of their families or community talk about it.³⁸ Orally communicated history can easily broaden researchers' data base and achieve keener perspectives on the events and forces that shaped local life and thought.³⁹

1.6.2.1 Sampling

To collect data for this research, communities interviewed were divided into four categories, namely (i) local community members of Ha-Luvhimbi led by their local Chief, (ii) Evangelical Lutheran Church leadership, (iii) representatives from the youth, and (iv) representatives from the prominent families with a long history of association with BMS work at Georgenholtz Mission Station. The researcher had planned to interview approximately five individual members from each community category, but the number was significantly reduced due to the sudden deaths of two prominent members who had already been consulted and who had agreed to be interviewed. From the church leadership, Reverend Ranwaha, former pastor of the Lutheran Church based at Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi, passed on before commencement of the interviews. From the families' side, Vho-Thalitha Nenungwi née Lalumbe, also passed on at the end of September 2017 at the age of 97 years. Their anticipated contributions to the study would have made a huge difference, as both of them had close links with the Mission station. However, these community categories of communities interviewed remained unchanged as initially planned. It is worth-noting that three participants in the interviews occupy prominent and leadership in three community cadedories identified for this

³⁷ Ibid., 69.

³⁸ Allen and Montell, *From Memory to History*, viii.

³⁹ Ibid., 3.

research, i.e. Ha-Luvhimbi Chief's advisory council (community leaders), historical or prominent family members/leaders associated with GHMS and currently with the Lutheran Church).

- The chief and members of his community were interviewed on the basis that before Georgenholtz Mission was established, the BMS had to interact with the Mphaphuli royal family and their council consisting of community members. It was evident during these interviews that the history of the BMS in Ha-Luvhimbi resonated in the minds of the royal family members and the local communities. The same mission station has been in their midst for over 100 years.
- Evangelical Lutheran church leadership was interviewed. These include previous pastors posted at the mission station. Current leaders of the church doubling as community members and members of prominent historic families were also interviewed. Two pastors were not available during the scheduled interviews of 9-14 November 2017 because they were committed with Church duties. They however agreed to be interviewed telephonically.
- Youth representatives from the church were brought into the picture because their views about the Mission station were equally important as those of other community categories. However, their voices are only heard towards the end where they express their views about future prospects of the Mission station buildings. They claim that this is because they were not privy to story-telling by elders when they were growing up in the village.
- Representatives of family members interviewed were drawn from the families with historic ties with the BMS and Georgenholtz Mission Station in particular. These families include those whose members were the first to be converted to Christianity, or the first to become assistants to missionaries at Georgenholtz and its outstations. Most of them still have high regard for the mission station and its environs. One key family member, Traugott Fobbe agreed to be interviewed telephonically as it was going to be difficult to arrange a meeting with him as he is always travelling through his tour guiding Touribusiness in the Southern African countries (SADC).

These diverse community categories represent different perspectives of communities regarding Georgenholtz as a heritage resource. It is important to ensure that different perspectives by different community groupings are taken into consideration. This action

fully supports the claim by Laurajane Smith that “there is really no such thing as heritage”.⁴⁰ This claim simply means that “heritage” is referred to by many people in different ways.⁴¹ It could also mean that there are multiple interpretations of the concept of “heritage”. Thus, diverse community perspectives on Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource will shed more light on the future of the mission station. Broadly, interviewing communities gives researchers access to the observations of others and there could be learning about places that most people have never been to.⁴²

1.6.2.2 *Unstructured and Open-ended Interviews*

This research used qualitative interviews that were unstructured. The unstructured interviews referred to here are “interviews in which the interviewer typically only has a list of topics or, issues that are covered, or an interview guide (schedule), and the style of questioning is very informal and the phrasing and sequencing of questions will vary from interview to interview.”⁴³ The interviews conducted are understood as representing both an act of memory and an inherently subjective account of the past in which oral history elicits information that requires interpretation.⁴⁴ The questions that participants were asked are also open-ended in nature, with participants having the opportunity to propose solutions or provide insight into events, but the focus is mainly on their own perceptions⁴⁵ of Georgenholtz as a heritage resource. Not only did participants rely on oral tradition to share data with the researcher. They also shared their experiences as they were growing in the Lutheran Church and Ha-Luvhimbi between the 1950s to the present. However, because of the diverse backgrounds of the community categories, different sets of questions for individual categories were prepared (refer to Appendix A).

⁴⁰ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), 1.

⁴¹ Jane Lennon, review of *Uses of Heritage* by Laurajane Smith, *Australian Archaeology* 65 (December 2007): 58-60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/402879229>.

⁴² Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein, eds., *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method* (London, SAGE Publications, 2002), 8.

⁴³ Babbie Earl and Mouton Johann, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2015), 216& 385.

⁴⁴ Norman K. Denzinger and Yvonne S. Lincoln, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds, Andrea Fontana & James, H. Frey (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2011), 415.

⁴⁵ Nieuwenhuis, *Qualitative research*, 69-97.

1.7 My Inside View

My interest in this study is based on the fact that my father was raised by Reverend Nathaniel Lalumbe Jnr (Tshishonga), who was the son of Nathaniel Lalumbe Snr- the evangelist, one of the first people to be converted and Christianised at Georgholtz Mission Station Tshifudi. My family and some older community members were baptised there. I was also a recipient of the Lutheran Scholarship Fund during the last two years of my studies at the University of Venda. This relationship makes me feel like being one of the community members associated with the Georgholtz Mission Station. Is this going to negatively impact on the research, as I am now coming in as a researcher? Not so! My insider situation makes this research an “insider action research”, which is a relatively neglected form of research.⁴⁶ Insider research is valuable because it draws on the experience of a researcher as a complete member of the community and it makes a distinctive contribution to the development of insider knowledge about the community.⁴⁷ However, I am aware that there are some disadvantages to being close to the data.⁴⁸ There is a possibility that when inside researchers interview fellow community members, they may assume too much and so not probe as deeply as they would if they were outsiders or ignorant of the situation. They may think they know the answer and not adapt their current thinking to alternative circumstances.

This research uses the benefits of insider action research to its advantage, while at the same time it is cautious so as to not incur its “insider action research” disadvantages. I am this compelled to be a sensitive observer who records phenomena as faithfully as possible, while also raising additional questions.⁴⁹

1.8 Statement of Assumption

In every study it is necessary to make certain assumptions.⁵⁰ Assumptions are the elements that a researcher assumes to be true without checking whether they are true or not.⁵¹ Assumptions are expected to reflect things that readers believe without offering

⁴⁶ David Coghlan, “Practitioner Research for Organisational Knowledge: Mechanistic and Organistic-Oriented Approaches to Insider Action Research,” *Management Learning* 34, no.4 (July 2003): 451-464, accessed June 02, 2017, <http://participation.wordpress.com/2008/07/10/insider/>.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Coghlan, “Practitioner,” 453.

⁵⁰ Kobus Maree and Carol van Der Westhuizen, *Head Start in Designing Research Proposals in the Social Sciences* (Cape Town: Juta and Company Ltd, 2009), 37.

⁵¹ Jonathan Anderson and Millicent Poole, *Assignment and Thesis Writing: South African Edition* (Cape Town: Juta, 2001), 23.

further evidence.⁵² This study is about exploring community attitudes and perspectives towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource. At the same time, the history of this mission station is unravelled with the assistance of various communities' contributions.

This study's main assumption is that members of various community categories who participated in the interview are knowledgeable about the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station. They are also clear about what needs to be done moving forward to the future. Communities are willing participants in sharing their perspectives about the state of the mission station in general. It is assumed that the respondents were objective and accurate when expressing their views, attitudes, and perceptions of the Mission station. Lastly, it is assumed that the Berlin documents stored at UNISA represent a true picture of the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station in Tshifudi, Mavhola, and Ha-Luvhimbi locations.

1.9 Definition of Terms

All key terms should be defined and stated clearly.⁵³ Unless stated otherwise, the following terms will apply throughout this mini-dissertation:

Built heritage is the physical evidence of our cultural developments including historical layers of our built environment in places made of brick, plaster, wood, metal, and stone.⁵⁴

Heritage is the sum total of tangible and intangible wildlife and scenic natural parks, biological and geological, palaeontological formations sacred sites and sites of scientific and historical importance and event of historical conflict, national monuments, statues, historic buildings, underwater wrecks, architecture and cities works of art, literature and music, oral traditions, ceremonies, rituals, performances, museum collections and their documentation, which provides the basis for a shared culture and creativity in the arts.⁵⁵

⁵² Eric Hofstee, *constructing a Good Dissertation: A Practical Guide to finishing a Masters, MBA or PhD on Schedule* (Johannesburg: EPE Publishing, 2011), 88.

⁵³ Hofstee, *Constructing*, 88.

⁵⁴ "Built Heritage: What is Built Heritage," State of New South Wales and Office of Environment and Heritage, last modified September 1, 2012, accessed February 4, 2018, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/Heritage/aboutheritage/builtheritage.htm. <http://www.soutpansberg.com/>.

⁵⁵ Department of Arts and Culture, Fourth Draft: Revised 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture- October 2017.

Vhumbedzi is the name of a much bigger area in north-eastern Venda that was settled by the Vhambedzi (early Venda group) before the arrival of the present dominant rulers—the Masingo of Mphephu Ramabulana, Tshivhase and Mphaphuli families.⁵⁶ Both the Old (Tshifudi/Mavhola) and New Georgenholtz (Ha-Luvhimbi) Mission stations were in Vhumbedzi before these villages were conquered by the Masingo clan of Ha-Tshivhase and Ha-Mphaphuli. Today, Ha-Luvhimbi and Ha-Makuya villages are in the Ha-Tshivhasa area, while Tshifudi/Mavhola, and Ha-Lambani are villages in Ha-Mphaphuli area

Vhambedzi (people): The Vhambedzi are one of the Venda sibs (groups) that settled in Vhumbedzi, but today, because of a mixture of different clans after the conquest of Vhambedzi in the mid-1890s, the term generally refers to anybody living in Vhumbedzi, regardless of his clan.⁵⁷ The Vhambedzi spoke Tshimbedzi or Lumbedzi, a dialect of the Tshivenda language.⁵⁸ Because different Venda clans are mixed today, it is very difficult to differentiate the various dialects of Tshivenda language in different parts of Venda, including Ha-Luvhimbi.⁵⁹

Ha-Luvhimbi is a village where the current Georgenholtz Mission is located. Ha-Luvhimbi is known in oral tradition as the home and centre of the ancient Vhambedzi Kingdom, led by the legendary Luvhimbi, a ruler and rainmaker.⁶⁰ Ha-Luvhimbi and Vhumbedzi in general should be seen as culturally and historically part of the early Mbedzi settlement; that Luvhimbi is a dynastic title of the leader, who was both a ruler and a rainmaker in the Northern Transvaal (N.Tvl).⁶¹ Ha-Luvhimbi was the capital of Vhumbedzi before the arrival of a powerful Venda group of Mphaphuli, Tshivhase and Mphephu Ramabulana.

⁵⁶ Victor Nkhumeleni Matodzi Nemakhavhani Ralushai, "Conflicting Accounts of Venda History with particular reference to the role of Mutupo in Social Organisation" (PhD diss., The Queen's University of Belfast, 1977), 31.

⁵⁷ Ralushai, "Conflicting accounts," 31-32.

⁵⁸ Ralushai N. M. N, *The Mbedzi Part Two: An extract from Conflicting Accounts of Venda History with Particular Reference to the Role of Mutupo in Social Organisation*, PhD thesis presented at the Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1977, 2.

⁵⁹ Aitken Ratshilumela, interview by the author, Ha-Luvhimbi, 9 November 2017.

⁶⁰ Ralushai N. M. N, *The Mbedzi Part two: An extract from Conflicting Accounts of Venda History with Particular reference to the role of Mutupo in Social Organisation*, PhD thesis presented at the Queen's University of Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1977, 2.

⁶¹ The Northern Transvaal (N. Tvl) refers to the most northerly Province of South Africa after 1994. This name remained until 2004 when the Province was renamed Limpopo Province after the Limpopo River.

Alt/Old Georgenholtz refers to the original mission station in Tshifudi and Mavhola locations.⁶²

Neu/New Georgenholtz is a name that was given to the BMS mission station in Ha-Luvhimbi village after it was relocated from Tshifudi and Mavhola. Alternatively, the mission station is referred to only as Georgenholtz.⁶³

Ha-Mphaphuli or Mphaphuli is a vast piece of land under the authority of a Senior Traditional Leader, Mphaphuli. The Old Georgenholtz Mission Station in Tshifudi and Mavhola locations was thus located in Senior Traditional Leader of Ha-Mphaphuli area.

Ha-Tshivhasa, like Ha-Mphaphuli, is a vast area under the authority of a Senior Traditional Leader, Tshivhasa.

Klein Spelonken is another name of the Transvaal province of the then South Africa. The northern part of the province, including Venda areas, was known as Klein (small) Spelonken, while the southern part of the province from Tzaneen or Magoebaskloof was referred to as “Groot (bigger) Spelonken.”

Venda is a geographical area where most of all Venda sibs/groups were found in large numbers. It is also a geographical area that was defined by the colonial and apartheid governments. Today there is a talk of the Kingdom of Venda after the restoration of Venda kingship to the Masingo clan of Mphephu Ramabulana.

Mavhola Mountain served as the second location of the Georgenholtz Mission Station after the BMS left the first location in the lower plains of Tshifudi (refer to Figure 4 in Chapter Three).

Heathen, meaning non-believer, is an insulting and offensive word for people that are not Christians or followers of other major, established religions.⁶⁴

Chief refers to a traditional leader (ruler) of a village who reports to a Senior Traditional Leader (Thovhele) of a vast area.

Thovhele is the ruler of a vast area with numerous chiefs of various villages reporting to him.

⁶² Helga Giesecke, *The Schwellnus-Giesecke Family in Venda, 1873-1973* (Polokwane: Privately printed by Helga Giesecke, 2005), 76.

⁶³ Giesecke, *The Schwellnus-Giesecke Family*, 77-78.

⁶⁴ Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners, s.v. “heathen” (Oxford: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2002), 664.

Tshikona is traditionally Vhavenda (people) male dance in which each player has a pipe made from a special indigenous type of bamboo growing only in a few places in Venda, and each pipe/player has one note only, so that they must play in turn, in such a way that they build a melody.⁶⁵ It was also performed on all important occasions, such as the installation of a new ruler, the commemoration of a ruler's death, and the sacrificial rites at the graves of a ruler's ancestors. It was and is still performed on Sundays in urban areas, especially in Johannesburg (Thembisa, Alexandra and Tshiawelo)⁶⁶ areas by Venda people who had organised themselves into dance-teams with managers, musical directors, and other officials.⁶⁷

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Limitations are flaws or weaknesses in the study that affect the internal and external validity of the results.⁶⁸ Firstly, this study falls within the Built Environment discipline, with the main focus on the views of communities on the mission station as a heritage resource. While the focus is on the perspectives of communities in respect of the Mission station, the study does not discuss the physical condition of the built environment, especially the buildings, as its key focus.

Methodologically, the sampling process for this study might not be an adequate one because individuals from only four community categories were randomly selected due to the unavailability of members from other categories. The dominant category is the church, because most members interviewed hold influential positions in the church while they are also community leaders and historical families in the Church. The youths interviewed are from the Lutheran Church. However, the researcher managed to only interview two of those who were available and agreed to engage with him during the time of interviews. The deaths of targeted individuals for interviews was a setback for the study. The overall limited number of individuals interviewed might not be sufficient

⁶⁵ "The Tshikona: Vhavenda Dance, Drums, Pipes and Rhythm," accessed December 17, 2017, <https://75.co.za/daz/2010/09/27>.

⁶⁶ These three townships in Johannesburg were set aside during the apartheid era for black people who came to look for jobs from the homelands. When the Venda people came to Johannesburg, they settled in these townships and they are in large numbers to this day.

⁶⁷ "The Tshikona: Vhavenda Dance, Drums, Pipes and Rhythm."

⁶⁸ Yvonne N. Bui, *How to write a Master's Thesis* (Los Angeles; SAGE Publications, Inc, 2009), 116.

to provide adequate answers to the research question. This impacted negatively to the researcher's intention to include women in the list of interviewees.

The study is weak in balancing the views of women, youths, and the elderly. The researcher could not find older people over the age of between 70 to 100 years old. Most of the elderly people from the local communities and the Lutheran Church are said to have passed-on between 2003 and 2010. The researcher was unable to search for older women and the elderly in the whole vast area of Vhumbedzi due to time constraints. However the participants who took part in the interviews provided enough information suitable for a research of this size. Most youths from the Ha-Luvhimbi community were not interested to be interviewed about the Georgenholtz Mission Station. The two youths members who agreed to be interviewed did so because they are members of the Lutheran Church Youth group and their families are staunch Lutherans from the times of the Berlin Missionary Society missionaries in Venda.

Even though the researcher managed to interview Traugott Fobbe, the son of missionary Christian Fobbe, the last missionary at Georgenholtz, his memory of the place and what it means to him might not be enough for this study, as many German missionaries left Venda to return to Germany. While the Hesse Collection of German Africana is available and there is a large quantity of information on the history of the Berlin Mission in the Northern Transvaal (N. Tvl- now Limpopo Province) and Venda, there are also plenty of circulars from BMS to missionaries that cannot be accessed because they are still in the German language. Many more are still in the archives of the BMS in Berlin (Germany).⁶⁹

While there are a growing number of researchers on the works of the missionaries in Venda such as N.L. Khorommbi (1996 and 2001), N.R Mathivha (1985), Alan Kirkaldy (2005), M.H. Nemudzivhadi (1977 and 1997), and Caroline Jenearett (2007) to mention a few, there is still a lack of research regarding individual mission stations. Previous researches relate broadly to biographies of individuals such as Nathaniel Lalumbe Snr, who was one of the first learners at the first school at Georgenholtz Tshifudi.⁷⁰ He later

⁶⁹ Chigwedere, *The Karanga Empire*, 134.

⁷⁰ Nathaniel Laumbe was one of the first four learners (with Joseph Radema, August Tshimange and Paulus Ratshikhopha) at the first Georgenholtz Mission School established by Missionary Klaas Koen at Tshifudi village in 1878.

became an assistant to missionary Niklaus Kuhn, also known as Klaas Koen⁷¹ (Figure 70) at Georgholtz Mission Station in Tshifudi. Allan Kirkaldy is credited with unravelling the stories about Klaas Koen, Nathaniel Lalumbe and Chief Makahane,⁷² who are all associated with the evolution of Georgholtz Mission Station. His contribution is noted but it is not adequate.

One cannot rule out the reality of bias among the various categories of communities. Local communities from Ha-Luvhimbi wanted to play the role of victims in the hands of missionaries, while the church community wanted to portray the Church as having brought light to the Ha-Luvhimbi community with regard to religion, development and education. The Hesse collection of German Africana Accession 89 at the UNISA Library Archives is biased towards Tshakhuma Mission Station, with selected information on Georgholtz. This could be because the person who donated this collection (Helga Giesekke) to UNISA on behalf of her BMS families spent the better part of her own life at Tshakhuma Mission Station where her grandfather and father retired from.

1.11 Ethical Considerations

As this study is community-centred and relies on humans for its data, it was subject to a number of ethical issues as prescribed by UCT's *Research Ethics Code for Research Involving Human Participants*. Application for ethics clearance was approved by UCT's Ethics Committee (refer to Appendix B). This implies that moral standards regarding research that involves humans should be followed. Permission to conduct research on Georgholtz was verbally granted by the current resident pastor of Ha-Luvhimbi. In conducting this research, the following principles, as outlined in the Ethics Code of UCT, were followed:

⁷¹ The first Missionary to be posted at Georgholtz Mission Station. He is credited for establishing the mission station in its first location in Tshifudi and Mavhola. Klaas Koen's South African identity was hidden in his German' spelt name (identity) of Niklaus Kuhn instead of Klaas Koen, the South African born missionary trained in Germany.

⁷² Chief Makahane is known to have been a notorious leader among his people. According to oral tradition Chief Makahane would kill his subjects for simply not doing what he wanted. He would also instruct them to flatten wet cowhide until it is dry in the sun. He lived at his Makahane capital, which now located within the northern part of the Kruger National Park where he was baptised by missionaries a few hours before his death in 1888. He was buried inside his enclosure. The Makahane stonewalled settlement is today the subject of archaeological, anthropological and historical research.

1.11.1 Consent to Participate in the Interviews

When approached to participate in the study, all participants agreed to take part in the interviews by signing the consent form, which was explained to them individually (refer to Appendix B). All informed consent forms were signed before the commencement of the interviews. In doing so, participants were agreeing to participate in this study voluntarily .

1.11.2 Voluntary Participation

The researcher explained to all participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, with no payment to them. It was also explained to participants that their contribution would assist other researchers to understand the history of the mission station. This study would also convince and inspire other researchers in the heritage field to continue involving communities in their studies.

1.11.3 Language and Participants' Rights

As all the participants are Tshivenda-speaking individuals, information was provided to them in their mother-tongue (Tshivenda). All interviewees were informed that they had the right to refuse to participate or, having agreed to participate, to withdraw their consent without prejudice at any stage.

1.11.4 Foreseeable Risks

The researcher assured the subjects that he would minimise or avoid exposing them to foreseeable psychological, social, or physical harm or suffering that could be experienced because of this research work. Subjects were assured of the researcher's sensitivity to the interests and rights of the vulnerable, elderly, very poor and/or illiterate persons he interviewed.

1.10.5 Participants' Privacy

The researcher explained to all interviewees that their privacy and confidentiality interests would be accommodated in the research process. They were also assured that information that could identify them as individuals would not be used in the research findings, unless the interviewees had expressly agreed to this release.

1.12 Organisation of the Dissertation

This mini dissertation comprises five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study of community participation and engagement in heritage practice. The research problem is introduced, giving a perspective on global ignorance and neglect of local communities as sources of information. A research question is asked about what the impact of community perspectives and attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station could be. The researcher's position as an insider and his interest in the study are also outlined. The chapter concludes with the methods applied in collecting research data for the study. Chapter Two on *Heritage and Communities* serves the purpose of a literature review, in that it gives a broad overview of the subject matter of the study. It details what other scholars have covered in the past decades, especially regarding community involvement in heritage practice.

The general overview of Georgenholtz Mission Station is outlined in Chapter Three, which covers the current location, description, and history (how it was established in Tshifudi before it was later relocated to Ha-Luvhimbi). The development of what constitutes Georgenholtz Mission Station is also explained in detail (parsonage and other structures). The land question, i.e. how the land for the mission station was acquired, is detailed in this chapter, the current condition of the mission station and other challenges it faces are also detailed. Chapter Three demonstrates that in the history of the Georgenholtz Mission Station, local or indigenous communities remain the focal point for the success of any study. Chapter Four details various perspectives in respect of Georgenholtz Mission Station by diverse community groups and include discussions and findings of the study. Chapter Five concludes the study by giving a summary and analysis of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

HERITAGE AND COMMUNITIES

2.1 Introduction

The issue of community involvement, engagement, collaboration or participation in the conservation and preservation of heritage resources worldwide has become an important topic. Researchers in the heritage disciplines are coming to terms with the fact that they can no longer enter a village and carry out research on heritage properties without the consent, effective and efficient involvement of the relevant communities.

Taking cognisance that around the world, local communities have been the subject of research without being active participants, researchers in the heritage disciplines are realising that local or indigenous people are becoming the focus of heritage books, articles, lectures, exhibits and web sites.⁷³ In recent years communities have begun to challenge the old system which ignored local communities in heritage matters. Some communities have gained influence over their own heritage and in some cases they are developing community-driven heritage programmes.⁷⁴ While the need to engage communities worldwide is becoming a priority, in South Africa in the 1990s we have witnessed communities demanding to be involved in heritage matters. The South African National Parks (SANParks), through its Social Ecology Division and later “People and Conservation Services”, has set the tone in involving communities in heritage matters. It is through the Social Ecology Division that communities alongside the borders of national parks in South Africa have their voices regarding heritage issues. Between 2000 and 2003, the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site (COH WHS) in the Gauteng Province involved communities in the master planning process and the development of site-specific management plans for the 13 fossil sites. RIM has taken a major step in collecting stories from various ex-political prisoners by means of

⁷³ Chip, Colwell, “Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration,” in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed., Ian Hodder, (Malden: Polity Press, 2013), 267.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 268.

its interpretation and heritage conservation programmes. Above all, the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) and the National Heritage Council (NHC) of SA are champions of community heritage. Lyn Meskell asserts that “essentially all heritage work starts from the premise that the past is contested, conflictual and multiple-constituted.”⁷⁵

This study is therefore about the notion of “community” within the field of heritage, examining varied ways in which community aspirations arise and are mediated.⁷⁶ While it is important to answer the research question, i.e. What is the impact of community attitudes, perspectives, and views towards Georgenholtz Mission Station?, it is important for this chapter of the mini-dissertation to look at what other researchers have done in respect of the same subject matter as a basis for their study. It is also important to look at how the entire study is located within the heritage resources arena.

2.2 Locating the Study in the Heritage Resources Arena

In locating this study within the heritage resources arena, it is important that the term “community” be well-understood within the heritage resources context. In recent years, the term ‘community’ has taken on a life of its own in heritage studies.⁷⁷ Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith encourage researchers to rethink the notion of “community”, as found in the field of heritage.⁷⁸ They further describe community involvement in heritage “in an array of terms such as community archaeology, community-engaged, community-based, community-led, outreach, community collaboration, community facilitation, community heritage, public education and public participation.”⁷⁹ Thus, consultation with community groups may occur as part of heritage management work, and as part of educational outreach programmes, or from a desire to make research work relevant to communities.⁸⁰ Steve Watson and Emma Waterton note that in Southern Africa, for well-known heritage practitioners and archaeologists such as Shadreck Chirikure, Peter Schmidt, Munyaradzi Manyanga, Laurajane Smith, Emma

⁷⁵ Lyn Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage: The New South Africa* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1.

⁷⁶ Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith, “The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 16, Nos. 1-2 (January-March 2010), 4-15, accessed August 03, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09647770903529038>,

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith, eds., *Heritage, Communities, and Archaeology* (London: Duckworth Publishers, 2009), 15&16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

Waterton, Innocent Pikirayi, Lyn Meskell, Gilbert Pwiti and Webber Ndoro, community participation in heritage can be seen as a meaningful engagement in the generation, interpretation and management of data.⁸¹ Similarly, heritage practitioners have become engaged in emerging forms of collaboration with descendant communities.⁸² Regarding community management of resources, 'participatory management' can be seen as a way in which conflicts and contestations can be reduced.⁸³ Furthermore, engaging communities in heritage matters could be a way of spreading responsibility for the management of heritage resources.⁸⁴

This research work therefore values the views of community groups of Georgholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource. To further demonstrate the relevance of community participation in heritage, Laurajane Smith is of the view that "all heritage is intangible", and in stressing the intangibility of heritage, she emphasises that she is "not dismissing the tangible or rediscursive."⁸⁵ This means that the relationship between tangible and intangible heritage could all be brought into play where they cannot be separated.⁸⁶

In recent years in South Africa, heritage has been used as a way of empowering local communities and stakeholders attached to heritage resources around them in a way that enabled these communities to express their opinions and knowledge of the same resources.⁸⁷ Accordingly, the so-called "authorised heritage discourse of the past - focusing its attention on aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes, cannot simply be reduced to archaeological data or historical texts- it is someone's heritage". This is an emphasis on the fact that heritage and people are inseparable. Depending on the use of the Georgholtz Mission Station by the respective stakeholders or communities over many years, the selected community

⁸¹ Steve Watson and Laurajane Smith, "Heritage and Community Engagement: Finding a New Agenda," in *Taking Archaeology out of Heritage*, eds., Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (London: Routledge, 2011), 6.

⁸² Chip Colwell and T.J Ferguson, "Introduction: The Collaborative Continuum," in *Archaeological Theory Today*, ed. Ian Hodder (Malden: Polity Press, 2013), 1.

⁸³ Watson and Smith, "Heritage and Community," 7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Laurajane Smith, *Uses*, 3.

⁸⁶ Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, 38.

⁸⁷ Munyaradzi Manyanga, "Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Empowerment of Local Communities: Manyanga (Ntaba zi Ka Mambo) Revisited (paper presented at the 13th ICOMOS General Assembly, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 31 October 2003), 387-392, accessed June 10, 2017, <http://www.international.icomos.org/victoriafalls2003/papers/C3-5%20-%20Munyaradzi.pdf>.

categories are likely to express different views on the existence of the mission station as a heritage resource.

Given an expanded view argument of heritage from this study, it is very important to also consider and locate it within the built heritage field. Built heritage is key to the understanding of the shared history, informs the understanding of the past today, helps to define a sense of place and an identity for the community.⁸⁸ In this way, built heritage can contribute to the feelings of connectedness, community pride and confidence.⁸⁹ The connectedness, pride and confidence of communities are tested by exploring their perspectives and attitudes towards Georgholtz Mission Station in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

2.3 Community Engagements versus Heritage Practice

Many researchers in recent times have increasingly been focusing their research energies on ensuring that more and more communities are involved in academic research worldwide. Community engagement in heritage practices takes centre stage. The increasing individualism of modern society has been accompanied by an enduring nostalgia for the idea of community as a source of security and belonging in an increasingly insecure world, in recent years.⁹⁰ Thus, an overview of current, older, and relevant research work in the subject is appropriate. This section reviews what is already known about the area of interest for this study (review of literature).⁹¹ Thus, an effort in this study is “placed in the context of the general body of scientific knowledge, indicating where it fits into the picture.”⁹²

Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton tackle some important issues facing the heritage practice discipline, with the primary aim of providing an analysis of the manner in which “community” and “heritage” have been yoked together, and to “unpack” the prevalent images of “community” in heritage studies.⁹³ Laurajane Smith recognises that as an archaeologist she had to reconsider her adherence to the dominant and framing

⁸⁸ “Built Heritage: What is Built Heritage,”³¹

⁸⁹ *Ibid*

⁹⁰ Delanty G, *Community* (London: Routledge, 2003), 1.

⁹¹ Bryman, *Social Research*, 98.

⁹² Earl Babbie and Johann Mouton, *The Practice of Social Research* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa, 2016), 565.

⁹³ Roberts, “Review of *Heritage*, 85.

concept that “heritage is a material object or site.”⁹⁴ This is the traditional Western account of “heritage”, which tends to emphasise the material basis of heritage.⁹⁵ The physicality of the Western idea of heritage means that “heritage” can be mapped, studied, managed, preserved and/or conserved, and its protection may be the subject of national legislation and international agreements, conventions and charters.⁹⁶ With the involvement of communities, Laurajane Smith has thus come to realise that instead, “heritage is not the site itself, but the act of passing on knowledge in the culturally correct or appropriate context and times”- making sites “theatres of memory.”⁹⁷ Heritage is about negotiating, about using the past, and collective or individual memories to negotiate new ways of being and expressing identity.⁹⁸ In this process, heritage places/properties/monuments become tools or props to facilitate this process.⁹⁹ It is the use of the sites by communities that make them heritage and not the mere fact of their existence.¹⁰⁰ The heritage discourse becomes part of the social processes of meaning-making .¹⁰¹ In Africa, heritage research is a century-long practice characterised largely by research approaches that do not consult and engage with local and indigenous communities.¹⁰² A focus on ‘community’ in archaeological and heritage projects was relatively rare before the 1970s.¹⁰³

The growth of the ‘heritage industry’ over the last 50 years has had an effect in motivating and energising individuals and communities to engage with the past in a broad range of activities.¹⁰⁴ Loosely since the 1980s, ‘90s and more vehemently since 2000s there have been signs of the rise in ethnographic approaches that aim to understand the nature of heritage, and how the past is constituted and utilised in the present.¹⁰⁵ Academically, heritage studies and archaeology have begun to respond to

⁹⁴ Smith, *Uses*, 42.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 276.

¹⁰² Peter R. Schmidt and Innocent Pikirayi, introduction to *Community Archaeology and Heritage in Africa: Decolonizing Practice.*, ed., Peter R. Schmidt and Innocent Pikirayi (New York: Routledge, 2016),1.

¹⁰³ Smith and Waterton, *Heritage*, 25.

¹⁰⁴ Watson and Smith, “Heritage and Community,” 1

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Uses*, 5.

the 'community' agenda emanating from Indigenous and non-Western.¹⁰⁶ Talk of 'community' is endemic in much of the heritage sector in England and it is labelled 'the cult of community.'¹⁰⁷ The interdisciplinary field of heritage studies is now well-established in many parts of the world. It differs from earlier scholarly and professional activities that focused narrowly on the architectural or archaeological preservation of monuments and sites.¹⁰⁸

Throughout the world there are debates that push heritage practitioners and researchers to be of service beyond their traditional roles, whereby the Western account of "heritage" tends to emphasise the material basis of heritage, attributing inherent cultural values or significance to these things.¹⁰⁹ There is an increasing anxiety about public relevance throughout the sciences and humanities. Communities and professionals should engage with each other and use the process and results of research to make sense of community histories and to make stronger communities.¹¹⁰

In Australia, the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) published a guide titled *Ask First: A Guide to Respecting Indigenous Heritage Places and Values*. The title *Ask First* implies the message that consultation and negotiations with indigenous stakeholders are the best means of addressing indigenous heritage issues because it is the first and simplest step that people have to take, by putting the subject on the agenda.¹¹¹ As the trend grows, community groups in many Western countries are also challenging the dominant discourse and advocating greater community participation; demanding that practitioners recognise not only local geographically defined communities, but also communities bound together by common social, cultural, economic and/or political experiences.¹¹² Involving communities on issues around heritage remains critical the world over.¹¹³ In South Africa in particular, heritage practitioners have also failed to

¹⁰⁶ Smith and Waterton, *Heritage*, 21.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁰⁸ Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, Introduction to *Intangible Heritage*, ed., Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London: Routledge, 2009), xii.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹¹⁰ Barbara J. Little, "What can archaeology do for justice, peace, community and the earth?" *Historical archaeology*, 43, No.4 (2009): 115-119. Accessed 29 May 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25617585>.

¹¹¹ Tom Harley, *A Guide to respecting indigenous heritage places and values* (Canberra, Australian Heritage Commission, 2002), 1.

¹¹² Smith, *Uses*, 28.

¹¹³ Pikirayi, *Archaeology*, 126.

articulate the relevance of their own disciplines to society.¹¹⁴ The dawn of democracy and the transformation programs of the post-apartheid era have created a socio-political environment in which it is both opportune and imperative that these forgotten historical, cultural and heritage resources be identified, assessed and developed.¹¹⁵ In doing so, communities are expected to be key stakeholders. For the first time in the mid-1990s, the SANParks in the KNP involved a variety of stakeholders in the identification, research and excavation of the Thulamela Heritage Site, and on other issues regarding research and repatriation of human remains.¹¹⁶ Thulamela heritage site became a good example of how local communities could be involved in the research and management of heritage in southern Africa, and it is expected to form the basis for reconciliation.¹¹⁷ At the same time, this kind of inclusivity has been questioned, that is, whether it is not a “camouflaged version of the old practice in the new dispensation.”¹¹⁸

Peter Schmidt argues that heritage projects continue to be designed by foreigners and conducted with just token- local participation, a condition that has troubled some African researchers.¹¹⁹ Innocent Pikirayi, a professor of archaeology at the University of Pretoria, champions the need for heritage management professionals to listen to community voices and to form partnerships with these communities.¹²⁰ Pikirayi’s exploration of the rights of communities with regard to their past, ownership and the use of the past is timely, especially as communities in Africa demand long-denied and forgotten rights to their heritage.¹²¹ Pikirayi’s book, *Tradition, Archaeological Heritage Protection and Communities*, is a valuable contribution to the current heritage discourse

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Galla, “Social Ecology,” 1.

¹¹⁶ Tshimangadzo Nemaheni, “The Reburial of Human Remains at Thulamela, Kruger National Park, South Africa”, in *The Dead and their Possessions: Repatriation in principle, policy and practice*, eds. Cressida Fforde, Jane Hubert and Paul Turnbull (London, Routledge, 2002), 256-57.

¹¹⁷ Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, 149.

¹¹⁸ Ndukuyakhe Ndlovu, “Old Archaeology camouflaged as new and inclusive? South African Community Archaeology in the Twenty-first Century” in *Community Archaeology and Heritage in Africa: Decolonizing Practice*, eds. Peter. R Schmidt and Innocent Pikirayi (London, Routledge, 2016), 136.

¹¹⁹ Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, 86-87.

¹²⁰ George Okello Abungu, review of *Tradition, Archaeological Heritage Protection and Communities* by Innocent Pikirayi. *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 69. No. 200 (December 2014), 221-223, accessed 29 May 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43868720>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

and on how communities can connect with their past and use it to negotiate their interests in the present.¹²²

While many countries around the world are adopting the approach of including community programmes in their professional work, there are also those countries that have not started recognizing the need to tap into the expertise of local communities. However, the theory regarding community-based heritage is a new and developing trend in most parts of West Africa, especially Nigeria, where it is rare.¹²³ This trend is increasingly becoming a necessary approach to both creating knowledge and working productively with communities.¹²⁴ It is about promoting active dialogue among the stakeholders, namely the affected communities.¹²⁵

There is no fixed approach to community research. However, there are broad types of approaches such as (1) research *with* communities, and (2) research *for* communities.¹²⁶ The relevant approach to this research work would be research *with* the community because the marginalized community and the researcher understand each other and interact with one another, “not only as collaborators, but also as co-learners.”¹²⁷ In this situation, researchers bring their academic or technical knowledge to the table, while community members bring the knowledge of their lived experience, making it a reciprocal relationship.¹²⁸ Giving local people an opportunity to share the past with researchers means allowing alternative interpretations. In this way, communities and heritage professionals have much to learn from each other, and open communication will help ensure that active learning takes place.¹²⁹ According to Chris Johnston and

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Jonathan O. Aleru and Kolawole Adekola, “*Perspectives on heritage, local community, and archaeological engagements in parts of Northern Yorubaland, Nigeria*” in *Community Archaeology and Heritage in Africa: Decolonizing Practice*, eds. Peter. R. Schmidt and Innocent Pikirayi (London, Routledge Taylor Francis Group, 2016), 181-203.

¹²⁴ Bill Lee, “Will the Real Community Research Please Stand Up? Some Critical Issues.” *Canadian Social Work Review* 25. No. 1 (2008), 5-21, accessed 26 May 2017.

¹²⁵ Colette Scheermeyer, “A Changing and Challenging Landscape: Heritage Resources Management in South Africa.” *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* 60, No. 182 (December 2005), 121-123, accessed 26 May 2017.

¹²⁶ Godwell Nhamo, “Participatory Action Research as a Platform for Community Engagement in Higher Education.” *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 10, No. 1 (2012), 1-21, accessed 26 May 2017.

¹²⁷ Lee, “Will.” 7.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁹ Innocent Pikirayi, *Tradition, Archaeological Heritage Protection, and Communities in the Limpopo Province of South Africa*, (Addis Ababa, Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa-OSSREA, 2012), 112.

Kristal Buckley, “communities demand our attention as researchers, since they are local experts.”¹³⁰

Incorporating community involvement in the heritage mainstream is also proving to be a challenge.¹³¹ In reviewing, Alan Kirkaldy’s book: *Capturing the Soul: The Vhavenda and the Missionaries, 1870-1900* (2005), Maanda Mulaudzi observes that even when the author recognises that the missionary voices were ‘strident,’ the voices of the African people were quiet, silent and hidden, since they were not consulted.¹³² In this history about the Vhavenda and the missionaries, there is a need for these voices to be heard.¹³³ Mulaudzi further asks pertinent questions regarding oral interviews that were relegated to informal discussion in this book. He argues that “however rich the mission records are, one wonders if Kirkaldy’s work would not have been greatly enriched through interviews.”¹³⁴ As a local person from Hamakuya (author’s village), Maanda Mulaudzi, a lecturer in history at the University of Cape Town, is also well-placed to question the author regarding the non-involvement of the descendant communities of the evangelist Nathaniel Lalumbe, Christians and non-Christians who, to his knowledge, are “easy to locate.”¹³⁵ As a researcher, I am also a member of the Nathaniel¹³⁶ Lalumbe extended family, which forms part of the family category of communities I interviewed. Other challenges not to be ignored relate to “propaganda” and “disagreements.”¹³⁷ With regard to “propaganda,” there is a potential for manipulation of archaeology by local communities for their own narrow political ends, since some consider indigenous interventions in heritage practice to be purely political exercises.¹³⁸ The challenge is when heritage practice and indigenous theories conflict.¹³⁹ For example when working for RIM and MNP, I witnessed communities disagreeing with professional suggestions to identify human remains through DNA processes in favour of their indigenous beliefs. Engagements with heritage and the past

¹³⁰ Johnston Chris and Buckley Kristal, “Parochial, Passionate, Committed and Ignored.” *Historic Environment* 15. No. 1-2 (2001), 88-96, accessed 27 May 2017.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Mulaudzi, review of *Capturing the Soul*, 266.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ “Nathaniel” is in some documents and books spelt as “Nathanael.”

¹³⁷ Colwell and Ferguson, “Introduction,” 280.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

will not be limited to one key community group, but will inevitably revolve around a coverage of often conflicting interests and aspirations.¹⁴⁰ Another aspect of communities is the recognition that they may self-define, and engagement with such communities may be difficult, making it complicated, since the automatic responses of experts are often to try to manage the situation and define how engagements with communities will progress.¹⁴¹ Laurajane Smith and Emma Waterton further warn that “we cannot ‘make’ people conform to our expectations nor ‘order them to participate’ in ways we can control.”¹⁴²

Community involvement in heritage practice also relates to values and meaning-making of heritage places by affected communities. Communities “should be given more power and say in decisions that affect them.”¹⁴³ Much has been spoken and written about “meaning-making” and/or attaching values and significance to heritage sites or heritage properties. According to Erica Avrami, Randal Mason and Marta de la Tore, simply labelling something as heritage is a value judgement that distinguishes that object, building or a place from other places, objects and buildings for particular reasons, and as such the labelling adds new meaning and value.¹⁴⁴ Heritage thus becomes significant to different communities, groups and individuals, depending on their values and attitudes, and the nature of the heritage resource.¹⁴⁵ In Australia and New Zealand, conservation of buildings and other heritage resources- have all become significant community issues.¹⁴⁶ Thus, heritage helps forge individual, community and national identities and has assumed economic importance as people increasingly want to visit heritage sites and experience what has been preserved.¹⁴⁷ The Thulamela project became a “touchstone” for liberal heritage in 1990s South Africa, but was haunted by unfulfilled promises to uplift and develop communities.¹⁴⁸ Communities are important in

¹⁴⁰ Smith and Waterton, *Heritage*, 18.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Graham Fairlough et al., *Heritage Reader* (London: Routledge, 2008), 91.

¹⁴⁴ Erica Avrami, Randal Mason and Marta de la Tore, eds., *Values, and Heritage Conservation* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), 1.

¹⁴⁵ Michael C. Hall and Simon McArthur, “The Human Dimension of Heritage Management: Different values, Different Interests, Different Issues,” in *Heritage Management in Australia and New Zealand: The Human Dimension*, eds. C. Michael Hall and Simon McArthur (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Meskell, *The Nature of Heritage*, 169.

such a way that “significant associations between people and a place should be respected, retained and not obscured”.¹⁴⁹ Different community categories are expected to share their perspectives on the meaning and values of the Georgholtz Mission Station. In this case, significant meanings, including spiritual values, socio-cultural values and political values, to mention a few, of the Georgholtz Mission Station could be articulated.¹⁵⁰ The creation of heritage is largely derived from the way people remember, think about and wish to use the past.¹⁵¹ Many values identified by the communities are associated with heritage resources, and those that are deemed significant will provide justification for their protection and conservation.¹⁵² At the same time, the lack of this identity of affected communities could lead to neglect and destruction.¹⁵³ What should be noted, however, is that the way in which local communities value sites may be very different from the views of professionals.¹⁵⁴ The values are the subject of much discussion in contemporary society, and in this post-modern, post-ideology, post-state-of-the-nation age, the search for values and meaning has become a pressing concern whereas in the field of heritage, values are becoming critical in deciding what to conserve and preserve.¹⁵⁵ In post-apartheid South Africa, the traditional understanding in respect of heritage has been challenged in terms of how meaning-making, heritage construction and knowledge production had been conducted in the colonial past.¹⁵⁶ The involvement of communities in heritage matters has been an important element that must have a positive impact in the future.¹⁵⁷ While research investigating the public meaning of cultural heritage has increased in intensity and

¹⁴⁹ Peter Marquis-Kyle and Meredith Walker, *The Illustrated Burra Charter: Good Practice for Heritage Places* (Burwood, Australia ICOMOS, 2004), 108.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Avrami, Mason and Tore, eds., *Values*, 8.

¹⁵² Bernard M. Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto, *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites* (Rome, ICCROM, 1998), 18. Bernard M. Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto, *Management Guidelines for World Cultural Heritage Sites* (Rome, ICCROM, 1998), 18.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁵⁴ Cate Clarke, “Values-Based Heritage Management and the Heritage Lottery Fund in the UK.” *APT Bulletin: The Journal of Preservation Technology* 45, No. 2/3, Special Issue on Values-Based Preservation (2014), 65-71, Accessed 13May 2017, <http://www.jstor/stable/23799529>.

¹⁵⁵ Avrami, Mason and Tore, eds., *Values*, 1.

¹⁵⁶ Gerard Corsane, “Transforming Museums and Heritage in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The Impact of Processes of Policy Formulation and New Legislation.” *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 48. No. 1 (Spring 2004), 5-15.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

scope over the past decades, both in the USA and the UK, limited progress has been made in the African region.¹⁵⁸

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that the winds of change in heritage practices are blowing throughout southern Africa, the African continent and the world. As heritage research is becoming commonplace in academia, the need to involve local communities in it is growing very fast. There is general agreement about the definition of the term “community”, and that communities should actively be involved in matters that affect them especially on heritage issues. There is also agreement that communities’ contribution in meaning-making through the identification of values is important. It has also been demonstrated that when communities are involved in heritage matters, they also feel confident in determining and attaching values to their heritage properties. In turn, these values determine what should be done to the respective heritage properties that exist amongst these communities. It is worth noting that in valuing the heritage places, there will always be competing values. Generally, researchers in heritage practice are positive that involving communities in heritage research is useful for the justification of continued funding and for them to act as responsible scholars.

¹⁵⁸ Susan Keitumetse, “Methods for investigating Locals’ perceptions of a Cultural Heritage Product for Tourism: Lessons from Botswana,” in *Heritage Studies: Methods and approaches*, eds. C. Michael Hall and Simon McArthur Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman (New York: Routledge, 2009), 201.

CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW OF GEORGENHOLTZ MISSION STATION

3.1 Introduction

Georgenholtz Mission Station is one of the three earliest Mission stations to be established in Venda by the Berlin Missionary Society between 1872 and 1912. The Ha-Tshivhasa or Maungani (Beuster) Mission Station was the first to be established in 1872. Ha-Madzivhandila or Tshakhuma followed in 1874 while Khalavha Mission Station was later established in 1912. Georgenholtz Mission Station was the third one to be established in 1877 at Tshifudi and Mavhola locations, and later in 1906 in Ha-Luvhimbi – the current location. The first two mission stations were named after the clan names of local rulers because they were established in their areas of authority: Chief Tshivhase of Ha-Tshivhase area and Chief Madzivhandila of Tshakhuma. Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi falls within Chief Tshivhase's area. This chapter seeks to give a general overview of the Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi: its location (the land on which it was established) and how the mission station was founded, developed, and operated during BMS mission years. Most importantly, the chapter considers the different historical roles played by the local communities and the BMS missionaries. The history of the BMS cannot be de-linked from that of GHMS in Ha-Luvhimbi.

3.2 Location and Description

Georgenholtz Mission Station, the subject of this study, is in the Ha-Luvhimbi village of the Ha-Tshivhase area, in the north-eastern parts of Venda (Limpopo Province of South Africa). This mission station at Ha-Luvhimbi is on a portion of the "Georgenholtz Farm No. 287", in what used to be known as the Klein Spelonken ward of the Zoutpansberg, also known as Soutpansberg (formerly Transvaal, now Limpopo Province).¹⁵⁹ However,

¹⁵⁹ Louw J.S, Crown Grant No 271/1913, 1913, file 69/308, Georgenholtz NTS3447, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

a larger portion of the land where the mission station is built was known as “Portion A” of the Georgenholtz Farm No. 287 at the foot of the Ha-Luvhimbi/Makonde Mountain. The mission station is currently surrounded by few residences of local people of Ha-Luvhimbi, especially in the western and eastern sections of the station. The local chief’s headquarters (Masikhwa) is about two and a half kilometres east of the mission station. While Chief Masikhwa is from the Masingo of Ha-Mphaphuli, the village falls under the Ha-Tshivhase area of the Senior Traditional Leader or *Thovhele* Kennedy Midiyavhathu Tshivhase. To the south of GHMS lie the Mutshindudi, Luvuvhu and Ngwedi (Mbwedi) Rivers. Further south of these rivers are the villages of Tshififi under Chief Tshikalange Mphaphuli and Miluwani, the capital village of the bigger area of Ha-Mphaphuli (under Thovhele Gole Musiiwa Mphaphuli), the descendant of Thovhele Ranwedzi Masindi Mphaphuli who ruled Ha-Mphaphuli between 1883 and 1898.¹⁶⁰

There are a few tributaries that run from the mountain down to the village on the plains, especially during the rainy seasons. The southern side of the mission station is mostly inhabited by people of Ha-Luvhimbi village. East of GHMS are the villages of Tshidzini, Tshivhilwi, Tshilonwe, Tshifudi, Gaba, Mahagala, Tshaulu and Ha-Lambani, while Mukula is slightly to the southwest of Ha-Luvhimbi. Makonde village is a few kilometres west of Ha-Luvhimbi. It is also important to note that Georgenholtz Mission Station is built against a sacred mountain, which is characterised by two sacred caves called Luvhimbi and Tshamukhaninga, associated with the *Vhambedzi* people of Venda. Tshamukhaninga is located about 10 kilometres into the far east just outside the perimeter fence of Mphaphuli Cycad Nature Reserve.¹⁶¹ Tswera, and Sambandou/Tshitavha, Mavunde, Vhurivhuri and Ha-Makuya villages are on the north-facing slope of the Luvhimbi /Makonde Mountain, from west to east. North of Ha-Luvhimbi or Makonde Mountain lies Thengwe area, where there is Tshilavulu Mountain. Mianzwi is a bit out in the far west of Ha-Luvhimbi. The most well-known outstations of GHMS Churches are in Tshilonwe, Mahagala, Mavunde, Ha-Makuya, Thengwe, Mianwzi, and Mukula villages. The map below reflects the locations of GHMS, as recorded in history and at some of the outstations.

¹⁶⁰ Helga Giesecke, *An Informative Translation of the Berliner Missionsberichte (The Berlin Mission Reports concerning Venda* (Polokwane, 2006), 5.

¹⁶¹ The Mphaphuli Nature Reserve was established by the former Venda homeland government between 1979 and 1988. Some of the cycads that are in front of the Georgenholtz mission house could have been collected from there before the area became a nature reserve.

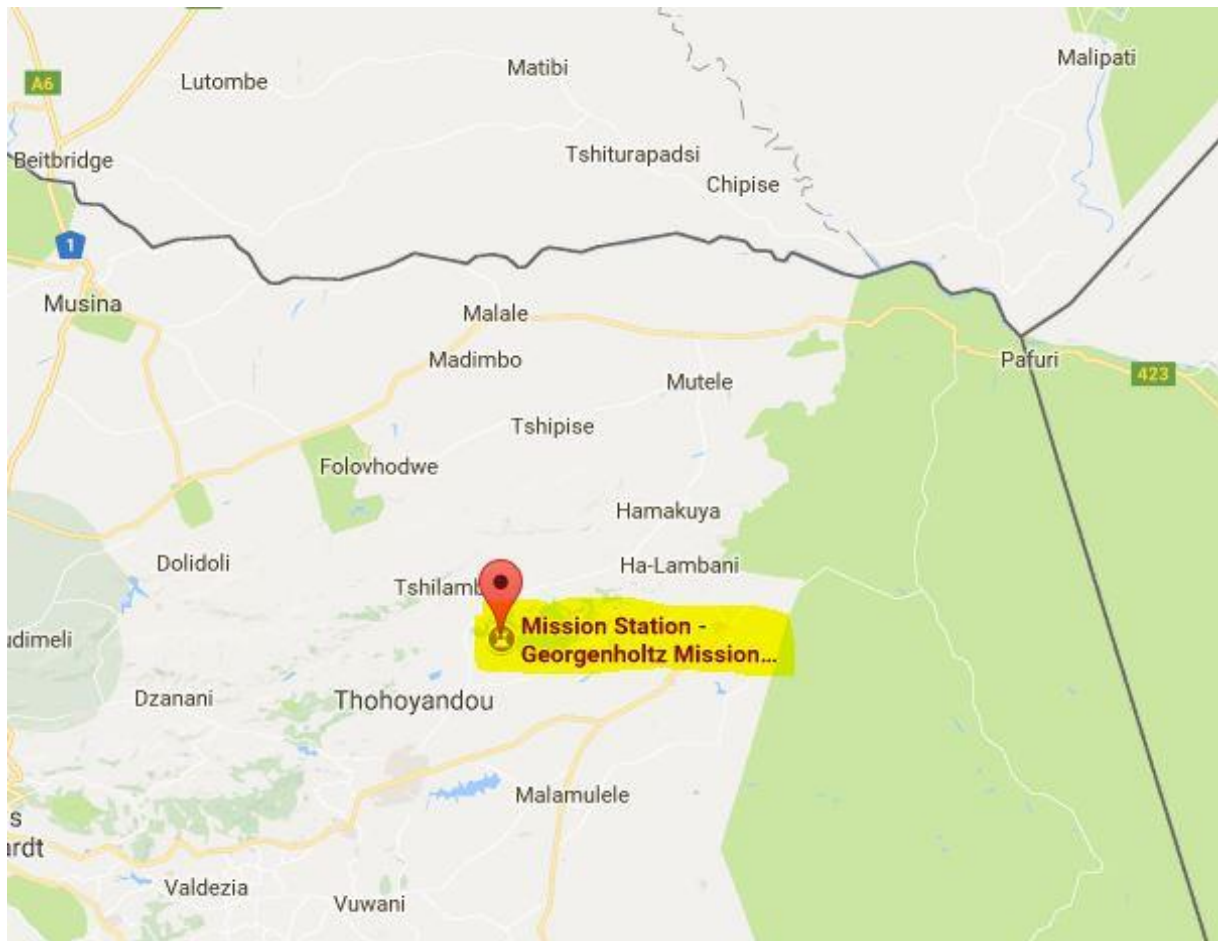


Figure 2: Location map (Source: Google Map, 2017).

The current GHMS is characterised by the old Lutheran church (with its bell or *Glocke* hanging outside), the parsonage, church cemetery, old bell arch, primary school, ruined clinic, current pastor's house, new Lutheran church, Georgenholtz Primary School, and sporadic bluegum and mango trees. An avenue of bluegum trees characterises the entrance road to the mission station. The old Georgenholtz Primary school has been upgraded over the years and it now looks modern. The white colour of the school walls was helpful to sponsors such as Joko Tea so that they could show their films in the evenings against the white wall with the viewers seated on the grass.

From above the mission, a canopy of bluegum and mango trees covers the church, bell, cemetery, memorial, avenue, and part of the parsonage. As a result, these features are only vaguely visible from the google earth picture (refer to Figure 3 below). The only structures visible from above are the new church, school, old clinic in front of the new church, part of the parsonage and the pastor's current house.

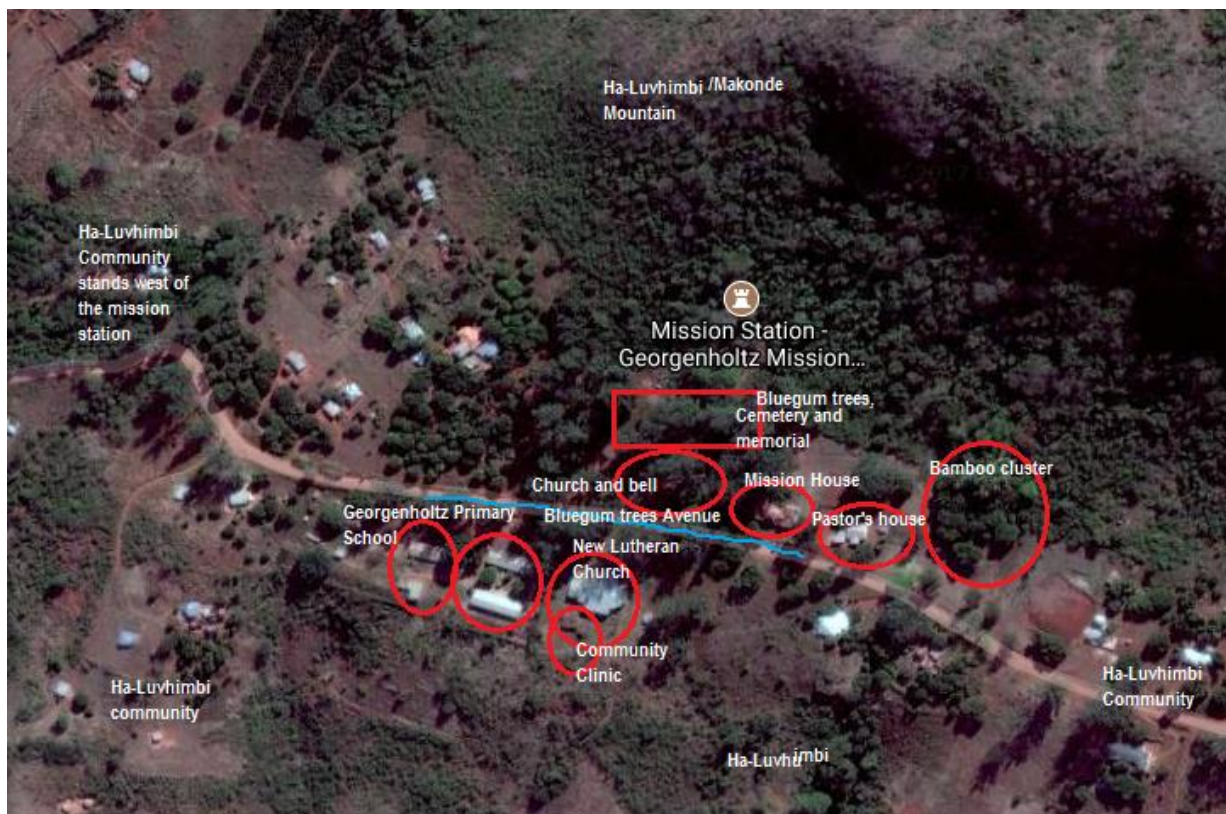


Figure 3: Google image of what constitute Georgholtz (Source: Google Earth, 2017).

3.3 Early Beginnings

The focus of this study is Georgholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi. However, the general connections of this Mission station to mission history in other rural areas in South Africa and Venda will be investigated. This will be done to convey the significance of Georgholtz Mission Station beyond Ha-Luvhimbi village. Its early beginnings have their roots in the arrival and spread of the BMS in South Africa and Venda. In Venda, the establishment of Georgholtz Mission Station by the BMS dates to 1877 in Tshifudi village, 1884 on Mavhola Mountain (still in Tshifudi), and 1906 in Ha-Luvhimbi (current location). Its establishment at Ha-Luvhimbi in 1906 cannot be divorced from the general history of the Berlin Mission in SA. Mission history and elsewhere in the African continent is associated with the introduction of education, Christianity, development and western lifestyles. While education and Christianity started with the Missionaries at Georgholtz in Ha-Luvhimbi, other villages like Ha-Makuya, Thengwe, Mavunde, Mianzwi, Tshilonwe and Mukula to mention a few, also benefited from the introduction of new schools and outstation Churches. By the time missionary Christian Fobbe left Venda in 1968, almost all the villages in the Vhumbedzi region of Venda had schools and Churches. It was also in the 1960s that communities started to do away from

building their houses using stones and thatched grasses. In Venda square houses with iron sheets started to appear.

3.3.1 Berlin Missionary Society Background

The BMS was first established as the “Gesellschaft zur Beförderung der evangelischem Missionen unter den Heiden” (Society for the Promotion of Protestant Missions among the heathen) by representatives of the Prussian nobility in Germany. This later became the BMS on 29 February 1824, with the aim of “furthering the work of spreading the gospel among the ‘heathen’ races of the new world”.¹⁶² Thus, the BMS became one of four German Protestant Mission societies active in the 19th and 20th century South Africa.¹⁶³ Born out of the tradition of Pietism in Germany and at the time of evangelical revival after the Napoleonic wars, the BMS sent its first missionaries to South Africa in 1834,¹⁶⁴ where they operated until 1972.¹⁶⁵ On arrival in South Africa, the BMS began by establishing their mission stations in the southern provinces of the country (Cape and Orange Free State).¹⁶⁶ In the Orange Free State, the BMS established Bethany Mission Station on the banks of the Riet River on 24 September 1834, while in the Cape, the Bethel and Itemba Mission Stations were established simultaneously in 1837.¹⁶⁷ From the original bases in the Cape and Orange Free State, the BMS spread its activities and influence to other areas in the interior of South Africa. More BMS stations were established further north at Botshabelo (1864), Ga-Matlala and Makapanspoort (1865), Thutloane (1867) and Blauberg (1868).¹⁶⁸ In Venda, the BMS established the mission stations of Ha-Tshivhasa in Maungani village (1872), Ha-Madzivhandila or Tshakhuma Mission Station in Tshakhuma village (1874), Georgenholtz in Tshifudi in 1877,¹⁶⁹ and Khalavha in 1912. Georgenholtz was later relocated to the top of Mavhola Mountain in the same village (1884) and again to Ha-

¹⁶² “A first Synthesis of the Environmental, Biological & Cultural Assets of the Soutpansberg.” Mission History Sources of Information, last modified May 14, 2014, accessed June 02, 2017, http://www.soutpansberg.com/workshop/synthesis/mission_history.htm.

¹⁶³ Gunther Pakendorf, “A Brief History of the Berlin Mission Society in South Africa,” *History Compass* 9/2 (2011): 106–118, 10.1111/j.1478- 542.2009.00624. x.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Helga I. Giesecke, *The Berlin Mission in Venda: The Pioneer Years:1872-1901* (Polokwane: Privately printed by Helga Giesecke, 2004), 6-7.

¹⁶⁹ Kirkaldy, *Capturing the Soul*, 27.

Luvhimbi between 1906 and 1907.¹⁷⁰ All these places were and are still rural parts of the Limpopo Province of SA.

3.3.2 From Tshifudi/Mavhola to Ha-Luvhimbi

Due to the fear of fever (Malaria and Tuberculosis- TB) attacks in the low plains of Tshifudi, the Mission station was relocated to the top of Mavhola Mountain (refer to Figure 4 below). The first missionary of the GHMS in Tshifudi and Mavhola Mountain was Niklaus Kuhn or Niklaus Kuhn. He is credited with the establishment of the mission station on 27 July 1877.¹⁷¹ The mission station in the low-lying area of the village became known as Georgenholtz Tshifudi. Its location in Tshifudi did not last as Klaas Koen (the first missionary) died in 1883 of what was suspected to be TB or malaria fever attack.¹⁷² Within a period of three months after Koen's death, his replacement (Brother Baumhofner) also died of a fever attack.¹⁷³ In 1884, the GHMS was relocated to the top of Mavhola Mountain where it eventually became known as Georgenholtz Mission Station Mavhola. The deaths of the two missionaries so soon after one another placed the future of the new mission station in jeopardy.¹⁷⁴ The name "Mavhola" has not died, as it is currently used to refer to the name of a broader Lutheran Church parish comprising most of the original outstations of the Alt Georgenholtz and the new ones under the New Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi. These outstations were and are still spread throughout the Vhumbedzi area in eastern Venda. Other BMS outstations attached to other Mission stations are spread out in central, south, northern and western Venda.

The cost of building the new mission station at Mavhola Mountain were borne by a friend of the BMS, Georg Holtz.¹⁷⁵ The new mission station was therefore named after him. Georg Holtz was the lord of the manor of Manow in Pomerania.¹⁷⁶ Additional donations were received from other well-wishers such as a group of young girls at a

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 22

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 160.

¹⁷² Helga Giesecke, *The SchwelInus-Giesecke Family in Venda, 1873-1973* (Polokwane: Privately printed by Helga Giesecke, 2006), 64.

¹⁷³ Giesecke, *The Berlin*, 7.

¹⁷⁴ Giesecke, *The SchwelInus*, 164.

¹⁷⁵ Alan Kirkaldy, "Klaas Koen: Identity and belonging in the Mission Society during the late 19th century." *Historia*, 55, no. 22 (Summer 2009), 99-120.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 99.

German boarding school who donated a bell or *Glocke*. With the following words cast on it:

“50 Kömer Saten wir,
Gott grab seinen Segen Schier:
Nur 10 Jahre Reichten aus,
Da wurde diese Glocke d’raus,
Geschenkt von einer Friendesschar, Soll,, frieden“ sie läuten
immerda.”¹⁷⁷

These words simply mean that the girls bought the Bell with the profit they generated after selling grain seeds they harvested from the fields over a period of ten years.¹⁷⁸ By selling their harvest, they gradually made enough money to buy the Bell for the Georgenholtz congregation.¹⁷⁹

At Mavhola, the mission station overlooked a plain next to the Luvuvhu River in the south¹⁸⁰ (refer to Figure 4). The only known outstations of the old Georgenholtz Mission Station are Ha-Mutele and Ha-Luvhimbi, where the focus of this study is located.

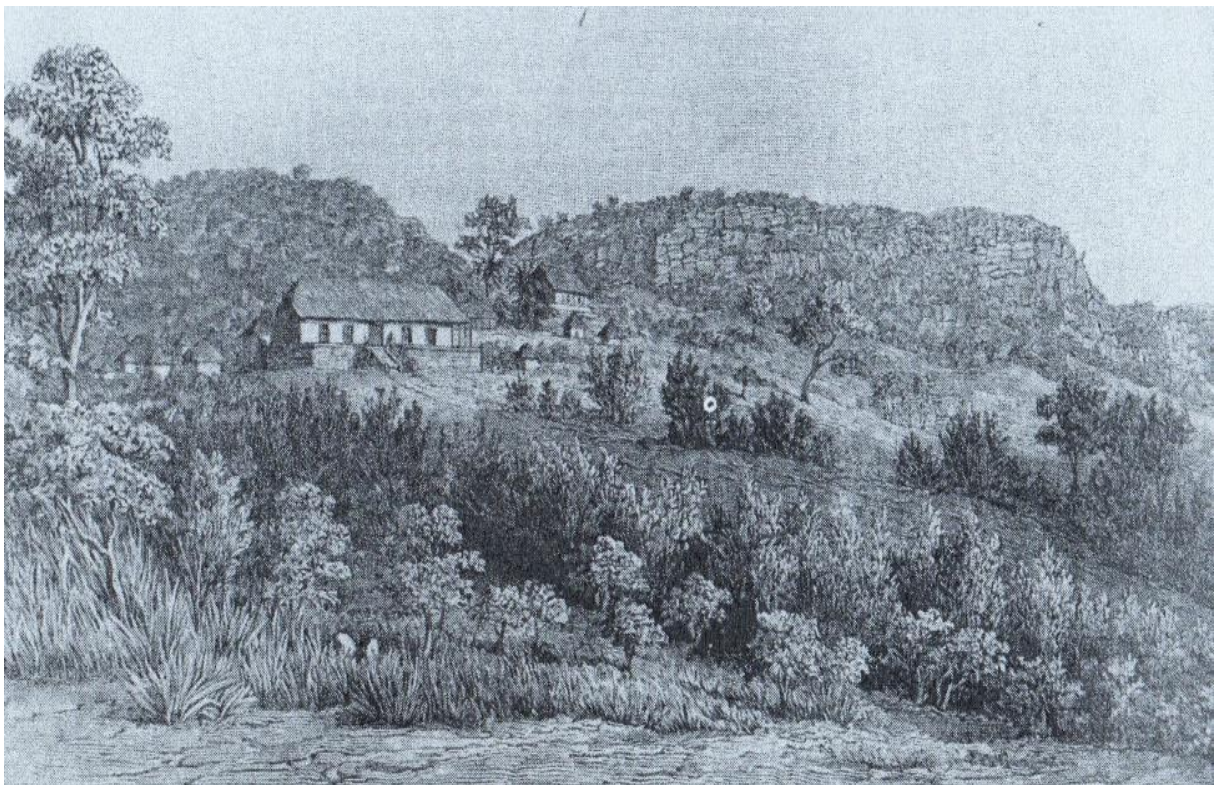


Figure 4: Georgenholtz Mission Station on Mavhola Mountain (Source: Van Zyl, 1992).

¹⁷⁷ These words are cast on a Bell (*Glocke*) which is still hanging on a stone arch. The congregation referred to here is the Georgenholtz Tshifudi. The Bell was later relocated with the Mission station to Mavhola and ultimately to Ha-Luvhimbi where it is hanged and used today (2017/18).

¹⁷⁸ Giesekke, *The SchwelInus*, 256.

¹⁷⁹ Giesekke, *The Berlin*, 7.

¹⁸⁰ Giesekke, *The SchwelInus*, 74.

The fear of permanently sending another missionary to the station lingered on until 1902, when an intern for Alt Georgenholtz, Theodor Schwellnus, was instead sent to Tshakhuma Mission Station from where he would on a temporary basis assist his father (Missionary Erdmann Schwellnus) with the activities of Beuster/Ha-Tshivhase Mission Station. By 1903, the parsonage at Mavhola had dilapidated beyond repair and no one could live there.¹⁸¹ Christians and school children from Georgenholtz Mavhola had since 1899 relocated to other Mission stations and outstations. Thus, the school and the Church were effectively closed. The fact that Theodor Schwellnus also lost his mother in 1904 dictated that he had to be nearer his father who was also aging.¹⁸² Theodor was only ordained in 1906 when he wrote his final examination and submitted a dissertation to complete his Missionary qualifications. This enabled him to focus on Beuster/ Ha-Tshivhase Mission Station on a full-time basis. This marked the beginning of his career as a fully qualified Missionary of Ha-Tshivhasa Mission Station. It also marked the end of his responsibilities for Georgenholtz Mission Station.¹⁸³ The BMS could not send another missionary to Alt Georgenholtz (Mavhola) where malaria fever had already taken the lives of its two missionaries (Klaas Koen and Brother Baumhöfner). Another problem was that there was competition from the Scottish Presbyterian Mission that was being established in Vhufuli (less than 10 km south-west of Ha-Luvhimbi), where there was already another outstation of the Tshakhuma Mission Station. These dilemmas led to the BMS considering abandoning Georgenholtz Mission Station at Mavhola and relocating it to a new location in Ha-Luvhimbi.¹⁸⁴ Ha-Luvhimbi was an obvious choice that would send a strong message to other missionary societies, especially the Scottish Presbyterian Mission, that the BMS already had a strong presence in eastern Venda.¹⁸⁵ In relocating the Mission station to a new location of Ha-Luvhimbi, the BMS allocated 1800 German Mark to him and in the process he was to be assisted by Ludwig Giesecke.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 174.

¹⁸² Ibid., 69.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

3.4 Land Question

Central to the establishment of GHMS in Ha-Luvhimbi was the land question, which became an issue from the onset when missionaries arrived in the village. For most South Africans the 'land question' is a descriptive phrase, with an element of colonial conquest and apartheid dispossession whereby white settlers appropriated 87% of the land for themselves and reserved a mere 13% for the subjugated black majority.¹⁸⁷ When the BMS was allotted land by the traditional leaders of Ha-Luvhimbi and Makonde in the Ha-Tshivhase area between 1905 and 1907, they started building the mission station immediately. By 1910, the new laws of the Union Government of South Africa required that land purchased or allocated to people or institutions should be surveyed by a government surveyor and be registered as such. In this case, the traditional leaders ceded land to the BMS missionaries without being forced to do so. The survey of a piece of land required for Georgenholtz Mission Station (Ha-Luvhimbi) was done only in 1911 by surveyor ER Kolbe, approved in 1912, and registered as Georgenholtz Farm No. 287 of "Klein Spelonken" in 1913 in the extent of 2000 morgen (1713,4 hectares).¹⁸⁸ According to Michelle Hay, the ceding of land by traditional leaders to missionaries and colonialists characterised the 19th century loss of land to settlers and missionaries without coercion.¹⁸⁹ Surveying of land is also viewed as another way land was dispossessed from black people. Regarding the surveying of land for the BMS activities, Michelle Hay argues that:

"The surveyed land became the property of the buyer, colonialist or missionaries. This in fact gave the new owners an opportunity to resort to labour tenancy system in which they drew cheap labour from the local communities for their horses, construction of new roads and the tilling of their land. The new owners were desperate for labour"¹⁹⁰

At Georgenholtz (Ha-Luvhimbi), residents who found themselves inside the demarcated area provided labour for the missionaries, as required.¹⁹¹ The final registration of the Georgenholtz farm came at a time when the 1913 Natives Land Act

¹⁸⁷ Cheryl Walker, "The Limits of Land Reform: Rethinking 'the Land Question,'" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 31, no. 4. Fragile Stability; State and Society in Democratic South Africa (December 2005): 807, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25065048>, accessed December 10, 2017.

¹⁸⁸ From Native Commissioner to Berlin Mission Society, 22 December 1911, Georgenholtz NTS3447: 7955/7814, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

¹⁸⁹ Michelle Hay, The roots of land dispossession in South Africa pre-1913. Alliance for Rural Democracy short course: An Introduction to the political economy of land, mining, and rural democracy in South Africa (22-26 February 2016).

¹⁹⁰ Hay, The roots of land dispossession in South Africa.

¹⁹¹ Ratshilumela, Interview.

was passed and implemented. The Act limited the areas where black South Africans could live¹⁹² and it remained the cornerstone of apartheid until the 1990s when it was replaced by the current policy of land restitution and which by itself is not yielding the desired results.¹⁹³ In order to implement the 1913 Natives Land Act, the Berlin Missionary Society (in 1921) suggested that all stations under their jurisdiction especially Georgholtz, Tshakhuma and Khalavha grounds should be sub-divided into planting and grazing plots which could be leased out to the residents on the farms.¹⁹⁴

It did not take long before the size of the Georgholtz farm 287 was contested by *Thovhele* Tshivhase and his council of chiefs and headmen because they suspected that missionaries wanted to make drastic changes to their way of life and taking over of land belonging to traditional leaders and their communities.¹⁹⁵ In the demarcation process, *Thovhele* Tshivhase and his council wanted the 2000 morgen farm to be further reduced so that their cattle would have space for grazing. They also wanted ownership rights to the land. The years between 1922 and 1928 were characterised by disagreements between the communities and the BMS regarding the different sizes of the land proposed (Figures 5 and 6 below). These proposals and counter-proposals finally led to the farm being subdivided into two portions, namely 1500 morgen for sale to the community and 500 morgens for BMS activities. Things came to a head in 1925, when Venda traditional leaders invited BMS missionaries and their assistants to discuss amongst others the issue of land acquisition by missionaries.¹⁹⁶ Traditional leaders emphasised that there should be transparency in dealing with matters concerning land allocation to missionaries. This subdivision was confirmed only in 1928, after *Thovhele* Tshivhase and his council agreed to the terms and paid the required amount of £25 per

¹⁹² James L. Gibson, "Land redistribution/restitution in South Africa: A model of Multiple Values, as the Past meets the Present" *British Journal of Political Science*, 40, no. 1 (January 2010): 137, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40649427>, accessed December 10, 2017.

¹⁹³ Mahlangeni M.B., *Reflections on the impact of the Natives Land Act, 1913 on Local Government in South Africa: Parliamentary exhibitions*, (Cape Town: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2013),2.

¹⁹⁴ Giesekke, *The SchwelInus*, 193.

¹⁹⁵ From Native Commissioner to Berlin Mission Society, 22 December 1911, Georgholtz NTS3447: 7955/7814, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

¹⁹⁶ Giesekke, *The SchwelInus*, 195.

morgen for the portion of the farm that became known as Portion "A" of Georgenholtz Farm No. 287.¹⁹⁷

Since 1928, the community of Ha-Luvhimbi had been growing and the need for more land became a reality. Gradually, the people of Ha-Luvhimbi moved closer to the BMS land where the GHMS was located, and by 1985, only 5,5 hectares remained for the mission station.¹⁹⁸ In 1985, the Department of Interior of the then Republic of Venda formally gave the Church permission to occupy the 4,5 hectares and use it for Church purposes. All the old buildings that constituted the mission station are now within the 4,5 hectares of land. According to the oral tradition of the people of Ha-Luvhimbi and Ha-Tshivhase, the issue of land distribution between the BMS and communities of Ha-Luvhimbi and Ha-Tshivhasa was and is still a thorny one and remains unresolved. All over South Africa, there were misunderstandings between the BMS and local communities regarding the allocation, redistribution and sale of land originally allocated to the Berlin Missionary Society by traditional leaders.

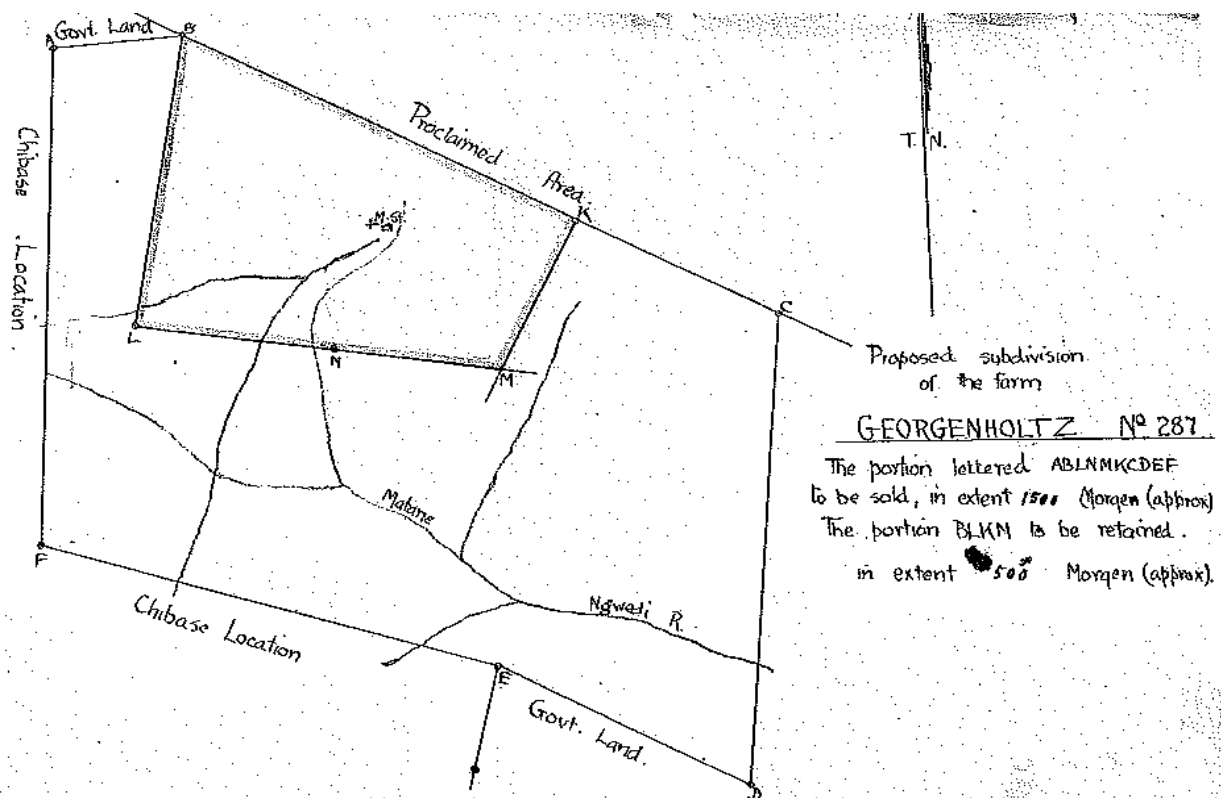


Figure 5: Initial subdivision sketch of Georgenholtz farm in 1911 (Source: National Archives of South Africa, Berlin Missionary Society, 69/308).

¹⁹⁷ From Sub-Native Commissioner (Louistrichardt) to Secretary for Native Affairs (Pretoria), 01 March 1928, Georgenholtz NTS3447: LT.2/7/204/22, National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria.

¹⁹⁸ Rudzani Ravhuanzwo, interview by author, Polokwane, 9 November 2017.

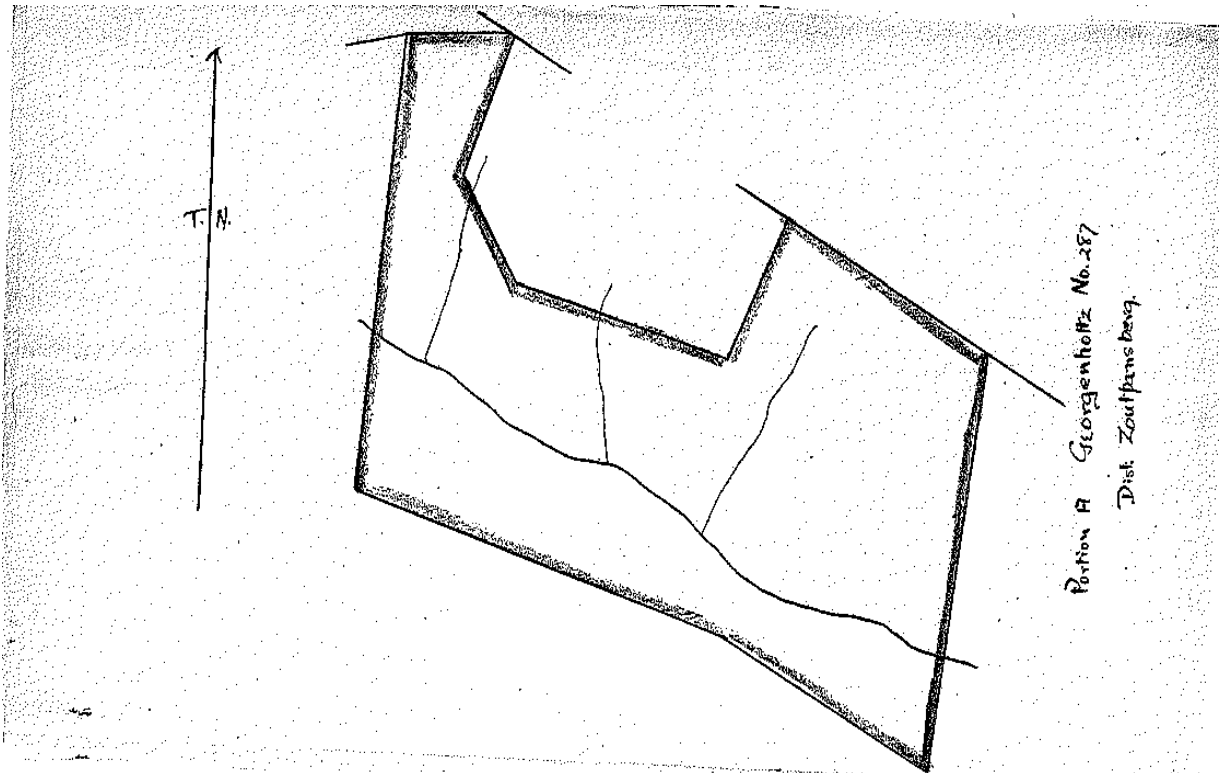


Figure 6: Approved sketch of Georgenholtz farm in 1928 (Source: National Archives of South Africa, Berlin Missionary Society, 69/308).

3.5 Mission Station Development History

From Tshifudi/ Mavhola in the east of Ha-Luvhimbi, missionaries wanted a replacement Mission station in a place that would be much “healthier and cooler.”¹⁹⁹ Ha-Luvhimbi village, high at the foot of Ha-Luvhimbi or Makonde Mountain, was an ideal place for the new Mission station. This meant that Ha-Luvhimbi now had to improve from being the outstation that was established by Klaas Koen and “Nathaniel Lalumbe”²⁰⁰ (Figure 7) in 1881 to a fully-fledged Mission station with numerous outstations of its own.²⁰¹ Outstations or “preaching centres”, as they were commonly referred to, were established to be serviced by missionaries and their assistants. Georgenholtz Mission Station had a missionary and African assistants (male) to help in outstations. This

¹⁹⁹ Giesecke, *The Schwellnus*, 67.

²⁰⁰ When Ha-Luvhimbi was established as an outstation of Georgenholtz Mission Station (Tshifudi) in 1881, Nathaniel Lalumbe was appointed as the permanent Assistant in charge of the Ha-Luvhimbi outstation. Before then, Nathaniel had the task of preaching the Gospel in the villages as one of the earlier converts of the BMS Christian Mission in the Vhumbedzi area.

²⁰¹ Republic of Venda, *Lini na Zwini: report prepared for the Office of the President*, by M. Nemudzivhadi (Thohoyandou, 1985). 6-7.

arrangement was not only at Georgenholtz Mission Station, but in all other Mission stations that were under the Berlin Missionary Society in South Africa.

As Theodor Schwellnus was out of the picture and now permanently responsible for Ha-Tshivhasa Mission Station, Ludwig Giesekke was put in charge of establishing and developing the new Mission station in Ha-Luvhimbi as a Missionary intern. Theodor Schwellnus continued to help him until his ordination as a qualified Missionary on 12 December 1907 and from 1908 Ludwig Giesekke was in full charge of Georgenholtz Mission Station (Ha-Luvhimbi).²⁰²

From its inception in Ha-Luvhimbi in 1906, the GHMS underwent developmental phases by different missionaries in the building, enlargements, and renovations of Mission house (s), post office, hostel facility, community clinic,²⁰³ community school, Lutheran Churches (in outstations), Glocke, Old and new Church buildings,²⁰⁴ and the erection of a memorial to honour those who had died in the service of GHMS from Tshifudi, Mavhola and Ha-Luvhimbi.

²⁰² Giesekke, The Schwellnus, 67.

²⁰³ Simon Sivhidzho, interview by the author, Ha-Luvhimbi, November 09, 2017.

²⁰⁴ Traugott Fobbe, telephone conversation with author, November 14, 2017.



Figure 7: Nathaniel Lalumbe (left) with Timotheus Mavusha.²⁰⁵
(Source: Giesecke, 2007).

²⁰⁵ Both Nathaniel Lalumbe and Timotheus Mavusha are known within the Lutheran Church circles as early evangelists and teachers of the Berlin Mission Society at Georgenholtz Mission Station (Tshifudi/Mavhola). The two were honoured of having lost their lives in the service of Georgenholtz Mission Station. Their names are among the many inscribed on the memorial erected in 1952 and unveiled in 1953 at Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi. Nathaniel Lalumbe died in 1928 in Ha-Begwa while Timotheus died on 1926 in Tshifudi.

3.5.1 The Parsonage

The parsonage at Georgenholtz was from 1906-1968 comprised a mud hut (Figure 8), a two-roomed bungalow (Figure 9), and a bigger house (Figures 9-19). All these structures were built in various stages. The first structure to be erected was a mud hut, which was built of stones and grass-thatched roof by the first missionary at Ha-Luvhimbi in 1906. Missionary Theodor Schwellnus used the mud hut as temporary accommodation while constructing a bigger parsonage.²⁰⁶

From the beginning, the Mission house was planned to be “a big, tall house, which would be clearly visible from afar, and to be built of mud and burnt bricks.”²⁰⁷ In 1907, some bricks were manufactured with which to build the parsonage, and by the end of the year, the house was standing but incomplete. When missionary Theodor Schwellnus left Georgenholtz for Tshakhuma Mission Station where he was going to attend to the passing away of his mother, BMS replaced him at Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi with Reverend Ludwig Giesecke, who continued with the task of establishing the new Mission station. On his arrival at Georgenholtz, Ludwig Giesecke wrote that:

“A new beginning has been made at New Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi. We have started the work here, with God. May He now also give His blessing and success in the continuation/development of this work.”²⁰⁸

By 1910, the bigger parsonage was half completed and the Giesecke family used it as a come-together venue for their family. The house also had a parapet wall, veranda on the front, and a top step. It was from the veranda where the family would watch Haley’s Comet that passed at its closest point to the earth on 20 May 1910.²⁰⁹ This is where they had a beautiful view of the whole sky.²¹⁰ In 1910, the parsonage had one gable. The parsonage was again renovated and enlarged between 1912 and 1913 (Figures 11 and 12). By the end of 1913 it looked more beautiful and complete (Figure 13). The current dilapidated house has two gables (Figure 47). Reverend Ludwig Giesecke added the right wing of the house. The bricks formed to build the parsonage were also used to build the hostel facilities for baptism candidates. The Gieseckes were

²⁰⁶ Giesecke, *The Schwellnus*, 68.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁰⁸ Helga Giesecke, *An informative*, 8.

²⁰⁹ “Haley’s Comet reaches the closest point to earth,” South African History Online: towards a people’s history, last updated May 17, 2016, accessed December 20, 2017, www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/halleys-comet-reaches-closest-point-earth.

²¹⁰ Giesecke, *The Schwellnus*, 73.

compelled to provide board and lodging for a group of pupils and baptism candidates at the station because they were intimidated by non-Christians in their respective villages- especially girls.²¹¹ These facilities were closed in 1919²¹² because the First world War (WWI) resulted in enormous challenges to the German missionaries, Mission stations and schools they built. Central to these challenges was the devaluation of the German Mark which made it impossible for the German Government and the BMS to send money abroad where they established Mission stations.²¹³ At Georgholtz hostel facilities, children were sent home because there was not enough money to buy food and baptismal candidates did not have enough clothing.²¹⁴

While bricks were being formed, a small new two-roomed bungalow was built for the comfort of the new missionary (Ludwig Giesekke) and his wife, Erdmuthe (Muti) Giesekke. The bigger house, which was already under construction, was planned to be completed by 1908. The smaller two-roomed bungalow was later used as a community clinic (refer to Figure 9),²¹⁵ before a bigger clinic was built by Missionary Walter Johansmeier in the 1930s.

²¹¹ Helga I Giesekke, *Education in Venda: The First Hundred years of the history of Education in Venda, 1870- 1970* (Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, No. 6), 27.

²¹² Ibid., 70.

²¹³ Helga I. Giesekke, *Education in Venda*, 33.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.



Figure 8: Temporary mud hut²¹⁶ between 1905 and 1906 (Source: Giesekke, 2005).

²¹⁶ All participants to the interviews indicated that they did not know the exact location of this mud hut. However, Mr. Aitken Ratshilumela is of the view that it could have been located closer to the foot of the mountain. He told the researcher that as young boys growing up in the 1950s, they used to see stone foundations there.



Figure 9: Parsonage and a two-room bungalow (Source: Giesekke, 2005).



Figure 10: Left wing of parsonage in 1910 (Source: Giesekke, 2005).



Figure 11: Front elevation of parsonage during enlargement and renovation (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Glass Slide No. 77.2.4).



Figure 12: Back of parsonage during enlargement and renovation (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Glass Slide No. 77.2.5).



Figure 13: Parsonage after renovation and enlargement- end of 1913 (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Glass Slide No. 77.2.6).



Figure 14: Parsonage in the 1930s (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini-series of Photos, No. 26.2, Sheet C, Row 4, Photo no.1).



Figure 15: Parsonage and its garden in the 1930s²¹⁷ (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Berlin Mission's work in Venda Photos Album, No. 26.2, Photo no. 300).



Figure 16: Silver-oak trees and lawn area in the 1930s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Photo Album of Muti (Erdmuthe Dorothea) Giesekke nee Schwellnus, No. 76.3, Photo no. 5.2).²¹⁸

²¹⁷ The wife of missionary Walter Johannsmeier, Thea, is standing in front of the gate to the parsonage.

²¹⁸ Erdmtuthe Giesekke and her two children, Adelheid and Diether are relaxing in the lawn area west of the parsonage.



Figure 17: Western part of parsonage and lawn area in the 1930s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Photo Album of Muti (Erdmuthe Dorothea) Giesekke nee Schwellnus, No. 76.3, Photo no.4.1).²¹⁹



Figure 18: Rear elevation of parsonage in the 1940s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No 34.34.2 Photo no. 109).

²¹⁹ In this picture are Erdmtuthe (Muti) and Missionary Ludwig Giesekke with their daughter Adelheid and their dog resting on the lawn on the western side of the parsonage.



Figure 19: Front elevation of parsonage in the 1950s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34.34.2, Photo no. 109).

3.5.2 Key Plant Species

Missionaries are also credited for introducing various tree species (alien and indigenous) at Georgenholtz. The station is thus surrounded by species such as bluegum, pines (*Pinus Patula*), silver-oak (*Grevillea robusta*),²²⁰ Modjadji cycads (*Encephalartos transvenosus*), coffee, mango, avocado, banana, and a few orange trees.²²¹ Except the Modjadji cycads and the bamboos, the rest of the species are alien to South Africa. The bluegum trees could have been introduced in the 1870s and 1880s when Ha-Luvhimbi was an outstation of Georgenholtz Tshifudi /Mavhola or by earlier prospectors.²²² The pictures of the first Church that was built between 1906 and 1908 (Figures 25, 26 and 27) indicate that some of these tall trees were already there. All the interviewees the author interacted with have no clue when exactly the trees were introduced to the area. After the introduction of fruit trees, local communities were encouraged to plant their own and today there is no family in Ha-Luvhimbi and the surrounding villages without fruit trees in their yards. This could be attributed to the efforts of the missionaries. While some Modjadji cycads appeared in the garden of the

²²⁰ Sivhidzho, interview.

²²¹ Ratshilumela, interview.

²²² Ibid.

parsonage by missionary Walter Johansmeier in the 1930s, they seem to have been planted earlier than that through to the 1960s. From the pictures, cycads are visible from the times of missionaries Theodor Schwellnus, Ludwig Giesekke, Walter Johansmeier, and Cristian Fobbe (refer to Figures 8,11, 15, and 18). Most of the planted cycads are now lining the road that passes through the Mission station closer to the Church and the Bell or *Glocke* (Figures 20, 32, 44, 47, 62 and 68). However, because of their indigenusness to the area, cycads seem to have been growing all over the Mission station area (refer to area behind the wall of the first mud hut in Figure 8 and in the cemetery behind the memorial, which was erected in 1952 (Figures 24 and 61). They were thus popularised as plants to beautify gardens in the 1930s, 40s and 50s. The trees in the cemetery have now grown bigger and they are visible in recent pictures.

In the past, the bluegum and silver-oak tree branches were used as ladders and beams when Churches were built or renovates (Figures 11 and 12). Missionary Christian Fobbe used them quite often when building some of the outstation Churches, especially Tshilonwe, Mukula and Mahagala.²²³ These beams are also used today in most rural areas of Venda where people prefer to build rondavel huts. The bluegum and silver-oak trees now form an avenue along the road that now passes through the Mission station. Bigger and older trees line this road, and most of these trees are more than 20 metres high. A few silver-oak trees are mixed with bluegum trees (refer to Figures 3, 21, 60, 62 and 68) along the avenue, cemetery and around the fence of the current pastor's house. The overview picture of the cover page also shows the locations of these trees.

Bamboos (Figure 22) are in demand by the local community members. They use them to build kraals for goats and pigs. According to oral tradition, bamboos were and are also still used to make pipes for the Tshikona traditional dance. Similarly, bamboos were used to make ceilings for the Georgholtz Church as reflected in Figures 30, 55-56 and 59). The bamboo species is rare in Venda. In Ha-Luvhimbi it is found only within the stand allocated to the BMS.

²²³ Ratshilumela, interview.

The cycad trees appeared at Georgholtz during the times of missionaries Walter Johansmeier in the 1930s, and Christian Fobbe in the 1940s and 1950s. These trees are slowly disappearing from where they were planted, especially in front of the parsonage and in the graveyard. Missionary Christian Fobbe used cycad tree leaves to decorate inside the Church during baptismal ceremonies. These indigenous cycads (Modjadji cycad) were and still are the resident species of the Ha-Luvhimbi Mountain from Makonde in the west to Tshivhilwi in the east. The eastern part of the mountain and the flat plain of Tshivhilwi and Tshifudi villages, in the east where they are integrated into the Mphaphuli Nature Reserve that was created by the former homeland government of the Republic of Venda, is a protected area specifically for the Modjadji cycads. The habitat of all these tree species is high-rainfall areas. The Luvhimbi Mountain is a suitable place because of the many springs that originate and flow from it. Furthermore, silver-oaks, bluegum and pine are not indigenous species. They have their origins from Native Central America, Australia, and Tasmania.²²⁴



Figure 20: Modjadji cycads in front of parsonage (Source: Author, 2017).

²²⁴ Braam van Wyk, Piet van Wyk and Ben-Erik van Wyk, *Photo Guide to Trees of Southern Africa* (Briza Publications: Pretoria, 2000), 137-137.



Figure 21: Bluegum trees along the school fence²²⁵ (Source: Author,2017).



Figure 22: Bamboo²²⁶ bush (Source: Author, 2017).

²²⁵ A few silver-oak trees can be spotted in-between the avenue of bluegum trees.

²²⁶ In different parts of Venda, bamboo bush is known as *Lutanga* or *Musengere*.

3.5.3 Cemetery and Memorial

The GHMS Ha-Luvhimbi is also characterised by an old Church cemetery (Figure 60) where mission workers and residents who had served GHMS (Tshifudi, Mavhola, Ha-Luvhimbi and its outstations) between 1877 and 1952 were and are still buried.²²⁷ In the cemetery there is a memorial that was erected in 1952 in honour of those who had died in the service of Georgenholtz Mission Station between 1877 and 1952 (refer to Figure 24. 44, and 61).²²⁸ The memorial was unveiled in 1953 as a way of celebrating 75 years of BMS work at Georgenholtz Mission Station (refer to Figure 23, which represents the Tshivhase royal family attending the event in 1953).

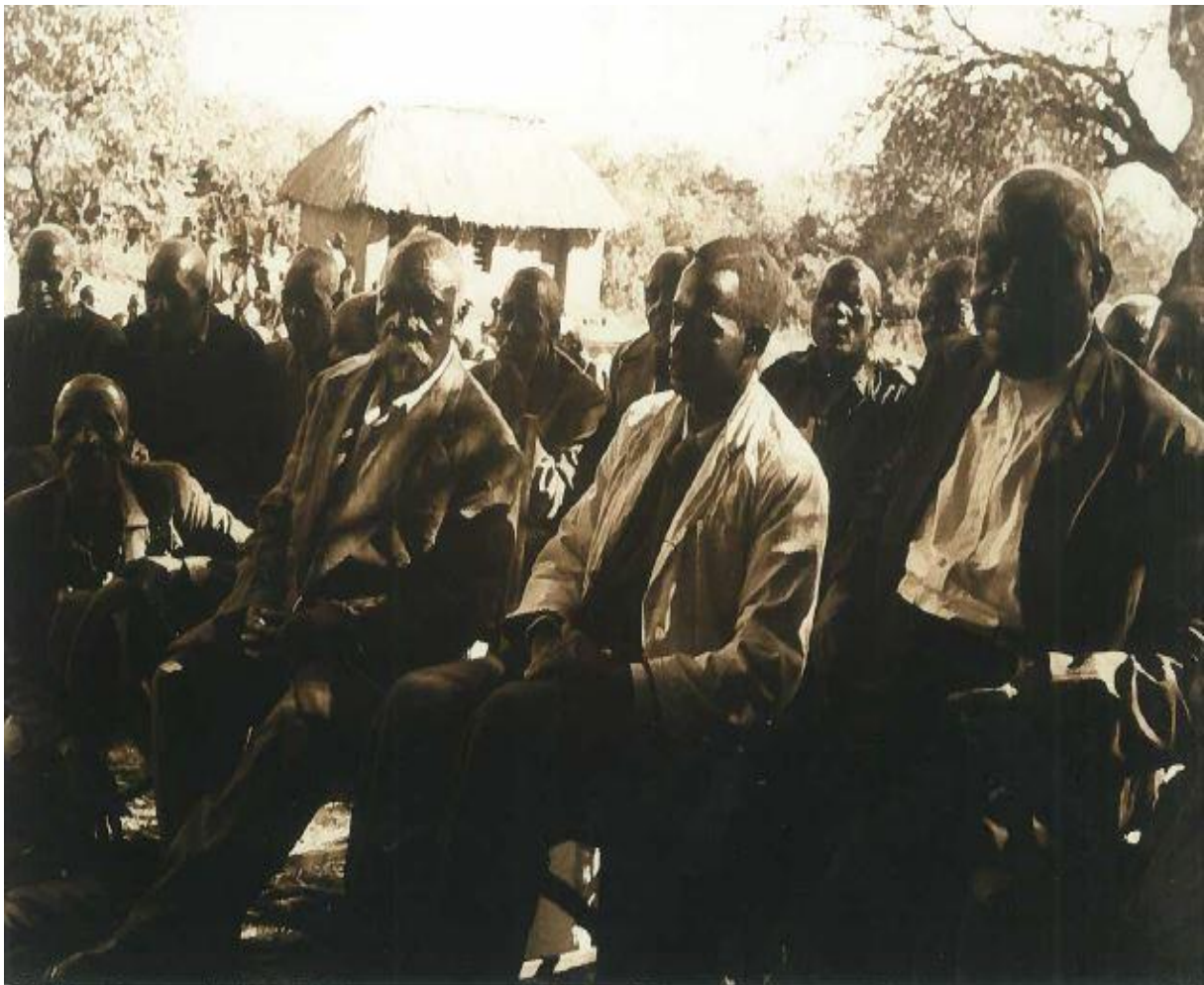


Figure 23: Tshivhase royal family members at Georgenholtz in 1953 (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34. 34.2, Photo no. 91).²²⁹

²²⁷ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

²²⁸ Some of the names to be honoured were inscribed on the basement of the memorial. These include amongst others: Josef Maseda, Simson Munzhedzi, Filipo Nthai, Abel Tshimange, Abel Malada, Timotheus Mavhusha, Petrus Muedi, Brother Baumhöfner, Petrus Luvhengo and Nathanael Lalumbe.

²²⁹ According to the photograph notes, the old man with a black jacket and moustache has been identified as regent Chief of Ha-Tshivhase after Phiriphiri Tshivhase was arrested and died in prison. A young man (in white jacket) is Prince Thikhathali Tshivhase. The apparent heir to the Tshivhase chieftainship.



Figure 24: Georgenholtz Mission Station memorial in 1953 (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34.34.2 Photo no. 94).

3.5.4 Church and School

For the BMS in Venda, Church and education were inseparable. Where Churches were established, they were always attached to schools. The basis for education at Georgenholtz-Ha-Luvhimbi has its origins in the establishment of the Mission station in 1877.²³⁰ The following year, in 1878, a school was first established at Georgenholtz-Tshifudi.²³¹ This school offered classes for adults and children. Children were taught to read and write, while adults learnt skills such as woodwork, building and sewing. Afternoons were also set aside for local women to learn family hygiene, childcare, food preservation, and cooking.²³² By 1892, the school had 32 pupils.²³³ The wives²³⁴ of

²³⁰ Helga Giesecke, Date Table of the History of Education in Venda, 2.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid., 1.

²³³ Giesecke, Education in Venda, 118.

²³⁴ Between 1878-1883 it was missionary Klaas Koen's wife (Maria Auguste Brose) in Tshifudi and Mavhola respectively. Between 1906 and 1908, 1911 and mid-1919, there was Erdmuthe Giesecke (wife to missionary Ludwig Giesecke). From mid-1919 to 1937 missionary Gotthardt Westphal's wife, Terese Krause and missionary Walter Johannsmeier's wife (Thea) assisted from 1937-1950 while Christa Fobbe (missionary Christian Fobbe performed similar duties from 1952 -1968 when the Fobbes were expelled from South Africa by the apartheid government).

missionaries taught all these tasks to local African women. Unfortunately, the structures contacted for the provision of lists of interviewees for this research are male-dominated. Where women were provided as possible participants, they were not available on the days scheduled for the interviews. The researcher would have loved to interview his aunt (Thalitha Lalumbe), but she passed on before the interviews (2017). Ms. Christa Fobbe, wife to missionary Christian Fobbe also passed away around 2002-3. Muthude Christian Ravhuanzwo, Julia Mahuluhulu and Penina Muavha are known women who worked at the Georgholtz community clinic as assistant nurses. Mrs. Muthude Christian Ravhuanzwo was affectionately known as *Vho-Nnese* or simply “Mrs. Nurse” until her death in 2010. Their views as women who experienced the BMS during their lifetime would have made a difference. Thus, the researcher holds the view that not only men in the social sciences “should be considered standard, normal, unmarked category of human beings” that should contribute knowledge to research topics.²³⁵ This assertion makes women feel powerless without much to say.²³⁶ Similarly, in many societies girls are still raised to be pretty objects who would be seen but not heard and their intellect is devalued.²³⁷

By the time the Georgholtz Mission Station was relocated to Ha-Luvhimbi between 1906 and 1908, the BMS missionary there, Theodor Schweltnus built a small, simple, square building, using stones and mud (refer to Figure 9) as the first Georgholtz Ha-Luvhimbi Church structure. This building was used as both a Church and a school.²³⁸ This marked the beginning of the building of the first Lutheran Church and a school at Georgholtz Ha-Luvhimbi. According to the BMS annual report of 1910, published in 1911, “a small chapel has been built at Neu or New Georgholtz this year (1910 which also serves as a school building and baptism started with two candidates from the Ha-Makuya outstation”²³⁹ or preaching centre (Figure 25). Church services as well as teaching for Christians, catechumen/baptism candidates and “heathens” from the main station (GHMS) and the outstations could gather in the Church for the first time.²⁴⁰ It

²³⁵ M.L Schalbe and Wolkomir M, “Interviewing Men, “ in *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, eds., J.F. Gubrium and J.A Holstein (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 203.

²³⁶ Giesekke, *Education in Venda*, 2.

²³⁷ S. Reinharz and Chase S.E, “Interviewing women, “ in *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, eds., J.F. Gubrium and J.A Holstein (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), 203, “ 225.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

²³⁹ Giesekke. *An Informative*, 41.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

had become clearer by 1929 that the Church had become too small for the Holy Communion services and overcrowding in the small Church became unavoidable. The BMS took a decision to enlarge the Church and some of the bricks used to build the house were used to lay the Church's foundation, with more materials for the windows, doors and roof being required.²⁴¹

A separate school block first appeared between 1919 and 1937 during the time of missionary Gotthardt Westphal. Not so many people know about this block, which is no longer there. It later collapsed, but it is slightly visible on some of the pictures of the 1930s (refer to Figure 31).²⁴² Another block of classes was built by missionary Walter Johansmeier (1937-1950).²⁴³ When missionary Christian Fobbe replaced Johansmeier and served between 1952-1968, he added a few classrooms to the school and made it bigger.²⁴⁴ In January 1941, the Georgenholtz School was fully functional, and by 1953 it had grown to be a five class-roomed school with one office built of stones and cement (refer to Figure 32). The roof of the school was made of galvanised iron sheets. From 1953 to 1966 the school evolved from being known as Georgenholtz Primary School, Georgenholtz Bantu School, and Georgenholtz Lower and Higher Primary School (Combined) to a boarding school with hostel facilities that are no longer available, or their foundations visible. Teachers were drawn from the local communities of Ha-Luvhimbi and the BMS missionaries. The first qualified teacher (trained in Botshabelo) was Immanuel Dau.²⁴⁵ Teachers' salaries were both subsidised and privately funded. The school was owned solely by the BMS as a community school.²⁴⁶ It took long for the school to be recognised as a state school, as it was still too small between 1908 and 1940.²⁴⁷ Due to the enlargements that took place in the 1930s, the school was finally inaugurated as a state school in 1940.²⁴⁸ In 1953, the Department of Native Affairs (Bantu Education) applied to rent the Georgenholtz Primary School buildings as

²⁴¹ Ibid., 219.

²⁴² Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Fobbe, telephone.

²⁴⁵ Helga Giesecke. *An Informative*, 86.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 219.

a government subsidised school. From 1956 to 1966, the school was operated as a government subsidised school, with some of the qualified teachers paid by government.

While the school was going solo, the Church was extended in the 1920s by missionary Gotthard Westphal when he came to replace missionary Ludwig Giesecke as a resident missionary of Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi. The length of the Church was thus doubled. When missionary Walter Johansmeier served at Georgenholtz, he added an altar sanctuary and the tower of the Church in 1938 (refer to Figure 27). It was during missionary Johansmeier's service period that the old bell from Alt or Old Georgenholtz-Tshifudi and Mavhola was first hung on a sturdy wooden structure, which through the years was weakened by termites (refer to Figure 29). It was too heavy and could not be hung in the Church tower. When missionary Christian Fobbe, the last BMS missionary at Georgenholtz renovated and enlarged the Church in the 1950s, he built a more secure stone structure (arch) for the Church Bell²⁴⁹ (refer to Figure 28 next to the Church). This stone structure or an arch with the Bell forms part of what remains of the Georgenholtz Mission Station today.



Figure 25: The grass-thatched building used as a Church and a school²⁵⁰ (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Glass Slide No. 77.2.8).

²⁴⁹ Giesecke, *The Schwelhus*, 174-9 & 188.

²⁵⁰ Erdmuthe (Muti) Giesecke- wife of missionary Ludwig Giesecke is posing in this picture with school children, baptismal class children, and unnamed African women assistants

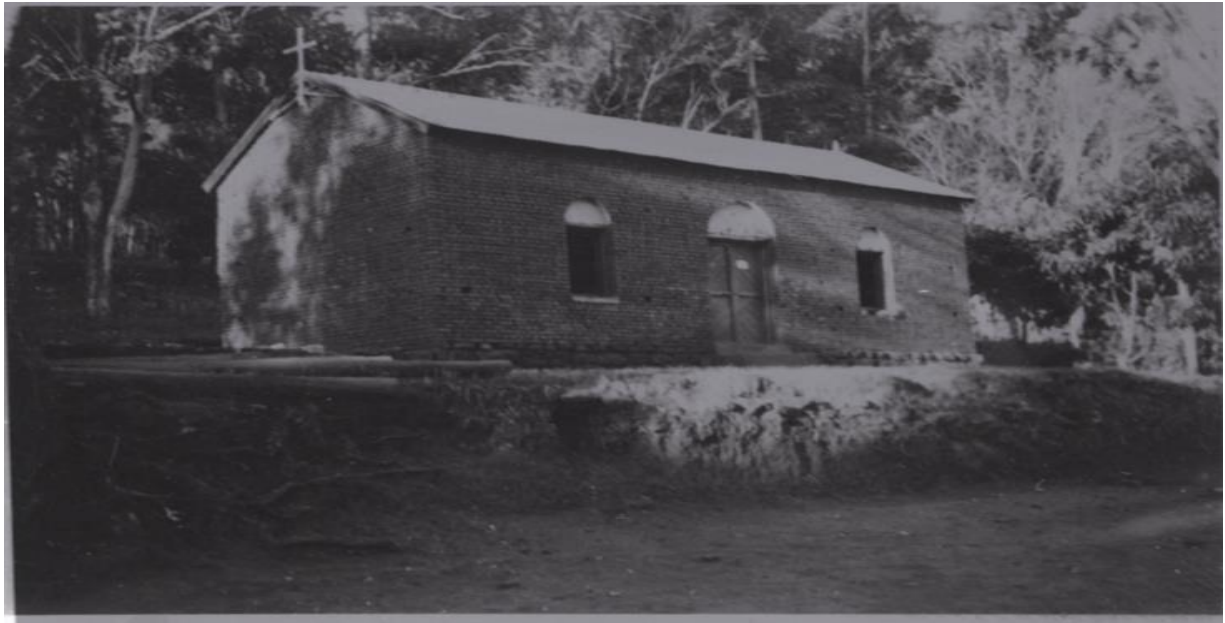


Figure 26: Improved Church building with iron sheets roof (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini-series of photos from retired mission workers, No. 26.2, Sheet C, Row 2, Photo no. 4).



Figure 27: Church after renovation and enlargement in 1938 (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini-series of photos from retired mission workers, No. 26.2, Sheet C, Row 2, Photo no. 3).



Figure 28: Enlarged and renovated Church with stone arch for the Bell²⁵¹ (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34.34.2, Photo no. 97).



Figure 29: Bell hanging on a wooden structure (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34,34.2, Photo no. 104).

²⁵¹ Opposite the Church is a stone arch to hang the heavy Glocke/Bell. It was built by missionary Christian Fobbe during his time as BMS missionary at Georgholtz Ha-Luvhimbi in the 1950s. The stone arch and the bell are still there. The current leadership of the new Lutheran Church across the road in Figure 69 continues to use the Bell to call congregants for Church service on Sundays.



Figure 30: Inside the Church in the 1950s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34. 34.2 Photo no. 87).

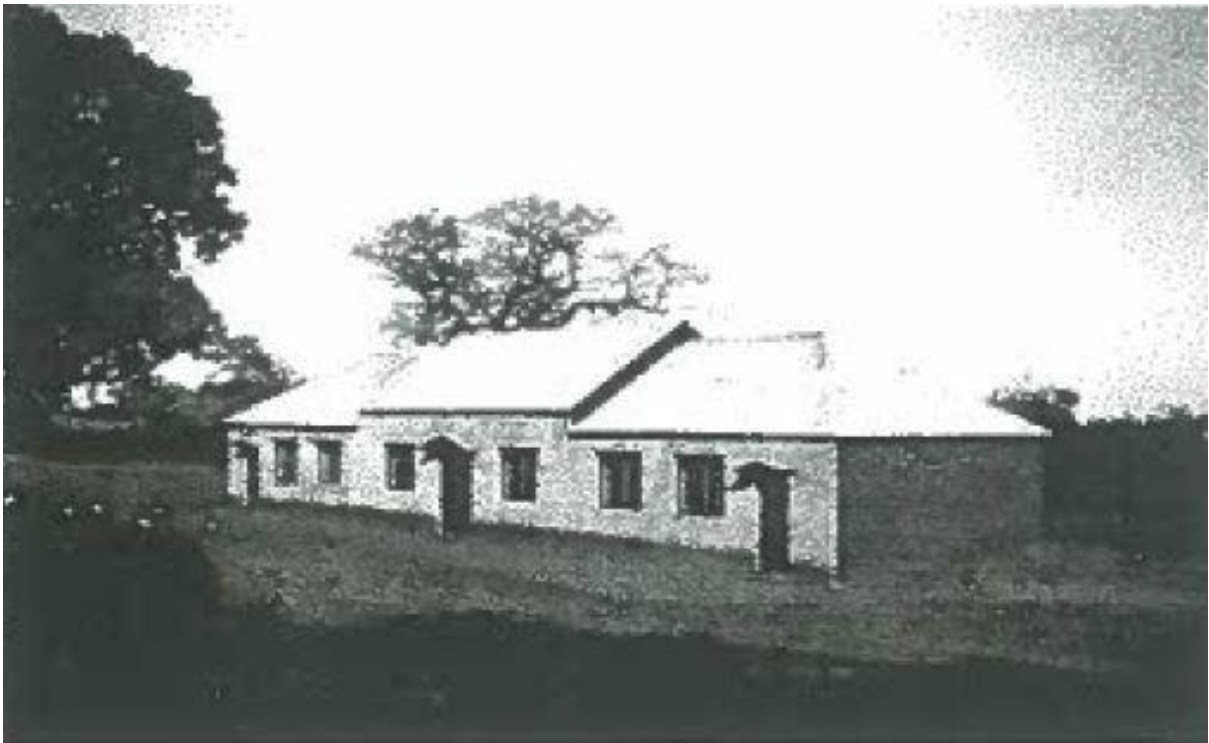


Figure 31: Georgholtz Primary School in the 1930s (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Berlin Mission's work in Venda Photos Album, No. 26.26.1, Photo no. 306).



Figure 32: Georgenholtz Primary School with additional block in the 1950s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34.34.2, Photo no. 108).

3.5.5 Community Clinic

The community clinic (in Figures 33 and 34) is one of the most important features to be added in the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station. Missionaries, and especially their wives, were trained to medically take care of the ailing communities wherever they were stationed. At GHMS, the clinic was introduced in the 1930s by missionary Walter Johansmeier. He is the one who built the clinic building that is currently behind the new Lutheran Church. Half of this clinic is still standing. African assistants²⁵² were also trained to work as nurses in the clinic and most of the patients who were treated there were communities from Ha-Luvhimbi and Georgenholtz outstations in places such as Ha-Makuya, Ha-Begwa, Ha-Lambani, Lukau, Mianzwi, Tshilonwe and Tshifudi, to mention a few.

²⁵² In all the BMS Mission stations in Venda, female black assistant nurses were trained to assist highly trained wives of the missionaries in their respective stations. It was a norm that before leaving Germany for South Africa and other parts throughout the world, missionary wives were trained in many skills, including nursing. The clinic in Figures 27 and 28 at Georgenholtz Mission Station was built by missionary Walter Johansmeier. By the time he worked at Georgenholtz (1937-1942), his wife was responsible for the clinic as a resident nurse.



Figure 33: Incomplete community clinic in the late-1930s (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini- Series of Photos-from retired Mission workers, Sheet C, Row 2, Photo no.2).



Figure 34: Fully operational community clinic in the early 1940s²⁵³ (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Berlin Mission's work in Venda Photo Album, No 26. 26.1, Photo no 309).

²⁵³ None of the participants was able to identify the woman assistant in uniform (standing) between Mrs. Muthude Christian Ravhuanzwo and Mrs. Julia Mahuluhulu who are known to have worked in this clinic between the 1930s and 1960s.

3.5.6 Outstations

When missionaries established main Mission stations, they were also tasked to establish outstations or preaching centres where they would render service with the assistance of African assistants or evangelists (also members of communities) whom they Christianised first. When Georgholtz Mission Station was established in Tshifudi and later relocated to Mavhola Mountain, preaching centres that were established were Ha-Makahane (now in northern part of the Kruger National Park). The Ha-Makahane outstation was also known as Christiansburg before the name was later given to another station in Louis Trichardt. Other outstations of the old GHMS were Ha-Luvhimbi and Ha-Mutele in the far north-eastern parts of Vhumbedzi. The first outstations did not have buildings. In Ha-Luvhimbi and Ha-Makahane, they used small stone enclosures, and at times held their sessions under the trees. In Ha-Mutele, Evangelist Nathaniel Lalumbe was tasked with the establishment of an outstation. However, due to lack of funding, Nathaniel ended up staying in a cave while he held Church sessions under the tree.²⁵⁴ When the Mission station was relocated to Georgholtz Ha-Luvhimbi, many outstations were established.²⁵⁵ Reverend Christian Fobbe is the one credited with building artistic Churches with mosaic murals and decorations which include, among others, Tshilonwe, Ha-Begwa, Mukula and Mahagala, to mention a few (refer to Figures 35-38 below).²⁵⁶ Missionary Christian Fobbe was able to do all these because he was himself a builder who brought German Architectural designs to Venda.²⁵⁷



Figure 35: Rear elevation of Tshilonwe outstation Church (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini-series of Photos, 26.2, Sheet A, Row 5, Photo no. 3).

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ratshilumela, Interview.

²⁵⁶ Fobbe, telephone.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.



Figure 36: Mahagala outstation Church (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No 34.34.2, Photo no. 61).



Figure 37: Entrance to Tshilonwe outstation Church (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No 34. 34.2, Photo no. 57).

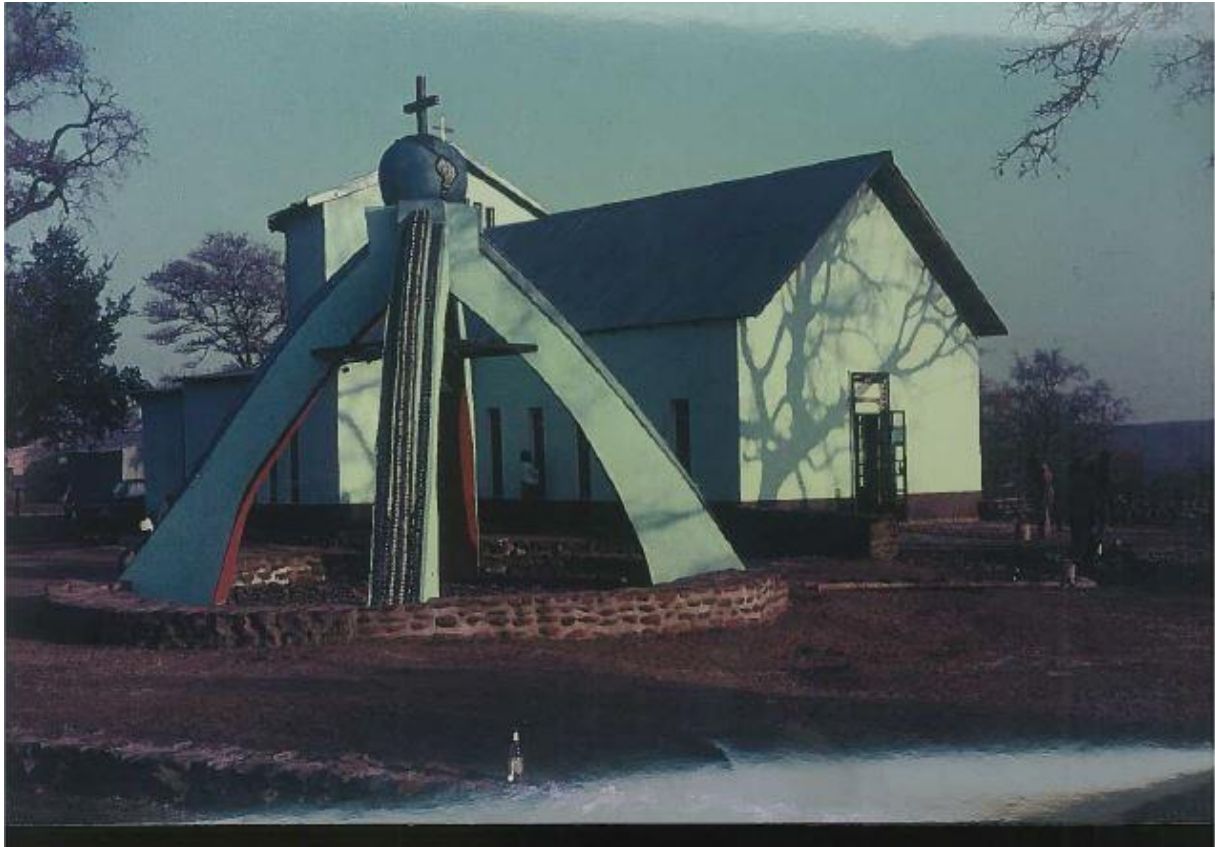


Figure 38: Mukula outstation Church in the 1960s (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 1, No. 34. 34.2 Photo no. 64).

3.5.7 Horse Stables

Horse stables first appeared in Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi during the latter part of the 1930s. It is not clear whether they were there when the Mission station was started. These were used to house horses that enabled missionaries to visit outstations. According to local oral tradition, missionaries did not use horses only in the 1930s and 1950s.²⁵⁸ Horses were also used as early as 1910 to pull wagons when missionaries were travelling around Venda and visiting the outstations.²⁵⁹

3.5.8 Mission Station as a Training Centre

The arrival of missionary Christian Fobbe in Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi was a turning point for the status of the Mission station. Teachers and pastors were no longer trained at Botshabelo. Georgenholtz became the centre of training from the mid-1950s to the 1960s (Figures 39-40), until missionary Christian Fobbe was expelled from SA in 1967. According to some notes written at the back of the pictures, missionary Fobbe would

²⁵⁸ Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

conduct some of the classes at the homes of his students.²⁶⁰ As the number of students increased in the 1960s, classes were held at the Church and the school.²⁶¹



Figure 39: First teachers/assistants during one of the training sessions (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 2, No. 76.4, Photo no 14).²⁶²

²⁶⁰ Mr Rudzani Ravhuanzwo – after seeing the picture in Figure 33, asked the elders about the venue of this meeting and the elders from Ravhuanzwo family told him that the meeting took place in Mr. Mudoc Ravhuanzwo's place in Lukau village in the Thengwe area. The elders could recognise the clay table missionary Fobbe (in white shirt) and Mudoc Ravhuanzwo (far right) are leaning on.

²⁶¹ Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁶² In this picture, Missionary Christian Fobbe (middle) guiding teacher/assistant trainees: Messrs Murdoc Ravhuanzwo (busy engaging Fobbe), Jensen Dau (far left and holding a book) and Christopher Makgakga (in light jacket).



Figure 40: The last group of trainee assistants/teachers between 1965-1966 (Source: Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Fobbe Photo Collection Part 2, No. 76.4.4).²⁶³

3.5.9 Other Buildings

As the GHMS grew and prospered, other buildings were added to the existing ones. These buildings, which many living people still vividly remember, include the hostel facility that was used to accommodate girls and boys who came to attend school and baptism confirmation classes. Messrs. Eitken Ratshilumela and Simon Shivhidzo claim that the post office and hostel facility were situated east of the parsonage on the site of the current pastor's house (Figure 68). Next to the hostel there was a small building that was used as a post office (see behind the delegates who came to attend the 75th jubilee celebration of the existence of Georgenholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi (Figure 23). Later, after the collapse of the hostel and post office buildings, a new house for the resident pastors was built with stock bricks and cement.²⁶⁴ Some people still remember the existence of a pigsty, but cannot remember where it was located within the premises of the Mission station.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Individuals in this picture are recorded as candidates who were being trained as evangelists. **Back row left to right are:** Samuel Netshakhuma, J. Maposa, James Nemuthanzwiela, Alfius Ndwambi, Albert Nemukongwe and Fanuel from Ha-Makuya. **Front row left to right are:** Finias Ramalata, Eduard Nemapate, David Mahada, Pastor Jensen Dau (their teacher), Robert Masindi, Pastor Christopher Makgakga (their other teacher) and Johannes from Mahagala.

²⁶⁴ Sivhidzho, interview.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.



Figure 41: Parsonage and original Church building (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana Accession 89, Mini-series of Photos, No. 26.2, Sheet C, Row 4, Photo no.1).

3.5.10 Communities' Role in Developing Georgenholtz

While the Mission station was being developed from 1906, communities were involved in many respects. Firstly, they were involved in the manufacturing of mud bricks and the construction of buildings such as the parsonage, Church, clinic, and outstations (Figures 11, 12). Their involvement was not different to what Alexander Merensky observed when the Church at Ga-Ratau in Skhukhune was reconstructed after it burned down in 1884:

“We used sun-dried bricks made by men from inferior clay. The people made bricks and fired them to build a Mission chapel.”²⁶⁶

The local communities of Ha-Luvhimbi played an important role in the building of the Georgenholtz Mission Station. The German missionaries could not succeed in completing all the built structures without the assistance of local people. The people of Ha-Luvhimbi and Christians based at the Mission station provided a variety of skills such as bricklaying, burning of bricks, plastering of inside and outside walls, and the

²⁶⁶ *Special Project: Missionary Settlement in Southern Africa 1800-1925*, South African History Online, accessed December 15, 2017, www.sahistory.org.za/article/mission-stations-g-h.

making of roofs for the buildings.²⁶⁷ The two pictures provided in Figures 42 and 43 below show women and men preparing soil for making mud bricks for the first buildings of the Mission Station- parsonage, two-roomed bungalow and the Church- an indication that women and men had their respective duties in the making of the GHMS. While all the missionaries since 1906 played their different roles in the establishment of the GHMS, it was missionary Christian Fobbe who relied mostly on the skills and expertise of local communities. He was assisted by them in the construction of Mukula, Mahagala and Mianzwi outstations, to mention a few. It is unclear whether the roles of communities in the construction of the Georgholtz Mission Station have simply been forgotten by those that are living today. It is also not certain that these memories evoke a sense of ownership of GHMS by the local community and Church members.



Figure 42: African men digging soil for making bricks (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana, Accession 89, Glass Slide in the wooden box, Glass Slide No. 77.2.3).

²⁶⁷ Giesekke, *The SchwelInus*, 73.



Figure 43: African women joined in the mixing of soil for making mud bricks (Source: UNISA archives, Hesse Collection of German Africana, Accession 89, Glass Slide in the wooden box, Glass Slide No. 77.2.3).

The culture of communities getting involved in matters affecting the Mission station was resuscitated by Pastor Zwoitwaho Nevhutalu, who was responsible for the Mavhola Parish of the Lutheran Church between 1985 and 1994. Reverend Nevhutalu initiated projects to conserve the Mission station, and especially the Church and the parsonage. He encouraged Christians from the Georgenholtz congregation to cut long grass, trees and shrubs that had grown very close to the Church and parsonage.²⁶⁸ The clearing of bushes around the Church was followed by fundraising for the renovation of the Church and took place between 1988 and 1990. During this period, congregants, especially workers, unemployed youths and Sunday-school children contributed money monthly for the renovation of the Church. With these funds, cracks were filled that had been developing in the walls and floor of the Church. A big crack on the stairs at the entrance

²⁶⁸ Simon Sivhidzho, "Tshivhidzo tsha Georgenholtz nga Murahu ha Mumishinari wa u fhedza Fobbe," handwritten -undated (privately printed), 4. This is the document that was compiled by Mr Sivhidzho as the Chairperson of the Lutheran Church Congregational Committee of Ha-Luvhimbi. The document outlines the history of the Georgenholtz Mission Station since 1968 after the last German missionary (Christian Fobbe) was expelled by the apartheid government from South Africa.

to the Church was also filled. The roof that was leaking was also fixed.²⁶⁹ All the money collected (R2 454,00) was used for this purpose. Cement was also used to strengthen the terrace wall supporting the foundation of the Church.²⁷⁰ My own analysis of the situation is that the Church did not have any alternative, as this Church was the only one they could use at the time. Leaving it unattended was going to be a receipt for complete deterioration. Its complete collapse would have left the community without a Church structure for their sermons. The same Church foundation was supported by a stone-walled terrace that had also collapsed in the 1980s.

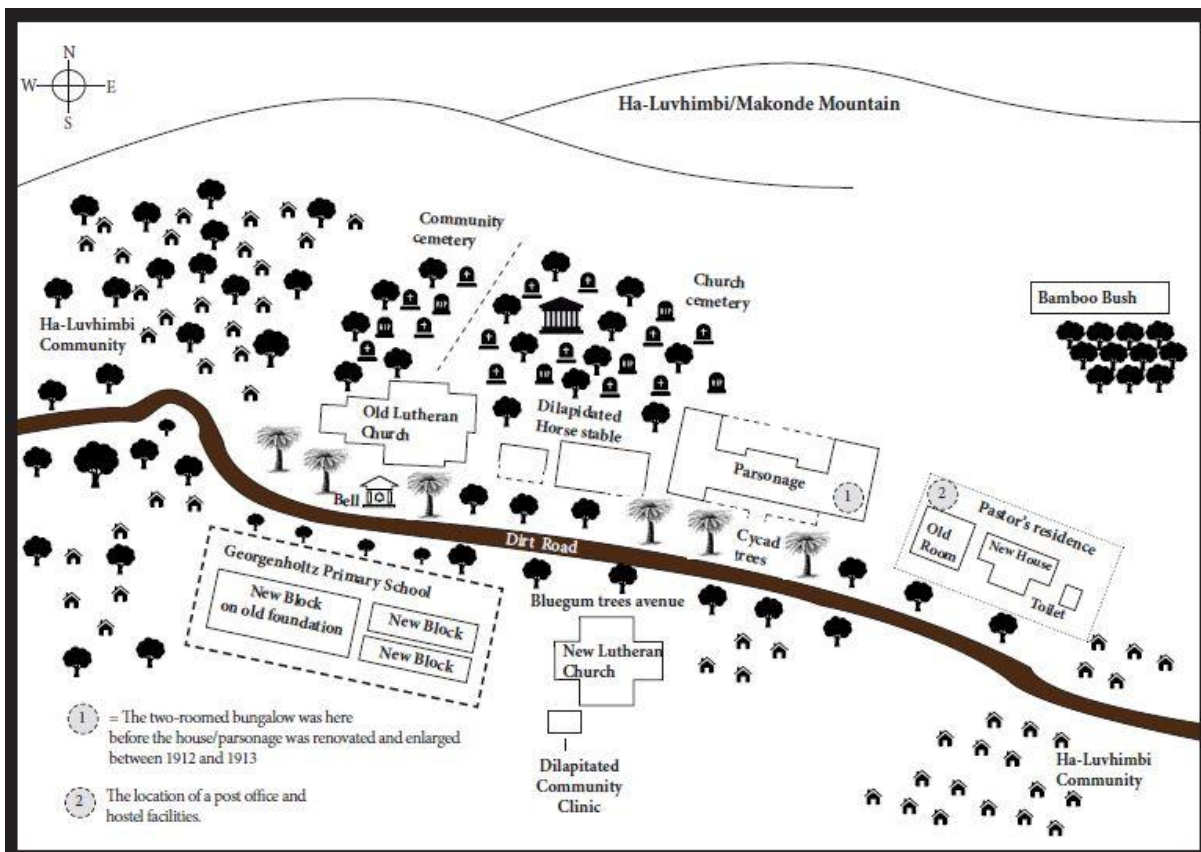


Figure 44: A site plan (sketch) of Georgenholtz Mission Station²⁷¹ (Source: Courtesy of Lusani Nemaheni).

3.6 Current status of Georgenholtz Mission Station

The Mission station at Ha-Luvhimbi is a shadow of its former self. Very few of the original Mission station structures have remained, and they are rapidly dilapidating. These include the parsonage, Church, cemetery, clinic, horse stables and a memorial.

²⁶⁹ Sivhidzho, "Tshivhidzo tsha Georgenholtz," 8-9.

²⁷⁰ Sivhidzho, interview.

²⁷¹ This sketch does not reflect the location of the old rondavel (mud hut). None of the participants have knowledge of its location. Although Giesekke (2005) provided a picture of the hut, she is silent on its location. Different fruit trees are not reflected in the sketch. The Bell/Glocke icon is shown next to the Old Church.

Bluegum, silver-oak, and Indigenous trees (cycads and bamboos) are still there. Other buildings such as the hostel facility, post office, mud hut and the two-roomed temporary missionary house either naturally/gradually collapsed or were destroyed between 1968 to the present times.²⁷²

3.6.1 Georgholtz Primary School

The original mission school has been replaced by a modern government school, the Georgholtz Primary School (refer to Figures 45 and 46). When the new school was introduced, all the original walls of the older blocks were demolished, except for the foundation of one block of the old school, on which foundation the Church and community leadership wanted the new government school to be built (refer to Figures 31 and 32), as they wanted similar block and classroom sizes to remain.²⁷³ The earliest block collapsed and was replaced by two new blocks of classrooms (Figure 45).²⁷⁴



Figure 45: Two new school blocks (Source: Author, 2017).

²⁷² Fobbe, Telephone.

²⁷³ Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.



Figure 46: New separate school block built on old foundation (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.2 The Parsonage

The parsonage is in a ruined state, showing damaged roof sheets (Figures 48-49 and 52-54), cracked walls, damaged wooden door frames (Figure 50), floors and ceiling (Figure 55). Access to the house is unrestricted. According to Nakisani Makhani who was interviewed by the researcher the parsonage “has become the home of those who commit adultery²⁷⁵ and drug abuse, especially dagga or *mbanzhe*.”²⁷⁶ This assertion is supported by other communities and Church members especially Messrs Aitken Ratshilumela and Simon Shivhiddzo. Most of the walls in the rooms are covered by charcoal graffiti (Figure 50) that were drawn by children and community members who spent time inside. One of these graffiti reflects people engaging in sexual intercourse. Trees and shrubs are growing all over, closer to the walls of the house. Because the

²⁷⁵ Fobbe, Telephone.

²⁷⁶ Nakisani Makhani, interview by author, Ha-Luvhimbi, November 09, 2017.

walls were built of mud bricks, the whole house is exposed to rainwater, leading to peeling of the plaster and exposure of the mud walls. The biggest threat to this house is complete neglect, as none of the resident pastors since 1968 wanted to use it as their accommodation. Roof sheets of the house have been blown out by the wind, while others have been removed by local people for domestic use. There is also a perception that bad or socially unacceptable things are happening in these buildings. The first perception relates to unknown people coming in and out of the house.²⁷⁷ One of them was a Zimbabwean citizen who, after being accused of stealing iron rods for burglar doors and windows of the new Church agreed to bring back all the materials from his scrap business in Makonde village.²⁷⁸ Overall, Figures (47-53) demonstrate the extent to which the parsonage has deteriorated.



Figure 47: State of parsonage today (Source: Andani Ravhuanzwo, 2018).

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

²⁷⁸ Ratshilumela, interview.



Figure 48: Dilapidated eastern wing of parsonage (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 49: Dilapidated western wing of parsonage (Source: Author, 2014).



Figure 50: Wall graffiti (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 51: Fern growth (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 52: Bushy rear elevation of parsonage (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 53: Fallen veranda roof at the back of parsonage (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.3 Old Church

The Church is gradually starting to develop cracks in the walls. This could be because the Ha-Luvhimbi congregation has relocated to a new, bigger Church structure across the road, and they no longer care about the old one. In 2014, The Church is currently used for youth group meetings and Sunday-school sessions. When the researcher visited the Mission station in November 2017, it showed that it has been completely neglected, as it accessible everyday. Children who play inside have damaged all the windows of the Church by throwing stones at them. The stairs (made up of flat stones) at the entrance are starting to be exposed and eroded by rainwater. The bamboo tree ceiling is also showing signs of deteriorating because of the leaking roof, which is too old. The bell that was relocated from Mavhola/Tshifudi is still hanging outside the Church, and it is still used to call congregants for Sunday services. Some Church members are concerned about the safety of the bell, as it continues to be unprotected.²⁷⁹ Now, there was dirt on the floor, and indications are that no more cleaning is taking place. One tall bluegum tree has fallen a few metres from the entrance of the Church. The overall condition of the Church is reflected in Figures 54-59 below.



Figure 54: Dry leaves accumulated on Church roof (Source: Author, 2014).

²⁷⁹ Fobbe, telephone.



Figure 55: Bulging bamboo ceiling (Source: Author, 2014).



Figure 56: Poor state of neglected Church inside (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 57: Church broken windows (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 58: Baptismal font with rain water that leaked through the roof (Source: Author, 2014).



Figure 59: Bamboo ceiling damaged by rain water (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.4 Cemetery and Memorial

The existence and utilisation of this cemetery (Figure 60) had its own politics and challenges, which nearly led to the splintering of the congregation at Georgholtz Haluvhimbi in 2011 as congregants could not find common ground. This was triggered by the suggestions from some senior Church members who held the view that the cemetery, which was off-bounds to non-Christians, should be made available to all the people of the village to bury their loved ones in that same cemetery.²⁸⁰ Families that resided on the farm and who had buried their loved ones in the cemetery were not in favour of the suggestion. Thus, mediation had to be sought to bring the two factions together. Another challenge regarding the same cemetery was when people who were not Church members demanded to bury their beloved ones on the same premises. With the help of Mr Rudzani Ravhuanzwo who had been appointed as a headman of a small area where the Mission station is located (2011), a reconciliatory statement was drawn up to allow all people of the village to live together as a unit.²⁸¹ According to Mr Ravhuanzwo, the reconciliatory statement outlines the following resolutions:

- That families be allowed to continue to bury their loved ones in the cemetery.

²⁸⁰ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

- That the cemetery be prevented from growing towards the Mission station and to the east.
- Burials can only take place in spaces against the mountain and in the spaces remaining inside.
- The general community of Fongodi of Ravhuanzwo should be allowed to bury their loved ones in the cemetery. Considering that the space was becoming too small, communities extended the cemetery outside the premises of the Mission station and due to agreements, they can also bury their dead in the Church cemetery if they so wish.²⁸²
- The cemetery will be fenced off and once it is full, it will be closed off permanently, allowing all community members to use the community cemetery down on the plain.²⁸³

Another feature in the cemetery is a memorial (Figure 61) that was erected in 1952 in honour of all residents and workers of the Georgholtz Mission Station from Tshifudi, Mavhola and Ha-Luvhimbi (1877-1952). When the memorial was unveiled in 1953, it was still in good condition, with the names of all the people painted and engraved on it. The situation today is a different one. The memorial is completely forgotten among the graves, trees, and shrubs. What is written on it is hardly visible. The Church cemetery has remained, but it is growing bigger, as local communities are no longer excluded from being buried there. Generally, the space for the cemetery is getting smaller as more people from the community are also buried inside.

²⁸² Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁸³ Ravhuanzwo, interview.



Figure 60: Cemetery behind Church and parsonage (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 61: Memorial in 2017 (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.5 Key Plant Species

Most of the bluegum, bamboo, Modjadji cycads, silver-oak and pine trees still form part of the Georgholtz Mission Station, albeit in small numbers. Some of these plant species have been cut down by Church members, or are dying naturally, or are blown over by the wind. After a request from the school to cut down some of the tallest bluegums, Mr Rudzani Ravhuanzwo took part in cutting down three bluegum trees

(refer to Figure 63), as requested by the school governing body.²⁸⁴ Not far from the entrance to the old Church, one tall bluegum tree had fallen after it had been drying for a long time (refer to Figure 62). Very few pine trees are scattered around the Mission station. Mr Aitken Ratshilumela recalls when one pine tree fell and destroyed the western wing of the parsonage.²⁸⁵ While the bamboo species is located within the stand of the Church, there is no control on how and when it should be open for cutting by the local communities.²⁸⁶ The silver-oak trees that surround the house of the resident pastor are still there. However, the number of these alien plants is not growing, as no new ones are being planted. Very few old mango trees have remained behind the Church. The coffee, orange and banana trees are no longer there but their traces are all over Ha-Luvhimbi village where each household boasts their availability.



Figure 62: Dry bluegum tree fallen in-front of old Church (Source: Author, 2017).

²⁸⁴ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ravhuanzwo, interview.



Figure 63: Stumps of fallen trees (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.6 Community Clinic and Horse Stables

The clinic and horse stables are still there (Figures 64 and 66) but in a very bad condition. The front wall of the clinic and its columns or pillars have collapsed. The wall that is still standing is the back one. The same applies to the horse stables. The roof and the larger part of it are falling apart (65 and 67). The small part of the stable that could have been used as a store room is still standing, because it gets protection from the roof. However, when the rainy season comes, the section that is standing could fall apart and disintegrate. The shorter walls of the horse stable have also been disturbed by baboons, cattle and goats that roam the area. Because both these structures were built from mud bricks and plastered with cement, rainwater separates mud bricks from cement when it rains heavily, resulting in the cement sliding down. The mud bricks are therefore exposed to natural threats and animals.



Figure 64: Front elevation of a neglected community clinic (Source: Andani Ravhuanzwo, 2018).



Figure 65: Dilapidated horse stable (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 66: Rear elevation of a neglected community clinic (Source: Author, 2017).



Figure 67: Remainder of standing horse stable (Source: Author, 2017).

3.6.7 Resident Pastor's House

A house for the resident or current pastor is one of the features at Georgenholtz today (Figure 68). In 1975, the Lutheran Church leadership thought it fitting that a strong house should be built to accommodate their pastors who would be responsible for Georgenholtz Mission Station and its outstations.²⁸⁷ By this time, the old parsonage that missionary Fobbe had left was becoming dilapidated. The new house was thus built with cement, compared to the old one that was built with mud bricks and a flat, corrugated-iron roof.²⁸⁸ The current roof is an improvement on the original one.²⁸⁹ The house is built where the post office building and the hostel were, and it is surrounded by a few silver-oak trees.²⁹⁰ Because of non-usage, the old parsonage became redundant and dilapidated over time.



Figure 68: Current pastor's house opposite old parsonage on the far left (Source: Andani Ravhuanzwo, 2018).

3.7 Other Challenges

The BMS stations around the world (including Georgenholtz) faced many challenges. The outbreak of the First and Second World Wars contributed to these challenges. Due to World War 1 (WW1) of 1914-1917, these Mission stations started feeling the pressure as the German Government decided to reduce funding to the BMS out of fear

²⁸⁷ Sivhidzho, "Tshivhidzo tsha Georgenholtz," 8.

²⁸⁸ Ratshilumela, interview.

²⁸⁹ Sivhidzho, interview.

²⁹⁰ Ratshilumela, interview.

that all German properties on foreign soil would be confiscated.²⁹¹ Because of these developments, Mission stations all over South Africa started to physically deteriorate.²⁹² The financial constraints led to the BMS in 1921 appointing a Finance Commission in South Africa for the purpose of determining ways to generate income without the German Government's support.²⁹³ The Commission resolved to call on all mission workers at the Mission stations to be "as frugal as possible" with regard to their finances.²⁹⁴ The shortage of funds was particularly felt in the poor congregations of the then Transvaal and now Limpopo, where Georgenholtz Mission Station is located.²⁹⁵ The war brought bankruptcy to the Church. Thus, Lutheran Churches all over were expected to come up with ways and means to sustain their Mission stations. Congregants had to come up with ideas to generate funding for the maintenance and construction of their Churches. World War 2 (WW2) of 1939-1945 and the withdrawal of the last German missionary from Georgenholtz Mission Station in 1966 exacerbated the situation, as Mission stations in Venda suffered gradual physical deterioration, and concerned communities could not do much as they did not have resources. Already in 1941, GHMS was directly impacted by the disappearance of one of the teachers from the school who was later found to have enlisted as a soldier in the war.²⁹⁶ This meant that the school was deprived of teaching staff.

As the Lutheran Churches are growing in Venda, they are faced with a challenge of not having bigger spaces for the ever-increasing number of congregants. Most congregations can raise funds for the building of new, modern Churches. The building of the new bigger Churches at Beuster, Georgenholtz and Tshakhuma Mission stations bears testimony to this narrative. From 2004, the Georgenholtz congregation raised funds to build a new Church (refer to Figure 69). This led to the neglect of the old BMS Church which is gradually disintegrating. The Church and the community of Ha-Luvhimbi are not taking actions to save the buildings.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 100-102.

²⁹² Ibid., 100.

²⁹³ Giesekke, *The Berlin Mission in Venda*, 7.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 50.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 56.

²⁹⁶ Thea Johansmeier to Ludwig Giesekke, 15 January 1941, Letter Ref: 7/2/4, UNISA Archives of Berlin Mission (Hesse Collection of German Africana, 1867-2005) Pretoria.



Figure 69: New Georgenholtz Lutheran Church (Source: Andani Ravhuanzwo, 2018).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a historical outline of the Georgenholtz Mission Station. Most importantly, all stages of its development demonstrate its close intimacy with the local communities it served. Firstly, permission was granted to the Berlin Missionary Society by the chief and his council to relocate the Georgenholtz Mission Station from Tshifudi to its current location at Ha-Luvhimbi. The Ha-Luvhimbi and Makonde and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Southern Africa (ELCSA) strongly feel that they have contributed to the building and development of Berlin Missionary Society Mission station and are proud to be part of the project. This is even though the Mission station was actively involved in land appropriation.

This chapter has highlighted the challenges being faced presently in the conservation of the old Church buildings and the legacy which they represent. The economic challenges that the BMS stations in South Africa experienced post-World War I (WWI), the Great Depression of 1922 and World War II, provided lessons for independence and seeking alternative funding mechanisms for self-sustenance. The new Church at Georgenholtz Mission Station was funded from local resources. The Mission extended its sphere of influence by establishing satellite stations in Tshilonwe, Mianzwi, Mahagala, Ha-Makuya, Mavunde, Ha-Lambani, Lukau, Makonde, Mukula, Khubvi, Tshifudi and Ha-Begwa. Missionary work in these areas is hailed as a positive step towards

development of education and literacy. The involvement of various communities in the history and making of Georgholtz Mission Station in different periods justifies the broader aims of this research to study the Church and its host communities.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES AND ATTITUDES

4.1 Introduction

In response to the theories regarding empowerment and social justice, research involving indigenous peoples often demands participatory and collaborative methodologies.²⁹⁷ However, the paradox is that heritage researchers often have the label 'public history' with a limited role played by "the public" in the heritage management process.²⁹⁸ This research seeks to explore community attitudes and perspectives towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource, thereby breaking the tradition that reduces heritage to a technical and scientific practice.²⁹⁹ This approach makes heritage both emotional and conflict-ridden.³⁰⁰ The researcher understands that some of the different communities he interacted with recognise that there are several versions of the past that are capable of explicating Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource.³⁰¹ In this chapter, communities that were interviewed express their own views about the Mission station, as it existed among them for more than 100 years. Communities interviewed express mixed feelings about how they view the Mission station. Their views range from attaching value to it, to concerns about the physical condition of the station. They also bring forth suggestions about what they would like to see happening to the Mission station in the future. Above all, the primary goal of these interviews is to gain focused insight into individuals 'lived experiences and understand how participants make sense of and construct reality in

²⁹⁷ Ruth Nicholls, "Research and Indigenous participation: critical reflective methods," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12, no 2 (March 2009): 117- 126, accessed August 03, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645570902727698>.

²⁹⁸ Emma Waterton, "Whose sense of place? Reconciling Archaeological Perspectives with Community Values: Cultural Landscapes in England," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no 4 (August 2006): 309-326, accessed August 03, 2017, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527250500235591>.

²⁹⁹ Waterton, "Whose sense of place," 309.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Larry J. Zimmerman, "Consulting stakeholders," in *Archaeology in Practice: A Student Guide to Archaeological Analyses*, eds. Jane Balme and Alistair Paterson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 39.

relation to the phenomenon, events, engagements, or experience in focus.³⁰² The engagements with participants for this study became a forum and process by which communities 'perspectives- "within and across individuals"³⁰³ were put together.

4.2 Perspectives on Values of Georgenholtz Mission Station

Communities 'perspectives on the identification of values for the Mission station came out strongly during the interviews. Values can be defined as the relative social attribution of qualities to things, and in heritage management, attention should be paid to what is conceived to be of cultural significance, although the economic aspects should not be ignored. Certain values can be related more specifically to the intrinsic aspects of a building - its design, material and workmanship - while other values can be associated with the building location and its relationship to the setting.³⁰⁴ Most importantly, we conserve heritage because it is valued.³⁰⁵ Individuals hold different values with varying strengths of conviction and if a choice has to be made, they tend to be prepared to "trade off" one value against the other.³⁰⁶ These decisions change with individual circumstances and are subject to change over time.³⁰⁷ This section of the dissertation demonstrates how Georgenholtz communities expressed their different views on the values they identified and associated with the Mission station. These include, among other things, religious, historical, aesthetic/architectural, educational, political and technical/research potential values and economic values. When identified, values do not remain static. They change over time. The sustainability of historic buildings such as Georgenholtz Mission Station depends on the recognition that communities afford them.³⁰⁸ Georgenholtz Mission Station "is laden with multiple values,"³⁰⁹ as detailed below:

³⁰² Ravitch and Carl, *Qualitative Research*, 146.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 47.

³⁰⁴ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 19-20.

³⁰⁵ Gilbert Pwiti, "Let the ancestors rest in peace? New challenges for cultural heritage management in Zimbabwe," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 1 (1996):151.

³⁰⁶ Dirk H.R. Spennemann, "Gauging Community Values in Historic Preservation," *The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 3, no. 2 (summer 2006): 6-20.

³⁰⁷ Spennemann, "Gauging Community," 7.

³⁰⁸ Webber Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe: Your Monument our Shrine* (ICCROM: Rome, 2005), 71.

³⁰⁹ Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe*, 71.

4.2.1 Identity Value

The identity value relates to emotional ties of society to specific sites and may include features such as: memorial, sentiment, spiritual, religious. Some participants interviewed during this study showed that they were emotionally and spiritually attached to Georgenholtz Mission Station. The Fobbe family and Lutheran Church leaders indicated that they were spiritually and emotionally attached to the Mission Station. Traugott Fobbe, a member of Missionary Christian Fobbe's family reveals the family attachment as follows:

"One thing I would like to tell you is that as a family we feel very sad about the status of Georgenholtz Mission Station, especially the Church and the parsonage, into which our family put their efforts in building them. I personally feel sad when I look back during my youth at Georgenholtz. My mother died a very sad person as she heard reports that the Church and the parsonage were about to collapse. As a result, she told me and my sister who is now based in Germany that some money that would be raised during her funeral (as gifts) should fund the upkeep of Georgenholtz Mission Station as she did not want its history to disappear. Out of what was raised, the Fobbe family (Traugott and sister), we donated half of the money to Georgenholtz congregation in to fulfil our mother's dream. I personally thought the Church leadership would honour my mother's donation to renovate and extend the old Church and the parsonage for the benefit of the Lutheran Church and the people of Ha-Luvhimbi. Instead, the congregation used the money in the building of the new and much bigger Lutheran Church across the road. I feel sad because my mother's wish was not realised as written in her will."³¹⁰

The identity value has a strong impact on the safeguarding, conservation, and restoration of a heritage resource, and it could strengthen the treatment of a heritage resource, it could also lead to restoration or over-restoration if most of affected community members feel the same. The lack of this identity value by all could lead to destruction of the same heritage property.³¹¹ Destruction in this case is caused mainly by neglect, vandalism, vegetation growth, rainwater, and insects. Rapid deterioration of heritage properties can easily attract attention of the affected communities. In this case, the identity value is biased towards the Fobbe family who feel that their heritage is disappearing especially that of Christa Fobbe (missionary Christian Fobbe's wife) who passed on around 2000. It seems what the children want to be honoured is the history and the legacy of their family at Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi rather than the legacy of all the people who played a role in the building of the Mission station. Instead communities that are supposed to be acknowledged for the good role they played in the building of

³¹⁰ Fobbe, telephone.

³¹¹ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 19.

this Mission station are ignored and blamed for its current demise. While identity value is important for the survival of the Mission station, it should be associated by all affected. Traugott Fobbe statement shows that the identity value of Georgenholtz Mission Station should be about emotional association with the very few (especially his family).

4.2.2 Religious Value

All the built structures that constituted the Georgenholtz Mission Station belong to the Lutheran Church congregation. These buildings are symbols of religious and spiritual beliefs that communities mentioned.³¹² Georgenholtz Mission Station represents the introduction of religious practices in Ha-Luvhimbi and some areas in Venda, as it was the third BMS station to be established in the area. Other Christian Churches followed long after the establishment of the Lutheran Church. Christians have a high regard for the role that GHMS played in the entire Vhumbedzi area or the north-eastern Venda. With so many Churches all over the Vhumbedzi area, Christians are proud of the establishment of Georgenholtz Mission Station in Ha-Luvhimbi. Spennemann asserts that heritage places that are imbued with a high spiritual significance play a major role in the well-being of a community in general.³¹³ The comments from one of the interviewees are as follows:

“The mission of the BMS was to spread the word of God in as many corners of Vhumbedzi as possible. Many outstations of Georgenholtz were established in Mukula, Ha-Makuya, Mianzwi, Lukau, Ha-Lambani, Ha-Begwa, Mahagala, Tshilonwe, Tshifudi, Ha-Mutele and Musina. In addition, the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Ha-Luvhimbi influenced the establishment of other Churches not aligned to the BMS. As Lutherans we are proud that because of the Lutheran Church, community members have many choices to go and worship the Lord.”³¹⁴

The religious value of Georgenholtz Mission Station as a religious centre for Christians in Vhumbedzi was followed by the establishment of other Churches that were not linked to the BMS. Because of competition that was going on between the Presbyterian and the Dutch Reformed Church in Venda, more Churches “to spread the word of God” were established in many villages of Venda. The current flurry of Churches in Venda is a result of the foundation laid by missionary Churches. Because school teachers were trained by the BMS and the Lutheran Church, morning devotions/prayers in schools were a Lutheran Church culture which started to disappear after 1994 with the ushering

³¹² Paul Davis and Robert Staas, *Church Buildings: Guidelines for their care and Conservation* (Crown Copyright: Ultimo, 1998), 4.

³¹³ Spennemann, “Gauging Community,” 9.

³¹⁴ Ratshilumela, interview.

in of new dispensation in South Africa. While this culture is disappearing, Schools that came about because of the Lutheran Church are still practicing it.

4.2.3 Educational and Historical Values

The Georgenholtz communities feel that the Mission station is characterised by educational and historical values. The two are intertwined as education, especially schooling, at Georgenholtz started simultaneously with the establishment of the Mission station at Tshifudi/Mavhola and ultimately Ha-Luvhimbi. Historical records of GHMS, like those of the BMS, are stored in the library archives of the Berlin Missionary Society in Berlin (Germany). Historical, archaeological, and anthropological research in Venda shows that further investigations on the BMS, Georgenholtz together with two other Mission stations in Venda could yield positive results on the significance of Mission stations and the roles played by the local people. Without considering the history of the Georgenholtz Mission Station, the history of the BMS in the old Transvaal, Venda (place) and Vhavenda (people) will not be complete. Historically, most of the written works in Tshivenda first appeared during the time of the BMS. Mathivha writes in his PhD dissertation, which surveys the literature of Venda (the place, since the BMS missionaries arrived in Venda) that:

“The attempts which the early missionaries made in the writing of Tshivenda language are appreciated and recorded. This research serves as a monument of their efforts and their endeavours and a record of their contribution to the development of the Tshivenda literature.”³¹⁵

Not only did the missionaries introduced education. It is evident from research carried out that Georgenholtz Mission Station possesses educational value. All participants interviewed could not hide their excitement regarding the contribution that the Mission station has made in the building of Mission schools such as Tshakhuma, Beuster and Georgenholtz Primary Schools. Mission schools were followed by more primary schools linked to Georgenholtz Mission Station outstations. Makuya, Begwa, Ha-Lambani and Lukau Primary schools were built. Communities have expressed their own views about the role that Georgenholtz Mission Station played in introducing education to the Vhumbedzi area of Venda. The local Chief of Ha-Luvhimbi does not mince his words

³¹⁵ M.E.R Mathivha, “The history of Venda Literature: A survey from 1895 to 1966” (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 1970), 11.

when talking about the role education significance of GHMS. As he observes the following:

“Of course, we feel blessed that today there are many schools that were introduced in Ha-Luvhimbi and the surrounding areas - all because of the presence of the Berlin Missionaries who were based at Georgenholtz Mission Station. We are grateful that our school has produced many prominent people like teachers, doctors, engineers, nurses, police etc. If it was not [for the] missionaries, we would not be able to read and write our own language (Tshivenda).”³¹⁶

In the same breath, Traugott Fobbe holds that:

“The Mission house or parsonage and the Church can still and in the future be used for educational to expose the youths from Primary, Secondary and tertiary levels about the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station and the BMS. When international and local tourists visit the station, they will be able to learn more of Georgenholtz Mission Station and the BMS.”³¹⁷

Thus, this makes the educational value of a heritage resource has potential for cultural tourism and awareness of the culture and history that it promotes as a means of integrating historic resources with present-day life. Integrating Georgenholtz Mission’s story in the narratives would be beneficial to all the stakeholders. The fact that schools mushroomed all over Vhumbedzi and the whole of Venda means that the educational value is significant beyond the Ha-Luvhimbi village only. Mathivha. N.R dedicated her master’s thesis to the Berlin Missionary venture in education at Tshakhuma in Venda from 1872-1954. However, education in Tshakhuma and other Mission stations was closely tied with developments at two other Mission stations, Georgenholtz being one of them.³¹⁸

On historic value, both the communities, prominent families and Church leadership are of the view that Georgenholtz Mission Station has a historic value spanning from the time of its establishment to the present times. They also claim that the development of the Mission station for over a period close to a century forms part of their heritage.³¹⁹ Because of its historic value, a Church building may provide physical evidence that tells researchers about the state of society at the time of construction, as the changes that could have been made to these buildings since they were built, could reveal how society and Church have changed in that period. Churches are often linked by association to

³¹⁶ Tshilidzi Masikhwa, interview by author, Ha-Luvhimbi royal palace, 09 November 2017.

³¹⁷ Fobbe, Telephone.

³¹⁸ R.N Mathivha, “The Berlin Missionary venture in Education at Tshakhuma: Venda, 1872-1954” (Master’s thesis: University of the North, 1985), 1.

³¹⁹ Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 4.

important or notable people and to significant local or state events.³²⁰ According to Rudzani Ravhuanzwo

“Georgenholtz Mission Station demonstrates historical values to the people of Ha-Luvhimbi, the villages where outstations were also established, the Lutheran Church and in general the people of Venda. The BMS buildings IN Ha-Luvhimbi, especially the Church, parsonage, ruinous community clinic and stables for horses remind people of how life was during the times of the missionaries in Venda. These buildings left a trace in the history of the Berlin Missionary Society in Venda- and they should not be allowed to disappear.”³²¹

Almost all participants interviewed can link Georgenholtz Mission Station to the history of the Berlin Missionary Society, Ha-Luvhimbi and Makonde villages. Prince “Thohoyandou” Tshivhase is always referred to as the senior traditional leader or *Thovhele* of the much broader Ha-Tshivhase area encompassing Ha-Luvhimbi and Makonde villages respectively. Of all the BMS missionaries, Christian Fobbe is the most well-known missionary to have worked at Georgenholtz because he left a legacy of building Lutheran Churches in outstations:

“Missionary Christian Fobbe’s work speak[s] for itself. When he left in 1967/8, the Mission station was clean, but look at it now. We have neglected the parsonage and the old Church. All the fruit trees he introduced at the Mission station have disappeared.”³²²

Missionary Fobbe’s only surviving son (Traugott Fobbe), who relocated back to Venda in 1992, agrees with Simon Sivhidzho that his father (missionary Christian Fobbe) was responsible for travelling in all the villages in the Vhumbedzi area to establish and personally built unique outstation Churches with the help of local people in those villages (Some of these outstation Churches he built are shown in Figures 35-38 has something to say about the contribution his father made to Georgenholtz Mission Station:

“My father built seven outstation Churches under Georgenholtz Mission Station 1952 and 1967. This is because he was a trained and {a} gifted builder.”³²³

This is the history that most people who are currently at their 70s do not want to forget. Most people in their late ‘60s, ‘70s and early ‘80 years vividly remember what happened at Georgenholtz Ha-Luvhimbi during the time of missionary Christian Fobbe because

³²⁰ Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 4.

³²¹ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

³²² Sivhidzho, interview.

³²³ Fobbe, telephone.

he loved to live his own life amongst them in the villages where he built outstation Churches with them.

4.2.4 Aesthetic or Architectural Value

Georgholtz Mission Station is also rich aesthetically and architecturally. This group of values is based on scientific and critical historical evaluations and assessments of the importance of the design of the heritage resource, and the significance of its technical, structural and functional concept and workmanship.³²⁴ Even though the buildings did not have formal plans/designs, missionary Fobbe used the skills that he came with from Germany to design and build unique and beautiful outstation Churches in Mukula, Mahagala, Tshilonwe and Mianzwi villages. He extended the old Church and the parsonage at Ha-Luvhimbi. The outstation Churches in Mahagala, Tshilonwe and Mukula were decorated with murals made from pebbles. These unique designs were also extended to outstation Churches built by missionary Christian Fobbe.

The location of the Mission station also evoked a sense of beauty to the Giesekke family who believed that because the way the Silveroak trees had grown, they called their house with its veranda “das Schloss im Urwald” or the castle in the tropical jungle.”³²⁵ This is the same place where the Schweltnus family came to watch the Haley’s Comet in 1910 ³²⁶ because of its “tranquillity and beauty”. ³²⁷ Traugott Fobbe boasts that:

“All the Churches my father built have unique designs. Interestingly these buildings did not have architectural drawings or plans. My father was just bringing to Venda the building style he had seen in Germany. Additionally, he had an eye for design himself.”³²⁸

The aesthetic value of Georgholtz Mission Station includes aspects such as unique corrugated iron sheets, which were imports. The beauty of this Mission station is also demonstrated in its appearance as reflected by its appearance from a distance. It looked spectacularly beautiful in its white paint. Compared to Tshakhuma and Beuster or Maungani Mission stations, Georgholtz is the most beautiful and spectacular

³²⁴ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 19.

³²⁵ Helga Giesekke, *Muti Giesekke nee Schweltnus’s Photo Album*, 5. These are separate notes that accompanied the *Muti nee Schweltnus’s Photo Album* to the University of South Africa.

³²⁶ Giesekke, *The Schweltnus*, 72-73.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Ibid.

(Figures 59 and 60). The unique building style and location of Georgenholtz Mission Station “has captured the imagination of all those who have visited the site.”³²⁹

The aesthetic architectural or artistic technical value is also known as “rarity value”, defining the resource’s rarity, representativeness, or uniqueness in the area, with reference to other constructions of the same type, style, builder, period, or some combinations of these.³³⁰

4.2.5 Social Value

Three participants indicated that Georgenholtz Mission Station possesses social value personified by missionary Christian Fobbe because of his involvement in the upliftment of the lives of needy African people and their families. The social value of a heritage resource is related to traditional social activities, compatible to present-day use and it involves contemporary social interaction in the community and plays a role in establishing social and cultural identity.³³¹ It is a place where locals learned to share what they had with the needy poor families. Missionary Christian Fobbe’s life was a threat to policies of the apartheid government of “separate development.”³³² Fobbe was the direct opposite of what the Nationalist government policy of “separate development” (led by the son of a missionary, namely Eiselen) stood for- separate development.

As a Nationalist, Eiselen tried to link the evolving ideas of apartheid with the philosophy of the BMS to which his parents belonged.³³³ Central to this ideology was that Africans were intellectually “inferior.” At Georgenholtz Mission Station, missionary Christian Fobbe did not see it the same way. Instead, he mingled with African people - travelled and ate food with them, not only at Church, but he would also visit them at their homes. Most people in Venda believe this association ultimately led to his expulsion from South Africa in 1967.³³⁴ Traugott Fobbe vividly remembers what happened when his father was expelled from Georgenholtz and South Africa respectively:

³²⁹ Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe*, 71.

³³⁰ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 19.

³³¹ Ibid., 20.

³³² Ibid, 19.

³³³ Cynthia Kros, *The seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education* (UNISA Press: Pretoria, 2010), 14

³³⁴ Sivhidzho, “Tshivhidzo tsha Georgenhjoltz,” 1-2.

“The true reason my father was expelled from Venda was because he was a people’s person who also befriended *Thovhele* Prince Tshivhase of Ha-Tshivhasa area. My father was also on[at] Prince’s bedside before he died after sustaining injuries in a car accident. This could have been the last nail in the coffin for[of] my father’s future at Georgenholtz Mission Station.”³³⁵

Georgenholtz Mission Station remains a central point in which different groups meet on a regular basis. The Lutheran Church continues as a place where Christians meet to praise God. Christian weddings and funerals are now held in the new Lutheran Church. The Ha-Luvhumbi community and Church leadership are concerned about the deterioration of the Mission house, the old community clinic and the Church which are no longer attended to.

Georgenholtz Mission Station is also the home of the dead who had been in the service of the Mission station. Thus, the Mission station continues to serve the people of Ha-Luvhimbi and the surrounding areas as the centre of Christian religious activities that continue to be carried out at the Mission station. The Georgenholtz Lutheran Church congregation and prominent family members (Rudzani Ravhuanzwo, Aitken Ratshilumela and Simon Sivhidzho)³³⁶ regard Georgenholtz Mission Station as the home of Christianity in the eastern Venda region of South Africa. Christians from the Lutheran Church in Ha-Luvhimbi continue to use Georgenholtz Church for their sermons. The building of a new, bigger Church within the same property is a testimony that Christians want to remain at Georgenholtz for a long period. According to Feilden and Jokilehto social values can generate the concern for the local environment that leads to maintenance and repair of the fabric of a heritage resource.³³⁷ A lack of this social coherence and appreciation can handicap conservation.³³⁸

4.2.6 Technical or Research Potential Value

Georgenholtz Mission Station is characterised by technical or research potential value. There are different periods that characterise the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station Ha-Luvhimbi- 1906-1919, 1919-1937, 1937-1952 and 1952-1967. Mission

³³⁵ Fobbe, Telephone.

³³⁶ These three people fall within the three community categories identified for this study. The three of them are members of the Chief’s advisory Council. They are also members of the congregational council of the Lutheran Church in Georgenholtz. Most importantly, their families have historic links with the BMS missionaries and the Lutheran Church at Ha-Luvhimbi. They therefore represent three of the four categories identified.

³³⁷ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 20.

³³⁸ Ibid.

station buildings and sites (existing and demolished), particularly old clinic, parsonage, Church, school, horse stable, cemeteries, post office, hostel facilities, memorial, cemetery and natural environment contain an immense amount of information that is important to historians, environmentalists, archaeologists, anthropologists and genealogists.³³⁹ Some buildings such as the school, parsonage and the current pastor's house were built on same places where previous buildings were.³⁴⁰ With regard to Georgholtz Mission Station:

“The old Church was upgraded almost [sic] three times while the parsonage was enlarged each time a new missionary was posted at the Mission station. The current pastor's house is built on top of the foundations of the post office and hostel facilities and the far eastern wing of the parsonage may have been built where the two-roomed bungalow was standing.”³⁴¹

Older participants such as Aitken Ratshilumela and Simon Sivhidzho were fortunate to see the hostel and post office facilities during their youth in the mid-1950s. However, they cannot remember how the two structures disappeared from the Mission station landscape. There are those buildings that are in a ruinous state such as the old community clinic and horse stable. In normal circumstances, the remaining fabric of the earlier buildings may contain important archaeological evidence of construction techniques or past events that could expand researchers' knowledge of earlier human activities on the site.³⁴²

4.2.7 Economic Value

Georgholtz Mission Station has had great potential “as a source of revenue through tourism- attracting visitors” from the time it was established in 1877.³⁴³ When Traugott Fobbe started with his international tour guiding business in the 1990s to 2000 period, he used to bring tourists from Germany, UK, United States of America and other European countries. The deterioration of the Church and the parsonage has led him to abandon the mission. However, emphasis on tourism could lead to unjustified reconstructions or the destruction of the original construction, thereby causing a loss of non-renewable archaeological evidence.³⁴⁴ Chief Masikhwa of Ha-Luvhimbi is of the view that:

³³⁹ Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 7.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

³⁴² Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 7.

³⁴³ Ndoro, *The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe*, 71.

³⁴⁴ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 20.

“If we can turn this Mission station into tourism business, it will benefit our youths and the local people as they will get employment from new activities there.”

Since economics encourages the best allocation of resources to fit a wide range of needs, the economic value may not be restricted to a financial value because in terms of cultural heritage, economic value may be understood as a value generated by the heritage resource or by conservation action.³⁴⁵

In short, values are an important, determining factor in the current practices and prospects of the conservation field.³⁴⁶ Many of these values- particularly contemporary socio-economic values- can have both positive and negative impacts on the cultural resource, depending on the type of value and on the emphasis that is given to it in the overall assessment.³⁴⁷

4.3 Views on Condition of the Mission Station

Many Church buildings are by nature prominent heritage items that provide physical evidence of the history, social and cultural aspirations of their communities.³⁴⁸ Like any other building, they are exposed to agents of deterioration.³⁴⁹ Many years of neglect result in major defects, which are very expensive to repair.³⁵⁰ Serious deterioration of Georgholtz Mission Station started to show in the 1970s, after the expulsion of missionary Christian Fobbe from Venda (Ha-Luvhimbi).³⁵¹ This was further evidenced by the gradual disappearance of the Mission station garden, fruit trees, fence, and dilapidation of most of the historic buildings (parsonage, horse stable, post office, Church, community clinic and school).³⁵² This is what traditionally, the conservation field focused on- the physical condition. Heritage managers and researchers wanted to arrest and understand the material deterioration.³⁵³

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 19.

³⁴⁶ Avrami, Mason and Tore, eds., *Values*, 1.

³⁴⁷ Feilden and Jokilehto, eds., *Management Guidelines*, 21.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 5.

³⁴⁹ Ibid, 4.

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

³⁵¹ Sivhidzho, “Tshivhidzo tsha Georgholtz,” 2.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Erica Avrami and Randal Mason, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation Research Report* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), 5.

The deterioration and collapse of what used to be Georgenholtz Mission Station is a cause of concern among the various stakeholders who were consulted. However, their views regarding Georgenholtz Mission Station differ from one individual to the other- but biased towards physical conservation of physical fabric of the Mission station buildings. One of the participants commented that:

“We only realise it now that as the Church and the custodians of the buildings we have neglected the buildings for quite a long time and that it might be too costly to repair them. Missionary Christian Fobbe left us a beautiful Mission station that we should have kept clean over the years. Furthermore, we took roof sheets from the old clinic and used them in the roofing of the toilet for the new Lutheran Church in Ha-Lambani village.”³⁵⁴

Mr Traugott Fobbe did not take kindly to the deterioration of the Mission station. He feels that the old Mission station buildings are collapsing- something that should not have happened. He laments that:

“Some of the buildings we left in 1967 standing had fallen apart. My observation is that the old Church and the parsonage were neglected and that is why they have collapsed. I have also noted that some community members are also concerned about the collapsed and deterioration of buildings. Concerned as we are, we should all take full ownership and responsibility to correct all the wrongs that led to the Mission station’s deterioration.”³⁵⁵

Traugott Fobbe attributes the collapse of the Mission station buildings to the culture of the Vhavenda people, which allows for the collapse of the buildings after the owners had passed on and were buried inside their houses or huts. This shows that there is a difference between the Venda culture and that of the western culture regarding the status of unused buildings. His reference to Venda oral tradition points to their attitude towards built structures:

“I feel touched when I see old buildings with historic and religious significance disintegrate as it is happening at Georgenholtz. However, I understand this[these] contradictions[differences] between the cultures as I observed it[them] at *Thovhele* Tshivhase stone citadel at Mukumbani where old entrances of previous leaders had to be closed and new ones had to be opened for the new rulers.”³⁵⁶

Between 1985 and 1994, Reverend Zwoitwaho Nevhutalu served at Georgenholtz Mission Station, and one of his priority projects was to intervene in the fate of the already dilapidating Church and the parsonage. In his own words, Nevhutalu told the researcher that:

³⁵⁴ Sivhidzho, interview.

³⁵⁵ Fobbe, telephone.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

“During my time as a pastor at Georgenholtz (1985-1995), I immediately realised that an urgent intervention was required to save some buildings of the Mission station, especially the Church and the parsonage. The main purpose of renovating the Church and the parsonage was to re-use them in a different way to the benefit of the Church and the local communities of Ha-Luvhimbi. I just hope that as a heritage practitioner you will help us save this historic Mission station for the future generations.³⁵⁷ As you have already visited the place you might have observed that a lot has been lost.”³⁵⁸

Nevhotalu’s sentiments are supported by some members from the Lutheran Church in Ha-Luvhimbi. The local community and Church members are all concerned about the deteriorating structures of the Mission station that once thrived during the times of missionaries Ludwig Giesekke, Gotthardt Westphal, Walter Johansmeier and Christian Fobbe. Both Sivhidzho and Ratshilumela who were young in the late 60s indicated that things started to change and to be worse after missionary Christian Fobbe left Georgenholtz and SA respectively. When Evangelist James Nemutanzhela (first African to take full responsibility of a BMS Mission station) was posted at Georgenholtz from 1971 to 1975, he did not stay in the parsonage which over many years was utilised by BMS missionaries. Instead, he built his own three mud huts on the opposite side of the current public/ dirt road that passes through the middle of the Mission station, in between the bluegum trees, school, new Lutheran Church, old Mission Church, horse stable, parsonage and the current pastor’s house. Reverend Nemutanzhela’s huts are no longer there, and their foundations are also not visible anymore.

“The Mission station belongs to the Lutheran Church of which I serve in its committee. As Church members, we did not put more efforts to save the deteriorating buildings. We have neglected the buildings for quite a long time and now we will find ourselves in a situation where we will be unable to repair them. A sad result will be the extinction of all the structures and if that happens, our history will be wiped out.”³⁵⁹

It seems that the people of Ha-Luvhimbi and the congregation believe in allowing built structures to gradually deteriorate and finally collapse without intervention. However, central to the lack of maintenance of the buildings is lack of funds. A resident pastor has his own views about the physical status and funding. His perspective is that:

“Whilst the Mission station belongs to the Lutheran Church, we acknowledge that the buildings have [become] completely dilapidated, especially the parsonage and

³⁵⁷ Zwoitwaho Nevhotalu, interview by author, Pretoria, 23 November 2017.

³⁵⁸ Nevhotalu, email message.

³⁵⁹ Sivhidzho, interview.

the old community clinic. I would however like to bring to your attention that as we are faced with these challenges on[to] our buildings, the Church does not have money for repairs and maintenance. We just wish a good Samaritan could come to our rescue.”³⁶⁰

Lack of money is one of the common problems in the maintenance of Church buildings in many countries. It can lead to urgent work being delayed and damage mounting to a point where the cost of fixing the problem is prohibitive.³⁶¹

Some of the community members interviewed also expressed their views about the ownership of the Mission station. This is because the Mission station project is already in the developmental plans of the local Chief of Ha-Luvhimbi and his communities. While some of the Church leadership members emphasise Lutheran Church ownership of the historic Mission station, community members have a different view, as reflected in the Chief’s comments:

“The BMS played a very important role in establishing the Mission station for the people of Ha-Luvhimbi. However, the Lutheran Church should not think that, it being a heritage property, the old Mission station in Ha-Luvhimbi belongs only to the Church. From my own point of view as the Chief of the area, the Mission station, as a heritage resource, belongs to all the people of Ha-Luvhimbi (Christians and non-Christians) and if we agree on developing it, all the community members, without exception, should benefit.”³⁶²

This sentiment is strongly held by Traugott Fobbe, but he feels disappointed when he talks about it with community and Church members. To him, all of them are shifting the responsibility for the Mission station onto him. He laments that:

“Every time I come to Ha-Luvhimbi to bring tourists to the Mission station, these people (community members) always expect me to refurbish the dilapidating Mission station, especially the old Church and the parsonage as if it belongs to my family. When I look at it, I see a heritage property that belongs to all the people (local communities and the Church). I don’t regard this house or the Mission station as my father’s. It belongs to the people of Ha-Luvhimbi. The Church and locals should stop shifting ownership responsibility of the Mission station to me, my father, and my family. There is nothing much I can do to help them with as I have my own business to look after.”³⁶³

While the physical condition of the buildings at Georgholtz is everyone’s concern, Traugott Fobbe, through his interactions with some members of the Georgholtz

³⁶⁰ Joseph Ramalida, interview by author, telephone conversation, 25 December 2017.

³⁶¹ Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 13.

³⁶² Masikhwa, interview.

³⁶³ Fobbe, telephone.

Congregational committee, has his own views about the current situation and he blames the community for the dilapidation. He remembers an occasion when his family took a decision to contribute funds to the maintenance of the old Church:

“Instead of the congregation using the funds in extending and renovating the old church, they used the funds in the building of a new Church opposite the old one. They should have considered extending the old Church to accommodate the growing number of congregants.”³⁶⁴

The local headman and Congregational committee member blames the Church members, especially the Ha-Luvhimbi congregation, for the deterioration of buildings on church land (4.5 hectares) that is not fenced in, as the old fence collapsed a long time ago, and in some areas, it is no longer visible. He suggests:

“As a church we must work first [to] ensure that we fence-in the 4,5 hectares of the Mission station land. At the same time, we must ensure that the Church cemetery and the memorial are also fenced in. By doing this, we will be able to control access to the bamboo trees and the Mission station. Thus, we should plan on how tourism and sustainable use of bamboo tree will assist GHMS overall.”³⁶⁵

Other community and Church members feel that the reason the Mission station is in such a state of disrepair is more complicated than what our eyes are seeing, and they are interested in knowing and rectifying that. A community elder says:

“There is a need for both community and Church members to acquire knowledge on how to preserve old buildings and the reasons why we do so. This interview has opened our eyes and we now realise that there is a need for experts to share with us the importance of conserving and preserving old buildings and monuments.”³⁶⁶

While renovation, creation of jobs and introduction of tourism activities seem to be the priority projects geared towards revival of the Mission station, one elder representing the Church and the community suggested that this is the right time for the Church and the community to start a revival project during the year that the Lutheran Church is celebrating 500 years of reformation (2017). Moving forward with the Mission station, this is what he recommended:

“I recommend that as one of the measures we need to appoint a security guard or a caretaker to monitor the destruction, vandalism, and deteriorations that have been taking place at the Mission station. We also need to ensure that there is regular maintenance of the old buildings once renovated and used. Of most importance, this project should be initiated this year as a good reminder that it was

³⁶⁴ Fobbe, telephone.

³⁶⁵ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

³⁶⁶ Sivhidzho, interview.

started on[in] the year the Lutheran Church throughout the whole world celebrated the 500 years of reformation.”³⁶⁷

The youths are equally concerned about the status of Georgenholtz Mission Station. They are concerned about those who spend nights misusing the building in different ways (committing adultery and abusing drugs in the house and Church of God). One of them indicated that:

“As the youth, we believe that the buildings are now used for unholy behaviours. There are people who use the building to commit adultery and drug abuse, especially dagga or *mbanzhe*.”³⁶⁸

The youth do not believe that the Mission station also belongs to them. They think that as it belongs to the Church, the Lutherans should take full responsibility for ensuring that it is in good shape again. Moreover, they pin their hopes on a *mukhuwa* or a white man (Traugott) to assist with the renovations and repairs. They only want to benefit from tourism projects that will ensure employment for the youth. At the same time, they are concerned with the cutting of the only bamboo tree by locals and people from outside:

“They come to cut this rare species from Georgenholtz for free. I think the Church must do something about it as it is falling within [located on] their stand. There is also no fence demarcating the Mission station and the residences.”³⁶⁹

The local headman, Rudzani Ravhuanzwo, indicated that he is also concerned about free access to the Church property by local communities and other people from outside. This put under threat the bamboo trees that are easily accessible. In trying to protect them, he says:

“The Church is looking at different options to safeguard the bamboos and the Church property with[in] the hope of protecting them for future generations.”³⁷⁰

4.4 Community Participation and Ownership Perspectives

While various communities are concerned about the physical condition of built structures of Georgenholtz Mission Station, they also expressed their views and attitudes towards its ownership. The Church leadership and community members are beginning to embrace Georgenholtz Mission Station as their own heritage resource

³⁶⁷ Ratshilumela, interview.

³⁶⁸ Makhani, interview.

³⁶⁹ Mukwevho, interview.

³⁷⁰ Ravhuanzwo, interview.

because they are starting to know Klaas Koen, the missionary who established GHMS from Tshifudi and Mavhola was a South African. Klaas Koen was born at Harlem in the Cape Colony, from a father whose ancestors came from Germany and a mother whose ancestors were the descendants of slaves.³⁷¹ This means that he has both German and slave blood in his ancestry. The reason people are only realising the facts about his African ancestry now is because his name and surname have been Germanised for quite a long time as Niklaus Kuhn.³⁷² To some local communities, Klaas Koen's association with South Africa is what matters most to them to reclaim Georgenholtz Mission Station as their own. As Koen's origins is unravelled some community members claim that:

“All along we have known Klaas Koen as a German missionary, but rumour has it that Koen was a South African. If it is true that Koen is a South African, Georgenholtz thus belong to us[our] community and the South African public in general.”³⁷³

With this revelation, most of the Lutheran Church elders and community members are embracing Georgenholtz Mission Station as their own heritage resource because it was established by one of their own.

4.5 Tourism Development Prospects Views

When participants view Georgenholtz Mission Station, they see jobs- local people being employed, and money being generated by means of tourism activities such as hotels, a museum, and guided tours. Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, the government has been, and it continues to encourage institutions to create employment for affected communities. Over the past few years, the South African government came up with the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP). The NDP aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030.³⁷⁴ The National Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) is also in the process of revising the 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture. The revised White Paper (fourth draft) seeks to create an enabling environment in which the arts, culture and heritage can flourish and play a significant role in nation-building and

³⁷¹ Alan Kirkaldy, “Klaas Koen.” 103.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Sivhidzho, interview.

³⁷⁴ Department of the Presidency, Republic of South Africa, National Development Plan 2030: Our Future-make it work (Cape Town: National Planning Commission, 2012), 24.

socioeconomic development.³⁷⁵ Thus, the National Department of Arts and Culture is also encouraging heritage institutions to be aligned to the prescripts of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the revised White Paper on Arts and Culture which are encouraging heritage institutions to reduce poverty and create employment. The National Liberation Heritage Route (NLHR) project initiated by the National Heritage Council (NHC) also aims to package heritage sites as key heritage and socio-economic nodes. Georgenholtz communities also expressed their views regarding socio-economic development- especially turning Georgenholtz Mission Station as a tourism node that will benefit the local communities and the Lutheran Church. One Church youth member said that:

“As young people from the Church and Ha-Luvhimbi community, we just wish that Traugott Fobbe should come back and assist the Church to renovate the buildings so that they could be used for tourism purposes and generate income for the Church and the youths.”³⁷⁶

When asked about his views on the future of Georgenholtz Mission Station buildings, Traugott Fobbe responded like a business man in the tourism industry. In his response, he indicated that:

“I strongly believe that if the Church and local communities can put their heads together, they can derive maximum benefits out of the existence of this beautiful Mission station. A museum or a hotel could be built with prospects of creating jobs for the locals and the Church. Locals could be employed to run the hotel, museum, and work as tour guides for international tourists. Certain percentage of income generated could be directed to the Lutheran Church as the owner of the property.”³⁷⁷

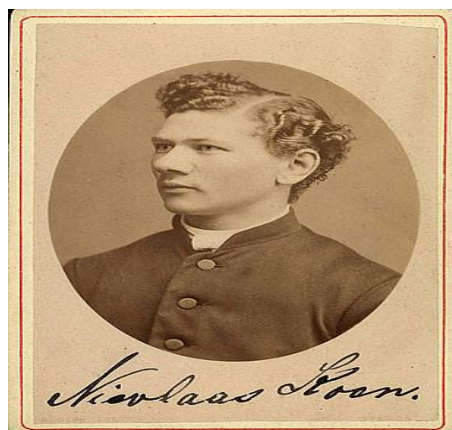


Figure 70: Missionary Klaas Koen (Source: <https://ilsie53.wixsite.com/klaas-koen/gallery>, 2018).

³⁷⁵ National Department of Arts and Culture, Fourth Draft: Revised 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture (Pretoria: DAC, October 2017), 9.

³⁷⁶ Makhani, interview.

³⁷⁷ Fobbe, telephone.

4.6 Christian Education Views

While most of the views concern the physical state of the Mission station, community benefits and socioeconomic opportunities, the Lutheran Church leaders are interested in managing the Georgholtz Primary School like other Christian-run schools in the country. Pastor Ramalida of Georgholtz Ha-Luvhimbi was vocal about the future of Georgholtz Primary School. He asked a question to that effect:

“What is wrong in us running a school like the Dutch Reformed Church is doing with Tshikevha Christian School in Thohoyandou-Venda?”³⁷⁸

Tshikevha Christian School was established in 1986 in Venda, Limpopo Province of South Africa. The school was established through the initiative of parents of the Reformed Churches in Venda, who were concerned with the level of education and the moral of educators in general, together with Dutch missionaries sent to Venda by the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.³⁷⁹ Tshikevha Christian School continues to be a shining school in Venda. Most parents want to send their children there for better education.

4.7 Community Recommendations

While communities were able to express their views and attitudes towards Georgholtz Mission Station, they also suggested recommendations for the Mission station for future generations. In this way, the researcher is demonstrating the relevance of the heritage management discipline to society. These recommendations vary from conservation and preservation of built structures, community participation, and socioeconomic development. The researcher has given all participants a voice to air their views freely without fears. However, the recommendations by communities about built heritage are not unique to Georgholtz Mission Station only. All over the world “many heritage buildings are used for functions and services that did not exist when they were built.”³⁸⁰ These proposals for adaptive re-use of GHMS are in line with this narrative. Details of the recommendations, as proposed by the communities, are as follows:

³⁷⁸ Ramalida, telephone conversation.

³⁷⁹ Tshikevha Christian School, “About Us: History,” *Webmail*, last modified 05 June 2017, accessed December 30, 2017, <http://www.tshikevha.co.za/about/>.

³⁸⁰ “Built Heritage: What is Built Heritage.”

4.7.1 Conservation of Built Structures and the Surrounding Environs

All the community members interviewed were concerned about the physical condition of the built structures at Georgenholtz, especially the old Church, community clinic and the parsonage.

- All participants agree that these buildings should be repaired, renovated and routinely maintained to prevent the total extinction of the Mission station. This concern is largely related to the lack of funding for maintenance of built structures.
- The Lutheran Church and the local communities should find a way of raising funds for the maintenance, conservation and preservation of the only remaining buildings that constituted the original Georgenholtz Mission Station. The Evangelical Lutheran Church as the current property owners are suggesting that there should be routine maintenance by Church members.
- Clearing of bushes and plant growths along the walls of the buildings was identified as an immediate action to be taken by the Church and the communities.
- The roof of the Church must be repaired immediately, since it is leaking. Continuous neglect of the leaking roof of the Church could lead to damaging the bamboo ceiling inside.
- As the old community clinic is on the verge of completely collapse and ways should be found to strengthen the walls and prevent the roof beams from collapsing.
- There should be regular monitoring of the tall pine, bluegum and silver-oak trees that are closest to the Church and the parsonage, to prevent them from falling on the buildings.
- The Church should consider fencing the remaining 4,5 hectares of Church land to prevent uncontrolled access by domestic animals, children, and unknown individuals.
- Communities have also acknowledged their lack of knowledge of heritage issues. They are proposing that joint workshops (on the care of buildings and heritage in general) be conducted by experts for communities and Church members. The 1972 World Heritage Convention refers to this intervention as “raising of awareness and education of[about] the need to preserve heritage and

informing the public of the dangers threatening heritage sites”. Eventually, educational materials about Georgenholtz should be developed for visitors.

- All plants that were planted by the missionaries should be reintroduced.
- Overall, these buildings should be completely restored to their former glory.
- Communities also feel that the Mission station and its built structures would be safer if a security guard or a caretaker is appointed to guard or monitor destruction, vandalism, and deterioration of the built structures.

There is no doubt that if these problems (physical) are resolved, Georgenholtz buildings can reclaim their past glorious days. Church buildings must be well-maintained. If not, many years of neglect may result in major defects, which cost a lot to repair.³⁸¹ A maintenance plan enables Churches to budget for regular upkeep, which will lead to the prevention of expensive repairs in years to come.³⁸² Above all, any increase in the deterioration of heritage resources makes the need for protection, long-term conservation and preservation programmes urgent.³⁸³ This endeavour is of particular importance as this heritage represents an irreplaceable contribution to the collective memory of this community and mankind.³⁸⁴

4.7.2 Community Participation and Ownership

Both the community and the Church members have identified a divide that separates them from each other as a community of Georgenholtz Mission Station. They are thus recommending the following:

- There should be one committee or Board of Directors to oversee the developments at the Mission station in the future. Members of the Church and local community leaders, well as the youth should constitute this Board of Directors.
- The Church cemetery should be utilised by all (Christians and non-Christians) until it is full. Thereafter, all the dead should be buried in the communal cemetery.
- The reconciliatory statement between the Church and the community (formulated and agreed upon in 2011) should be revisited and its resolutions

³⁸¹ Davis and Staas, *Church Buildings*, 4.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Mabulla A Z P, “Tanzania’s Endangered Heritage: A call for protection program,” *The Archaeological Review* 13, no.3 (September 1996), 197—214.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 198.

implemented to strengthen common community aspirations for Georgenholtz Mission Station.

- The so-called “Permission to occupy” (PTO) should be revisited so that the 4.5 hectares it stipulates can finally be agreed on by both the community and the Church. Further delays will complicate matters in the future, if the PTO is not popularised among the communities.
- Communities would like to be regularly updated about all developments that take place at Georgenholtz Mission Station.

These recommendations on community participation and engagements only demonstrate the importance of engaging communities on heritage matters. Fitch wrote a few years ago that:

“we are all of us, participants in the built environment,”³⁸⁵

This narrative also indicates that preserving heritage has the potential to engage communities in decision-making about their shared past and future, forge bonds and build bridges between peoples, and foster awareness.³⁸⁶ The closer the communication alliance between local communities and heritage practitioners, the greater the chance of success in many areas, including coordinated programmes for site protection against looting, field investigation and local employment.³⁸⁷

4.7.3 Tourism Development

One of the major recommendations that communities suggested relates to developing Georgenholtz Mission Station as a tourism destination for international and local tourists. For this dream to materialise, communities proposed the following:

- Turning the parsonage into a small hotel where international guests can overnight while being entertained by locals employed at the hotel. Other community members are saying that the parsonage should be turned into a small museum that would be divided into a small exhibition on the history of the mission, a small library, and a small, open space for meetings and presentations. If this dream is realised, more jobs for the locals in the museum,

³⁸⁵ James Marston Fitch, “The Future of Architecture,” in *Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York: WW. Norton and Co., 2006), 80.

³⁸⁶ Erica Avrami, “Preservation and sustainability,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 22.

³⁸⁷ Helaine Silverman, “Cultural Resource Management and Heritage Stewardship in Peru,” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 7, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 68.

hotel and as tour guides will be realised. This will also assist the Church to generate income for the regular maintenance of historic buildings.

- It is also suggested that the bamboo cluster should be commercialised once the place is fenced in. People wanting to harvest the bamboo would be subject to payment of a certain fee that would be determined by the Board of Directors.

Economically, in the mid-1990s, Georgholtz Mission Station was used as a tourism destination for international and local tourists, especially those from South Africa, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands. The main beneficiary at the time was Mr Traugott Fobbe, who was a tour guide to the Mission station. Traugott Fobbe was born and raised at the Mission station before he left for Germany with his father in 1968. The Mission station has the potential to generate revenue for the Church and create employment for the local people of Ha-Luvhimbi and the surrounding areas where people have been Christianised—especially Mukula, Makonde, Tshivhilwi, Tshilonwe, Mahagala, Ha-Lambani and Ha-Begwa.

Most participants interviewed for this research are in favour of Georgholtz being turned into a tourism destination to include a museum, school, crèche, and hotel. This means that major interventions that would impact on the building heritage are being proposed. Fresh tourism development proposals will put Georgholtz Mission Station at the centre of local and international tourism. It should, however, be noted that while communities will be deriving some benefits, tourism also presents many challenges for heritage resources such as attracting large numbers of people which could be difficult to control while visiting heritage sites.³⁸⁸ All community views detailed in this chapter reflect that heritage buildings can be very important ingredients of collective sentiments of the feeling that “this is our place.”³⁸⁹ When developments that involve adaptive re-use of heritage buildings take place, they involve some destructions of the elements of buildings. It should be done cautiously following correct guidelines on the conservation of built structures as contained in the National Heritage Resources Act, and international charters especially the Australian Bura Charter.

³⁸⁸ Gilbert Pwiti, “Let the ancestors rest,” 152.

³⁸⁹ “Built Heritage: What is Built Heritage.”

4.8 Conclusion

The importance of community consultation in the research on the Georgenholtz Mission Station has been underlined in Chapter Four. In this chapter, these communities articulate their perspectives about the Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource. Their views are largely on their concerns regarding the physical condition of the buildings and of the surrounding environs. All communities interviewed are concerned about the deteriorating condition of buildings. Communities identify and associate with many values of the Mission station and demonstrate the importance of the station as a heritage resource. The chapter also outlines the wishes of the communities regarding what should happen to the station in the future. They recommend amongst others, that old buildings be renovated and used as a boarding school for Christians. The local communities are also aware of the potential economic value of the site as a tourism destination. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated of broad-based research tapping information at grassroots, suggesting in the end that heritage does not entail the tangibles only.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

This study aimed from the outset to explore community perspectives and attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station in north-eastern Venda as a heritage resource. To unravel these communities' perspectives and attitudes towards the Mission Station, affected stakeholders (communities) were identified and interviewed on key issues regarding Georgenholtz Mission Station from Tshifudi/Mavhola to the current location at Ha-Luvhimbi. The study also sought to establish from the participants, the values that are associated with Georgenholtz Mission Station and their perspectives about the future of the Mission station. The study attempted to answer the main research question: "What are the impacts of community attitudes/perspectives towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource?" In establishing the historical facts of the Mission station, the study also depended on the documentary and photographic sources of the Berlin Missionary Society.

It was stated from the outset that the main challenge in the heritage field is a lack of effective and efficient involvement of the affected stakeholders or communities in research, development, and management of heritage resources. As a result, heritage practitioners, historians and anthropologists have always struggled to unravel the true stories of heritage places and their communities. Neither have they been able to fully involve affected communities in meaning-making. The end of colonialism around the world and apartheid in South Africa brought opportunities for academia to engage with affected communities on matters that affect them. For example, when the researcher was working as Senior Manager for Robben Island Museum's Heritage and Environment Department, he was approached by the Xhosa family led by Chief Fadana, who wanted research to be conducted on one of their chiefs who was banished and died on the Island. Extensive research, including excavations, was undertaken in the

presence of the affected communities. Occasional research reports on the findings were also presented to Chief Fadana, council and family.

While exploring community perspectives and attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource, the study demonstrated that involving communities or affected stakeholders in heritage research is sacrosanct. In Chapter One of this mini-dissertation, the research question: "What is the impact of community attitudes/perspectives towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource?" The problem of heritage practitioners and researchers not involving affected communities on heritage matters, the world over, was highlighted with the hope that these practitioners would change their behaviour. To understand communities' perspectives towards Georgenholtz, desktop and interview tools were suggested with ethical issues brought forward for consideration. Chapter Two presented a variety of previous and contemporary literature on matters affecting communities in heritage research and management. Chapter Three detailed an extensive overview of the Georgenholtz Mission Station with emphasis on how communities played their various roles in its shaping and making. It is demonstrated in the same chapter how local communities contributed to the gradual deterioration of certain buildings of the Mission station. Chapter Four has been a revelation as communities interviewed fully expressed their perspectives regarding the history and development of the Mission station. Communities were also able to identify various values associated with Georgenholtz Mission Station. Physical condition of the Mission station built-structures remains a concern while communities are figuring out how the Mission station-built structures could be used for- to the benefit of all.

As a heritage practitioner with extensive experience in heritage management, conservation of the built environment and archaeological sites, the researcher was tempted to fully focus his energies on the conservation of the built environment. The intangible values became the focus of this study, unraveling memories and sense of belonging to Georgenholtz Mission Station.

5.2 Research Findings

Communities 'perspectives or views' have been at the centre of this research. The findings recognise that the views and perspectives of communities enrich the historical

narrative about the Georgenholtz Mission Station. The study also breaks with past approaches and methodologies ostracising communities and prioritising the officially authorised heritage discourse. There is an agreement with proponents of community participation in the heritage practice such as Innocent Pikirayi, that there should be dismantling of exclusionist paradigms and other agendas that create a rift between western scholarship and non-western traditions of heritage management. The main findings that came out of this study are as follows:

- All the participants in this research (from the Church, Ha-Luvhimbi community, families and the youths) showed a willingness to add their voice in the making of the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station. This willingness demonstrated that the communities' knowledge cannot be ignored in the construction of people's histories or on new projects to be initiated. The times when researchers would disregard the affected communities in their villages or projects are over.
- Georgenholtz Mission Station has links with other BMS Mission stations in Venda such as Tshakhuma, Beuster, and Khalavha. Many BMS missionaries in the old Transvaal Republic were familiar with activities taking place in all the Mission stations in Venda because most of them were rotated from one station to the other. For example, The Schwellnus and the Giesekke families worked in Tshakhuma, Beuster, Georgenholtz and Khalavha Mission Stations during different periods. Reports that are stored at the Library and Archives of the BMS in Berlin- Germany could bear testimony to this narrative.
- Education in Venda is known to have started in Tshakhuma and Maungani where the first two BMS Mission stations were located. This study has found that in the Vhumbedzi area, education was started by the BMS at Georgenholtz Mission Station in both locations (Tshifudi, Mavhola and Ha-Luvhimbi). The introduction of Georgenholtz Community School in Ha-Luvhimbi was the beginning of the spread of education in the Vhumbedzi region of Venda. Missionaries who were stationed at Georgenholtz in different periods also established schools in areas where the BMS had established outstations. The Schwellnus family, credited with inventing the Tshivenda (in its written format for the first time) are associated with Georgenholtz Mission Station.
- Missionaries and their descendants always claimed that the aim of the Berlin Missionary Society BMS {BMS was abbreviate above and should not be written

out again}was to spread the word of God to all the nations of the world. However, in Venda, the study found out that it was the spread of the word of God and the dispossession of land from African chiefs who were not aware. The biggest loser in Venda was *Thovhele* Tshivhase, who lost pieces of land in areas where Georgenholtz and Khalavha Mission Stations were established.

- The local communities and the Lutheran Church leadership differ on the ownership of the old Mission station. The Church claims full ownership because of historical associations with the Mission station. Communities, on the other hand, claim ownership because the Mission station is within the Ha-Luvhimbi community. However, both local communities and Church leadership agree that the Mission station buildings can be utilised through adaptable reuse for the benefit of all socio-economically.
- Much emphasis on photographs is put on the missionaries and their wives while most African assistants are hardly mentioned. The same applies to their different roles in the Mission station.
- Georgenholtz Mission Station could not be divorced from what was happening in the country especially in the 1950s and 1960. The study found that the politics of the 1950s and 1960s was determined by the policies of the government of the day. A good example is that of the lifestyle of missionary Christian Fobbe, who was suspected of being close to “blacks” in the villages of Venda and their chiefs. His expulsion from Georgenholtz, Venda and ultimately South Africa was a result of his inclusive lifestyle (to Blacks) during the times of “separate development policies” of the Nationalist government in South Africa.

5.3 Proposals for Future Work

Having explored the perspectives and views of communities, it is evident that Georgenholtz Mission Station cannot be studied in isolation from other Mission stations established at the same period in history as Georgenholtz. These Mission stations exchanged staff (missionaries) through transfers from one station to the other. It is evident from their correspondences through letters, reports and memoranda kept in the BMS library and archives in Berlin (Germany) that they shared experiences of having worked in all the four Mission stations. After the researcher discovered discarded documents (from all the four Mission stations in Venda) dumped outside on the veranda

of the Tshakhuma parsonage at Tshakhuma Mission station in 2014, it is recommended that for future researchers, Georgenholtz Mission Station should not be studied in isolation to other Mission stations in Venda, as they are historically connected. Much information could be unearthed from them. Research about Georgenholtz Mission Station could be broader if communities in areas where outstation Churches were built could be consulted on matters to register their views on the values, conservation, and preservation of the Mission station. The existence of Mission stations in Venda also depends upon the support from traditional leaders whose ancestors permitted their establishment in the area. There is no doubt that traditional leaders could play important roles in enhancing research into the activities of the Berlin Missionary Society and local communities.

While this study has made some efforts to highlight the importance of engaging with communities on heritage matters, it should be noted that on its own, it cannot form the basis for action. Many researchers agree about the need for diverse and complementary studies to produce solid policy guidelines and other recommendations for effective engagement between heritage practitioners, the community, and the public. However, in Southern Africa, practitioners are moving towards accomplishing consent-based community involvement and indications point to the fact that heritage researchers may not have attained a truly community-based heritage practice to the future of heritage practice. One other area of interest for future research could be on the impact of other Mission stations on communities of the Limpopo Province such as Dutch Reformed, Presbyterian, and Swiss Missions. Further research on them could yield positive results in the reconstruction of the community histories in which they were operating. Missionary history in Venda cannot be ignored because it took place during the times of imperialism, colonialism and internal disputes and conquests in Venda. Thus, BMS history is part and parcel of the history of Venda.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Topics for interviews with Church leadership

Georgenholtz Mission Station Built Structures

Historically, what were the structures that constituted the Georgenholtz Mission Station and where are they now?

Historical Background

Discuss the history of Georgenholtz Mission Station chronologically, from its inception and through its operations, until the departure of the last Berlin Missionary in 1966.

Explain in detail what happened to the Mission station between 1966 and the present.

When the missionaries arrived in Ha-Luvhimbi, they had good relationships with local leaders and the local communities. What have the relations been like between 1966 and now, as we are speaking?

Value Judgement

Is Georgenholtz Mission Station a heritage resource? What does it mean to the Church, and the people of Ha-Luvhimbi?

You have explained the condition of the Mission station in detail above. Are you concerned about the current situation? If so, what concerns you the most?

In your opinion, considering the history of the Mission station, what are the values and meanings you can attach to it? In other words, do you think the existence of what has remained of the original Mission station is important? If so, how?

Way Forward

Based on all the concerns/dissatisfactions you have expressed earlier, what do you think should be done with the Mission station?

2. Topics for interviews with local chief and his subjects

Family History

Please tell me about yourself.

Explain the history of your family since the arrival of Berlin Missionaries at Georgenholtz Mission Station between 1872 to 1966.

What were the contributions of your family to the making of Georgenholtz Mission Station?

Are you still attached to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa?

Built Structures Background

What are your memories of built structures at the Mission station? In addition to the ones that are remaining, which other ones do you remember or have heard of?

Do you have any memories of structures built or improved during your time?

How were the remaining built structures (the Church and the parsonage) used?

Value Judgement

What does Georgholtz Mission Station mean to you as a family? Do you think other groups of people should hold it highly and why? Do you think it is a heritage resource of the people?

Are you concerned about the current situation? If so, what concerns you the most?

Who do you think should be excluded from the affairs of the Georgholtz Mission Station?

Way Forward

Based on all the concerns/dissatisfactions you have expressed earlier, what do you think should be done with the Mission station?

3. Topics for interviews with the youth

Georgholtz Mission Station Built Structures

Historically, what were the structures that constituted the Georgholtz Mission Station and where are they now?

Historical Background

Chronologically discuss the history of Georgholtz Mission Station, from its inception, through its operations, until the departure of the last Berlin missionary in 1966.

Explain in detail what happened to the Mission station between 1966 to the present

When the missionaries arrived in Ha-Luvhimbi, they had good relationships with local leaders and the local communities. What have the relations been like between 1966 and now, as we are speaking?

Value Judgement

Is Georgholtz Mission Station a heritage resource? If so, whose heritage is it?

You have explained the condition of the Mission station in detail above. Are you concerned about the current situation? If so, what concerns you the most?

In your opinion, considering the history of the Mission station, what are the values and meanings you can attach to it? In other words, do you think the existence of what has remained of the original Mission station is important. If so, how?

Way Forward

Based on all the concerns/dissatisfactions you have expressed earlier, what do you think should be done with the Mission station?

4. Topics for interviews with families

The History of the Family

It is a well-known fact that historically some of your family members were the first ones to interact with the Berlin Missionary Society's missionaries when they arrived here in Venda in the 1870s to 1890s. Could you please share with me who these family members were and what the good and bad stories were that they shared with you of the Berlin missionaries they interacted with (the names of missionaries as well)?

Georgenholtz Mission Station Built Structures

Historically, what were the structures that constituted the Georgenholtz Mission Station and what happened to them? As a family, are you concerned that very few structures of the Mission station have remained?

Value Judgement

Some of your family members worked here as Berlin missionaries, and contributed to building some of the structures You were born and raised at the Mission station and in the general area of Ha-Luvhimbi village. Do you view Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource? What meaning and values do you attach to the Georgenholtz Mission Station?

As it is now, who do you think Georgenholtz belongs to?

Way Forward

Based on all the concerns/dissatisfactions you have expressed earlier, what do you think should be done with the Mission station? What are your recommendations for the future?

APPENDIX B: SIGNED INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT FORM: GEORGENHOLTZ MISSION STATION COMMUNITIES

Exploration of community attitudes towards the Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource

*Tshimangadzo Israel Nemaheni
Department of Architecture, Planning, and Geomatics
University of Cape Town
Mobile: 0844931371
Email: Nemaheni@hotmail.com*

Hallo, my name is Tshimangadzo Israel Nemaheni and I am conducting research towards an MPhil in the Conservation of Built Environment. I am researching on community perspectives/ attitudes towards Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource and would like to invite you to participate in my study. Taking part in this study is voluntary. The quality of your health care will not be affected by whether you participate or not. Participating in the study might not benefit you, but information might be gained that will benefit others. You may withdraw from the study at any time without affecting your care. The study is described below. This description tells you about the risks, inconvenience, or discomfort that you may experience

The main purpose of this study is to explore community attitudes/perspectives towards the Georgenholtz Mission Station as a heritage resource. The project involves interviewing communities who have interest in the mission station like family members, local community members from Ha-Luvhimbi village, youth from within the Lutheran Church and community, and leadership of the Lutheran church. In these interviews, I will ask you questions related to the history of the Georgenholtz Mission Station, your perspectives of the mission station as a heritage resource and what you think should be done to the mission station. The interview won't require you to be transported to another area. Instead, you will be interviewed at your own home.

All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. I will do my utmost best to ensure that your anonymity in all my written reports and I do not expect you to divulge any information that might compromise you. I would be grateful if you would assist me by allowing me to interview you.

If you have any questions, contact myself at the following mobile number: 0844931372 and email address: nemaheni@hotmail.com.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant: RAISHILUMELA MA Date: 2017-11-09

Signature Removed

Signature of Participant.....

APPENDIX C: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Description/ Profile	Date of Interview	Contacts	Con- sent Given
Mr Aitken Ratshilumela	A pensioner, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Chief, treasurer of the Lutheran Church congregation. He is also chairperson of the Luvhimbi Development Committee	9 Nov 2017	0710957751	Yes
Chief Tshilidzi Masikhwa	Traditional leader of Ha-Luvhimbi.	9 Nov 2017	0721996442	Yes
Mr. Nakisani Makhani	Church Youth	9 Nov 2017	-	Yes
Miss Fulufhelo Mukwevho	Church Youth	9 Nov 2017	-	Yes
Mr. Simon Sivhidzho	Administrator at Hayani Hospital, Chairperson of the Lutheran Church Committee, Civic Chairperson, member in Chief's advisory Committee and Chairperson of the School Governing Body of the local Secondary school	9 Nov 2017	082425475 0	Yes
Mr. Rudzani Ravhuanzwo	Headman of the Mission area-Fongodi, Executive member of Congregational Committee. He is from the Raavhuanzwo Family.	10 Nov 2017	07219042 01 ravhuanzwo@capricc rncollege.edu.za	Yes
Mr. Traugott Fobbe	Tourism businessman and son of Missionary Christian Fobbe	9 Nov 2017	0823409608 Silke.thavhani@gmai .com	Yes
Reverend Zwoitwaho Nevhutalu	He was responsible for the Mavhola parish of the Lutheran Church between 1985- 1994. He is currently the CEO of the South African National Aids Council (SANAC).	9 Nov 2017	08234096 08 zwo@san ac.org.za znevhtalu@gmail.c om	-

Name	Description/ Profile	Date of Interview	Contacts	Con- sent Given
Reverend Ramalida	He is currently responsible for the Mavhola Parish while based at Georgholtz.	9 Nov 2017	07221349 95 07126555 1	Yes