



‘Casting off the old *Kaross*’ : The Little Namaqualand Missions, 1805-1848.

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

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Abstract

‘Casting off the old kaross’: The Little Namaqualand Missions, 1805-1848

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This thesis is a history of the development of missionary activity in the Little Namaqualand region of southern Africa during the first half of the nineteenth century. Through a rich analysis of the archival documents of the various missionary societies who worked in the region, it attempts to fill in the wide gaps present in the historical narrative. Little Namaqualand, an area north of the Olifants River and south of the Orange River, during the nineteenth century was the epicentre of the north-western frontier zone of the Cape Colony. It had long been home to the Little Namaqua, a Khoikhoi group, who occupied the central and mountainous region of the Kamiesberg, the San, who moved between the Kamiesberg and Bushmanland to the east, and ‘baster’ (mixed race) groups who migrated from the Cape in the eighteenth century. It has since been a relatively under-studied area despite it being the hub of missionary activity in the north-west in the nineteenth century. An environmentally harsh and politically turbulent region, home to a nomadic people, it presented a unique and trying set of circumstances for the incoming missionaries.

The European missionaries of the London Missionary Society (LMS), Wesleyan Missionary Society (WMMS) and later the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) moved through the region in waves during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Their intended destination, however, was not Little Namaqualand, but Great Namaqualand across the Orange River. For the first fifteen years of the century the missionaries moved between Little and Great Namaqualand, unable to establish a permanent and successful settlement. They faced many difficulties – the colonial government’s changing attitudes and legislation towards missionary activities in and outside of the colony’s borders, the mounting financial strain of maintaining a mission station in such a barren, desolate and sweltering region and existing inter-group tensions between those amongst whom they ministered.

From their first arrival in the region in 1805, the early German missionaries of the LMS relied on local and powerful mixed-race groups to facilitate their stay, both financially and

logistically. These groups had long been desirous of a missionary in the region for both their spiritual and temporal benefits. On the north-western frontier, access to trading networks and firearms was pivotal to the survival of many groups who relied almost solely on hunting and ivory trading. Many missionaries, themselves struggling to survive under such trying environmental conditions, themselves resorted to hunting and trading to supplement their pitiful income.

By 1811, after a devastating attack on their Great Namaqualand mission, the LMS retreated into Little Namaqualand where they paid more attention to establishing themselves on a more permanent basis. A fresh wave of young and enthusiastic German missionaries greatly aided this effort. The Wesleyans joined shortly after in 1816. Both missionary societies were still understaffed and, due to unique regional circumstances, relied heavily on Namaqua and baster translators and teachers. Many of these would become missionaries in their own right. The northerly stations of Little Namaqualand, Steinkopf and Pella, utilised these African evangelists to run the various outposts or satellite stations (necessitated by the people's nomadic habits). The same took place at the southern stations of Leliefontein and Komaggas. From Leliefontein, several Namaqua converts were sent out. Many of them ministered to Sotho-Tswana and Coranna groups in the east. These African evangelists, and the pivotal role they played in facilitating and sustaining the Little Namaqualand missions, form the core of this thesis. Their names have been excavated from the archival records and the often limited anecdotes of their lives have been brought to life.

This thesis shows that the spread of Christianity in the region pre-dated the formal arrival of the European missionaries. After their arrival, it was through African mouths that the message of Christianity took on a new form and was more successfully prorogated through the region. The majority of those who heard the gospel message responded emotionally. Most negotiated with what they heard, rejecting some tenets of the message while accepting others. They thus embraced and created a wholly new rendition of Christianity, one which saw to their immediate needs and offered both a remedy and an explanation for their suffering.

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This thesis has been many years in the making and reaching the finish line feels somewhat surreal. Recognition should be made of the financial support provided by the University of Cape Town for the travel grant which allowed me to spend three months in London and Liverpool at the School of Oriental and African Studies and Liverpool Hope University. The family of Andrew Alexander, who generously awarded me the Andrew Alexander Scholarship in Historical Studies in memory of their son, for two years consecutively, assisted me greatly.

Special thanks should be extended to Wayne Dooling at SOAS who offered me supervision during my time at SOAS. The staff of the reading rooms at both SOAS and Liverpool Hope University made the research experience smooth and were incredibly helpful in facilitating my archival research.

The task of completing a PhD in a global pandemic has not been easy. Recognition should be made to the patient staff of the University of Cape Town Libraries who saw to my every need and nagging emails. The process of remote book collection was a frustrating one and most certainly stalled my progress. The fire which devastated the African Studies Library and its reading room at UCT added to these complications. In spite of the obstacles, the UCT library staff were long-suffering and helpful. Further mention should be made of the staff, librarians and archivists at the National Library of South Africa and the Cape Town Archives – in particular Melanie Geustyn who helped me navigate the Special Collections at NLSA. Dani Fleischman should be recognised for the creation of the detailed maps included in this thesis. Special thanks should also be extended to John Dorrington who, at the very last minute, assisted in proof-reading my work.

My supervisor, Nigel Penn, has been on this journey with me since my undergraduate years and it is he who first sparked my interest in and subsequent passion for the northern frontier and its people groups. His expertise guided my every step but it was his patience and gentle encouragement that saw me through. He believed in me at times when I did not – and for that I cannot thank him enough.

Finally, mention should be made of my friends and family who supported me over the past three years. This thesis was not an individual effort, but took a community. It was forged not only in the library, but also in the gym, coffee shops and on the therapist's couch.

Chronology

- 1799** J.J. Kircherer and William Edwards (LMS) establish mission to the San at Zak River.
- 1801** Edwards and Jan Matthias Kok begin mission to the Tlhaping (Tswana) near the Kuruman River.
- 1802** William Anderson (LMS) and Cornelius Kramer settle at Klaarwater (later Griquatown).
- 1805** Christian Albrecht, Abraham Albrecht and Johannes Seidenfaden (LMS) settle at Stille Hoop and Blyde Uitkomst in Great Namaqualand.
- 1806** Albrechts' move to Warmbath, Seidenfaden to Hierachabis.
Zak River mission is abandoned.
- 1807** Caledon appointed as governor.
- 1810** Death of Abraham Albrecht.
- 1811** Pella and Warmbath attacked by Afrikaner Oorlams, missionaries retreat into Little Namaqualand.
Cradock appointed as Governor.
- 1812** Seidenfaden relocates to Zuurbraak.
- 1814** Johann Heinrich Schmelen (LMS) establishes Bethany station in southern Namibia.
Somerset appointed as Governor.
- 1815** Johann Ebner (LMS) joins Afrikaner Oorlams at Afrikaner's Kraal.
Christian Albrecht dies at the Cape.
- 1816** Barnabas Shaw (WMMS) establishes mission station at Leliefontein in the Kamiesberg.
John Bartlett arrives at Pella.
- 1817** Schmelen establishes station at Steinkopf.
LMS Missionary Meeting takes place at the Cape under George Thom.
Edward Edwards (WMMS) joins Shaw at Leliefontein.
- 1818** Ebner replaced by Robert Moffat (LMS) at Afrikaner's Kraal.
James Kitchingman (LMS) arrives at Steinkopf.
Schmelen visits Bethany.
- 1819** James Archbell arrives at Leliefontein.

- 1820** Shaw, Edwards and Kitchingman travel to Bethany and the Fish River region of Great Namaqualand.
- 1821** Kitchingman leaves Steinkopf for Bethelsdorp.
Michael Wimmer (LMS) arrives at Steinkopf.
- 1822** Schmelen travels to Angra Pequena (present-day Lüderitz).
- 1824** William Threlfall (WMMS) arrives at Leliefontein.
- 1825** Threlfall, Jacob Links and Johannes Jager are murdered near Warmbath.
Richard Haddy (WMMS) arrives at Leliefontein.
Station at Pella formally abandoned on account of drought.
- 1826** Shaw departs Leliefontein for the Cape.
- 1828** Schmelen withdraws from Bethany.
Cole appointed as Governor.
- 1829** Schmelen establishes mission station at Komaggas.
RMS missionaries Theobald von Wurmb, Johann Leipoldt, Gustav Zahn and Daniël Lückhoff arrive at the Cape.
- 1830** Von Wurmb and Leipoldt establish station of Wupperthal.
- 1832** Von Wurmb establishes station of Ebenezer.
- 1834** Edward Cook (WMMS) re-establishes mission at Warmbath.
D'Urban appointed as governor.
- 1840** Franz Kleinschmidt (RMS) arrives at Komaggas.
Death of Wimmer at Steinkopf.
- 1841** Johann Friedrich (RMS) visits Komaggas to establish its eligibility for a school for 'Hottentot youths'.
Carl Schröder (RMS) recommences mission at Pella.
- 1847** Extension of Colony boundary to Orange River.
Pottinger appointed as governor.
- 1848** Death of Schmelen at Komaggas.
Transferal of LMS missions in Little Namaqualand to RMS.

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Chapter One: Setting the Scene

An Introduction

The onlookers were evidently fascinated at the spectacle unfolding in front of their eyes. A Namaqua Khoikhoi visiting the Cape, John Engelbrecht, adorned with his kaross, ministered to a group of Khoikhoi who sat at his feet.¹ Engelbrecht, and several other Namaqua and Damara, had accompanied the German missionary Johann Heinrich Schmelen, of the London Missionary Society (LMS), on a trip to Cape Town in September of 1816. It was Schmelen's first trip to the Cape since he had initially set out for Namaqualand just five years prior. George Thom, LMS agent at the Cape, was one of the awestruck onlookers: 'This is the first time that the people of Cape Town I believe have heard a native of South Africa act as such.'² A Reformed and Lutheran minister, as well as several of their congregation, were also present on that day. Engelbrecht was the youngest of the group but was considered by Thom as 'the most complete interpreter.'³ Though unable to understand the Nama dialect in which he spoke, the bystanders were surely impressed. It wasn't only Engelbrecht who left a lasting impression. In conversation with another baptised Namaqua, who reportedly understood Dutch, Thom was captivated by the biblically sound answers the man provided to his questions. Topics such as 'the fallen state of man, justification by faith alone, the nature of baptism, and the Lord's Supper – the place which good works have in religion – sanctification and the enjoyments of the heavenly wants they explained.'⁴ Thom was clearly unaware that the missionary effort in both Little and Great Namaqualand was by 1816 already heavily dependent on Namaqua and baster evangelists. The sight of a Namaqua preacher in action, a crowd-drawing gimmick at the Cape, was the norm in Namaqualand in the first half of the nineteenth century.

¹According to the *Dictionary of South African English* a 'kaross' is 'a blanket of softened skins, used both as a cloak and (now more usually) as a covering for a bed or floor'; These were commonly worn and used by the Khoikhoi; Peter Kolbe visited the Cape in 1705 and noted that the Khoikhoi wore 'krosses, or Mantles, of Sheep – or Wild Beast-Skins, which they wear Cloak-wise, over their Shoulders...their Krosses (as the *Hottentots* term 'em) or Mantles cover the Trunks of their Bodies...They wear 'em the Year round; in Winter turning the hairy side inward; in Summer turning it outward. They lie upon 'em at Nights. And, when they die, they are tied up and interr'd in 'em', Peter Kolbe, *The Present State of the Cape of Good-Hope, or, A Particular Account of the Several Nations of the Hottentots : Their Religion, Government, Laws, Customs, Ceremonies, and Opinions ; Their Art of War, Professions, Language, Genius, Etc. Together with a Short Account of the Dutch Settlement at the Cape* (London: Printed for W. Innys, 1731) 185, 187.

² Church for World Mission (hereafter CWM), School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, London Missionary Society (hereafter LMS), South Africa Incoming Correspondence (box 6) folder 5, jacket not labelled, Thom to LMS, 4 September 1816.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

1.1 ‘Namaqualand is forgotten’

The missionary reliance on African evangelists was, in part, due to the dwindling presence of European missionaries in the Namaqualand region of southern Africa. In 1817 the German missionary Johann Ebner appealed desperately to the LMS to send further missionary reinforcement. Namaqualand, he pled:

...is a barren land but not so unfruitful as some say, who had perhaps looked in for some days. A long experience can teach us more...But why will the Brethren not come into the Namaqualand? Why do thy not follow the direction of our worthy Directors? They sit in Cape Town, or round about, and they hear the name of a missionary, or they go to Bethelsdorp when they are destined into the Namaqualand. I would not say anything aloud, but Namaqualand is forgotten. Thousands of those poor Namaqua cry aloud: come over and help us! ⁵

Ebner’s appeal echoes the cry of Acts 16:9-10 which describes Paul’s vision of a Macedonian man, beseeching him to ‘come over to Macedonia, and help us’.⁶ This verse, later known as ‘the Macedonian Plea,’ found its way onto the Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629 where it wreathed the head of a loin-cloth wearing ‘Indian’.⁷ The seal and its motto have since been studied by generations of scholars and have come to symbolise the entanglement of colonisation and missions.⁸

Ebner’s plea captures the very essence of the early missionary endeavour on the Cape Colony’s northern frontier in the early nineteenth century. The region was ecologically inhospitable and politically turbulent. Though not wholly disconnected from the Cape, it was isolated and relatively unsurveilled by colonial authorities. The first missionaries of the LMS consequently had their sights set elsewhere, on the far more agriculturally fruitful and politically important

⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3A, J. Ebner to LMS, Cape Town, 8 October 1817.

⁶ “During the night Paul had a vision of a Macedonian man standing and begging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’ After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.” Acts 16:9-10, New King James Version (NKJV).

⁷ Kristinia Bross, “‘Come over and Help Us’: Reading Mission Literature”, *Early American Literature* 38, no. 3 (2003), 395–400.

⁸ Ann Marie Plane, *Dreams and the Invisible World in Colonial New England: Indians, Colonists, and the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.); Cathy Rex, ‘Indians and Images: The Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, James Printer, and the Anxiety of Colonial Identity’, *American Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (2011), 61–93.

region of the eastern frontier. Ebner correctly identified the missionary pre-occupation with the Colony's eastern frontier at the expense of the Colony's north-western frontier. The eastern frontier in the early nineteenth century has since been recognised by many historians as one of the most missionised regions globally.⁹ The Eastern Cape mission stations, such as Bethelsdorp, garnered the attention of government, missionary organisations, and later historians. Home to arguably the most renowned of the LMS missionaries, Johannes van der Kemp and James Read, Bethelsdorp was considered a 'model' station by LMS administrators in London, on the grounds that, unlike the stations of Namaqualand, it was 'conducted with far greater regularity, and utility and with incomparably less expense.'¹⁰ The harsh climatic and environmental conditions of Namaqualand made missionary activity nearly impossible and consistently drained the LMS financially. Unable to sustain themselves, the Namaqualand missions quickly became a burden to the LMS directors and understandably so. These trying conditions impeded both the evangelical and secular pursuits of the Namaqualand missionaries and exasperated their reliance on African intermediaries and assistants who facilitated and supported their presence in the region.

The integral role played by these African missionary agents has only recently come to the forefront of missiology, specifically in the South African context. As will be shown later in this chapter, extant literature has instead focused on the role of European missionaries in economic and cultural imperialism. These studies, although important in their own right, fail to account for the ways in which the spread of Christianity pre-dated the formal arrival of European missionaries in the context of Namaqualand. In turn they fall short of answering the following pertinent questions: How can one account for the fact that, in many instances, the success of the missionary endeavour relied solely on the assistance provided by local powerbrokers? Or the fact that many African societies actively sought out missionary intervention, aware of the material advantages attached to it? Or, perhaps most relevant to this thesis, the fact that it was African missionaries and assistants who better communicated and dispersed the Christian message than their European counterparts? The regional complexity of Little Namaqualand at the start of the nineteenth century, as will be discussed, offers an interesting case study through which to consider these questions.

⁹ Robert Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 36 ; Roger Levine, 'Savage-born but new-created: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa chief and missionary in Britain, 1836-1838,' *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 33, no. 1 (2007), 114.

¹⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 4B, Hardcastle to LMS, 11 March 1811.

Through an in-depth reading of the extensive archival records of the LMS and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS), housed in the Special Collections of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, and Liverpool Hope University in Liverpool, this thesis considers the complex development of missionary activity in the Little Namaqualand region in the first half of the nineteenth century. The role of local interlocutors in this process forms the focus of this thesis. These non-white groups and individuals occupied a multiplicity of roles. Powerful baster groups, who have since been regarded as pioneers of the north-west frontier, provided economic and political support for the early missionaries. Khoikhoi too offered support as guides and translators and later became evangelists in their own right. These African agents offered far more than just assistance to the European missionaries, but rather, as this thesis will show, sustained and extended the missionary effort in Little Namaqualand until 1848.

1.2 The Sources

The research presented in this thesis is informed primarily by the records of the various missionary societies – a fact that is controversial at the least, considering the author’s intention to illuminate the lived experiences and amplify the voices of African Christian agents. These records are problematic on many levels, not only due to their inherently paternalistic and Eurocentric nature, but also due to the many details and narratives they fail to represent. These obstacles do not, however, render the missionary sources useless nor unreliable. Through a careful reading of the records, one can certainly identify the influence asserted by these indigenous characters and the missionaries’ subsequent reliance on them. In many cases these individuals are named, and anecdotes of their lives, though brief, are provided. It is without a doubt that the records underplay the weighty contribution that they made. Those who remain unnamed, or reduced to a single-mention, inhabited lives of influence which cannot go unnoticed. The silences and gaps in the record do not benefit the attempts of this thesis to place the African missionaries at the centre of the story – which they most certainly were. Reading against the grain, the silences are telling. These records do, however, offer rich descriptions which throw particular light on the ways in which the Namaqua used and comprehended Christianity. These descriptions are central to this thesis and allow us to understand the nature of the missionary effort in Little Namaqualand. Descriptions as dense cannot be found

elsewhere. For this reason the author has chosen to forego the colonial government archives in order to allow for greater attention to be paid on the missionary archives.

The records of the LMS held at SOAS are comprised of incoming and outgoing correspondence between the missionaries and the Society from 1805 to 1845, as well as the journals of the individual missionaries. These records are supplemented by the various volumes of the *Transactions of the London Missionary Society*, in which a collection of the yearly reports and excerpts from the above-mentioned records are published. The WMMS sources, held on microfiche, include incoming correspondence as well as a series of biographical accounts of the missionaries. They too are supplemented by the *Missionary Notices of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* as well as the *Annual Reports of the WMMS*. Those reports which were subsequently published by the societies were evidently created for public consumption, whereas others were private.

The WMMS records offer far more detailed descriptions of the Namaqua assistants than the LMS', more specifically that of Wesleyan Assistant Missionary Jacob Links. WMMS missionary Barnabas Shaw eagerly published a sermon, diary entry and a letter penned by Links and did much to amplify his contribution to the mission of Leliefontein and its satellite stations. This thesis attempts to analyse these auto-ethnographic texts as a window into the world inhabited by a Little Namaqua missionary and the transformation that the Christian message underwent as a result.

A thorough investigation into these records has brought to life the world of the missionaries and inhabitants of Little Namaqualand. These letters and journals, often addressed to their respective missionary societies, understandably focus on the spiritual affairs of the various mission stations. They describe instances of conversion, baptism and other spiritually significant events. They also happen to describe the processes and circumstances surrounding the propagation of Christianity and the establishment of missions in the Namaqualand region, which this thesis attempts to systematically cover and contextualise.

The nineteenth century accounts of travellers and government-sanctioned expeditions also inform the research presented in this thesis. Some visited the mission stations and provided accounts thereof, others merely passed through the region and in many cases offered colourful and in some cases degrading descriptions of the area and its inhabitants. In particular, reference

is made to the travel journals of Sir James Edward Alexander, George Thompson, James Backhouse, Hinrich Lichtenstein, William Burchell and Sir John Barrow. Many of these accounts also fleshed out the political affairs of the regions through which they passed.¹¹ Alexander in particular paid much attention to the injustices experienced by the Little Namaqua, namely the ill-treatment of labourers at the hands of local farmers and the illegal appropriation of land.¹²

1.3 The Context: Little Namaqualand

By the early nineteenth century the region of Little Namaqualand, situated below the Orange River, presented a complexity which set it apart from other missionised regions in southern Africa at the time. The area, identified by Penn as a backwater of sorts, attracted an array of people including exiles and opportunists from the Cape.¹³ In particular it attracted groups of Khoikhoi, ‘bastards’ and ‘oorlams’ who in the eighteenth century fled the Cape and the reaching grasp of colonial expansion. Before continuing to consider the movements of these groups it is worth briefly pausing to consider their origins. The category of ‘baster’ or ‘bastaard’ is purely a racial one, denoting the mixed-race children of Khoikhoi and European parents.¹⁴ ‘Oorlam’, however, was a ‘cultural’ category referring to Khoikhoi or mixed-race people who had become acculturated, often acquiring horses and ammunition and a decent understanding of Dutch.¹⁵ The lines between these racial and cultural identities were not fixed but it is safe to

¹¹ J.E. Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery into the Interior of Africa*, Vol 1 (Cape Town: Struik, 1967); G. Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, Part 2 & 3. V. Forbes (ed.) (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1968); H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806*. (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1928); W. Burchell. *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa with Numerous Engravings* (London: Longman, Hirst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822); John Barrow, *An Account of Travels into the interior of Southern Africa in the years 1797 and 1798, part II* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp, 1968); James Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

¹² Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 71.

¹³ Nigel Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone, 1700 – c. 1815’ (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1995), 158.

¹⁴ J.S. Marais, *The Cape Coloured People, 1632 – 1937* (London: Longman Green & Co), 9.

¹⁵ The Journal of Van Riebeeck suggests that the Dutch in the seventeenth century called homeward-bound sailors ‘Orangh lammen’ from the Malay ‘orang lama’ which translates to a ‘man of experience’, H.B Thom (ed.) *Journal of Jan Van Riebeeck*, Vol. 1, 1651-1655 (Cape Town: Balkema, 1952), 223; According to Legassick the term ‘oorlam’ was later used by independent Khoikhoi to describe those Khoikhoi in the service of colonists, Martin Legassick ‘The Northern Frontier to c.1840: The Rise and Decline of the Griqua people’ in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds.) *The Shaping of South African Society*, 2nd edition (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), 410 n49 ; Kienetz believes the term to stem from ‘overland’, Alvin Kienetz, ‘The Key Role of the Oorlam Migrations in the Early Europeanization of South West Africa (Namibia)’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 4 (1977); For more on the term ‘Oorlam’ see Johannes du Bruyn, ‘The Oorlams Afrikaners: from Dependence to Dominance, c.1760-1323’ (Unpublished paper, University of South Africa,

say that those referred to as oorlam possessed a degree of independence and autonomy beyond the reaches of colonial society. Many oorlams were in fact basters or ‘Baster-Hottentots’, the mixed-race descendants of slaves and Khoikhoi, eager to flee the Cape on account of their deteriorating social status. After leaving the Cape, Penn claims that these ‘non-white fugitives’ began to establish a common oorlam identity.¹⁶ Legassick cautions against too simplistic a categorisation of oorlam and baster, claiming that ‘the Bastards were as much culturally and economically as biologically defined.’¹⁷ He posits that those of slave, Khoikhoi or San descent could become classified as ‘bastards’. The argument is a nuanced one but for matters of clarity this thesis will, wherever possible, implement the following distinctions. Those of mixed racial origins will be referred to as ‘bastards’. Those of non-white origins, whether baster, Khoikhoi, San, slave, or ‘Baster-Hottentot’, exhibiting a degree of acculturation, will be referred to as ‘oorlam’.¹⁸

Many of these groups continued northward and fled across the Orange River. The migration of the oorlams into Little Namaqualand and southern Namibia has been since referred to as the ‘oorlam invasion’, and covered in-depth by Kienetz and Lau.¹⁹ Those who did not cross the river, but remained in Little Namaqualand, lived alongside the resident Khoikhoi group, the Little Namaqua. The author has chosen to use the word ‘Khoikhoi’ to denote the semi-nomadic pastoral people who occupied much of the Cape prior to the arrival of Europeans.²⁰ Hunter-gatherer groups who lived alongside the Khoikhoi have been termed ‘San’. Historical accounts, as will be seen in this thesis, often referred to the Khoikhoi in the derogatory term ‘hottentot’

1981); Penn, ‘The Northern Frontier Zone,’ 162 ; Heinrich Vedder and Cyril Godfrey Hall, *South West Africa in Early Times : Being the Story of South West Africa up to the Date of Maherero’s Death in 1890* (London: Oxford University Press, 1938), 171; L. Fourie, C. H. Hahn and V. Vedder, *The Native Tribes of South West Africa* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1966), 116; Peter Carstens, *The Social Structure of A Cape Coloured Reserve* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 95; William Hudson et al., *Anatomy of South Africa: A Scientific Study of Present Day Attitudes* (Cape Town: Purnell, 1966), 88, 95.

¹⁶ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 164.

¹⁷ Martin Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780–1840* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010), 46; Griqua Chief Andries Waterboer is believed to have solely been of San extraction.

¹⁸ The offspring of slaves and Khoikhoi were commonly referred to as ‘Baster-Hottentots’ or ‘Bastaard-Hottentots’; For more on Bastards and Baster-Hottentots see Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 158-161.

¹⁹ Brigitte Lau, ‘The Emergence of Kommando Politics in Namaland, Southern Namibia, 1800-1870’ (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982); See also Brigitte Lau, ‘Conflict and Power in Nineteenth-Century Namibia,’ *Journal of African History* 27, no. 1 (1986), 29–39; Brigitte Lau, *Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner’s Time* (Windhoek Archives Publication Series, No. 8, 1987); Kienetz, ‘The Key Role of the Oorlam Migrations’.

²⁰ ‘Khoikhoi’ is a Nama word which broadly speaking translates to ‘men of men’, ‘Kwekwena’ in the Cape dialect; see R. Elphick, *Kraal and Castle: Khoikhoi and the founding of white South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), xv.

and the San as ‘bushmen.’ Once again there is debate surrounding the fluidity of the racial and economic boundaries of these two categories.²¹

Further clarification is needed when addressing the Khoikhoi groups occupying the regions of Namaqualand. Broadly speaking, those Khoikhoi living in the region of Little Namaqualand south of the Orange River are called ‘Little Namaqua’, while those living north of the Orange River are called ‘Great Namaqua’.²² The Orange River, though used to delineate these two groups from one other, was not a fixed boundary and was regularly crossed by both groups. Interaction between the Little and Great Namaqua was commonplace, with some early travellers into the region believing them to be one and the same.²³ Wherever possible, this thesis will attempt to distinguish between these two groups; however, when the distinction is unclear in the records, the term ‘Namaqua’ will be used in a broader sense. ‘Khoikhoi’ will be used even more broadly when the regional origins are completely unknown.

²¹ Elphick, *Kraal and Castle*, 25; Susan Newton-King, *Masters and Servants on the Eastern Cape Frontier 1760-1803* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 28; J.E. Parkington, ‘Soaqua and Bushmen: hunters and robbers’ in *Past and Present in hunter-gatherer studies*, edited by Schire, C. (New York: Academic Press, 1984), 159; A. B. Smith, ‘Review of ‘Khoikhoi and the founding of White South Africa,’ *Social Dynamics* 11, no. 1 (1985), 90; A.B. Smith, ‘Competition, conflict and clientship: Khoi and San relationships in the western Cape’ in *Prehistoric pastoralism in southern Africa*, edited by Hall, M. and Smith, A.B., 36-41, *South African Archaeological Society Goodwin Series*: 5 (1986); ‘Seasonal exploitation of resources on the Vredenburg peninsula after 2000 B.P.’ in *Papers in the Prehistory of the Western Cape, South Africa*, edited by Parkington, J.E. & Hall, M., 393-402 (*Oxford: British Archaeological Reports International Series* 332, 1987); A.B. Smith, ‘The origins and demise of the Khoikhoi: the debate,’ *South Africa Historical Journal* 23 (1990), 3-14; A.B. Smith, ‘On becoming herders: Khoikhoi and San ethnicity in southern Africa,’ *African Studies* 49, no. 2 (1990), 51-73; A.B. Smith, K. Sadr, J. Gribble & R. Yates, ‘Excavations in the South-Western Cape, South Africa, and the archaeological identity of prehistoric hunter-gatherers within the last 2000 years,’ *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 46 (1991), 71-91.

²² Contemporary sources refer to the Namaqua as ‘Nama’. ‘Namaqua’ is the older form of the word. Both names can be used interchangeably. The author has chosen to refer to the group as ‘Namaqua’ as this name is found in the archival sources which form the basis of this thesis. ‘Nama’ is used to denote the language spoken by the Namaqua; E. E. Mossop (ed.), *The Journals of Brink and Rhenius*. VRS No. 28 (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1947); For more on the ‘Namaqua’ see I. Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa: Bushmen and Hottentots* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1965); Fourie, Hahn and Vedder, *The Native Tribes*; Vedder and Hall, *South West Africa in Early Times*; Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders of Southern Africa: a Comparative Ethnography of the Khoisan Peoples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Winifred Hoernlé and Peter Carstens, *The Social Organization of the Nama and Other Essays* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1985); Tilman Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia C.1700 - C.1840: Khoikhoi, Missionaries and the Advancing Frontier’ (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1989).

²³ A.B. Smith & R. H. Pfeiffer, ‘Robert Jacob Gordon: Notes on the Khoikhoi,’ *Annals of the South African Culture History Museum*, 5:1 (1992); L.E. Webley, ‘The History and Archaeology of Pastoralist and Hunter-Gatherer Settlement in the North-Western Cape, South Africa’ (PhD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1992), 34; E.E. Mossop, *The Journal of Hendrik Jacob Wikar (1779) and the journals of Jacobus Coetze Jansz (1760) and Willem van Reenen (1791)* VRS No. 15 (Cape Town: Van . Riebeeck Society, 1935); Nigel Penn, ‘The Orange River Frontier Zone, c.1700-1805’ in Andrew Smith (ed.) *Einiqualand: Studies of the Orange River Frontier* (Rondebosch: UCT Press, 1995).

It was the baster and oorlam immigrants from the Cape who first arrived in Little Namaqualand and were responsible for the expansion of the northern frontier. Dutch colonists, known as *trekboers* also ventured into the region during the eighteenth century where many married Khoikhoi women. This led to the creation of another generation of basters. The *trekboers* were quite unlike their European ancestors, forced by the unique conditions of the north-west frontier to adopt a semi-nomadic lifestyle and many other characteristics of Khoikhoi society.²⁴ At the start of the nineteenth century Lichtenstein commented on the relations between the Europeans and basters of the north-west: ‘In the middle of the last century when the country North of the Elephant’s River was first peopled, when the customs and manners of the colonists had degenerated less from European manners and customs than they have at present, reciprocal necessities, and more pure religious feelings, united the colonists and the Hottentots.’²⁵ It is because of this that the north-west has since been considered ‘the cradle of the baster population’.²⁶

Little Namaqualand, in the early years of the nineteenth century, was a frontier zone – a meeting point and melting pot of many different groups and cultures.²⁷ The arrival of European missionaries and the development of missionary efforts in the region thus took place in a geographically and socially dynamic context. As will be shown in this thesis, these complexities shaped the nature and extent of the missionary endeavour.

²⁴ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone’, 4; P. J. Van der Merwe, *Die Noordwaartse Beweging van die Boere voor die Groot Trek 1770-1842* (The Hague: W. P. van Stockum & Zoon, 1937); P. J. Van der Merwe, *Die Trekboer in die Geskiedenis van die Kaapkolonie 1657-1842* (Cape Town: National Press, 1938); Nigel Penn, ‘Pastoralists and Pastoralism in the Northern Cape Frontier Zone during the Eighteenth Century’, in M. Hall and AB. Smith (eds.), *Prehistoric Pastoralism in Southern Africa*, 62-68.

²⁵ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa* as cited in Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*, 11.

²⁶ Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*, 12.

²⁷ For more on the concept of a ‘frontier zone’ in South African history see Martin Legassick, ‘The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1780-1840: the Politics of a Frontier Zone’ (PhD thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1969); Martin Legassick, ‘The Northern Frontier to c. 1840: The Rise and Decline of the Griqua People’ in Richard Elphick and Herman Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 – 1820* (Cape Town: Masked Miller Longman, 1989); Herman Giliomee, ‘Processes in development of the southern African frontier,’ in Lamar, H. & Thompson, L. (eds.) *The Frontier in History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Martin Legassick, ‘The Frontier Tradition in South African Historiography,’ in Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore (eds.) *Society and Economy in Pre-Industrial South Africa* (London: Longman, 1980); Leonard Guelke, ‘The Making of Two Frontier Communities: Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century,’ *Historical Reflections/Reflexions Historiques* 12, no. 3 (1985), 419-448; Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*; Nigel Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone in South African Frontier Historiography,’ in *Colonial Frontiers* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2017); Nigel Penn, ‘The frontier in the Western Cape, 1700-1740’ in I. E. Parkington and M. Hall (eds.) *Papers in the prehistory of the western Cape*, South Africa. B.A.R. International Series 322 (1987), 462-503.

Martin Legassick's pioneering thesis first drew attention to work of missionaries on the northern frontier with a focus on the societies of the Griqua, a powerful baster group, and the Sotho-Tswana in Transorangia.²⁸ He was followed closely by Robert Ross' study of the Griqua and Johannes Du Bruyn's thesis on the work of the early missionaries amongst the Tlhaping – a Sotho-Tswana group.²⁹ Tilman Dederling's 1989 thesis, 'Southern Namibia c. 1790-c. 1840: Khoikhoi, Missionaries and the Advancing Frontier', later published as *Hate the Old and Follow the New*, extended the conversation across the Orange River into Great Namaqualand and offered an in-depth socio-economic study of the missions in southern Namibia which were inextricably linked to developments and processes taking place south of the Orange River. Dederling's arguably Marxist approach follows closely in the footsteps of Legassick, focusing largely on capitalist expansion and political economy. His work is however not completely void of the cultural processes at play. Both Legassick and Dederling's work can however be said to have taken place prior to the cultural turn – a period which the Comaroffs work on the missionaries and the Southern Tswana can be said to have pioneered.³⁰ More recently Paul Landau's *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa* has offered a weighty contribution to the study of missionaries in Transorangia and the Southern Highveld.³¹ In doing so, Landau has been said to 'correct' the deleterious effect' of the Comaroffs work.³²

These works do not directly consider the region of Little Namaqualand but offer an illuminating backdrop against which to consider developments to the west. No extensive study of the sort exists, an apparent gap in the historiography, which this thesis attempts to fill. The socio-political context of Little Namaqualand differed from Great Namaqualand and the middle Orange. Dutch farmers had occupied Little Namaqualand since the eighteenth century and the Little Namaqua's early encounters with Christianity and European missionaries thus took place

²⁸ Legassick, 'The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries.'

²⁹ Robert Ross, *Adam Kok's Griquas: a Study in Development of Stratification in South Africa*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Johannes Du Bruyn, 'Die Tlhaping en die Eerste Sendelinge, 1801–1806', *South African Historical Journal* 14, no. 1 (1982), 8-34; Johannes Du Bruyn, *Die aanvangsjare van die Christelike sending onder die Tlhaping, 1800-1825*. (Pretoria: Die Staatsdrukker, 1989).

³⁰ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 29; Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Volume 2: the Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

³¹ Paul Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³² Barry Morton, 'Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948', *African Historical Review* 44, no. 2 (2012), 14-142.

within an existing climate of tense Khoikhoi-Dutch relations. Processes of conversion and the adoption of Christianity thus had an array of political underpinnings which differed from neighbouring regions which had remained largely unaffected by encroaching farmers.

Nigel Penn's 1995 thesis, and later his book *The Forgotten Frontier*, presents extensive research on the northern frontier and has contributed extensively to the understanding of the north-western frontier zone prior to the arrival of European missionaries at the end of the eighteenth century.³³ Penn considers the failure of the LMS' first mission amongst the San at Zak River in 1799. He suggests that although a hunger for the word, and the temporal advantages attached to it, clearly existed among groups in the north-west, the establishment of a mission station in its traditional form was incompatible with the region's fluctuating social climate at the time. The Zak River missionaries also faced a language barrier which caused them to rely on the assistance of a Khoikhoi, Willem Fortuin, and his San wife for translation. Vigilant, one of the three San captains who first requested the services of a missionary in Bushmanland, later withdrew his support for the mission on the grounds that the missionaries posed a threat to the way of life of his people. Many San, once lured to the mission by the supplies of livestock and tobacco that the missionaries offered, followed suit. After the withdrawal of the San, the station was only occupied by Khoikhoi and baster converts, from the Cederberg, who seemed to have been more receptive to the Christian message.³⁴ The final dissolution of the Zak River mission in 1806 followed a series of droughts, environmental constraints, and outbreaks of violence between San and colonists. The LMS abandoned their attempts to evangelise to the San and instead focused on the more responsive Khoikhoi and baster groups of the Orange River region.

With the failure of the Zak River mission, the LMS missionaries set their eyes on Great Namaqualand. Little Namaqualand, for reasons that this thesis aims to uncover, was seemingly overlooked despite several requests and opportunities to establish a station in the region. Abraham and Christian Albrecht, the German missionary brothers of the LMS, accompanied by Johannes Seidenfaden, instead established a station at Warmbath in Great Namaqualand. It was only in 1811, after the Warmbath mission was attacked by the notorious Afrikaner Oorlam gang, that the LMS missionaries were begrudgingly forced to retreat into Little Namaqualand

³³ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone'; Nigel Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier: Colonist and Khoisan on the Cape's Northern frontier in the Eighteenth Century* (Cape Town: Ohio University Press, 2005).

³⁴ See page 246 – 249.

and establish the stations of Steinkopf, Pella and later Komaggas. The Wesleyans entered the region soon after. Barnabas Shaw of the WMMS had too been initially destined for Great Namaqualand but, upon passing through the Kamiesberg, met the chief of the Little Namaqua who had been en route to the Cape to request the services of a missionary. Shaw remained in the Kamiesberg and established the station of Leliefontein in 1816. By the 1820s the LMS, then spearheaded by Johann Heinrich Schmelen, made two, arguably feeble, attempts to re-establish themselves in Great Namaqualand. Forced to remain in Little Namaqualand, Schmelen was assisted by John Bartlett, James Kitchingman and Michael Wimmer who attended to the stations of Steinkopf, Pella and later Komaggas. By 1840 the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) replaced the then diminishing LMS presence in Little and Great Namaqualand. The WMMS continued work at Leliefontein throughout the nineteenth century.

The events and processes which took place in Little Namaqualand were intricately connected to those taking place in Griqualand and Great Namaqualand. The formation of the dominant Griqua polity owes much to the chiefly Kok lineage who migrated from the Piketberg district of the Western Cape to the Kamiesberg of Little Namaqualand. In the early nineteenth century Cornelius Kok was the most powerful baster leader in the region. He and his followers remained in the Kamiesberg while his siblings and several of his children journeyed northwards and continued along the Orange River before settling at Griquatown. It was only in 1816 that Kok and several of his followers finally left Little Namaqualand and moved to Griquatown. The early nineteenth century thus saw the movement of people, trade and correspondence between the lower and middle Orange. Furthermore, as will be seen in Chapter Four, the Wesleyan station at Leliefontein in Little Namaqualand often provided Namaqua assistants and translators to accompany missionaries along the middle Orange, the Highveld and Great Namaqualand. The Orange River was by no means a barrier separating these regions but should instead be viewed as a meeting place of sorts. Little Namaqualand was perceived by many missionaries as a stepping stone into Great Namaqualand and Griquatown. Cornelius Kok was an integral player in connecting these regions. On many occasions he directed and facilitated the movement of both African and European missionaries into these surrounding regions. Furthermore, in times of distress, missionaries were known to retreat into Little Namaqualand for the purpose of recouping and stocking up on supplies.

The extensive works of Legassick, Du Bruyn, Dederling and Penn are foundational to this thesis. Apart from Penn they do not specifically address the region of Little Namaqualand. The

historiographical gaps are thus undeniable. Other than a handful of localised histories of mission stations in the region, there remains no wider-scale analysis of the nature of the missionary presence in Little Namaqualand nor the significant role played by Namaqua and baster missionaries in the propagation of Christianity in the area.³⁵ In supplementing the existing historiography, this thesis seeks to flesh out the otherwise untold history of the Namaqua, baster and oorlam groups of Little Namaqualand and their early encounters with Christianity and European missionaries.

1.4 Missions to the Khoikhoi

The Khoikhoi were one of the first indigenous groups in South Africa to be missionised. A pastoral people occupying much of the south-western Cape, they attracted the attention of the early VOC settlement for their wealth of cattle and trading capabilities. Dispossessed of much of their land and cattle by the nineteenth century, the majority of the Cape Khoikhoi had either fled to the north or enrolled in the labour force of colonial farmers. A smaller group found refuge on some of the early mission stations.³⁶ The Moravians were the first to begin work among the Khoikhoi. In 1737 George Schmidt began work at Baviaanskloof among the Hessequa Khoikhoi of the Overberg region. This stint was brief on account of grievances of the Dutch Reformed Church, the VOC and colonists. The mission was abandoned in 1742, at the instruction of the VOC, until it was eventually re-established in 1792 and named Genadendal.³⁷ The Dutch were evidently resistant to the Christianisation of the Khoikhoi which threatened the supply of labour to frontier farmers and the fragile balance of power.

³⁵ For localised histories see N. J Price, 'Leliefontein: Structure and decline of a Coloured mission community 1870-1913' (Honours Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1976); J. Bregman, 'Land and Society in the Komaggas region of Namaqualand' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2010); W.P. Carstens, 'The Social structure of a cape coloured reserve' (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1966); W.P Carstens, 'The Community of Steinkopf: an Stenographic Study and an Analysis of Social Hangs in Namaqualand' (University of Cape Town, 1961); G. Klinghardt, 'Social Differentiation and Local Government in Pella, a Rural Coloured Area in Great Bushmanland' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1982); K. Rawson, 'Land Rights & Identity: The Establishment of the Leliefontein Mission and its impact on the Little Namaqua of the Kamiesberg' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2017).

³⁶ For more on Khoikhoi-Dutch relations see Elphick, *Kraal and Castle*; Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone'; Karel Schoeman, *Seven Khoi Lives : Cape Biographies of the Seventeenth Century* (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2009); Newton-King, *Masters and Servants*; V.C Malherbe, 'The Cape Khoisan in the Eastern districts of the colony before and after Ordinance 50 of 1828' (Ph.D Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1997); Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*; Emile Boonzaier, Candy Malherbe, Andrew Smith and Penny Berens, *The Cape Herders : a History of the Khoikhoi of Southern Africa* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1996).

³⁷ For more the Moravians at the Cape see Bernhard Krüger, *The Pear Tree Blossoms: The History of the Moravian Church in South Africa, 1737-1869* (Provincial Board of the Moravian Church in South Africa, 1966); Joseph E. Hutton, *A History of the Moravian Church* (Moravian Publication Office, London, 1909); J. de Boer and E.M. Temmers, *Unitas Fratrum* (Genadendal: The Moravian Church in South Africa, 1987); Karel T. August, 'The

With the transferal of the Cape into the hands of the British in 1795, the restrictions of missionary activity amongst the Khoikhoi were eased. The Moravian mission of Genadendal flourished and soon was praised by the colonial government for the industry and civilisation which they promoted amongst their Khoikhoi members. These positive sentiments were held by the Batavians who briefly ruled the Cape from 1803 to 1806. In a conversation with Christian Albrecht of the LMS, Governor Janssens ‘spoke a great deal in praise of the Brethren in Baviaanskloof, saying, that they were useful and able men, and taught the Hottentots to be industrious.’³⁸ Janssens words clearly left an impression on Albrecht who paid a visit to Baviaanskloof prior to departing for Namaqualand. Of the station he noted that ‘the Hottentots...paid a great deal of attention to the missionaries. They sing with edification and conduct themselves with propriety.’³⁹ The governments’ continuous positive appraisal of the Moravians clearly frustrated the LMS – so much so that in 1823 Dr Philip, superintendent of the LMS, defended the LMS station of Bethelsdorp in an attempt to ‘silence the ignorance and clamour’ of the ‘foolish men’ who celebrate the Moravian Institutions as the only ‘missionary establishments where industry and civilisation go hand in hand with religious instruction.’⁴⁰

The LMS, led by Van der Kemp, began work at the Cape in 1799 amongst the Xhosa.⁴¹ Van der Kemp travelled to Xhosaland accompanied by John Edmond. Edmond’s time amongst the Xhosa was even shorter than Van der Kemp’s. Their first attempts to establish a mission amongst Chief Ngqika and his people failed.⁴² Though initially accepted by Ngqika, the Xhosa

Quest for Being Public Church: A Study of the South African Moravian Church in Historical and Contemporary Perspective’ (PhD Thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2003); H.C. Bredekamp and H.E.F. Plüddemann (eds), *The Genadendal Diaries Vol. 1* (University of the Western Cape Institute for Historical Research, Bellville, 1992).

³⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1) 4C, Albrecht, 20 January 1805 - 7 August 1805.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1A, J. Philip to LMS, Cape Town, 24 January 1823.

⁴¹ For more on the LMS in Southern Africa see Elizabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799-1853* (Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002); Comaroffs, *Of Revelation and Revolution, vol 1 and 2*; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*; R. Elphick, and T.R.H. Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa: a Political, Social & Cultural History* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997); Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland, and Zululand* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978); John W. De Gruchy, *The London Missionary Society in Southern Africa, 1799-1999: Historical Essays in Celebration of the Bicentenary of the LMS in Southern Africa* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2000); Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895* (London: Frowde, 1899); Tom Hiney, *On the Missionary Trail: A Journey Through Polynesia, Asia, and Africa with the London Missionary Society* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2000).

⁴² For more on Van der Kemp’s missions to the Xhosa see Janet Hodgson, ‘Do we hear you nyengana? Dr J.T Van Der Kemp and the First Mission to the Xhosa,’ *Religion in Southern Africa* 5, no. 1 (1984), 3-47; Ido H. Enklaar, *Life*

chief and Van der Kemp viewed one another with deep suspicion. The Xhosa at the time were involved in a series of wars, both internally and externally. The followers of Ngqika and Ndlambe were at war with one another and the Xhosa of the Zuurveld, joined by Khoisan allies, had recently attacked colonists in the area. For this reason Edmond believed that the Xhosa were in no state to receive a missionary. Van der Kemp disagreed but was soon proved wrong. Establishing a mission amongst the Xhosa during such a turbulent time was evidently impossible. Edmond left Xhosaland in late 1799, followed by Van der Kemp a year later.

The LMS' attempts to establish themselves and convert the Xhosa in 1799 followed a similar trajectory to that of the Zak River mission. Elphick claims that, much like the San, the Xhosa were not as receptive to the early missionaries as the Khoikhoi.⁴³ Xhosa society, he argues, remained in its traditional socio-political form for far longer than Khoikhoi society. Xhosa belief structures, he claimed, were able to withstand Christian influence until the Cattle Killings of the 1850s. Khoikhoi groups, who faced both political and social disintegration early on, were thus far more receptive to the explanation and remedy that Christianity offered to their suffering. This was certainly the case. Xhosa society, however, had faced tremendous interruption, as discussed above, and evidence suggests that Christian thought and millenarianism had infiltrated Xhosa society much earlier than Elphick proposes.⁴⁴ That being said, Elizabeth Elbourne claims that 'the Xhosa beyond the Zuurveld had far more room to manoeuvre than the San of the northern frontier zone.'⁴⁵ Khoikhoi and baster receptivity to Christianity can perhaps be better explained by taking into consideration their long history and close co-habitation with colonists, rendering them more acculturated and attuned to both the message and media of the missionaries.

and Work of Dr. J. Th. van der Kemp, 1747-1811: Missionary, Pioneer and Protagonist of Racial Equality in South Africa (Cape Town and Rotterdam: A.A. Balkema, 1988).

⁴³ Richard Elphick, 'Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa' in Howard Lamar and Leonard Thompson (eds), *The Frontier in History: North America and South Africa Compared* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press 1981).

⁴⁴ Janet Hodgson, "Ntsikana's 'Great Hymn': A Xhosa Expression of Christianity in the Early 19th Century Eastern Cape" (Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1980); Janet Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa: a Study of the Origins and Development of the Traditional Concepts of the Supreme Being* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1982.); Jeff Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: The Xhosa Cattle Killing of 1856-57* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1989).

⁴⁵ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 121; E. Elbourne, 'Early Khoisan Uses Of Mission Christianity', *Kronos*, no. 19 (1992), 1.

Meanwhile Johannes Kicherer and William Edwards were sent north to the San of the Zak River.⁴⁶ The LMS soon came to the realisation that, despite their attempts to evangelise amongst the Xhosa and the San, it was amongst the Khoikhoi that their message was best received and their first converts originated. The Moravians and the LMS thus fixed their gaze on the Khoikhoi. The LMS stations of Bethelsdorp and Theopolis in the Eastern Cape became the hub of LMS missions to the Khoikhoi in South Africa and have since received the attention of the majority of historians. LMS missions to the Griqua polities of the middle Orange in 1801 and to Namaqualand in 1805 have received comparably less attention.

Van der Kemp and Read at Bethelsdorp received much of their renown through their attempts at intervention on behalf of many Khoikhoi who had received severe ill-treatment and often brutality at the hands of farmers. The introduction of Circuit Courts in 1811, following the Caledon Code of 1809, sought to hear the complaints of the Khoikhoi and, if appropriate, to offer redress. At these hearings Van der Kemp and Read often represented the cases of their Khoikhoi followers. In doing so, the missionaries stirred up contempt amongst the farmers and the authorities. Dr John Philip would later champion the cause of the Khoikhoi in his critique of the Caledon Code and his attempts to improve the legal standing of the Khoikhoi in the colony.⁴⁷ The efforts of Philip were supported by Sir Andries Stockenström and his humanitarian movement back in Britain who strongly opposed the Apprenticeship Act of 1812. Their efforts were surely instrumental in the eventual passing of Ordinance 50 in 1828 which in some respects sought to undo much of the damage done by the Caledon Code. It allowed the Khoikhoi to legally own land and abolished the pass laws which had kept them in a state of *de*

⁴⁶ For more on the Zak River mission see Nigel Penn, 'Civilising the San, 1790-1799' in Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*; Karel Schoeman, *J.J Kicherer en die Vroee Sending, 1799-1806* (Cape Town: South African Library, 1996); Nigel Penn, "'Civilizing' the San: the first mission to the Cape San, 1791-1806" in Pippa Skotnes (ed.) *Claim to the country: the archive of Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd* (Cape Town: Jacana Media, 2007), 90-117.

⁴⁷ For more on Dr Philip, the Caledon Code of 1809 and the Circuit Courts see John Philip, *Researches in South Africa: Illustrating the Civil, Moral, and Religious Condition of the Native Tribes Including Journals of the Author's Travels in the Interior* (London: James Duncan, 1828); Wayne Dooling, 'The Origins and Aftermath of the Cape Colony's 'Hottentot Code of 1809,' *Kronos* 31, 2005; J.S Marais, 'The Colonial Hottentots (1795-1828)' in Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*; Kathryn Rawson, "'Magna Carta of the Hottentots': The Caledon Code of 1809 and its Impact on the Khoisan of the Cape" (Honours Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2015); Timothy Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empire: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2016); Nigel Penn, 'The Onder Bokkeveld Ear Atrocity,' *Kronos*, no. 31 (2005), 62-106.

facto slavery. The political interventionism of the LMS has received much attention from Robert Ross, Elizabeth Elbourne and Candy Malherbe.⁴⁸

Studies of interactions between missionaries and Khoikhoi in Southern Africa have focused largely on the station of Bethelsdorp. Through a detailed investigation of the Bethelsdorp station, Elbourne's *Blood Ground* offers perhaps the most extensive analysis of Khoikhoi responses to and negotiation of Christianity. Elbourne suggests that the Khoikhoi utilised a newly negotiated version of Christianity in an array of ways, some of which were practical and others political. Elbourne confirms Elphick's notion that Christianity offered the Khoikhoi a helpful framework with which to explain their oppression. It simultaneously provided them with an arsenal with which to combat it. Furthermore, Robert Ross argues that Christianity catalysed a sense of 'political consciousness' which grew amongst the Christianised Khoikhoi of Bethelsdorp.⁴⁹ These claims clearly build upon the work of Stanley Trapido who first suggested the existence of a 'Hottentot Nationalism' through a case study of the Khoisan of the Kat River Settlement.⁵⁰ Trapido went on to claim that the politically active missionaries of the LMS, such as James Read, played an important role in instigating nationalism and encouraging the Khoikhoi to consider themselves as 'a distinct Tribe.'⁵¹ Notwithstanding the many emotional and spiritual responses to Christianity, these studies seem to support Elphick's claim that many Africans considered the associations of Christianity as more valuable than its content – literacy, baptism, firearms, protection and political representation, to name a few.⁵²

In Little Namaqualand the missionaries did not overtly promote ideas of political consciousness and nationalism amongst the Khoikhoi, as had been done at Bethelsdorp. This is not to say that these ideas did not exist in the region. Missionaries were in most cases explicitly requested by Khoikhoi, oorlams and basters in Little Namaqualand and it is evident that the initial reasons

⁴⁸ Malherbe, 'The Cape Khoisan in the Eastern districts'; Elbourne, *Blood Ground*; Robert Ross, 'Missions, Respectability and Civil Rights: The Cape Colony, 1828 -1854,' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 25, no. 3 (1999), 333-345; Robert Ross, 'The Social and Political Theology of Western Cape Missions, c. 1800- c. 1860,' in H. Bredekamp and R. Ross (eds.), *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand Press, 1995); Elizabeth Elbourne and Robert Ross, 'Combating Spiritual and Social Bondage: Early Missions in the Cape Colony' in Elphick, Richard, and T. R. H. Davenport (eds.) *Christianity in South Africa: a political, social & cultural history*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1997).

⁴⁹ Robert Ross, *These Oppressions Won't Cease : An Anthology of the Political Thought of the Cape Khoesan, 1777-1879* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2017).

⁵⁰ Stanley Trapido, "The Emergence of Liberalism and the Making of 'Hottentot Nationalism', 1815-1834" in *Collected Seminar Papers on the Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Vol. 17 (London: University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1992)

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 53.

⁵² Elphick, 'Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa'.

for this were political. In a rapidly closing frontier zone with a growing and often hostile settler society, protection against farmers and greater land security became increasingly necessary. The hostile conditions in Little Namaqualand thus necessitated a political mobilisation on the part of Namaqua groups. Nowhere was this more evident than at Leliefontein in the Kamiesberg. From 1806 the Little Namaqua sought out the assistance of missionaries on multiple occasions but it was only in 1816 that they managed to secure the services of the Wesleyans who based themselves at Leliefontein in 1816. Three years later, the Wesleyan missionary Edwards recorded Chief Wildschut ‘standing by my little hut with joy sparkling in his countenance as he observed that he did not expect to get his land again from the Boor. The poor Namaquas say they are very thankful that God could send me to preach the gospel of the saviour and are also thankful that I have prevented the Boors from stealing their land.’⁵³

The Wesleyans at Leliefontein played an instrumental role in securing Little Namaqua access to land. They also, on several occasions, intervened on behalf of Little Namaqua labourers in cases of ill-treatment on duty. This was uncharacteristic of the Wesleyans who had a reputation for garnering the favour of the colonial government and settlers alike. The first Wesleyan missionaries arrived at the Cape in 1814, more than a decade after the LMS, and the Khoikhoi were not their first priority.⁵⁴ Facing government resistance to their attempts to evangelise among the soldiers and the slaves at the Cape, they were forced to look elsewhere. It was a matter of mere chance that Barnabas Shaw stumbled upon the Little Namaqua who in 1816 were themselves seeking out the services of a missionary. Since then the Wesleyans made sure to tread lightly and remain in good repute with the colonial government. The favourable reputation of the Wesleyans explains why they faced little resistance in establishing a mission in the Kamiesberg, as opposed to the LMS whose prior attempts failed. The tarnished reputation and questionable actions of LMS missionary Seidenfaden, who preceded the Wesleyans in the Kamiesberg, was met by fierce opposition from colonists and local authorities.⁵⁵

⁵³ Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archive (hereafter WMMS), School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, E. Edwards, Reedmont, 18 July 1819.

⁵⁴ For more on the Wesleyans at the Cape see J. Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London: Longmans Greens, 1911); J. Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta, 1906); W. J. Mears, *Barnabas Shaw: Founder of South African Methodism*. (Rondebosch: Methodist Missionary Department, 1957); Barnabas Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa* (Cape Town: Struik, 1970).

⁵⁵ Nigel Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing’ in Nigel Penn, *Murderers, Miscreants and Mutineers: Early Colonial Cape Lives*. (Cape Town: Jacana Media, 2015); see page 87.

The LMS missionaries in Namaqualand, who by association could be deemed pro-Khoikhoi, did little to foster a group identity or political agenda like their counterparts in the east. Khoikhoi identities in Little Namaqualand were much more fluid and would have been weakened by the presence of basters and oorlams – the likes of which were not present in the east.

The missionaries can be said to have been more focused on survival and adapting to the unique and barren environment, which forced them to adopt a semi-nomadic lifestyle. In 1812 Van der Kemp informed Albrecht that the Namaqualand missionaries would receive the same financial support as those at Bethelsdorp. The notion infuriated the Namaqualand missionary Christopher Sass, who complained that

...we there (Namaqualand) could have no corn, no garden and not many oxen and sheep could bring up and must live on meat, whereas they not being in a barren wilderness, had good food to bring up plenty cattle, they had pretty gardens and cornfields and were nearer to Cape Town and in the midst of the farmers, by whom they sometimes could get some from Cape Town, what they stood in need of, without expenses...⁵⁶

Perhaps then it was the restrictive environmental conditions of Namaqualand and the hostility of the encroaching settler and oorlam society which made the organised political mobilisation of the Khoikhoi more difficult. These conditions forced many Khoikhoi to move across the Orange River away from settler society. Those who remained in Little Namaqualand were mostly basters, or had risen to the status of oorlam, offering them a level of protection. Others, like the Little Namaqua in the Kamiesberg, had a degree of security granted to them through the registration of the loan farm Leliefontein in the name of Jantjie Wildschut by Governor Plettenberg in 1772, the implications of which will be considered in Chapter Three. This did not completely protect the Little Namaqua from the impact of neighbouring settlers who obstructed their cycles of transhumance and subsequently their livelihoods. Many of them had no other option but to enlist in the service of the settlers for sustenance.

Unlike the Little Namaqua, the neighbouring Griqua were able to politically mobilise themselves more successfully. The LMS station of Griqua Town, initially known as

⁵⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 1C, Sass to LMS, Silverfontein, 10 April 1812.

Klaarwater, was arguably the hub of missionary activity in the north. In 1801, prominent baster groups, known as the Griqua, invited the LMS to settle among them. William Anderson arrived shortly after. From the outset it was evident that the Griqua intentionally utilised the missionaries to foster political and economic ties with the colony. The missionaries were in turn utilised by the colonial government as political intermediaries, tasked with the duty of issuing passes which allowed the Griqua to enter the colony for the purposes of trade. Through this the Griqua were able to secure access to ammunition and firearms with which they hoped to assert their independence and autonomy in the region. The missionaries, however, were unable to adequately control illegal trading. Hostilities on the middle Orange resulted in the rebellion of 1814 and greater government intervention – the details of which will be discussed in Chapter Two.⁵⁷ Unlike the comparably non-threatening missions in Little Namaqualand, the missions to the Griqua were a concern to the colonial government. There is little existing evidence to suggest that the Little Namaqua explicitly requested firearms and ammunition from the missionaries. The records do, however, suggest that many of the Little Namaqua residing at Leliefontein had access to firearms by 1824. Where they procured these firearms is open to speculation.

The Little Namaquas' inability to arm themselves and politically mobilise as successfully as the neighbouring Griqua and oorlam groups can certainly be attributed to their proximity to and oppression by colonists. Prior to the arrival of missionaries in Little Namaqualand, many of the Little Namaqua of the Kamiesberg had been in the employ of farmers. Their dependence on this employment continued even with the formal establishment of the Leliefontein mission. The Namaqua reported ill-treatment on several occasions. With his request for a missionary in 1811, Guido Links explained to Seidenfaden that 'it is true, our district is but small, however we have enough, the worst is that we are oppressed by the Colonists. If the Government would make the necessary regulations, we should do very well.'⁵⁸ The Namaqua evidently had an understanding of the social and political benefits that were attached to procuring a missionary. Access to literacy and baptism would grant them an enhanced social status in colonial society – something which in the context of their relationship with neighbouring and encroaching farmers was under threat. The Little Namaqua also believed that the missionaries would serve

⁵⁷ For more on the Griqua missions see Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*; Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier to c. 1840.'

⁵⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 4A, J. Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

as intermediaries between them and the colonial government at the Cape, and would thus offer much-needed protection from the colonists. These colonists, heavily reliant on Little Namaqua labour and ignorance, were understandably heavily opposed to the establishment of the mission stations and Christianisation of the Namaqua.

1.5 Missions and Empire in Southern Africa : A Conversation

The relationship between missions and colonialism has long been a disputed one and, while not central to this thesis, is worthy of mention for the purpose of contextualisation. The early historiography of missions, which Johannes Du Bruyn and Nicolas Southey term ‘the reverential phase’, promoted the evangelical and civilising pursuit of missions and idealised those heroic European missionaries who were believed to be its torchbearers.⁵⁹ Robert Strayer has referred to the scholars of this period as the ‘metropolitan-ecclesiastical school of mission history.’⁶⁰ By the 1950s and 1960s this writing was replaced by those more liberal historians who harshly criticised missionaries whom they believed to be agents of colonialism and empire. Dora Taylor’s book, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest*, was published in 1952 under the pseudonym Nosipho Majeke. The title of her book says much about her stance on the matter and prefaces her critique of the missionaries complicity in colonialism.⁶¹ African historiography itself was leaning toward a nationalist perspective during this time, and missionary history followed suit, with an emphasis on African responses and protests to mission expansion. The work of African evangelists became prominent and missionaries were believed to be ‘no less racist than other Europeans’ and ‘intimately linked to imperial pressures and colonial governments.’⁶²

By the 1970s the focus shifted from the colonising influence of the European missionaries to the African societies in which they worked. The ways Africans utilised and exploited missionaries came to the forefront of the literature. Martin Legassick’s then unpublished thesis, ‘The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries, 1780-1840 : the Politics of a Frontier

⁵⁹ Johannes Du Bruyn and Nicolas Southey, ‘The Treatment of Christianity and Protestant Missionaries in South African History’, in Ross, Robert, and H. C. Bredekamp (eds.) *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1995), 36.

⁶⁰ Robert Strayer, ‘Mission History in Africa: New Perspectives on an Encounter,’ *African Studies Review* 19, no. 1 (1976), 1.

⁶¹ Nosipho Majeke, *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* (Johannesburg: Society of Young Africa, 1952).

⁶² Strayer, ‘Mission History in Africa,’ 1.

Zone', can be said to have ushered in this phase.⁶³ Though only formally published in 2010, its 1969 unpublished format offered a substantial contribution to the conversation.⁶⁴ In its analysis of the interaction between the Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the LMS missionaries in the region of Transorangia, it considered the African polities' use of the material advantages attached to the missionaries. Anthony Dachs followed in Legassick's footsteps shortly after, with his nuanced discussion of Sotho-Tswana responses to missionaries.⁶⁵ By the 1980s historians began to analyse the political and economic responses of African societies to the arrival of missionaries and European expansionism. During this period we see little consideration of the religious responses of Africans to missionaries but rather attempts at reconstructing African religion.⁶⁶

While the above have been the dominant historiographical trends of the 1950s to 1980s, works were published intermittently which arguably went against the trend and foreshadowed works to come. The concept of religious change became prominent, with historians analysing both sides of the encounter and, more specifically, the social and political background of the missionaries.⁶⁷ This, many believed, directly influenced the theology of the missionaries and the subsequent responses of Africans thereto. Norman Etherington's work on northern Nguni responses to Christianity exemplified this.⁶⁸ Only through an understanding of the social backgrounds of both the missionaries and the Africans, he showed, could one begin to understand African responses to Christianity. Etherington's study, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics in Southeast Africa*, though published in 1978, was based on his doctoral thesis 'The Rise of the Kholwa in Southeast Africa 1835-1880', originally presented in 1971. For this reason some have critiqued his work for being a product of the 1960s literature rather than the

⁶³ Legassick, 'The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana, and the Missionaries.'

⁶⁴ Later published as Legassick, Martin, *The Politics of a South African Frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the Missionaries, 1780-1840*.

⁶⁵ A.J. Dachs, 'Christian Missionary Enterprise and Sotho-Tswana Societies in the Nineteenth Century' in A.J. Dachs and M. F. C. Bourdillon (eds.) *Christianity South of the Zambezi* (Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1973), 53; A.J. Dachs, 'Missionary History – A Conflict of Interpretation', in C.R. Hill and P. Warwick (eds.), *Southern African Studies* (University of York, 1977).

⁶⁶ G.M Setiloane, *The Image of God Among the Sotho-Tswana* (Rotterdam,; Balkema, 1976); Hodgson, *The God of the Xhosa*.

⁶⁷ T.O Beidelman, 'Social Theory and the Study of Christian Missions in Africa', *Africa*, XLIV, 3 (1974), 241.

⁶⁸ Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics*; See also Norman Etherington, 'Mission Station Melting Pots as a Factor in the Rise of South African Black Nationalism', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, IX, 4 (1876), 592-605.

1970s.⁶⁹ Etherington's study, however, cannot be discredited, contributing several important questions to the discussion, such as:

Why did some Africans choose Christianity? Why did most Africans reject it? What kinds of people went to live at mission stations? How did life in African Christian communities differ from life in heathen communities? What was the relationship between white missionaries and black converts? Can the roots of African separatist churches and political movements in South Africa be traced to developments in mission communities before the Zulu War?⁷⁰

Richard Elphick's chapter in *The Frontier in History*, 'Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa,' was most certainly a product of the 1970s scholarship on Africans and missions, and built directly on the theses of Legassick and Etherington.⁷¹ Elphick's work is based on the frontier zones of southern Africa and considers the ways in which the frontier experience shaped the nature and direction of the cultural and religious change which, he argued, took place on both sides of the missionary encounter. Much like Etherington, he stressed the diverse socio-economic and theological backgrounds of the missionaries and missionary societies which influenced and shaped this exchange.

Before the turn of the century the historiography can be said to have come a full circle with the role of missionaries in the colonising enterprise once again coming to the foreground. The conversation had, however, changed and focused on the idea of 'cultural imperialism'.⁷² Jean and John Comaroff's influential work, the voluminous *Of Revelation and Revolution*, boldly entered the conversation in 1991, introducing the concept of 'the colonisation of consciousness'.⁷³ Brian Stanley's work, published around the same time as the Comaroffs' first volume, drew many parallels, stressing the role of Christianity in 'the ideological thrust of

⁶⁹ Davis, R. Hunt, 'Review of *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880: African Christian Communities in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand*, by N. Etherington', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 14, no. 4, 730-733.

⁷⁰ Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants, and Politics*, 5.

⁷¹ Elphick, 'Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa.'

⁷² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993); Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., 'The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism' in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 360; Brian Stanley, 'Nineteenth-century Liberation Theology: Nonconformist Missionaries and Imperialism', *Baptist Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1987), 5-18; Paul S. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (London: James Currey 1995).

⁷³ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution vol. 1*, 29.

Western colonial aggression.⁷⁴ In 1997 Andrew Porter expressed dissatisfaction with the existing scholarship on ‘cultural imperialism’, arguing that the missionaries’ success in Africa ‘depended on their value and usefulness, the willingness of local leaders and their people to cooperate with them and the possibility of Christianity being construed in a manner answering to local circumstances’.⁷⁵ Porter’s later contributions to the *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* and the *Oxford History of the British Empire* emphasised how indigenous peoples accepted, adapted or wholly rejected the cultural influences of the British.⁷⁶

The Comaroffs’ work, though extensive and ground-breaking for its time, has since received criticism. Henry Bredekamp and Robert Ross’ edited collection *Missions and Christianity in South African History*, published in 1995 shortly after the Comaroffs’, considered how the form and enactment of Christianity was in most cases decided by the mission converts and not by the European missionaries.⁷⁷ The European missionaries thus can be said to have failed to completely dismantle and replace African religious and social systems. Christianity cannot be said to have been imposed on Africans. Many rejected and negotiated with Christianity and the mission stations and adapted it to suit their specific needs. Because of this, their consciousness cannot be said to have been colonised, ‘at least in the same way as their land and their labour was colonised.’⁷⁸ Bredekamp and Ross’ opposition to the claims of the Comaroffs continued:

To say that the consciousness of South Africans was colonized is akin to saying that it was false. It can only be an insult, a polemical device, a demeaning of the real choice and the real dignity of those who came to accept, in a part and in their own ways, the message of the missionaries.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 24.

⁷⁵ Andrew Porter, “‘Cultural imperialism’ and protestant missionary enterprise, 1780–1914,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997), 386.

⁷⁶ Andrew Porter, ‘Empires in the Mind’ in P. J Marshall, (ed.) *The Cambridge illustrated history of the British Empire* Cambridge University Press Cambridge (England, New York: 1996); Andrew Porter ‘Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire’ in Andrew Porter (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁷⁷ Ross and Bredekamp, *Missions and Christianity in South African History*.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*; For other reviews of the Comaroffs see Clifton C. Crais, ‘South Africa and the Pitfalls of Postmodernism’, *South African Historical Journal* 31, no.1 (1994), 273-279; Leon De Kock, ‘For and Against the Comaroffs: Postmodernist Puffery and Competing Conceptions of the ‘Archive’, *South African Historical Journal* 31, vol.1 (1994), 280-289; Johannes du Bruyn ‘Of Muffled Southern Tswana and Overwhelming Missionaries: The Comaroffs and the Colonial Encounter’, *South African Historical Journal* 31, no.1 (1994), 294-309; Doug Stuart., ‘Revelations from Neo-Modernity’, *South African Historical Journal* 31, no.1 (1994), 290-293.

Etherington too cautioned that the Comaroffs have ‘breathed new life into the almost lifeless corpse of the missionary-as-imperialist.’⁸⁰ This was a corpse that Steven Kaplan had been happy to bury as early as 1982. He was clearly relieved that ‘the opposing figures of the missionary-hero and the missionary-imperialist had begun to vanish from the scholarly literature.’⁸¹

In the context of South Africa, missionaries played a more ambivalent role in the imperial project.⁸² They were in many cases at odds with the colonial government and certainly with settlers who often opposed their presence and attempts to convert indigenous populations. African communities, especially those on the peripheries of colonial settlement, quickly recognised the advantages of an attachment to a missionary. Missionaries could facilitate trade, foster political ties and convey information from the colonial centre. Many Africans can be said to have utilised the missionaries as political intermediaries long before the colonial government acknowledged their usefulness in this regard. Only when the security of the north-western frontier was under threat, toward the mid-nineteenth century, did the colonial government actively engage the missionaries and recognise their presence as a stabilising force in the region. The missionaries most certainly sought to civilise, convert and Westernise the Africans amongst whom they worked. They in some cases encouraged them to join the British Empire and were understandably often met with hostility and sometimes violence. The ambiguous relationship between missions and empire in the nineteenth century is fittingly summarised by Freund:

To the extent that they created new communities, the missionaries represented a threat to Cape employers that their labourers would desert them and find champions for their grievances. As a result, despite widespread belief that Christians must work for the conversion of the heathen, the mission stations evoked much opposition among employers. Moreover, the government, increasingly anxious to support the farmers,

⁸⁰ Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.

⁸¹ Steven Kaplan, ‘Ezana’s Conversion Reconsidered’, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 13, no. 2 (1982), 101.

⁸² For more on these issues see Charles Villa-Vicencio and Peter Grassow (eds.) *Christianity and the Colonization of South Africa: A Documentary History, vol 1* (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2009); Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700- 1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Ross and Bredekamp, *Missions and Christianity in South African History*; Elphick and Davenport, *Christianity in South Africa*.

came into conflict with the missionaries. At the same time both government and employers could appreciate the advantage for the colony if the mission stations could add to the stability of the social order. As a result of these ambiguous attitudes, phases of co-operation between government and missionaries were juxtaposed with phases of conflict.⁸³

The idea of the missionaries as agents of empire, and Africans as passive recipients thereof, though not completely without merit, is further complicated by the role played by African evangelists in the missionary endeavour. In 1999 Paul Landau commented: ‘African teachers played a larger role than missionaries in many places, and Christianity developed in ways missionaries did not understand. Christians practised their faith alongside or even prior to the ministrations of Europeans.’⁸⁴ In his edited works, *Missions and Empire*, Etherington later took a firm stance on the issue, arguing that:

...the greatest difficulty faced by those who have tried to argue that Christian missions were a form of cultural imperialism has been the overwhelming evidence that the agents of conversion were local people, not foreign missionaries. None of them were coerced into believing and very few were paid.⁸⁵

The consideration of these indigenous agents is not new to the historiography of missions. In a 1972 pamphlet entitled ‘The Interpreters’, Monica Wilson issued a call for further studies of ‘Africans who participated in the translation of language, but who also ‘mediated ideas, law, custom, symbolism ...who listened as much as they taught.’⁸⁶ These Africans she termed ‘cultural brokers’, a term she borrowed from Clifford Geertz and Eric Wolf.⁸⁷ There has recently been an upsurge in these studies, with historians recognising the importance of the role played by these ‘native preachers’ in the nineteenth century missions in Asia, Central

⁸³ W. M. Freund, ‘The Cape Under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814’ in Elphick, R. and Giliomee, H. (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, 340.

⁸⁴ Paul Landau, “‘Religion’ and Christian Conversion in African History: A New Model,” *The Journal of Religious History* 23 (1999), 10.

⁸⁵ Etherington, *Missions and Empire*, 7.

⁸⁶ Monica Wilson, *The Interpreters* (Grahamstown: 1820 Settlers’ National Monument Foundation, 1972), 17-20.

⁸⁷ Roger Levine, *A Living Man from Africa: Jan Tzatzoe, Xhosa Chief and Missionary, and the Making of Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 200 n9.

Africa and the Americas.⁸⁸ The translation and transformation of the Christian message at the hands of these local interlocuters has only recently gained traction in the scholarship.⁸⁹ In relation to Africa, however these studies remain in their infancy, as will be discussed below.

1.6 The African Evangelists

Two factors bring into dispute the notion of a ‘missionary’ and ‘native’ dialectic in the spread of Christianity in Namaqualand. The first being that the arrival of Christianity in the region pre-dated that of the European missionaries, and the second being that, soon after their arrival, Christianity was quickly transferred into Khoikhoi and baster hands and rapidly disseminated. The dialectic too has been complicated by the fact that upon their arrival the early European missionaries were reliant on local power brokers. Their dominance in the region was thus not assumed nor was it immediate. Of this, Elbourne argues that missionaries entering a turbulent environment were initially weak and ‘able to manipulate power if and only if they could make the right alliances.’⁹⁰ This trend was occurring on a global scale, seeing local converts spearheading evangelisation en masse.⁹¹ Paul Landau comments that ‘Teachers played a larger role than missionaries in many places, and Christianity developed in ways missionaries did not understand. Christians practiced their faith alongside, or even prior to, the ministrations of

⁸⁸ Peggy Brock, ‘New Christians as Evangelists,’ in Peggy Brock (ed.) *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005); Edward E. Andrews, ‘Prodigal sons: Indigenous missionaries in the British Atlantic world, 1640—1780’ (PhD Thesis, University of New Hampshire, 2009).

⁸⁹ See Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); Brock, ‘New Christians as Evangelists,’ 132-152; Peggy Brock, ‘Two Indigenous Evangelists: Moses Tjalkabota and Arthur Wellington Clah,’ *The Journal of Religious History* 27, No. 3 (October 2003), 348-366; Terence Ranger, ‘Christianity and Indigenous Peoples: A Personal Overview,’ *The Journal of Religious History* 27, No. 3 (October 2003), 255-271; Terence Ranger, ‘Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,’ *African Studies Review* 29, no. 2 (June 1986); Roger Levine, *A Living Man from Africa*; Levine, ‘Savage-born but new-created’; B. Lawrance, E. Osborn, R. Roberts (eds.), *Intermediaries, Interpreters, and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006); Elbourne, ‘Early Khoisan Uses of Mission Christianity,’; Elizabeth Elbourne, ‘Indigenous Peoples and Imperial Networks in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Politics of Knowledge,’ in Philip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (eds.), *Rediscovering the British World* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005); William D. Lawson. *Wesleyan Local Preachers: Biographical Illustrations of Their Position in the Connexion, Utility in the Church, and Influence in the World* (WD Lawson, 1874).

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Elbourne, ‘Word Made Flesh: Christianity, Modernity and Cultural Colonialism in the Work of Jean and John Comaroff’, *American Historical Review*, CVIII (2003), 12.

⁹¹ Andrew Porter, ‘Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1914,’ *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, XX(1993), 372; E. Palmer Patterson, ‘Native Missionaries of the North Pacific Coast: Philip McKay and Others’, *Pacific Historian*, XXX (1986), 22-37; Susan Neylan, *The Heavens Are Changing: Nineteenth-Century Protestant Missions and Tsimshian Christianity* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2003); Andrews, ‘Prodigal Sons’; Stephen Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier: Tswana Evangelists and Their Communities During the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

Europeans.⁹² Simmons, whose work is based on the French Catholic missions to the Pacific Islands, comments that the success of Christian expansion in New Zealand was ‘primarily a Maori story, not a European one.’⁹³ The Maoris, he claimed, ‘played a part in their own conversion.’⁹⁴ Andrew Edwards, in his study of ‘Indian preachers’ in the British Atlantic, comments that ‘native missionaries – meaning native to the people they were evangelising – became absolutely central to the intercultural exchange between Europeans, Africans and Native Americans during the most formative years of their encounters.’⁹⁵

Acknowledging the role played by these indigenous agents does not, however, completely discredit the connection between missions, colonialism and capitalism. Although the responses of the indigenous evangelists to Christianity ranged from resistance, adaption, acceptance and subversion, they most certainly played a role in the propagation of Western ideas. In a sense it is then difficult to separate the work and influence of the indigenous agents from their European counterparts. These ideas have been recognised internationally by scholars, but have primarily focused on those indigenous evangelists who worked in the second half of the nineteenth century – those who preceded the European missionaries or were involved in the first waves of Christian expansion have been neglected to a large extent. Scholarship on those operating on the peripheries of colonial society – such as Namaqualand – is even more sparse.

Terminology is a contentious issue in this discussion. Historically, terms such as ‘native missionary’, ‘native agent’ or even ‘indigenous evangelist’ have been laden with negative connotations. In the light of this, Peggy Brock has suggested the use of ‘new Christian evangelists’, whom she defines as ‘people who having accepted Christianity attempted to persuade others to adopt the new religion.’⁹⁶ This language is more suitable for the context of Namaqualand where the evangelists were not always native to those among whom they preached. Many too were of mixed racial origins, which for many would bring into question the wording of ‘indigenous’. Stephen Volz, in his study on Tswana evangelists, does not

⁹² Paul Landau, ‘Religion’, 10.

⁹³ E.R. Simmons, *Pompallier: Prince of Bishops* (Auckland: CPC Publishing, 1984), 155; Raeburn Lange, *Island Ministers: Indigenous Leadership in Nineteenth-century Pacific Island Christianity* (Canterbury, NZ: MacMillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, 2005), 109; E.R. Simmons, ‘The Maori Mission to 1850’ in *A Brief History of the Catholic Church in New Zealand* (Catholic Publications Centre: Auckland, New Zealand, 1978).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Andrews, ‘Prodigal Sons,’ 2.

⁹⁶ Brock, ‘New Christians as Evangelists,’ 17.

hesitate to consider mixed-race or baster missionaries as ‘African evangelists.’⁹⁷ Paul Landau, who considers the work of mixed-race interpreters and teachers in the nineteenth century Southern Highveld, uses the word *métis* to denote them. This term he borrows from colonial South America where mixed-race people were known as *mestizo*.⁹⁸ What is interesting is that even during the nineteenth century the terminology used to denote indigenous evangelists was a contentious issue. Van der Kemp rightly recognised that the idea of a Khoikhoi evangelist would likely be met with hostility by settlers and would ultimately hinder their work. He suggested instead that ‘They ought to be merely members, or officers of the church at Bethelsdorp; as to the rest, private Hottentots, though, in fact, ministers of the gospel.’⁹⁹ Van der Kemp’s successor, James Read, agreed. ‘Our people are all missionaries’, he declared, encouraging his converts to evangelise covertly.¹⁰⁰

Wherever possible this thesis does identify the evangelists or teachers as either Khoikhoi, Namaqua or baster evangelists. When referring to the group as a whole, or when the distinction is unclear, the term ‘African’ will be used.

Within the scholarship of South African missions, the involvement of African evangelists, teachers and translators has not been appropriately considered. This is understandable considering the direction of the historiography and the perception of missions as an extension of the colonial project – an idea which has often been mistakenly perceived as antagonistic to the input of local agents. The existence of the African preachers in the nineteenth century and the extent of their contribution to the spread of Christianity was overlooked. This oversight was most likely influenced by a lack of African voices or testimonies within the sources. To date histories of African evangelists have focused on the second half of the nineteenth century, where sources are more numerous and literacy more common among converts.¹⁰¹ This research

⁹⁷ Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*.

⁹⁸ Landau, *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa*, 81.

⁹⁹ Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*, 32.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Read, 7 July 1815’ as cited in Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*, 32.

¹⁰¹ Peggy Brock, Norman Etherington, Gareth Griffiths, and Jacqueline Van Gent, *Indigenous Evangelists and Questions of Authority in the British Empire 1750-1940: First Fruits*. (Boston: Brill, 2015); John Peel, ‘The Pastor and the Babalawo: The Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth-Century Yorubaland,’ *Africa* 60, no. 3 (1990); Wyatt MacGaffey, *Religion and Society in Central Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Karen Fields, *Revival and Rebellion in Central Africa* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Ingie Hovland, *Mission Station Christianity: Norwegian Missionaries in Colonial Natal and Zululand, Southern Africa 1850-1890* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Tolly Bradford, *Prophetic Identities; Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850–75* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012.)

has focused primarily on missions amongst Bantu-speaking groups such as the Xhosa, Zulu and Tswana. The African teachers involved in most cases originated from these groups – examples of which being Jan Tzatzoe, Hermanus Matroos, Tiya Soga and John Dube.¹⁰² Most of these works, while instrumental in laying the ground work for future studies on the role of African evangelists, focus predominantly on the late nineteenth century and thus very few consider those prominent figures who facilitated early encounters with Christianity and European missionaries.

Candy Malherbe and later Elizabeth Elbourne were some of the first historians to consider, in any detail, the work of Khoikhoi lay evangelists in South Africa. Christianity, Elbourne states, “was spread well beyond the borders of the colony by those identified in the colony as ‘Hottentots’...even on the mission stations themselves, conversions appear to have been made more often by Khoekhoe than by missionaries.”¹⁰³ In 1814 the LMS held a conference in Graaff-Reinet at which Rev. John Campbell, an administrator of the LMS, announced that ‘missionaries should be formed from among the heathen.’¹⁰⁴ Following Campbell’s call, six men were selected for the task – two of whom being Khoikhoi from Bethelsdorp, Cupido Kakkerlak and Jan Goeyman. Kakkerlak, considered by Campbell as a ‘valuable Hottentot evangelist’, left Bethelsdorp with James Read in 1815. He worked alongside Read at Dithakong in 1816 before being appointed to work amongst the Kora at the Taaibosch kraal and later the Griqua.¹⁰⁵ Goeyman worked briefly at the LMS mission to the San on the upper Orange, at Toornberg and Hephzibah.¹⁰⁶ The mission stations amongst the San were closed by the government in 1818 but Goeyman remained until he removed to the Griqua state of Philippolis where he taught between 1822 and 1826.¹⁰⁷ Gerrit Sampson, another prominent Khoikhoi teacher out of Bethelsdorp, worked alongside Kakkerlak on many occasions. Of the two men,

¹⁰² Brock, ‘Two Indigenous Evangelists’; Brock, ‘New Christians as Evangelists’; Peggy Brock, ‘From Wars to a Prophet: The Making of the Reverence Tiyo Soga,’ in Tolly Bradford (ed.) *Prophetic Identities: Indigenous Missionaries on British Colonial Frontiers, 1850-75* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012); Peggy Brock, *The Many Voyages of Arthur Wellington Clah: a Tsimshian Man on the Pacific Northwest Coast* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011); Levine, *A Living Man from Africa*; Levine, ‘Savage-born but new-created’; Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*; Karel Schoeman, *The Early Mission in South Africa, 1799-1819*. (Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005); Robert Ross, ‘Hermanus Matroos, Aka Ngxukumeshe: A Life on the Border’, *Kronos*, no. 30 (2004), 47–69.

¹⁰³ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Minutes of the Graaff-Reinet Conference, August 1814 as cited in Malherbe, V. C. ‘The Life and Times of Cupido Kakkerlak,’ *The Journal of African History* 20, no. 3 (1979), 371.

¹⁰⁵ London Missionary Society, *Transactions of the London Missionary Society*, Vol. IV Campbell to Tracy, 64.

¹⁰⁶ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 108; Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 176; Schoeman, *The Early Mission*, 42.

¹⁰⁷ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 176.

Van der Kemp noted, 'I spoke and prayed with these two, but found that they spoke to me with less boldness than to their own countrymen.'¹⁰⁸ Another notable Khoikhoi from Bethelsdorp was Hendrik Boezak, an elephant hunter known to evangelise during his hunting excursions.¹⁰⁹

Jan Tzatzoe (or Tshatshu) is perhaps the most renowned of the Bethelsdorp lay preachers. Tzatzoe was of Xhosa origin and the son of a minor chief.¹¹⁰ In 1817 Tzatzoe played an instrumental role in founding the short-lived mission to the Xhosa at Kat River, alongside Joseph Williams. He was accompanied by another 'native agent' Matroos Jaris.¹¹¹ Jaris also joined Tzatzoe in the 1820s, during which they accompanied LMS missionary John Brownlee to establish a mission at Chumie in Xhosaland and later along the Buffalo River. Tzatzoe is perhaps best known for the role he played in the humanitarian efforts of the LMS. In 1836 he visited Britain where he, along with Khoikhoi leader Andries Stoffels, testified before the Select Committee on Aborigines.¹¹² He also delivered many speeches during his visit, the most notable of which he presented at the Special General meeting of the LMS held at Exeter Hall. During his speech he declared that the African Christians, like himself, were ready and able to form their own missionary societies and spread the gospel themselves.¹¹³ Tzatzoe's life and work is chronicled in detail by Roger Levine who describes him as a cultural intermediary who embodied the new hybrid identities being created during the colonial encounter. Most relevant to this thesis Levine considers how Tzatzoe integrated Christian beliefs and practices into his own understandings.

Stephen Volz's *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier* and Karel Schoeman's *The Early Mission in South Africa* have also contributed to the discussion of African evangelists. Both of these works consider the Khoikhoi evangelists who worked along the middle Orange in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁴ Jan Matthys Kok of the Cedarberg, the son of a European stable hand and a 'Hottentotsmeid' was one of the first African evangelists to work amongst

¹⁰⁸ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. I, Letter of James Read, 18 March 1802, as cited in Malherbe, 'The Life and Times,' 368.

¹⁰⁹ Elbourne. *Blood Ground*, 175.

¹¹⁰ Levine, *A Living Man from Africa*; Levine, 'Savage-born but new-created'.

¹¹¹ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 339.

¹¹² Levine, *A Living Man from Africa*, 126, 149; Keegan, *Dr. Philip's Empire*, 205-210.

¹¹³ Levine, *A Living Man from Africa*, 133.

¹¹⁴ Schoeman, *The Early Mission*; Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*.

the Batlhaping, a southern-Tswana group, as early as 1801.¹¹⁵ For this reason Schoeman deemed him ‘the first coloured missionary in South Africa.’¹¹⁶ Jan Kok is often referred to in secondary accounts, such as Du Plessis’ *Christian Missions in South Africa*, as having worked with William Edwards of the LMS. In reality, the two men operated independently of one another and at a considerable distance within the same Tlhaping territory. Furthermore, for reasons of ignorance or omission, the likes of Du Plessis fail to mention Jan Kok’s mixed-race heritage. Lichtenstein, who visited the region in 1805, spoke highly of Kok whom he believed to be far more useful than Edwards on account of his knowledge of the language and the culture of the people.¹¹⁷ Lichtenstein also mentioned two other African missionaries who assisted Kok, Jantje and David Bergover, whom he held in just as high esteem as Kok.¹¹⁸ Jan Kok’s time amongst the Batlhaping was short-lived. In 1808 he was killed in a dispute over an ivory trading transaction by a group of Batlhaping.¹¹⁹

Jan Hendrick, of mixed European and African descent, would later walk in Jan Kok’s footsteps. In 1816, at Dithakong, amongst the Batlhaping, Hendrick was considered ‘the most important Griqua employee’.¹²⁰ This was most likely due to his ability to preach in Kora, Dutch and Setswana, his role in fostering diplomatic ties with the Batlhaping during his hunting and trading expeditions, as well as the knowledge of the interior that he had acquired during these expeditions.¹²¹

Many of these African evangelists received no, or pitiful, compensation for their work. Malherbe claims that Kakkerlak received no salary from the LMS but was provided on occasion with provisions.¹²² Volz has, however, found evidence to the contrary. Kakkerlak did receive a salary from the LMS, as well as supplies from the Tlhaping mission.¹²³ This is not to

¹¹⁵ Du Bruyn, ‘Die Tlhaping en die Eerste Sendelinge’; Du Bruyn, *Die aanvangsjare van die Christelike sending onder die Tlhaping*; Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 437-438.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ H. Lichtenstein and O. Spohr (eds.) *Foundation of the Cape: About the Bechuanas* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1973), 72; Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 310.

¹¹⁸ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, vol.2, 335-336; Robert Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in Southern Africa* (London: Snow, 1867), 218.

¹¹⁹ Volz, *African Teachers on the Colonial Frontier*, 31.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 43.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Malherbe, ‘The Life and Times’, 372.

¹²³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3C, Read, 31 December 1817; (8)1A, Read, April 1819; Campbell, J., *Travels in South Africa undertaken at the request of the London Missionary Society, Second Journey* (London, 1822; reprint Cape Town, 1974), 143.

say that they were enough to sustain him financially. He kept herds of sheep near Griquatown to supplement his feeble salary.¹²⁴ Jan Hendrick was paid 33.30 rix dollars during the first year, as well as 126.60 rix dollars' worth of supplies.¹²⁵ By 1820 he is recorded as 'assistant missionary' and received 300 rix dollars for the year. Another of Read's Khoikhoi assistants from Bethelsdorp, 'Dirk', is recorded to have received 100 rix dollars a year.¹²⁶ Sethlodi, a Motlhaping man who became 'the leading Tswana Christian' and interpreter at the Tlhaping mission, was also included on the LMS payroll, although only in the second year of his work. Along with his wife Serone, he received an annual salary of 150 rix-dollars.¹²⁷ The salaries provided by the LMS were often not sufficient to live on, forcing many to supplement their income by hunting and trading along the Orange River.

Schoeman notes that the close co-operation between European missionaries of the LMS and African missionaries declined by the 1820s. This seems to correlate closely with the factionalism which arose within the LMS after a spate of adultery scandals within their inner circles. A missionary meeting called in 1817 by George Thom addressed the apparent misconduct of the missionaries, with James Read at its very centre.¹²⁸ Read was charged with impregnating the daughter of one of his converts. Read, who had been ministering at the time at Dithakong, was replaced by Scottish missionary Robert Moffat in 1821.¹²⁹ Many, including the Batlhaping, opposed Read's removal. Moffat was immediately displeased with the state of the mission, the cause of which he believed to be Read and his group of African evangelists.¹³⁰ He delivered harsh criticisms of both Kakkerlak and Hendrick and suggested they both be removed from the society.¹³¹ Surprisingly, the work of the Griqua and Khoikhoi missionaries later transferred hands to a series of Tswana lay preachers. Moffat's stance had evidently changed. 'As early as 1834,' he stated, 'we found it conducive to the interests of the mission

¹²⁴ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 143.

¹²⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3C, Read, 31 December 1817; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 3A, Campbell, Report for 1820.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 3A, Campbell, Kuruman Report and notes, 1820; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 2B, Read, 12 July 1820

¹²⁷ Volz, *African Teachers*, 43.

¹²⁸ For more on the Missionary Meeting of 1817 see page 162.

¹²⁹ For more on Robert Moffat at Kuruman see J. S Moffat, *The Lives of Robert and Mary Moffat* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1885); J.P.R Wallis (ed.), *The Matabele Journals of Robert Moffat 1829-1860* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1945.); I. Schapera, (ed.), *Apprenticeship at Kuruman; Being the Journals and Letters of Robert and Mary Moffat* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951).

¹³⁰ Legassick, 'John Philip, Robert Moffat, and the Griqua, 1819 – 1832' in *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 219.

¹³¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1A, Moffat, 24 January 1823.

to have recourse to native assistance.¹³² African missionaries, of Khoikhoi and Griqua descent, were the first to minister to the Tswana and convince them to receive European missionaries. This, Elbourne believes, is an idea which has been significantly underplayed by the Comaroffs' extensive work on the missionary endeavour amongst the Southern Tswana.¹³³ The later contribution of the Tswana evangelists was built on the foundations laid by their Khoikhoi and Griqua predecessors. These Tswana evangelists form the basis of Volz's 2012 study.¹³⁴

Studies on the influence and work of African evangelists and teachers during the first half of the nineteenth century are certainly in their primacy. The region considered in this thesis, Little Namaqualand in the north-west, has received little attention by historians, and the many evangelists it birthed have in most cases been completely neglected in the historiography. From their first arrival in Namaqualand, the European missionaries faced a predicament wholly different from those working elsewhere in South Africa. The nomadic nature of the people would become a constant obstacle in their attempts to both settle and instruct their converts who moved seasonally with their livestock. The missionaries were unable to both see to the needs of the station and accompany the travelling groups. This led to the establishment of a series of outposts or satellite stations through which the people constantly orbited. A shortage of European missionaries to the region and a bleak financial situation meant that this system relied almost solely on the assistance provided by Namaqua and baster assistants and teachers who were able to travel alongside the people to the outstations. Many of these assistants had risen to their positions through their initial role as translators, bridging the linguistic, and often cultural, gap between missionary and convert. Without them, communication between the two would have been near impossible. Their knowledge of Namaqua culture meant that they were

¹³² Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 589.

¹³³ Elbourne, 'Word Made Flesh,' 444, 447.

¹³⁴ Volz, *African Teachers*; For more of Volz' work on Tswana Evangelists see Stephen Volz, 'African Evangelism and the Colonial Frontier: The Life and Times of Paulo Rraffing Molefane', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 47, no. 1 (January 2014), 101–20; Stephen Volz, "Written on Our Hearts: Tswana Christians and the 'Word of God' in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 38, no. 2 (2008), 112–140; Stephen Volz, 'Caught between chief and missionary: Tswana Evangelists and European Colonization' in S. Swanepoel (ed.), *Resistance in the Northern Cape in the Nineteenth Century : History and Commemoration : Proceedings of a Mini-Conference Held at the McGregor Museum, Kimberley, 14-16 September 2011* (Kimberley, South Africa: McGregor Museum, 2012.)

not only linguistic but also cultural translators, transforming the Christian message into a vocabulary more palatable to the Namaqua hearers.

Many of the European missionaries based in Namaqualand wed Khoikhoi and baster women who played an integral role alongside their husbands. In most cases these women, and in some cases their children, took on the teaching responsibilities at the stations and led many classes. Schmelen's wife Zara was almost solely responsible for the translation of the gospels into Nama and has been deemed by Trüper as an 'assistant missionary'.¹³⁵ These women, although barely featuring in the missionary records, faced trying conditions and often died during or after childbirth.

There has been no study to date which considers the region of Little Namaqualand and the role of the baster and Namaqua power brokers, interpreters, assistant missionaries and evangelists who played an instrumental role in facilitating the presence of the missionaries, furthering the dissemination of Christianity and moulding the very message they communicated. These figures forged the way for their European counterparts in Little Namaqualand. The evidence is scant but their presence in the records of missionaries and travellers alike is undeniable. This thesis hopes to bring to light those who were, for reasons we cannot assume, deserving of a mention in the missionary record, namely John Engelbrecht, Jacob Links, Hendrick Smit, Peter Links, Timothy Africaner, Jonis April, David Afrikaner, the Goeyman brothers, the Engelbrecht brothers, Willem Moddel and the Zaal brothers. Others remain unidentified. In addition to these prominent figures we see the readiness of many of what this thesis terms 'unnamed Namaqua' to spread the gospel message. These men and women who belonged to the mission stations spread tenets of Christianity upon their travels to farms for work or neighbouring areas to water their cattle. The Christian message thus spread rampantly throughout Little Namaqualand through the mouths of Namaqua. The message they spread was an altogether transformed one. These African missionary assistants, though wielding the social capital of literacy and baptism, were in most cases reduced to lives of poverty and hardship and were seldom financially compensated for their work.

¹³⁵Ursula Trüper, *The Invisible Women: Zara Schmelen, African mission assistant at the Cape and in Namaland* (Basel: Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2006).

1.7 The European Missionaries

The London Missionary Society and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society worked simultaneously in Little Namaqualand during the first half of the nineteenth century before they were replaced by the Rhenish Missionary Society during the 1840s. Despite their affiliation to the LMS, many of the first missionaries into Little Namaqualand were of German origin. Many of whom – namely, Abraham and Christopher Albrecht, Johannes Seidenfaden, Johann Ebner and Johann Schmelen – were trained at Jänicke’s seminary in Berlin. Others, such as Henry Helm, Christopher Sass and Michael Wimmer, also received their theological training in Berlin. Before being commissioned to South Africa, these newly trained missionaries would spend a period of time at the headquarters of the LMS in London.

The Germans differed from the British strand of LMS missionaries who worked elsewhere in South Africa. Germany at the time was largely an agrarian society and was not yet as technologically advanced as England. Many of the first German missionaries of the LMS were artisans, not yet influenced by the ideals of industrialisation and capitalism. Unlike their British counterparts, their evangelicalism, originating during the Protestant missionary movement in Germany, was distinctly orthodox-pietist. The German pietists were firmly anti-intellectual, instead prioritising charity and a brand of evangelicalism that steered away from the kind of disruptive politicisation which defined other branches of the LMS operating in South Africa, spearheaded by the likes of Dr Philip and Van der Kemp. This seems to further explain the apolitical nature of the Namaqualand missionaries and their converts. Furthermore, Dederling claims that the politically fragmented nature of Germany at the time meant that the German missionaries were not driven by the same sense of nationalism or imperialism as their British colleagues.¹³⁶

The Wesleyans entered South Africa long after the LMS. The first WMMS missionary to be stationed at the Cape, J. McKenny, arrived in 1814.¹³⁷ His stay was short-lived as the government would not authorise his work amongst the soldiers and slaves at the Cape. McKenny departed for Ceylon shortly after. In 1816 Barnabas Shaw arrived. Shaw would later labour at Leliefontein, the WMMS base in the Kamiesberg region of Little Namaqualand.

¹³⁶ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia.’

¹³⁷ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*.

Much like the LMS, the WMMS was formed during the missionary movement catalysed by the Evangelical Revival and Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. The WMMS missionaries belonged to the working and middle classes, many of whom were artisans and tradesmen. Barnabas Shaw was born to a farming family in Elloughton, Yorkshire, where he gained a very practical knowledge of agriculture that he would later put to use at Leliefontein. Much like the Germans, Methodism prioritised personal piety. As John Wesley, its innovator, famously noted, ‘Leisure and I have taken leave of one another.’¹³⁸ On a doctrinal level the Wesleyans, with their Arminian beliefs, departed from non-conformist principles.¹³⁹ In this way they differed from the Calvinist English Dissenters of the Protestant movement. Hildegard Fast believes that the Wesleyan belief in free will, in opposition to the LMS belief in predestination, did not have implications on a practical level.¹⁴⁰ This may certainly be the case. Barnabas Shaw, however, would probably argue otherwise. In a letter he wrote in 1817 he expressed grave concern over what he termed ‘the fundamental principle’ of Methodism.¹⁴¹ The LMS, he feared, were spreading the corrupted gospel of unconditional election.¹⁴² In other parts of the world, the Calvinistic beliefs of the LMS were a concern for many Arminian WMMS missionaries who attempted to work alongside them.¹⁴³ In nineteenth century Samoa, the WMMS missionary George Brown complained of his LMS counterpart, John Thomas: ‘The LMS folks are a "dead & alive" lot & they seem to infect us.’¹⁴⁴ The sentiments of Shaw and Brown would have dismayed the late Wesley, whose work, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, specifically sought to denounce the apparent condemnation against those with different principles and the subsequent division which existed between societies. Wesley, though a strong Arminian himself, instructed ‘Suffer not one thought of separating from your brothers and sisters, whether their opinions agree with yours or not.’¹⁴⁵

¹³⁸ John Pudney, *John Wesley and His World* (Norwich: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 1978), 25.

¹³⁹ For more on the WMMS in South Africa see G.G. Findlay, G. G. and F.G. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth Press, 1924); W.C Holden, *A Brief History of Methodism, and of Methodist missions in South Africa: with an appendix on the Livingstonian Mission* (Wesleyan Conference Office, 1877); W.G. Mears, *Methodism in the Cape* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing House 1973); W. Moister, *The History of the Wesleyan Missions, in all parts of the world, from their commencement to the present time* (London: E. Stock, 1871).

¹⁴⁰ Hildegard Helene Fast, *African Perceptions of the Missionaries and Their Message: Wesleyans at Mount Coke and Butterworth, 1825-35* (MA Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1991).

¹⁴¹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, Lilyfontain, 6 July 1817.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ For the case of Samoa see John Garrett, ‘The conflict between the London missionary society and the Wesleyan Methodists in 19th century Samoa,’ *The Journal of Pacific History* 9, no.1 (1974), 65-80.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ John Wesley, ‘Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection’ in *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as Believed and Taught* (Dublin: Wesleyan Book Room), 177; Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins (eds.),

While the LMS were considered as not strictly Calvinist by some, LMS missionary Ebner records the strongly Calvinistic words of Van der Kemp: ‘God of Christ has suffered and spilled his blood for the whole human race but one part he has delivered to the devil.’¹⁴⁶ The LMS base in London was indeed Calvinist but by the nineteenth century a more moderate breed of ‘new-style’ Calvinists had arisen.¹⁴⁷ As suggested by Van der Kemp, these moderate missionaries still believed in the damnation of non-believers but saw the possibility that evangelism presented to make known the grace offered by God.

It was, however, on a political level that the LMS and WMMS differed most ideologically. Within Great Britain the Methodists followed the political lead of their founder and were staunchly Conservative. Above all they prioritised co-operation and alignment with colonial and government authorities. The social and political condition of their hearers was not as important. These values were carried into their South African mission as the WMMS submitted to the colonial government and settler society. While this was perhaps most evident on the eastern frontier, it does serve to further explain the apolitical nature of their Namaqualand mission and their followers. The Wesleyans and the Germans preferred to remain in good stead with the colonial government. Despite the doctrinal differences the missionaries of the LMS and WMMS usually worked in close co-operation in Little and Great Namaqualand.

The European missionaries working in Namaqualand were far from traditional in their *modus operandi*. Their lifestyles and adoption of many Khoikhoi habits – such as use of the *matjieshuis*, portable huts made from reeds – were in many instances necessitated by the ecological conditions in the region. The aridity of the land deemed agriculture almost impossible, and many subsisted, much like their followers, on a diet of meat and milk alone. Some were forced to revert to hunting and raiding – an activity looked down upon by many other missionaries but wholly necessary in the environmental context. For these reasons they cannot be said to have established mission ‘stations’ or ‘institutions’ in the traditional sense. For many years these mission communities did not have permanently built churches or dwellings, and they can be more aptly defined, on grounds of their nomadic and inconsistent

‘An Introductory Comment’, in *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, vol. 13 of *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), 92-94.

¹⁴⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2A, J. Ebner, Honingberg, 1 April 1813.

¹⁴⁷ Elbourne, ‘Early Khoisan uses of mission Christianity,’ 8.

nature, as ‘missionary communities’ or ‘movements’. In addition, many of the LMS missionaries in Namaqualand married Khoikhoi and baster women, such as Johann Schmelen, John Bartlett and Michael Wimmer. This was frowned upon by the more conservative faction within the LMS, as well as their WMMS colleagues in Little Namaqualand. Many of these unions took place under questionable circumstances such as illegal marriages, illegitimate pregnancies and adulterous affairs. Before Wimmer had even arrived in Namaqualand he had earned a questionable reputation for engaging in relations with a Khoikhoi woman, Sabina Adams, at Zuurbraak.¹⁴⁸ Before her betrothal, deemed illegitimate, to Wimmer, Sabina accused former Namaqualand missionary Johannes Seidenfaden, now labouring at Zuurbraak, of rape.¹⁴⁹ Seidenfaden’s behaviour was far more serious and criminal than that of his colleagues. Senior LMS missionaries at Bethelsdorp, Van der Kemp and Read, had also shocked and disgruntled settler society and conservative members of the LMS by their ‘sexual disorder’.¹⁵⁰ Van der Kemp had married a teenage ex-slave from Madagascar and Read a Khoikhoi woman. Even worse, Read was accused of committing adultery with a Khoikhoi woman, Sabina Pretorius, who later gave birth to his child, Johannes Pretorius.¹⁵¹ These European characters of the LMS, drawn to the most marginal and inhospitable areas, on the fringes of society, were in many ways marginal themselves. For these reasons, Elbourne fittingly describes the missionaries working in the early nineteenth century as ‘marginalised mavericks’.¹⁵²

The case of Little Namaqualand presented several unique circumstances, such as the above, which differentiated the region from other missionised areas in southern Africa at the time. The melting pot of people groups and identities it was home to and its proximity to the colony and settler society, set it apart from other previously-studied regions and renders it an interesting and necessary area for further research. This thesis considers the development of the missionary effort into Little Namaqualand, and in doing so seeks to fill the previously mentioned gaps in the literature. The first five chapters are dedicated to a chronological and dense narrative which fleshes out the complexities of the development of the missionary effort in Little Namaqualand. It is the first of its kind, filling in historical gaps. The role of African evangelists in the missionary effort is intertwined within this narrative.

¹⁴⁸ After her baptism on 22 August 1815 Sabina took on the Christian name Susannah; Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,’ 212-217; Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 222.

¹⁴⁹ Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing’, 212.

¹⁵⁰ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 223.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 221.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 18.

Chapter Two covers the entrance of the very first LMS missionaries into Little and Great Namaqualand in 1806 and considers the unique conditions which necessitated their reliance on baster groups in the region. It also analyses their complex relationship with the Cape Colony and their extended struggle to fix their place of missionary settlement. In Chapter Three we see the arrival of the Wesleyans into the region in 1816 and the very unique set of events that led to the establishment of the Leliefontein mission in the Kamiesberg. The mission at Leliefontein was home to several translators, Namaqua missionaries and assistants who itinerated between the various outstations as well as to the Coranna and Sotho-Tswana on the middle Orange. Their names and lives are brought to life as far as the limited archival record has allowed. Chapter Four continues the analysis of the LMS who retreated back into Little Namaqualand in 1811 and re-established the stations of Steinkopf and Pella. Chapter Five considers the 1820s, a period of drought and instability in Little Namaqualand, which resulted in the establishment of the LMS station of Komaggas. Chapter Six shows the final decline of the LMS in Little Namaqualand and the subsequent transferal of the LMS missions to the Rhenish missionaries. This chapter in many senses is the conclusion of the narrative and the time period considered in this thesis. Chapter Seven, different to those before, is somewhat of a landing stage. It pauses to consider the process of translation in which the Namaqua translated Christianity into their existing systems of meaning, symbols and practices. Rich anecdotes and metaphors are taken from the missionary archive and used to consider the brand of Christianity wielded by the Namaqua in the early nineteenth century. What is evident is that the Namaqua did not wholeheartedly embrace all the tenets of Christianity, both spiritual and temporal, but instead negotiated a version of Christianity which best suited their immediate needs.

Chapter Two: A Mission Field is Chosen

The LMS in Little Namaqualand, 1806-1815

*'The object of a wise Missionary is the good of a world, and when the good he aims at is effected in one place he will hasten to another, like a city on fire, the firemen having extinguished the flames in one house, hasten to extinguish the fire in the next, and will not desist while a house remains burning.'*¹

2.1 The Hospitality of Cornelius Kok

The LMS' early attempts to establish mission stations in both Little and Great Namaqualand were fraught with obstacles. The logistical difficulties of establishing themselves in a harsh semi-desert environment on a shoestring were immense. The young missionaries were far from equipped and their lack of knowledge on pastoral farming impeded their attempts to sustain themselves in the region. Their many failed efforts to begin a mission in Little Namaqualand were even further impeded by the hostility with which they were received by settler society and local authorities alike. The prevarication of the Little Namaqua surrounding a potential mission in the Kamiesberg surely added to their frustration. It was only through the assistance provided by the Koks, a powerful baster group in the Kamiesberg, that the missionaries were able to sustain themselves for as long as they did.

In August of 1805 three German missionaries of the LMS, the brothers Christian and Abraham Albrecht accompanied by Johannes Seidenfaden, left the Cape and crossed the Olifants River with the help of a Little Namaqua guide.² We know little about the Albrecht brothers other than the fact that they were born in Swabia, a south-western district of Germany, and were linen weavers. The brothers were joined by fellow German missionary and baker Johannes Seidenfaden, whose questionable character and scandalous behaviour would eventually see

¹ George McCall Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony from February 1793 to April 1831* (London: Clowes printers for the Government of the Cape Colony, 1897-1905), Vol. IX, 'Letter from Reverend Mr. Campbell to Sir John Cradock, 12 February 1814', 353.

² CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

him suspended from the LMS in 1825. Seidenfaden originated from the small town of Witzenhausen in Germany and it is likely that he first met the Albrecht brothers at Jänicke's seminary in Berlin where they received their training as overseas missionaries.³ The three missionaries belonged to the *Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap* (NZG) which had been formed by Johannes van der Kemp of the LMS in 1797. The NZG served as the sister society to the LMS whose existing empirical connections globally provided a network through which the German missionaries could be dispatched.

During their time in Great Namaqualand the Albrecht brothers did little to draw attention to themselves or attract much notoriety. They received little criticism or hostility from settlers, government or the LMS – bar the flack they received for insisting on settling in such a costly location as Great Namaqualand and the 'extravagant expenses' which they drew upon the society for doing so.⁴ For these reasons Penn describes the Albrecht brothers as 'exceptionally saintly men'.⁵ They were certainly not fiery characters but it would be naïve to assume they were passive or weak men. They laboured in the most harsh and arguably most hostile conditions in the country and made alliances with powerful and at times dangerous oorlam and Namaqua groups – the consequences of which will be evidenced later in this chapter.

The Albrechts were quite unlike the rest of the German missionaries working in Namaqualand. They did not marry Khoikhoi women, nor did they find themselves embroiled in sexual scandals. Instead, both followed the more traditional route and married European women at the Cape. Abraham married Catharina Schültz in 1807 and Christian married Sophia Burgman in 1810.⁶ Sophia Burgman, in a rare journal entry composed by the wife of a missionary, spoke admirably of her husband's relationship with colonists: 'It was a pleasure for me to see, that my dear Albrecht was received everywhere amongst the Colonists with so much love and esteem.'⁷ Burgman's life was cut short. In April of 1812 she suffered a series of fits following

³ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,' 169.

⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811; Christian Albrecht later received criticism from Van der Kemp for his attempts to rally a commando against Afrikaner after the attack on the Warmbath station.

⁵ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,' 175.

⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 28, Journal of C. Albrecht, 30 April – 31 December 1810; Du Plessis, *A History of Christian missions in South Africa*, 115; Records of the SAMS suggest that Abraham Albrecht in fact married a Carol Nippoldt in 1807; Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 143.

⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 28, Journal of C. Albrecht, 30 April – 31 December 1810.

which she gave birth to a stillborn child.⁸ Hours later she died. Early deaths were common amongst the wives of missionaries in Namaqualand. In the case of Burgman, her premature death is felt strongly by historians who could have benefitted greatly from her descriptive and detailed records. Unlike many of the other missionary wives, Sophia had received missionary training at the age of seventeen⁹ Burgman was not satisfied with merely becoming the wife of a missionary. After her training in Rotterdam she was accepted as a missionary candidate and made connections with Van der Kemp of the LMS.¹⁰ It was here that she first met the Albrecht brothers. Burgman arrived at the Cape in July 1810 after completing a probationary period in London. She married Christian Albrecht just two months later. Burgman was a missionary in her own right. She was well equipped for the mission field and it is doubtless that she would have contributed greatly to the LMS' missionary efforts in Namaqualand.

By the time they arrived at the Cape, the brothers were thirty-two and twenty-seven years of age and Seidenfaden only twenty-three¹¹ The Germans had initially set off for the Cape with the intention of working under the superintendence of Johannes Kicherer at the mission of Zak River in Bushmanland. They were accompanied by J.G. Ulbricht, Ari Vos and his wife.¹² Kicherer had been one of the first LMS missionaries to the Cape, arriving alongside Van der Kemp in 1799. Upon their arrival it was decided that Van der Kemp was to labour among the Xhosa on the eastern frontier of the colony, while Kicherer was to focus on the 'bushmen'.¹³ By the time the Albrechts and Seidenfaden arrived the mission at Zak River had already been abandoned by the LMS. The San, who had originally visited the Cape to request the missionaries presence in Bushmanland, had lost interest in the station. The station was instead inhabited by groups of Khoikhoi and basters who only visited periodically due to their nomadic lifestyle.¹⁴ Of the Zak River mission, Du Plessis comments:

As a mission to the Bushmen, the work of Kicherer in the neighbourhood of the Zak River must be characterised as a failure; but as a stepping-stone to the distant north, and

⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 32, Journal of J. Schmelen, 10 December 1811- 25 April 1812.

⁹ C.P Heese, 'The Albrecht Brothers. First Missionaries in Great Namaqualand (1806-1811)', *South West Africa Annual* (1983), 111.

¹⁰ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 143.

¹¹ Heese, 'The Albrecht Brothers,' 110-112; Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, 112-115; Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,' 169.

¹² *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. II, 176.

¹³ Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, 102-103.

¹⁴ Nigel Penn, "'Civilizing' the San: the first mission to the Cape San, 1791-1806".

developments in the near future of the work among the Griquas and Bechuana, the Zak River mission was not without importance.¹⁵

In a conference held in March 1806 Kicherer suggested that Zak River was no longer a favourable location and instead recommended that the men proceed to the Namaquas who he believed were ‘a people of good character.’¹⁶ From that day the Albrechts’ unwavering, or stubborn, gaze was set on Great Namaqualand. By the end of March the governor had approved the Albrechts’ request to settle in Great Namaqualand, and by May the group had departed.¹⁷

The journey was a tedious one and the missionaries struggled to provide for themselves and their group of eleven who conducted their waggons. By the time they reached the Kamiesberg mountains the men and their oxen had become faint. Of the journey, Christian Albrecht complained:

If we had not been protected by the Almighty, we would not have been your missionaries any longer. To go into a desert and through wilderness, and to have daily to provide for 16 persons, is a great thing, especially, if they are destitute of proper means of sustenance. A missionary is thereby tempted very much to abandon the service of his employers. But the Lord has preserved us from perishing through poverty. ...With all the expenses, we were still obliged to suffer very much for want of provisions, besides, we have been daily in danger of being attacked by bosjesmen and wild beasts. It is easily said, the missionaries may go beyond the limits of the colony, but we have experienced, what it is to travel without money for two months running through the most miserable part of Africa, dare I say of all the world.¹⁸

The protection afforded to them by ‘the Almighty’, as per Christian Albrecht’s letter, could more accurately be attributed to Cornelius Kok. In the very same letter, Albrecht recounts how ‘He (the Lord) inclined the heart of Mr. Kok to give us for the account of Mr. Hoppe at Cape Town, 300 Ryxd , 130 wethers and 8 oxen. If this had not been the case, we should never have reached the place of our destination, and all the expenses would have been in vain.’¹⁹ From the

¹⁵ Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, 105.

¹⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (1) 4, C. Albrecht, 11 March 1805.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, C. Albrecht, 14th of March 1805.

¹⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3A) 2D, C. Albrecht to LMS, 18 May 1806.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

outset, Cornelius Kok and his family would prove pivotal to the survival of the LMS missionaries in both Little and Great Namaqualand.

Cornelius Kok was, during the early nineteenth century, captain of the powerful Kok clan based in Little Namaqualand. He was the son of the Griqua captain Adam Kok I. The Griquas were a mixed community made up of the descendants of early *trekboers*, Khoisan, escaped slaves and free blacks having escaped the borders of the Colony. There is speculation surrounding the origins of Adam Kok I.²⁰ Campbell was the first to record that Adam Kok I was an ex-slave.²¹ He is traditionally believed to have bought his freedom from his master N. Laubscher.²² Ross, however, suggests that his manumission was gained in an ‘unlawful manner.’²³ After gaining his freedom in the mid-eighteenth century, Adam Kok I fled to the Piketberg where, despite his classification as a ‘Hottentot’, he was granted grazing rights by the Dutch at the farm ‘Stinkfontein’ (located on the Orange River) between 1751 and 1760.²⁴ In the Piketberg he is believed to have joined a group of Chariguriqua, a Khoikhoi group living between Saldanha Bay and the Olifants River amongst whom the Griqua are believed to have originated.

Adam Kok I’s classification as a ‘hottentot’ in the *Oude Wildschutteboeken* seems to dispute his supposed slave origins.²⁵ Many who later came into contact with Cornelius, son of Adam Kok I, described him as a ‘hottentot’.²⁶ Some claim that in the Piketberg, Adam Kok I married Donna Gogosa, the daughter of the Chariguriqua chief.²⁷ There is little evidence to support this claim although it would explain the apparent confusion around the Koks’ ancestry. Penn presents a more plausible suggestion. He proposes that Adam Kok I was a descendant of a runaway slave, Claas Kok, who, with a group of other runaway slaves, managed to escape recapture and find refuge amongst the Chariguriqua in 1713.²⁸ The Chariguriqua were known

²⁰ Legassick, ‘The Northern Frontier,’ 414, n.114.

²¹ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 57; Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 235-236; Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, Second Journey*, 25.

²² Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 292.

²³ Ross, *Adam Kok’s Griquas*, 14.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Cape Archives (hereafter CA), RLR 21, 23 April 1771, 196 as cited in Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 292.

²⁶ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 292.

²⁷ R. Fenton, *Peculiar People in a Pleasant Land: A South African Narrative* (Pretoria: Pretoria Publishing Company, 1905) as mentioned in Ross, *Adam Kok’s Griquas*, 14.

²⁸ Ross, *Adam Kok’s Griquas*, 145 n21.

to harbour runaway slaves and it is likely that from there Claas Kok would have married a Khoikhoi woman, and would thus have been considered a ‘hottentot’ himself.

In 1813, during a conversation with Adam Kok II, the son of Cornelius Kok, Campbell was informed that the ‘founding father’ of the Koks, ‘by repute a slave’, had attached himself to persons of ‘Karihuri’ descent.²⁹ ‘/karihuri [qua]’ is a known alternate spelling for the ‘Chariguriqua’.³⁰ It is not apparent whether he is referring to Adam Kok II here or his father Cornelius Kok. Campbell, too, stated that Adam Kok I acquired a staff of office from the VOC after which he was recognised, by both his people and the Cape Colony, as captain of the ‘Griqua.’ It was Campbell who suggested the name ‘Griqua’ be adopted by the group.³¹ Once again, there is no record of Adam Kok I receiving a staff of office in the Cape Archive. His grandson, Adam Kok II, however, received a staff in 1809 in his position as Captain at Klaarwater.

While there are some minor deviations in the various accounts of the origins of the Kok family, there is a general consensus among historians that the Koks had both slave and Khoikhoi ancestry, and that by the mid-eighteenth century the loan farm Stinkfontein had been registered in the name of Adam Kok I. Stinkfontein was sold in 1771, after which Adam Kok I and his followers, likely Chariguriqua, removed to the Kamiesberg. Adam Kok I died in Little Namaqualand in 1795 where he was succeeded by his eldest son Cornelius Kok. Cornelius Kok, at the time of his father’s death, had already established himself amongst a group of Griqua and San followers and settled near the Orange River. Evidence suggests that the baptised and literate Cornelius Kok had been granted a staff of office from the colonial government, recognising him as a Khoikhoi captain.³² For these reasons he was considered ‘both a burger and a captain’.³³ Sophia Burgman met Kok on her journey from the Cape to Warmbath in August 1810. She described him as, ‘a baptised Bastard, a Citizen, a rich

²⁹ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 52.

³⁰ Paul. S Landau, ‘Eyewitness Engagements (Highveld Political Discourse at the Start of the 1800s)’ in Paul Landau *Popular Politics in the History of South Africa, 1400–1948*, 13; Ross, *Adam Kok’s Grikwas*, 14.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 84.

³³ *Ibid.*

Farmer...’ who ‘shows much kindness to the missionaries.’³⁴ Kok’s wife, she claimed, was ‘not baptized, but seems to have regard for religion.’³⁵

While many of his siblings and children became influential along the Orange River and finally at Griqualand West, Cornelius Kok chose to remain in Little Namaqualand where his influence as ‘outstanding Bastard frontier pioneer’ was steadily solidified.³⁶ Kok owned five farms between the Kamiesberg and the Orange River, some of which were located at Pella, Silverfontein, Elandsfontein, and Olivenfontein.³⁷ Kok and his family were the wealthiest of the basters in the Kamiesberg, owning upwards of 45 000 sheep and 3000 cattle.³⁸ To put the wealth of the Koks into perspective, other basters in the region are recorded to have owned between 50 and 200 cattle, while poorer basters had perhaps two or three cows each.³⁹

Cornelius Kok’s wealth was acquired through the trade of ivory and cattle on the northern frontier. These trading networks went as far as the Sotho-Tswana on the middle Orange. Kok was known to trade with the Tlhaping and even ventured on an expedition as far as the Rolong in the east.⁴⁰ Legassick notes that by the nineteenth century these once-casual trading links with the Sotho-Tswana were solidified. He suggests that Kok’s desire to establish formal trading links with the Cape, rather than through the proxy of colonists, would have reacquired the creation of stabilised trading routes and connections. Furthermore, elephant populations in the Orange River region were on the decline and traders needed to pivot accordingly.⁴¹ The Koks’ extensive involvement in trade also explained their acquisition of firearms which they received from frontier farmers who in turn supported their elephant-hunting expeditions.⁴²

It is worth mentioning that the Koks were not the only powerful baster family living near the Orange River at the time. The Berends (or Barends) family were another prominent group

³⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 28, Journal of C. Albrecht, 30 April – 31 December 1810.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tilman Dederling, *Hate the Old and Follow the New : Khoekhoe and Missionaries in Early Nineteenth-Century Namibia* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1997), 148.

³⁷ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 292 ; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 85 ; P.B Borchers, *An Autobiographical Memoir* (Cape Town: Balkema, 1963), 91; William Paterson, *Narrative of Four Journeys into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffaria* (London: J. Johnson, 1790), 120-121.

³⁸ Legassick, ‘The Northern Frontier to 1820’, 265; Borchers, ‘An Autobiographical Memoir’, 118.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 69; Legassick, ‘The Northern Frontier to 1820’, 258.

⁴¹ Legassick, ‘The Northern Frontier to 1820’, 258.

⁴² Ibid; Trading along the Middle Orange was mostly legitimate whereas it is recorded that illegal raiding took place more commonly along the lower Orange.

whose origins, whether slave or baster, have also received much debate.⁴³ The founders of the group were the brothers Klaas and Piet. The Koks and the Berends were intermarried families. Cornelius Kok's sister, whose name is not available in the records, was the mother of Berend Berends. It is unknown which of the Berend brothers fathered Berend. The families, though interconnected, operated separately and shared an overlapping sphere of influence. The Koks and Berends growing influence in the region and, most importantly, their possession of firearms came to the attention of Augustus van den Heever – the *veldkorporaal* of Little Namaqualand in 1789.⁴⁴ Believing the firearms to have been illegally possessed, Van den Heever attempted to disarm Klaas Berends, Cornelius Kok, his son Adam Kok II and others in possession of muskets. Not only were they armed, but also according to Van den Heever they gravely outnumbered the *trekboers* in the region and were thus an increasing threat. To this Klaas Barend responded, 'To try take it away with the barrel of a gun because as long as he had powder and lead he'd defend himself against the Christians to the last bullet'.⁴⁵ Cornelius Kok defended his right to own a firearm in a letter to the *landdrost* of Stellenbosch.⁴⁶ He explained that he had initially purchased firearms merely to protect his livestock. Three of the five muskets he owned he had purchased from colonists, another he had bartered with a Khoikhoi for two heifers and the last he purchased from Van den Heever himself for three oxen.⁴⁷

The Berends, as well as Adam Kok II, moved to the Middle Orange where in 1809 Berend Berends and Adam Kok II, son of Cornelius, received colonial sanction as 'chiefs' of the Griqua state.⁴⁸ Much like the Koks, the Berends had been involved in hunting and trading links with the Sotho-Tswana and had by the early years of the nineteenth century moved from the lower to middle Orange River where they invited the LMS of the Zak River to join them at Klarwater (later Griqua Town).⁴⁹

⁴³ For more on the origins of the Barends see Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 55-57; Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 293; I.D MacCrone, *Race Attitudes in South Africa : Historical, Experimental and Psychological Studies* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1957), 80 ; J.A. Heese, 'Onderwys in Namakwaland: 1750-1940' (D.Ed Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1942).

⁴⁴ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 329; *Veldkorporaals* were lower in rank than *Veldcornets*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 330; A 'landdrost' was the term used to describe the magistrate of the district.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 81.

⁴⁹ Legassick, 'The Northern Frontier to 1820,' 257.

Cornelius Kok and his younger sons remained in Little Namaqualand where their dominance in the region deemed him a threat to local farmers and nervous authorities but placed him in a powerful position politically. His extensive land ownership and wealth certainly solidified this. Legassick has since described him as the ‘ruler of a state structure’, albeit a scattered state with a mixed following of dependants.⁵⁰ Of Kok’s relationship with his followers, Borchers wrote:

He appeared to command great respect amongst his people... He appeared to not only command love and respect, but also to deserve a power not fettered by restraint, and to maintain his directions by the good feeling and co-operation of those about him... his superiority as chief or captain was tacitly acknowledged.⁵¹

Through this influence Kok was on several occasions able to facilitate peace in the region. The San and Little Namaqua were often at odds with one another and with the colony. Through gifts of tobacco, sheep and game the Koks were able to foster advantageous relationships with both groups. Cornelius Kok, both wealthy and influential, had a stabilising presence in the region and thus proved indispensable to the LMS missionaries who so early on in their missionary pursuits were in need of assistance.⁵² Although never officially belonging to a missionary institution himself Cornelius Kok, Albrecht claims, and his son Adam II, had heard the gospel preached by LMS missionaries Anderson and Kramer at the Orange River and had since been baptised ‘...at the time the Cape was in the hands of the English.’⁵³ Penn claims that Cornelius Kok had previously enlisted the services of *Veldwachtmeester* Andries Craaij to teach him to read and write as well as the catechism.⁵⁴ Considering the fact that Craaij was only appointed as *veldwachtmeester* in 1796, Kok’s knowledge of Christianity must have predated the arrival of the LMS missionaries into the region.⁵⁵ Borchers noted that Kok:

was considered a religious man, and communicated the principles of his faith to those residing about him...he could that he could read and write, and had been to a certain

⁵⁰ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 84.

⁵¹ Borchers, *An Autobiographical Memoir*, 118-119.

⁵² Dederling, *Hate the Old and Follow the New*, 148.

⁵³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

⁵⁴ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 439.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 363.

degree civilised by intercourse with missionaries and the colonists, and through frequenting Cape Town and the colony.⁵⁶

Kok was held in high esteem by missionaries and colonial officials alike.⁵⁷ In 1799 Kok offered to assist the *landdrost* of Stellenbosch to capture Klaas Afrikaner in exchange for supplies of gunpowder. Afrikaner and his followers had been involved in a series of raids and attacks at the time.⁵⁸ The *landdrost* agreed to Kok's request on the grounds that 'the said Kok is a well-disposed Hottentot.'⁵⁹ There are very few, if not any, negative comments regarding his character. Rev. John Campbell praised him for his peaceful nature and his ability to manage his people and followers with grace and fortitude. Campbell did, however, criticise Kok for his 'imprudence and want of economy.'⁶⁰ After selling one of his farms for 5000 rix dollars he was reported to have spent the majority of the funds on indulgent goods at the Cape such as brandy, tea, coffee and articles of clothing.⁶¹ These goods, Campbell claimed, were consumed in a matter of weeks upon his return back to Little Namaqualand. Similarly, Campbell criticised Kok and his followers' imprudent consumption of wheat.

Ironically Kok's haphazard generosity would render him indispensable to the missionaries who relied so heavily on him, as will be shown throughout this chapter. This, Campbell noted; 'when the Missionaries were in want of any article, which Cornelius happened to have, he never would accept a price for it, but gave it freely; at the same time he would as freely ask from them whatever he knew they had.'⁶² Campbell relays a somewhat humourful account of Cornelius asking Mrs. Sass for a supply of tea. In response, Mrs. Sass explained that their tea was near finished and only enough was had for the day. Cornelius more than happily invited himself and his wife to partake in the Sass' last supply of tea that afternoon. These shortcomings of character were easily explained away by Campbell who evidently deemed the Koks as 'demicivilized people'.⁶³

⁵⁶ Borchers, *An Autobiographical Memoir*, 118-119.

⁵⁷ Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 214-215.

⁵⁸ For more on this see Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 210-217.

⁵⁹ Penn, *The Forgotten Frontier*, 214.

⁶⁰ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, Second Journey*, 263.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*, 265.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Kok's generosity toward the missionaries was definitely not without foresight, nor the expectation of reciprocity. Connection to a missionary would be extremely beneficial to the group. Education in the form of literacy, numeracy and religion was certainly amongst these advantages but they were not the most important. The missionaries, the Koks believed, could serve as an intermediary between them and the colonial government at the Cape. Through these connections with the colony, trading and diplomatic ties could be legitimised and the Koks' authority in the region cemented in the eyes of government and settlers. Perhaps most importantly was the role the missionaries could play in facilitating trade between the Koks and the Cape.⁶⁴ The trade of firearms and gunpowder were likely most important to the Koks. The frontier farmers who had once been a proxy for this trade had been viewed with suspicion by the colony for their role in illegal trading and the missionaries, deemed more trustworthy, would likely serve as a more suitable representative of the Koks. Finally, access to supplies of gunpowder and firearms would afford the Koks greater protection and reinforce their status in Little Namaqualand.⁶⁵

When the German missionaries met Cornelius Kok en route to Great Namaqualand in 1805 they were physically defeated and financially depleted. The journey from the Cape to Kok's kraal at Silverfontein, north of the Kamiesberg, had been arduous and the land barely hospitable. The journey was known to have taken the missionaries a month. Sass, who travelled the same route in 1812 and also relied on the assistance of Kok, described the conditions:

In the first place, it has after the saying of the farmers not yet been so dry, as it has been now in two years, and it is impossible to give a full description of this barren wilderness; for grass, what we call green in England and Germany grows here not at all except et near Cape Town, and now and then I saw a little as a table brought on the water. The ground is coarse sand and stones, where on several sorts of bushes grow, of which some serve for the food of oxen and sheep, which they therefore call grass. Yet here they have shown me a place where very coarse green in the sand grows in heaps, like bushes, when it is good, which they call bushmans-grass for that the seed serves for their food. The most now of these bushes was dry as there comes no rain, and even what is green gives no strength as it grows but out the coarse dry sand. Therefore after we were come

⁶⁴ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,' 174.

⁶⁵ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 90.

a little in the country our oxen, being very poor already in Cape Town, grow daily poorer, and so that one of myn (sic) without working at all grows so poor, that I not could bring him along with me. Hence when we rode in one day sometimes but two hours we must rest one or more days, and yet poor things fall frequently down before a waggon, that here 8 Hottentots laid hold on and drew it away.⁶⁶

On his journey from the Cape to Silverfontein, seven years after the Albrechts' first journey, Schmelen described the area through which he travelled as a 'howling wilderness'.⁶⁷ Kok also provided Schmelen with oxen which made his journey possible. Kok's generosity toward the LMS missionaries evidently lasted for several years – until 1816 at least when he relocated from the Kamiesberg to Griqualand.

In 1806 Kok provided the Albrechts and Seidenfaden with two yoke of oxen to continue their journey. Without this gift it is likely that they would have had to turn around completely. Instead the group were enabled to continue and soon reached a kraal belonging to a group of Little Namaqua where they remained for the night.⁶⁸ Abraham Kok, the youngest son of Cornelius Kok, served as an interpreter as the missionaries evangelised to the group. The missionaries applauded Abraham whom they described as being very able and 'speaking boldly in favour of Christ'.⁶⁹ The following morning Albrecht reported that the 'heathens came from the said kraal to our wagons and showed signs that they would again hear something concerning the way to salvation.'⁷⁰ With the assistance of Abraham Kok, he preached once again. Albrecht noted that, "there are many among these people who have a great desire to be further taught in the way of salvation, but they told us: 'the Christians their Neighbours would not allow them to be taught in their Religion.' And that is true, we ourselves have heard the above said Christians say that we had better teach the baboons than the heathens."⁷¹

They were clearly impressed by Abraham as they requested to hire him as their interpreter. His father denied the request, explaining that he 'not only required him for his family but also to

⁶⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (5) 1C, C. Sass to LMS, Silverfontein, 10 April 1812.

⁶⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 32, J. Schmelen, 10 December 1811- 25 April 1812.

⁶⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid

preach the Gospel to the heathens that resided there.⁷² Interesting here is that Abraham Kok had been fulfilling the role of a missionary to Kok's followers and those in the surrounds before the arrival of the missionaries in the Kamiesberg in 1806. It is possible that Abraham had received religious instruction from the LMS missionaries Kicherer, Kramer and Scholtz, who had relocated from the Zak River mission and settled at Rietfontein in 1802, seventy miles from the Orange River.⁷³ These missionaries had moved to the Orange River following several requests from groups of Kora and the Berends. Kok's followers had also brushed shoulders with Christianity, albeit a distorted version, through the arrival of a Greek con artist and religious man known as Stephanos.⁷⁴ Stephanos had spent a short period of time at the Zak River mission, where he had made an attempt on the life of Kicherer.⁷⁵ After leaving Zak River, Stephanos established himself as 'a missionary and Prophet' amongst Cornelius Kok and his followers.⁷⁶ Stephanos' regime was ruthless and anyone who 'ventured to murmur against his abominable acts of rapine or lust, was sure to be put into the stocks, or to be beaten unmercifully'⁷⁷ Stephanos was eventually confronted by Kicherer and a group of armed men at Kok's kraal. Stephanos, being the manipulator that he was, successfully convinced Kicherer not to arrest him on the grounds that he would leave the country immediately.⁷⁸ This would prove a terrible mistake as Stephanos continued his trail of destruction and murder.⁷⁹

By the time the Albrechts arrived in Little Namaqualand, tensions in the region were most certainly high. The closing of the eighteenth century had seen an escalation of violence and unrest later dubbed by Penn as the 'Namaqualand Revolt'.⁸⁰ It was the appointment of Andries Craaij as *veldwachtmeester* of Namaqualand in 1797 which catalysed the events which followed into motion. Shortly after his appointment he authorised the confiscation of all ammunition and firearms held by the Little Namaqua. The Little Namaqua were accustomed to lodging complaints directly to the governor at the Cape and this case was no exception. The

⁷² CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

⁷³ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 72-73; 83.

⁷⁴ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 435.

⁷⁵ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 73; Legassick refers to the forger as 'a Pole named Stephanus'.

⁷⁶ J. Kicherer, 'The Rev. Mr. Kicherer's Narrative of his Mission To The Hottentots', in *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol II, 30.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 440; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 73.

⁷⁹ For more on Stephanus see Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 435-441.

⁸⁰ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 361.

complaints must not have been adequately addressed or resolved as the aggrieved Little Namaqua soon took it upon themselves to seek redress. In an interesting turn of events, the once-fragmented groups of Little Namaqua, oorlam and basters united against Craaij. The group initiated an uprising of sorts and began to drive many *trekboers* in the area off their farms. The revolt was led by basters Claas and Piet Barend in collaboration with both Little Namaqua and San resisters.⁸¹ Of the revolt, British Commander at the Cape, General Craig, commented:

The inhabitants of the Namaqua Country have been exposed to plunder and devastation by a party of lawless vagrants consisting of wild Bosjesmans and Hottentots, who have stolen their cattle, burnt their houses and forced them to retire as far as the Green River.⁸²

The distressed *trekboers* flooded Craaij with numerous desperate complaints, begging that he take greater steps to secure the area from the resisters' violence. Instead, Craaij did even more to stir up the hornets' nest. In 1798 Craaij attempted to record the names of all Little Namaqua not enlisted in the service of *trekboers*. One could argue that his intention had been to gain greater control over the region's disorderly occupants. Unsurprisingly Craaij's actions did much to further antagonise and infuriate the Little Namaqua. They believed their names were being listed to prepare for their enslavement and argued that 'as long as they were a freeborn nation, they would defend themselves to the last or flee rather than be made a slave.'⁸³ It was later found that Craaij had in fact misinterpreted the instruction which had ordered him to record the names of those Little Namaqua and basters in service of the *trekboers*, rather than those living in independent kraals. The realisation came far too late.

By December 1798 several Little Namaqua kraals of the Kamiesberg united and launched a mass attack on five *trekboer* farms in the region. The group looted the farms of all available livestock and ammunition, threatening to drive all of the Europeans out of Namaqualand. One farm overseer was brutally murdered in the process. The Little Namaqua heavily outnumbered the *trekboers* in the region and thus had the upper hand. Many of the farmers feared that their

⁸¹Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 362.

⁸²CA, BO 147, Craig to Van der Riet, 5 August 1796, as cited in Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 362.

⁸³CA 1/STB 10/151, J.C van der Westhuysen to Landdrost, 10 December 1798, as cited in Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 364.

labourers would be convinced to join the revolt and thus chose to stay put on their farms rather than immediately mounting a commando in retaliation. *Veldcornet* van der Westhuysen pled for reinforcements to protect ‘our women and children and our provisions...our lives, yes, everything would be lost.’⁸⁴ Reinforcements did not arrive and by 1799 Van der Westhuysen had little option but to resort to a peace offering. It was short-lived.

By February 1800 the promised reinforcements arrived. A commando of 68 armed men made contact with the rebels and an attack ensued. Two of the rebels were shot and the rest fled. It took the shooting of two of the rebels and the murder of a colonial messenger before both groups agreed to negotiate peace. The stolen goods were to be returned and the Little Namaqua ordered to return to their kraals. Many of the rebels rejected the terms and instead fled over the Orange River. Interestingly, many of these fleeing rebels were baster and oorlam while those who agreed to the terms of peace were mostly Little Namaqua. Despite these apparent differences, which arose in the conclusion of the revolt, it was a fascinating spectacle of Little Namaqua, San, baster and oorlam unification against a common enemy.

Interestingly, despite the baster and oorlam participation in the revolt, Cornelius Kok managed to remain somewhat uninvolved.⁸⁵ Craaij’s prior attempts to disarm and alienate Kok did not antagonise him to the point of joining the rebellion. Had he been more actively involved, Penn believes, the outcome would have been gravely different and the position of colonists in the region would have been weakened. Instead, he had a peaceful influence and even managed to convince the oorlam revolt leaders to enter negotiations with *Veldcornet* van der Westhuysen. The authorities had Kok to thank for the outcome of events.

While the peace offering of 1799 did much to quell the immediate outbreak of violence, it did little to address the tensions which existed between colonist and Khoikhoi. These tensions were as a result of constant land disputes as well as mistreatment of Khoikhoi labourers at the hands of colonists. This, Penn argues, was a manifestation of the socio-economic closure of the northern most frontier. This discord instigated a tour of the north-west frontier and Little

⁸⁴ CA, 1/STB 10/151, J.C van der Westhuysen to Landdrost, 10 December 1798 as cited in Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 364; *Veldcornets* were government officials who served beneath *landdrosts* (magistrates) across the various districts of the colony.

⁸⁵ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 368.

Namaqualand by the *landdrost* of Tulbagh, Van der Graaf, in 1809.⁸⁶ Van der Graaf recorded complaints from both colonists and Khoikhoi against one another. Khoikhoi labourers reported that their employers were both withholding their wages and restricting their movements.⁸⁷ On the other side, colonists reported that Khoikhoi were deserting to mission stations thus causing a shortage of labour. While these grievances were reported after the arrival of the LMS missionaries in the region, they contextualise the socio-political state of Little Namaqualand prior to their arrival. It is understandable then that Namaqua groups would receive the missionaries with open arms, knowing the protection they would afford them against the colonists. Understandably, too, the colonists would perceive the mission stations and Christianisation of the Khoikhoi as a threat to the supply of labour and the delicate balance of power in the region.

Before their departure for Great Namaqualand the missionaries visited the residence of Cornelius Kok at Silverfontein where they preached throughout the weekend to an assembly of over sixty of Kok's followers. The following week Christian Albrecht once again paid a visit to the kraal of Little Namaqua where he 'visited the heathens in their huts,' and found that it was 'their sincere desire to become saved'.⁸⁸ In the circumstances (the closure of the northern frontier) the reasons behind the Little Namaquas' desire for a missionary must have been politically motivated.

Cornelius Kok not only played an important role in supplying the missionaries with oxen and facilitating their stay in Little Namaqualand but also advised the men on their onward journey to Great Namaqualand. It was Kok who first suggested that the missionaries head toward a fountain in Great Namaqualand known as Warmbath, where a kraal of Great Namaqua were sometimes to be found. Kok advised the group not to travel directly northward over the Orange River but to instead travel in an eastward direction where they would meet his son Adam Kok II, who resided on the river. For this suggestion, Kok provided several explanations. Firstly, the northward road which would have led them straight to the Orange River and across to Great Namaqualand would be a more difficult and dangerous journey because of the 'wild bushmen who are savage.'⁸⁹ Secondly, in order to cross the river successfully the missionaries would

⁸⁶ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 451.

⁸⁷ CA, Miscellaneous (hereafter M) 76, 'Journey to Namaqualand'.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

most certainly require assistance to assemble rafts for the transportation of their wagons and baggage. Kok assured them that nobody would be found to assist them in this regard on the northward route. Thirdly, by spending some time with Adam Kok II and the people situated on the opposite side of the river, the missionaries would become better acquainted with the Great Namaqua nation and the situation in Great Namaqualand.⁹⁰

The missionaries were hesitant at first, but after hearing that upon the borders of the Orange River and living with Adam Kok II were many who understood the Dutch language and could thus serve as an interpreter for their journey to Great Namaqualand, the missionaries resolved to follow the advice of Cornelius Kok. It wasn't long, however, before they established that for such a lengthy journey they would require a team of at least eight oxen as well as enough cattle for almost six months' worth of food.⁹¹ Knowing that they couldn't draw any money on the account of the LMS at the Cape, the group were close to abandoning their journey completely. It was only with the financial assistance of George William Hoppe, a good friend of the missionaries at the Cape, that the journey was resumed. Kok, being an acquaintance of Hoppe, provided the men with the necessary sum of money on account of Hoppe. What is evident from this is that by 1805 Cornelius Kok was already involved in a network of communication and relations with influential members of Cape society. This network, and the wealth of Kok, once again sustained the early LMS missionaries. In their journal, the missionaries comment that:

These friends are Heathens by birth, but in their beliefs in Christ Jesus, they surpass many called Christians, and we as missionaries, sent among the Heathens cannot but rejoice and say: Oh how agreeable is it for us that we meet with such People in their dreary desert: and in truth we could not have proceeded on our journey if the said friends had not assisted us as they have done.⁹²

Finally, on Tuesday the 17th of September, the missionaries left Little Namaqualand accompanied by three sons and a daughter of Cornelius Kok. Kok himself had initially left with the group but after a commando was ordered against a group of Bushmen, who the week prior had stolen and murdered in that district, he was required to accompany the troops. By Friday

⁹⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

the group arrived at Silverfontein and parted with Kok's sons and daughter. On Friday the 11th of November the missionaries were met by Adam Kok II and a group of 'heathens.' Seidenfaden held a service in the presence of about seventy people who are referred to in the missionaries' journal as 'Oorlamers, that is Hottentots who come from the upper country and area bred and born with the farmers; most of whom understand and speak the Dutch Language.'⁹³

2.2 The LMS Settle in Great Namaqualand

The group of missionaries followed Kok's advice and made their way to Adam Kok II's settlement at Rhenoster Kop, also known as 'Oorlam Kraal' or 'Koks Kraal', located in the vicinity of the junction of the Hartebeest and Orange Rivers. It was here that the missionaries first learned of the trying conditions in drought-stricken Great Namaqualand. They briefly considered the prospect of a mission amongst the Sotho-Tswana. Some Great Namaqua chiefs, having received word of the missionaries presence in the region, sent messengers to Oorlam Kraal who managed to convince the missionaries to continue to Great Namaqualand. One of these chiefs was Jantje Kagab of the *!Kharakhoen* whose messenger assured the missionaries that there would be plenty food available for them as the Namaqua had already planted potatoes for them.⁹⁴ In September 1805 Christian Albrecht finally travelled across to Great Namaqualand.

The crossing of the Orange River with wagons and goods was no easy feat, especially when the river was full. There were only a few places at which it could be crossed. The missionaries were assisted in the crossing by several swimmers and floats. Sophia Albrecht (née Burgman) describes the details of a crossing in 1810:

8 October - Travelled to the shore of the Great or Orange River, that spot called Company's stream for all the places where one is able to swim over with the floats, have its own name, which is not everywhere possible, for reason of the sea-cow-holes, the

⁹³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

⁹⁴ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 148-149; Agriculture amongst the Great Namaqua evidently pre-dated the arrival of the missionaries; *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extracts from the Journals of the Missionaries C. and A. Albrecht, and Seidenfaden, 25; *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract of a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society at Rotterdam, May 18, 1806, 28.

large rocks, and the rough and steep shores. The River was high, but we observed daily its decrease...During two days were the swimmers here, and two floats ready. These floats are about 8 or 9 feet long and 4 wide. They take two pieces of wood in the length and bring about 8 or 9 shorter cross over there woods, upon which thickets are laid and fastened, and the float is ready. At these crosswoods the swimmers hold themselves with one hand, and with the other and the legs they swim. We had now 22 men besides our own, for each float wants about 16 men. It was a wonderful sight for me, when those swimmers came over, and set round us on the ground to rest, quite undressed, it seemed to me as a Company of apes, but they all were rejoiced to see their eldest teacher returning, and with a wife.⁹⁵

The rest of the group joined Christian Albrecht in January 1806 where they settled near two fountains namely *Kouwis Fountain* and *Kames*, which they subsequently named *Stille Hoop* (Silent Hope) and *Blyde Uitkomst* (Happy Deliverance).⁹⁶ The exact location of these fountains is unclear. Dederling asserts that *Stille Hoop* is what later would become Afrikaner's Kraal, while *Blyde Uitkomst* is likely identical to what would later be called Jerusalem. We do know that the fountains are a day's journey from the Orange River and four miles away from one another.⁹⁷ The missionaries established themselves between the two fountains on account of the drought. Upon their arrival at *Blyde Uitkomst*, it was decided that Seidenfaden would travel to the kraal of Kagab at Heirachabis (*Herrigewis*), to inform him of their arrival. After hearing Seidenfaden preach, Kagab responded:

That word is too great that we should not accept it – all the chieftains of Namacqualand must come hither to hear, hither must they come, under this tree, to hear; then they shall experience the word of God if great: there must also harmony prevail, and all the chieftains of Namacqualand must have one heart and one mind, and accept the doctrine – then the doctrine must be established in the centre of Namacqualand, that everybody may have access to it.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 28, Journal of C. Albrecht, 30 April – 31 December 1810.

⁹⁶ Report of the Directors to the Thirteenth General Meeting of the London Missionary Society (hereafter *LMS Annual Reports*), May 14th 1807, 15; Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 49.

⁹⁷ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract from a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society of Rotterdam, 18 May 1806, 29.

⁹⁸ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extracts from the Journals of the Missionaries C. and A. Albrecht, and Sydenfaden, Entry dated 3 March, 26.

Following this response, Seidenfaden departed from the Albrecht brothers and settled at Heirachabis, amongst Kagab and the *!Kharakhoen*. The *!Kharakhoen* were also known by the Dutch name ‘Fransman Hottentots’.⁹⁹ At Heirachabis, a four-day journey from Blyde Uitkomst, Seidenfaden’s followers consisted of not only Namaqua, but also a mixed following of oorlams and ‘Little Namaqua’.¹⁰⁰

After just six months in Great Namaqualand, the missionaries were in dire need of supplies. When their food stocks had been depleted, Christian Albrecht was forced to travel with a wagon to the Kamiesberg to buy corn and sheep. Albrecht, however, had no money and had no other option but to take a loan from Cornelius Kok.¹⁰¹ In addition, he acquired 100 sheep from Kok. Christian Albrecht immediately sent the sheep up to Great Namaqualand before he continued to the Cape on horseback, where he procured provisions from the South African Missionary Society (SAS) on account of the LMS. The SAS was established by Van der Kemp in 1799. It worked in close co-operation with the missionary societies abroad and acted as a local middleman, providing the missionaries with the necessary logistical and financial support.¹⁰²

On his return journey Christian Albrecht travelled through the Kamiesberg and was faced yet again with the Little Namaquas’ indecisiveness surrounding their appeal for a missionary. He noted that,

...when we passed through the country last year with the wagons, the Little Namaqua came to us and requested us to preach the word of God to them which we accordingly did and I would willingly have stayed with them if we had not a call beyond the Colony. When I afterwards came to the Lorde (sic) of this people and asked them whether they wished to have a missionary among them, they answered that some of them were very

⁹⁹ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 113.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 154 ; *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract from a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society of Rotterdam, 18 May 1806, 32.

¹⁰¹ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract from a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society of Rotterdam, 18 May 1806, 50.

¹⁰² Freund, ‘The Cape Under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814’, 225; Schoeman, *The Early Mission in South Africa*, 11; Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing’, 172.

desirous to be continually instructed in the word of God, but that others would not consent to it.¹⁰³

On the 14th of July 1806 Christian Albrecht, accompanied by the youngest son of Cornelius Kok, once again approached Hans Links, the chief of the Little Namaqua, and enquired whether they wished for a missionary to preach the gospel amongst them. Hans Links remained undecided, claiming that ‘...he did not know whether his people would be satisfied to have a teacher.’¹⁰⁴ Christian Albrecht reports that Links was hastily interrupted by some of his people who cried out unanimously: ‘why does the Captain say so? He should say that we also wish to hear the word of God; for nearly all the Hottentot nations are instructed in it, if we wish to have a teacher likewise, to declare to us the will of God, and tell us what is good or Bad?’ Christian Albrecht, already committed to his mission across the Orange River, could do little but promise the Little Namaqua that he would endeavour to procure a missionary for them. He duly requested that the Directors of the LMS take the appeal into consideration and send missionaries to Africa for the Little Namaqua. He assured the Directors that three missionaries would have ample work among the Little Namaqua, basters and Christians living in the Kamiesberg region.

Not all of Hans Links’ followers supported the acquisition of a missionary for the Kamiesberg. Some would have been influenced by the threats of neighbouring farmers, many of whom were their employers, who convinced them that the missionaries were coming to enslave them. In 1818 Daars, a Namaqua residing at Leliefontein, informed Shaw that, ‘When the people began to pray in their homes I often came amongst them. When our missionary came, the farmers said we must not listen- they said all missionaries are deceivers... the farmers said we should shortly be sent by the missionaries over *'de blaauw waters'* as slaves.’¹⁰⁵ This would not have been the first time that Albrecht had heard of the farmers’ anti-missionary sentiments. Other of Links’ group were evidently more robust in their views and had heard from other Khoikhoi groups of the benefits of connecting themselves with a missionary. The Little Namaqua seemed to be aware that they were one of few Khoikhoi groups yet to receive the instruction of missionaries. The Great Namaqua had only recently received missionaries so word of

¹⁰³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1) 15, C. Albrecht, 3 July 1806.

¹⁰⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1)15, C. Albrecht, 14 July 1806.

¹⁰⁵ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, B. Shaw, Lilyfontain, 18 February 1818; B. Shaw to his father, 27 March 1818.

missionaries at Zak River and later along the middle Orange at Griqua Town had almost certainly reached the Little Namaqua years before.

The Namaqualand Mission Stations, 1799-1848



Figure 2. The Namaqualand Mission Stations, 1799-1848.

In August 1806, before returning to Great Namaqualand, Christian Albrecht met with Cornelius Kok who took him to the *Kammas* spring just below the Orange River. Albrecht describes *Kammas*, later known as ‘Pella’, as being in the country of the bushmen near the Great River.¹⁰⁶ The spring was reportedly surrounded by many meadows and able to support great herds of cattle. For these reasons, Albrecht believed it to be the best spring he had observed in Bushmanland. Kok expressed his desire to establish a mission station at the spring. He and his followers stayed at *Kammas* from time to time, but his son remained at the spring more permanently with a group of ‘heathen’.¹⁰⁷ It is unknown whether it was Adam II or Abraham Kok who resided permanently at *Kammas* but both men were known to preach the gospel to their followers and those around them.

Upon Albrecht’s return to Blyde Uitkomst, and after consulting with the other missionaries, the decision was made to remain in their present location as, according to Albrecht, the Great Namaqua would not leave their country and the missionaries likewise would not leave the Great Namaqua. While Albrecht’s correspondence refers to the more generalised category of ‘Great Namaqua’, records suggest his community consisted of 300 *Kaminúqua* (!*Kami*≠*nûn*) and 200 oorlams.¹⁰⁸ *Kaminúqua* was translated by the Albrechts’ interpreter into the Dutch name ‘Bondelswart.’¹⁰⁹ Since the arrival of the missionaries in Great Namaqualand, Captain Bondelswart had connected himself and his followers to them. He soon requested that the Albrechts move their mission to Warmbath. Considering the continuous drought at Blyde Uitkomst and Stille Hoop, the brothers were open to the idea and abandoned the stations shortly after.¹¹⁰

Captain Bondelswart’s request for missionaries to accompany him to Warmbath was a strategic one and he was far from secretive about the ulterior motives attached to it. He explicitly sought out their assistance to serve as diplomatic intermediaries between the Bondelswarts and the Groot Dode (*//Ogain*), a smaller Great Namaqua group, who had long been in conflict with one another. He also attempted to acquire firearms from the missionaries. The Albrechts denied the requests, disinterested in meddling in the political affairs of the Namaqua groups. Tension

¹⁰⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1)15, C. Albrecht, 3 August 1806.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (3B) 4A, A. Albrecht, March 1807.

¹⁰⁹ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Observations made in the Country of the Great Namaqua, A. Albrecht, 209.

¹¹⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (1) 15, A. Albrecht, 17 September.

arose between the Bondelswarts and the missionaries but soon dissipated. The Bondelswarts were not the only Namaqua group to seek out the political services of the missionary. In the early days of the Warmbath settlement many different Namaqua, and oorlam, groups were in competition for the services of the missionaries.¹¹¹ The Namaqua too were increasingly suspicious of the oorlam groups who they deemed foreigners. Interestingly enough, it was only through their interaction with missionaries that many groups rose to oorlam status. Piet Vlermuis, a Namaqua who later became a prominent oorlam leader of the *Kai/khauan*, joined Seidenfaden at Heirachabis until the station was later abandoned completely in 1808. It was through his connection with Seidenfaden at Heirachabis that, Dederling proposes, Vlermuis may have risen to the status of oorlam.¹¹²

The various inter-group dynamics and tensions existing around the early LMS stations in Great Namaqualand are considered in this thesis only to the extent to which they affected the movement of the missionaries between Little and Great Namaqualand.¹¹³

By the end of 1806 two mission centres existed in Great Namaqualand. The Albrechts continued to work at Warmbath amongst a following of mostly Bondelswarts and Seidenfaden at Heirachabis amongst the *!Kharakhoen*. Amongst their following at Warmbath two ‘bastard Hottentots’ caught the attention of the Albrechts, namely Gerhardus and Johnanus Engelbrecht.¹¹⁴ Gerhardus is first mentioned in the Albrecht’s journal in 1807 as a ‘Hottentot...whom we employ as our interpreter.’¹¹⁵ The same account refers to Gerhardus as a ‘baptized bastard Hottentot’ who was admitted to partake in the holy sacrament on the basis that the Albrechts were ‘satisfied that he possesses the faith of the elect of God.’¹¹⁶ In 1808 Albrecht recorded a conversation with Johnanus Engelbrecht, often referred to as John or Jan, ‘a believing bastard hottentot’, ‘respecting the fallen state of man, and his own conditions

¹¹¹CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2), C. and A. Albrecht, Warmbath, January-November 1809; CWM, South Africa Incoming Correspondence, A. Albrecht, Cape Town, 16 May 1807; CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals, C. and A. Albrecht, Warmbath, November-December 1809.

¹¹² Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 114.

¹¹³ For more on this see Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’; Lau, ‘The Emergence of Kommando Politics’; Lau, ‘Conflict and Power’; Lau, ‘Southern and Central Namibia in Jonker Afrikaner’s Time’; Kienetz, ‘The Key Role of the Orlam Migrations.’

¹¹⁴ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract of a letter from A. and C. Albrecht, dated Warme-Bath 24 August 1808, 245.

¹¹⁵ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract from the journal of Abraham and Christian Albrecht, 242.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

before God.¹¹⁷ Albrecht found that, to his satisfaction, ‘he greatly increased in self-knowledge and experience’.¹¹⁸ In April 1809 the Albrecht’s recorded in their journal that they lent a certain ‘John’ a shirt and some clothing which he had never worn before. John displayed an emotional response to the clothing, shedding tears and crying: ‘O what great things does God to me, who am a great sinner; O God, support me, that I may always remain faithful to thee till the last moment of my life!’¹¹⁹ It is likely that this was John Engelbrecht. What can be said with certainty is that the Albrechts’ records of the early years at Warmbath indicate that both John and Gerhardus were instrumental, initially as translators, and later as preachers. On many occasions Gerhardus reported that many Namaqua would come to him during the night ‘for the purpose of being instructed in the word of God’ or for having ‘conversations on religious subjects.’¹²⁰ As will be seen in this thesis, John worked semi-independently of the LMS for much of his life, preaching to various groups along the Orange River.

2.3 The Kamiesberg Question

In March 1807 Abraham Albrecht visited Cape Town most likely for the purpose of acquiring supplies for the Warmbath and Heirachabis missions. The Namaqualand missionaries were constantly on the move to either the Cape, or more commonly the Kamiesberg, to secure stocks of corn and livestock. Their inability to establish themselves in a vicinity suitable for agriculture quickly became a financial burden to both the LMS and the SAS. It seemed that the Namaqualand missionaries were constantly requesting more goods and money. They not only needed to pay for food, but also had to compensate (financially or in kind) the swimmers who assisted them in transporting their goods across the Orange River, their wagon drivers and their domestic servants. Swimmers were reportedly paid five sheep, a cow and an ox for eight days of work.¹²¹ Orange River crossings were a costly expense and the more the Albrechts were necessitated to visit the Kamiesberg for supplies, the more they occurred.¹²² A visit to the Kamiesberg for corn was a lengthy ordeal often taking up to five weeks. A trip incurred the

¹¹⁷ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract from the Journal of Abraham and Christian Albrecht, 1807, 214.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Journal of the Brethren C. and A. Albrecht, intended for the Directors of the South African and Netherland Societies, 311.

¹²⁰ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Journal, since the Departure of Brother. C Albrecht to the Camie’s Mountain; beginning with Jun 14 1809, 315-316.

¹²¹ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 157.

¹²² *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract of a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society at Rotterdam, May 18, 1806, 29.

following costs upon the missionaries: a wagon load of corn for 49 rixdollars, servants labour for 49 rixdollars and swimmers for 89 rixdollars.¹²³ The entire trip thus cost the missionaries 187 rixdollars. To put this into perspective, in 1807 the LMS had budgeted an annual allowance of £200 for the Warmbath missionaries.¹²⁴ A single Orange River crossing to buy supplies in the Kamiesberg cost the missionaries approximately £37,40.¹²⁵ It is understandable then that the Warmbath missionaries were exceeding their annual budget and causing great frustration amongst the LMS directors.¹²⁶ The financial sustainability and longevity of the Great Namaqualand missionaries were a concern to the LMS from the start.

In addition, the missionaries were constantly in need of gunpowder and ammunition to sustain their mission. This was another reason behind Albrecht's visit to the Cape. In his initial meeting with Fiscal van Ryneveld in 1807, Abraham Albrecht expressed his desire for gunpowder. The request was immediately denied on the grounds of an apparent scarcity of shot. A frustrated Albrecht elevated his request above Van Ryneveld's head to Colonial Secretary Barnard.¹²⁷ The desperate need for shot, Albrecht explained, was for self-protection for his journey. Without it, he claimed he could not protect himself from 'wild beasts' and 'cruel Boschemen'.¹²⁸ What is more likely is that Albrecht was supplying the Namaqua attached to his missions with firearms and ammunition. These supplies, Dederling posits, accounted for the rise of several oorlam leaders, such as that of Vlermuis amongst the *Kai/khauan*.¹²⁹ Van der Kemp later strongly criticised Albrecht's attempts to procure firearms on behalf of his followers, whose intentions he believed not to be pure. This was the first, but not the last, time that the amenable character of Albrecht came under scrutiny by Van der Kemp. Van der Kemp speculated that:

The wandering hordes of Br. Albrecht, abusing his pliable character, have sent him to the Cape as a tool to obtain by his instrumentality as much powder and firearms as

¹²³ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 157.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 156.

¹²⁵ At the time 1 rixdollar was worth 4 British shillings. 20 British shillings to the pound; Elphick and Giliomee, *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652–1840*, xv.

¹²⁶ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 157.

¹²⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 5A, A. Albrecht to LMS, Warmbath, 13 February 1808.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 208.

possible to commit more depredations as Afrikaner ever is said to be guilty of, and that upon this reason they ly (sic.) fake or exaggerate representations of (...) dangers...¹³⁰

Van der Kemp harshly attacked the character of the Namaqua attached to Albrecht, whom he accused of exaggerating the threat posed by Jager Afrikaner in order to procure, under false pretences, firearms and shot for their protection. Jager Afrikaner was the leader of the Afrikaners (*//Aixa//ain*), an oorlam group with a violent reputation, known for their raiding activities in the Orange River region.¹³¹ We cannot know if Albrecht was complicit in this fabrication at the time or whether he had indeed been duped by the Namaqua as suggested by Van der Kemp. What we do know is that at the Cape he had not specified his need for shot for the protection of his people against the Afrikaners nor had he mentioned any threat of the sort. In fact in the early years of the Warmbath mission the missionaries had established good relations with Klaas Afrikaner. His son, Jager, resided at the nearby spring of Stille Hoop and sent his children to be educated at the mission school.¹³² The Afrikaners were well aware of the benefits of an alliance with the missionaries. Jager Afrikaner for one utilised Seidenfaden as a middle man in the ivory trade.¹³³ Only later, would the Afrikaners pose a direct threat to the missionaries at Warmbath.

The authorities at the Cape were disinterested in Albrecht's pleas for shot and instead shifted the topic of conversation to the location of the mission station. Van Ryneveld expressed the government's desire for Albrecht to establish a more permanent mission station within the vicinity of the colony.¹³⁴ For this, Van Ryneveld promised that the government would provide a district sufficiently larger for their support. Albrecht barely considered the idea. He knew that the Great Namaqua and the rest of his followers were greatly attached to their land and would not leave it – as was the case with Kok's request for their relocation to Pella in 1806. Van Ryneveld's request was evidently a self-serving one and, as he expressed himself, was an attempt to put a stop to the 'alarming increase in Mahomedanism.'¹³⁵ Many slaves at the Cape

¹³⁰ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 228.

¹³¹ For more on the Afrikaner Oorlams see Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 97-109; Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 338 – 359; Du Bruyn, 'The Oorlam Afrikaners'; Lau, 'The Emergence of Kommando Politics'; Lau, 'Conflict and Power'; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 70-74.

¹³² Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 480; Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 149.

¹³³ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 480; Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 105.

¹³⁴ The northern boundary of the colony at the time was the Buffels river in the Kamiesberg, see Figure 2.

¹³⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 4A, A. Albrecht to LMS, Cape Town, March 1807.

had embraced Islam, much to the distress of the government who deemed the religion as impure. A Muslim community appeared at the Cape during the seventeenth century and by the nineteenth century had grown exponentially.¹³⁶ This was an issue of concern to both government and the missionary societies. The WMMS commented, ‘the Mahomedan priests from the interior have been actively and successfully making prey of their (the Africans) ignorance, and turning them to the delusions of the false prophet.’¹³⁷ The further propagation of Christianity within the colony, Caledon believed, was the only solution.¹³⁸ Albrecht was not completely opposed to the idea but believed it to be impossible due to the stubbornness of his followers.

In addition, Albrecht was surely confused by the government’s sudden change in stance toward missions within the colony. This likely had to do with the transferal of the Cape from the Batavians back to the British in 1806.¹³⁹ During the first British occupation from 1795 to 1803, the British had been mostly supportive of the missionaries – seeing their usefulness as political intermediaries specifically between the rebellious Xhosa and Khoikhoi in the east. The prosperity of the Moravian settlement at Baviaanskloof added to their support of missions. The Batavians, just a few years later, were somewhat more distrustful of the missionaries – especially those of the LMS whose political activism became a thorn in their side.¹⁴⁰ Much like the British before him, Governor Janssens had initially been supportive of Bethelsdorp and Van der Kemp as a means by which to quell the unrest on the eastern frontier. He hoped Van der Kemp could convince the Khoikhoi to return to their labour on farms and the Xhosa to leave the colony completely. Bethelsdorp was not to attract labourers from their work but was instead to serve as refuge for the old, sick and unemployable. Much to Janssens dismay, Van der Kemp would become a spokesperson for the Khoikhoi and the slaves, strongly opposing their appalling labour conditions. By 1805, Janssens had changed his outlook on missions entirely. He saw to the expulsion of Van der Kemp from Bethelsdorp and imposed an edict which banned all missionary activity within the borders of the colony – the Moravians at

¹³⁶ R. Elphick and R. Shell, ‘Intergroup Relations: Khoikhoi, settlers, slaves and free blacks, 1652-1795’ in Elphick, R. and Giliomee, H. (eds), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 – 1840* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), 123.

¹³⁷ *Report of the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society* (hereafter *WMMS Reports*), 1817, 24.

¹³⁸ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, VI: July 1806 - May 1809, ‘Letter from the Earl of Caledon to Viscount Castlereagh, 4 February 1808.’

¹³⁹ Freund, ‘The Cape Under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814,’ 224.

¹⁴⁰ William, Freund, ‘The Eastern Frontier of the Cape Colony during the Batavian Period (1803–1806)’, *The Journal of African History* 13, no. 4 (1972), 631–45.

Baviaanskloof being an exception.¹⁴¹ The Moravians were far more co-operative with the government and saw to their labour requirements. They were stricter than the LMS and more successfully saw to the ‘civilisation’ of the Khoikhoi.¹⁴² In 1806 Janssens changed the name of Baviaanskloof to Genadendal.¹⁴³

Albrecht was well aware of Janssens’ ban. When he met a kraal of Little Namaqua in the Kamiesberg in 1805 who were desirous of a missionary, he commented in his journal: ‘If this Kraal was not within the colony, a missionary Brother might find work enough.’¹⁴⁴ When the British returned to the Cape in 1806, government attitudes towards missionaries changed yet again. Initially, though, the British were cautious. When Lord Caledon took office as governor in May 1807, Janssens’s edict banning missionary activity within the colony was deemed obsolete.¹⁴⁵ Though the government was still suspicious of the missionaries – and the threat of mission stations attracting labourers away from employment – the establishment of missions within the colony was technically legalised. The British certainly believed that the missionaries could serve a useful purpose in instilling political and social stability on the frontiers. The establishment of the Namaqualand missions thus took place during an uncertain and transitional period within the governance of the colony. Attitudes towards missions were changing sporadically.

It is understandable then why Van Ryneveld and Barnard supported the relocation of the Great Namaqualand mission to within the boundaries of the colony. In addition to the usefulness a mission station would provide as a stabilising force in the region, a mission station closer to the colony, Van Ryneveld hoped, would quell the rise of Islam amongst slaves at the Cape.

Albrecht was not completely opposed to the relocation of the station. He mentioned to Barnard that before he had left Great Namaqualand for the Cape, he had been told by some Namaquas

¹⁴¹ Freund, ‘The Eastern Frontier’, 226; Du Plessis, *Christian Missions*, 425-8; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 77; For more on the relationship between the Batavians and the missionaries see P.S De Jongh, ‘Sendingwerk In Die Landdrostrikte Stellenbosch En Tulbagh (Sedert 1822 Worcester) 1799-1830’ (MA Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1968).

¹⁴² For Janssens’s proclamation see *British Parliamentary Papers*, vol 20., ‘Reports and Papers on the Affairs of the Cape Colony, the Condition of Native Tribes and Sixth Kaffir War 1826-1836’, 457-458; Marais, *The Cape Coloured People*, 148; Du Plessis, *Christian Missions*, 425-428.

¹⁴³ Du Plessis, *Christian Missions*, 136.

¹⁴⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (1) 6, Journal of A. Albrecht, C. Albrecht and J. Seidenfaden, 8 August to 5 November 1805.

¹⁴⁵ CA/WOC, Vol. 11/1, Secretary’s Office to Hendrik van der Graaf, 31 October 1809.

that ‘near the Western coast there was a fine tract of land with some fountains, which would suit us very well.’¹⁴⁶ Albrecht offers little other description of this location but one could presume that it was located within the borders of the colony, as Albrecht explained he would need government and LMS consent for the move. The records of Alexander and Backhouse later provide more information on the various groups of Little Namaqua living to the west, near the coast, at the areas known as *Ukribip*, *Kama* and Seal Island.¹⁴⁷ It is possible that these are the groups and the tract of land that Albrecht is referring to. Once again Albrecht seemed to show a willingness to move within the boundaries of the colony so long as his Namaqua followers were in favour of it – which they more than often were not.

The government was not the only one in favour of the LMS moving their operations closer to the colony. The SAS had requested that the location of the LMS institution in Great Namaqualand be changed to Little Namaqualand, within the limits of the colony. The mission in Great Namaqualand was occasioning far too great an expense on the society. It is clear that the SAS believed that the institution’s expenses would be less if it were nearer to the Cape. The SAS also believed that the Little Namaqua, and those living in the vicinity of the Kamiesberg, would be more receptive to the missionaries and their message as, unlike the Great Namaqua, they had been in contact with Europeans for years prior.¹⁴⁸

The possible relocation of the Great Namaqualand mission into Little Namaqualand was supported by Governor Caledon too. He commented that ‘the missions in Africa had been particularly recommended to him by the Missionary Society of London and that he had promised his protection and assistance, which he was willing to afford’.¹⁴⁹ With the verbal support of the governor, the SAS put the relocation petition to the government into writing.¹⁵⁰ The following day the request was granted but with a condition. The *landdrost* and magistrates of Tulbagh were to be acquainted with the petition and ordered to suggest an appropriate place for the establishment of the institution. The *landdrost* of Tulbagh suggested the Buffels (or Cousies) River, being the official boundary of the Colony to the north, and running through the middle of the country of the Little Namaquas, ‘appears to them a very fit place to establish a

¹⁴⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 5A, A. Albrecht to LMS, Warmbath, 13 February 1808.

¹⁴⁷ See page 208 – 213.

¹⁴⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 4A, A. Albrecht to LMS, March 1807.

¹⁴⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 5A, A. Albrecht to LMS, 13 February 1808.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

missionary institution.¹⁵¹ Caledon thus approved that the ‘missionaries may be replaced hither, provided they do not fix themselves too much to the Southward.’¹⁵²

With the odds in their favour and the grant of a favourable tract of land in the Kamiesberg, the Albrechts left for their post in Great Namaqualand. Despite the unwavering support they received for the move, they chose to remain at Warm Bath. They provided no written explanation for this but one can assume that their followers refused to move southward. Either that or their ongoing negotiations with the government were merely an act of appeasement in order to secure supplies of ammunition.

Their struggle in Great Namaqualand continued to incur great expenses to the SAS and LMS. Trips to the Kamiesberg to procure corn became more common and loans from Cornelius Kok even more so.¹⁵³ The continued trips to the Cape for supplies would have been even more costly. In response to the great expense incurred by a mission as remote and inhospitable as Warm Bath, the Albrechts requested that the Directors consider ‘how much it costs to cultivate a barren desert.’¹⁵⁴ This request was a bold one, considering both the mission societies’ requests for the movement of the station into a more hospitable and financially feasible location.

While the establishment of a mission station in Little Namaqualand seemed far more suitable the Albrechts were unwilling to release their tight grasp on Great Namaqualand. In a letter to the LMS later that year, the Albrecht brothers explained that:

His excellency the British Governor of the Cape has had the goodness in compliance with a request of Brother Chris. Albrecht to assign us a considerable district of land situated between Coperhill and the Orange River, which is a much healthier spot for Europeans, of a more temperate climate, more fruitful, has a better pasturage for cows and goats and lies nearer the sea then our settlement. This spot may prove in process of time, of the utmost consequence for the better subsistence of our mission but for the present we feel no freedom to leave the Namacqua Country, neither have we request to

¹⁵¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (3B) 5A, A. Albrecht to LMS, 13 February 1808.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, Extract of a letter to the Brethren of the Missionary Society at Rotterdam, May 18, 1806, 29.

¹⁵⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4)1B, A. and C. Albrecht to LMS, Warmbath, 19 April 1809.

take immediate possession of it but only for part of our people to repair then occasionally.¹⁵⁵

The vast distance between the missionary station at remote Warmbath and the Cape meant that communication between the missionaries and their society was both irregular and infrequent. By December of 1809 the Directors of the LMS seemed just as confused and likely frustrated by the Albrechts' stubbornness and indecisiveness regarding the location of the mission. In a letter to the Albrecht brothers, the society stated that:

We shall now pay some attention to these letters in the order of their dates – the first of them relates principally to the interview which Mr. Abram Albrecht had with the Governor when at Cape Town the results of which was – his permission to remove you from your Station to the Cousse River, which is the northern boundary of the Colony – but as your subsequent letters are all dated at Warm Bath, and contain no confirmation of your intention to abandon that Station, we conclude that you find it likely to answer the purpose of a Missionary Settlement better than you before expected.¹⁵⁶

Nobody was more vocal in their frustration with the Albrechts' unwillingness to leave Great Namaqualand than their co-worker Seidenfaden. Seidenfaden repeatedly expressed his concern to the Society over the impracticality of a mission station in Great Namaqualand. He deemed Namaqualand as 'completely unfit for an establishment, not only because the missionaries cannot grow any corn, nor get any vegetable food for themselves, but they and their pupils would be obliged to live entirely upon meat and milk.'¹⁵⁷ He went on to explain to the Society that,

it is possible after a good deal of rain, that we could remain in the same spot, for three or four months, but certainly not longer; for during that time all the grass and plants would have been consumed, and a dispersion into all directions for subsistence would be the only means of preserving us from starving, by which all the instruction is lost for the whole establishment could not remain together, and those families that followed

¹⁵⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 1D, A. and C. Albrecht to LMS, Warmbath, 7 November 1809.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, LMS to A. and C. Albrecht, 1 December 1809.

¹⁵⁷ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

us and had been attending to our instruction would expect to be supported by the Missionaries; and really it is miserable and heart-breaking to see the poverty and distress of many families, and in many cases it is impossible to refuse them all support. The misery and distress are still greater, if there has been no rain during a whole year; no human being, neither any animal can remain there.¹⁵⁸

Seidenfaden had strongly supported the SAS and government's requests for the missionaries to move with their followers to either the western coast or the Kamiesberg but the Albrecht brothers remained reluctant. In the same report to the Society, Seidenfaden offered a contemptuous attack on the Albrechts, deeming them as 'more like hermits, than ministers of the gospel among the heathen.'¹⁵⁹ This assault on the Albrechts' character was a little harsh. Their choice to remain in Great Namaqualand, as they explained on multiple occasions, was on account of their followers' refusal to relocate, not their own. It is very likely that they would have welcomed the relocation and the comfort that life in the Kamiesberg could offer them. The Albrechts' aversion to leaving their followers caused Seidenfaden much unease, as he believed that the Namaqua 'wish more to be fed, than instructed in the truths of the gospel.'¹⁶⁰

Seidenfaden's frustration was understandable. He had been far more mobile than the Albrechts in Great Namaqualand and it is possible that he had experienced far more exacting conditions. Seidenfaden complained, although several years later, that Heirachabis was 'the worst, the most barren and sterile in the whole southern part of Africa...the climate is much too hot and during the summertime it is therefore necessary that one goes from one place to another during the nighttime..¹⁶¹ Of his physical state, he continued, 'I have not been well one week in the three years I have been travelling about this country...I am never free of severe headaches... these are the reasons why I am so very much against this country.'¹⁶² By 1811, he was even more disillusioned, stating in his report, 'Often I cannot help asking myself, what are you doing here? What is your labour? What for so much expense and why suffering so much poverty and distress?'¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 180.

¹⁶² Ibid, 179.

¹⁶³ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

The differing opinions of the Albrechts and Seidenfaden ultimately caused the group to split. This came after a group of Little Namaqua requested Seidenfaden to move and live amongst them in the Kamiesberg. The move suited Seidenfaden's aversion to Great Namaqualand. Unsurprisingly, the Albrechts were opposed to the idea and strongly recommended that the group not be broken up. It is likely that the Albrechts believed the splintering of the group would not serve the already weakened reputation of the Great Namaqualand missions in the eyes of the LMS and SAS directors. Hitting a dead-end with the Albrechts, Seidenfaden communicated his desire to move to Little Namaqualand to the SAS and awaited a response. In the meantime, however, his followers became impatient. The lack of food and water for man or animal at Warmbath made it impossible to remain there. Furthermore, the group of Little Namaqua were constantly at odds with the *Kaminuquaas* (or *Kamanukuas*), a group of Great Namaqua.¹⁶⁴ Finally, the Albrechts suggested that if Seidenfaden was still intent on moving to the Kamiesberg, he first make a trip to the Cape and consult with the agents in this regard. In order to keep up appearances in the eyes of the Society and their agents, which was apparently important for both the Albrechts and Seidenfaden, the Albrechts provided Seidenfaden with a certificate which stated that 'on account of the want of water and sufficient pasturage, and the disagreement of the *Kamanukuas*, with the other nations, we the three missionaries have agreed that Brother Seidenfaden should separate from the Brethren Albrecht for the purpose of establishing a Missionary Institution by himself.'¹⁶⁵

Seidenfaden left for the Cape on the 5th of October 1808. His trip was likely for the purpose of acquiring provisions and selling ivory, a trade he had recently become involved in. He also intended to establish marital relations. His trip had been successful considering he married Maria Schonken in March 1809. En route to the Cape, Seidenfaden made a fortnight-long stop in the Kamiesberg to rest his oxen. During his stay he observed the area, preached the gospel and conversed with many Little Namaqua. During a conversation with Cornelius Kok, he informed him of his inclination to reside in the Kamiesberg, which Kok 'seemed excessively glad to hear.'¹⁶⁶ Kok's wife seemed just as joyous at the proposition, responding 'Sir! Pray do your best to come amongst us, in that case we shall have an opportunity of hearing the Word

¹⁶⁴Dederling suggests that the Bondelswarts also went by the name 'Caminge', '!Kami=nun', 'Kamingou, 'Camingnoe'. It is possible that the Kamanukuas were an offshoot of the Bondelswarts; Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 84.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

of God, and seeing our children instructed in the Christian religion and if you cannot find a better spot in the vicinity, we shall give you our place at the Silver fountain.’¹⁶⁷ A few days later Seidenfaden was approached by a Little Namaqua known as Guido Links, the brother of Jacob Links, whom Seidenfaden knew. Guido Links requested, ‘in the name of all the natives,’ that Seidenfaden should come and live among them and fix his residence near Leliefontein so that they and their children could be taught the Christian religion.¹⁶⁸ In addition, Links requested that the Little Namaqua, who had been with Seidenfaden in Great Namaqualand, should return to the Kamiesberg. Links concluded, ‘it is true, our district is but small, however we have enough, the worst is that we are oppressed by the Colonists. If the Government would make the necessary regulations, we should do very well.’¹⁶⁹

The SAS approved Seidenfaden’s request. They must have been relieved that the Great Namaqualand missionaries were finally willing to relocate to the more financially viable Kamiesberg. They wrote: ‘If you have not yet found in the Western part a fit place for your Missionary establishment, we wish you to remove your present institution to the Camies Mountains in the Little Namaqua Country, for why should you remain longer in the Great Namaqua Country, without being able to support yourselves, think how expensive your present place of residence is without having the least prospect of gathering any fruit in future from your labours.’¹⁷⁰

Seidenfaden was surely aware that establishing himself in the Kamiesberg would be greatly beneficial to his involvement in the ivory trade, which he had engaged in during his stay in Great Namaqualand.¹⁷¹ Though the trade was crucial to his survival in the region, it was also lucrative. Relocation to the Kamiesberg would allow for greater access to Griquatown and existing trade networks. The missionaries Jan Kok and William Edwards, operating parallel to Seidenfaden, had since their arrival amongst the Tlhaping devoted much time to hunting and trading.¹⁷² Through his interaction with the two missionaries, Seidenfaden had become well

¹⁶⁷ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 84.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 105.

¹⁷² Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 125-126 ; Roger B. Beck, ‘Bibles and Beads: Missionaries as Traders in Southern Africa in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *The Journal of African History* 30, no. 2 (1989), 211–25.

aware of the money to be made in ivory hunting. By 1806, Edwards had made approximately 3200 rixdollars from ivory trading and, from his profits, purchased a wine farm.¹⁷³ Seidenfaden too had established relations with the Griqualand missionaries through his marriage to Maria Schonken. Maria Schonken's sister, Johanna, was married to Griqualand missionary William Anderson.¹⁷⁴ Anderson himself is reported to have been involved in the ivory trade with the Tlhpaing and Barlolong.¹⁷⁵ By establishing himself in the Kamiesberg, a central point in the journey between Griquatown and the Cape, Seidenfaden could occupy a strategic position along the trade route.

Seidenfaden's next stop, on the 28th of November, was Tulbagh where *Landdrost* Van der Graaf promised his protection in regard to the new establishment.¹⁷⁶ He told Seidenfaden that with the Buffels River being the northernmost boundary of the colony, no colonists were permitted beyond it. Therefore, he suggested that the area just beyond the river should belong to his new establishment. At this point, it seemed that almost everyone, bar the Albrechts, was in favour of the establishment of a station in Little Namaqualand.

By December 1808 Caledon too was supportive of the station and advised Seidenfaden to request the official permission of Van der Graaf.¹⁷⁷ Van der Graaf denied Seidenfaden's request to fix his abode near Leliefontein in the Kamiesberg as the spot was within the boundaries of the colony. He would only support the establishment of a mission station outside the colony's boundaries. The area north of the boundary, however, was barren and dry, which would greatly inhibit the cultivation of corn and the subsistence of an establishment – a fact which Van der Graaf was surely aware of. The SAS sent a petition to Caledon for the same object and favourable response was received once again. Caledon supported the settlement at Leliefontein and stated that 'the more southward you go, the more I shall be pleased.'¹⁷⁸ Caledon, however, seemed adamant that the opinion of Van der Graaf be duly submitted on the matter. This must have caused Seidenfaden despondence; he believed that 'Mr van der Graaf would secretly endeavour that I should be disappointed for I believe he is no friend to the

¹⁷³ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing', 183.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

missionaries.¹⁷⁹ The subsequent actions of Van der Graaf to block the establishment of the mission in the Kamiesberg would prove Seidenfaden's intuition correct.

At the Cape Seidenfaden met LMS missionary Bastiaan Tromp, who had arrived earlier that year and was without employment. Shortly after, he enlisted Tromp, with the approval of the SAS, to join him in the Kamiesberg. Tromp went ahead of Seidenfaden, arriving in January 1809, and was well received by Cornelius Kok. From the outset the relationship between Tromp and Seidenfaden was strained. When Tromp left Kok, just shortly after his arrival, on account of illness, he received harsh criticism from Seidenfaden for his apparent feebleness. Later, Tromp would harshly criticise Seidenfaden's deplorable character and 'wicked' behaviour.¹⁸⁰

When Seidenfaden returned to the Kamiesberg in August 1809 he was immediately summoned to the farm of *Veldcornet* van Niekerk, where he had organised an impromptu enquiry before a panel of colonists in which Seidenfaden's character was scrutinised and evidence presented against him by the Kamiesberg farmers. The minutes of the enquiry strongly suggest that both Van der Graaf and the farmers were not in favour of the missionary enterprise as a whole, nor the dubious Seidenfaden. It is not surprising, then, that Seidenfaden's petition to establish a station at Leliefontein was denied on the grounds that Leliefontein 'had been left to the Little Namacquas' by 'the Dutch government'.¹⁸¹ Here Van der Graaf refers to Governor Janssens' edict of 1806 which, under the then Batavian Republic, ensured that no new mission stations would be permitted within the colony. Van der Graaf also claimed that 'the country is not large enough to maintain the present inhabitants' let alone Seidenfaden and his followers.¹⁸² It is understandable at best that these white farmers present at the interrogation, one of which being Van der Graaf himself, were opposed to the establishment of a mission station in their neighbourhood as they commonly believed it would attract their Khoikhoi labourers away from service. Furthermore, many feared that the mission station would attract bastards and Khoikhoi from surrounding areas, which they believed would result in criminality and lawlessness in the Kamiesberg.

¹⁷⁹ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁸⁰ Penn, *A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*, 193.

¹⁸¹ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

Seidenfaden remained steadfast during the interrogation. He vehemently defended the accusation that he was attempting to dispossess the Little Namaqua of their land and instead explained that he had been invited to settle by Captain Links and had the support of Cornelius Kok. Without a rebuttal to these claims, Van der Graaf managed to convince another Little Namaqua Captain, Jantjie Wildschut, to state that he had not been consulted in the decision to invite Seidenfaden onto the land. Here, rather strategically, Van der Graaf managed to capitalise on a ‘power struggle’ of sorts between the Chiefly Wildschuts and Linkses.¹⁸³ While the Linkses, as well as the Koks, were deemed to be in favour of the missionaries, Captain Wildschut was often regarded as answering to the colonists. Seidenfaden had been outmanoeuvred by a *landdrost* who would go to great lengths to ensure that his district remained free of missionaries. Van der Graaf himself admitted to Seidenfaden that ‘...you know very well that I shall never tolerate any missionary within my district.’¹⁸⁴

The Kamiesberg colonist community’s anti-missionary sentiments were personal. Seidenfaden was a character they strongly mistrusted. They believed him to be exploiting Leliefontein and the Little Namaqua for his own purposes and accused him of riling up the Khoikhoi to rebellion against the colonists. These accusations were confirmed by Tromp who reported to the LMS in 1808 that Seidenfaden ‘has made so revolution among the Christians and has enticed the heathens against the Christians. In my presence he had an interpreter who was interpreted to the Bushmen that the Bushmen should kill the Christians with arrows.’¹⁸⁵ He added: ‘Seidenfaden is not able to be alone in a settlement amongst the heathens, because his behaviour is very dangerous and he will be entirely master himself and what he says shall be done.’¹⁸⁶ Penn suggests here that Tromp was hinting at Seidenfaden’s involvement in ivory trading and disgraceful sexual behaviour.¹⁸⁷ The LMS had their own concerns about Seidenfaden and his alleged involvement in elephant hunting and ivory trading activities.¹⁸⁸ It certainly did not work in his favour when he impregnated Sanna Arye, the wife of Jan, one of his followers.¹⁸⁹ Though it seems that the two did have an extra-marital affair that led to the pregnancy, Sanna later accused Seidenfaden of seducing her. Seidenfaden’s adultery, although

¹⁸³ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing’, 192.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 194.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

unbeknownst to the LMS until 1820, was common knowledge among the community of the northern frontier.

Van der Graaf concluded his final decision in a report dated 5 September 1809:

The Missionary J. Seidenfaden having fixed his establishment within the boundary of this colony in the neighbourhood of the Camies Mountains, the experience of its impracticability as well as the complaints of the respective inhabitants have made it necessary, that the aforementioned Missionary shall be obliged to remove his establishment beyond the limits, where he is at liberty to choose such a spot for his institution as he may think serviceable to obtain his views. It being hereby expressly ordered that nobody shall hinder him to go with his property beyond the boundary, and to fix himself without disturbance.¹⁹⁰

Caledon expressed much confusion at the *landdrost's* 'arbitrary' judgement in the matter, in particular his interpretation of the edict of 1806 which had in reality been made obsolete since the capitulation of Janssens to the British.¹⁹¹ Despite Caledon's previous support of a mission at Leliefontein he did not question Van der Graaf's decision. He ordered that 'the Landdrost of Tulbagh...show the petitioner within his district a spot fit for his intended establishment.'¹⁹² Caledon believed that 'much public advantage might derive from missions' and thus instructed that Seidenfaden be directed to 'another place, either within or without the colony.'¹⁹³ The Seidenfaden debacle suggests that the failure to secure a location for the establishment of a mission in Little Namaqualand had as much to do with Seidenfaden's crooked reputation as it had to do with Van der Graaf's devious misinterpretation of Janssens' Edict to promote settler interests.

Seidenfaden begrudgingly removed himself from the Kamiesberg and, after a six-day journey, crossed the border of the colony into the northern tracts of Little Namaqualand, which he described as 'barren', 'infertile' and 'inhospitable.'¹⁹⁴ On the 4th of October Seidenfaden arrived at *Kammas*, the location Kok had previously shown to the Albrechts, just half an hour's

¹⁹⁰ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁹¹ CA/WOC, Vol. 11/1, Secretary's Office to Hendrik van der Graaf, 31 October 1809.

¹⁹² Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

¹⁹³ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 476.

¹⁹⁴ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

walk below the Orange River. Here Seidenfaden, his wife and his followers patiently awaited further instructions from Caledon. Seidenfaden remained at *Kammas* for two months where his followers built him a small hut as his dwelling. Caledon's reply arrived soon after and instructed Van der Graaf to show '...the petitioner within his district a spot fit for his intended establishment.' Knowing full well that Van der Graaf would not allow any missionary institution within his district, Seidenfaden returned to the Cape in search of an alternative location. Seidenfaden's petition was later sent to the *Landdrost* of Swellendam who assigned him a post at the Zuurbraak station where his reputation became further tarnished.¹⁹⁵

2.4 The 'Prince of Darkness'

In the meanwhile the Albrechts', and their wives', work at Warmbath continued, albeit with much difficulty. The hot and dry conditions were beginning to take a toll on the Albrechts, who were also severely undernourished from a diet solely consisting of milk and meat. In late June 1810 Christian and, a now weakened, Abraham Albrecht attempted a journey to the Cape. They only made it as far as Piketberg where Abraham passed away in July from tuberculosis. After a short visit to the Cape, Christian Albrecht arrived back at Warmbath where he ministered to his followers who showed a 'great desire for instruction.'¹⁹⁶ Albrecht was now supplemented by the labour of Tromp who had been at Warmbath since late 1809. The joy of being back at Warmbath, however, Albrecht claimed, was soon dampened by the 'Prince of Darkness.'¹⁹⁷

The 'Prince of Darkness' came in the form of the Afrikaner gang. Despite initially establishing friendly ties with the LMS missionaries at Warmbath, the station soon became the target of the Afrikaners. On the 12th of January 1811 Albrecht received news of an attack that had taken place on a small group of Khoikhoi near the Orange River.¹⁹⁸ The group's huts were robbed and cattle stolen at the hands of nine armed men who claimed to be followers of Afrikaner. The men also claimed to have raided the station of Seidenfaden at *Kammas* while he was at the Cape.¹⁹⁹ Seidenfaden's house had been robbed, his servant Hans Drayer severely beaten and shot, and all his cattle stolen and driven away. Afrikaner's gang of robbers threatened that

¹⁹⁵ For more on Seidenfaden see Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing.'

¹⁹⁶ *Transactions of the London Missionary Society, Vol III*, 426.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5D, C. Albrecht, Report for the year 1811, 29 November 1811.

¹⁹⁹ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 481.

Warmbath would be their next target. Albrecht and his followers lived in a constant state of fear for the following month and had armed men on guard each night. Vlermuis, an ally of Albrecht, had also heard of Afrikaner's threats on Albrecht's life and agreed to join Albrecht at Warmbath to better their defensive strategy. En route to Warmbath, however, Vlermuis and his followers were attacked by Afrikaner's gang. Surprisingly, no lives were lost. Afrikaner's gang, however, managed to take possession of the nearby spring, which caused the subsequent loss of Vlermuis' cattle which could not be stopped from drinking at the spring and falling into the hands of the robbers. The entire district was now not only destitute of water, but also of its people, scattered and hungry. It thus became necessary for Albrecht to gather his followers and make the eight-day journey across the Orange River for *Kammas*. The group's final destination, however, was Byzondermeid (later Steinkopf) where they had easier access to the Kamiesberg to secure supplies of corn and cattle. Byzondermeid, a region north of the Kamiesberg, was named after its Nama name '*Tarrakois*', meaning 'strange maid.'²⁰⁰ Once again it was the generous hands of Cornelius Kok that supplied Albrecht with the necessary cattle.

Before leaving for *Kammas*, Albrecht sent a letter to the *Landdrost* of Tulbagh, acquainted him with their situation and requested the assistance of a commando. The process of assembling a commando was, however, heavily delayed by bureaucratic processes. When a commando was eventually authorised and assembled, a whole three months later, the group turned back before even reaching Afrikaner as, according to a frustrated Albrecht, 'it clearly appears that it is too great a task for Christians to travel in such uncivilized and desert countries, unaccustomed to the Hottentot mode of warfare.'²⁰¹ By this time Afrikaner had already plundered and completely destroyed the deserted Warmbath station and Albrecht and his followers, having run out of gunpowder and ammunition, were left in an even more vulnerable position than before.

²⁰⁰ James Kitchingman, Basil Alexander Le Cordeur, and Christopher C. Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers : Missionary Letters and Journals, 1817-1848 from the Brenthurst Collection, Johannesburg* (Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1976), 13.

²⁰¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5D, C. Albrecht, Report for the year 1811, 29 November 1811 ; Van der Kemp heavily criticized Albrecht's request for a commando against Afrikaner, claiming that rather than admonishing him of his vengeance and advising him to formally lay his complaints before the government, Albrecht's actions instead further demonized Afrikaner and instigated mischief;

²⁰¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811.

Afrikaner's attack on Warmbath has long been explained by the group's violent reputation, stemming from 1796 when the Afrikaner Oorlams were accused of killing their master Petrus Pienaar. Albrecht explains the attack as an act of vengeance after the group's leader, Jager Afrikaner, became 'hardened in sin' following an incident with Hans Dreyer (who had later been attacked at *Kammas*) in which he lost thirty oxen.²⁰² Dederling, however, is somewhat more sympathetic toward Afrikaner, reducing his reputation to the 'Afrikaner myth' in spite of many years of non-violence on Afrikaner's part and attempts to establish peaceful relations with the colonial government.²⁰³ The 1811 attack on Warmbath, long seen as an act of anti-colonial and anti-missionary violence, instead had more to do with the missionaries involvement in the ivory and firearm trade and Afrikaner's attempt to secure his access to trade relations with the Cape. Seidenfaden in particular was involved in the ivory trade and by 1811 had amassed a series of complaints against him by Afrikaner. The loss of his cattle and wagons under the care of Hans Dreyer was seen by Afrikaner as a destabilisation of the monopoly he once held over the trade.²⁰⁴ The Afrikaners after all had no personal vendetta against the missionaries, or the Albrechts at least, nor the station of Warmbath. They instead benefitted greatly from the presence of the missionaries on both a religious and temporal level. Albrecht's request for a commando and military allegiance with Vlermuis further enraged the already offended Afrikaner, instigating the escalation of violence against Warmbath and *Kammas*. Van der Kemp strongly criticised Albrecht's request for a command:

If, in my opinion, Br. Albrecht, in place of stirring up the boors to fight against Afrikaaner, had treated him in an amicable manner, and admonished him of the irregularity of revenging himself, and offered him to lay his complaints before the government or at least the landdrosts, and had endeavoured to procure him their satisfaction of having his loss repaired, and the robber punished, all the present mischief would have been prevented.²⁰⁵

²⁰² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5D, C. Albrecht, Report for the year 1811, 29 November 1811; Hans Dreyer had been hired by Afrikaner to buy him a wagon in exchange for twenty of his oxen. Afrikaner entrusted Dreyer with another ten oxen in order to return the newly purchased wagon back to him. Dreyer, apparently heavily in debt, was accosted by a certain colonist woman and the oxen in his possession and the thirty animals were duly seized on account of his debt.

²⁰³ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 104.

²⁰⁴ For more on the circumstances surrounding Afrikaner's attack on Warmbath see 'Mission work and Conflict, 1808 – 1828' in Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 192- 226; Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 481-484.

²⁰⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811.

In the same letter Van der Kemp commented that:

The unsettled station in which the Namacqua mission, if it be re-established, will probably remain, will (I am afraid) involve the society in extravagant expenses...Should these missionary settlement be extended to greater distances from Cape Town, it will become almost impracticable to provide them with the necessary articles, even when there is a continued chain of intermediate missionary stations formed, and this difficulty will prove an almost insurmountable obstacle for the spread in Gospel in the interior parts of Africa.²⁰⁶

For this he offered an interesting solution:

A multitude of wandering hordes, consisting of few individuals, which cannot be into one coherent body nor remain settled at one place, I think could be better informed of the way of salvation, by converted Hottentots to whom the society may allow a trifle for their encouragements than by European Missionaries, who cannot content themselves with the scanty accommodations, with which these people are satisfied. Occasional visitations of these hordes from the nearest Missionary Stations by European Brethren I would by no means disapprove.²⁰⁷

Van der Kemp clearly believed that the only way the mission in Great Namaqualand could be a success were if it be transferred into the hands of African converts and missionaries themselves, rather than Europeans whom he deemed unfit for the job and environment entirely.

The endangered missionaries left Byzondermeid for Cape Town in September 1811 to secure further supply of ammunition. At the Cape Albrecht was overjoyed to meet four German missionaries who had been sent by the LMS to assist him, namely Sass, Helm, Ebner and Schmelen. These men would prove themselves essential to the future of the LMS' missionary efforts in both Little and Great Namaqualand. Governor Cradock, who had since replaced Caledon, after being acquainted with the situation of Albrecht's mission, granted the

²⁰⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

missionaries' request for two hundred pounds of gunpowder, four hundred pounds of lead and twenty firelocks.²⁰⁸ Albrecht's next request was a surprising one:

...we request his Excellency to be permitted to extend our Mission, to preach the Gospel in the Little Namaqua country, near the Lily Fountain, situated on the Kamiesberg; conceiving that this place would be very advantageous to the whole of our community, because we might grow corn here, as well as other articles of subsistence, sufficient to supply those residing at the Warm Bath... This place would also afford a greater degree of safety in case of an attack.²⁰⁹

It seemed that while previously neither drought, suffering nor poverty could convince Albrecht to move his station and his followers to Little Namaqualand, a threat to their security would finally convince him otherwise. Albrecht now saw all that Little Namaqualand, and specifically the Kamiesberg, had to offer – greater security, a permanent water supply and fertile ground. He was, nevertheless, not ready to let go of Warm Bath completely. Instead, Albrecht strategically embraced a station in the Kamiesberg as a means by which to supply Warmbath, Byzondermeid, and eventually Great Namaqualand with corn and fresh supplies. The Kamiesberg would be a stepping stone into Great Namaqualand, which would always remain the priority for Albrecht.

With his request approved by Governor Cradock, Albrecht left the Cape for Little Namaqualand and arrived late December 1811. His four German colleagues had left in early December and awaited his arrival. They, as well as Albrecht, had been instructed by the LMS to '...go to the Kamies Mountain, and hereafter, if possible, to the Warm Bath, or otherwise to fix themselves in different stations in the neighbourhood.'²¹⁰ The group became separated when Sass' wife became ill, forcing the others to continue on without him. Sass' journey onward was fraught with difficulty as his oxen became thin and fatigued, dropping like flies. Sass, now desperate for assistance, was met by two men and a span of oxen who had arrived especially to accompany him to Silverfontein – the place of Cornelius Kok. Sass was surprised and assumed the help had been sent by Albrecht. He soon found out it was Kok himself who

²⁰⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811.

²⁰⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5D, C. Albrecht, Report for the year 1811,

²¹⁰ *LMS Reports*, May 14th, 1812.

had arranged the party to chaperone him to Silverfontein. Upon his arrival Sass was determined to repay Kok for his kindness, but the gesture was refused by Kok who exclaimed, 'He had got it already by hearing the blessed word of God.'²¹¹ Sass and his wife were soon convinced to remain with Kok and potentially remove with him and his family to the neighbourhood of the Orange River where the LMS missionaries Anderson, Kramer and Janz were working.

Albrecht, now joined by Schmelen, was approaching Silverfontein and sent a letter to Kok to request oxen to be sent to fetch their wagons. Yet again, Kok assisted the missionaries and the group reunited at Silverfontein. Albrecht and Schmelen left Silverfontein and arrived at Byzondermeid six days later where they were joyfully greeted by Ebner, Helm and their congregation. Ebner and Helm had remained at Byzondermeid since they first arrived in Little Namaqualand and had found the area inhabited by many of Albrecht's Warmbath congregation who had fled with him in 1811. The group reached Leliefontein in September 1812, where they catechised to the people whom they found to be over five hundred in number.²¹²

Before planting roots in the Kamiesberg, Albrecht would have to first get past the formidable Van der Graaf whose strong anti-missionary sentiments had kept Seidenfaden out of the Kamiesberg just two years prior. Much to Albrecht's surprise and frustration, it was not Van der Graaf who objected to his settlement in the area but instead the Little Namaqua living upon the Kamiesberg mountains. When asked if 'they had a desire to be instructed as they had told him about 12 years before' and if they 'were satisfied, that a new mission in the colony was established' they objected.²¹³ Their ground for objection was that the 'place was too small for them already and as a missionary should, many more Hottentots will settle there and they should not have enough water and pasture.'²¹⁴ Albrecht refuted their claim, explaining that were he and his followers to settle in the Kamiesberg, no more would join. The Little Namaqua were not easily swayed and instead claimed simply that they had no desire to be instructed.

It seemed that much had changed in the hearts and minds of both the Little Namaqua and Van der Graaf since Seidenfaden had attempted to establish a mission amongst them. Van der Graaf, who had once been strongly against the settlement of missionaries in his district, now seemed

²¹¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 1C, C. Sass, Silverfontyn, 10 April 1812.

²¹² *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. IV, Extract of Schmelen's Journal containing an account of his Journey from Beyzonder Meid to Warm Bath, 8 October 1812.

²¹³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 32, J.H Schmelen, 10 December 1811- 25 April 1812.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

more open to the idea. Van der Graaf knew he would not get away with ‘misinterpreting’ Janssens’ edict for a second time, especially knowing that Governor Cradock was supportive of a mission in the Kamiesberg. Van der Graaf’s support, unsurprisingly, came with a catch. If Albrecht were to establish a mission in the Kamiesberg amongst the Little Namaqua, Van der Graaf instructed that the mission would not be open to newcomers or ‘strangers’ but would be for the exclusive use of the Little Namaqua and Albrecht’s Warmbath congregation.²¹⁵ This condition, had it come to fruition, would have appeased the Kamiesberg farmers who feared that the establishment of a station in the region would attract their Khoikhoi labourers away from service. It also resolved the fears of both Van der Graaf and the farmers that a mission in the area would attract groups of Khoikhoi and bastards from neighbouring regions, which they believed would disturb the peace in the Kamiesberg. Van der Graaf surely breathed a breath of relief when the Little Namaqua objected to the proposed mission.

Why the Little Namaqua had changed their minds yet again, we can but speculate. Schmelen, in his journal, suggested that the colonists could have played a role in altering the opinions of the Little Namaqua toward a mission.²¹⁶ In 1818 Shaw explained that the reason the Little Namaqua would not accept a missionary in 1812 was due to their fears of being enslaved by the missionaries.²¹⁷ It was, as expected, the Kamiesberg colonists who had managed to instil these fears into the minds of the Little Namaqua. The establishment of a mission in the area would be too great a threat to the fragile master-servant relationship that they had fought so hard to protect. They had, for the time being, managed to keep the missionaries at bay.

With Leliefontein and the Kamiesberg now out of the question, Van der Graaf did not hesitate to grant Albrecht use of Byzondermeid, and five neighbouring sites, in Little Namaqualand. Byzondermeid, being even further north and technically outside the colony’s borders, posed even less of a threat to Van der Graaf and the colonists. Despite that, Van der Graaf ensured that the same conditions he had applied to the prospective Leliefontein station would apply to Byzondermeid too. Newcomers would only be allowed onto the settlement and enlisted in its church book if authorised by Van der Graaf himself.²¹⁸ This condition, in addition to obviously

²¹⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 32, Extracts from the Journals of H. Helm, J. Ebner & J. Schmelen, Besondermeid, 22 February- 11 July 1812.

²¹⁶ Ibid, Extracts from the Journal of J. Schmelen, 10 December 1811- 25 April 1812.

²¹⁷ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBNI, B. Shaw, 18 February 1818.

²¹⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 32, Extracts from the Journals of H. Helm, J. Ebner & J. Schmelen, Besondermeid, 22 February- 11 July 1812.

giving Van der Graaf a sizeable amount of power, would allow him to ensure that the mission did not attract labourers from their duties with colonists within the colony.

Van der Graaf explained:

I felt the less scruples granting those places to the Brothers Missionaries Albrechts when I considered that the extending of their institution could tend to the prejudice of no person whatever, nor could the Bosjesmen, Hottentots or any other nation suffer from it. On the contrary, I can assure Your Excellency that the granting of those lands will be of the greatest advantage for the inhabitants of the boundary in general, and more particularly for those people who have settled themselves in its neighbourhood.²¹⁹

The question of what changed between 1808 and 1811 which caused a shift in opinion toward the mission station in Little Namaqualand by both Van der Graaf and the Little Namaqua is one worth considering. The most notable change perhaps is Governor Caledon's Hottentot Proclamation of 1809.²²⁰ The Proclamation introduced a strict pass system that restricted the movement of Khoikhoi in the colony and essentially immobilised them completely. An unemployed Khoikhoi was given a pass for only eight days until he or she would be required to re-enlist in the service of a colonist. Van der Graaf and the Kamiesberg colonists would surely have felt greater security and control over their labour force, and the fears of deserting labourers onto the mission station would have been quashed. The system still did not apply to those Khoikhoi already resident on mission stations within the colony. These new laws, paired with Van der Graaf's control over admission onto the station at Byzondermeid, would have offered colonists greater security and control over their workforce

The Hottentot Proclamation, a somewhat paradoxical piece of legislation, also attempted to protect Khoikhoi labourers against mistreatment from their employers. It introduced a series of travelling circuit courts to which Khoikhoi could lodge their complaints and receive a trial. The system was far from perfect and, in the majority of cases, highly prejudiced towards the colonists.

²¹⁹ Dederling, *Southern Namibia*, 169.

²²⁰ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, VII: *May 1809 – March 1811*, 'Proclamation by the Earl of Caledon', 212.

When the Little Namaqua asked Seidenfaden to live among them and establish a mission in 1808, Hans Links informed Seidenfaden of the oppression they faced from farmers. Somewhat naïvely, as quoted previously, Links believed that ‘... If the Government would make the necessary regulations, we should do very well.’²²¹ It is highly unlikely that the Hottentot Proclamation sufficed as the ‘necessary regulations’ to combat the oppression. But if it had, it would perhaps explain their refusal for a missionary in 1811. Campbell, on his journey back to the Cape from Namaqualand, stopped at the first colonists house in the colony. He gave the following description of the conditions under which the man’s Khoikhoi servants lived:

Their servants are Hottentots and have the appearance of extreme wretchedness, being covered with tattered skins worn by the sheep of former times, and their bodies so filthy that they seem not to have been washed since they were born. The lady sits with a long stick in her hand, commanding the tone of a general, and her orders are instantaneously obeyed.²²²

The Little Namaqua had not only faced mistreatment by their colonist employers but also had been pushed off their land and cut off from vital resources. Campbell described a Namaqua kraal whose land was taken by a colonist. The colonist had initially asked permission to sow corn and erect a mill, which they had allowed. Later, he applied to the government for a grant of the land, which was duly authorised. The colonist, according to the Namaqua, had failed to notify the government that the place was already in possession of the Namaqua. Unable to protect or fight for their land, the group were driven off it. Another old Khoikhoi told Campbell ‘that he remembered the time when the boors were all within five days’ journey of Cape Town, and the country was full of Hottentot kraals; but they have been gradually driven up the country to make room for the white people.’²²³

One would assume that the Little Namaqua would have known that a mission station and the missionaries would afford them further protection against encroaching colonists, and a refuge from the harsh living conditions and maltreatment they faced. Their refusal of a missionary in 1811, however, suggests that the intimidation they faced by the colonists had instilled enough

²²¹ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

²²² Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 457.

²²³ *Ibid*, 458.

fear in the Little Namaqua to outright decline Albrecht's request to establish a mission in the Kamiesberg – for the time being at least.

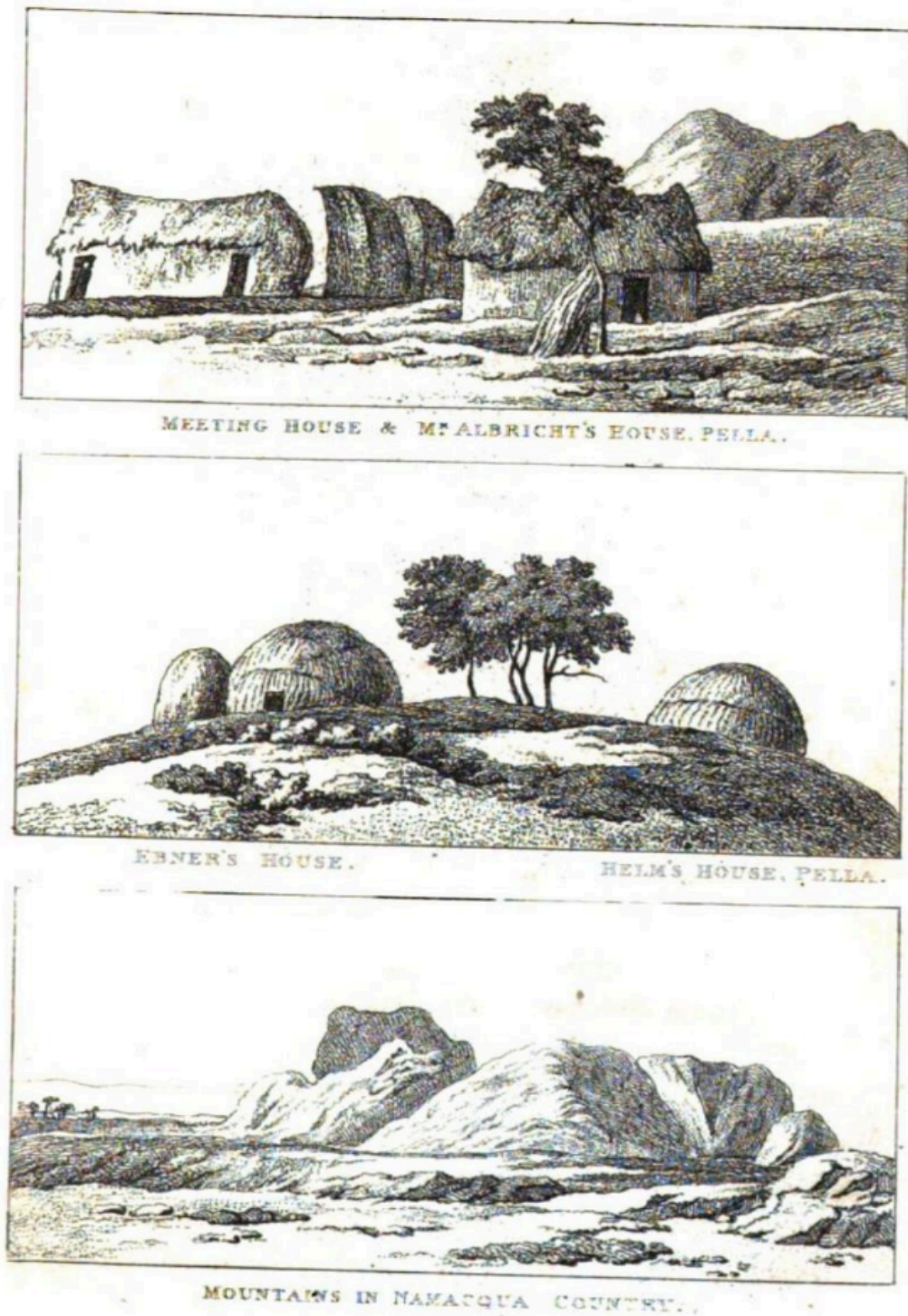


Figure 3. Illustration of the LMS settlement at Pella, 1813.

The missionaries did not remain at Byzondermeid for long. The area was better suited for occupation during the dry season. Many of the Namaqua thus moved with their cattle to an area known as Brackriver in order to spare the Byzondermeid pasture for the dry season. The missionaries followed suit. When a group of Namaqua from the Orange River arrived at Byzondermeid in May, requesting that the missionaries would come back with them, they were instructed to instead move with their cattle to *Kammas* where the missionaries would meet them soon after. Later in May another group of Namaqua arrived to fetch Albrecht and Schmelen for the Orange River. The missionaries consulted with the Namaqua groups and queried whether they knew of a better settlement than Warmbath for the collection of people and introduction of agriculture – they didn't. Without sufficient oxen for the journey, and without a suitable location in mind, Albrecht and Schmelen could not accompany the Namaqua back to Great Namaqualand. Instead Albrecht, Ebner and Schmelen made their way to *Kammas* where they resided with their congregation of 750 for three years. During their time spent at *Kammas* many of their congregation desired to remove back to Warm Bath, a request that Albrecht could not fulfil as not only was the land 'unfruitful' but also Afrikaner still posed a threat to their safety. Schmelen explained that at *Kammas* they were protected by the Orange River, which he deemed 'a strong fence for us, and a high wall for the enemy to step over.'²²⁴ *Kammas* was renamed 'Pella' as it provided a place of refuge for those who had fled Warmbath in 1811, just like the ancient Pella had served as a refuge for those fugitive Christians fleeing from Jerusalem.

During his visit to Pella in September 1813, at the request of the LMS, John Campbell instructed Schmelen to take an exploratory journey to the mouth of the Orange River, Great Namaqualand and Damaraland.²²⁵ Schmelen's journey was delayed until the following year on account of drought and a lack of sheep to see him through.²²⁶ On his journey Schmelen was met by several groups who expressed a desire to receive instruction. Finally, on his return, Schmelen established a new mission at Klipfontain (later called Bethany) approximately a two-day journey north of the Orange River. During his stay at Pella, Campbell also facilitated peace-making efforts between the missionaries and Afrikaner – so much so that in April 1814 Afrikaner and his followers requested a missionary to reside with them. A hesitant Ebner and

²²⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2A, J. Seidenfaden, Albrecht & Schmelen, 14 January 1813; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) B, Albrecht, 5 September 1814.

²²⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 11, 1815.

²²⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 3C, J. Schmelen, 12 April 1814.

his wife took up the challenge, believing it to be the only way to achieve peace in Great Namaqualand. In May 1815 Ebner, accompanied by Albrecht, travelled to Afrikaner's Kraal (formerly Stille Hoop/Peace Mountain) where they were received with open arms.²²⁷ The LMS station at Pella suffered yet another loss when Christian Albrecht became ill and died in Cape Town in July 1815. As Read recounts, 'This valuable missionary was cut out for Namaqualand: his love to the poor people was intense; and he was ready to sacrifice all temporal enjoyments for their welfare, and was ready to give up those stations where the hardships appeared too great for other missionaries'²²⁸ Albrecht had seemingly been aware of his declining condition, and had requested prior to his death the assistance of new missionaries. The congregants of Pella became scattered and remained without a missionary for over a year until the arrival of Bartlett in April.

The LMS' attempts to settle in the Kamiesberg had ultimately failed and the Little Namaqua were left without a missionary until the arrival of the Wesleyans in 1816. The LMS' time in Little Namaqualand in the first ten years of the nineteenth century was fragmented. Their attempts to establish themselves in Great Namaqualand were fraught with difficulty due to the harsh environmental conditions. The mounting expenses the mission incurred upon the SAS and LMS constantly brought the suitability of the location of the station into question. Little Namaqualand was far better suited to the establishment of a mission and favourable in the eyes of both societies and the government at the Cape. The Albrechts and their Great Namaqua followers would not budge. Multiple other factors were at play. The Little Namaqua could not seem to reach a consensus around their desire for a missionary, their views constantly shifted in accordance to the pressures placed upon them by the Kamiesberg farmers whose influence was readily increasing with the closing of the frontier. The sway of the farmers was evident too in the actions of Van der Graaf who successfully kept the missionaries out of the Kamiesberg. Only with the attack of Afrikaner on the Warmbath mission did the Albrechts and their followers retreat into Little Namaqualand. Then, just like before, the missionaries were heavily reliant on the assistance provided by Cornelius Kok.

²²⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 2E, J. Read, Report for the year 1815.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Chapter 3: A Chance Encounter

The Wesleyans in Little Namaqualand, 1816-1840

*'Several of these hear the gospel and carry something thereof away with them, which they proclaim as well as they can amongst their friends, and others come to hear for themselves. I believe there is not an Institution in the Colony to which so many heathens belong as to Lily Fountain.'*¹

3.1 The Wesleyans at the Cape

The Wesleyans' attempts to establish themselves in Little Namaqualand were far more seamless than the LMS who went before them. Within two years of their first arrival at the Cape, they had formally established a missionary institution amongst the Little Namaqua in the Kamiesberg. Still their original intention was to minister to the sailors and slaves in Cape Town. Without the support of the government in this regard they had little other option but to look elsewhere. It was during a meeting with Schmelen, who happened to be visiting Cape Town at the time, that the potential of a Wesleyan mission in Great Namaqualand came to the fore. Government was vehement in their opposition to a mission outside the borders of the colony, for reasons which this chapter will uncover. It was through a chance meeting with the Little Namaqua Chief, Wildschut, that the possibility of a mission in Little Namaqualand came to fruition in 1816. The WMMS, in many senses, managed to do what the LMS had failed to. The WMMS mission at Leliefontein would become the centre of missionary activity in the Kamiesberg and a training ground for Little Namaqua missionaries.

Prior to the arrival of the Wesleyans, the LMS made their last effort in 1814 to settle amongst the Little Namaqua. LMS administrator, Rev. Campbell, submitted a memorial to Governor Cradock in which he relayed an account of his visit to Little Namaqualand in 1813. During this time he found 'a considerable kraal of Hottentots enveloped in the grossest ignorance'.² In conversation with them he found that they had once again changed their mind and wished to be instructed by a missionary. We cannot know if the missionaries dealt with the same group of Little Namaqua on each occasion. Few individuals are named specifically but it does seem

¹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 20 February 1820.

² Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol IX, 'Memorial of the Rev. J Campbell to Sir John Cradock, 21 January 1814.'

likely that on each occasion the missionaries interacted with the captain or leaders of the group. With this in mind, Campbell sought permission for a missionary to reside among them. At this point it is surprising that the government even took the request seriously after the LMS' numerous applications to settle in Little Namaqualand which, for various reasons, resulted in nothing. Cradock declined Campbell's request until he could receive further detail of the circumstances.

Cradock was not wholly against missions within the colony. He supported the missionaries on the basis that the missions did not act independently of the neighbouring colonists and continued to supply Khoikhoi labour to their farms.³ His hesitance to grant land for the establishment of a mission in the Kamiesberg, however, was on the basis that the kraals in the area were in a 'wretched' condition, as he had heard from Campbell, and that until the missionary institutions could prove themselves as producing 'great alterations' to the state of the Khoikhoi he could not grant the request.⁴ In the same breath, Cradock refused Campbell's requests to establish institutions at Great Zwartberg in the district of Graaff Reinet and Hooge Kraal in George until he could obtain further information from the respective *landdrosts*.

Campbell assured Cradock that the missions would not attract Khoikhoi away from their places of employment on farms, which had been a cause for concern for government and colonists. He instead argued that the missions would improve the condition and education of the Khoikhoi that would, he believed, in turn render them more useful to their employers and more deserved of respect. If better treated he believed the Khoikhoi would in fact be more compelled to labour among the colonists. A missionary institution, he argued, would thus be more beneficial to the colonists and their need for labour. In addition, it would be in the interests of the government as 'to grant instruction to the Hottentots,' which, he argued, 'would certainly attach them more the Government, and from the thinness of population in the Colony, this consideration is very important.'⁵

Cradock was just as critical of the idea of establishing an institution beyond the borders of the colony. He believed these institutions would attract inhabitants out of the colony and become

³ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol IX, 'Letter from Sir John Cradock to the Reverend Mr. Campbell, 10 February 1814', 350.

⁴ Ibid, 351.

⁵ Ibid, 311.

a refuge for ‘disorderly and wicked persons’ fleeing justice.⁶ From his scathing criticisms of the existing missionary institutions and their usefulness within and without the colony, Cradock’s claim to support the missions is suspicious and incongruous. Nevertheless he did explicitly compliment the Moravian institution at Genadendal, which he believed to promote industry and usefulness. The Moravians, on account of their close co-operation with government and their apolitical stance, posed far less of a threat to government and were constantly on the receiving end of government praise.

Cradock’s inconsistent attitude toward the missionaries seems to reflect the government’s ambiguous stance toward missionaries. While on the one hand they tried to appease colonists and farmers who were strongly anti-missions, they could not deny, on the other hand, that the missions were at times an advantage to the colony for the role that they played in the stabilisation of the social order – especially on the often tumultuous frontiers.

But Cradock was soon out of office and the future of missions in Little Namaqualand was placed in the hands of Lord Charles Somerset. His appointment as governor in April 1814 coincided with the arrival of the first Wesleyan missionaries at the Cape. The WMMS sent Rev. J. McKenny to the Cape in August 1814 with the instruction to minister specifically to the soldiers and slave population. The first Methodists at the Cape were soldiers, not missionaries. George Midlemis, of the 72nd British Regiment arrived in 1805 and was followed shortly after by Sergeant John Kendrick of the 21st Light Dragoons, who arrived in 1812.⁷ Both soldiers became lay preachers at the Cape and evangelised mostly to their fellow soldiers. They faced much resistance and scrutiny from their seniors and fellow military officers. It was undeniable, however, that their following was growing, and a desire for Methodism at the Cape existed. For this reason Kendrick requested that the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Committee formally send a Methodist Minister to the Cape. When McKenny arrived in 1814, he too faced resistance. His application to officiate as a minister at the Cape was swiftly denied by Somerset, on the grounds that ‘the soldiers have their chaplains provided by Government...and if you preach to the slaves, the ministers of the Dutch Church may be offended.’⁸ A disheartened McKenny left the Cape for Ceylon shortly after.

⁶ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol IX, ‘Letter from Sir John Cradock to the Reverend Mr. Campbell, 10 February 1814,’ 352.

⁷ Mears, *Methodism in the Cape*, 6; Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in South Africa*, 35.

⁸ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 36.

The Wesleyan Committee didn't wait long before commissioning their second missionary to the Cape, in the hopes that the governor could be convinced otherwise. Rev. Barnabas Shaw and his wife Jane arrived in Cape Town on 14 April 1816. Before their departure from London, and in order to equip themselves for their time at the Cape, the couple studied the Dutch language under the tutorage of Baldwin Janson. Upon arrival at the Cape, Shaw's attempts to minister to the soldiers and slaves were met with resistance by Somerset who could not sanction the commencement of a Wesleyan Church in the Cape. It was feared, by many officers of the military, that if their hardened soldiers were to become Christian they would be softened and refuse to fight. Similarly, many slave-owners at the Cape demanded that their slaves remain ignorant of religion. This was in opposition to the recommendation made by Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, at Downing Street, who saw no reason to interfere with Shaw's request to preach to those Methodists at the Cape.⁹

Unlike the defeated McKenny, a rebellious Shaw continued to minister underground – without government sanction. As Shaw explains, 'If His Excellency was afraid of giving offence to the Dutch ministers and the English chaplains, I had no occasion to fear either the one or the other.'¹⁰ Shaw ministered to the soldiers at Wynberg in a make-shift church the men had built. After the church was burnt down by the colonel of the regiment, Shaw and the soldiers built one in the forest. Later Shaw ministered to the soldiers in Simonstown, in the cramped room of a sergeant.¹¹

The Wesleyans had not entered the Cape with the intention of evangelising to the indigenous or Khoikhoi population. The perpetual opposition to the Wesleyans work at the Cape however forced them to shift their sights elsewhere. Shaw describes that it was a chance encounter on a mountain near Simonstown that changed his mind. On the mountain he met with a 'Mohammedan, and also an aged heathen' with whom he 'entered into conversation, and found altogether ignorant of spiritual things.'¹² It seems this encounter ignited a desire in Shaw to 'be employed in preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.'¹³ Shortly after this

⁹ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol. X, 'Letter from Lord Bathurst to Lord Charles Somerset, 9 November 1815.'

¹⁰ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 71.

¹³ *Ibid.*

encounter Shaw put in an application to Somerset to preach to the ‘heathen’ of the interior. The request was granted though Somerset could not recommend a specific location. Somerset was evidently more supportive of a mission within the colony than his predecessor Cradock. By 1815 it is recorded that over 2500 Khoikhoi were attached to mission stations within the colony, in addition to thousands of slaves and others.¹⁴

Without any Wesleyan counterparts at the Cape, or any knowledge of the interior, Shaw was left in limbo. It was only when he brushed shoulders with Schmelen of the LMS that his future prospects became clearer. Schmelen had visited the Cape accompanied by 12 of his Namaqua followers. During a meeting between the two men, Schmelen informed Shaw of the state of the people across the Orange River. It didn’t take much to convince Shaw to accompany Schmelen on his return to Bethany. Schmelen had founded the station of Bethany, in Great Namaqualand, in 1814 in an attempt to re-establish the LMS missions in Great Namaqualand following their 1811 retreat into Little Namaqualand.

The venture was not without obstacles. It would involve great expenses and perils and Shaw had yet to receive sanction from the Methodist Committee for such a journey. It was Jane Shaw who managed to convince her now hesitant husband to accompany Schmelen to Great Namaqualand. Mrs. Shaw exclaimed, ‘We will go with you.’ Shaw objected, ‘But look at the cost of a wagon, and oxen, and stores!’ Mrs. Shaw replied, ‘If the Missionary Society is offended, tell them we will bear all the expenses ourselves. We have a little property in England, and for this let it go.’¹⁵ With the unwavering support of his wife, Shaw applied to Somerset for a passport and permission to proceed beyond the frontier of the colony into Great Namaqualand.

Shaw was again met with resistance from Somerset who instead advised that a mission be pursued within the borders of the colony and even offered him a position within the clergy of the Dutch church. Somerset explained his decision:

That English establishments should exist upon the border, not liable to colonial laws and regulations, cannot be satisfactorily explained to the colonists, who are themselves

¹⁴ Freund, ‘The Cape Under Transitional Governments,’ 225.

¹⁵ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 82; Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 38.

strictly prohibited from passing that frontier, which they daily see the native Bastards do unrestrained, and to which their slaves desert with impunity. I own I am disposed to think that no further encouragement should at present be given to missionary establishments beyond the boundary... The missionaries settled beyond the Colony do not consider themselves liable to colonial interference...It should clearly be made known to them that they must be liable to the same laws and regulations as are binding upon the other British settlers in this province...and that they are amenable to Colonial Law.¹⁶

Somerset, much like his predecessor, was evidently concerned with appeasing the settler population in the north as well as securing government control of the mission and its population. The farmers, Ebner stated, 'are enemies of God and enemies of missionaries.'¹⁷ Once again it is likely that the perceived labour shortage played a role in this, and another mission across the border, Somerset feared, would draw more of the Khoikhoi population out of the colony and away from their places of employment. Farmers' fear of a shortage of labour seemed to have followed the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 which would have, in theory, disrupted their labour supply. In response, government tightened their control of labour relations and passed the Caledon Code of 1809, in the hopes of promoting Khoikhoi labour.¹⁸ This would have certainly affected government's stance on missions, which were seen to attract Khoikhoi labourers away from their places of employment.

Somerset's outright refusal for Shaw to pursue a mission outside of the colony was definitely influenced by the events taking place on the middle Orange at Griqua Town. The LMS' troublesome mission at Griqua Town had, by 1815, caused Somerset much concern. The mission was accused of harbouring runaway slaves and facilitating illegal trading activities.¹⁹ More disturbing to Somerset was the so-called 'Hartenaar Rebellion' led by groups of disgruntled Griqua in response to the government's attempts to impose military constriction upon them. The Griqua, living outside of the colony's borders, insisted on their independence

¹⁶ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol. XI, 254-255.

¹⁷ CWM, South Africa Journals, (5) 2, B. Ebner to LMS, Honingberg, 1 April 1813.

¹⁸ See Newton-King. *Masters and Servant*, 40; Rawson, 'Magna Carta of the Hottentots'; Hermann Giliomee, 'Die Administrasiedepk van Lord Caledon, 1807-11', *Archives Yearbook for South African History*, Volume 29 (2), 1966, 279.

¹⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1D, G. Thom to LMS, 29 April 1817; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 99.

and autonomy. As LMS missionary to the Griqua, William Anderson, wrote: ‘none will be in a state of subjection to the others, but be his own master.’²⁰ These events would eventually lead to a complete ban on new missions beyond the borders of the colony in 1817.²¹ The prospect of Shaw establishing a mission outside the colony’s borders, free from the grasp of the colonial authorities, would, in the eyes of Somerset, pose a grave threat to the security of the northern frontier.

Shaw was unwilling to compromise, explaining that ‘had I been desirous of preaching to Christian congregations, I should have remained in England.’²² Somerset eventually granted a passport to Shaw, albeit reluctantly. It is possible that Somerset believed that Methodism and its politically conservative ethos would not pose a threat or stir up disturbance within Great Namaqualand. It is also likely that Somerset’s administration was far more preoccupied with the uprisings at Griqua Town, which posed far more of a threat to the colony’s security than the comparably more peaceful lower Orange. Similarly, the eastern frontier was far from peaceful in 1815 and the events surrounding the Slagtersnek Rebellion, in which disgruntled and dissenting colonists sought out alliances with Xhosa, seem to have dominated government’s agenda.²³

3.2 The Establishment of the Leliefontein Mission

On 6 September 1816 the Shaws departed from Cape Town and accompanied Schmelen and his Namaqua followers on their journey back to Bethany. The journey was a gruelling one as the group were faced with excessive heat and sandy roads. Shaw complained: ‘Yesterday the thermometer was 110 in the shade, and to-day the wind felt as if it mingled with particles of

²⁰ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 100.

²¹ See page 161.

²² Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 72.

²³ See Hermann Giliomee, ‘The Burgher Rebellions on the Eastern Frontier, 1795-1815’ in Richard Elphick and Herman Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652 – 1820* (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1989), 338-351; Clifton C. Crais. *White supremacy and Black resistance in pre-industrial South Africa: the making of the colonial order in the Eastern Cape, 1770-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); J. A Heese, *Slagtersnek en Sy Mense*, second edition (Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2016); Hendrik Carel V. Leibbrandt, *The Rebellion of 1815, Generally Known as Slachters Nek: a Complete Collection of All the Papers Connected with the Trial of the Accused with Many Important Annexures* (Cape Town: Juta, 1902).

fire; the heat, together with long-continued exertions, so relaxed every nerve, that we were completely exhausted, and could eat but little.²⁴

The group were fortunately met with the utmost hospitality by the Dutch farmers that they passed. A Mr. Van Aarde allowed them to rest in his home, Mr. Coetzee offered a quantity of oranges and Mr. Van Zyl provided them with three goats and five sheep as well as the use of his boat in order to cross the Olifants River.²⁵ These Dutch farming families, as well as the Rousseaus of the Piketberg; the Engelbrechts of the Kamiesberg; and the Bassons of Groot Valley, would prove instrumental in providing the Wesleyan missionaries with assistance and hospitality on future journeys to and from Namaqualand.²⁶ The Koks, who had provided similar assistance to the LMS missionaries in the years prior, had moved from the Kamiesberg to Griqua Town and thus the Wesleyans had no other option but to rely on the assistance of local farmers. Their Great Namaqua guides, who escorted them on the journey, also proved helpful. Shaw provides the following account of the crossing of the Olifants River:

... owing to the depth and rapidity of the stream, they (the wagons) were in great danger of being overturned. It was both imposing and painful to behold the oxen proceeding slowly onward – the drivers vigorously applying their large whips – and the people shouting, hallooing, and using every possible exertion to prevent the bullocks from being carried away by the current. The Great Namaqua men who led the oxen, being excellent swimmers, were as buoyant on the water as ducks, and all were brought over in safety.²⁷

Before reaching the Piketberg in late October the group were met by a ‘boer’ from Little Namaqualand who reported to them that ‘the Captain of the Hottentot Kraal in that place was desirous of being instructed in divine things, and that he had been requesting the Field Cornet to use his influence in procuring them a Missionary.’²⁸ The farmer relaying the request seemed in favour of it and, since Schmelen and Shaw would pass by Little Namaqualand en route to Great Namaqualand, Schmelen assured Shaw that should he wish to remain in Little

²⁴ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 86-87.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁶ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 39.

²⁷ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 86.

²⁸ *Missionary Notices of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions* (hereafter *WMMS Notices*), Vol 1, February 1817, 115.

Namaqualand he would render him all assistance in his power. Shaw responded, 'I am willing to go either to the Great or Little Namacguas, or to the ends of the earth, if it is the will of the Lord.'²⁹

One can assume that since their request to Campbell in 1814, and their more recent request to the farmer in 1816, the Little Namaqua had been desirous of a missionary. Before continuing it is worthwhile to briefly consider the composition of the group that this thesis broadly refers to as the Little Namaqua. By 1816 the group was scattered, many had fled across the borders into Great Namaqualand. In 1800 Barrow noted that while the area between the mountains and sea remained virtually unoccupied, the remaining four groups of Little Namaqua were still concentrated in the Kamiesberg region.³⁰ It seems that those who remained in Little Namaqualand were not a homogenous group nor were they necessarily united. The proceedings of Seidenfaden's interrogation under Van der Graaf in 1809 suggests that a division had occurred between those in the chiefly Links group and those under Wildschut. This factionalism could explain the groups changing stance on a mission station in the Kamiesberg – could the missionaries have dealt with different groups or kraals on each occasion?

What is clear is that by 1816 a united group of self-titled Little Namaqua existed under the leadership of Jantjie Wildschut, actually named Haaimap, who resided at Leliefontein. Haaimap's predecessor, Noebee, was oddly enough also known as 'Jantjie Wildschut' under the Dutch administration of the Cape.³¹ In a rare event, the loan farm of Leliefontein had been registered in the name of Wildschut (Noebee), for the exclusive use of the Little Namaqua, by Governor Plettenberg in 1772.³² It is known that Wildschut (Noebee) had long been co-operating with the colonial authorities at the Cape. He had been granted a staff of office in 1740, following the frontier war of 1739, which indicated that he was in the hands of the government.³³ On his fourth journey, in September 1779, Gordon met 'Chief Wiltschut, the

²⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol 1, February 1817, 115.

³⁰ Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa*, 388.

³¹ Robert J. Gordon, *Cape Travels 1777 to 1786*, vol. 1, P.E. Raper and M. Boucher (eds.)(Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1988), 25 July 1779, 250.

³² D. Moodie, *The Record; or, a series of official papers relative to the condition and treatment of the native tribes of South Africa, part III* (Johannesburg: 1959, originally printed 1838) 'Letter from Plettenberg to Landdrost of Stellenbosch, 31 Jan. 1772'.

³³ V. Forbes and J. Rourke, *Paterson's Cape Travels 1777 to 1779* (Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1980); For more on the frontier war of 1739 see Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 91-102.

Kleine Namaqua'.³⁴ Later that year, he was introduced to Wildschut's (Noebee) father and predecessor, a man of over a hundred years of age called 'Pluto'.³⁵ Pluto was likely 'Plato', a Little Namaqua who is recorded to have visited the Cape in November 1705, alongside two other Little Namaqua, Jason and Vulkaan.³⁶ These men visited the Cape in an attempt to make peace with the company following a series of attacks on the company's livestock. During the visit, the governor gifted the men with tobacco and beads and formally recognised them as Khoikhoi captains.³⁷ This was evidently an attempt to appease the Little Namaqua and stabilise the hostile northern frontier. The goodwill between Plato and the company broke down in 1739 after the company re-confiscated his cattle which had, in the first instance, been confiscated under false pretences.³⁸ Plato was likely confused and frustrated that his collaboration with the company had been in vain. The Wildschuts' co-operation with government seemed to continue from Plato, to Noebee and finally to Haaimap. This was evident in Wildschut's (Haaimap) support of Van der Graaf in evicting Seidenfaden from the Kamiesberg in 1809 as well as the Little Namaqua's, under Wildschut, co-operation with *Veldcornet* van der Westhuysen during the peace negotiations following the Namaqualand Revolt in 1799.³⁹ As had been the case just less than a century prior, it is likely that the government's support of Wildschut was an attempt to appease the Little Namaqua for the purposes of securing peaceful relations between the group and colonists in the region. Yet Penn believes to the contrary. He ascertains that it is unlikely that this attitude stemmed from a perception of vulnerability of the colonial position in the far north-west.⁴⁰

³⁴ Gordon, *Cape Travels*, 4th Journey, 13 September 1779.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 29 December 1779.

³⁶ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 66.

³⁷ *Ibid*.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 117.

³⁹ CA, 1/STB 10/151, Van der Westhuysen to Landdrost, 7 March 1799 as cited in Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 368.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 287.



Figure 4. Depiction of the Little Namaqua, with Noebee on the far right, 1780.

In October 1816 Wildschut's desire for a missionary was strong enough to make the long and potentially treacherous journey to the Cape to officially procure a 'Leeraar' (teacher) for his people.⁴¹ The journey would have been approximately 450 miles.⁴² When the group of Little Namaqua reached the extremely arid desert-like region, known as the Knersvlakte or Karree, just south of the Kamiesberg, they coincidentally collided with Shaw and Schmelen. Wildschut explained that 'having heard of the Great Word, and other tribes having received it, he was anxious to have it; and had commenced the journey in search of a teacher.'⁴³

Shaw believed the meeting to be providential and proposed that he accompany the group to their kraal. An excited Wildschut exclaimed that he 'had heard a little of that which was good, but he longed to hear more.'⁴⁴ Without further consultation, the Shaws and the Schmelen accompanied the Little Namaqua to their winter residence at *Naamrap*. The journey through the inhospitable Knersvlakte was treacherous. In his journal, Shaw complained:

While Mr. Schmelen and a fellow labourer were crossing the Karree some years ago, their oxen were so fatigued that forty-five died; in consequence of which they were

⁴¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. 1, February 1817, 115.

⁴² Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 86.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 87.

⁴⁴ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. 1, February 1817, 115.

detained several weeks in this dreadful wilderness. Here we experienced a great scarcity of water, and the little which was to be obtained, was of such a description, that nothing but necessity could have compelled us to drink it. Some, in colour, resembled the blackness of ink, being copiously impregnated with the excrements of the various animals of the desert.⁴⁵

At *Naamrap*, the missionaries were received with delight by many of the Namaqua who lined up, uncovered their heads and waved their hands, shouting ‘Welcome! Welcome to our land!’⁴⁶ The missionaries spent their first night in a ‘hut belonging to one of the natives, which had neither window, chimney, nor even a door, and withal was of small dimensions.’⁴⁷ The Shaws were not perturbed in the least, finding no difficulty in sleeping on the floor on account of their extreme exhaustion. Shaw explained, ‘every man commencing a mission among barbarians will have made up his mind to meet with trials; we were therefore partly prepared for our situation.’⁴⁸

The following day a council was held between the Little Namaqua and the missionaries during which Wildschut, with the support of his people, wholeheartedly agreed to receive Shaw as a teacher, provide him with land for a station and assist him in the erection of a house and a church. Without further ado, the Little Namaqua and their newly acquired missionary departed for their summer residence at Leliefontein atop the Kamiesberg mountains. Schmelen and his wife continued on to Bethany.

⁴⁵ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 88.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 70.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 91.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*.

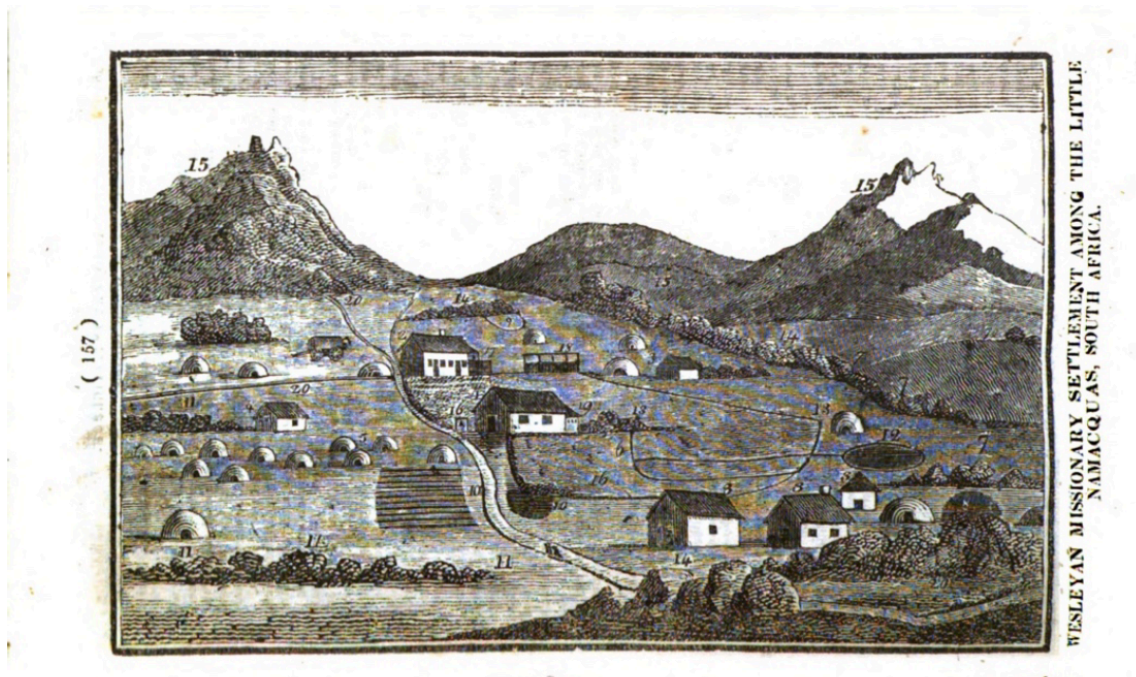


Figure 5. Illustration of the Wesleyan Missionary Settlement among the Little Namaqua.

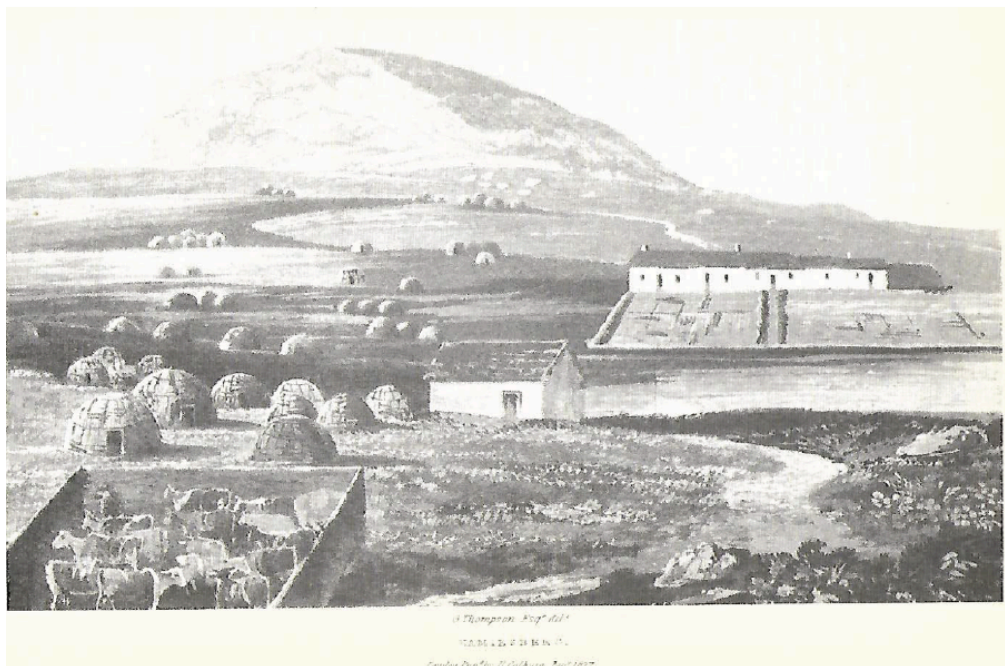


Figure 6. Missionary village in the Kamiesberg, 1827.

This is not to say that all of the Little Namaqua were in favour of Christianity nor the establishment of a missionary institution. Jacob Links, who later assumed the position of Shaw's interpreter at Leliefontein, explained that in the early days of his faith he came under fire from some of his fellow Little Namaqua. In an attempt to hinder him they claimed he would

‘lose his reason and bring himself to the grave.’⁴⁹ Jacob stood his ground, responding, ‘If I lose my reason and my soul too, I am determined to hang on to the Word of God, and continue in prayer to the last.’⁵⁰ Rifts still existed amongst the Little Namaqua. It is unclear whether these Little Namaqua were residents of the early mission as many belonged to the institution long before they converted to Christianity – some never converted at all but utilised the mission for its temporal benefits.

The Little Namaqua’s now steadfast pursuit of a missionary, enough for them to attempt the 500-mile journey to the Cape, can only be understood against the backdrop of the changing socio-economic climate of Little Namaqualand. The once relatively isolated Little Namaqua residing at Leliefontein were becoming surrounded by colonists on almost all sides, and the security of their land was subsequently at risk. Despite the border of the colony remaining at the Buffels River, Shaw noted in 1822 that many farms existed beyond the boundary. When Shaw first arrived in 1816, he observed that ‘the Dutch boor surround the Little Namacqualand.’⁵¹ The threat of farmers’ encroachment onto the land of the Little Namaqua is evident in the words Kupido Links, who is quoted as saying:

I am grown old and grey-headed; what shall I say who am as nothing? My children are all around me; I have cause to be thankful. The Gospel is now here. This place was once left by nearly all the people, who went to the rich land. Had I gone also, this place would have been in the hands of the farmers. But it is a Missionary Station. Surely I had cause for thankfulness.⁵²

The Little Namaqua were evidently aware that the security of their land was threatened by the increasing presence of farmers in the area. This surely influenced their 1816 request for the establishment of a mission station at Leliefontein. The establishment of the mission and the later Ticket of Occupation did much to secure the Namaquas’ land tenure. More so, the missionaries often made it their business to settle land and boundary disputes with neighbouring farmers.⁵³ The missionary Edward Edwards, whose time at Leliefontein will be discussed later in this chapter, was perhaps the most useful in this regard. In his journal he

⁴⁹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, October 1816.

⁵² *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Journal of E. Edwards, 25 November 1828.

⁵³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, E. Edwards, September 1821.

records that ‘By the request of my people I accompanied them as far as the Veld Cornet, to assist them in settling some dispute which had long existed between them and a neighbouring Boor’.⁵⁴ This suggests that the presence of a missionary gave the Little Namaquas’ case more credibility and urgency in the eyes of the *veldcornet*.

Many of the Little Namaqua employed by local farmers were equally as aware that the affiliation with missionaries would offer them greater protection against mistreatment in the workplace. In 1819 Shaw hinted at the above:

Today the friend of sinners was pointed out as the 'shadow of a great rock in a weary land'. This is truly a weary land: a land where thick darkness covers the minds of those who are called Christians – a land where cruelties have been exercised against our people – a land where our purest motives are suspected and our characters...and where but few have any knowledge of divine things.⁵⁵

The introduction of the Caledon Code in 1809 evidently failed to sufficiently improve the working conditions of the Little Namaqua. This could be explained by the vast distance between the Kamiesberg and the nearest magistrate. Up until 1808 the nearest court of law in the district was as far as the town of Tulbagh. In 1808 a sub-magistracy, or sub-*drosdty*, was established in Jan Disselsvlei (Clanwilliam) – the deputy-*landdrost* of which reported directly to the *landdrost* of Tulbagh. This was the government’s most northerly point of call. From a reportedly dilapidated office the deputy-*landdrost* was given the almost impossible task of administering an extremely vast and tumultuous region including the Olifants River, Namaqualand, Bushmanland, the Roggeveld, Hantam and Nieuweveld.⁵⁶ The journey from the Kamiesberg to Clanwilliam was a distance of approximately 270 kilometres and would take up to three days by foot. This is not to say that Khoikhoi on the north western frontier did not travel the distance to Clanwilliam to lodge their complaints and, in some cases, their complaints were dealt with appropriately.⁵⁷ Penn claims that ‘the Caledon Code and Cradock's instructions were undoubtedly having a positive impact on the treatment of labourers in the Jan Disselsvlei district.’⁵⁸ While this may have been the case for those living closer to the office of the magistrate, in the regions of the Onder Bokkeveld and Roggeveld, by 1816 the reports of the

⁵⁴ *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Journal of E. Edwards, 17 September 1822.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, B. Shaw, 12 April 1819.

⁵⁶ Penn, ‘The Onder Bokkeveld Ear Atrocity,’ 82.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 85.

missionaries suggest that the conditions of Khoikhoi labourers living as far as the Kamiesberg had not improved sufficiently. The travelling Circuit Courts, implemented in 1811 as a means by which to see to the effective administration of the Caledon Code, focused on the arguably more turbulent eastern frontier. As John Philip, a fervent critic of the Caledon Code, argued, the system ‘intended to protect the colonists, but to enslave the Hottentots.’⁵⁹ For these reasons, the acquisition of a missionary to champion the cause of Khoikhoi labourers in Little Namaqualand was necessary.

As late as 1823 the Wesleyan missionary Rev. James Archbell, who arrived at Leliefontein with his wife in 1819, reported that:

The people here have many difficulties to encounter, chiefly owing to the oppressive measures of many of the farmers, who use great cunning and villainy to dupe them out of their rights. It is but a short time since a farmer hired one of our people by what they call contract. The boor having kept him a few months, until his purposes were suited, turned him away without any remuneration; and he, being under the necessity of passing over a dry barren country in order to come again among his friends, and having had no support during his journey, died a few hours after his arrival. A representation of this, with other particulars, is now laid before the Commissioners of Inquiry, through whose exertions salutary measures, it is to be hoped, will be adopted to protect these poor people.⁶⁰

If these injustices were still taking place in 1823, many years after the introduction of the Caledon Code and the establishment of the Wesleyan missionaries at Leliefontein, it is without question that the occurrences of abuse leading up to the Little Namaquas’ request for a missionary in 1816 would have been far more severe. The Little Namaqua were merely acting in response to the rapidly closing frontier around them. It seemed that the institution of Leliefontein initially did little to protect those living on the mission. It was not able to offer a complete refuge for the Little Namaqua. Many Khoikhoi at the station were not able to support themselves completely and often found work on neighbouring farms intermittently. By 1824, 550 of the 1810 members of Leliefontein belonged to the mission station but lived with farmers.⁶¹ Several of these would return to the mission station on the expiration of their contract.

⁵⁹ Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, 167.

⁶⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extracts of a letter from Archbell, 2 October 1823.

⁶¹ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 20 February 1824.

Despite the missionaries' inability to completely protect the Khoikhoi against ill-treatment, nor offer them a complete refuge and alternative to employment by the colonists, the establishment of a mission in the Kamiesberg had initially caused much unease amongst neighbouring colonists. The reasons for this were two-fold. Firstly, as mentioned before, the mission station was perceived by many as a threat to their access to and control over Khoikhoi labour. The mission stations were seen as harbouring 'all the lazy, rebellious and run-away slaves... where they spent their lives in indolence under the pretence of obtaining religious instruction.'⁶² As Shaw explained:

Some of the Veld Cornets are accustomed to threaten the Bastaards and Hottentots, should they express a desire of going to hear the word of life; and though these people are equally as free as Englishmen, yet those petty officers pretend that the heathens are under perpetual obligations to live under them in a state of servitude. The godlike labours of Clarkson, Wilberforce &c. having given the death stroke to that detestable traffic of buying and selling human creatures, its funeral rites are about to be performed, and the mourners have begun their dirge with solemn accents, 'We have no people.'⁶³

Secondly, the mission stations not only posed a threat to the colonists' supply of labour, but also to their perceived racial superiority. They did all in their power to prevent their labourers, and any Khoikhoi for that matter, from fleeing to the mission stations and accessing Christianity. These farmers relied heavily on Christianity and its symbols as not only a religious doctrine but also a social marker of political status. Conversion had long been used to draw the distinction between 'coloniser' and 'colonised', 'white' and 'black', 'servant' and 'master'.⁶⁴ For these reasons, many colonists did all that they could to ensure that their labourers were not able to access Christianity, which ultimately threatened their fragile hierarchical relationships. In the case of the Kamiesberg, these distinctions were unclear. Its distance from the Cape meant that the majority of European frontier farmers as well as their children were not able to access structured education and religious instruction. In addition, the boundaries of ethnicity in Namaqualand by the early nineteenth century had already become blurry with the rise of

⁶² WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, S. Kay, 12 August 1820.

⁶³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VI, Extracts of a letter of B. Shaw, August 1819, 29.

⁶⁴ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 378.

interracial marriages and children of mixed race. This created an even greater vulnerability on the part of frontier farmers, who so desperately clung to available markers of social distinction in order to maintain their dominance over a servile class. Many Dutch farmers believed that Christianity, and the ‘English man, has made the Namacquas too wise.’⁶⁵ As Shaw explained, the farmers were threatened by the fact that the Little Namaqua would no longer trade their cattle for brandy and tobacco, nor would they believe the famers’ devious stories respecting the missionaries.⁶⁶

In 1819 Shaw passed through Piekenierskloof, near present day Citrusdal, on his way to Leliefontein. He stopped at the house of an old tipsy farmer where he met with his thirty-six slaves and servants, anxious to hear the gospel. The farmer’s wife had been murdered some years prior by a slave and as a result the man lived in continual fear. Of the situation, Shaw commented: ‘Would flogging, or allowing them to hear the gospel, be the most effectual preventative?’⁶⁷ It was common for famers to forbid their servants from receiving religious instruction as a means by which to preserve their dominance. Shaw suggested that the contrary would be the case. By allowing their servants and slaves access to Christianity farmers could induce good behaviour and facilitate peaceful relations which would ultimately solidify their dominance both socially and physically.

3.3 The Little Namaqua Evangelists

After almost a year of labouring alone at Leliefontein, Shaw sought out the assistance of a second missionary. The environmental conditions in Little Namaqualand, which required the Little Namaqua to constantly scatter and migrate between their winter and summer residences, as well as into Bushmanland seasonally, put far too much pressure on the lone minister. Shaw too was often required to visit the houses of neighbouring farmers, some 30 to 50 miles away, leaving his people ‘destitute of instruction for so long a time.’⁶⁸ In a letter to the Methodist Committee, Shaw explained that ‘in the summer season all of the people are upon the mountain’ but ‘in the winter about half remain on the mountain, and the other go to two different places, each being a long day’s journey from thence.’⁶⁹ The assistance of a second

⁶⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VII, Extracts of a letter of B. Shaw, September 1818, 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VII, Extracts of a letter of B. Shaw, July 1819, 28.

⁶⁸ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 20 October 1817.

⁶⁹ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 6 July 1817.

missionary would assist him greatly, allowing one missionary to remain at the summer residence while the other could accompany the Little Namaqua to the outposts. Furthermore, since his arrival at Leliefontein, Shaw had been ministering to a group of so called ‘bushmen’ who for a certain period each year assembled at a location about a day and a half away on horseback. Since Bushmanland was outside of the borders of the colony, these annual visits required official permission from the governor. Luckily, the seemingly sympathetic *Landdrost* of Clanwilliam, J. Ryneveld Esq. granted Shaw the necessary permission in this regard as he believed, ‘a missionary is expected to visit his people, wherever they may be.’⁷⁰ If another missionary were obtained for Leliefontein, Shaw believed he could be settled at what he now named ‘Bushman’s Fountain.’, or ‘Bush Fountain’.⁷¹ The exact location of ‘Bushman’s Fountain’ is not mentioned in the records but its name and description suggests it was located in Bushmanland.

By 1817 the Methodist Missionary Committee based in London acquiesced to Shaw’s petitions and sent Rev. Edward Edwards to assist him. Edwards arrived at the Cape in December that year and upon receiving the authorisation of the governor began his journey to Little Namaqualand. Edward would later be described as a man with an ‘amiable disposition, simple piety and untiring zeal.’⁷² He was received joyfully by the Little Namaqua who were ‘exceedingly glad on seeing a klein Mynheer (young missionary)’.⁷³ This should not confuse the reader into immediately assuming that Edwards was younger than Shaw. The Little Namaqua were known to give the first missionary the title of ‘old’ and the second, no matter his age, the title of ‘little’ or ‘young’ or in this case ‘klein’.⁷⁴ We do not know the age of Edwards at the time he arrived at Leliefontein but one could assume he was younger than Shaw. In the long-term, the assistance of Edwards would prove incredibly beneficial to Shaw but initially there remained a stumbling block to his usefulness. Unlike Shaw, Edwards was unmarried and thus hesitant to travel to the outstations or into Bushmanland alone. It seems that the potential temptation that the Namaqua women posed was seemingly too much for Edwards. Initially these apprehensions kept Edwards from visiting Bushmanland and led Shaw

⁷⁰ Ibid, B. Shaw, 20 October 1817.

⁷¹ Ibid, B Shaw, 6 July 1817.

⁷² Moister, *The History of the Wesleyan Missions*, 217.

⁷³ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 109.

⁷⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, Extracts from the Journal of Jacob Links, 10 March 1820.

to believe that perhaps a Little Namaqua may be better suited than any European missionary to reside at Bushmanland. Shaw had just the man in mind – his interpreter Jacob Links.

3.3.1 Jacob Links extends the mission

Jacob Links, the son of Kupido (also known as Keudo) and Trein Links, of the chiefly Links family, was just seventeen years old when Shaw first arrived at Leliefontein.⁷⁵ Jacob had never met a missionary before Shaw, nor had he heard the gospel, but had occasionally interacted with persons from other mission stations ‘of whom he made inquiries respecting the Great Word.’⁷⁶ He had planned on leaving Little Namaqualand and visiting the mission stations near the Orange River in order to hear the gospel. It is not surprising then that with the arrival of the Wesleyans Jacob was one of the first to receive the gospel, showing great concern for the salvation of his soul. In his own words Jacob describes how deeply affected he was by the gospel: ‘I learnt that the precious blood of Jesus alone cleanses us from sin – I found that Christ is the way and the sinner’s friend – I feel sweetness to my soul, which is unspeakable.’⁷⁷



Figure 7. Reverend Jacob Links.

⁷⁵ WMMS, Special Series, Biographical, South Africa, B. Shaw ‘Life of Jacob Links of Little Namaqualand,’ 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

He was also one of the first to learn to read and write, showing ‘an excellency of disposition, an inquiring mind, and a constant desire to obtain information.’⁷⁸ In the early days of the station his spiritual education still came second to his labour. Like many of the Khoikhoi on the station, he was tasked with the more arduous jobs of brick-making and gardening. It is recorded that during his manual labours he was always inclined to ask the most inquisitive of questions. It was not uncommon for Jacob to ‘retire to the clefts of the rocks or amongst the wild bushes of the wilderness to call upon God.’⁷⁹ In all of his correspondence and records, Shaw was always greatly complimentary of Links. The historian should interpret these hagiographic sources carefully, which is difficult considering the only times these indigenous evangelists made it into the missionary records were when they and their labours were worthy of praise. This thesis attempts to bring these evangelists’ contribution to the missionary effort to the forefront, while avoiding the common mistake of creating a mere caricature of their lives.

Before he reached the esteemed position of assistant missionary Jacob Links fulfilled the more practical but nonetheless important role as interpreter to Shaw. Realising that many of the Little Namaqua, especially the aged, did not completely understand Dutch, the need for an interpreter presented itself very early on. Initially, Jacob Links was the only one Shaw could put his complete trust and confidence in as interpreter. As an interpreter, Shaw believed Jacob ‘was more expert than any one I had ever heard.’⁸⁰ Links was celebrated not only for his impressive memory and ability to retain large amounts of information, but also for the animation and passion with which he relayed the message to the often captivated congregation. Impressed with his ‘upright department and his love for souls’, Shaw soon invited Links to deliver a Sabbath exhortation to the congregation in Nama.⁸¹ The congregants received Links’ sermon with enthusiasm and, although Shaw could only understand parts of it, he applauded Links for speaking with great fluency. Shortly after, Links accompanied Shaw to ‘Modder Fontein’ where Shaw is known to have occasionally preached. Modder Fontein, as the name suggests, was located near a permanent spring on the mountain near Leliefontein.⁸²

⁷⁸ WMMS, Special Series, Biographical, South Africa, B. Shaw ‘Life of Jacob Links of Little Namaqualand,’ 3.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸² Webley, ‘The History and Archaeology of Pastoralist and Hunter-Gatherer Settlement in the North-Western Cape, South Africa,’ 162; Lita Webley, ‘Ethnoarchaeological research among descendants of Khoikhoi herders in

Here Shaw noticed that Links ‘was very active among those who know nothing of the gospel.’⁸³ Shaw was beginning to see the potential that Jacob Links had to offer as his ‘assistant missionary’ and right-hand man. Links’ final test would come in February of 1818 when he was requested to deliver a sermon in Dutch. Unknowingly, this would be the sermon by which he would be qualified, in the mind of Shaw at least, for the mission field of Bushmanland. Links spoke from Matthew 20:29-30, discussing the account of the blind men near Jericho.⁸⁴

In his newly acquired position as ‘Assistant Missionary’, Links accompanied several of the Leliefontein Namaqua and their cattle on their seasonal migration into Bushmanland in order to keep religious services and teach the children. During his stay in Bushmanland, Links was also instructed to visit the ‘wandering Bushmen’ in the area and to try and collect them together for the purpose of religious instruction. In Bushmanland Links endured much hardship. He wandered with his congregation from place to place but was unable to find anything to subsist on, except for some dried goat skin. He therefore returned back to Leliefontein to regain his strength. Despite being enthusiastic to return to Bushmanland, Links’ assistance was required more urgently at Leliefontein where he was to take charge of the school. For his labours Links was not compensated financially but was paid in food and clothes. When not frequenting outstations, Links fulfilled the role of ‘native school-master’ at Leliefontein. During this time, he taught himself to both speak and read English and was known to be in the habit of making memorandums of various discourses that piqued his interest.

While Links was eager to learn both Dutch and English, he did not limit his teachings or prayer to the languages of the missionaries. Links often closed Divine Service, after the sermons of either Shaw or Edwards, with a prayer in Nama. It is recorded that ‘whilst Jacob prayed after the sermon in the Namacqua language there seemed to be a shaking amongst the dry bones, many tears were shed and both men and women seemed to long for the appearance of Him who can wash the Ethiopian clean.’⁸⁵ When he was afforded the opportunity to preach himself, he was known to begin in Dutch, but as his passion and tempo increased would often struggle to

the Steinkopf and Leliefontein Communal Reserves.’(Unpublished Report for the Human Sciences Research Council, 1987),13.

⁸³ Webley, ‘Ethnoarchaeological research among descendants of Khoikhoi herders’, 13.

⁸⁴ See Appendix I, page 295.

⁸⁵ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw ‘Extracts from journal, 26 January 1820.’

express himself in Dutch. In these situations Shaw often encouraged him to continue in Nama and noticed immediately how his countenance changed and how ‘with the greatest fluency of speech and of expression he continued in the Namacqua language.’⁸⁶ Jacob was also instrumental in the translation of several hymns and verse into Nama. In September of 1819, on a visit to one of the outposts, Jacob and his sister taught a group of children to sing a verse of a hymn in their own language. Shaw noted: ‘This being their first attempt to sing in their own language, some of them could not refrain from smiling, especially when they sang out those words which, in their language, require a considerable exertion of the organs of speech.’⁸⁷

Links, now literate and Christian, posed a direct threat to colonists in the area, especially to those for whom he had once worked. An incident that highlighted this is recorded in Shaw’s *Memorials*. A farmer, for whom he had once worked, arrived at Leliefontein one Sunday morning and requested that Jacob should assist him in search of his horses. Since it was the Sabbath, Jacob refused the request.⁸⁸ The farmer angrily responded, ‘I dare say you will not reject eating on Sunday, and why not go with me as usual?’ To which Jacob replied firmly,

Ik zal niet gaan (I shall not go) master; we ought to obey God rather than men. If it were a case of necessity I would go immediately, but your horses run for weeks together without being looked after, and the Sabbath is the only day you collect them together. Had you come yesterday, I would have accompanied you. If you come tomorrow I will go; but this is the Lord’s day, and not ours. I will not, therefore, leave the house and worship of God on this day, for the purpose of seeking horses. How can I, who profess to believe and revere the command of God, profane his holy day? How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?⁸⁹

The disgruntled farmer left Leliefontein and, according to Shaw, ‘he came no more to seduce the Namacquas from the worship of God on the Sabbath.’⁹⁰ This perhaps was a case in which the mission station did provide the Khoikhoi with a protection of sorts against neighbouring colonists. Had the mission not existed, and the interaction not taken place under the supervision of Shaw, it is likely that the outcome would have been dreadfully different. The colonist, most

⁸⁶ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818.

⁸⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, ‘Extracts from Mr. Shaw’s Journal, 12 September 1819.’

⁸⁸ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 271.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 272.

likely armed, surely would have forced Links into submission. Chapter Seven considers many other scenarios in which the Christianisation and literacy of the Little Namaqua threatened colonists. The prominence of Jacob Links in the leadership of the Leliefontein mission coincided with the arrival of Rev. James Archbell and his wife in May of 1819 and the subsequent establishment of the 'Reed Fontein', or 'Rietfontein' mission in Bushmanland.

A year prior, in February of 1818, Leliefontein had been frequented by a 'hottentot' who requested that a missionary should come and teach upon their place where he claimed that as many as 300 'Bastards, Hottentots and Bushmen' gathered who all 'earnestly long for the gospel.'⁹¹ This man was later identified as the baptised Frederick Dideries and the place as Reed Fontein.⁹² Reed Fontein, a spring, was four days' journey north of Leliefontein.

The persistent Dideries visited Leliefontein once again in July 1818 in order to procure a teacher for the 'bastard hottentots' who live by and near him.⁹³ Dideries describes the specific moment in which he was stirred to endeavour to obtain a missionary.

I was one evening lying in my house, but had not closed my eyes in sleep, nor could I, that night, when supper was ready, either eat or drink. After having lain some time, there were two ships presented before me, which appeared to be sailing on the great waters. Someone then informed me that the one ship was filled with believers, who were holy people, and on their passage to heaven; and that the other was full of impenitent and wicked sinners, who were on their passage to hell. A person then asked me in which of those ships will you go? But before I could give an answer, the ship loaded with sinners began to sink, gradually descended out of my sight, and I saw her no more. From whence these things come, I know not; or who he was that appeared to speak with me, I know not; but I was sore afraid, and determined as speedily as possible, to procure a Missionary, that we may be taught how we can be saved. This is the only end I have in view of coming to invite you to come to us with the Gospel.⁹⁴

⁹¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, 'Extracts from a Letter from Mr. Shaw, 20 February 1818.'

⁹² *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 2 September 1819.'

⁹³ *Ibid*, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 12 September 1818.'

⁹⁴ *Ibid*.

In early 1818, however, with Edwards only having arrived a month prior, Shaw did not yet have the manpower to send a missionary full time into Bushmanland. Furthermore, since the land at Reed Fontein did not legally belong to Dideries, Shaw required the permission of the *landdrost* and governor in order to establish a new station for the scattered people of Bushmanland. This Shaw managed to achieve after a short visit to Governor Somerset in Cape Town during August of 1818. It was only with the arrival of Archbell in July 1819, and the support provided by Edwards and Links at both Leliefontein and the outposts, that the possibility of a settlement in Bushmanland now became feasible.

Shortly after Archbell's arrival at Leliefontein Shaw received word that the 'bastard tribes' were awaiting his arrival and had thus become widely scattered in various areas of Bushmanland as 'they did not dare to approach Reed Fountain till a missionary had first taken possession thereof.'⁹⁵ This hesitancy came as a result of two factors. The first being that so many Khoikhoi and basters still held a deeply instilled fear of missionaries, similar to those fears previously held by the Namaquas. By then, for the Namaqua at least, the Wesleyan missionaries had disproved the rumours propagated by many ill-disposed Boers – that they were not there to enslave the Namaqua or kidnap them over the 'blue water'.⁹⁶ Secondly, those in the service of nearby farmers expressed concerns with leaving to visit the future institution out of fear of threats at the hands of their employers. The *veldcornets* too, according to Shaw, had often threatened those who desired to visit the mission stations.

Shaw and Archbell left Leliefontein for Reed Fontein on the 10th of August 1819. After travelling for four days the men were met by a grateful Frederick Dideries, who had a hut especially prepared for their arrival. After a good night's rest the missionaries accompanied Dideries, with his waggon, oxen, sheep and goats in tow, toward the location of the new station. The fountain, which gave the new settlement its name, was of considerable strength and surrounded by large mountains. Shaw noted that Reed Fontein was suitable for a settlement as its sweet water allowed for a garden to be grown and a sufficiency of corn to be sowed.⁹⁷ Despite Reed Fontein being located within the area known as Bushmanland, by late 1819 Shaw recorded that 'few of that race of people are to be found in its vicinity.'⁹⁸ Archbell remained at

⁹⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 2 September 1819.'

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 2 September 1818.

⁹⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 2 September 1819.'

Reed Fontein in order that all the scattered people may collect at the fountain and he could commence the establishment of a permanent settlement. By December, Links made his first visit to Reed Fontein in order to teach the children.

The reinforcement provided by Edwards, Archbell and Links afforded Shaw the opportunity to turn his gaze northward. From the outset Shaw had shown considerable interest in Great Namaqualand and from his journal entries it is evident that he perceived Leliefontein to be ‘of great importance as a door of entrance to the distant tribes beyond the Great Orange River.’⁹⁹ He believed those in Great Namaqualand to be ‘far more destitute of instruction’ than those in Little Namaqualand.¹⁰⁰ Thus, when he received a letter from Schmelen in September 1819 beseeching him to pay a visit to Bethany, he agreed enthusiastically. From the start Jacob Links had been anxious to accompany Shaw on this visit and with his knowledge of the language he would be, according to Shaw, an ‘invaluable companion.’¹⁰¹ Should the opportunity and a suitable location present itself, Jacob was also willing to remain in Great Namaqualand.

In March 1820 Shaw and Links departed Leliefontein and arrived at Bethany in May. The two were soon joined by Kitchingman, resident missionary at the nearby LMS station of Byzondermeid. The trip lasted a total of fourteen weeks and, upon his return, Shaw applied to the governor for permission to establish a Wesleyan mission in Great Namaqualand. The request was granted by Governor Donkin, then acting for Somerset, who stated that, ‘being fully convinced of the benign influence of Christianity upon the mind, character and conduct of man, I hesitate not to say that it ought to be extended, not merely beyond the boundaries of the colony, but to the uttermost parts of the earth.’¹⁰² Here we see another shift in government’s position on a mission across the border – this is perhaps most aptly explained by Donkin’s brief governorship and his seemingly more favourable view of missions.

It was decided that Shaw would remain at Leliefontein while Archbell, accompanied by Jacob Links, would proceed to Great Namaqualand at the beginning of October 1820 where he would begin his labours amongst Chief Gammam and his people.¹⁰³ Edwards, now married, agreed to

⁹⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, ‘Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 22 September 1819.’

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, S. Kay, 12 August 1820.

¹⁰³ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 28 July 1820.

follow Archbell and Links to Great Namaqualand as soon as Shaw received further assistance at Leliefontein. By this stage, Links had married the 22-year-old Hannah Cloete.¹⁰⁴ Hannah Cloete is only mentioned once in the register of marriages in the church book of Leliefontein. We know almost nothing about her life, apart from her marriage to Jacob Links in 1819. Records suggest that Jacob and Hannah Links had seven children. We only know the names of two them. Bailie's census recorded at Leliefontein in 1853 records a 'Hannes Links', noted as 'J's son.'¹⁰⁵ Another of the Links' children, a daughter 'Heintjie Peters', is mentioned in the WMMS records under the register of 'Births Illegitimate.' She is recorded to have had a child in 1856 with an unknown man at 'Hoorn Zaal'.¹⁰⁶ The last of Jacob's children, a daughter, seems to have been born in the year of his death.¹⁰⁷

In 1821 Archbell and Links left Leliefontein for Great Namaqualand. The missionaries settled at a location known as 'Bush Fountain', the previously mentioned 'Bushman's Fountain', which was well-supplied with water from eight fountains as well as the Untup River, only half a day's journey away. Before leaving Bethany, Schmelen had warned Archbell about the perils he and his family would face.¹⁰⁸ Despite the warning, Jacob seemed fearless. He 'cheerfully followed' Archbell, famously saying 'where Mynheer goes, I am not afraid to go.'¹⁰⁹ The men continued on to Bush Fountain in October 1821 where Archbell soon realised the ruthlessness of life in Great Namaqualand. He recounted that 'it is no small trial to have our two children crying for something to eat or drink, when we have often nothing to give them but dried flesh, which, whenever I eat myself, makes me ill the whole of the next day.'¹¹⁰ The missionaries' time at Bush Fountain was short. The men instead moved with another group of Namaqua to the coastal region of Angra Pequena – present day Lüderitz in Namibia. The men returned to Leliefontein in August 1822.

¹⁰⁴ National Library of South Africa, (hereafter NLSA) MSC 39, 50 (1): 'Church book of Lily Fountain' (1816), 'Register of Marriages.'

¹⁰⁵ NLSA, MSC 39, 52 (8): 'List of the Adult population attached to the Institution of Lily Fountain, Khamiesberg – showing their Race, date of admission, the quantity of their stock, and the sum subscribed by each towards the expenses of measuring the lands of the institution.' (31st January 1853).

¹⁰⁶ NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): 'Church book of Lily Fountain' (1816), 'Register of Illegitimate Births'.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol III, Mr. Archbell to Shaw, 26 November 1821.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

They were not in the Kamiesberg for long before attempting another trip to Great Namaqualand – this time with their sights set on Woolwich Bay (Walvis Bay). Upon their return, Shaw reported that ‘Jacob Links is so much concerned for the people they have been constrained to leave that he offered a few days ago, in case of our commencing at the Bay above-mentioned, to go to them alone.’¹¹¹ An outbreak of warfare amongst the groups in the interior of Great Namaqualand had led the Wesleyans to resolve upon the possibility of establishing a settlement on the far western coast. On 23 October 1822 Archbell and Links sailed for Walvis Bay in order to assess the viability of the location for an institution. The men returned to Leliefontein on 30 November 1822 with a favourable report on the viability of the location. In his journal, Shaw recorded that ‘according to the account given by Brother A., I am fully of the opinion that a Mission established in that quarter would be of more importance than all the Missions which have hitherto been established in the Namacqua country.’¹¹² The establishment at Walvis Bay, however, did not come to fruition. In 1824 Archbell had instead been directed to assist Broadbent at the Baralong mission at Maquasse.¹¹³ Hodgson, who had worked alongside Broadbent, had been directed to return to Cape Town. This sudden change in circumstances led Shaw to cling a little more tightly to the resource he had in Jacob Links. Shaw commented:

You cannot object to my holding Jacob Links here. He is very diligent in the School and more highly respected than any Native Teacher I have ever seen. As it is said, all the London Society's Native Teachers have turned out to be good for nothing and some of the Brethren object to the name of Assistant (tho' I do not.)¹¹⁴

3.3.2 Peter Links and the Baralong and Coranna Mission

In 1818 a visitor to the Leliefontein station, who had recently travelled among the neighbouring groups of ‘Mankestens, Boschuanas and Marootzes’ to the north and north-east of Griqua Town, informed Shaw of their desire for instruction and requested that Shaw accompany him to those people.¹¹⁵ Shaw, at the time preoccupied with the possibility of a Wesleyan mission in

¹¹¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Mr. Shaw Journal Extracts, July 18, 1822 - January 21 1823.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 30 November 1822.

¹¹³ Du Plessis, *Christian Missions*, 179.

¹¹⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 29 April 1824.

¹¹⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol III, ‘Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, dated 29 September 1821.

Great Namaqualand, did not accede to his request. It would be a couple of years until the WMMS directed its missionaries to those regions in the interior.

In early 1823 WMMS missionaries Thomas Hodgson and Samuel Broadbent established an institution amongst the Baralongs (or Rolong-Seleka), a group of Sotho-Tswana in the Maquasse mountains (near present-day Klerksdorp) under Chief Sifonello (or Sefunelo).¹¹⁶ During their time at Maquasse the missionaries were visited by several Coranna chiefs who expressed a desire for a missionary to reside with them along the banks of the Vaal River, only a day's journey to the south of Maquasse. The Corannas were a Nama-speaking Khoikhoi group known to inhabit the area ranging from the western coast, along the banks of the Orange River, to the east of Griqualand. While missionaries of the LMS had once established themselves amongst the Corannas to the west of Griqualand, by 1823 those Corannas residing east of Griqualand had yet to receive a missionary.

Hodgson and Broadbent informed the Wesleyan Committee of the Corannas' request for instruction while temporarily agreeing to itinerate between Maquasse and the Corannas whenever possible. But the Corannas had very little knowledge of Dutch, which made the above very difficult. The acquisition of an interpreter with a knowledge of the Nama was thus imperative. For this the Maquasse missionaries looked to their neighbouring Wesleyan institution of Leliefontein. Shaw selected Peter Links for the job.

In 1823, the Report of the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society mentioned that the Leliefontein station 'has not only a considerable Society connected with it, but has also furnished two pious Hottentot Assistant Missionaries, from one family, to assist in spreading the Gospel in Southern Africa. One has been employed with Mr. Archbell, among the Great Namacquas, and the other is usefully employed in the neighbourhood of Khamiesberg.'¹¹⁷ Peter

¹¹⁶ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 326; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 137; For more on the Wesleyan mission to the Baralongs see Whiteside, 'The mission to the Baralongs', in Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church*, 325-342; Samuel Broadbent, *A Narrative of the First Introduction of Christianity Amongst the Barolong Tribe of Bechuanas, South Africa* (London: Wesleyan Mission House, 1865); Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 295-312; W. Shaw(ed.), *Memoirs of Mrs. Anne Hodgson — Compiled from Materials Furnished by her Husband, the Reverend T. L. Hodgson, Comprising Also an Account of the Commencement and Progress of the Wesleyan Mission Amongst the Griqua, and Bechuana tribes of Southern Africa*. (London: Mason, 1836), 120-158; Thomas Hodgson and Richard Cope, *The Journals of the Rev. T. L. Hodgson: Missionary to the Seleka-Rolong and the Griquas, 1821-1831* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press for African Studies Institute, 1977).

¹¹⁷ *WMMS Reports*, 1823, 33.

Links, the older brother of Jacob, was the other member of the Links family who played an instrumental role in the functioning of the Leliefontein mission. He was one of the group of Little Namaqua who accompanied Wildschut in his search for a missionary in 1816. Peter was married to Troy Links and the couple are recorded to have nine children.¹¹⁸ The names of some of their children are notable, named directly after missionaries of the WMMS: Thomas Hodgson Links, Jacob Threlfall Links, Barnabas Shaw Links, Robert Snowdall Links and Jane Edwards Links (twins) and Edward Edwards Links.¹¹⁹ These children would later prove useful in providing assistance in teaching.

Peter was from the outset an extremely active and practical man. As Shaw recounts, ‘he learned to do many things at the station in a way far superior to any of the other Namacquas.’¹²⁰ As a mason, carpenter, smith and thatcher, he was a man of many talents who in the early days of the institution proved invaluable. In addition to his practical skills, Peter was sought out most by the missionaries for his knowledge and wisdom. He was an active and vocal participant of the Leliefontein community, which is evident in the numerous speeches he gave regarding the temporal affairs of the station. At a monthly council meeting at Leliefontein, Peter addressed the attendants regarding the increasing trend of the schoolchildren missing class in order to take care of their parents’ cattle:

Brothers, hear me! I know you of old. It is not the first time that I have heard complaints respecting the children. Many of them are watching the calves in the field, instead of being in the school. Brothers, hear me! I know you often sit with only one ear open, but now open them both. I know you soon forget what you hear, and when reprov'd for doing wrong, you say, we did not know it...What were we before we received the gospel? You know you were blind and stupid heathens. Brothers, what did you know of God, what of Christ Jesus, and what of the way of salvation? You knew nothing, you were in thick darkness...What did you know of ploughing and sowing? What of making gardens, and partaking of the fruit of them? What did you know of reaping corn fields, of thrashing the sheaves, of baking cakes, and of eating loaves of bread? What did you know of religious teaching, of the Holy Scriptures, and of schools for your children?

¹¹⁸ NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): ‘Church book of Lily Fountain’ (1816), ‘Register of baptised children.’

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 279.

You knew nothing of them: but we see great things today; we have our teachers, we have the great word, and we have a school for our children. Brothers, hear me! After all these things, will you be indifferent? Will you make your children go after the lambs, and the calves, instead of sending them to school?¹²¹

Peter was evidently vocal on many an occasion; his oratory skills were noted by many. During religious assemblies on the station he was known to have ‘gained the marked attention of his audience, when he commenced the application of them to their hearts.’¹²² As Shaw describes, Peter was known to stand in the middle of the assembly, “like the watchful pilot of a ship in the height of the storm. As the people mourned, he became more and more animated; he preached ‘repentance and the remissions of sins;’ he pointed his hearers to the Lamb of God, and spoke of his atonement.”¹²³ Peter continued his discourse, ‘till it appeared as if Sinai were on a blaze, and its thunders were rolling all around; as if the gloomy cloud were descending, and the lightning of divine justice flashing conviction into every conscience.’¹²⁴ When strangers arrived at Leliefontein from neighbouring regions, it was almost always Peter who was called to address them in Nama. Peter’s skills qualified him for a mission field much farther afield than the boundaries of the Kamiesberg or even Bushmanland.

Peter arrived at Maquasse on 24 September 1823 where he would serve as both an interpreter and ‘native agent’ to the neighbouring Corannas.¹²⁵ According to Broadbent and Hodgson, Peter was ‘in every respect proper to be employed as an interpreter to the Corannas. We consider him a great acquisition, and since his arrival have resolved to visit them occasionally, itinerating from village to village, though nothing more should be effected at present than to prepare the way for wiser and better men.’¹²⁶

On 22 December, Peter Links accompanied Hodgson on a trip to the Corannas in order to properly assess the situation amongst them before presenting his formal recommendation to the Committee. The journey from Maquasse to the banks of the river took just over eight hours. Here they were met by six Coranna who accompanied them on the remainder of their journey

¹²¹ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 280.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 281.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Broadbent, *A Narrative*, 78.

¹²⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extracts from the last Quarterly Communication of Messrs. Hodgson and Broadbent.

to the villages of Chudeep and Bantze, two Coranna Chiefs. By the morning of the 24th another two Chiefs and their three hundred people arrived to meet the missionaries. Hodgson took the opportunity to address the large group of people who had gathered respecting the future of the missionary presence amongst them. At this gathering Peter spoke to the people about his experience in the Kamiesberg and how he and his people had received the gospel and the advantages they had derived from it. Hodgson and Links continued on their journey and soon reached two more small villages, the residence of another Coranna chief known as Chuboo. Here they addressed the people on some of the first principles of Christianity. The men arrived back at Maquasse on the 24th of December. During his time at Maquasse, Peter Links proved essential to the functioning of the mission amongst the Baralong. As Shaw recounts, ‘In many things Mr. Hodgson depended on Peter’s judgement, and loved him as a brother.’¹²⁷ Broadbent too spoke highly of Peter whom, he believed, was ‘well qualified by his piety, prudence, Christian zeal, and knowledge of their language.’¹²⁸ Regarding the future of the Coranna mission, Broadbent proposed that the Committee should send out a missionary urgently. Furthermore, he recommended that:

...there are two or three men at Khamies-Berg, who, I believe, are truly pious, and are able to read the Scriptures, having heard the Gospel, and interpreted for the Missionary there, occasionally, for several years; so that they are well qualified. If the Committee should send one or two young men out to begin a Mission among this people, they must be furnished with such interpreters from our station in Little Namaqualand; for such they cannot get in Griqualand.¹²⁹

3.3.3 Hendrick Smit and the Corannas

Word soon reached Leliefontein that a missionary and Namaqua assistants were required amongst the Corannas. It would seem that the Leliefontein mission had become somewhat of a training ground for interpreters and Namaqua missionary assistants. Edwards and his wife volunteered to establish a mission amongst the Corannas. On 1 December 1823 Edwards left Leliefontein accompanied by ‘three single men and two married ones, with their families.’¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 282.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, ‘Extracts from the journal of Mr. Broadbent, May 1824.’

¹³⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extracts from the journal of Mr. Shaw, 20 November, 1823.’

One of these men was Hendrick Smit. Hendrick was another one of Shaw's first interpreters and one of the 'first fruits' of the Leliefontein mission.¹³¹ He had often accompanied Jacob Links on his pastoral visits to the various outstations. While Smit never quite rose to the prominent position of 'assistant missionary', like Jacob and Peter Links, he is perhaps best known as the 'Namacqua assistant' of Edwards. We know comparably little about Hendrick Smit. It is likely that he was married, though the name of his wife is not mentioned. He is recorded as having five children, of which Gert, Katryn, Marcus and Edward are mentioned.¹³²

In July 1821, the thirty-nine-year-old Hendrick accompanied Edwards to Reed Fontein where he 'prayed with much fervency and devotion, both for the success of the Gospel and the welfare of the minister.'¹³³

In December of 1823 Smit joined Edwards to commence a mission amongst the Corannas. The group only reached the Coranna village in early February of the following year. Unlike the previous reports of Broadbent, the Coranna chief now seemed somewhat hesitant about the prospect of Edwards' settling amongst them. He could not give a final answer, he explained, on account of the absence of other aged and respected Corannas. As Edwards was required to continue on to Maquasse, where he had been instructed by the superintendent to deliver a message to Hodgson, he suggested to the Coranna chief that he leave Hendrick to remain with them during his absence. The chief agreed and Hendrick was 'perfectly willing' to remain and continue instruction, along with one of the other Leliefontein Namaqua who had joined them.¹³⁴

By 29 March Edwards returned and, with the assistance of Hendrick, formally commenced the mission amongst Chief Chudeep and the Corannas at Moos. There remains no account of the fate of Edwards and Smit's station at Moos, but an outbreak of violence between the Baralongs and the invading Bataus (or Batauws) at nearby Maquasse seems to suggest that the station was 'burnt to the ground' and the mission buildings and property destroyed. The people scattered.¹³⁵

¹³¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, 'Extracts from the journal of Mr. Shaw, 4 December, 1824.'

¹³² NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): 'Church book of Lily Fountain' (1816), 'Register of baptised children.'

¹³³ *Ibid*, 'Extracts from the journal of Edwards enclosed in a letter, 24 July 1821.'

¹³⁴ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, 'Extracts from the journal of Mr. Edwards, 1 February 1824.'

¹³⁵ Du Plessis, *Christian Missions*, 179; There is speculation surrounding the origin of the violence, see Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 152.

On the 12th of December 1824 Shaw received a letter from Hodgson informing him of the death of Hendrick Smit, of which the particulars are unknown. The list of deaths in the church book of Leliefontein indicates that Hendrick Smit died at the age of 42 at Griqua Town where he had accompanied Edwards.¹³⁶ Speaking of the character of Smit, Shaw explained: ‘He was a good man, an expert interpreter, and exceedingly zealous in the cause of Christ. Having tasted of the word of life himself, he was anxious to impart it to others, for which he left his country, and friends, and property, (for he was not poor), to go amongst a strange people, where he has finished his course.’¹³⁷

The failure of the missionary efforts in both Great Namaqualand and Maquasse meant that by 1824 the dispersed Little Namaqua missionaries, Peter and Jacob Links, returned to Leliefontein. During this period the viability of the various outstations and institutions attached to Leliefontein came under scrutiny. The institution at Reed Fontein, or Reedmont, in Bushmanland had since 1820 been problematic to the Wesleyan missionaries. The overarching reason for this was the migratory nature of Reed Fontein’s inhabitants. According to Shaw, the problem stemmed from the fact that before the establishment of the institution there was not an ‘original kraal of people’ as there had been at Leliefontein.¹³⁸ The arguably fragmented nature of the community was thus further dislocated upon their seasonal movements. Shaw believed that the same problem had been experienced at the Moravian settlement of Enon near the Witte Rivier. While in 1818 the Moravian institution at Groenkloof (modern-day Mamre) was recorded to have approximately 300 ‘hottentots under their care’ in the very same year their Witte Rivier settlement recorded only 27.¹³⁹ By 1820 Shaw claimed that on his various trips to Reed Fontein there were never fewer than 50 people. Despite these low numbers, which Shaw strongly hoped would increase over time, they did not have enough man-power to have a missionary stationed full-time at Reed Fontein. Archbell, who had initially agreed to remain at Reed Fountain in 1819, was required back at Leliefontein only a year later. As a result, by 1821 Shaw declared that Reed Fontein could no longer be considered a separate institution but rather an outpost of Leliefontein.¹⁴⁰ It was occasionally frequented by the Leliefontein missionaries until 1825 when its viability came into question once again.

¹³⁶ NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): ‘Church book of Lily Fountain’ (1816), List of deaths at Lily Fountain.’

¹³⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, ‘Extracts from the journal of Mr. Shaw, 12 December 1824.’

¹³⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 21 January 1820.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 8 February 1821.



Figure 8. Inhabitants of the Leliefontein Mission, circa. 1880.

3.3.4 Timothy and Lena Africaner at Reed Fontein

On the 31st of October a council was held at Leliefontein respecting the future of Reed Fontein. Three delegates from Reed Fontein were present who requested that ‘a member of our Church on Lily-Fountain should go thither, and remain with them as Schoolmaster and Instructor.’¹⁴¹ Finding such a person was difficult, as many at Leliefontein, especially those with the ability to read and write and thus qualified to take up the position, were ‘so much attached to the place where the Gospel is preached, that they have no desire to leave it.’¹⁴² Yet one man was willing to make the sacrifice – Timothy Africaner. Timothy Africaner was married to Lena Links, the sister of Jacob Links, and the two had five daughters and a son between the years 1820 and 1829: Rebecca, Hannah, Margareta, Charlotte, Griet, Martha, and Jacob.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Extracts from Mr. B Shaw’s Journal, October 21, 1824.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): ‘Church book of Lily Fountain’ (1816), ‘Register of baptised children.’

Timothy, then twenty-five years old, offered to remain at Reed Fontein on a six-month trial basis on condition that he and his wife, Lena, should be allowed to come back to Leliefontein to attend divine service once or twice a month.¹⁴⁴ Timothy had previously superintended the school for adults at Leliefontein alongside his brother-in-law Jacob. He had also spent some time in Cape Town in 1822, where he had assisted in teaching in a school. Lena Africaner was just as qualified for the task as her husband. She had for many years filled the important office of class-leader at Leliefontein and was occasionally employed by Edwards to teach at the school.¹⁴⁵ Timothy, Lena Africaner and their children left for Reed Fontein on the 8th of November, supplied with carpentry tools and a sufficient number of books for the children.

Little more is recorded about the Africaners' time at Reed Fontein. The couple sent a letter to Edwards in April 1827 in which Timothy wrote:

Sir, - We rejoiced when we heard of your arrival, and I now send you my love and Leno's also; and if all the people knew I was writing they would send their love also. I am yours most sincerely and with much affection.

(signed) Timothy Africaner¹⁴⁶

Records indicate that Timothy Africaner died at Leliefontein on 31 October 1829 at the age of thirty-two. It is likely that Reed Fontein was left unoccupied by a missionary.

3.3.5 Jacob and Peter Links in Great Namaqualand

The Africaners' departure for Reed Fontein coincided with the arrival of Rev. William Threlfall at Leliefontein in late 1824. Threlfall, who had previously laboured at Delagoa, had been in ill-health at the time and had chosen to remain at Leliefontein for the duration of his recovery. During this time Shaw, Threlfall and Jacob Links formulated a plan to visit Fish River in Great Namaqualand to see if the people were still desirous of receiving teachers. In 1820 a group of *Kennammapp Koebip*, a Great Namaqua people from the vicinity of the Fish River, approximately four days' journey from Schmelen's station at Bethany, visited Leliefontein.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ NLSA, MSC 39, 50 (1): 'Church book of Lily Fountain' (1816), 'Register of baptised children.'

¹⁴⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VII, Extracts of a letter from Mr. Edwards, 19 June 1832.

¹⁴⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Extracts of a letter of Edwards, Kamiesberg April 1827.

¹⁴⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol III, Extract from Mr. Shaw's Journal, 25 March 1820.

At Fish River they claimed they ‘are a numerous people’ and ‘have plenty of water and good gardens.’¹⁴⁸ When Shaw visited the vicinity of the Fish River in 1821 he met with Great Namaqua Chief *Gammam* (or *Tsaugammam*), who ‘is acknowledged head of all the other Chiefs’, and who expressed a desire to receive a missionary.¹⁴⁹

By 1824 the Wesleyans were ready to make the trek to the Fish River. An eager Jacob Links selected a companion, Johannes Jager, to accompany them but would have to wait for Threlfall’s health to recover fully. Johannes Jager, who had previously lived in the Karree, had recently moved to Leliefontein after hearing the gospel from a group of Leliefontein Namaqua who had passed his way. Jager embraced the gospel wholeheartedly and soon learned to read the scriptures. He had been so eager to learn to read that, according to Shaw, ‘he used to carry his book into the fields with him; and if he met with any of the school children he would engage them to sit down and become his instructors.’¹⁵⁰ Since his arrival at Leliefontein, Jager had been greatly attached to Jacob Links, which explained why he was chosen as his companion for this journey.

At the end of June 1825 Threlfall, Links and Jager left for Great Namaqualand.¹⁵¹ Shaw, at the time, had been unable to join the group. Jager and Links had been authorised to remain at Fish River, if the circumstances allowed, but Threlfall was to return to Leliefontein by October in order to assist Shaw at the public meeting. Threlfall clearly had much confidence in Jacob Links, which is evident from the following account he gave of his character in a letter addressed to William Shaw, WMMS missionary at Wesleyville in the Eastern Cape, in April 1825. The account, although complimentary of Jacob Link’s character, offers a more nuanced and honest account of Links’ shortcomings. He wrote:

Jacob Links is the schoolmaster and interpreter; he is well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and is intelligent and pious; but he has still the peculiarities of a Namacqua, weak in his resolutions, and timid in all his proceedings; he appears, however, to have a keen sense of his defects, combined with a gracious simplicity, and deep humility; he is always cheerful, very affectionate, and I believe he is established with grace; he is

¹⁴⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, Extracts from Journal, 21 January 1820.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 270.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, Extract of a letter from Mr. B. Shaw, 24 March 1826.

about twenty-six years of age, has been married several years, but has no children; there are some valuable men in the same family.¹⁵²

On their journey northward the group had been continuously warned of the dangers of proceeding beyond the Orange River. Reports had been circling that *Gammad* and another Namaqua chief were dead and that many of the people at Warm Bath were dying of hunger. Threlfall recounted that ‘They said all they could to discourage Jacob and Johannes; but these two brave fellows, to use a phrase of Ambrose’s, had their courage and confidence steeled, and declared themselves fearless through grace, and that they were not only willing to suffer, but to die in the cause of their Lord Jesus.’¹⁵³ The group arrived safely at Warm Bath in July where they found *Tsaumap* in a state of poverty, after being robbed of all his cattle by many of the disaffected people at Bethany. Despite being warned yet again, this time by a chief at *Kammanoup* in Great Namaqualand, of the perils of proceeding to Fish River, the men proceeded forward to a Bushman kraal where they were murdered by one of their guides.¹⁵⁴

In October a letter arrived at Leliefontein from Michael Wimmer, the LMS missionary then present at Byzondermeid (then named Steinkopf), to relay the news that Threlfall, Links and Jager had been murdered. Shaw initially thought little of the claim. It was not uncommon to receive reports of the kind. He had in the past received false reports of the deaths of Archbell and even Schmelen. It was not until the arrival of a group of Namaqua from Warmbath bearing the same devastating news, that Shaw considered the validity of the claim. The group of Namaqua had brought with them several receipts, articles and letters which had been in Threlfall’s possession at the time. A visit from Schmelen to the Cape further confirmed the reports. According to Shaw, ‘Jacob had been shot by poisoned arrows, one of which entered his cheek; and a youth who was present declared that he continued for some time preaching to his murderers, notwithstanding the pain he had to endure, and then, like another Stephen, spent

¹⁵² *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Extract of a letter from Mr. W. Shaw, 11 July 1926.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, Extract of a letter from Threlfall, 4 July 1825.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, Extract from the South African Commercial Advertiser, 17 May 1826; for more on the murder of Threlfall, Links and Jager see Tilman Dederling, ‘The Murder of William Threlfall; The Missionaries in Southern Namibia and the Cape Government in the 1820s’, *South African Historical Journal* 24, no. 1, 90-111; Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 236-267; T. Cheeseman, *The Story of William Threlfall: Missionary Martyr of Namaqualand, with some account of Jacob Links and Johannes Jager* (Cape Town: Methodist Publishing Office and Book Room, 1910).

his last breath in praying for their salvation.¹⁵⁵ Threlfall ‘offered no resistance, but crept into a bush and continued to pray until till he ceased to breathe.’¹⁵⁶

Threlfall, Links and Jager would long be celebrated as martyrs of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, but the repercussions of the tragic events of 1825 were far greater reaching. The violent murder of a missionary, albeit outside of the Colony’s borders, threatened the security of the colony. The Cape government now had a renewed interest in the northern frontier and adopted a new frontier policy by means of fostering alliances with neighbouring chiefs. Furthermore, the institution of Leliefontein, which had for so long been a door to Great Namaqualand and many surrounding areas, as well as a *de facto* training facility for so many Namaqua interpreters, assistants and missionaries, was now forced to put a temporary hold on its missionary pursuits outside its boundaries. In June of 1826 Leliefontein suffered another great loss when Barnabas Shaw, its founder, was dispatched to Cape Town to superintend its circuit. Rev. Richard Haddy, who had arrived at the station prior to Shaw’s departure, took over the running of Leliefontein until the return of Edwards in May 1827.

It would be seven years until the Wesleyans attempted to send another missionary into Great Namaqualand. In 1834 Rev. Edward Cook, on his way to Great Namaqualand, stopped at Leliefontein. Here he was joined by Edwards before venturing northward ‘for the purpose of learning the disposition of the people, and seeking a suitable situation for our object.’¹⁵⁷ The missionaries had not gone far before their paths crossed with Abram Christian, the chief of the Bondelswarts, who had been en route to the Kamiesberg in search of a missionary. This coincidental encounter, which Cook deemed to be ‘providential,’ seemed to mirror the events of 1816 when the path of Shaw crossed that of Chief Wildschut.¹⁵⁸ Cook and Edwards accompanied Abram to Warm Bath, where the Albrechts had once laboured under the LMS, which he recommended as an appropriate site for the mission. Cook returned briefly to Leliefontein before he and his wife set off for Warm Bath which they renamed ‘Nisbett-Bath’ in honour of James Nisbett who generously donated £300 to the missionary efforts in Great Namaqualand.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 273.

¹⁵⁶ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South*, 588.

¹⁵⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VIII, Extract of a letter from Mr. Cook, 14 June 1834.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 57.

Peter Links accompanied Cook to Nisbett-Bath and assisted in the establishment of the new station. Links was seemingly undeterred by the tragic death of his younger brother in that very region just a few years prior. While initially the assistance Links rendered was of a physical nature – in masonry and carpentry – he soon became invaluable to Cook as an interpreter and schoolmaster. He also helped ease the teaching load and would on occasion hold religious services. According to Cook, Peter Links ‘on account of his piety, industry, and ingenuity, is a very valuable acquisition.’¹⁶⁰ The future of Peter’s increasingly essential involvement at Nisbett-Bath was, however, uncertain as his wife and five children had remained at Leliefontein.

In a letter to the Wesleyan Committee in September 1834 Cook reflected on the future of Peter at Nisbett-Bath: ‘But in the case of his continuing, some arrangement must be made with him, as he has a wife and five children. Could he not be employed as an artisan?’¹⁶¹ By early 1835, after being at Leliefontein for some time, Peter Links had agreed to continue at Nisbett-Bath. Cook, who had by then realised the inefficiency of each lesson and instruction being translated through Links, opted to task Links with the sole management and teaching of the catechism class. Many of the Bondelswarts had little understanding of the Dutch in which both Cook and Peter Links preached, thus Links opted to teach and pray primarily in Nama.¹⁶² Peter, now joined by his wife and family, made use of their assistance. Upon the commencement of the station in 1834 his oldest son Thomas Hodgson Links, though only eleven years of age, is recorded by Cook as having assisted in the teaching efforts on the station.¹⁶³ Peter’s family also joined him on their frequent visits to the outstations. Much like at Leliefontein the people at Nisbett-Bath moved seasonally between outstations according to the rains. With Peter Links and his family in one wagon, and the Cooks in another, the group traversed what became known as the Nisbett-Bath Circuit. The circuit extended as far south as the Orange River and approximately 200 miles north to the Karas mountains. In the east it reached the Fish River valley and 100 miles west the Back River. Peter Links remained at Warmbath for three years until he left in 1837, unsatisfied with his salary as a ‘native assistant’.¹⁶⁴ In his correspondence Cook claims that he replaced Links with another ‘native assistant’ whom he paid two pounds a month.

¹⁶⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VIII, Extract of a letter from Mr. Cook, 13 September, 1834.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, Extract of a letter from Mr. Cook, 20 April 1835.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, Extract of a letter from Mr. Cook, 24 November 1834.

¹⁶⁴ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Cook, 16 July 1838.

In 1839 Peter Links accompanied Cook and several others to the Cape where he died at the age of forty-five as a result of the dysentery epidemic. Peter's family returned to Leliefontein, which was then under the instruction of resident missionary Joseph Jackson. Thomas Links, now fifteen, and his thirteen-year-old brother, Jacob Threlfall Links, immediately stood out to Jackson for their proficiency in reading, writing and scriptural knowledge. This, Jackson credited to their time spent with Cook at Nisbett-Bath.¹⁶⁵ They would surely follow in the footsteps of their father. Peter's two youngest sons, Barnabas Shaw Links and Robert Snowdall Links, though able to read, didn't seem to make as great an impression as the others did. His daughter remains absent from the records completely.

3.3.6 David Afrikaner at Nisbett-Bath

At Nisbett-Bath, African assistants continued to prove invaluable to the functioning of the mission. Hodgson noted that David Afrikaner, one of the sons of Titus Afrikaner, had been employed by Cook as an 'Interpreter, Exhorter and Scripture-Reader'.¹⁶⁶ David was not a Little Namaqua, as those discussed previously, but his work is worth briefly mentioning here. At the time of Hodgson's visit, he had four men under his instruction, two of whom had recently become members of the church. Hodgson was extremely impressed by David, whom he believed to be 'a great blessing to the people amongst whom he resides, who look up to him with the highest respect....his good sense, humble spirit, and pious deportment, are sufficient to warrant the confidence Mr. Cook place in him.'¹⁶⁷ David had not always had such an upright reputation. He had first heard the gospel preached by Albrecht at Blydeverwacht and Jerusalem, but later 'backslid' and engaged in robbing, murdering and marauding amongst the Damara. Afrikaner was later reformed and was employed as 'resident Native Assistant', itinerating between Nisbett-Bath and Jerusalem. For his labour he received a few pounds sterling annually from the LMS.¹⁶⁸ He soon came to his senses and returned to Jerusalem. Then reformed and at Nisbett-Bath, he interpreted with 'readiness, energy and fluency.'¹⁶⁹ He prayed predominantly in Nama and was well-received by the people who were 'so much disposed to receive

¹⁶⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IX, Extract of a letter from Rev. Joseph Jackson, 26 February 1839.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol XI, Extract from the Journal of the Rev. T. L. Hodgson, on a Visit to Nisbet—Bath, and Khamies-Berg, Great-Namacqualand, 601.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 600.

instruction from pious persons of their own class and tribe.¹⁷⁰ Hodgson believed Afrikaner to be an example of ‘what may be effected by native agency judiciously directed.’¹⁷¹ As a location, Nisbett-Bath ‘was a valuable field for extending the work successful, by means of native agency’.¹⁷²

Rev. Benjamin Risdale, who replaced Cook at Nisbett-Bath in 1844, was just as complimentary of these ‘native teachers’ who occupied the most important outstations. They were ‘men of years and experience, of sound judgement, of true piety and stability of character.’¹⁷³ From the young men on the station, Risdale hoped to train another generation of future assistant missionaries. He had selected five men to be trained but had not been satisfied with the results. They had not been as useful as he had hoped, which he believed to be because ‘we have no institution into which they can be taken and clothes and fed and watched over as they are on some of our more favoured Mission-stations’.¹⁷⁴ The young men he believed had proved themselves ‘unworthy of the pain that have been bestowed upon them.’¹⁷⁵ The men were able to read the scriptures and write decently, with some knowledge of arithmetic, but they were not ready to give direct religious instruction.

In 1846, Rev. Haddy suggested to the Wesleyan Committee that, to further the WMMS missions in Great Namaqualand and Damaraland, ‘native agents’ should be trained at Leliefontein and sent north.¹⁷⁶ He had three men ‘of established piety and promise’ in mind. They are not named but are said to be married, literate and well-spoken in both Nama and Dutch. Haddy recommended that each be compensated annually with £25. From this he believed a deduction should be made to purchase their wagons. This would have been a feeble salary at the time, considering ‘it requires the exercise of self-denial to leave a comfortable home at Khamiesberg to go and live in the Damara country’.¹⁷⁷ Despite this, the men were willing. The following year, Timotheus Sneeu, ‘a Christian Native from Khamies Berg,’ had

¹⁷⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol XI, Extract from the Journal of the Rev. T. L. Hodgson, on a Visit to Nisbet—Bath, and Khamies-Berg, Great-Namacqualand, 603.

¹⁷¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol XI, 599.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, Extract of Letter from the Rev. Benjamin Risdale, dated Nisbet-Bath, 12 December 1846, 193.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, Extract of a letter from Rev. Richard Haddy, dated Cape Town, 5 November 1846, 189.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

joined the Damara mission ‘in a spirit of self-denial’ as he had left his family behind.¹⁷⁸ The WMMS ‘Report of the Damara Mission’ describes Sneeu as ‘a credit to the Institution where he was born, converted and trained.’ The report recommended that he be employed as a ‘Native Catechist amongst the Berg Damaras.’¹⁷⁹

3.4 The Unnamed Missionaries

The work of these Namaqua missionaries was central to the maintenance and extension of missions in Little Namaqualand and those areas further away. One cannot discount the contribution of those who are mentioned, but unnamed, in the missionary record. From Leliefontein, many who were not formally regarded as ‘assistants’ spread the gospel – or what they understood of it - throughout the region in the nineteenth century. From Leliefontein, the WMMS reported that ‘the light of Christianity and the useful arts, is gradually diffusing itself among the neighbouring tribes.’¹⁸⁰

Even with the establishment of an official WMMS mission at Leliefontein, the people attached to it were still highly mobile. By 1824 the majority of those Little Namaqua belonging to the institution of Leliefontein did not reside permanently on the station. Over half of the population of almost 2000 officially belonged to the institution but lived with farmers, another 400 were classed as ‘wanderers’ who were ‘living amongst the mountains, in the Bushmanland, near us, but who never settle long on one place.’¹⁸¹ It was these Namaqua, constantly on the move to and from Leliefontein, who were often responsible for the spread of the gospel throughout the region. These Namaqua followed in the footsteps of the early Methodists in England who ‘stood in town squares and in the open air and travelled from farm to town to city to spread the gospel.’¹⁸² It was not uncommon for groups and individual basters, San and even Namaqua from Great Namaqualand to visit Leliefontein for the sole purpose of requesting instruction or a missionary to accompany them home. The station’s central position in the Kamiesberg meant that it was convenient and accessible to many. The dispersed nature of its members and the message that they communicated caused many to visit Leliefontein.

¹⁷⁸ *WMMS Reports*, 1847, 82.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ *WMMS Reports*, 1819, 34.

¹⁸¹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 20 February 1824.

¹⁸² Annemieke B. Nel, ‘South African Missions, Methodism, Identity and Agency in the Cape, with reference to the Klipfontein Mission Station, ca.1800s-2010s’ (MA Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, March 2020) 49.

In October of 1823, Shaw recorded the following account:

This morning we halted at a place called Rim-Hoogte,¹⁸³ where, in consequence of the excessive heat, we remained till sun-set. During the day an old Mosambique slave came up to our wagon and asked for a Dutch Hymn Book. On asking if he could read, he took a small school book out of his leathern sack and read, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This circumstance being very surprising to me, I inquired by whom he had been taught to read. He said, "My master some time ago hired one of your Namacquas to take care of the sheep. When he came amongst us, we knew nothing of God, or prayer; but he commenced singing hymns and praying with us every evening. He then read out of the book, and told us of Jesus Christ. The words which he preached were so good for me, that I longed to read them myself. He was willing to teach me, and gave me his books; but the Hymn book is old, and shattered, so that I can scarcely read it. I long for another. Our Teacher has now gone away from us to the station, yet we still sing and pray together and with our fellow slaves every evening; and whilst I am watching the sheep in the day, I try to improve myself. Others of the slaves have begun to pray and long to be taught." How various are the instruments employed in spreading the savour of divine truth! The poor Namacqua leaves Lily-Fountain he commences a journey of at least on hundred and sixty miles, in order to become shepherd to a farmer by the Elephant-River. Surrounded in his new situation with a number of slaves, almost as ignorant of God as the beasts which perish, he commences praying with them, and for them. Seeing them far from God, he begins to prophesy according to his ability; and, from the fruits of his labour, it is evident he spoke to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.¹⁸⁴

For many Namaqua, especially those labouring in the service of nearby colonists, professing their faith and daring to evangelise to their fellow labourers came with a risk of punishment. Despite the apparent risks involved, many continued to openly share their faith and were thus actively involved in the dissemination of Christianity amongst the population of Khoikhoi,

¹⁸³ Also known as Rem Hoogte, a place near the Oliphants River; CWM, South Africa Journals (2) 32, Schmelen, entry 18 January 1812.

¹⁸⁴ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, October 1823.

baster and slave labourers in and around Little Namaqualand in the early nineteenth century. It is likely that these Little Namaqua, who carried the gospel with them, would have been better received by those they visited than the European missionaries who were still viewed with scepticism by many Khoikhoi. The Namaqua, understandably, carried greater credibility amongst their 'native brethren.'¹⁸⁵

In September of 1819, Shaw recorded the following:

Last night one of our people, who has been absent some time, returned to the Station. In several places he had spoken on spiritual subjects; some heard him gladly, but others were angry, because he reproved them. On taking out his testament (which hangs suspended in a leather sack under his arm) and reading some passages of scripture, they were convinced that not he, as expressed himself, but the Book, reproved them. In one place some farmers made a mock of his experience and all instruction given to heathens on which he opened on John iii and told them they could not be saved except they were born again. At this they were angry, and would have flogged him, but asking them (being Christians in profession) if the Book said they must flog him, they desisted.¹⁸⁶

The fact that many Namaqua would have benefitted materially from the mission stations could perhaps bring the legitimacy of their true 'conversion' into question. Accounts such as the above can be seen to validate the authenticity of their beliefs. As Whiteside posits, 'one of the strongest proofs that converts can give of the genuineness of their conversion is a readiness to assist in sending the gospel to others.'¹⁸⁷ The Leliefontein Namaqua most certainly displayed a willingness to spread not only the gospel but also to teach the literacy required to access it textually. They did this on their own accord, without prompt from the missionaries, and so often in spite of the risk it posed to their livelihoods and job security.

¹⁸⁵ Nel, 'South African Missions, Methodism, Identity and Agency in the Cape,' 50.

¹⁸⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, November 1819.

¹⁸⁷ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 56.



Figure 9. The Leliefontein Mission, circa 1855.

Very little separated these unnamed Namaqua evangelists from those more prominent ‘missionary assistants’ who have been named and famed in the missionary record. The missionary assistants were unpaid and merely compensated with food and clothes by the Wesleyan missionaries. This suited the Wesleyan Committee who were both cash-strapped and desperately in need of labour in the Namaqualand region. As Shaw explained in August 1820:

According to the reckoning of some missionary societies we have work enough here for three or four missionaries – but I have always endeavoured to show those who can read that it is equally as much their duty to teach others to read as it is mine to teach them, so that we have plenty of teachers none of whom receive anything on book for anything but Jacob who we have taken from his parents entirely.¹⁸⁸

Shaw and the Wesleyan missionaries at Leliefontein took full advantage of the Little Namaquas’ willingness to spread the gospel on their own accord. New converts were just as

¹⁸⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 21 August 1820.

eager to spread the word creating an arguably self-perpetuating system. During a Love Feast held in January 1825, Shaw recorded the testimony of a Namaqua which highlights this:

He said he was living in the Karee country, ignorant, and without God in the world, when Delia, one of our people, came amongst them. She sung and prayed with them and spoke on spiritual subjects. She told them of things we he had never before heard. He was alarmed on account of his sins, and sought to hide himself among the rocks, from the presence of the Almighty, but found no refuge where he could be secure. He prayed; he sought the Lord with many tears – he believed that what he had heard of the way of salvation – he determined to come and live at the institution; he arrived, and found peace- he soon after was baptized and learnt to read, and he is now a real Christian, and one of our Leaders. The Lord can work by whom he will; and, to show that the good which is done on earth, he alone doth it, he frequently used the most insignificant instruments. This pious female Namacqua has, I believe, been the means of the conversion of several, and many, through her labours, have been brought to hear the gospel.¹⁸⁹

Even amongst the mission communities, Namaqua were known to facilitate their own prayer meetings and times of worship, independent of the missionary. At Nisbett-Bath, Hodgson observed that ‘the chapel...was occupied at an early hour, in a prayer-meeting conducted by the natives themselves in the Namacqua language.’¹⁹⁰ Some would even preach to those groups of ‘unconverted’ people attached to the mission stations. In December 1830, Edwards observed one of the Namaqua addressing a group of his ‘unconverted countrymen’.¹⁹¹ He preached:

We see what riches are: some who were rich are now poor: - riches are only temporary; but the riches of the Gospel are eternal, and will never forsake us. I have long heard the gospel, and frequently thought of the labour and pains bestowed upon us by Missionaries. Death will pass none by, and I often think of the time when the church-

¹⁸⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, 2 January 1825; A Love Feast was a tradition unique to the early Methodists in which a meal was shared and fellowship enjoyed while recalling the meals Jesus shared with his early disciples.

¹⁹⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol XI, Extract from the Journal of the Rev. T. L. Hodgson, on a Visit to Nisbet—Bath, and Khamies-Berg, Great-Namacqualand, 599.

¹⁹¹ *WMMS*, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, E. Edwards, Kamiesberg, 31 December 1830.

bell will stand still. This will be when I am dead, when I shall no more hear the sounding bell calling us to church. We have the word of life and ought now to receive it.¹⁹²

Others on the station, Edwards noted, ‘take opportunities to be useful to their pagan brethren, whose talents and piety give great promise of their becoming important auxiliaries to this interesting Mission.’¹⁹³

The Wesleyans arrival in Little Namaqualand in 1816 coincided with the removal of Cornelius Kok, and his followers, to Griqua Town. The founding of the Leliefontein mission thus signalled a new era in the Little Namaqualand missions which saw the LMS and WMMS establish their dominance in the region through their close co-operation as missionary societies. In doing so both societies became increasingly reliant on both Namaqua and baster missionary assistants upon whose support the missionary effort relied heavily. These assistants solved many pragmatic problems that the European missionaries faced, namely; their inability to communicate in Nama, their need for teachers to migrate with the Namaqua to their outposts, their inability to deal with the harsh climatic conditions and the lack of funding from their respective missionary societies. Perhaps most significant was the missionary assistants’ ability to translate the Christian message into cultural templates compatible with existing Namaqua belief systems, the details of which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Seven.

¹⁹² WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, E. Edwards, Kamiesberg, 31 December 1830.

¹⁹³ *WMMS Reports*, Vol I, 1819, 35.

Chapter Four: 'The door to Great Namaqualand'

The LMS Return to Little Namaqualand, 1814-1820

'A multitude of wandering hordes, consisting of few individuals, which cannot be into one coherent body nor remain settled at one place, I think could be better informed of the way of salvation, by converted Hottentots to whom the society may allow a trifle for their encouragements than by European Missionaries'.¹

4.1 Steinkopf and Pella are Revitalised

A period of uncertainty followed the dispersion of the LMS missionaries from Warmbath in 1811 in which they attempted to re-establish themselves in Little Namaqualand without fully releasing their grip on Great Namaqualand. Schmelen had managed to begin work at Klipfontein (Bethany) in 1814. Bethany was further north-west into the interior of Great Namaqualand. The area had been home to the Bethany people (!*Aman*) who had risen to oorlam status prior to the arrival of the missionaries. Schmelen's followers at the time consisted of several diverse groups, from the oorlams led by Piet Vlermuis and Kobus Boois, to various groups of Namaqua and Damara. The Great Namaqua groups - //*Haboben* (Veldskoendraers), *Kai//khaun* (Red Nation) and //*Khau/gôan* (Swartboois) had also made contact with Schmelen at Bethany.

Johan Heinrich Schmelen was born to a relatively wealthy family in Bremen in northern Germany. Germany, then known as Prussia, was politically divided into separate and distinct states. Bremen had, since the middle-ages, been a centre for missionary activity in north-eastern Europe.² In 1803, in an attempt to avoid military conscription in Germany, he travelled to London where he met Kircherer and the three Khoikhoi converts who had accompanied him. Much like the Albrecht brothers before him, Schmelen was trained at Jänicke's Seminary in Berlin. Schmelen arrived at the Cape in 1811, at the age of thirty-four, along with his fellow German missionaries Henry Helm and Leonhardt Ebner.³

¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Van der Kemp to LMS, 30 October 1811.

² Eric Knibbs, *Ansgar, Rimbert and the forged foundations of Hamburg-Bremen* (Routledge, 2016); Francis Joseph Tschan and Timothy Reuter (eds.) *History of the archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*, Vol. 53. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.)

³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5C, Schmelen, Helm and Ebner to LMS, 18 October 1811.

Schmelen's arrival at the Cape coincided with the dissolution of the Warmbath mission in 1811. For this reason he and his colleagues made their way directly to Byzondermeid, in Little Namaqualand, where they joined Christian Albrecht and the Warmbath Namaquas and preached to a group of basters.⁴ Helm and Ebner remained at Byzondermeid while Schmelen and Albrecht continued onto Pella.⁵ In his correspondence to the LMS directors, Schmelen acknowledged that at Pella the missionaries were 'not at the spot where you might possibly wish us.'⁶ Pella, Schmelen argued, 'at these unsettled times,' was the 'best for the Society, for us, and for our people.'⁷ The ground at Pella, the missionaries admitted, was 'brack and therefore entirely unfit for agriculture.'⁸ Despite this, they were insistent on remaining. They were consequently not self-sufficient, having to travel to the Kamiesberg constantly to procure supplies of corn.⁹ Schmelen and Albrecht were still adamant to return to Warmbath as soon as it was considered safe. Following the attack on the Warmbath station, the Namaqua had accompanied the missionaries in their retreat into Little Namaqualand and had since been anxious to return.

By mid-1813, Helm and Ebner had joined Schmelen and Albrecht at Pella and at Byzondermeid the Namaqua teachers, John and Claas Engelbrecht, as well as his wife, remained to minister to the people.¹⁰ Two translators, 'Magerman' and 'Goejeman', worked at Pella. Jan Magerman, Albrecht wrote, is a man 'of great use among his own nation. He has particular gifts for interpreting, and to speak with our people about the word of God.'¹¹ He had previously worked alongside Kramer and Anderson at Klarwater. Heese claims that after the 1811 attack on Warmbath, Magerman did not flee but rather joined the Bondelswarts and

⁴ The locations of 'Byzondermeid' and 'Steinkopf' are often grouped into one, or presumed to be one location. Byzondermeid was an outstation of Steinkopf. Where possible, this thesis has attempted to distinguish between the two. From Steinkopf, Backhouse 'walked in the direction of Byzondermeid, where there were a few mat huts and the ruins of an old mission house near a remarkable hill, from which the place probably takes its name, which signifies, Singular Meid.', Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 545; Some accounts refer to Steinkopf as 'Kok Fontein'.

⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2A, Schmelen to LMS, 14 January 1813.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 2A, Ebner, Schmelen, Helm & Albrecht, Extracts, 1813.

¹⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 1C, Ebner, Schmelen, Helm & Albrecht, 26 July 1813; Schmelen to LMS, 14 January 1813.

¹¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2A, A, Albrecht, Schmelen, Ebner, Helm, 'Extracts from the Missionaries Reports at Kamas from January 1 1813 to July 1813'.

settled at a place called ‘Leeuplek’.¹² In 1818, when Ebner visited Warmbath, Magerman was still ministering amongst the Bondelswarts, of which he had become a ‘deputy chief’.¹³ ‘Goejeman’, or Goeyman, is likely Hans Goeyman, the brother of the Khoikhoi evangelist, Jan Goeyman, of Bethelsdorp.¹⁴ The Goeymans were a prominent family of bastards living along the Orange River.¹⁵ Another of the prominent Goeyman brothers was Peter, who had been one of the first converts of the Zak River mission and later moved to Klaarwater.¹⁶ Hans Goeyman was well-liked by the missionaries at Pella. ‘There is much good in him,’ Albrecht wrote, ‘and his conduct is unblameable.’¹⁷ In 1814 another of the Goeyman family, the translator ‘Jacob Huiman’, was baptised at Pella.¹⁸ At Pella, a reported 750 men, women and children remained at the station, seventy-five of whom were able to read well.¹⁹ From their journals it is evident that the missionaries met with the baptised of the station, both men and women, and encouraged them to ‘converse with one or two other of our people about the word of God.’²⁰ The missionaries intentionally equipped the most capable of their followers to carry the workload.

In 1814 it was deemed fit for Schmelen to return to Great Namaqualand where he established a mission at the beforementioned Bethany. Upon his arrival, however, he found that Titus Afrikaner was still causing much disturbance amongst groups of Namaqua. Vlermuis, desperate for Schmelen to stay, threatened the Afrikaners ‘that he would come and take off their skins to make shoes of and pickle their head and cut off the breasts of the women.’²¹ The hostilities in Great Namaqualand seemed to have altered Albrecht’s opinion on the future of a mission in the region. He believed that ‘Pella is more fit for the establishment of a mission than

¹² J.A Heese, ‘Onderwys in Namakwaland: 1750-1940’ (D.Ed Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1942), 116-117; G. L Buys and Shekutaamba V. V. Nambala, *History of the Church in Namibia, 1805-1990: an Introduction* (Windhoek, Namibia: Gamsberg Macmillan, 2003), 48.

¹³ C.P Heese, *Die Verband tussen Onderwys end Sendingonderwys in Suidwes-Afrika 1806-1870: 'n Kritiese beskouing van bepaalde aspekte.* (Stellenbosch: Universiteit van Stellenbosch, 1980), 18.

¹⁴ Schmelen mentions a ‘H. Goeiman...a native convert’, at Pella; *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. IV, ‘ourney from Pella, to explore the Mouth of the Orange River, the Great Namaqua and Damara Countries, by Mr. H. Schmelen, undertaken at the request of Mr. Campbell, when at Pella’, 162.

¹⁵ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 72; Legassick notes that the ‘Gunjemans’ or ‘Goeymans’ were the remains of the ‘Gorinhaiqua’ khoikhoi of the seventeenth century, 52.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 72; 92.

¹⁷ *Ibid*; In August 1813 Campbell met ‘Hans Huiman, a Dutch (or bastard) Hottentot’, at a Coranna Kraal west of Pella, along the Orange River, Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 385.

¹⁸ ‘Huijan’ was a commonly-used semi-phonetic variation of ‘Goeyman’; See Schoeman, *The Early Mission in South Africa*, 178; *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. IV, ‘Extracts from the Journals of Messrs. Albrecht and Ebner, Missionaries at Pella, Namaqualand, From January to August 1814, 177.

¹⁹ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. IV, ‘Extracts from the Journals of Messrs. Albrecht and Ebner, Missionaries at Pella, Namaqualand, From January to August 1814, 177.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 5C, Schmelen to LMS, Klipfontein, 29 July 1814.

Warm Bath, and for many reasons I should not like to quit this place.’²² Rev. Campbell, since his visit to Pella, had penned a letter to Afrikaner in attempt to make peace. If successful, Albrecht would request a missionary to be sent to Warmbath – clearly he was not up for the task himself. By 1815, at the age of thirty-seven, Christian Albrecht was already making preparations to leave Pella. The Namaqualand climate had taken its toll on him physically, and mentally he seemed frustrated. He complained of the people of Pella: ‘...they are lazy and unfit to build a house, they rather sit and smoke a pipe very often, and when we say to them it is time to assist and work again they look at you and laugh or they become angry.’²³ He recommended John Bartlett take his place. Michael Wimmer had been his original selection, but he expressed concerns that Wimmer’s age and condition would render him unfit for the heat of Namaqualand.²⁴ Albrecht’s planning was somewhat fortuitous; he died in July that year.

Schmelen made a journey to the Cape in August 1816 for necessities.²⁵ It was during this visit that he became acquainted with WMMS missionary Shaw whom he accompanied to his post at Leliefontein, en route to Bethany. On account of a lack of water for his fatigued oxen, Schmelen was unable to make it to Bethany. He had little option but to stop at Steinkopf. He duly forwarded a message to his followers at Bethany, instructing them to travel to Steinkopf and collect him with their oxen the moment water became available. At Steinkopf, where Schmelen had previously ministered to several of his followers on an itinerant basis, he now recorded a total of 250 people with ‘a great desire for divine things, several are anxious to find an interest in Christ, and much of a praying spirit is prevailing amongst them.’²⁶

The religious fervour experienced at Steinkopf was apparent in many of the early missionary writings. In their journal from 1812, the newly arrived German missionaries recounted the following description of a Great Namaqua women at Steinkopf:

This sermon had a deep effect upon their minds. One sister called Griet from the above mentioned nation was crying through the whole service. At last she arose and lifted up her eyes to heaven, and crying aloud, and many more began to cry in a heart-breaking

²² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 5B, Albrecht to LMS, Pella, 5 September 1814.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6), Albrecht to LMS, Pella, 24 August 1815.

²⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 5A, Schmelen to LMS, 5 September 1816.

²⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1C, Schmelen to LMS, 20 March 1817.

manner so that the speaking Brother was interrupted, to proceed in sermon. Some verses were sung afterward and then concluded in fervent prayer.²⁷

In March 1814, from a location near Pella, Schmelen reported a similar account.

Most of my hearers were in the forenoon drowned in affectionate tears. Several were so much effected that they were trembling as if in a fit whilst the word of God seized upon them, others went before the discourse ended out of our meeting crying and praying into the field, to render themselves onto the Lord Jesus Christ.²⁸

Such emotional outbursts and expressions were common in Little Namaqualand at the time. Detailed descriptions of these can be found in both the records of the LMS and WMMS missionaries. The European missionaries were quick to send these detailed accounts back to their parent societies. They were a testament to the success of the missionary endeavours in Namaqualand and were surely imbued with a sense of pride.

Schmelen, though recognising the importance of a LMS station at Steinkopf as a strategic post between Great Namaqualand and the Cape, was unwilling to remain there indefinitely. He instead requested that the LMS send another missionary to settle permanently amongst the people at Steinkopf. This would allow him to focus on his pursuits at Bethany. In the interim he paid a visit to the nearby station of Pella, which took five days on ox-wagon, where LMS missionary John Bartlett and his wife had recently arrived in April 1816.²⁹ The people of Pella had been scattered since the death of Albrecht. John Bartlett had joined the LMS five years prior and was stationed at Bethelsdorp. In 1815 he played an important role in the founding of the mission at Theopolis in the Eastern Cape. With the arrival of Bartlett in 1816, the mission at Pella was recommended. Bartlett was assisted by the translator 'Jacob Goeyman', who had worked at Pella previously.³⁰ Jacob Goeyman would have been family to Bartlett who had married Johanna Margaretha Goeyman at Graff-Reinet in November 1815.³¹

²⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2), Helm, Ebner and Schmelen, from Besondermeid, 22 February 1818-11 July 1812.

²⁸ Ibid, Schmelen, near Pella, 20 March 1814.

²⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8A) 1A, Wimmer to LMS, Steinkopf, 20 August 1822.

³⁰ See page 152 ; CWM, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (10) 1B, Wimmer to LMS, Steinkopf, 24 February 1827

³¹ Schoeman, *The Early Mission in South Africa*, 164.

Bartlett's character and running of Pella would come under the scrutiny of many missionaries. Of his conduct, Ebner reported: 'I am very dissatisfied. He is not come in this country to proclaim peace in Jesus Christ, but an uproar maker, who meddles with other men's matters (1 Peter 4:15). He is the person that has also contributed much to my great grief, and that of our little congregation.'³² Prior to his arrival at Pella Bartlett's reputation had come under scrutiny. He had been accused of several offences such as adultery, impregnating a woman and leaving the daughter of an esteemed Stellenbosch farmer for a 'bastaard-hottentot'.³³ A critic of Bartlett, Moffat, visited Pella in 1818 where he quickly retracted his prejudices toward Bartlett:

I have been mistaken in what I contemplated respecting Pella, but much has been done as it regards civilisation under Mr. Bartlett.... On the whole I like his plans. He is active, zealous and to all appearances a good missionary. You know we are very fond to criticize and make holes where there are none, and put on laps where there is no necessity; but I hope you will not be inclined to think I am doing so when I say Mr. Bartlett is an active man. He is happy as the day is long, has a good wife and a sweet child and has his house as clean as any Englishman or woman. He is in this respect an example. Respecting his conduct at Theopolis, he faithfully and candidly confessed all, and says that he should never have continued had Read not thought otherwise. Tho' suspended by the meeting, I could not feel it my duty to persuade him to resign the work, but I left it to his own experience. He is fraught with brotherly kindness, which I have experienced.³⁴

He was very complimentary about both Bartlett and the prosperity of the station:

There is an abundance of water, about 30 gardens: 28 of those are watered from one of the numerous fountains which are settled here. Labour and perseverance are only necessary to render this a very excellent institution. The gardens considering circumstances beat a profusion of fruit and vegetables; pampoons, water lemon and

³² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3A, Ebner to LMS, 8 October 1817.

³³ Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing,' 224; For more on Bartlett's alleged offences see page 163.

³⁴ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 53.

Spanish spick abound. Mr Bartlett has built a house which deserves its appellation, and capable of becoming what men term a church.³⁵

Pella had served as a very strategic base for the LMS in Namaqualand. Its proximity to the Orange River, between Little and Great Namaqualand, had much to do with this. It seems that the LMS stations in Little Namaqualand were only deemed useful to the LMS on the basis that they served as a stepping stone into Great Namaqualand. The missionaries seemed impatient, unable to direct their time and energy at whole-heartedly entrenching themselves in Little Namaqualand. Instead, a preoccupation with Great Namaqualand existed. This can only be explained by the fact that the country north of the Orange River was believed to be far more wild, uninhabited and more desperately in need of civilisation and Christianity. These sentiments seemed to have been shared by the Wesleyans at Leliefontein:

The Gospel being now established in this place...our settlement...is of great importance as a door of entrance to the distant tribes beyond the Great Orange River...When the first Methodist preachers had succeeded in publishing the glad tiding of salvation in any city, town, or central place, they could never sit down with satisfaction till the influence thereof had spread into every surrounding village. This always appeared to me to be the true apostolic spirit; a spirit highly necessary for all preachers of the Gospel, but especially for missionaries to heathen lands.³⁶

Campbell's comment, at the opening of this chapter, seems to confirm this. Although by 1814 the missionaries had far from 'completed' their mission in Little Namaqualand, nor had Christianity been completely cemented in the minds of the people. It seems here that Campbell believed the indigenous preachers and missionaries would step in the gap:

When the people in any place are effectually converted to the Christian faith, and have natives among them capable of carrying on the work, then the Society's and the Missionary's object is attained, he will then leave them, and proceed higher up the country in search of new and uncultivated fields.³⁷

³⁵ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 53.

³⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, dated Lily Fountain 22 September 1819', 213.

³⁷ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, Vol. IX, 'Letter from Reverend Mr. Campbell to Sir John Cradock', 12 February 1814, 353.

Great Namaqualand was by 1815 perceived by many as spiritually uncultivated. This may be true for the more northerly tracts. Schmelen's station at Bethany however had already produced missionary assistants, mostly oorlams with a great degree of independence. These assistants were known to travel on their own to isolated Namaqua groups to whom they preached. They were, according to Dederling, in many cases far more successful than Schmelen.³⁸ Their fluency in the language certainly worked in their favour but, most importantly, the message they presented was not riddled with Eurocentric ideologies and convoluted religious doctrine.

Pella, at the same time, had produced several African assistants. In 1815 Read reported that from Pella 'Several native teachers have been recommended, who send out in different directions, Warm Bath, Steinkopf, at which place Br. Albrecht begged missionaries from Europe might be stationed.'³⁹ Many of the early 'native teachers' based at Pella were in fact bastards from the Engelbrecht family living at an outpost on the outskirts of Pella.⁴⁰ Paul, Gert and Jan Engelbrecht were sons of the Dutchman Engelbrecht who had married a Namaqua woman from southern Namibia. He had been involved in cattle-raiding and illegal trading of firearms for which he was eventually arrested. He later died in the Clanwilliam jail. Following his death, his sons crossed the boundaries of the colony and entered Little Namaqualand. Paul had settled with his family near the oorlam leader Kupido Witbooi's kraal at Pella, Gert had chosen to reside in a matjieshuis near Steinkopf and Jan headed westward to the Sandveld. Paul Engelbrecht had spent time with Christian Albrecht in the Kamiesberg as early as 1810 and was at that stage already baptised. By 1814 Gert Engelbrecht had also been baptised, and according to Schmelen, the brothers proved incredibly useful among the people of Pella 'in conversing with them about spiritual things.'⁴¹

The sons of the Engelbrecht brothers, Willem and Gert Jnr, were two of Pella's most prized young converts. At the age of twenty-four Willem had expressed a desire to 'instruct his countryman in the ways of salvation.'⁴² He was known to read well in the New Testament and prayed, spoke and interpreted often in meetings. Willem would later be sent to Steinkopf where

³⁸ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 226.

³⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 2E, James Read, Report for the year 1815.

⁴⁰ For more on the Engelbrechts see Carstens, 'The Community of Steinkopf,' 220; Meyer, *Die gemeente te Steinkopf, Namakwaland*; Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 57.

⁴¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2), Schmelen, 10 February 1814.

⁴² *Ibid.*

he assisted Wimmer with teaching at the outstations. His cousin, Gert Engelbrecht Jnr, was considered by Schmelen as ‘the most forward of all the children’.⁴³ On a journey from Pella to Byzondermeid Gert was recorded as having frequently exhorted from the bible, having ‘a deep impression upon them all and caused their tears to flow.’⁴⁴ Back at Pella Gert spoke often at the Sunday afternoon meetings with ‘great energy and boldness.’⁴⁵

Other notable Namaqua played an important role in facilitating Christian conversation and evangelisation at Pella. Jonis April was one of them. April had spent time with Seidenfaden in Great Namaqualand and was ‘very zealous in divine things.’⁴⁶ Following the destruction caused by Afrikaner, April had strayed from God and turned to ‘intoxication’⁴⁷. In 1814 April returned to Pella and upon improving his conduct was baptised by Schmelen. Schmelen noted that April was ‘very useful among our people and has particular gifts in prayer and conversation and sometimes goes from house to house to have Christian conversation with his friends.’⁴⁸ It was also common for April to sit outside his hut and preach to ‘a large assemble of his own nation.’⁴⁹ Another man, a Bondelswart by the name of Jantjie Oortman, removed to Pella after spending much time under the instruction of Albrecht at Warmbath. Oortman, Schmelen recorded, ‘had a deep impression from the word of God’ and ‘has also been useful amongst our people in Christian conversation and exciting them to come to the Lord Jesus Christ.’⁵⁰ Oortman would later labour and interpret alongside Edward Cook at Nisbett-Bath. Finally, the Hendricks sisters, Zara and Leentjie, of Little Namaqua descent, were two of the first four members of Schmelen’s congregation and were baptised by Schmelen in 1814. They were deemed very useful for the role they played in conversing with and teaching the women at the station. It was common for the sisters to meet with the young women in their house in the evenings following divine service. At these meetings, the sisters would lead singing and spiritual dialogue.⁵¹

Schmelen later encouraged both Zara and Leentjie to become mission assistants at Steinkopf. After the death of one of Schmelen’s servants, Sara fulfilled the role. Their relationship soon

⁴³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2), Schmelen, 11 March 1814.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 26 January 1814.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 6 February 1814.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 25 December 1813.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 26 January 1814.

⁵¹ Ibid.

evolved from being professional in nature to romantic and the two were later married, despite the twenty-year age difference between them. Zara Schmelen subsequently became one of the most prominent and influential of the female missionary assistants. We know little about her life, nor the extent to which she assisted her husband in missionary duties or travels. Nevertheless, what we do know is that she played a very important role in the translation of the gospels into Nama – a feat which her husband has since been credited with. Trüper believes to the contrary. Schmelen's knowledge of Nama was limited and thus Zara would have been tasked with the majority of the work.⁵² This is somewhat of a contested view. Hahn argues that Schmelen did have a knowledge of Nama and was so adept at the language and customs that he became known as a 'white Nama'.⁵³ It is likely that Zara's contribution to the translation of the texts was far greater than that of her husband and for this reason she is deserving of far more a prestigious title than 'missionary wife' or 'missionary assistant'. Unfortunately, for Zara and her female counterparts, they receive little mention in the records. Schmelen's betrothal to Zara would later land him in hot water with a contingency of the LMS who fervently disapproved of marriage and relations between missionaries and their African congregants.⁵⁴

The congregation at Pella became scattered in 1815, following the death of Albrecht. Upon Bartlett's arrival at Pella in 1816, many of the people immediately re-assembled. Johann Ebner, who had previously been stationed at Pella, visited in September 1816 at the request of Read who instructed him to brief Bartlett as to the congregation and the state of the mission. Read was also somewhat concerned that Bartlett, a catechist, had not been officially ordained and thus could not administer baptism or the Lord's Supper.⁵⁵ Schmelen thus visited Bartlett at Pella in 1817 to see to his ordination and discuss the organisation of the LMS missions in Little Namaqualand. Until the LMS could send reinforcement in the form of a European missionary to remain permanently at Steinkopf, Schmelen and Bartlett concluded that two of their best Namaqua assistant missionaries should be stationed at Steinkopf. The beforementioned John Engelbrecht of Pella, as well as Willem Moddel of Steinkopf, were the men chosen for the job.

⁵² Trüper, *The Invisible Women*, 13.

⁵³ Theophilus Hahn, *Tsuni-IlGoam: the supreme being of the Khoi-Khoi*. (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 49.

⁵⁴ See page 162-165.

⁵⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 2B, James Read, 24 August 1815.

According to Schmelen, ‘Both I trust are sincerely converted are able to read and write a letter they have gifts to speak publicly as well in the Dutch as in the native tongue.’⁵⁶

4.2 Missionaries, Misconduct and Miscegenation

In 1817 the LMS missionaries based in Little Namaqualand found themselves at the centre of a society-wide scandal of misconduct. Schmelen was based at Steinkopf when Governor Somerset installed a ban, restricting any new missionaries from joining missions beyond the borders of the colony. The governor thus denied permission for the LMS’ new arrivals at the Cape, missionaries Robert Moffat and James Kitchingman, to proceed to the places of their destination in Namaqualand.⁵⁷ These temporary restrictions were applied by the colonial government as a means by which to placate ‘the present political state of the tribes beyond the boundaries’ of the colony.⁵⁸ This came after the breakdown of relations between the Griqua institutions, spearheaded by missionary Anderson, and the colonial government, which brought into question the role of the LMS missions outside the borders of the colony.

Somerset had many gripes: that Anderson and the Griqua institutions harboured runaway slaves and attracted deserters from the colony; Anderson’s inability to halt the Hartenaar rebellion led by baster Coenraad Buys and the facilitation of illegal trading and hunting activities.⁵⁹ These gripes not only pertained to the Griqua missionaries but also to all missionary activity on the frontiers of the colony. The missionaries, Somerset believed, had lost control of their people, who were unwilling to be subjected to the authority of the colonial government. This not only posed a threat to the government but also to farmers in the region.⁶⁰ While these grievances cannot be attributed to the failures of the missionaries alone, they do bring into question the government’s perception of the expected responsibility of the missionary in promoting law and order. In a conversation with the LMS’ George Thom on the subject, Colonial Secretary Bird explained that:

And when you have your missions so well conducted as writing the two objects Christianity and Civilisation, as Seidenfaden and Pacalt do, then Government will

⁵⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1C, Schmelen to LMS, 20 March 1817.

⁵⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 4B, H. Goulburn to G. Burder, 22 October 1816.

⁵⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1C, Thom to LMS, 10 April 1817.

⁵⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1D, G. Thom to LMS, 29 April 1817.

⁶⁰ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 140.

support you to the utmost of their power. Let any one visit these settlements particularly Mr. Pacalt's and he will be obliged to see the order that is kept by these two Missionary and the improvement which the people have made...but there is work enough for these missionaries within the colony. Would to God, that they would set about converting Mahometans and to keep the slaves from becoming of that religion.⁶¹

There exists more to the story of Somerset's sudden ban. The ban cannot be divorced from rumours that began to spread regarding the misconduct of the LMS Superintendent in South Africa, James Read. Read had recently been accused of committing adultery and impregnating the teenage daughter of one of his San converts.⁶² This was not the first grievance that the colonial government and colonists held toward Read. His prior marriage to a Khoikhoi woman in his congregation had surely already tainted his reputation in the eyes of government and settler society, who sought to tighten their grip on an increasingly hostile indigenous population. Furthermore, Somerset's personal objections to Read stem from Read's strong anti-government stance. Read had been a fervent critic of the colonial government and its inability to address the mistreatment of Khoikhoi and slave labourers within the colony. Legassick posits that Somerset's ban happened all too coincidentally to coincide with the movement of Read from Bethelsdorp into the northern frontier region in order to establish a mission amongst the Tlhaping in 1816.⁶³

George Thom and his conservative supporters, notably on the pro-government side of the factionalism that had arisen within the LMS, seized the opportunity created by the ban to intervene and put an end to the perceived misconduct of many LMS missionaries and their African wives. The behaviour of the missionaries, he believed to be 'very injurious and disgraceful to our holy calling'.⁶⁴ Thom, with the assistance of Seidenfaden, held a ten-day-long meeting in August of 1817 in which he addressed the 'immoralities of the missionaries'.⁶⁵ The fact that Seidenfaden, himself having impregnated the wife of one of his followers, saw

⁶¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 1D, G. Thom to LMS, 29 April 1817.

⁶² For more on James Read see C. Saunders, 'James Read: Towards a Reassessment', in University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, *The Societies of Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Collected Seminar Papers*, 21, 7 (1975-1976); Julia Wells, 'Scandal of Rev James Read and the Taming of the London Missionary Society by 1820', *South African Historical Journal* 4, no. 1 (2000), 136-160; Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 3-6; 197-232.

⁶³ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 142.

⁶⁴ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 12.

⁶⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 2C, Minutes of the Missionary Meeting, 12 August 1817.

himself fit to facilitate such a meeting is baffling. He had been guilty of the very sins of which he would so harshly accuse his colleagues. Perhaps he hoped that his marriage into white settler society would cover up his past transgressions. They would only later come to the attention of the LMS, leading to his eventual removal.

The meeting considered the cases of several offending missionaries – very few of whom were handled as punitively as Read. The meeting took the guise of an official representation of the LMS in South Africa as a whole, but in reality was little more than a disgruntled clique who presented the LMS Directors in London with an ultimatum – the immediate suspension of the transgressing missionaries or the resignation of the meeting’s organisers.

Accusations arose against three of the Little Namaqualand missionaries – Schmelen, Wimmer and Bartlett. All of them fostered marriages and relations with Khoikhoi women which the meeting organisers deemed immoral or illegal for different reasons. Schmelen was charged with the immoral conduct of ‘marrying himself’ to his own ‘servant-maid’ outside the borders of the colony.⁶⁶ The mitigating circumstances in his case, being outside the colony as well as his desire to avoid ‘living in fornication’, seemed to excuse his ‘imprudent’ course of action in the eyes of the meeting’s members.⁶⁷ Thom, evidently a supporter of Schmelen, recommended instead that Schmelen ‘only be most severely assured by the Directors as knowing the great evils which have come on the cause of Missions by it.’⁶⁸

German missionary Michael Wimmer, who later laboured at Steinkopf, had been chiefly accused by Seidenfaden whom he laboured alongside at the Caledon Institution. Wimmer was accused initially of partaking in inappropriate relations with a Khoikhoi woman called Sabina Adams, but his greatest offence had been his illegal ‘self-marriage’ to Sabina. Wimmer’s several unsuccessful and obstructed attempts to marry Sabina legally were completely overlooked at the meeting and instead his behaviour was labelled a gross immorality. His misconduct was deemed a ‘public crime’, which ultimately rendered him ‘unfit for the sacred office.’⁶⁹

⁶⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 2C, Minutes of the Missionary Meeting, 12 August 1817.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 16 August 1817.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*; for more on the case of Wimmer at Caledon Institution see Penn, ‘A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,’ 212-217.

John Bartlett of Pella was the third Namaqualand missionary to come under scrutiny at the missionary meeting. Bartlett, who had been previously stationed at the Theopolis mission, was accused of impregnating a married Khoikhoi woman. It was further alleged that James Read assisted in the cover-up of Bartlett's scandalous affair by transferring Bartlett to his eventual post at distant Pella. Bartlett's later marriage to a Khoikhoi woman Johanna Margaretha further cemented his debauched reputation in the eyes of the delegation. The meeting report recommended to the LMS Directors that Read, and the other transgressing missionaries, be immediately suspended. Albeit a recommendation, Thom's intervention was seemingly enough to placate the colonial government into lifting the ban on the condition that the LMS send a missionary of 'superior class' to replace Read as Superintendent.⁷⁰

The LMS' fresh recruits were finally allowed to proceed to their posts in Namaqualand. While Thom may have disguised his intervention as a means by which to placate the government and settler society into lifting the ban, his ulterior motives were undeniable. Thom had his eyes on the position of LMS Superintendent.⁷¹ Much to his dismay, the Directors replaced Read with Rev. John Philip in 1819.⁷² The Directors of the LMS had not approved of Thom's impromptu meeting, believing it to be undermining of their authority. This surely left a bitter taste in their mouth. They did however approve of some of Thom's decisions, evidently aware of the benefits of fostering positive relations with government and settler society. The Directors released the accused Namaqualand missionaries Schmelen, Wimmer and Bartlett to continue their work.

⁷⁰ Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, vol. 12, 1818-1820, 'Lord Bathurst to Lord Charles Somerset, 22 December 1818', 107.

⁷¹ For more on the Missionary Meeting of 1817 and the misconduct of LMS missionaries see Julia Wells, 'The Suppression of Mixed Marriages among LMS Missionaries in South Africa before 1820', *South African Historical Journal* 44, no. 1, (May 2001), 1-20; Wells, 'Scandal of Rev James Read', 136-160 ; Penn, 'A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing'; Doug Stuart, 'The "Wicked Christians" and the "Children of the Mist": Missionary and Khoi Interactions at the Cape in the Early Nineteenth Century', in University of London, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, *Societies in Southern Africa in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Collected Seminar Papers*, 18 (1992); Doug Stuart, "'Of Savages and Heroes': Discourses of Race, Nation and Gender in the Evangelical Missions to Southern Africa in the Nineteenth Century." (PhD Thesis, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London 1994); Doug Stuart, "'O That We Had Wings' - Race, Sexual Politics and the Missionaries." (Paper presented to seminar on Imperial History, Institute of Historical Research, London, 29 October 1990); Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 217.

⁷² Thom resigned from the LMS in 1818 and took up a government position in Swellendam. Seidenfaden was later suspended from the LMS for 'oppressing the Hottentots', selling Khoi children and running the Caledon Institution for financial gain.

In Namaqualand, the majority of the LMS missionaries were in fact married to women of Khoikhoi or baster descent. In addition to the missionaries accused at the 1817 meeting, Christopher Sass who based himself on the middle Orange River had been married to the daughter of Paul Engelbrecht, a notable oorlam leader in the area.⁷³ This trend seems to have merely been an extension of the Namaqualand missionaries adoption of the Khoikhoi lifestyle – the adoption of the *matjieshuis*, Namaqua healing techniques, burial routines and on occasion clothing. Examples of these can be found in Chapter Six. One could argue that these adoptions on the part of the missionaries were a result of the trying environmental conditions in Namaqualand and the missionaries subsequent reliance on the Khoikhoi for various coping strategies. The missionaries promotion of Khoikhoi preachers and leaders and their occasional flexibility around African spirituality were enough for them to be deemed Africanist and subsequently seen as a threat to colonists, government and the security of the colony as a whole.

The Wesleyans who worked alongside the LMS were also sceptical of their counterparts' behaviour. Relations between the two societies had however been mostly pleasant. Since Shaw and Schmelen's first meeting in Cape Town in 1816 there seemed to exist a great level of friendliness and co-operation between the missionaries and their societies within Little Namaqualand. In the earliest days of the Wesleyan settlement at Leliefontein, as early as January 1817, Shaw had relied on Bartlett, who from his station at Pella sent an interpreter to assist Shaw.⁷⁴ Of this favour Shaw commented, 'I feel much obliged to Mr. B for his kindness though I know him not.'⁷⁵ It was but the beginning of a long-standing relationship between the LMS and WMMS missionaries in Little Namaqualand. This was at times fraught with tension and animosity but on the whole was completely necessary for the survival of missionaries in such a barren and harsh region.

In his correspondence from August 1818 Kitchingman reported to the Directors that 'I am glad to mention that the Methodist missionary on the Kamies Mountain has manifested much kindness toward us and we live in brotherly love.'⁷⁶ When Shaw arrived at Steinkopf in 1820 it is thus understandable that he was received 'with much affection' by Kitchingman and his

⁷³ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia, 138.

⁷⁴ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, 'Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 22 January 1817.'

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

family.⁷⁷ In his journal, Shaw seemed overjoyed by this formal meeting: ‘How delightful to meet with Christian friends, a Christian Church, and a Brother Missionary, in the midst of a desert.’⁷⁸ During his stay at Steinkopf in 1820 Shaw recorded:

A goodly number of natives belong to this station; some of whom can work well, and have assisted their teacher in the erection of a large and comfortable dwelling-house. Considerable portions of land have been sown with corn some distance from the settlement, and their gardens near the house appear sufficiently productive. Some have received the word with readiness of mind, and all appear attached to him who proclaims amongst them the glad tidings of salvation. Brother K. and sister K. have had many trials in this dreary wilderness; yet they seem willing to endure all things for the spread of the gospel.⁷⁹

Shaw easily convinced Kitchingman to join him on his journey to Great Namaqualand. Kitchingman had after all always looked for an opportunity to cross the Orange River. After crossing the Great River in April that year, the two men, accompanied by their wives and children, were met by several people and oxen sent by Schmelen to assist them onward to Bethany. From there, the group travelled to the various Namaqua tribes in Great Namaqualand, many of whom expressed a deep desire to obtain missionaries to teach them the ‘things of God.’⁸⁰ Two months later they left Bethany in order to return to Little Namaqualand. Relations between the missionaries were seemingly pleasant during their almost two month long expedition in Great Namaqualand as Shaw reported back to the Methodist Committee:

Should any enquire who is brother Schmelen or who is Brother K? I answer, they have been our fellow travellers, and fellow helpers in the Lord. 'They are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.' And may it be known to all, that missionaries from different societies can now travel together in unity and concord; preaching to the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and helping to bear each other's burdens.⁸¹

⁷⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, ‘Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 3 July 1820.’

⁷⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol III, ‘Extracts from the journal of Shaw, 31 March 1820.’

⁷⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, ‘Extracts from a Letter of Mr. Shaw, 3 July 1820.’

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Shaw, and the Methodists, had, however, not always spoken so affirmingly of the LMS missionaries. In 1818 Shaw strongly condemned what he believed to be the immoral conduct of the LMS missionaries:

Whatever Dr. van der Kemp, Br. Read and others may think of their Hottentot wives, my prayer is that the Lord may deliver the Methodist Missionaries from every connection of that nature. ...This may be lawful, but it is far from being expedient or prudent. The man and especially the missionary who is joined to a Hottentot is by the colonists looked upon with contempt, so it is impossible that they can by the colonists be heard of profit.⁸²

Edwards was just as vocal in his disdain of the conduct of many of the LMS missionaries:

I need only to remind you what has taken place among the London Missionary; some of whom have been guilty of the greatest crimes such a fornication and adultery. Others have acted very improperly in marrying themselves to Hottentots. Mr Read, of whom you heard so much of in England, has fallen into adultery. May the Lord, ever preserve the Methodist Missionaries from such great evil.⁸³

Shaw and Edwards were surely horrified at Schmelen, Bartlett and Wimmer's questionable betrothal and relations with Khoikhoi and Namaqua women. From their statements one can deduce that it was not merely the perceived immorality of the sexual misconduct of the LMS missionaries that bothered the Wesleyans but the impact it would have on the reputation of the missionaries in the eyes of the colonists and authorities. This falls in line with the commonly held belief of the WMMS as being more 'pro-colonial' than the 'anti-colonial' LMS. While these beliefs were more specifically related to the close ties held between the WMMS and the settler societies of the eastern frontier, we can pick up traces of the WMMS' colonial loyalties in Namaqualand too. It seems more likely that Shaw's desire to keep the reputation of the Namaqualand missionaries intact, whether WMMS or LMS, was more a case of pragmatism than one of loyalty. With Leliefontein being within the colonial boundaries, it was imperative that Shaw maintain a favourable relationship with both the government and neighbouring

⁸² WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 18 February 1818.

⁸³ Ibid, Edwards, undated 1824.

colonists. It was only through government sanction that Shaw had been enabled to settle at Leliefontein in the first place and it had not been an easy process.

In their own dealings in Little Namaqualand the Wesleyans had erred on the side of prudence. As discussed in Chapter Three, when the unmarried Edwards arrived at Leliefontein in 1817 to assist Shaw, he was hesitant to itinerate to the outstations on the basis of his singleness. Whether his concern had been based on the public opinions of the Kamiesberg farmers or his own inability to resist the temptation that the Namaqua women apparently posed, it was enough to stop him from travelling to his first post in Bushmanland. The job was, as was common in Little Namaqualand, transferred to the well-known Namaqua assistant missionary Jacob Links, who willingly took up the challenge. Despite the Wesleyan's vocal disdain of the behaviour of their LMS counterparts, it was evidently not enough to completely tarnish the otherwise fruitful relationship between the two missionary societies in Little Namaqualand.

The early failures of the LMS in and around Namaqualand did not go unnoticed by the Wesleyans, who attributed it to a want of order and discipline. In 1820 Shaw commented that, 'Many of the London Society and stations have come to almost nothing – this I think may be attributed partly to want of proper directions – to want of proper encouragement and support from the parent Society – to want of proper self-denying persevering men – to want of the broken enforcement of church discipline amongst the missionaries.'⁸⁴ With the two missionary societies working so closely together in Namaqualand it was only inevitable that cracks in their once solid relational foundation would present themselves. One of these cracks was set in 1821 with the proposed deployment of Wesleyan missionary Stephen Kay from the Cape.

Kay and the WMMS had their sights set on the 'tribes of heathens' beyond Latakko who Shaw referred to as the 'the nations of Bootchuannas, or to the more savage Tribes of Wanketzens.'⁸⁵ Several people from these remote parts had visited Leliefontein in 1819 and requested a missionary. It was thus agreed upon that Kay should first proceed to Leliefontein to rest his cattle before continuing by way of the Orange River to Griqua Town and finally Lattakoo. From Lattakoo he should make himself acquainted with the manners and customs of the surrounding peoples before proceeding to the 'numberly tribes amongst whom Christ had never

⁸⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, March 1820.

⁸⁵ Ibid, B. Shaw, 8 February 1821.

been named.⁸⁶ Coincidentally, around the very same time, the WMMS were informed that Mr. Melville was due to accompany two LMS waggons from the Cape, stocked with necessaries for the missionaries, to Griqua Town. The WMMS immediately decided that it would be more logical for Kay to accompany Melville on the more direct route to Griqua Town. This suggestion was received with great hostility by Campbell and Philip of the LMS.⁸⁷ Shaw seemed blindsided by the apparent hostility, unaware of any possible causes.

Kay and Melville departed from Cape Town separately, a mere week apart, in February 1821. On a visit to Cape Town Shaw confronted Philip on the matter, fearing the devastating consequence that a rift between the two societies could have on the future of the missions in Namaqualand. Philip explained that ‘he by no means objected to our having missions in that part of Africa as there was work enough for hundreds of labourers, but he considered Br. Kay as an improper person to undertake such a mission, observing at the same time that any young man, just arriving from England must be unfit for such a work.’⁸⁸ It is unclear whether there were underlying objections from Philip and the LMS. It seems probable as it was certainly not the first, nor the last, time a young missionary be sent into the mission fields fresh from England. Following the incident in 1821, Shaw beseeched the Methodist Committee to speak to the LMS ‘as Abraham did Lot’: ‘Let there be no strife I pray three between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee: if thou wilt take the left hand then I will so to the right: or if thou depart to the right hand then I will so to left.’⁸⁹ The success of the missionary enterprise in Namaqualand necessitated a high level of co-operation between the various missionary societies, which explains the Wesleyans’ apparent ability to overlook their many grievances against the character and conduct of the LMS missionaries. Their common goal of bringing the lost flocks of Namaqua to Christ was seemingly paramount, and the unity of the societies with this common purpose in mind thus imperative.

⁸⁶ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 8 February 1821.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, B. Shaw, March 1820.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, B. Shaw, 29 September 1821.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

4.3 Missions on the Move

Somerset's ban happened to coincide with the arrival of two new LMS missionaries at the Cape – James Kitchingman and Robert Moffat. They were also joined by John Brownlee, Evan Evans and John Taylor. Kitchingman, who would later labour at Steinkopf, was Yorkshire-born and ordained in the Surrey Chapel in September 1816.⁹⁰ He was accompanied at the Cape by his wife Sarah Kitchingman. Of the arrival of the new group of missionaries, Somerset commented: 'Every day fresh missions are arriving'.⁹¹ Moffat and Kitchingman were viewed favourably by the conservative Thom. Moffat, he believed, 'was possessed of some influence and of much perseverance.'⁹² Moffat's views strongly aligned with that of Thom. He was greatly critical of the Namaqualand missionaries. Upon his first meeting with Michael Wimmer, who would later join them in Namaqualand, he noted:

It was with emotions of sorrow that I beheld the unfortunate 'Wimmer', who contrary to our holy calling vindicated to me his sensuality from the broad law of nature, and appealed to other two public characters, who acted nearly in a similar manner (I mean Van der Kemp and Read).⁹³

While waiting for the ban to be lifted, Kitchingman spent time in Tulbagh and Moffat at Stellenbosch. Kitchingman visited the nearby station of Genadendal, for which he gave mixed reviews:

We were much pleased with what we saw, except that they did not pay the regard which we think ought to be paid to the observance of the sabbath. They make no difference hardly between that holy day the other days of the week. They have got a most beautiful settlement there, and civilisation is much cultivated among them.⁹⁴

Following the eventual lifting of the ban, Moffat and Kitchingman, accompanied by Mrs Kitchingman, left for Steinkopf. The journey was tedious. Upon crossing a river, Kitchingman

⁹⁰ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 10.

⁹¹ *Ibid*,

⁹² *Ibid*, 12.

⁹³ *Ibid*, 37.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 34.

noted that the ‘...wagon sunk into the ground so deep that it could not be gout out without unlading the goods.’⁹⁵ The health of Mrs. Kitchingman also began to take a toll. As Moffat described she was ‘near a period of maternal solicitude’.⁹⁶ In November the group reached Steinkopf. Kitchingman seemed immediately dismayed at Schmelen’s proposal that he should remain permanently at Steinkopf. Kitchingman explained that he ‘had many objections, particularly the apparent barrenness of the place; the small number of inhabitants, the poor attendance, which I had observed on the preaching of the gospel and that my instructions directed me to proceed to Great Namaqualand.’⁹⁷ Little did Kitchingman know that the conditions in Great Namaqualand would be severely worse.

Schmelen, however, had an explanation for each one of Kitchingman’s objections. Despite the area appearing barren to the eyes of the newcomer it was actually ‘preferable in many respects to any other station in this country.’⁹⁸ The area had ‘an abundance of land for agriculture’ suitable for the sowing of corn.⁹⁹ The region also provided the stone which many of the Namaqua were accustomed to making tobacco pipes from, which they are recorded to have made and sold for a considerable sum of money. The poor attendance and small numbers was explained to be a result of the transhumant traditions of the Namaqua. In the summer months many of the people would have been obliged to move from Steinkopf in search of water and pasture for their livestock. In the rainy season they would return in great numbers. Most importantly, though, Steinkopf held a very strategic position in the eyes of the Directors of the LMS. Schmelen claimed that ‘the Directors wished this to be a sort of middle station and therefore it is absolutely necessary that some brother should remain.’¹⁰⁰ Despite his heart being set on proceeding further into Great Namaqualand, as many of the LMS missionaries before him, Kitchingman had been successfully convinced and agreed to remain at Steinkopf for a year until he heard back from the Directors. This decision was most certainly affected by the fact that Mrs. Kitchingman was heavily pregnant and due to deliver shortly. A trip across the Orange River and into Great Namaqualand would put too much pressure on her already fragile body.

⁹⁵ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 45.

⁹⁶ Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 26.

⁹⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

⁹⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

⁹⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (3) 65, Journal of J.H Schmelen, 1817-1818.

¹⁰⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

With Kitchingman at Steinkopf, and Moffat en route to assist Ebner at Afrikaner's Kraal in Great Namaqualand, Schmelen was able to depart for Great Namaqualand whenever the rains allowed him. He finally left Steinkopf in May 1818 and arrived safely at Bethany over a month later. Assistant Namaqua missionary, John Engelbrecht, was released to begin a mission at the mouth of the Orange River. There is little information about Engelbrecht's mission apart from a few letters sent to Schmelen in which he explained that 'the people here are very desirable to hear the gospel. It was better than I ever expected.'¹⁰¹ In a later letter Engelbrecht complained that a man from Griqua Town had visited after which many of his people had moved to that station.¹⁰²

When Kitchingman took over duties at Steinkopf, the station had a church, a small dwelling house, a mill house and an unfinished store house. Its church book held the names of about 400 men, women and children who were all reported to have lived around one day's journey of the station frequenting the meetings from time and time.¹⁰³ Kitchingman almost immediately began moving with his people as the seasons necessitated. They removed to an area known as Brand Kloof to sow corn, a process which was very slow due to there being only one plough belonging to the station. From there they moved from place to place in search of pasture for their livestock. This was done to spare the pasture nearer to Steinkopf for the dry season. Of this demanding transhumant lifestyle Kitchingman commented: 'This for an Englishman is an unpleasing life, but the barrenness of the country renders it absolutely necessary, and the consideration that if we remained on the place we could expect few would come to hear the gospel makes us content to lead this pilgrims life.'¹⁰⁴ Assembling the people together for Divine Service, while on the move during the rainy season, was another difficult task. Kitchingman relied on a 'bush hut' for this.¹⁰⁵ While back at the station attendance to meetings, Divine Service and school, as Schmelen had rightfully assured, did in fact improve at Steinkopf. In general, Kitchingman reported an average of sixty to seventy children in the school with some days having up to a hundred attendees. At Divine Service, many were much affected by the worship that they were often obliged to be carried out. For this Kitchingman bordered on sceptical, noting in his journal that 'whether this is all the work of the Holy Spirit

¹⁰¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (3) 65, Journal of J.H Schmelen, 1817-1818; *LMS Reports*, May 1819.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (3) 65, Journal of J.H Schmelen, 1817-1818.

¹⁰⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

on their hearts I cannot say.’¹⁰⁶ But he was encouraged by the prayerful nature of the people, recording that: ‘I have frequently found people praying among the bushes; this makes me hope that there is some concern for salvation among them.’¹⁰⁷

The people at Steinkopf although initially described by Schmelen as ‘Namaqua’ were instead a mixed group consisting of, as Kitchingman described, ‘Bastards and Hottentots.’¹⁰⁸ The group were far from homogenous, nor harmonious for that matter. Schmelen warned Kitchingman of the ‘prejudice...between different orders of the people against each other.’ ‘The Bastaard Hottentots,’ he explained, ‘consider themselves higher in the scale of creation than the real hottentots’.¹⁰⁹ There also existed tensions within the group of bastards. A group known as the ‘Dutch bastards’ considered themselves better than the ‘slave bastards’.¹¹⁰ Schmelen believed it was important for Kitchingman to know about these tensions in the case that he may be required to mediate conflicts between the groups. Kitchingman quickly picked up on these issues himself. Shortly after his arrival he recorded that, ‘There are many quarrels among the people here, which makes it difficult for a missionary to live among them ... the former (Bastards) are remarkable for pride, envy and malice, the latter I think would be more united were they alone.’¹¹¹

The animosity existing between the Namaqua and bastards of Steinkopf was not unique to the Steinkopf station but seemed to exist across much of Little Namaqualand. At this stage most of the northerly tracts of Little Namaqualand, from Steinkopf to the Orange River, was under the control of Chief Kupido Witbooi of the */Khobesin* tribe. Unable to single-handedly control the vast territory from his base at Pella, Chief Witbooi appointed two ‘onder-kapteins’ for the western and central tracts of Little Namaqualand. Paul Links, captain of a branch of the Swartboois, was assigned to the west (present day Richtersveld) and Vigiland Oorlam (later Abraham Vigiland), leader of a segment of the *Kei//Khaun*, was assigned to central Namaqualand (Steinkopf).¹¹² Witbooi and Vigiland were unimpressed by the arrival of the Engelbrecht Bastards into the area but were reportedly unable to defend their territory against

¹⁰⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 50.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ CWM, LMS, Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5A, Kitchingman to LMS, 27 August 1818.

¹¹² Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia, 116; Carstens, ‘The Community of Steinkopf’, 59.

the gun-wielding newcomers.¹¹³ The Engelbrechts clearly deemed themselves far superior to the Namaqua and were unwilling to submit to the sovereignty of the inferior Witbooi and his ‘onder-kapteins’. The Dutch-speaking basters did much to rid themselves of their Namaqua roots and features, often claiming ‘ons het die Hottentot bloed uitgebaster.’¹¹⁴ This can be seen in the politics of succession in the Engelbrecht lineage. Gert Engelbrecht Senior had two wives who each bore him a son. His second wife, a Namaqua woman, gave birth to his oldest son Pieter. His first wife, a baster, later gave birth to Willem. Usually, according to baster tradition, the first born son would have been afforded the respect and rights of succession. Following the death of Gert Engelbrecht, however, he was strangely succeeded by his younger son Willem. Pieter’s Namaqua blood and dark features clearly disqualified him from his rightful position as successor. Later Willem Engelbrecht’s son Jacobus, a senior member on the Steinkopf council, became embroiled in tensions with *onder-kaptien* Vigiland.

The animosity eventually forced Vigiland and a large group of his followers to leave Steinkopf. In doing so, Vigiland was obliged to appoint Jacobus as ‘acting Kaptein.’ A popular anecdote describes that as soon as Vigiland’s wagon moved off into the distance, Engelbrecht turned his back, tore up the document assigning him to act as captain, and murmured: ‘*Ek sal nie onder ‘n Hottentot staan nie.*’¹¹⁵ The arrival of the missionaries did little to unite the baster and Namaqua occupants of Little Namaqualand. Vigiland returned to Steinkopf a few years later and mysteriously died the same day after drinking an apparently poisoned cup of tea. Following his tragic death, and lack of a son to succeed him, Jacobus Engelbrecht was formally appointed as Captain of Steinkopf and the transferral of the captaincy from Namaqua to basters was complete. The animosity between the Witboois and the basters seemed to wane by 1840. When Witbooi relocated to Great Namaqualand, having called up his followers from Leliefontein and Steinkopf, he was also accompanied by newer members of the baster community at Steinkopf.¹¹⁶

The baster and Namaqua members of the Wesleyan station of Leliefontein to the south of Steinkopf were also often at each other’s throats. Leliefontein was unique as the Namaqua population greatly outweighed that of the basters. A census undertaken by resident missionary

¹¹³ Other Baster pioneer groups such as the Cloetes arrived at Steinkopf shortly after the Engelbrechts.

¹¹⁴ Carstens, ‘The Community of Steinkopf’, 243.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 66.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 20-21.

Rev. John Bailie in January 1853 indicates that of a total adult male population of 268: 225 were Little Namaqua, 26 were ‘Basters’, six were emancipated slaves and one was an ‘Africaner’.¹¹⁷ Those listed as ‘Little Namaqua’ were not a homogenous group but instead stratifications between rich, often livestock-owners, and poor, reliant on a gathering economy, did exist. What is clear here is that the Leliefontein station was inhabited mostly by Little Namaqua, whereas the more northerly stations of Steinkopf, Pella and later Komaggas were predominantly comprised of basters. Despite this, competition between the few baster and Little Namaqua members of Leliefontein did exist. Those who identified as baster were often favoured over those who identified as Namaqua.¹¹⁸ At Leliefontein these beliefs were ostensibly founded in the unabashed racial hierarchy of the time: the basters were deemed a better ‘breed’ as they were ‘part-white’.¹¹⁹ They were believed to be more trustworthy, sober and hardworking than the Namaqua. As a result, members of the station were often penalised and punished by schoolteachers for speaking Nama in public. Understandably these leanings caused many Little Namaqua to do all that they could to rid themselves of any Namaqua cultural markers – a process Sharp has called ‘denigrating indigenosity’.¹²⁰ What is contentious here is that the boundary between what it meant to be Namaqua and what it meant to be baster in the nineteenth century was by no means fixed. These identities were instead being constantly renegotiated by means of physical appearance, religion and culture. Moreover, these identities were also being reconfigured in terms of the socio-political context of the time.

Similar hostilities between Namaqua and oorlam groups existed in Great Namaqualand at the time of the establishment of the Warm Bath mission. Though the immigrant oorlam were initially welcomed by the Namaqua, and their settlement authorised by the senior chief of the *Kai//khaun*, tensions soon arose involving competition for environmental resources.¹²¹ The arrival of the Albrechts merely exacerbated these existing tensions as competition soon emerged for access to European commodities. Namaqua disgruntlement with the oorlams was expressed through praise songs amongst the *Kai//khaun* which deemed the oorlams as

¹¹⁷ NLSA, (MSC) 39, 52 (8): ‘List of the Adult population attached to the Institution of Lily Fountain, Khamiesberg – showing their Race, date of admission, the quantity of their stock, and the sum subscribed by each towards the expenses of measuring the lands of the institution.’ (31 January 1853).

¹¹⁸ J Sharp & E. Boonzaier, ‘Ethnic Identity as Performance: Lessons from Namaqualand’, *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20, no. 3 (1994), 405-415.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 408.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 409.

¹²¹ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 118.

‘unthankful children.’¹²² Social stratifications soon emerged between the Namaqua and oorlams. The oorlams, and other acculturated Khoikhoi, found it easier to communicate with the missionaries and thus their access to resources and economic support trumped that of the Namaqua.¹²³ Oorlam access to firearms and ammunition surely aided their dominance and facilitated their access to the raiding and trading economy in Great Namaqualand.

The rise of oorlam missionary assistants, or ‘mission elite’, such as Piet Vlermuis and Amraal Lambert, following Schmelen’s initial settlement at Bethany in 1814, also indicates the existence of a social stratification of sorts.¹²⁴ Amraal Lambert (#*Gailnub*) was of Cape Khoikhoi origin and had originally been Schmelen’s wagon driver who accompanied him to Bethany but soon rose to become captain of the *Kai/Khauan* (Khaus People).

Worth noting is that Khoikhoi acculturation, which often catalysed a rise to oorlam status following their connection to mission communities, did not always follow a linear trajectory. It instead was more often a turbulent and unpredictable process. Dederling has succinctly outlined the most common trajectory which he believes to have comprised of three stages. The first stage was one in which both parties welcomed one another with an air of excitement, hopeful for the future. The optimistic nature of the first phase led to the second in which the realities of the encounter became more obvious. The missionaries were faced with the fact that many of their followers were more interested in procuring firearms and other European commodities than they were in the Christian message. Furthermore, the harsh climate of Great Namaqualand necessitated the Namaqua’s seasonal migration with their livestock and dampened the missionaries’ idea of establishing as civilised agricultural society. The third phase either saw an improvement of climatic conditions, instigating a revival of sorts and the return to the first phase, or, more commonly, it saw the complete failure of the mission and the movement of Namaqua groups away from the mission centre. In the case of Bethany the latter occurred, causing Schmelen to move into Little Namaqualand in 1817 where he established himself at Steinkopf.

¹²² Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 120.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid, 209.

By 1821 Kitchingman's time at Steinkopf had drawn to an end. Not long after his Great Namaqualand trip Kitchingman travelled to Cape Town accompanied by several Namaqua where he received news of his urgent appointment to Bethelsdorp which Philip deemed to be 'a far more important station' in urgent need of a missionary.¹²⁵ Devastated by the news that they would be returning to Steinkopf alone, the Namaqua 'manifested at once their personal attachment to him and their sorrow on the occasion, by tears and entreaties.'¹²⁶ The Namaqua returned to Steinkopf and it was only a matter of months before they received a replacement in the form of Michael Wimmer, described in the annual report as a 'Catechist...sent from the colony to take charge of the school at Steinkopf.'¹²⁷ Wimmer had previously laboured at Zuurbraak alongside Seidenfaden. En route to his new station Wimmer, accompanied by his Khoikhoi wife Susannah (previously Sabina Adam), stopped briefly at Leliefontein where they spent the evening with a more than welcoming Edwards. Of Wimmer, Edwards commented: 'He has been so many years in the work, and I trust he will be made useful to the people to whom he is now sent.'¹²⁸ It was a further six days journey to the north of the Kamiesberg until the Wimmers reached Steinkopf. The couple arrived in July 1821. Their initial impressions of Steinkopf were similar to those of Kitchingman upon his first arrival three years prior. Wimmer complained that when, '...we came near the place our minds were filled with grief and sorrow, a barren land, neither did we find one single person at the place the house was left alone, the windows were plastered with nails, we were obliged to break open the house.'¹²⁹

After hearing of Wimmer's arrival from a servant on the road the Steinkopf Captain, Gert de Klerk, and some of his people arrived with a waggon and an ox to meet Wimmer and bring him to a place he called 'Kosis', where they were remaining for a time.¹³⁰ The captain explained that the people were scattered, some at the Orange River and others elsewhere, in search of pasturage for their cattle. The group soon returned back to Steinkopf for a short while where Wimmer reported that they were 'a praying people,' some of which could even read a little.¹³¹ A mere year after their arrival at Steinkopf, Susannah Wimmer died, leaving her husband and

¹²⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 1822, 121.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *LMS Reports*, May 1821, 90.

¹²⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, 'Extracts from the journal of Mr. Edwards, 24 July 1821.'

¹²⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 4B, Wimmer to LMS, 5 March 1822.

¹³⁰ There seems to exist a discrepancy between the secondary records which claim Vigiland/Engelbrecht as the 'kaptien' of Steinkopf and the primary sources (Wimmer's journals) which record the 'kaptein' as a 'Gert De Klerk'. It is possible that De Klerk was the 'Kaptien' of a neighbouring baster group at Bysondermeid.

¹³¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 4B, Wimmer to LMS, 5 March 1822.

three children. She had played a pivotal role alongside him in ministering to the people. Even when confined to her eventual death bed, Wimmer recorded that she ‘was never idle, but diligent and speaking to those around her of ways of salvation.’¹³²

Just like his predecessor Wimmer realised very quickly that were he to make a success of the Steinkopf mission he would have to adapt to the transhumant lifestyle of its people. The group moved seasonally between Steinkopf’s various outposts, namely Portfontein, Katsenkop, Brand Kloof and Reidfontein. The outpost of Reidfontein, approximately two days’ south east of Steinkopf, belonged to a baster called David Gert Beukes. Beukes had put up several small huts which Wimmer used to keep Divine service as well as his daily meetings. The constant movement often left Wimmer discouraged and downcast: ‘I have no abiding place where to stay, not for a half year to keep few people together, if long perhaps two months, sometimes one and yet less, I cannot be otherwise considered a wandering missionary, my house I must put upon the waggon, to carry it from one place to another, and yet it is not possible to keep for a little time fifty or sixty people together; either for want of water or grass. Such is the situation in this region.’¹³³ Wimmer’s mood was surely lifted when he made a romantic connection with Beukes’ daughter, Margrietha, whom he married shortly after.

With Wimmer now happily remarried and adapting to the trying conditions that missionary work at Steinkopf presented, the gospel was spread at Steinkopf. In May of 1823, Wimmer reported:

There is but the only encouraging thing that the preaching of gospel is not without effect to them and which keeps me back of not leaving them. The Lord has given his blessings to the preaching of his word, that several are truly converted to God and are exhorting one another in the way to heaven.¹³⁴

With the people of Steinkopf constantly scattered between the various outstations, Wimmer could not see to their instruction alone. He was assisted by many Namaqua and basters, the majority of whom, despite the vast contribution they made, were most commonly reduced to non-descript mention in the journals of Wimmer. These lines, lacking gravely in description

¹³² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8) 4B, Wimmer to LMS, 20 August 1822.

¹³³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 2F, Wimmer to LMS, 27 December 1824.

¹³⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1C, Wimmer to LMS, 4 September 1823.

and detail, begin to reveal the instrumental role that they played at Steinkopf and its outposts. On a visit to the outpost of Reidfontein in April 1823, Wimmer reported that the people, approximately forty-five in number, 'are zealous in the things of God...Still and steady, keeping regularly in the morning and evening family worship. Andreas Zaal a long good pious man keeps on a sabbath day morning regular prayer meeting, in the forenoon and afternoon divine service, in absence of me.'¹³⁵ 'The four Zaal brothers'; Andreas, Willem, Hendrick and Piterus, are mentioned a handful of times in the journal of Wimmer for keeping up Divine Service on weekdays and Sundays at Steinkopf.¹³⁶ Willem Moddel, the Namaqua assistant who moved from Pella to Steinkopf with Schmelen in 1817, and the 'jong John Engelbrecht', likely to be the son of John Engelbrecht, are also mentioned, yet little detail of their roles provided.¹³⁷ On a visit to an outpost, the name of which is not specified in the journal, Wimmer recorded, 'My Shephard woman is my interpreter, a very zealous good doing woman, a great help to me in the gospel. Another woman, who came here with me, is at the outpost, is very laborious there, for the good of immortal souls.'¹³⁸

Not all the missionaries were in favour of the utilisation of the African translators and assistants. Considering his deeply conservative and traditional character, it is not surprising that Moffat was the most critical. In a letter to Kitchingman in October 1818 he noted:

I would just say that it would not be prudent, not in some respects scriptural, that unordained missionaries should administer the ordinances where there are opportunities of being scripturally ordained...from heartfelt experience that where interpreters are necessary to communicating the truths of the gospel, it proves a great barrier which cramps the heart of the speaker and tarnished every idea before it reaches the objects to whom it is spoken. This arised from the inaccuracy of the interpreters' apprehensions and theirs expressions (being?) not so definite as to convey the exact idea to the minds of the heathen. Therefore I highly disapprove of interpreters. But the question is: what can I do until I have learned their language? Better speak one word thro' an interpreter than a thousand in an unknown tongue.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 2F, Wimmer to LMS, 27 December 1824.

¹³⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 4A, Wimmer to Mrs Philip, 31 August 1825

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 2F, Wimmer to LMS, 27 December 1824.

¹³⁹ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 54.

In August 1822, after merely a year at Steinkopf, Wimmer received a letter from Philip relaying an instruction from the Directors of the LMS that he should remove from Steinkopf to Afrikaner's Kraal in Great Namaqualand. The same Jager Afrikaner that had previously caused much destruction to the LMS and their missions in Great Namaqualand had converted and been baptised by Ebner in June 1815.¹⁴⁰ Afrikaner's Kraal had been without a missionary after the departure of Moffat to Lattakoo and Afrikaner is recorded to have frequented the mission at Pella on many occasions to request a missionary.¹⁴¹ Unlike the majority of the LMS missionaries who had gone before him, with an apparent preoccupation with continuing on to Great Namaqualand, Wimmer resisted strongly. He would not leave his people and believed the providence of God to have instructed him so. He wrote a letter back to Philip, at the instruction of the Captain Gert de Klerk and the people 'who would not let me gone,' in which he explained the possible dangers of leaving Steinkopf: 'What would it be otherwise to give them over to the wolves...The children would suffer loss in learning, the quarrelsome would gain a footing.'¹⁴² Instead he suggested that the Directors look to Bartlett at Pella as the man for the job. Pella, he explained, was much nearer to Afrikaner's Kraal and Bartlett had the assistance of a missionary whereas Wimmer laboured alone at Steinkopf with little assistance. To further solidify his case to remain at Steinkopf, Wimmer added that he was almost sixty years of age and no longer as young or strong as he once was.

Philip was seemingly unimpressed by both Wimmer's refusal to transfer to Afrikaner's Kraal and his usefulness, or lack thereof, at Steinkopf. In his report for 1823 Philip wrote of Wimmer:

His age, his infirmities, his desolate situation, and the attention which his young family require from him, prevents him filling entirely the sphere of usefulness in that country professed by our Brother Kitchingman; but the people have petitioned for his continuance amongst them and speak favourably of his spirit and his labours.¹⁴³

Before Philip could turn to Bartlett for the position he received news of the sudden death of the captain of the Afrikaner Oorlams, Christian (Jager) Afrikaner. His father Klaas Afrikaner, also known as 'old Afrikaner', had died just a week before. In December 1822 two of the late

¹⁴⁰ *LMS Reports*, May 1817; Dederig, 'Southern Namibia,' 198.

¹⁴¹ *LMS Reports*, May 1822.

¹⁴² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8A) 4B, Wimmer to LMS, 20 August 1822.

¹⁴³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1A, John Philip to LMS, 24 January 1823.

Christian Afrikaner's sons, accompanied by their uncle David Afrikaner, arrived at Leliefontein to speak with the resident missionary Edwards. Prior to his death Christian had transferred captaincy of the Kraal to his youngest son Jonker, whom Edwards described as being 'the image of his father'.¹⁴⁴ Jonker Afrikaner, now captain, asked Edwards to write to Philip and immediately request another missionary for Afrikaner's Kraal. Jonker claimed that according to the promise made by Campbell they fully expected a missionary to be sent in the place of the now absent Moffat. Edwards did just that, informing Philip that 'I consider them upon the whole very much desirous of a Missionary but regret much that their residence is so ill suited for a station.'¹⁴⁵

It is worth considering here why the Afrikaners would choose to visit Leliefontein, a Wesleyan mission, in order to relay a message to Philip of the LMS rather than visiting the LMS stations of Steinkopf or Pella, much closer to Great Namaqualand, for the same purpose. There had always been much personal communication between the missionaries of the LMS and WMMS in Little and Great Namaqualand during the 1810s, but official communication between the Wesleyan missionaries and the LMS Superintendent Philip at the Cape seems to be a product of the 1820s. It seems unlikely that Jonker Afrikaner would have known this. His choice of Leliefontein was more likely a pragmatic one, knowing the flow of post between the Cape and the Kamiesberg was both more reliable and regular than the LMS stations. Those LMS missionaries residing at Steinkopf and Pella often received their post from the Cape via Leliefontein. In September 1822, Schmelen complained that he had not received letters from the Directors nor Philip for almost three years.¹⁴⁶ Yet the flow of communication between Edwards and Philip seemed constant during that same period. While Philip kept Edwards updated with political movements at the Cape, Edwards conveyed information back to Philip concerning the movements and affairs of the various LMS missionaries in Namaqualand, including Schmelen. The affairs of the LMS and WMMS in Little and Great Namaqualand were inextricably intertwined.

Between 1815 and 1820 the LMS began the process of solidifying their presence in Little Namaqualand with Steinkopf as the centre of the mission community. The station did not resemble the style of a classic mission station but was instead run almost singlehandedly by

¹⁴⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8A) 1C, E. Edwards to Dr Philip, 15 December 1822.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8A) 1B, Schmelen to LMS, 26 September 1822.

several baster leaders who oscillated inconsistently between outstations and the nearby settlement of Pella. By 1820 Schmelen had made his way back to Bethany and the Steinkopf station transferred hands from Kitchingman to Wimmer and his wife Susannah. Wimmer, perhaps the most stubborn and Africanist of the LMS missionaries, would partner with these basters leaders and see the station through the 1820s, arguably the most trying period in the Little Namaqualand missions.

Chapter 5: Missions in Turmoil

The Decline of the LMS in Little Namaqualand, 1820-1840

*'There is more hunger after the bread that perished, then after the bread of life. And what shall we say to that? When there is but a lingering(...)for want of temporal food...'*¹

5.1 Drought and Distress

Great Namaqualand, and the more northerly tracts of Little Namaqualand, were riddled with severe droughts and subsequent poverty during much of the 1820s. Below the Orange River Pella was the worst hit by the drought, often left completely barren and dry. The drought had rendered Bartlett and his people at Pella scattered to various parts of the country in search of grass and water: 'At present I have a very small number of people, if this drought continues I cannot tell what my people will subsist on. A number of them has neither sheep nor goat. They are obliged to subsist on gum from the thorn trees.'² In 1822 rains fell around Steinkopf, leaving it 'surrounded with verdure and plenty.'³ Bartlett and the people of Pella thus began, what would become a common occurrence during times of severe drought, to move from Pella to Steinkopf.

On his return to Pella in 1823 Bartlett became entangled in the unrest taking place over the Orange River. Powerful Namaqua and oorlam groups had become engaged in a series of violent conflicts centred around the now destabilised mission station of Bethany. By 1823 it seems that this unrest had seeped into Little Namaqualand where Vlermuis and his followers had fled to Pella seeking refuge from Afrikaner after a series of violent clashes between the two groups. Old Vlermuis admitted to Bartlett that he had 'fled on account of the dreadful murder and plunder that he (Vlermuis) had committed in that country.'⁴ Vlermuis had been advised to retreat to Pella where his relations, the Goeymans, resided.⁵ Bartlett was adamant that Vlermuis was not welcome at the mission station until he made peace with both Schmelen and Afrikaner and returned the cattle he had plundered. With Witbooi at the Cape, Bartlett did

¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 3E, Wimmer, Komaggas, 29 August 1829.

² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (8A) 1A, Bartlett to LMS, 12 July 1822.

³ *LMS Reports*, May 1823.

⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1C, Bartlett to LMS, 8 September 1823.

⁵ *Ibid*, Wimmer to LMS, 4 September 1823; In his report Schmelen makes reference to the familial relations between Vlermuis and Hans Goeyman, *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. IV, 'Journey from Pella, to explore the Mouth of the Orange River...', 162.

not have the power to expel Vlermuis and his heavily armed followers completely. It was only with the return of Witbooi to Pella that Vlermuis left.

This suggests that by 1822 Witbooi still held sovereignty over Pella and the northern tracts of Little Namaqualand despite the presence of missionaries. This is noteworthy. At the same time, Shaw reported that at Leliefontein Wildschut was rapidly losing control of his people. This led to the eventual transfer of the management of affairs at Leliefontein to the Wesleyans.⁶ Perhaps, due to his oorlam status and the fragility of the Pella mission, Witbooi was able to maintain his dominance for much longer than Wildschut.

In the meantime Afrikaner had received wind of Vlermuis' retreat to Pella and had sent some of his people to retrieve their stolen cattle. Bartlett noted that 'had I have not been here, many lives would have been lost.'⁷ Vlermuis remained in Little Namaqualand where he similarly accosted Wimmer at Brand Kloof seeking pardon and refuge. Wimmer refused on the grounds that 'the Namakwas would look upon us to be such robbers and murderers like himself.'⁸ The now disgruntled Vlermuis planned an attack on Pella, which triggered the formation of a military alliance between the Afrikaners and the Witboois. Chief Witbooi immediately advised Bartlett to leave for Steinkopf on account of his safety. The alliance defeated Vlermuis in a skirmish just outside of Pella. Vlermuis fled, leaving several of his people to fight the losing battle that resulted in the death of several men on each side. Bartlett returned to Pella on the 4th of August around the same time that the oldest son of Vlermuis, Koebas, arrived to make peace with Witbooi and the Afrikaners.⁹ Afrikaner was sent for and duly arrived at Pella where the three parties made peace. Vlermuis and his followers, after their fallout with both the LMS missionaries and oorlam groups in Great Namaqualand, moved eastward to the middle of the Orange River. Great Namaqualand was still far from peaceful. In 1824 Wimmer received numerous reports of plunder, murder and bloodshed amongst the Bondelswarts and the Afrikaners.

George Thompson visited Pella in August of 1824, only to find the station completely abandoned on account of drought and the failure of the pasture. He commented on the quality

⁶ Rawson, 'Land Rights & Identity', 84.

⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1C, Bartlett to LMS, 8 September 1823.

⁸ Ibid, Wimmer to LMS, 4 September 1823.

⁹ Ibid, Bartlett to LMS, 8 September 1823.

of the soil which, on account of high numbers of saltpetre, he believed to be unsuitable for agriculture. Despite this, he found the location to be suitable for a mission station. Shortly after his arrival Thompson, and his guides, got wind that Bartlett and his followers had moved to a location known as *t'Kams*, a five-hour journey to the west of Pella.¹⁰ Forty Namaqua were present with Bartlett at *t'Kams* but he informed Thompson that Pella usually consisted of up to 400 people. Bartlett and his group would return to Pella when the first rains fell and the pastures are replenished.

Thompson also travelled through Reidfontein where he met Wimmer and 'Dirk Beukes', a 'Bastaard Hottentot' who occupied the place. This is likely the same man whom Wimmer referred to as 'David Gert Beukes'. Beukes came from a wealthy baster family who occupied properties in the Kamiesberg. He owned large herds of livestock and cultivated a considerable quantity of land. He lived in a mat hut. Thompson made an interesting remark of Beukes, considering him to be more of a 'substantial boor than a degraded Hottentot'.¹¹ This comment points to the dynamic nature of identities in nineteenth century Little Namaqualand. The Beukes' families ability to occupy land in the Kamiesberg was a rarity. Other basters had been prevented from doing so by many ill-disposed farmers in the area.¹² For this reason most baster families had moved beyond the border of the colony.

We don't know if Bartlett returned to Pella later that year but by 1825 he and his people had moved to Steinkopf in search of pasture. Fifteen families from Pella now ploughed alongside the people of Steinkopf at Brand Kloof. The rest of the Pella population had proceeded to the Orange River, leaving two families at the station to keep guard over it. Gert de Klerk had requested that 'all the people here, and those of Pella, must come here together.'¹³ It was but a month until the pasturage became poor and the people scattered once again. The failure of the harvest caused Wimmer to fear the worst – famine:

I cannot tell what I feel for this poor people, they cannot stay by the word of God, tho' some of them are wishing and hungering very much, yet they come sometimes from a

¹⁰ *T'Kams* means 'tufted grass' in Nama, and is named after the grass in the nearby plains which grow in separate tufts; Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, 284.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 298.

¹² *Ibid*, 299.

¹³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 4A, Wimmer to Mrs Philip, 31 August 1825.

very great distance, four five and six oxen, but sometimes faint from hunger. If one had heart like stone it must melt. Many have in two three yet four days nothing to eat, nor to drink.¹⁴

By 1826 Wimmer received grievous reports each day of people starving, the most shocking of which being a woman who had killed her own child to eat it.¹⁵ The drought and the forecast famine, Wimmer explained to his followers, was a result of the ‘chastising hand of God... heavy laying upon this land’ on account of, ‘the aggravated sins, and disobedience to his word.’¹⁶ With the food supplies having run out completely at Steinkopf, Wimmer reached out to Shaw at Leliefontein for assistance. In May of 1826 Wimmer visited Leliefontein on horseback, followed shortly after by Mrs. Wimmer with the wagon. Leliefontein had not been as harshly affected by the drought. Thompson noted, when travelling from Reidfontein to Leliefontein, that ‘the face of the country had here (Leliefontein) a very different aspect from the parched wastes I had lately traversed. Rain had fallen in abundance, and the declivities of the mountains were clothed with green forage of a bushy nature, excellent pasture for horses and cattle.’¹⁷ At Leliefontein Wimmer stocked up with supplies, partook in the Lord’s Supper with Shaw and Haddy, and returned to Rietfontein.

The 1820s saw Schmelen constantly oscillating between the mouth of the Orange River, the Cape and Namaqualand as he attempted to revitalise his once prosperous station at Bethany. The droughts facing the region made this task difficult but it was the escalating conflict in Great Namaqualand which rendered it impossible. Tracing the exact origin and escalation of these sporadic conflicts is complicated. From a letter penned by Schmelen in September 1822, after fleeing from Bethany to the safety of the Orange River mouth, we can make a few useful deductions. Schmelen’s greatest threats at the time were Vlermuis and Jantjie Kagab.¹⁸ Schmelen accused Vlermuis of intercepting his communications to the Cape and burning his journal: ‘He is the man of whom I mentioned to you before, that he and his sons have made here a disturbance in Namaqualand.’¹⁹ Jantjie Kagab, chief of the *!Kharakhoen*, who Schmelen named as one of his own people, ‘did rise against me and my people.’²⁰

¹⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (4) 9, Journal of M. Wimmer, Steinkopf, 30 August 1825.

¹⁵ Ibid, Journal of M. Wimmer, Steinkopf, 24 May 1826.

¹⁶ Ibid, Journal of M. Wimmer, Steinkopf, 22 July 1825.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, 300.

¹⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1B, Schmelen to LMS, 26 September 1822.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

The reason for Kagab's apparent enmity toward Schmelen was that Schmelen had refused to provide him and his followers with powder and lead. In the same letter, Schmelen recounts the final escalation of tension between himself and Kagab that led to his eventual desertion of Bethany in 1822. It is a somewhat of a bizarre story but it illustrates the rising competition for power between the missionaries, in this case Schmelen, and Namaqua chiefs.

In June of 1822 Schmelen made a trip to Angra Pequena, leaving his wife and people at the station. During his absence his kraal was attacked on several occasions and the legs of several of his sheep broken. On one occasion Schmelen's herdsman caught the attacker and was able to identify him as 'King Kwap', a servant of Kagab. On another occasion, Schmelen's wife Zara confronted the attacker who claimed that he had merely followed orders. After this, somewhat surprisingly, the wife of Kagab seems to have appeared and explained that they too had lost many lambs and calves in the same manner. She claimed that when it had happened to their flocks, 'none did talk about it' yet only when it happened to the Schmelen's, and on a much smaller scale, 'we talked so much about it.'²¹ Before Zara could explain that they were not to blame for the Kagab's loss of sheep 'the old woman with her daughters would knock her (Zara) down. Some took up stones, others sticks, to beat her.'²² Thankfully, for Zara, those who were nearby rushed her into the safety of the house.

Upon his return to Bethany, Schmelen was infuriated by the events that had taken place in his absence. He immediately confronted Kagab who, though admitting that several of his sheep had been killed in the same manner, explained that the attack on Zara took place because she falsely accused his servant of attacking their sheep.²³ The conflict ensued for several days and quickly became violent, with many of Schmelen's people having access to muskets. Two men died as a result of the skirmish, one on each side, and another severely wounded. The entire ordeal eventually came to a relatively peaceful close when Kagab agreed to hand over nineteen muskets to Schmelen. These obscure events say much of the dynamics between the missionaries and the Namaqua and oorlam leaders in Great Namaqualand at the time. The groups of both Vlermuis and Kagab, who were followers of Schmelen, had access to firearms,

²¹ It seems that the attacker's sheep may have not been attacked but instead have suffered from what was known during the time at 'breaking disorder'. This was witnessed by Campbell during his stay at Pella and by Seidenfaden at Heirachabis.

²² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1B, Schmelen to LMS, 26 September 1822.

²³ Ibid.

which tipped the delicate balance of power between them and the missionaries. Their constant requests for ammunition, which were often denied, added further stress to the existing relationship. The missionaries had little control over their people and their influence in the region was rapidly declining.

When reciting the series of events to the Directors of the LMS, Schmelen claimed: ‘I really believe that much good might be done in Namaqualand, if the law and the Gospel can go together, but the Gospel by themselves I think will do very little good.’²⁴ Without the protection of the government in Namaqualand, Schmelen could not continue. Despite the overtures of peace, Schmelen left Bethany immediately for the mouth of the Orange River. The mouth had received an abundance of rainfall and was a much needed refuge from the barren Great Namaqualand. Here he met John Engelbrecht who had been labouring amongst his followers at the mouth of the river for over five years and was now almost sixty years of age.²⁵ Despite his age, Schmelen recorded Engelbrecht as being ‘still full of zeal for the Lord Jesus Christ.’²⁶ At the mouth of the Orange River, away from the unrest taking place in the southern tracts of Great Namaqualand, Zara Schemelen, with the assistance of her husband, began to make a copy of the translation of the Dutch New Testament into the Nama language. Of the process, Schmelen noted: ‘It is extremely difficult to find the right pronunciation. Sometimes my wife must say the word over and over again before I can find the right expression. I doubt not, as may easily be supposed it will be very imperfect at least in the accents and spelling.’²⁷

At the request of Philip, Schmelen visited the Cape in September 1824 to have his four Nama gospels printed. Upon presentation of the clearly impressive transcripts the Bible Society agreed that they should be printed. Much to Schmelen’s disappointment they soon discovered that the printer at the Cape was unable to process the necessary accented symbols required in the Nama language. Philip suggested that the symbols be sent to England to be cast. Unwilling to sacrifice the symbols completely, Schmelen agreed. The process would take up to ten months, a period that Schmelen refused to be away from his station. He left the Cape in early November 1824 in the hopes of moving with his people to Walvis Bay, a month’s journey from Bethany.²⁸ Leaving his wife and waggon at the mouth of the Orange River, Schmelen set out

²⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 1B, Schmelen to LMS, 26 September 1822.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (9) 1C, Schmelen to LMS, 29 August 1823.

²⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (9) 3B, Schmelen to LMS, June 18 1825.

for Walvis Bay to examine its eligibility for a station. He returned to Cape Town in May 1826 with a favourable report of the coastal region, where he and Wimmer were now desirous of commencing a mission. It would offer a refuge from the current turmoil in Namaqualand which Schmelen described as, ‘the greatest distress... in consequence of the dearth of food for man and beast...many have perished in famine.’²⁹ The drought had affected his people not only physically but spiritually too. ‘Those who were hot, have become cool, and those who were zealous, become slowly, and those whom I supposed to be clean, have turned to be swines.’³⁰ Schmelen’s disappointment continued at the Cape. The accented type he had sent to be cast in England had not yet arrived stalling the printing of the Namaqua gospels for a second time. A frustrated Schmelen set out once again for Namaqualand.

By 1828 Schmelen withdrew permanently from Bethany for the last time. The establishment of trading links with the ships at Angra Pequena, which Schmelen had introduced to his followers as early as 1815, was now completely out of his control. Schmelen had initially been hopeful about establishing trading links with the ships, which he saw as a connection to the Cape. Schmelen would send some of his followers, who carried a cover letter written by him, to trade with whalers at the coast.³¹ Soon, groups would make the trip without his sanction. They saw the opportunity to partake in the trade in ivory and guns with the whaling ships. A new frontier thus opened at Angra Pequena, causing much disruption to the mission at Bethany and attracting many of Schmelen’s followers away from the mission station.

Schmelen’s attempts to regulate the trade were unsuccessful. Instead his people traded several heads of cattle for an abundance of powder. More importantly though, they realised they could do so without the assistance or sanction of Schmelen or any missionary for that matter. Before the trading links with the ships at Angra Pequena had been established, Schmelen noted:

My people had but very little powder, and that little what they had was used sparingly to kill again now and then, and they could live together upon our station, and I could govern them. None of them could get any powder from the farmers, except they could

²⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (10) 1C, Schmelen to LMS, Miles to LMS, 5 July 1826.

³⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 2C, Schmelen to LMS, 4 November 1824.

³¹ Dederling, ‘Southern Namibia,’ 214.

show a written pass from me, and if they behaved disobedient, I declined to give them a pass.³²

Schmelen, and the mission station at Bethany, had become completely redundant. Furthermore, Schmelen felt that his own life was at risk: 'Most of them ruined themselves with this traffic and sold off every living thing they had, and then they had nothing to live upon afterwards. This gave rise to quarrel and prideness (sic.) amongst themselves, and disobediently towards me for everyone seemed to be a sovereign in his own eyes, threatening one another, that if they would not be obedient to them, that they would shoot and kill them.'³³ Schmelen, and a group of his faithful followers, left Bethany once again.

Wimmer's struggle at Steinkopf continued. The drought and subsequent poverty in the region had caused him to question its sustainability as a station in the long term. In February 1827 Wimmer wrote to Rev. Richard Miles, acting Superintendent of the LMS at the Cape during Philip's trip to England, explaining the state of the mission and his uncertainty regarding its future:

If I take this place in comparison with other place as where you have been, and Griqualand, where people can live together, then is this region not worthy, to take so much trouble and spent so much money, yet if I consider, that it might be a connection with Great Namaqualand, where there are perhaps better places, if the Lord shall make a change there, which I hope will be in his time. Then it might be that this place in some sense might be servable then it is need that arrangement be made, as will if it shall be kept, to be more serviceable to their people themself.³⁴

Wimmer additionally requested that Miles make a tour of Namaqualand in order to fully understand the state of affairs in the region. It was a request he had also made of Miles' predecessor Philip, who had been unable to find the time. Miles too was unable to undertake the journey as he had commitments to the chapel in Cape Town. With uncertainty in the air, Wimmer had little other option but to labour on at Steinkopf. In July 1827 the population at

³² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 2C, Schmelen to LMS, 29 December 1828.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (10) 1B, Wimmer to Miles, 24 February 1827.

Steinkopf was thirty-eight, with an additional fourteen reportedly in the fields at Reidfontein, five accompanying Schmelen, five gone with their families to Griqualand and two having been recently excluded on grounds of fornication.³⁵ These numbers are feeble compared to the almost two hundred people Wimmer recorded to be present at Steinkopf just two years prior. Others, unwilling to persevere through the poverty and hunger, fled Steinkopf across the Orange River where they were reduced to a life of robbery and crime for survival.

The fact that Wimmer, now in his late sixties, managed to keep the station of Steinkopf operating can only be explained by understanding the continued role played by the baster and Namaqua assistants. In 1827 Wimmer mentioned the great assistance provided by Jan Engelbrecht, 'a jong man of mine,' in itinerating between Steinkopf and Reidfontein to preach and speak to the people.³⁶ This Jan Engelbrecht is most likely the same 'jong John Engelbrecht' previously mentioned by Wimmer and should not to be confused with the now older John Engelbrecht labouring at the mouth of the Orange River: 'This Jan Engelbrecht have I appointed as a Teacher of my people, who are with him at the outpost, to teach the children there and keeping Divine Services and prayer meetings in the morning and evening. He and his wife are both of them pious and well in their speeches.'³⁷

Wimmer knew full well that with his people more scattered than ever he had to make use of those of his people who were literate. In most cases they happened to be the youths. He mentioned a group of four families moving together, among which 'a young girl speaking and reading very well have I appointed there as a school master. Her mother and father are good and pious. The mother of her is very zealous in doing good, such I wished to have more.'³⁸ In another group of families he records a 'Paul Meijer' who had begun to teach his children and those who were with him.³⁹ This was the template that Wimmer would use moving forward: '...this is now my view to get to every party who are moving together, to get children who can read and spell well, to make them school masters, because it is entirely impossible for a missionary to keep them together. The situation of this land permits it not and I wish very much if it could be made possible, that the Rev. Miles could make a visit to see himself.'⁴⁰

³⁵ CWM, LMS, I South Africa Incoming Correspondence (10) 1B, Wimmer to Miles, 21 July 1827.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Miles was unable to visit Namaqualand himself yet he seemed to understand the many challenges faced by the missionaries in such a barren land:

Persons who have never lived out of civilised society can form no idea of the multiplicity of little jobs to be done by a missionary. Further to his own domestic department, and which, to his no small grief, occupy a large share of his time and attention. He must superintend, in some degree, his cattle, ploughing and sowing, and the cultivation of his garden must often be done by his own hands beside other things too numerous to mention and in some situation he must do many things to assist the people. And all this outward work is independent of the main business of a missionary – the care of the souls of the people. The instruction of the children, who ought to be trained up in the ‘nurture and admonition’ of the Lord and in habits of industry, is also an important branch of his duty. Besides the duties at the station, frequently itinerating amongst the surrounding kraals &c. to preach the gospel, and to endeavour to draw them to the settlement is also a work of importance but this cannot be attended to without injury to the Mission, except there be, at least, two missionaries. Another consideration is that the brethren are given the necessity of occasionally leaving the station to fetch supplies from some part of the colony. And where there is only one missionary, the people must be left to themselves, which is like leaving a flock of sheep in the wilderness to the mercy of wild beasts, to their inevitable dispersion or destruction. The improvement of a barbarous people, who are under constant temptation to relapse and degenerate requires increasing attention. The interruption of a few months labour in the case of Mr Schmelen's is almost inevitable. There are many instances of the lamentable effects of missionaries leaving their flocks for only a few months.⁴¹

With the above in mind, Miles recommended to the Directors that those missionaries labouring in Namaqualand either be put on a more efficient footing or be withdrawn from the mission field completely. The latter alternative he regretted and instead recommended that at least two missionaries be commissioned to every station beyond the borders of the colony.⁴²

⁴¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (10) 3A, Miles to LMS Directors, 27 September 1827.

⁴² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 2C, Schmelen, 29 December 1828.

At Leliefontein, the severity of droughts of the 1820s were felt just as strongly. In a letter written in 1827, Haddy reported:

You have heard now how much that country has suffered from the late drought, the crops of corn having greatly failed again the last summer: many whose principal dependence is on the produce of the land are reduced to great want and distress.⁴³

In the same year, Edwards reported from Leliefontein:

The poverty of a large portion of the Namaquas is very great, and since my return to this place continued applications are made for food, &c. The harvest this year was very indifferent, so far as the crops of most of our people were concerned.⁴⁴

The effects of the droughts at Leliefontein, and the missions to the north, were short-lived and interspersed with periods of good harvests and recorded prosperity on the station. Claire Kelso posits that these periods of rapid recovery at Leliefontein were due to the Namaquas' ability to migrate with their cattle between the Kamiesberg and Bushmanland, in accordance with rainfall patterns.⁴⁵ The inhabitants of the missions of Steinkopf and Pella were able to do the same, making use of the full extent of northern Little Namaqualand, bar those regions occupied by farmers. Kelso claims that 'greater resilience and more rapid recovery from drought can, therefore, at least partly be ascribed to wide ranging transhumance.'⁴⁶

In December of 1828, a mere year after reporting the drought, Edwards informed the Directors that, 'It will afford you pleasure to hear that we are doing well, and that our people have commenced their harvest with prospects of obtaining a good average crop.'⁴⁷ He continued: 'The harvest this year has turned out better than the last: our people are daily employed

⁴³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. V, Extract of a letter from Mr. Haddy dated Cape Town, 19 June 1827.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, Extract of a letter from Mr. Edwards, dated Khamie-Berg, 10 May 1827.

⁴⁵ Claire Kelso, 'On the edge of the Desert – A Namaqualand Story: 1800-1909' (PhD Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2010); Clare Kelso and Coleen Vogel, 'Diversity to decline-livelihood adaptations of the Namaqua Khoikhoi (1800–1900)', *Global Environmental Change*, Volume 35 (2015) 54-268; Clare Kelso and Coleen Vogel, 'The climate of Namaqualand in the nineteenth century', *Climatic Change* 83 (2007) 357–380.

⁴⁶ Kelso, 'On the edge of the Desert', 165.

⁴⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VI, Extract of a letter from Mr. Edwards, dated Khamie-Berg, 29 December 1828.

ingathering its fruits.’⁴⁸ The good harvests evidently came at a cost. In the very same letter Edwards complained that ‘...the attendance of the adults is not good, owing to the harvest being in hand; and most of our young men will be employed in the fields until the grain is brought to the floors.’⁴⁹

5.2 The Establishment of Komaggas

In 1828, as much of Namaqualand recovered from years of drought, Schmelen travelled to the Cape. This time he arrived to the pleasing news that his types had finally arrived from England. Miles agreed to the printing of the four gospels in Nama and informed Schmelen that the London Bible Society would cover the costs completely. After hearing about the critical state of the Great Namaqualand mission however, both Miles and Schmelen agreed that the printing be postponed. Instead, they agreed that it was of utmost importance and urgency that a permanent mission be established in Little Namaqualand, which ‘must and should be considered as a door to Great Namaqualand.’⁵⁰

This decision on the part of the LMS missionaries seemed to coincide with an increasing government involvement in the affairs of the northern frontier. The surge in illegal traffic of firearms and ammunition beyond the colony’s borders, the destabilisation of authority once wielded by the missionaries in these areas and the recent murder of the Wesleyan missionary Threlfall caused a new sense of panic amongst authorities. A region that had for so long received little government attention now posed a grave security threat to the colony. The promulgation of Ordinance 50 in July 1828, granting the Khoisan population greater independence and mobility, surely added to the pressure.⁵¹

In a response to these rising risks the government authorised an expedition to Namaqualand headed up by Dr. Andrew Smith, a military surgeon and explorer, in order to examine the socio-political state of Great Namaqualand.⁵² Following his expedition Smith published his

⁴⁸ Kelso, ‘On the edge of the Desert’, 164.

⁴⁹ WMMS Notices, Vol VI, Extract of a letter from Mr. Edwards, dated Khamie-Berg, 29 December 1828.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Marron Wallace and John. Kinahan, *A History of Namibia : from the Beginning to 1990* Auckland Park (South Africa: Jacana Media, 2011), 56.

⁵² William F. Lye (ed.), *Andrew Smith's Journal of his expedition into the interior of South Africa 1834-36. An authentic narrative of travels and discoveries, the manners and customs of the country*, (Cape Town: Balkema, 1975).

‘Northern Frontier Report’ in which he recommended the immediate ‘closing’ of the frontier through the extension of the colony’s border to the Orange River. This was not a new idea. In 1824 Thompson had reported on the plunder and disturbance taking place along the banks of the Orange River and suggested that ‘the present state of things...call loudly for the interference of the Colonial Government.’⁵³ In addition, or as an alternative, he recommended that a military post and magistrate should be established in the Kamiesberg.⁵⁴ Smith proposed a different solution. He suggested that the government form alliances with the chiefs of the dominant frontier groups in the region, namely the Witboois under Chief Witbooi; the baster population residing under Captain Gert De Klerk of Steinkopf and the Bondelswarts under Abraham Christian.⁵⁵

These captains were to become British citizens and receive an annual salary of 25 pounds.⁵⁶ Smith’s recommendations were not implemented wholly but their essence guided the government’s future diplomatic relations with the frontier groups in question. This can be seen in 1830 when the government provided Abraham Christian military assistance, in the form of firearms and ammunition, to head off potential attacks by the Afrikaner Oorlams.⁵⁷ During his trip to the Cape to collect the goods Abraham Christian, on behalf of the Bondelswarts, entered into a treaty with the Cape Government and received a staff of office, confirming his official status as a government ally. The government hoped that, by engaging in military and political alliances with these semi-independent groups in the northern frontier region, it would regain a sense of control over the area.

Schmelen got wind of these advances in 1828 reigniting his hope of the commencement of the Great Namaqualand mission:

However dark as our prospects may be in Gt. Namaqua; I have some hopes that a change will take place. Dr Smith, a gentleman, belonging to Cape Government, has been here in order to get some information about the cruelty in Gr. Nama; entirely done by the powder of the whalers ships. He assured me that next year a stop shall be put to

⁵³ Thompson, *Travels and Adventures in Southern Africa*, 293, 295.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 295.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 264.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

that traffic. Indeed government must do something for every runaway from the colony do meet there and within time that traffic may endanger part of the colony. If this will be the case, then our door will be halve (sic.) opened again.⁵⁸

In the meanwhile the establishment of one united station in Little Namaqualand as a 'door' to Great Namaqualand became a priority for the LMS. The station of Steinkopf, which the LMS had originally intended to be this 'door', had proved altogether insufficient. Schmelen recommended that, instead, one mission institution be established in Little Namaqualand, upon a more favourable location, from which he and Wimmer could alternate in itinerating. While one remained upon the institution to see to the instruction of the people, the other could travel to the surrounding areas and outposts for the same purposes. The location of this proposed institution was unclear. Schmelen initially suggested the mouth of the Orange River or somewhere near the Buffels River. Apart from these two plausible locations, he knew of nowhere else in the whole of Little Namaqualand 'fit for an institution.'⁵⁹

Somewhat serendipitously in 1828, while searching for an appropriate location within Little Namaqualand, Schmelen was approached by a man called Jasper Cloete, whom he met at the farm 'Ugrabies'.⁶⁰ Cloete resided on an area of land then known as Komaggas, which lay to the north-east of Leliefontein and bordered on the Buffels River, within the boundaries of the colony. Here Cloete had a following of Khoikhoi and basters who desired that a missionary should come and live among them. There are opposing accounts as to Cloete's background, but some suggest he was a baster himself and at the time of his interaction with Schmelen was married to a young Khoikhoi woman of the *Kurib*, a Namaqua group.⁶¹ There is also some debate around how Cloete came to occupy Komaggas.⁶² Schmelen barely hesitated before

⁵⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 2C, Schmelen, 29 December 1828.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ It is unclear whether this 'Jasper Cloete' was Jasper Cloete Senior, of white descent, or his Bastard son Jasper Cloete Junior whom he fathered with a Namaqua woman. For more on this see Nigel Penn, 'Land Rights, Missionaries and Surveyors: Khoisan Identity and the Komaggas Community' in Fisher, R. (ed), *History of Surveying and Land Tenure*, Collected Papers Volume Two. Surveying and Land Tenure at the Cape 1813 – 1912 (Cape Town: Institute of Professional Land Surveyors and Geomatics, 2004); Bregman, 'Land and Society'; E. Strassberger, *The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa, 1830 – 1950* (Cape Town: C. Struik, 1969).

⁶¹ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Mission Society*, 64; Bregman, 'Land and Society,' 44; J. Sharp, 'Land claims in Namaqualand: the Komaggas reserve', *Review of African Political Economy* 61 (1994),403.

⁶² See Bregman, 'Land and Society', 44.

accepting the offer which he communicated to the Society in December 1828.⁶³ Miles agreed to the decision:

The settlement of Komaggas is situated in Little Namaqualand, on the frontier of the colony. It is considered the only eligible situation that can be obtained in that part of the country for establishing an efficient missionary station. The land has hitherto been in the possession of several families of bastard Namaquas who were willing and desirous that it should be placed under the superintendence of a missionary, that themselves, and other who should be disposed to associate with them, might enjoy the advantages of Christian instruction.⁶⁴

Wimmer, initially hesitant about Komaggas, visited Schmelen at Komaggas in February 1829 and was surprisingly impressed with the state of the land: 'I found it much better as it was represented to me.'⁶⁵ He recorded the presence of several fields appropriate for cornlands surrounded by many fountains and water sources. Now more optimistic about Komaggas, Wimmer agreed to join Schmelen. They would not abandon Steinkopf entirely but would instead consider it an out-post of Komaggas, which would serve, as explained by the LMS as a '*point d'appui*, whence the Gospel may be advantageously conveyed into different parts of Little Namaqualand.'⁶⁶ After a short journey back to Steinkopf, Reidfontein and Nauws, Wimmer arrived back at Komaggas. His departure had been unwelcomed by the people of Steinkopf who were evidently disgruntled about being left without a teacher and without the Word of God.⁶⁷ Many chose to follow Wimmer to Komaggas. From their base at Komaggas, Wimmer and Schmelen began to itinerate – Schmelen commonly to the mouth of the Orange River and Wimmer to Steinkopf and Reidfontein. With Wimmer periodically absent from Steinkopf the facilitation of Divine Service and the instruction of the school was left in the hands of Gerrit Engelbrecht – 'an old man.'⁶⁸

⁶³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 2C, Schmelen, 29 December 1828.

⁶⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 3B, Miles, General Report of South African Stations, 17 October 1830.

⁶⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 3E, Wimmer, 24 February 1829.

⁶⁶ *LMS Reports*, May 1830, 87.

⁶⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 3E, Wimmer, 2 July 1829.

⁶⁸ *LMS Reports*, May 1831, 93.

With Komaggas located within the boundaries of the colony the missionaries required the consent of the government before its formal establishment. The missionaries were understandably hesitant to incur expenses for the erection of permanent buildings and residences before receiving this sanction. The movement of colonial farmers nearby also added a certain amount of pressure, causing the LMS to fear that the 'Namaquas would be dispossessed of the soil, unless secured to them by the government in the manner proposed.'⁶⁹ With this in mind Schmelen drew up a memorial, witnessed by *Veldcornet* Aggenbach and signed by:

all the principal men on the place and to whom the place belonged and stating that the people are desirous of having missionaries among them and begging that the place called Komaggas might be given by the government to the LMS for an institution and that the inhabitants of the place, desirous of being instructed might be permitted to come there and live at Komaggas.⁷⁰

The memorial was forwarded to the Cape where Miles presented it to the government in August 1829. By December 1829 no response had been received and Schmelen requested that Philip, now back at the Cape as Superintendent, intercede on their behalf. The sanction was received only in 1831 after Schmelen visited the Cape and renewed his application to government. For the delay the government gave the weak justification that the memorial had been misplaced. Penn suggests, however, that the real reason was uncertainty on the government's behalf regarding the location of the station in relation to the border.⁷¹ This is questionable, considering the fact that Komaggas was quite clearly located to the south of the Buffels River.

During his trip to the Cape in 1830 Schmelen finally superintended the printing of the gospels in Nama, copies of which he brought with him back to Komaggas. From these, he began to instruct the people of Komaggas in their own language. This seemed to be a strategic move to promote the promulgation of Christianity in Namaqualand. By translating the four gospels, and some vocabulary lists, into Nama and teaching the children of Komaggas to both read and write in Nama, Schmelen, and the LMS, hoped that 'the knowledge of Christ will become more

⁶⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 2D, Documents accompanying the Tabular View of Missions in South Africa, undated.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Penn, 'Land Rights, Missionaries and Surveyors: Khoisan Identity and the Komaggas Community.'

extended in Namacqualand.⁷² It was the Namaqua themselves who the LMS prepared to take the gospel further into the interior of Great Namaqualand. By 1833 it was recorded that many of the children of Komaggas, who attended the school regularly, were able to read well in both Dutch and Nama. When Backhouse visited the stations of Komaggas, Leliefontein and Steinkopf in 1840, he noted that at Komaggas ‘the language of the Hottentots was that chiefly in use’ and at Steinkopf, ‘few people understood anything but Hottentot.’⁷³ Those at Leliefontein, while still conversing in Nama from time to time, had a far greater knowledge of Dutch. The Leliefontein Namaquas’ propensity to Dutch can be best explained by their greater interaction with Dutch farmers over the years. Some had even acquired a basic knowledge of Dutch before the arrival of the missionaries. But we cannot discount the probability that Schmelen’s translations of the gospels and hymn book allowed for the further preservation of the Nama language at both Komaggas and Steinkopf.

Schmelen’s return to Komaggas, which had been in the care of Wimmer during his absence, coincided with Wimmer’s final departure from the station. He left Komaggas on 22 June 1831, itinerating briefly at Leliefontein, Reidfontein and Bushmanland, before settling at Steinkopf. Wimmer’s departure from Komaggas seems to be shrouded in an air of mystery. Schmelen, unsure of the reasons behind Wimmer’s departure, denied the existence of any animosity between the two.⁷⁴ He informed the Directors that he’d ‘always observed an inclination in him, that he wished to be by himself.’⁷⁵ In the same letter, and rather contradictory to his claims about a lack of animosity, Schmelen provided a rather personal attack on Wimmer’s character:

I do not know what to make of him. It appears to me that he will get now and then such quarrelling fits that he scarcely knows himself, what he is about. I am sure that he is not perfectly right in his sense. At such times he has a great zeal, but not knowledge; enough to govern himself and his people. We must not look for these quarrelling fits, as I have called them, to be brought on, but this sickness is within his own door. He cannot agree with his wife. They are against one another. He has baptised several to whom I cannot consent. One man he baptised who belonged to my people in Gr. River who asked me to be baptised, but I declined because his conduct was not upright and

⁷² *LMS Reports*, May 1832, 94.

⁷³ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 532.

⁷⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 4D, Schmelen, 22 November 1831.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

besides this he had two wives, and would not separate from one. When this man saw that I would not baptise him, he went to Mr. Wimmer. He baptised him without consulting me upon the subject.⁷⁶

The animosity between the two missionaries, which Schmelen so vehemently denied, clearly did exist. It was by no means one-sided either. Wimmer seemed to have long held a grudge against Schmelen, believing him to have been guilty of robbing the sheep of Kagab in Great Namaqualand. In 1834, Wimmer urged the LMS directors to send a judge to Komaggas ‘to inflict punishment’ on Schmelen who ‘has brought shame upon the living God and the missionaries.’⁷⁷ The LMS Report for the year 1832 suggests that Wimmer returned to Steinkopf at the request of its inhabitants.⁷⁸ Wimmer explains that upon his return to Steinkopf, Witbooi and some of his people had joined the station and ‘determined not to let me go away again.’⁷⁹ Since Bartlett had left Pella in 1825, many of his people had been scattered and in search of a missionary. In 1829 Wimmer met the wife of Witbooi at Steinkopf, who complained that ‘it is very grievous for her and some other to be without the water of God. Since Mr. Bartlett is away we are like lost sheep.’⁸⁰ The people of Steinkopf and the now ‘lost’ flocks of Pella urged Wimmer to remain with them. He agreed. Schmelen strongly advised Wimmer against this decision – reminding him of the Director’s instructions regarding Komaggas. Despite Schmelen’s firm warning, he records that Wimmer ‘turned against me.’⁸¹

With the misunderstandings between Schmelen and Wimmer aside, the Steinkopf mission was recommenced in August of 1831. A total of three hundred inhabitants was recorded upon Wimmer’s return, with over fifty children in the school. Pella, now vacant of a missionary, was henceforth deemed an out-station of Steinkopf alongside the places of Reidfontein, *Aucorrop* and *Tabep*, to which Wimmer itinerated. The scattered and nomadic nature of the people at and around Steinkopf still frustrated Wimmer greatly. In 1831 he wrote: ‘As I have many times wished if it was possible, that I could divide myself into pieces, and that each piece of me could preach the gospel at every place where it is desired.’⁸²

⁷⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 4D, Schmelen, 22 November 1831.

⁷⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (14) 1A, Wimmer, 3 February 1834.

⁷⁸ *LMS Reports*, May 1832.

⁷⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (13) 1C, Wimmer, 24 October 1832.

⁸⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (11) 3E, Wimmer, 28 August 1829.

⁸¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 4D, Schmelen, 22 November 1831.

⁸² *Ibid*, Wimmer, Komaggas, 18 November 1831.

Bondelswart Captain Abraham Christian and several of his people visited Steinkopf frequently, expressing their desire for a missionary to join them across the Orange River. Great Namaqualand had been completely unoccupied by any missionary presence since Schmelen's final retreat from Bethany in 1828. Until such a time as a missionary be stationed over the Orange River, the Bondelswart Captain and his people seemed willing to make the journey to Steinkopf to be near to the gospel and religious instruction.

Wimmer remained at Steinkopf for the following decade. Despite his many attempts to promote a more sedentary agrarian lifestyle, the people of Steinkopf continued to move with their livestock. They commonly dispersed north toward the Orange River and in an easterly direction. Wimmer, now in his seventies and in an increasingly frail condition, still managed to frequent the outstations on occasion in addition to visiting those groups dispersed in the surrounding areas of Steinkopf. The responsibility of seeing to the daily religious and scholastic instruction of those dispersed at the outstations was thus in the hands of the basters and Namaqua. In 1835 Wimmer made a tour by waggon to several of the dispersed groups. He distributed New Testaments, printed paper, reading and spelling material to John Engelbrecht at Hartebeest-fountain; to Willem Engelbrecht at Byzondermeid; to Willem Engelbrecht and Claas Zon at Little Byzondermeid; to the Zaals at Tweefountain and to Willem Kok at Keicus.⁸³ These men named in Wimmer's account were clearly instrumental figures amongst the dispersed people of Steinkopf. At the outstation of Reidfontein, Wimmer's eldest daughter, Magriet, saw to the instruction of the children. In 1835 Mrs. Wimmer took over the job at Reidfontein so that Margriet, then eighteen, and her younger sister Marri, sixteen at the time, could teach the children at Steinkopf. The Schedule for Steinkopf for the year 1832 does however mention, although does not name, two 'Native Assistants' and two 'Native Teachers.'⁸⁴

The years 1834 to 1836 were particularly challenging for both Komaggas and Steinkopf. An extensive drought forced Wimmer and many of his people to settle at Reidfontein, while others continued to disperse in search of pasture. At Komaggas the drought and other environmental conditions caused a series of failed harvests which left them in great poverty with little

⁸³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (14B) 4D, Wimmer, 12 August 1835.

⁸⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (13) C, Steinkopf Schedule 1832.

alternative but to ask neighbouring farmers for seed. The climatic changes experienced at Komaggas impacted all spheres of life, as Schmelen explained in 1838:

These outward changes must of course have a great influence upon spiritual. The greatest number of my people have been obliged to attend to their few cattle and to get a living and to move with them from one spot to another to keep them alive and I have been necessitated, travelling about to visit them at their different outposts to preach the gospel to them which I hope and pray has not been entirely in vain...Our school has not been so well attended too, as might have been expected, between 40-60 have been the most we have got under our instruction, and sometimes not so many. Several of their parents have been obliged to move about in the country to keep themselves and their cattle alive.⁸⁵

Schmelen also struggled to convince the people of Komaggas to erect more substantial buildings at the station in the hopes that it would appear more like a village. He had since his arrival encouraged them in this regard, highlighting the importance of having a proper place to preserve corn and other fruits. The people were hesitant, and despite Schmelen's several offers of assistance, his pleas were fruitless. In 1837 Schmelen suggested to the Directors of the LMS that the Society should offer some form of reward to those who built substantial dwellings.⁸⁶ Schmelen argued that the erection of buildings would not only be useful to those at Komaggas, but it would be necessary, 'for the farther extension of those stations in Great Namaqualand.' In order for Komaggas to be the 'door to Great Namaqualand', he continued, it needed to be made into 'a fair and permanent station.'⁸⁷ It is clear that despite the numerous failed attempts of the LMS to establish themselves successfully in Great Namaqualand Schmelen still remained hopeful.

5.3 Visitors to Little Namaqualand

Of the early LMS missionaries to Namaqualand, Schmelen and Wimmer were perhaps the hardest. Both men remained in the region for the longest period of time, until their dying days. The colleagues who had once worked alongside these men had either died or long left the

⁸⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (16) 2C, Schmelen, 7 August 1838.

⁸⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (15) 4B, Schmelen, Report for the year 1837.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

region on account of its foreboding conditions. Others had been relocated to other stations which the LMS believed to be more important than Namaqualand. In 1840 James Backhouse passed through Steinkopf and Komaggas where he offered a complimentary description of the two men:

If these laborious men were compared to shepherds, their flocks might be compared to sheep, scattered in little groups over a dreary wilderness; but religious knowledge and civilization, when considered in connexion with the wandering lives of the people, and the common indisposition of human nature to advance in these points, had made considerable progress...⁸⁸

Schmelen and Wimmer's commitment and success in Namaqualand could be explained in part, by their tenacity and stubbornness of character. Both men were fiercely loyal to their people and their missions. It is likely, though, that their ability to integrate and adopt the lifestyles of their followers contributed to their success. The very feature that qualified the men for the Namaqualand missions also brought them much ill-repute. Wimmer was well-aware of this. In 1830 he noted that: 'It has been said in Cape Town that the missionaries in Namaqualand live just so as the Hottentots do.'⁸⁹ He appeared defensive. 'If those who say so; would come here with a just eye, they would yet see, a little difference. And if such would stay for a time to view our doings, and how we are obliged to live. If they did see the bushes we have got and the stones of the clay...and the other things we have suffered. I do not think that they would touch it with their little fingers.'⁹⁰

In November of 1836 Sir James Alexander passed through Little Namaqualand on a government-sanctioned expedition to explore the interior as far as Namaqualand and Damaraland. Four years later, he was followed by Backhouse. The travellers both visited the stations of Komaggas, Steinkopf and the abandoned Pella. The accounts, descriptions and woodcut illustrations they recorded offer an enlightening insight into the state of Little Namaqualand and the LMS missions at the time.

When Alexander first arrived at Steinkopf, he offered a colourful description of Wimmer:

⁸⁸ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 558.

⁸⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 1A, Wimmer, Komaggas, 8 March 1830.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

Mr. Wemer (sic.) living like his flock in a mat hut, was seventy-four years of age, and during a great part of his life had moved about among three hundred of the natives south of the Great River, he and Mr. Schmelen being the only two missionaries between Lily Fountain and the Great River. Mr Wemer (sic.) had a very tidy native wife, by whom he had several children; one was in arms when I was at Bezondermeid. Ye dwellers in cities, nourished in abundance, think of the life this old man was leading! And yet he seemed cheerful and contented, particularly when I gave him a supply of tobacco, of which he was in want to replenish his meerschaum pipe. But for a year he had not tasted bread and had been out of salt for six months...⁹¹

His description of Steinkopf was just as bleak:

Nothing can be conceived more desolate and forbidding than the appearance of the country about Bezondermeid, at this the hot season of the year. The black and bare hills bounded sandy and bare plains, on which, beside the dry bed of a stream (in which there was one hole for water), stood three or four mat huts and a waggon...⁹²

This description was less about the station and more about the unforgiving environmental conditions. It provides further evidence for the years of drought which had proceeded Alexander's visit.

At the time of Alexander's visit Wimmer had been labouring at Steinkopf, and occasionally at Komaggas, for over fifteen years. By the age of seventy he was surely haggard, which the description suggests. Despite this he continued to migrate with his people. In the winter he would leave Steinkopf, 'he packed up three mat huts, which then served as a dwelling, a chapel and a kitchen, and removed with his wagon and cart, to the place where most of the people were sojourning.'⁹³ His longevity in Namaqualand thus has to be attributed to the assistance provided to him by the numerous baster evangelists whom he entrusted with Steinkopf's many outstations, as well as his second wife, Margrietha, and their daughters. When Backhouse later visited Steinkopf, he was met by Margaret Wimmer and her sister, who in their father's absence

⁹¹ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 141.

⁹² Ibid, 140.

⁹³ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 558.

were seeing to the running of the station. Margaret, he described, as ‘an active young woman’ who had been running both the schools.⁹⁴ In Wimmer’s absence she was known to take charge of both the civil and religious affairs of the station.⁹⁵

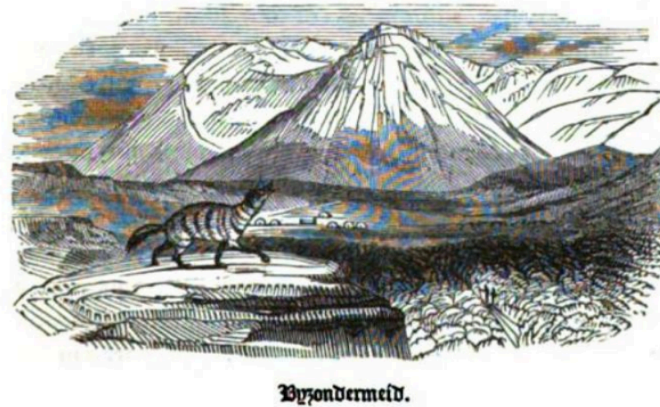


Figure 10. Illustration of Bysondermeid, 1840.



Figure 11. Illustration of Kok Fountain, 1840.

At the station Backhouse described the dwelling of the Wimmers as consisting of a two-roomed house and two mat huts.⁹⁶ Many of the people connected to the station lived in the surrounding areas and, at the time of his first visit, he counted only seven mat huts, which belonged to the people. Usually the population on Steinkopf was approximately 300, with 100 pupils in the

⁹⁴ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 544.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

school.⁹⁷ Backhouse also noted the presence of Gert Wegland, who was called ‘Corporal’ of the station. Wegland was ‘active and attentive’ and must have been a wealthy man.⁹⁸ He hired horses out to Backhouse for his journey onward to Great Namaqualand.

Upon his return to Steinkopf, Backhouse was happy to finally meet the ‘aged’ Wimmer of whom he spoke favourably. He witnessed several religious and public worship meetings to which the people were called by the blowing of a bullock’s horn.⁹⁹

Considering that the memory of the aged missionary was evidently failing in respect to things of a temporal nature, I was struck with admiration at his clearness and soundness, in regard to subjects of Christian doctrine, as well as with the fervency and feeling with which he pressed these upon his audience.¹⁰⁰

At his visit to Leliefontein during the same year, Backhouse heard the testimony of a woman. She had first heard the gospel from Schmelen but was only ‘effectually awakened’ by Wimmer. She explained that Wimmer ‘screwed the truth into her heart, and flogged it into her children.’¹⁰¹ Though Wimmer’s evangelical abilities were impressive, his communications on most occasions were interpreted into Nama. By 1840, Nama was still the dominant language spoken at Steinkopf. Despite this, they did not have access to Nama bibles or hymnbooks that were in print. Their chief medium of religious instruction, Backhouse noted, was ‘hymns containing concise summaries of Christian doctrine, which these people had committed to memory.’¹⁰² Considering the above, it is clear that in Little Namaqualand the Christian message took on an oral form. For these reasons, Backhouse was critical of the missionaries’ inability to delegate their ministerial duties. He claims that they (the missionaries) saw themselves as the only persons qualified for these roles and ‘therefore did not sufficiently direct the attention of the people to the importance of exercising their own gifts for the edification of their own families, and one of another.’¹⁰³ Backhouse it seems was not fully aware of the positions held by many baster and Namaqua who independently ran the religious and scholastic instruction at various outstations of Steinkopf.

⁹⁷ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 545.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

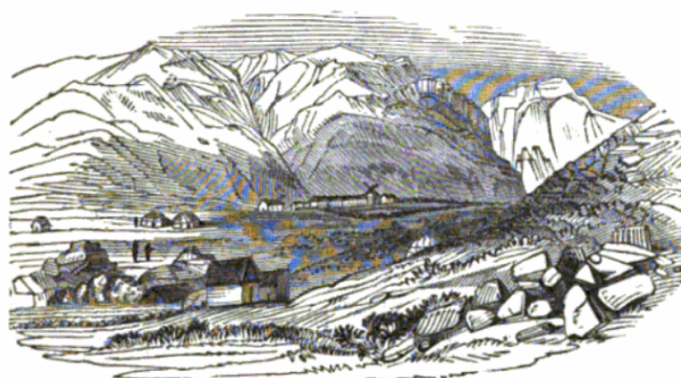
⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 577.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 584.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 546.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*



Komaggas, London Missionary Station.

Figure 12. Illustration of Komaggas, 1840.

In January 1840 Backhouse arrived at Komaggas with his interpreter William Sneeuwy. Physically he described the station as consisting of ‘a few cottages and mat huts, a little windmill, and some gardens, watered by a copious spring.’¹⁰⁴ The population he described as fluctuating, on account of the movement of the people with their cattle. The huts on the station ranged from thirteen in number to more than thirty. It was made up of people of ‘Dutch and Hottentot descent’, three of whom had cottages while the rest lived in mat huts.¹⁰⁵ Alexander, who had visited four years prior and spent more time at Komaggas, described Schmelen as a man ‘compactly made,’ with ‘great energy, with excellent judgement and good nature.’¹⁰⁶ He continued: ‘No one can be more highly respected than he is by the natives, among whom he has been very successful as a teacher, and over whom he has great influence. Single and solitary, he wandered about with the people, living often on game, and without bread, for a great length of time.’¹⁰⁷ While the descriptions provided of Wimmer and Schmelen are complimentary, they also paint a very realistic and wretched picture of what it took to be a missionary in Namaqualand.

These travel records are also helpful to understand the nature of the groups living in Little Namaqualand during the 1830s and 1840s. During his time at Komaggas, Backhouse travelled

¹⁰⁴ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 531.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 91.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

to the coast where Schmelen had been fishing at the time.¹⁰⁸ The journey took approximately two days. At the coast, near Seal Island, a group of Little Namaqua commonly resided in a village comprised of three or four mat hits, called *Autkotowa* (present day Port Nolloth) near a spring of water.¹⁰⁹ Of the people at *Autkotowa* Backhouse provided the following description: ‘The men wore jackets, trousers, and waistcoats of leather, and had hats or caps; the women had sheepskin karrasses, and a sort of petticoat of leather; few of them understood Dutch.’¹¹⁰ From this it is clear that the Little Namaqua had been involved in a trading network of sorts.

Seal Island, described as being within a bay, ‘shut out by the ocean by a ridge of rocks,’ had often been frequented by the missionaries at Komaggas as well as nearby Namaqua groups for the purpose of fishing and seal-hunting. During periods of drought their reliance on fishing increased.¹¹¹ Waggon-loads of mullet were commonly salted for the purpose of preservation.¹¹² En route to the coast Backhouse passed a place known as *Ukribip*, over the Buffels River, approximately fifty-seven miles to the north of Komaggas.¹¹³ At *Ukribip* he met John Engelbrecht and his family who had been taking care of Schmelen’s cattle.¹¹⁴ Engelbrecht would have been seventy-eight at the time. Backhouse describes him as ‘an aged man of Hottentot descent’.¹¹⁵ His bible was suspended in sheepskin – ‘the corners of its leaves worn off by long and constant use’.¹¹⁶ This, Backhouse believed to be ‘Christianity in its humblest garb.’¹¹⁷ Engelbrecht shared his testimony to the group:

¹⁰⁸ Seal Island, located on the coast to the north-west of Komaggas, was also referred to as ‘Robben Bai’, ‘Bay of Seals’, Alexander, *Expedition of Discovery*, 536.

¹⁰⁹ ‘*Autkotowa*’ translates to ‘the place of the old man’ after an old man who had drowned while swimming to Seal Island; Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 537.

¹¹⁰ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 538.

¹¹¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (21) 4A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1845; Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 537.

¹¹² Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 537; Backhouse reports that the fish caught at Seal Island were called ‘Harder’, today known as South African mullet, and the salt obtained from a nearby river. They were also known to catch crayfish as well as feast on beached whale meat.

¹¹³ Distance calculated in accordance to figures presented in Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery into the Interior*, 279; See Figure 13, page 210.

¹¹⁴ Backhouse refers to him as ‘Jonas Engelbrecht’, Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 534; Alexander, Backhouse and Schmelen all mention this place. Alexander describes it as ‘*Ukribip*’, which translates to ‘scratch claw place’ in Nama, Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 95; Backhouse refers to it as ‘*Oeg Grawep*’, also known as Footjes Kraal’, Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 535; In his correspondence Schmelen spells it ‘*Oeggrawip*’; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (21) 4A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1845.

¹¹⁵ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 535.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 536.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*.

...before any missionary came into this part of the country, he was much troubled in mind, under a feeling that all was not right with him, though he could hardly say in what: as he kept under these feelings, he was made watchful and became more peaceful; but when he heard that a Missionary was come into the neighbourhood, he went to hear him, and then he learned more clearly the way of salvation; he also learned to read, and brought his Bible and hymn-book with him into the wilderness.¹¹⁸



Figure 13. An excerpt of a map illustrating the route taken by Alexander in 1836.

After returning to Komaggas, Backhouse passed through Steinkopf and continued onto the abandoned station of Pella. There he found three huts and a group of people who moved from place to place along the river.¹¹⁹ Alexander took a different route to Backhouse after visiting Komaggas on his journey to Great Namaqualand, but also passed through *Ukribip* where he met a few families of Little Namaqua. After resting for a night and procuring fresh horses he continued westward and downhill where he reached a ‘hamlet’ of Little Namaqua called *kama* – meaning ‘water place.’¹²⁰ A dozen huts made up the hamlet. He offers an interesting account of the group. Alexander describes their clothing as, ‘the old dress of Namaqua land’, as he records:

¹¹⁸ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 535.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 548.

¹²⁰ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 95.

Many of the men wore a leathern girdle, from which in front was suspended part of a jackal's skin with the fur outward, whilst behind dangled a square piece of stiff leather. Conical fur caps were on their heads, a *karosse* or mantle of sheepskin depended from their shoulders, while sandals or buskins of untanned leather were on their feet...The women wore skin petticoats, or the Namaqua *broek karosse*...the breasts were uncovered, strings of porcelain or glass beads were upon the neck, the woolly hair of the head was carefully concealed with a striped cotton handkerchief...from the shoulders hung an ample sheep skin mantle.¹²¹

Interestingly, despite their seemingly traditional garb, the men were armed with muskets. They 'had some old muskets and long guns obtained from the colony (for four, six, or eight oxen each piece).'¹²² In addition, they had assegais and bows. From the account of Alexander it does not seem that this group was directly attached to a missionary or mission station, although their nearest would have been Steinkopf. Yet he does mention that, during his visit, religious instruction was held (most likely by him) and translated by an interpreter. The Namaqua at *Kama* were recorded to remain there for four months of the year (July to October) after which they moved to the Orange River.

Shortly after leaving *Kama*, after a journey of five hours, Alexander's group reached *Aris*, 'a Namaqua village of about twenty huts on the Orange River.'¹²³ The settlement of *Aris* was home to a hundred people and their flocks and herds. The leader of the group, Alexander called 'Paul Lynx'. This was most likely Paul Links, the under-captain of Kupido Witbooi, who was assigned the western tracts of Little Namaqualand. According to Carstens, Paul Links was a 'hottentot' and 'immigrant from the south.'¹²⁴ He had been the acting-captain for a branch of the Swartboois (*//Khou/gōan*), a Great Namaqua group.¹²⁵ Dederling suggests that Paul Links had close ties with the Kok clan.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 95.

¹²² Ibid, 96; No mention of the location 'Aris' can be found elsewhere.

¹²³ Ibid, 105.

¹²⁴ Carstens, 'The Community of Steinkopf', 79, 463,

¹²⁵ Ibid, 79.

¹²⁶ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 128, n111.

Links was described by Alexander as ‘a strapping fellow, with one eye, and a peculiar savage look.’¹²⁷ He approached Alexander immediately to request his advice and mediation in a dispute between him, the government and a ‘white man’.¹²⁸ Links’ group of Little Namaqua had long lived in the area near the coast. *Aris*’s proximity to Seal Island allowed its inhabitants to swim and kill seals whose meat they would preserve. As many as three hundred of them were able to subsist annually on the preserved meat. They sold the seal skins. The seal-skin trade must have been a lucrative one that soon caught the attention of nearby farmers.



Figure 14. The settlement of Aris.

In 1836 one particular farmer sent a memorial to the government in an attempt to acquire possession of Seal Island and the coastal land parallel to it – despite it being outside the colony’s borders.¹²⁹ According to Links, the farmer presented him with a piece of paper which he claimed to be a letter from government granting him the land. He requested that Links make his mark on the document in order to confirm his cession of the land and the seal trade attached to it. From Alexander’s account it is unclear if Links signed the document but it seems unlikely. Links was evidently suspicious of the letter’s authenticity. That Links was asked to ‘mark’ rather than sign the paper suggests that he was illiterate and would have been unable to read the contents of the document. He sought out Alexander’s opinion in regard to the document – did the governor have the power to remove the Little Namaqua from the land? Alexander was

¹²⁷ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 111.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 112.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*.

adamant that the land's location, forty miles beyond the border of the colony, indicated that it was out of the jurisdiction of the governor. In addition, he believed the document to be most definitely a forgery.¹³⁰ Links was evidently furious at the farmer's attempted dupery. He threatened that his people 'shall shoot the white man if he attempts to catch seals on our island.'¹³¹ Alexander warned Links against the use of violence and suggested instead that 'if any white man belonging to the colony attempted to interfere with them, they ought to inform their missionary, Mr. Schmelen, and that he would lay the matter before the Governor of the Cape, and thus obtain justice for them.'¹³²

The land-grabbing colonist in question had also been aware of Alexander's presence in the region and had approached him regarding the matter. He had memorialised the governor for permission to occupy two places, namely *Ukribip* and *Nubip*. Many other colonists occupied areas beyond the border of the colony which led him to believe his memorial was valid. The Little Namaqua who occupied the land, he explained, were 'lazy', and should rather move further north, to the Orange River.¹³³ Alexander believed the man to have complete disregard for 'aboriginal rights' to the land beyond the borders of the colony.¹³⁴

Schmelen's report for 1837 indicates that he was well aware of the situation. The group had evidently been attached to the mission at Komaggas. Schmelen had previously encouraged them to move closer to the station but to no avail.¹³⁵ For this reason Schmelen visited both *Ukribip* and *Aris* – between which the Little Namaqua orbited seasonally – a few times a year.¹³⁶ Some of the people at Komaggas were to visit too on occasion, during which Schmelen encouraged them to keep up their religious meetings and worship. Though unwilling to leave their settlement at the seaside, there was clearly much movement and communication between *Aris*, *Ukribip* and Komaggas.

¹³⁰ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 112.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 113.

¹³² *Ibid*.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 94.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*.

¹³⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (15) 4B, Schmelen, Report for the year 1837.

¹³⁶ In his Report for 1847 Schmelen does not refer to the location as *Aris* but as 'the people at the seaside'. His reference to the confrontation between these people and the farmer attempting to take the land suggests they were the same people living under Paul Links.

Schmelen supported the Little Namaqua's possession of, or more appropriately sole occupation of, the land near Seal Island and promised that should a farmer or trader attempt to take possession of it again, he would direct an urgent memorial to the governor. This he believed was highly probable as the Namaqua only occupied the land during the sealing season, between October to March, after which they left it unoccupied. Schmelen believed that, upon their return, they had a right to take possession of the island once again. 'If it had not been for that island,' he argued, 'I am afraid that in these years of hunger much more plunder and stealing would have taken place.'¹³⁷ From these remarks one cannot assume that Schmelen was supportive of the independence of the Little Namaqua. On many occasions he encouraged them to subject themselves to the sovereignty and laws of the colony in order to ensure their protection from colonists and to cement their rights to their land.¹³⁸

These attempts were unsuccessful. Without jurisdiction over the land across the border, the governor had no authority to grant land and sealing rights to the colonist, nor did he have the authority to protect the Little Namaqua against the encroachment of their land. Four years later the Little Namaqua's sealing had come to a sudden end on account of two 'rapacious Englishmen' who, with the help of a raft, had obliterated much of the seal population and filled two wagon-loads with their skins.¹³⁹ Many colonists and traders within and beyond the colony seemed to have had a complete disregard and contempt for the Little Namaqua. Upon a trading trip into the colony with their cattle, a group of Little Namaqua claimed they had been abused and ridiculed by the first farmer they came into contact with. The farmer accused the Little Namaqua of possessing stolen cattle, which he believed they had plundered from the Damara. 'Vordoem die Hottentots!(Damn those Hottentots)' the farmer exclaimed, 'What business have they with cattle?'¹⁴⁰ Fearing an attack the group fled back across the border and never returned. Instead, they chose to barter their cattle with the whalers at Angra Pequena.¹⁴¹ Their fear of the colonists must have been severe as they were by no means treated well by the whalers who often robbed them.

¹³⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (15) 4B, Schmelen, Report for the year 1837.

¹³⁸ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 101.

¹³⁹ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 537.

¹⁴⁰ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 102.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

These reports of ill-treatment led Alexander to recommend the urgent establishment of a magistrate in the Kamiesberg in order to protect the Namaqua, a magistrate which he specified should not be in any way connected to the farmers in the region – as had so often been the case.¹⁴² In particular Alexander complained that those living on mission stations had to travel as far as Clanwilliam to pay their *opgaaf* (taxes) during April, the driest month of the year.¹⁴³ Backhouse, visiting Leliefontein, noted a Namaqua accompanied him to Clanwilliam to pay his taxes for himself and a few others.¹⁴⁴ This journey was an unnecessary and gruelling one. It was also time-consuming. For these reasons Alexander believed that it would be far more efficient for the *veldcornets* to collect the *opgaaf* themselves and to take them to Clanwilliam.

Many of the colonists living across or nearby the borders of the colony were interesting and sometimes dubious characters. At Leliefontein Cobus Bulle, a ‘brandy-boer’, visited in an attempt to sell his wine and brandy to the people. Bulle is described as being a ‘big, red-faced man, with very coarse manners.’¹⁴⁵ After crossing the Orange River back into the northerly tracts of Little Namaqualand, Alexander described meeting a Dutch farmer who had fled the colony after committing murder and subsequently married a Namaqua woman.¹⁴⁶ The Dutchman was accompanied by a baster, Martinus, who is described as being a ‘miscreant.’¹⁴⁷ Martinus had previously spread rumours in Great Namaqualand that Alexander would kill all the Namaqua and steal their land.¹⁴⁸

Contrary to their contempt for the Little Namaqua, many colonists either had Namaqua wives or children as a result of affairs with Namaqua women. In his visit to a farm, Alexander observed ‘several dark children running about’.¹⁴⁹ The children were the grandchildren of the farmer, although it is unclear whether he considered them as such. One of his daughters had a child with a ‘Hottentot youth’.¹⁵⁰ Another daughter, married to a farmer, had given birth to a ‘black child’.¹⁵¹ The family, though clearly aware and ashamed of the circumstances leading

¹⁴² Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 103.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁴⁴ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 584.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁶ At a place known as *Aniep*, approximately 63 miles north of *Kama*, Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 251.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 241.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 229.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 77.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid*, 77.

to the child's darker features, circulated a story so as to explain away and clarify the situation. 'One day his wife was going out and was frightened by a black man, whom she suddenly saw behind the door, and that the child became black in consequence.'¹⁵² The situation was both an amusing and a unique one. It was not uncommon for men in Little Namaqualand to have Namaqua wives or sexual partners. To find an instance in which two daughters of a colonist did such a thing is an abnormality, to say the least.

As this chapter demonstrates, much can be deduced from the travel accounts of Alexander and Backhouse. By 1840 it seems that there were three prominent Little Namaqua groups residing on the coastal tracts of Little Namaqualand – at the mouth of the Buffels River, at *Autkotowa* near Seal Island and at *Aris* near the mouth of the Orange River. These groups lived semi-independently and subsisted on a mixed economy of pastoralism and line-fishing. They were also known to trade their fishing surpluses with colonists across the border for tobacco and other articles. At both *Autkotowa* and *Kamas* the Little Namaqua were reported to have firearms, although not in abundance.¹⁵³ These they undoubtedly procured via the trade in meat, seal skins and cattle. At Angra Pequena they traded an ox for either forty bullets or two quart bottles of shot.¹⁵⁴

These groups, on occasion, visited the mission stations to the south. At other times they were visited by the missionaries and the African evangelists attached to the station. In 1840 two men – April, an ex-slave and Adam, likely a Namaqua or baster – accompanied Schmelen from Komaggas to *Autkotowa* where they prayed and sang with the Little Namaqua.¹⁵⁵ The group of twenty attentive Namaqua assembled at the foot of a hill where they are reported to have used the vertebrae of whales as seats.¹⁵⁶ For the reader today, this serves as both a colourful illustration and an informative example of the dynamic nature of missionary activity in Namaqualand. Mission stations were not geographically fixed nor did they take on a traditional form. Instead communities brushed shoulders with missionaries and made selective use of their temporal benefits.

¹⁵² Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 77.

¹⁵³ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 538; Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 95.

¹⁵⁴ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 102.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 539.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

After Schmelen's final withdrawal from Bethany in 1828 the LMS missionaries were able to fix their focus on Little Namaqualand with the renewed support of the government, now gravely concerned for the safety of the northern frontier. By the second quarter of the nineteenth century Komaggas and its missionaries, though located within the colony, served as a most useful station to those Little Namaqua groups that occupied the north-western regions of Little Namaqualand. This is not to say that it was permanently occupied by them, in fact very rarely, but rather by groups of basters who lived south of the Buffels River. Steinkopf continued to serve different group of basters and Namaqua both at its centre and outstations. Schmelen and Wimmer moved between the two stations and, with the invaluable help of their African assistants and evangelists, were able to persist through a period of extreme environmental and political turmoil in Little and Great Namaqualand.

Chapter Six: The Passing of the Baton

The Rhenish Missionary Society enter Little Namaqualand 1840-1848

'Prepare to meet thy God for we know not in what hour the Lord will come to call us home. Might we but at all times live in such a state of mind, that whenever he calls us, that we can say in truth: ye come Lord Jesus and take me out of this corrupt world'.¹

6.1 The LMS in Crisis

In 1836 Schmelen visited Cape Town. During his visit Philip expressed his opinion that the western tracts of southern Africa should be 'entirely handed over to the missionaries that belong to the Rhyn Society.'² Shortly after, the first missionaries of the Rhenish Missionary Society (RMS) entered Little Namaqualand for the first time. Their presence was well-received by both Wimmer and Schmelen who were both aging and tired. The young RMS missionaries offered much assistance at both Komaggas and Steinkopf and alongside Schmelen established a school for the training of young 'native missionaries'. The arrival of the RMS coincided with an uncertain period in the history of the LMS missions in southern Africa. The Society faced both financial strain and unforgiving public opinion which saw to their early decline. Within the decade both men had died and the LMS discontinued their missions in both Little and Great Namaqualand completely.

The Sixth Frontier War, which took place from December 1834 to late 1835, greatly disrupted the activities of the missionaries in the east. Clashes between the Xhosa, government and colonists had taken place intermittently since 1779, in a response to, albeit simply put, European expansion into Xhosa territory.³ The clashes continued late into the nineteenth

¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Report for the year 1840.

² CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (15) 4B, Schmelen, Report for the year 1837.

³ For more on the Xhosa Frontier Wars see J. Peires, *The House of Phalo: A History of the Xhosa People in the Days of Their Independence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); J. Peires, *The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1989); J. Peires, 'A History of the Xhosa c.1700-1835' (M.A Thesis, Rhodes University, 1976); J. Peires, 'Nxele, Ntsikana and the Origins of the Xhosa Religious Reaction', *The Journal of African History* 20, no. 1 (1979), 51-61; N. Mostert, *Frontiers: The Epic of South Africa's Creation and the Tragedy of the Xhosa People* (London, 1992); C. Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance*; T. Stapleton, *Maqoma: Xhosa Resistance to Colonial Advance* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1994); T. Keegan, *Colonial South Africa and the Origins of the Racial Order* (London: Leicester University Press 1996); Alan Lester, 'The Margins of Order: Strategies of Segregation on the Eastern Cape Frontier, 1806-c. 1850' *Journal of Southern African Studies* 23, no. 4 (1997), 635-53; Elbourne,

century. Missions of several societies operating in the area were affected – the London Missionaries, the Scottish and the Wesleyans.⁴ Mission stations faced destruction, their inhabitants forced to flee and many belonging to neighbouring stations ordered to join the colonial forces against the Xhosa.⁵ The LMS station of Hankey, near Bethelsdorp, contributed eighty men to the forces. Their absence was recorded to have interfered greatly with both the secular and religious pursuits on the station.⁶ The station at Kat River, according to the LMS, ‘has suffered most severely...All the Hottentots capable of bearing arms were withdrawn for the service of the army, and the plentiful crops of corn then standing in the fields were totally destroyed...Twelve thousand head of cattle...and twenty lives....were lost in defence of the place.’⁷

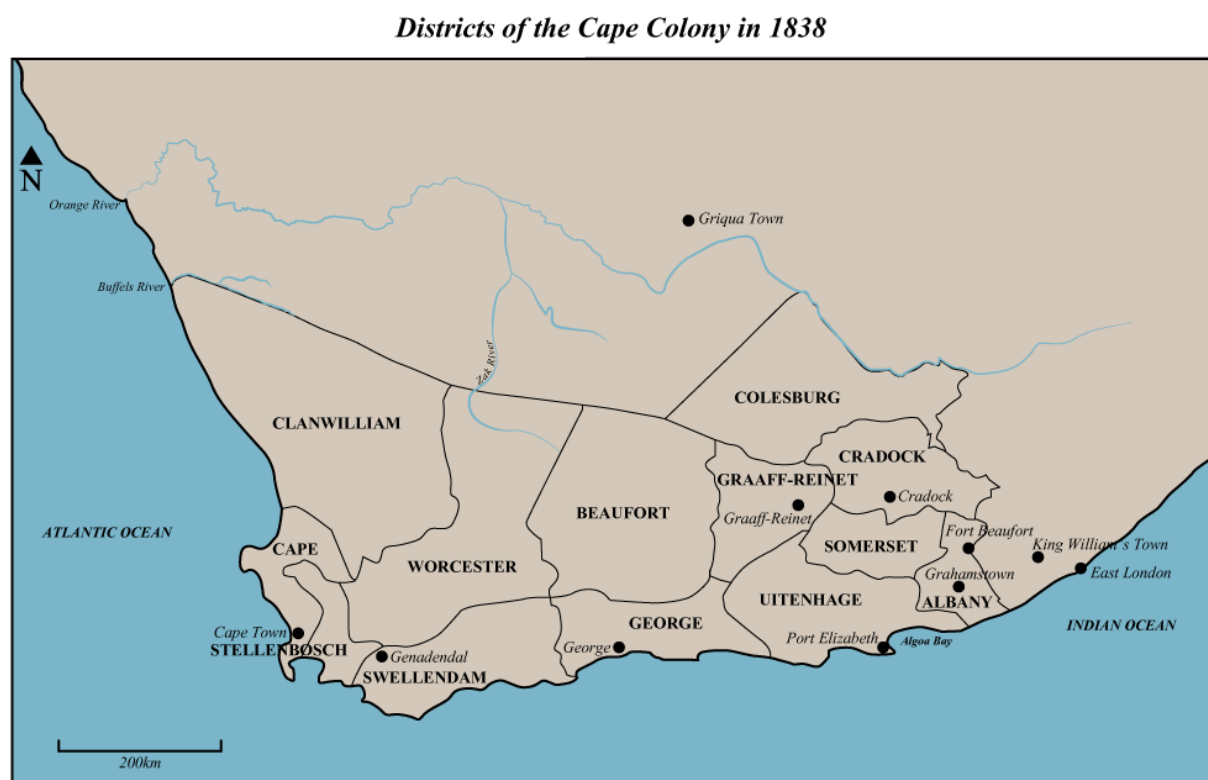


Figure 15. Districts of the Cape Colony in 1838.

Blood Ground, 259 – 292, 345 – 376; T. Stapleton, ‘Warfare and the Frontier (c. 1650-1830)’ in *A Military History of South Africa : from the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid* (Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, 2010); J. Laband. *The Land Wars : the Dispossession of the Khoisan and AmaXhosa in the Cape Colony* (Cape Town, South Africa: Penguin Books, 2020)

⁴ Du Plessis, *A History of Christian missions in South Africa*, 185; The Wesleyans had established missions amongst the Xhosa at Morley, Shawbury, Butterworth and Clarkebury. The Scottish and Glasgow Missionary Societies had established themselves at Lovedale.

⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 1836, Report of Hankey, 84.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid*, Report for Kat River, 1836, 91.

The LMS missions took many years to recover from the losses they experienced during the Xhosa War of 1834.⁸ Much to their dismay, the Seventh Frontier War, otherwise known as the ‘War of the Axe’, broke out in 1846 following the breakdown of previous treaties. Once again the eastern mission stations were at the centre of the violence. The LMS station of Theopolis, due to its proximity to the frontier, was the worst affected by the war.⁹ Rev. Robert Taylor described the state of the station as a result:

..down came the Caffres upon the Institution as a destroying flood, and threw everything into confusion: building was at once suspended; one school-house was turned into a store, and the other, with the chapel, into a place of refuge for the women and children. To add to the evil, a horde of strangers, flying from the Caffres, rushed to Theopolis for protection, bringing in their train disorder and moral pestilence.¹⁰

Taylor continued to explain that the station was desolate, the land uncultivated and over 14 500 cattle deceased. Its prospects were ‘dark in the extreme.’¹¹ The damages and loss of property sustained at Kat River on account of both wars amounted to £30 000.¹² The LMS Report for 1847 aptly captures the overall impact of the wars on missionary activities in the east:

The destruction of their (the missionaries) stations, the severe personal losses they have sustained, the dispersion of their people, and the interruption to the regular work of their Missions, are trials of no ordinary kind. The labour of years, in which their best strength and highest energies have been spent, was to a great extent destroyed as in a moment; and years will probably be required to recover the ground which has been lost.¹³

In the next breath the Society expressed concern as to whether the re-establishment of its missions in Xhosaland, to their former condition, was a viable option.¹⁴ At the same time,

⁸ *LMS Reports*, May 1838, 80.

⁹ Du Plessis, *A History of Christian missions in South Africa*, 247.

¹⁰ *LMS Reports*, May 1847, Report of Theopolis, 100.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *LMS Reports*, May 1848, 11,

¹³ *LMS Reports*, May 1847, 106.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

public opinion of the missions began to wane. In 1847 the Civil Commissioner, likely Johannes Borchers of Fort Beaufort, addressed a letter to Governor Henry Pottinger in which he accused those of the Kat River mission of ‘indolence, the Missionaries of imbecility, and the whole Settlement...as a total failure.’¹⁵ In their Annual Report, the LMS were quick to defend themselves and claimed that the Commissioner’s report should not be taken seriously as it had since its circulation been heavily criticised and regarded as unjust by the press. Colonists’ criticism of the missionaries was not new. According to the LMS Report for 1850, their institutions, ‘have ever been the objects of suspicion, calumny, and hatred from the portion of the Colonists to whose selfish and oppressive proceedings they were opposed; and recently, renewed misrepresentations have been made of their injurious influence, with the design of inducing the Government to disperse the people and resume the lands.’¹⁶ This is likely a reference to the influence the LMS had on the outcome of the Sixth Frontier War in which Governor D’Urban annexed a large expanse of Xhosa territory.¹⁷ Following the Select Committee on Aborigines, held in London in 1836, in which Philip, James Read Snr, James Read Jnr., Andries Stoffels and Jan Tzatzoe testified, the annexation of Xhosaland was overturned and Governor D’Urban recalled by the secretary of state, Lord Glenelg.¹⁸ The Report of the Select Committee blamed the war on the settlers and tarnished the reputation of the colonists who treated the Xhosa unjustly. The report, Elbourne claims, ‘represented the British apogee of Africanist evangelical radicalism.’¹⁹ The missionaries of the LMS evidently had an influence on political affairs at the Cape which severely agitated the colonists.

Public opinion back in London was also beginning to change. In his correspondence to Kitchingman in 1847, Philip noted that ‘differences in opinion prevail at home as to the manner in which our missions should be conducted. Many of our friends begin to doubt whether our missions are not in a state of retrogression, and Tahiti, Madagascar and South Africa are appealed to, to justify this surmise.’²⁰ Philip was evidently disgruntled and hopeless about the future of the LMS at the Cape. He continued, ‘things are very dark with us at present. Our

¹⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 1848, 11; N. J. Jooste, ‘Die Geskiedenis van Fort Beaufort van 1822 tot 1843’ (MA, Raandse Afrikaanse Universiteit, 1987).

¹⁶ *LMS Reports*, May 1850, 7.

¹⁷ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 288-292.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 290.

²⁰ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 27.

Society was among the first in the field of missions, and I am afraid that we shall be the first out of it... We appear to be approaching an important crisis in the history of missions.’²¹

The Wesleyans, in comparison, received much support from settler society, particularly in the Albany district. They intentionally sought to curry the favour of settlers, knowing that in Xhosaland this would be the source of their financial support. During the Sixth Frontier War they aligned themselves with colonists and condemned the Xhosa.²² The colonists were impressed. William Shaw, WMMS missionary, was celebrated in the *Grahams Town Journal* for his ‘meekness’ unlike Philip, ‘the restless... wrangling politician.’²³ The Wesleyans also aligned themselves with the colonial government. During these tumultuous years they remained in good standing with D’Urban and supported the annexation of Xhosaland. The WMMS mediated peace negotiations between the government and the Xhosa in 1835. In doing so, however, unlike the LMS, they represented government interests. For these reasons, disruptions on the eastern frontier, though physically damaging to the WMMS stations, did not injure their reputation in the eyes of government and settlers – if anything they boosted it.

By the end of the 1840s, the LMS were under immense financial strain and the Directors urged those missions within the borders of the colony to become self-supporting as soon as possible. By the second half of the century many institutions had managed to become independent which allowed the LMS to direct its financial support to those missions outside of the colony which, due to their conditions, were more urgently in need of missionaries. Against this backdrop the LMS’ decision to transfer their Little Namaqualand missions to the Rhenish Missionaries during the 1840s is understandable.

6.2 The Rhenish Missionaries at the Cape

Shortly after the formal establishment of the RMS in 1828 its attention was drawn to South Africa. After a Berlin newspaper published that Dr. Philip was setting sail shortly for the Cape with three missionaries of the Paris Missionary Society, the RMS addressed a letter to Philip

²¹ Kitchingman, Le Cordeur and Saunders, *The Kitchingman Papers*, 27.

²² Hildegard H. Fast, ‘African Perceptions of the Missionaries and their Message: Wesleyans at Mount Coke and Butterworth, 1825-35’ (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991), 22.

²³ *Graham’s Town Journal*, 7 February 1833, as cited in, Fast, ‘African Perceptions of the Missionaries and their Message,’ 23.

and requested that some of their missionaries should join him.²⁴ His response was positive, so much so that he travelled to Germany to meet the men. The four men chosen for the Cape were Theobald Von Wurmb, Johann Leipoldt, Gustav Zahn and Daniël Lückhoff. The group arrived at the Cape in October 1829.

After their arrival at the Cape, Lückhoff and Zahn proceeded to Stellenbosch and Tulbagh respectively. At Tulbagh Zahn worked alongside LMS missionary Rev. Arie Vos who had been in desperate need of assistance.²⁵ Leipoldt soon received word that a teacher was needed in Clanwilliam. Despite resistance from Philip, who believed Clanwilliam to be an unsuitable location for a mission, Leipoldt, accompanied by Von Wurmb, made an exploratory trip to the Clanwilliam. Barnabas Shaw, who had spent time with Von Wurmb and Leipoldt, suggested that the men visit the Kamiesberg and consider the prospects of a mission there. Shaw told the Germans that the Wesleyan missionaries currently stationed at Leliefontein operated quite differently to those of the LMS. He told Leipoldt that, '*dass die deutsche Missionare viel mehr beliebt in Süd Afrika waren und viel mehr wirkten als die Englischen*' (the German missionaries were much more popular in South Africa as they worked much more than the English).²⁶ Shaw's statement was not false, but it is likely that he was attempting to curry favour with the German missionaries in order to convince them to travel to the Kamiesberg.

Shaw's sentiments were matched by Governor Sir Lowry Cole who spoke harshly of the LMS missionaries in the colony. He told Von Wurmb, '*Die Engländer bilden aus den Heiden Faulenzer und keine Christens. Es ist ein Jammer, was die Engländer für leute bildeten*' (The English turn the heathen into idlers and not Christians. It's a shame what the English made for people).²⁷ Sir Lowry Cole had visited the newly established mission at the Kat River settlement at the end of 1829 and perhaps it was this visitation which informed his strong opinion of the LMS missionaries. Since his commencement as governor Sir Lowry Cole had been troubled by the unrest in the east which, by 1833 when he retired, he likely believed was to have been stirred up by Philip and the LMS.²⁸ The governor thus strongly supported the Rhenish

²⁴ Du Plessis, *A History of Christian missions in South Africa*, 201.

²⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 1832, 81.

²⁶ J. G. Leipoldt, Diary, 4 November 1829, 41' as cited in Strassberger, *The Rhenish Mission Society*, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 3 December 1829.

²⁸ G. Cory, *The Rise of South Africa : a History of the Origin of South African Colonisation and of Its Development Towards the East from the Earliest Times to 1857, Vol I* (South Africa: Archives of the Union of South Africa, 1940), 386

missionaries in their pursuits at the Cape. He promised the protection of the government on the grounds that they do not, 'do it like the English missionaries.'²⁹ The RMS, much like the Moravians, and their anti-political stance, posed much less of a threat to the government.

There does seem to have been some early tensions between the RMS missionaries and Philip following their arrival at the Cape. From their first arrival Philip had been critical of their naïve expectations. They hoped to establish a permanent missionary institution where they could convince the 'heathen' to settle and be taught industry. Philip, much more experienced in the mission field of South Africa, was somewhat more cynical. He warned the missionaries that they would struggle to induce their followers to labour and should not expect to so easily subsist off of agriculture and crafts. Philip had also been frustrated by Leipoldt's desire to establish an institution in Clanwilliam. He believed that 'there were too few heathens and the heathens were too scattered.'³⁰ Philip had ulterior motives. He believed that two of the men should instead join the LMS and be stationed at Bethelsdorp. Lückhoff's recruitment to Stellenbosch also struck a nerve with Philip, who opposed the decision. Leipoldt later wrote that Philip had been insulted that the Stellenbosch Mission Society had communicated directly with Lückhoff and not through him.³¹ Philip was surely displeased when, against his wishes, Lückhoff proceeded to Stellenbosch and Von Wurmb to Clanwilliam.

At Clanwilliam Von Wurmb was unable to find an appropriate location for a mission station. He soon found that a piece of land in the Cederberg would be more suitable. Von Wurmb, then accompanied by Leipoldt, was welcomed by *Landdrost* Van Ryneveld. The nearby farmers were more sceptical; they believed their workers would abandon their jobs and join the mission station.³² At a property once called 'Riedmond', the RMS established the station of Wupperthal in January 1830. The Khoikhoi and basters residing in the Cederberg had long been desirous of religious instruction. At the start of the century many Khoikhoi and basters from the Cederberg travelled up to the LMS mission at Zak River and later became the focus of the

²⁹ J. G. Leipoldt, Diary, 3 December 1829' as cited in Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 14.

³⁰ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 11.

³¹ J. G. Leipoldt, Diary, '18 November 1829' as cited in Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 15.

³² Megan Anderson, 'Elandskloof: Land, Labour and Dutch Reformed Mission Activity in the Southern Cedarberg, 1860-1963' (Honours Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1993), 25.

missionaries after the San showed disinterest.³³ In addition, prior to the arrival of the RMS, the Cederberg had been home to many baster missionaries who spread Christianity in the Cederberg and further afield. Jan Kok was one of these men who ‘evangelised energetically in the Olifants River and Cedarberg districts around the years 1799 and 1800.’³⁴ Kok later evangelised amongst the Tswana and Coranna in the north. Yet a hunger for the word still existed in the region. Many who arrived at Wuppertal came from the surrounding areas and some had already been baptised by Kicherer at the Zak River. Since the dissolution of the Zak River station, they had been scattered around the Bokkeveld, Roggeveld, and the Olifants River region. In a sense the RMS were reaping the benefits the decades of missionary work that preceded them.³⁵ In 1832 a Khoikhoi chief, Kees Louis, and his mixed following of Khoikhoi and basters expressed their wish for a missionary to join them at their residence at ‘Doornkraal’, near the Olifants River.³⁶ Von Wurmb agreed and later established the mission station of Ebenezer at the location.

6.3 The LMS and RMS Collaborate in the Kamiesberg

The settlement of the RMS in the Cederberg was celebrated by Schmelen, who in 1831 addressed a letter to the missionaries in which he ‘expressed his joy at the establishment of a mission station in the Cedar Mountains.’³⁷ He believed the station would serve as a very useful base within the colony and could potentially serve the advancement of the missions further north. It only took three years before the RMS were ready to extend their mission northward. For this purpose, Leipoldt set out in 1836, accompanied by Gerhard Terlinden, hoping to travel as far as the mouth of the Orange River and Pella in search of a suitable location for a new station.³⁸ The men stopped briefly at Leliefontein before they continued onto Komaggas to meet Schmelen in November that year. En route to Komaggas their paths happened to cross with Alexander who also intended to visit the station. Schmelen eagerly agreed to accompany the group for the rest of their journey to the mouth of the Orange River and back to the

³³ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 447; Anderson, ‘Elandskloof’, 66; Nigel Penn, ‘The /Xam and the Colony, 1740–1870’ in P. Skotnes (ed.), *Sound from the Thinking Strings* (Cape Town: Axeage Private Press, 1991), 15-17.

³⁴ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,’ 438; Du Bruyn, ‘Sending under die Thlaping’, 24.

³⁵ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 44.

³⁶ Ibid, 47; P. Scholtz, ‘Die Ontwikkeling van die Onder-Olifant Rivier’ in *Archives Year Book for South African History* (1966), 121.

³⁷ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 50.

³⁸ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 93.

Kamiesberg. Upon their return to Leliefontein, Schmelen directed Alexander and the two missionaries toward Pella. En route the group passed through Steinkopf where they were met by Wimmer.

The unexpected arrival of the group and particularly the Rhenish missionaries had been a pleasant surprise for Wimmer who had recently complained to the Directors that he desperately needed the assistance of another missionary to see to the many outposts.³⁹ Wimmer hoped that one of the Rhenish missionaries would remain at Steinkopf to assist him. Much to his disappointment the group left shortly after for Pella.

Alexander, who had already spent much time in Little Namaqualand during his tour, parted ways with the group and commenced a journey across the Orange River and further into Great Namaqualand. He was met by the WMMS Joseph Jackson, who had been at the Warmbath station during Cook's absence at the Cape, and Captain Abraham Christian of the Bondelswarts.⁴⁰

Unable to get as far as Damaraland, as he had originally intended, Alexander continued on to Walvis Bay which he did not consider fit for a missionary institution on account of its barrenness. Having located another more appropriate location, Alexander made his way back to Komaggas now accompanied by many of the people of Bethany who were anxious to receive a missionary. The people of Bethany claimed in 'their own expression', according to Schmelen, 'Since the gospel has been gone from us, it appears to us, that all bodily and spiritual blessings are gone from us. We have no place where to go to. We are again in darkness and we are convinced that if ever the Lord sent us rain our place is barren no grass will grow, we are obliged to flee from one place to another, and can remain nowhere long.'⁴¹ It certainly was not an inviting proposal as the environmental conditions at Bethany remained merciless. Schmelen assured them that he would attempt to procure a missionary for them now that they were able to see 'that the punishment of our God is upon them.'⁴² This was not the first time that the harsh climatic conditions faced in Namaqualand were deemed an act of God's wrath on a rebellious people. Following his exploratory trip, Alexander wrote to the RMS and requested

³⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (15) 3C, Wimmer, 14 October 1836.

⁴⁰ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 148.

⁴¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (15) 5B, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1837.

⁴² Ibid.

‘that a missionary might be sent to Bethany to begin that mission there again, and from there the country might be examined father, and if possible, that some more missionaries might be sent to other places in Great Namaqualand.’⁴³

It was only in 1840 that Schmelen received a letter from the Directors of the LMS in London which informed him that the Society had concluded to send no more missionaries to the west side of Africa. The LMS had officially handed over the western portion of their missions to the RMS. Upon receiving the news, Schmelen immediately addressed a bill to the Directors of the RMS and requested the assistance of a missionary to join him at Komaggas. In response the RMS sent Franz Kleinschmidt, a ‘young and zealous Brother Missionary’, who arrived at Komaggas in April 1840.⁴⁴ Kleinschmidt had been instructed to remain at Komaggas for a period of time in order to learn the Dutch language as well as the manners of the Namaqua.⁴⁵ After which, he should proceed to Great Namaqualand to begin a station at Bethany.

The arrival of Kleinschmidt was a great relief for Schmelen who was, in 1840, sixty-three years of age and frequently ill. Wimmer too, now over eighty years old, had recently taken very ill. In June 1840, just two months after Kleinschmidt’s arrival, word reached Komaggas that Wimmer had died. At the time of his death Wimmer had been moving with his people to a Vriesklip, one of Steinkopf’s outstations. Backhouse presents a poetic description of the circumstances surrounding Wimmer’s death. Wimmer had been mid-conversation with a man, on the subject of the pursuit of heavenly treasures, and ‘while thus engaged, he bowed his head as if in deep thought, but was soon discovered that this head was bowed, to be raised no more; his spirit had fled to its everlasting habitation.’⁴⁶ Schmelen left immediately for Vriesklip where he saw to the burial of Wimmer and comforted the grieving people. Upon leaving, Schmelen reported that ‘most of the elderly people there, but especially the females, begged me, that I should care for them that they might soon have a teacher again to instruct them.’⁴⁷ Following Wimmer’s death, the LMS reported that they ‘have no means, at present, of

⁴³ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (15) 5B, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1837.

⁴⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1840.

⁴⁵ L. Von Rohden, *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft: aus den Quellen mitgeteilt* (Barmen: Wiemann. 1888), 139.

⁴⁶ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 579.

⁴⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1840.

supplying the vacancy' at Steinkopf.⁴⁸ The arrival of the RMS in the region may have influenced their decision. From Komaggas Kleinschmidt departed for Steinkopf and remained there while Schmelen wrote to the RMS to request further assistance for Steinkopf.

By August 1841 Kleinschmidt had been in Little Namaqualand for over a year, itinerating between Komaggas, Steinkopf and Pella.⁴⁹ The LMS station at Pella had been abandoned since Bartlett's departure and was not recommenced on account of the drought and warfare which riddled the region in the 1820s. Having given up their pursuits in Great Namaqualand, following Schmelen's departure from Bethany in 1828, it is likely that it was no longer useful to them as a halfway point at the Orange River. It would, however, continue to serve as such for travellers passing through the region. This is not to say that the LMS gave up on Pella as a mission station completely. It was still considered as an outstation of Steinkopf and visited irregularly. The Witbooi Oorlams, who resided at Pella, were also known to make the journey to Steinkopf for instruction. With the arrival of the RMS missionary Carl Schröder in 1841 the station at Pella was recommended, albeit rather unsuccessfully. Much like his predecessor, Schröder soon found that the land at Pella was not arable and was unsuitable for cultivation.⁵⁰ As they had before, the people followed their old migratory patterns between nearby Brand Kloof and Bushmanland.

Kleinschmidt was eager to continue his journey onward into Great Namaqualand to establish a station at Bethany but was hesitant to do so alone. Instead he opted to remain at Komaggas until reinforcements could be sent out by the RMS. The RMS had assured Schmelen that they would send three men; one to accompany Kleinschmidt to Bethany, one for Steinkopf, and one to assist Schmelen at Komaggas. From there the RMS planned to explore the possibilities of a mission in Damaraland or Walvis Bay – where Schmelen had for so many years dreamed of establishing an institution. In the meanwhile the RMS had another plan in mind – the establishment of a training school for 'the instruction of pious and intelligent Hottentot youths with a view to the missionary work.'⁵¹ The RMS had clearly realised that in order for a

⁴⁸ *LMS Reports*, May 1841, 93.

⁴⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1841.

⁵⁰ Schröder worked at Pella until 1869 when he was murdered by 'bushmen'. The RMS abandoned Pella in 1869 and was re-opened by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1874; 'RMS 41st Annual Report, 1840' as cited in Strassberger, *The Rhenish Missions Society*, 77, n48; Klinghardt, 'Social Differentiation and Local Government in Pella', 42.

⁵¹ *LMS Reports*, May 1842, 86.

missionary institution to thrive in the context of Namaqualand the training and equipping of Namaqua missionaries was paramount. An RMS agent by the name of Johann Friedrich Budler was given the task of examining ‘every station which they have in Africa, that he might judge which would be best suitable for his seminary.’⁵² Budler arrived at Komaggas in January 1840 accompanied by a fourteen-year-old ‘Baster-Hottentot’ catechist from Wupperthal, Frederick Hein.⁵³ Hein was in the process of being trained by Budler to become a teacher. Budler considered Komaggas’ eligibility for a seminary and concluded that it ‘would be for the first, the most suitable place to begin his school.’⁵⁴ Schmelen seemed to be of the opinion that Bethany would be better suited, knowing that so many of the people at Bethany, especially the children, would be unwilling to travel so far away from their country and friends, nor would their parents allow them to.

In 1841 RMS missionaries Hans Christian Knudsen and Carl Hugo Hahn were sent to support Kleinschmidt in furthering the RMS mission in Great Namaqualand.⁵⁵ Knudsen and Hahn arrived at Komaggas in December that year. Kleinschmidt, now married to Hanna, one of Schmelen’s daughters, was ordained at Komaggas in May 1842. The newlyweds left shortly after for Great Namaqualand, followed soon after by Hahn and Knudsen. The group were briefly forced to remain at a place called Henkries near the Orange River on account of the poor condition of their oxen. Here they collected many people together and began a school for the children. Over 70 children attended their school each day, and upwards of a hundred adults attended their preaching morning and evening. The group could not however remain there permanently, compelling the people to pen a letter to Schmelen, via Hahn, requesting a teacher to be sent among them. Once again, Schmelen did not have the manpower. He did however have a few young Namaqua who had been trained up by Budler for this very purpose. One of these trainees, yet again unnamed in the records, was from Steinkopf and described as a ‘pious young native’.⁵⁶ Schmelen was concerned however that he, or she, was not yet prepared enough to keep a school. Another potential trainee came from the Komaggas school, described as ‘a pious jong (sic.) man who has been trained by Mr. Budler on purpose to undertake a school and to be an assistant missionary labour, but he is too young to be left by himself’⁵⁷ This was

⁵² CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1841.

⁵³ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa*, 70; Carstens, *The Social Structure of A Cape Coloured Reserve*, 206.

⁵⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (17) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1841.

⁵⁵ Von Rohden. *Geschichte der Rheinischen Missions-Gesellschaft*, 140.

⁵⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (19) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1843.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

most likely Frederich Hein, who then would have been fifteen. Hein and the other Namaqua trainees were clearly not yet ready to be commissioned independently as missionaries. At Steinkopf, however, now unoccupied by a permanent missionary, a young Namaqua man and his wife took care of the instruction of the people. The unnamed couple are described by Schmelen: 'Both are pious and have been members in our church. They are zealous for the cause of our Lord. Their labour has been blessed since they have been there.'⁵⁸ Schmelen now hoped that the old LMS station of Pella, once an outstation of Steinkopf, would shortly be equipped with the services of a Namaqua teacher. Once the various outstations were supplied with 'native teachers' Schmelen and Budler could merely itinerate whenever possible.⁵⁹

Budler was reported to have twelve young men under his instruction for the role of 'native assistant missionary' for Little and Great Namaqualand. In 1844 a trainee was stationed at *Ukribip*, then an outpost of Komaggas. It was Budler's apprentice, Frederich Hein, who Schmelen calls 'Frederich Heinjies'.⁶⁰ Schmelen believed that Hein, then eighteen, was still too young for the position but did not seem to disqualify the man entirely. Desperate for his assistance, Schmelen and Budler agreed that he could be stationed alone at out outpost on the condition that he should visit Komaggas every two months to remain under their mentorship. Hein agreed and kept in constant communication with Schmelen and Budler by letter. Upon his arrival at his new station he reported that he had, '40 children in his school, but he expected more. He reads a chapter from the bible to the people in the morning which he begins with singing a few verses out of him (sic.) book and concludes with a prayer. On Sabbath days he reads a sermon to them and concludes as he does on weekdays.'⁶¹ Schmelen was impressed by his work and his communication. In October 1844 Schmelen and his wife set out to visit the 'jong Evangelist' and examine his school. On his visit to *Ukribip* Schmelen found that Hein 'had nearly 50 children in his school. We examined the children and were highly satisfied that the children had been brought forward in knowledge.'⁶² Hein later worked at the Orange River, with Paul Links and his followers.⁶³ In 1893 Hein was ordained and became the first 'non-European minister' of the RMS in South Africa.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (19) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1843.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (21) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1845.

⁶¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (20) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1844.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Strassberger, *The Rhenish Mission Society in South Africa*, 70.

⁶⁴ Carstens, *The Social Structure of A Cape Coloured Reserve*, 206.



Figure 16. Frederick and Elizabeth Hein.

The other Namaqua assistant and his wife who had been sent to Steinkopf in 1842, continued to labour there with much zeal. In August 1844 he visited Komaggas and reported that on occasion he had more than a hundred children in his school at Steinkopf. In addition to seeing to the instruction of the children, he and his wife kept divine service in the morning and each day explained a portion of scripture to his hearers. Another of Budler's graduates had been sent from Komaggas as far as Bethany to assist Knudsen in his school. The utilisation of Namaqua as interpreters, teachers and assistants was not completely new to the LMS but it was only with the arrival of the RMS missionaries, Budler in particular, that it became a more systematic operation in Namaqualand. Budler's 'graduates' were not merely assisting but were in most cases taking sole charge of the outstations. In 1845, the Directors of the LMS noted in their annual report:

The Rhenish brethren pay particular attention to the instruction of the young, the results of which are extremely cheering, and such as, by the blessing of God, cannot fail to operate beneficially on the religious interests of the country at large....and thus a beginning has been made in the employment of native agency to aid the Missionary work among the Namaquas.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *LMS Reports*, May 1845, 126.

The labour of these Namaqua teachers had been vital to the functioning of Komaggas in the 1840s with Schmelen facing several bouts of ill health and ailments. With those at the river and Steinkopf under the instruction of the African missionaries, Schmelen could now remain at Komaggas. Mrs. Schmelen and Budler were also extremely useful in seeing to the instruction of the school at Komaggas. The school attendance continued to variate in accordance with the harvest and ploughing seasons, with numbers varying from as low as twenty to over a hundred and fifty.⁶⁶ Mrs. Schmelen had also began a sowing school, teaching many of the students needlework. In 1843 the number of those connected to the station were approximately 500, half of whom resided at Komaggas with the others remaining at the stations two outposts or its surroundings. The same year saw the baptism of seventeen adults and twelve children, the majority of whom, Schmelen noted in his yearly report, were slaves who had formerly been in the service of nearby famers and since being freed, fled to Komaggas to be instructed.⁶⁷

In 1844 Budler was abruptly transferred to the RMS station of Wupperthal after Leopold and his wife had taken ill and been forced to remove to Cape Town. Luckily for Schmelen, the RMS had recently sent another missionary to Komaggas – Rev. Ferdinand Brecher. Brecher’s final destination was however uncertain. Until he received further instruction regarding his future he remained at Komaggas. Brecher took charge of the school where he attended to the instruction of between sixty and seventy children each day. In April 1845 he visited the people scattered in the surrounding areas, on account of a recent drought, and made a six-week-long trip to *Ukribip*. By August of the same year he returned from the river accompanied by Hein. Hein and Brecher continued on to Ebenezer. With Schmelen now labouring alone at Komaggas, he relied once again on the assistance of the African missionaries. After a short trip to the Orange River in 1846, for the purpose of cutting wood for a new chapel, Schmelen met a group who were anxious to obtain instruction. Schmelen sent the group, ‘a pious, intelligent, zealous young native as a teacher.’⁶⁸ The young teacher, ‘had been engaged two years previously at another out-station, and had succeeded well. He holds a service with the people, morning and evening, and keeps school for the children.’⁶⁹ It is unclear in the records whether this was the same group that Hein had instructed at *Ukribip* or if this young Namaqua was in

⁶⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (21) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1845

⁶⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (19) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1843.

⁶⁸ *LMS Reports*, May 1847, 114.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

fact Hein himself – but it is likely that it was not in fact Hein but rather another one of Budler’s graduates.

The group of RMS missionaries who had left Komaggas for Great Namaqualand had reached Bethany in August 1842 where Knudsen remained to commence the re-establishment of the mission station. Kleinschmidt and Hahn continued on to the kraal of Jonker Afrikaner and his people at Windhoek, which they renamed ‘Elberfeld.’ Jonker had requested a missionary through Alexander who conveyed the request to Kleinschmidt and Hahn. The men remained with Jonker Afrikaner and his people for two years until 1844 when Afrikaner chose the Wesleyan missionaries Haddy and Tindall over the Rhenish.⁷⁰ Jonker had been in constant communication with the Wesleyan missionaries Cook and Tindall prior to the RMS’ arrival and it seems that he had confused the RMS missionaries with the Wesleyans. The confusion and competition resulted in a three-day conference to resolve which of the missionary societies would occupy Windhoek alongside Jonker Afrikaner. Jonker made his decision final in a letter sent to both parties:

I give this as a proof that I, Jonker Afrikaner, chief of the Afrikaner tribe and all belonging thereto, that I have invited the missionaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Society to become my missionaries, because the missionaries of that Society laboured with me previous to the London Missionary Society, and further this letter serves to show that I received the Rev. Mr. Kleinschmidt with the understanding that he belonged to the same Society as Messrs Cook and Tindall. As soon as I discovered that it was not so, and that there existed strife about my place between the missionaries, I sent a letter to the Wesleyan Missionaries to call them as the missionaries of my place and people.⁷¹

Kleinschmidt went on to establish a mission at Rehoboth with Captain Abraham Swartbooij and his people, while Hahn continued north to the Herero where he began a station at Otjikango in 1844.

The death of Schmelen in July 1848 is the point at which this thesis ends its analysis of missionary activity in Little Namaqualand. His death was in many ways the end of an era in

⁷⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (21) 3A, Schmelen, Komaggas Report for the year 1845; Heese, *Sendigonderwys in Suidwes-Afrika 1806-1870*, 64.

⁷¹ Mears, *Wesleyan Missionaries in Great Namaqualand*.

the Namaqualand missions. It saw the final transferal of the LMS' Little Namaqualand stations into the hands of the Rhenish. Following the death of both Wimmer and Schmelen, the transferral of their missions were smooth. The LMS, then weakened financially and lacking much government or public support, willingly withdrew from the costly and treacherous mission field of Namaqualand. The RMS, still newcomers to an extent, remained in good footing with the government which surely assisted their efforts. The Germans had successfully gained a monopoly over the missions in both Little and Great Namaqualand, despite some fierce opposition from the Wesleyans who managed to maintain a foothold at Warmbath and Leliefontein. Schmelen's departure also coincided with the annexation of Little Namaqualand. In 1847 the border of the Cape Colony was extended to the Orange River in the north west. In many ways this can be said to have signalled the closing of the northern frontier. An influx of both white farmers and bastards into the area, utilising the regions of Bushmanland and Namaqualand for grazing, placed pressure on the land and its holding capacity.⁷² This caused many groups, such as the Witboois, to migrate northward into southern Namibia in desperate search for pasturage

⁷² Klinghardt, 'Social Differentiation and Local Government in Pella', 32.

Chapter 7: ‘Let One Interpret’¹

A Case of Translation, 1805-1848

*‘Yes, I am a sinner, and I hate also my sin, but Christ must cleanse me from them then I will be happy. I have also cast off my old Kaross (made of sheep-skin) and got a new one which is also warmer and better than my old one’.*²

7.1 From Interpreter to Preacher

In tracing the development of the Wesleyan, London and Rhenish missionary societies’ work in Little and Great Namaqualand what becomes increasingly evident is the significant role that the Namaqua and basters often played in their own conversion and evangelisation. The missionary documents on which this thesis is based offer an interesting and new insight into the role these interlocutors played as well as the various ways in which the Namaqua and basters responded to and received Christianity. Previous chapters have shown how these notable African teachers, translators and assistants rose to prominence and in many senses, paved the way for their European counterparts. These ‘new Christians’ or ‘indigenous agents’ served as cultural and linguistic intermediaries between the European missionaries and those they ministered to. Without them it is likely the missionary endeavour in Namaqualand would have failed gravely – not to say that it was altogether successful. Armed with their newly-acquired literacy and knowledge of the gospel these men, and in few cases women, voluntarily evangelised amongst their own people and distant groups. The space they carved out for themselves was a new one, and the Christian message that they carried was in many cases repackaged in accordance with their existing belief systems.

In her analysis of the Wesleyan missionaries in Xhosaland and the Xhosa responses thereto, Hildegard Fast raises uncertainty over whether the Xhosa truly understood and comprehended the Christian message. In doing so she argues that true comprehension could be detected when the Xhosa expressed the newly acquired knowledge in the terms of their own culture.³ Fast

¹ ‘If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.’ 1 Corinthians 14:27, (King James Version).

² CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 40, Albrecht & Ebner, 10 August 1814.

³ Hildegard H. Fast, “‘In at One Ear and out at the Other’: African Response to the Wesleyan Message in Xhosaland 1825-1835”, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 23, no. 2 (1993), 147-74.

posits that in the case of Xhosaland it was the Wesleyan missionaries inability to translate their message and ideas into culturally appropriate formats that led to their overall failure to Christianise the Xhosa.⁴ Furthermore she claims that their inability to effectively train and utilise indigenous missionaries indicates their failure to recognise the importance of understanding Xhosa culture in order to effectively convert the Xhosa. The above cannot be said for the case of the Namaqualand. Instead, as this chapter will show, it was the European missionaries' reliance on African evangelists which facilitated the translation of the Christian message into cultural templates which were more readily understood and embraced by their hearers. These evangelists became the very personification of the highly-brokered version of Christianity that they so eagerly spread.

The reliance on African translators and evangelists was not completely intentional, but instead a pragmatic decision on the part of the often desperate missionaries. The shortage of missionaries sent to Namaqualand constantly hindered religious progress in the area and forced the missionaries in many cases to rely on the assistance of Africans. Their knowledge of the region and its language paired with their ability to withstand the severe climate worked in the favour of the missionaries. One cannot place sole responsibility on the African assistants for the translation of the gospel message into culturally sound templates. As evidenced in Chapter Three many of the Little Namaqua of Leliefontein, on the basis of their own convictions, spread the gospel message both far and near. It is likely that these Namaqua too utilised devices of cultural translation to better convey the message they communicated. These unnamed and everyday Namaqua evangelists, much like the Namaqua assistant missionaries, often risked their lives and reputations in order to spread the gospel message to others. The role of the Namaqua or baster missionary was by no means a glamorous nor a well-paid one. As Shaw explains:

Two of the natives generally assist in teaching and sometimes four. Jacob our Assistant is one of those who generally attend and hitherto he has received nothing excepting a few clothes. As he will continue to assist in the school and occasionally be sent to an outpost to read the scriptures or give an exhortation we shall take care that clothes and

⁴ Fast, 'African Perceptions', 164.

food be given to him. The other helpers in the school are much pleased with my little presents that are made them.⁵

Despite their feeble compensation the African preachers often faced unbearable and life-threatening conditions in their evangelical pursuits. In 1820 John Engelbrecht wrote of his distressed state to Albrecht: 'I am very weak, and withal in the wilderness; I can therefore not know it, and I cannot, in due time, get to church. My heart is willing, but with me there is much want of food, as also many other obstacles.'⁶ This was not always the case. In 1808 the Albrechts reported that Engelbrecht, 'one of our brightest students' had a wealth of livestock, so much so that he gifted Albrecht's young son with a cow.⁷ His poverty by the 1820s can be most likely explained by the chronic droughts facing the region at the time and his removal to the more desolate regions of Great Namaqualand for the purpose of evangelisation.

The oorlam and baster missionary assistants attached to the Great Namaqualand missions were far more autonomous and wealthier than those Little Namaqua missionaries from Leliefontein and the baster missionaries at Steinkopf and Komaggas. Their material wealth was most likely established prior to the arrival of the missionaries, although their attachment to the station consolidated their elite position within the community. Their financial independence meant that they did not rely on the missionaries as much as those at Leliefontein. That being said, records suggest that Hendrick Smit of Leliefontein had a large amount of property and livestock, which he left to minister amongst the Coranna.⁸ It is unlikely though that his wealth gave him the autonomy that those oorlam groups possessed across the Orange River. The Little Namaqua at Leliefontein, and many in the Kamiesberg, subsisted upon pastoralism and occasional fishing trips to the coast. There is little evidence to suggest that they were as involved in the hunting, trading and sometimes raiding economy as those in Great Namaqualand. The sealing and trading communities along the west coast and connected to Komaggas differed greatly from those at Leliefontein. They had access to firearms and were less likely to be employed in the service of farmers.

⁵ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 April 1819.

⁶ *LMS Reports*, May 14th 1812.

⁷ *Transactions of the LMS*, Vol. III, 'Extract from the journal of Abraham and Christian Albrecht, 11 May 1808', 243

⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, 'Extracts from the journal of Mr. Shaw, 12 December 1824.'

No amount of wealth however made the gruelling environmental conditions bearable. Jacob Links evangelised amongst the neighbouring San in 1817 where he wandered from place to place adorned with old pieces of animal hide. He returned back to Leliefontein shortly after, in a state of starvation and complained to Shaw: '*Ik kan niet meer*, the bushmen have worn me out.'⁹ Jacob's brother, Robert Links, also set out to preach to hunter-gatherer groups in the Kalahari. There he spent weeks at a time with a gun in hand and water-vessel slung upon his back. Robert Links was overcome by the suffering and died prematurely.¹⁰ Peter Links, another of the Links brothers, 'an eloquent preacher in Namaqua... went through all kinds of danger' and was once attacked and lacerated by a lion.¹¹

The tragic murder of Jacob Links is perhaps the most pertinent example of the struggles faced by the African missionaries – evidence of the hostile and sometimes violent conditions on the northern frontier. Links is certainly the most renowned of these preachers which is most likely due to the tragic nature of his death which brought the previously overlooked and uneventful, in comparison to the eastern frontier, realm of Namaqualand to the government's attention, as discussed in Chapter Five. We cannot however completely explain his renown by his murder alone. In 1822 Jacob was officially received into the Connexion as a minister of the Methodist Church – the very first Khoikhoi or indigenous South African to enter the Methodist ministry.¹² We also have far more detailed records of Jacob Links' life and teachings than other Namaqualand teachers or assistants of his time. Before his tragic murder in 1825 Links had left behind a detailed journal entry, a sermon (transcribed by Shaw) and a letter he had addressed to the Methodist Committee. Several other colourful anecdotes and chronicles of his life can be found in the records of Shaw, Edwards and Threlfall. These accounts, which shall be referenced throughout this chapter, have been included in full in the appendix.

⁹ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 272.

¹⁰ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 45.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The 'Connexion' refers to the united network of Methodist churches. Conferences serve as decision making bodies for the Connexion. Ministers ordained into the Methodist church are 'received into full Connexion'. The Connexion was based on words of John Wesley, '*Suffer one thought of separating from your brothers and sisters, whether their opinions agree with yours or not*,' John Wesley, 'Farther Thoughts Upon Christian Perfection,' 177; Paul Wesley Chilcote and Kenneth J. Collins (eds.), 'An Introductory Comment', in *Doctrinal and Controversial Treatises II*, 92-94.

The earliest of these reports is a letter, written by Jacob Links, in 1819 and addressed to the Methodist Committee.¹³ The letter was originally written in Dutch and, according to the Methodist Missionary Notices, in ‘a very good hand.’¹⁴ It was later translated into English before publication in the *Missionary Notices for 1820*. In the letter Links writes about his ‘former and present state’, explaining in detail his first encounters with prayer and the Christian message.¹⁵ What is perhaps the most significant aspect of Links’ testimony provided in the letter is that his two first encounters with Christianity were not through European missionaries but through other Namaqua. It is pertinent, and telling of the nature of Christianity in Namaqualand, that the very man who has been considered as one of the first, and most popular, of the Little Namaqua preachers, had himself first heard the gospel through non-Europeans. Links explained that when he first heard a Namaqua, a man who had been visiting his people, praying out loud, he mistakenly believed that the man was praying to the missionary. The praying Namaqua in question had once been under the instruction of the LMS missionary Albrecht at Warm Bath and Pella and was known to often hold service with those he met during his travels. Although the young Jacob Links evidently struggled to understand the concept of prayer, this Namaqua visitor had clearly awakened his curiosity. Soon after, Links went on to explain, another Namaqua passed through the Kamiesberg and brought with him the gospel message. According to Links, ‘he spoke much of sin and also of Jesus.’¹⁶ There had been no ‘official’ or government authorised missionary presence in the Kamiesberg, where Links’ family resided, until the Wesleyans established Leliefontein in 1816. Instead it seems that Namaqua visitors to the area who brought the Christian message with them, had mostly likely interacted with missionaries either at the stations in Great Namaqualand or en-route to them.

Seidenfaden and Albrecht had passed through Little Namaqualand and the Kamiesberg as early as 1806 and had evangelised sporadically to groups of Namaqua in the area. These are the missionaries that Links is most likely referring to in his letter when he explains that ‘a missionary, on his journey towards Pella, remained some weeks with our Chief.’¹⁷ The curious Jacob had unfortunately been in Bushmanland with his cattle at the time and had been unable to meet the missionaries himself. The early LMS missionaries only ever interacted directly with a handful of people during their travels through Little Namaqualand. Christianity, or

¹³ See Appendix III, page 298-300.

¹⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 January 1820.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

versions thereof, was thus spread orally and rampantly through Little Namaqualand during the first years of the nineteenth century by African mouths.

In the letter Links also makes mention of the fact that his mother Trein, although herself later distressed by his conversion to Christianity, possessed ‘some leaves of an old Dutch Psalm-book’.¹⁸ Access to bibles and religious texts was extremely rare at the time and the scarcity continued for decades after the formal arrival of the missionaries – on account of their distance from the Cape. Worth noting here, and evident in the letter, is that the Little Namaqua during the early 1800s were interacting with European farmers who settled in the Kamiesberg. It is possible that the nature of this interaction was merely neighbourly, but the farmers’ strong warning to the Namaqua to not engage with the missionaries suggests that there was more at stake. The establishment of a mission station in the Kamiesberg would pose a direct threat to the farmers’ pool of labour. Those Namaqua employed by local farmers, who themselves professed to be Christian, would surely have been exposed to some elements of Christianity during their employment. The extent of this exposure is likely to have been minimal but could cause one to question whether Links’ mother had obtained the Psalm-Book through a missionary, an evangelising Namaqua or a farmer. The latter is highly unlikely. The majority of farmers did all in their power to hinder Khoikhoi access to Christianity rather than encourage it. In a 1821 letter Shaw relayed the following story to the Wesleyan Committee: ‘the Dutch Boors -the enemies of every effort & c...in the night after work is done, the Boor sits in his chair and the word of God is before him, if the Hottentot comes to the door, he shuts the book...’¹⁹ Not all of the Dutch farmers, he added, were enemies of the missionaries. Though he confirmed the authenticity of the account, Shaw cautioned the Committee not to circulate it at the Cape as it would likely antagonise the farmers with whom he needed to remain in good repute.²⁰ The anecdote, he continued, was fit for Britain.

In 1813, Ebner provided a similar account, though in reference to slaves, during his visit to a farmer in the Honingberg. ‘When reading, speaking and praying,’ with the farmer, he noted, ‘I lifted up my voice, a trumpet according to the commandment of my dear Lord Jesus... that the slaves, who were perhaps standing and listening behind the door in the other room, might hear

¹⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 January 1820

¹⁹ Ibid, B. Shaw, 24 October 1824.

²⁰ Ibid.

and understand every word.²¹ In 1818, Jacob Links enquired if a neighbouring farmer taught his slaves and servant, to which he replied, ‘No; for they would then be as wise as I am myself!’²²

Even as late as 1836 Alexander detailed a report in which a missionary, whom he does not name, visited the house of a farmer to deliver religious instruction. The missionary suggested that the farmer invited his Khoikhoi labourers to join the service. The farmer, horrified, responded, ‘the Hottentots?...you would not have them with us also? We are told in the Bible that the sheep are to be separated from the goats, and I cannot therefore admit the Hottentots.’²³

These responses were surely influenced by the Calvinist views of many Dutch farmers who believed the ‘heathen’ to be predestined to hell. The farmers knew the advantages that both the Khoikhoi and slaves would obtain if able to access Christianity, and even worse if baptised.²⁴ The reports of Alexander and Ebner suggests that these attitudes were certainly common in Namaqualand and it was thus unlikely that Jacob Links’ mother would have retrieved the pages of the book from a farmer, unless of course they were stolen. It is also highly probable that the waves of baster and oorlam immigrants entering and passing through Little Namaqualand from the Cape toward the end of the eighteenth century brought with them word of the gospel and perhaps its texts. What is certain then is that by the time the Wesleyans established their mission at Leliefontein in 1816 and the LMS at Steinkopf in 1817, many metaphorical seeds had already been sown in the area.

7.2 ‘Hold fast by the tail!’

On 22 February 1818, before his first solo missionary trip to Bushmanland, Jacob Links preached his very first sermon in Dutch under the scrutinising eye of Barnabas Shaw. Unlike his previous teachings and sermons, in Nama, Links now needed to present a sermon in Dutch, in order for his evangelical capabilities to be evaluated. This was necessary before he could be completely entrusted by Shaw to be sent into Bushmanland on his own. Shaw would have

²¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2B, Ebner to LMS, 1 April 1813.

²² *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, October 1819, 150.

²³ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 76.

²⁴ See Elbourne, ‘Early Khoisan uses,’ 5-7.

needed to examine Links' oratory skills, but more importantly the nature, and reliability, of the Christian message he relayed.

In a letter addressed to his father Shaw recorded Links' first Dutch sermon, more specifically 'the ideas and expressions made use of ... which I took down as they fell from his lips.'²⁵ This sermon was a significant one, not only because it qualified Links for the following seven years of missionary work that he was afforded, but because it is one of the only Little Namaqua sermons to have been recorded word for word – as Shaw claims. The words of Links were of course framed by Shaw and underwent translation from Dutch into English before being written down and sent to his father a month later. The degree of accuracy of the translation is however immaterial, as it is from the sermons essence that we can begin to understand the version of Christianity both understood and spread by a Namaqua preacher.

Jacob Links opened his sermon by reading from Matthew 20:29-30 in which Jesus healed two blind men as he and his disciples were leaving Jericho.²⁶ The structure of the sermon follows a generic evangelical template used to effectively convey the Christian message and it is undeniable that certain excerpts are regurgitated. It is through Jacob's translation and application and of the scripture in which we can begin to see the cultural templates he engaged to convey the message to his Namaqua hearers. In his first point, addressing the innate sinful nature of man, Links used the example of goats and sheep to help his hearers better understand the concept – 'You sometimes ask "how is it that, that we can be sinful by the sin of others?" I answer your sheep bring forth no goats, neither do your goats bring forth no sheep – It is so with mankind, the parents being sinful, the children begotten by these parents are also sinful - these children having a sinful nature soon begin to commit actual sin.'²⁷

At the time of Links' sermon his hearers would have relied on a nomadic and pastoral economy. Livestock was more than just a means to subsistence, but carried social and political weight.²⁸

²⁵ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818.

²⁶ See Appendix I, page 295; 'And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, have mercy on us, o Lord, thou son of David.' Matthew 20:29-30 (King James Version).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Webley, 'The History and Archaeology of Pastoralist and Hunter-Gatherer Settlement,' 52; Nigel Penn, 'Pastoralists and Pastoralism in the Northern Cape Frontier Zone during the Eighteenth Century' in *Goodwin Series, Prehistoric Pastoralism in Southern Africa*, 5 (June 1986); Barnard, 'The Nama and Others' in Alan Barnard, *Hunters and Herders*.

Their knowledge and dealings with livestock were extensive. Livestock formed the core of Namaqua society on an economic and social level. Their use of, and receptivity to, pastoral-based language is understandable. Links' goat analogy would thus have been powerful. The altogether foreign concept of sinfulness was effectively transformed into a more palatable format which allowed for the better communication of the message. Pastoral metaphors were used by missionaries globally to communicate Christianity to pastoralist groups in the nineteenth century.²⁹ These groups were able to easily understand the pastoral references littered throughout the scriptures – Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the Lamb of God, the Parable of the Lost Sheep. They were likely able to relate, on some level, to the Israelites who were themselves nomadic-pastoralists.

In 1819 a Namaqua complained to Shaw that his duties as a shepherd withheld him from attending Sabbath day instruction. In response Shaw, 'endeavoured to show him how he might obtain instruction, from his business as a shepherd – by saying that Jesus was the Shephard of souls – by showing him that Jesus was more faithful than any African Shepherd - that he had even laid down his life for his Sheep.'³⁰ A year later, Edwards, 'spoke of the black sheep and the white ones.'³¹ After this teaching, a Namaqua noted: 'I think therefrom that the Lord will accept both the blacks and the whites who believe on (sic.) Jesus.'³² The Namaqua's extrapolation of Edwards' sermon, and its allusion to non-racialism and Arminianism, suggests that pastoral analogies were in fact effective and well-received by the Little Namaqua. The Little Namaqua readily adopted these metaphors and the Little Namaqua evangelists, further propagated them. In describing his former state to Shaw, Peter Links, who would shortly after become a missionary to the Coranna and later the Great Namaqua, used a pastoral trope to explain his prior condition. He told Shaw:

I have been like a poor silly lamb, which is only just beginning to go. When the ewe goes from it a short distance, it turns aside first to one bush and then to another. The

²⁹ See for example Laura Stevens, 'Gold for Glass, Seeds to Fruit: Husbandry and Trade in Missionary Writings' in *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 34-61.

³⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 April 1819.

³¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VII, B. Shaw January 1820.

³² *Ibid.*

ewe has her eye upon it, and goes back again to it, and does all she can to induce it to follow her, and will not forsake it. So the Lord has done for me.³³

It could be argued that Jacob Links' goat analogy, though certainly inspired by biblical pastoral metaphors, was more applicable to the Little Namaqua who, in their acquisition of goats from the Tswana many centuries prior, were distinct to other Khoikhoi groups who only herded cattle and sheep.³⁴ Other Khoikhoi groups thus would not have been as receptive to the goat analogy. Jacob Links created a new, and arguably better metaphor, through which to explain Christianity. Through this analogy we can see how local or Namaqua preachers were able to translate the gospel message not only linguistically, but culturally too. They were able to better transmit Christianity than the Europeans, who at times fell short in their communication. In other parts of the world, missionaries made the mistake of thoughtlessly applying these metaphors to non-pastoral communities. In the case of the Moravian mission to the *Yuupit*, in south western Alaska, during the late nineteenth century, their pastoral metaphors fell on deaf ears: "How could they speak of 'the Lamb of God' when no Eskimo knows what a lamb is?"³⁵ 'Native helpers' instead were recorded to have employed more appropriate metaphorical devices – 'The 'reindeer and it's herder' being one.³⁶ Many of the new metaphors created by these indigenous evangelists were cross-cultural in nature. They blended features of Namaqua and baster society with imported ideas from the people and missionaries from other parts of the Cape Colony, southern Africa and the world.

The pastoral features of Namaqua society greatly assisted the evangelical pursuits of the missionaries but were also a cause of great concern and ill-regard. In 1813 Campbell noted the following of the Korana: 'Their language 'cannot be a copious language as they have so few things to talk of, but must be a pastoral language, only having words adapted to the pastoral

³³ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 107.

³⁴ Elphick, *Kraal and Castle*, 57; Webley shows that herders in central Namaqualand possessed cattle, sheep and goats alongside which they moved around the Kamiesberg and the neighbouring tracts, L. Webley, 'Archaeological evidence for pastoralist land-use and settlement in Namaqualand over the last 2000 years' in *Journal of Arid Environments*, 70 (2007), 634-635; L. Webley, 'Pastoralist ethno-archaeology in Namaqualand' in Goodwin Series, *Prehistoric Pastoralism in Southern Africa*, 5 (June 1986), 60.

³⁵ Ann Fienup-Riordan, 'Metaphors of Conversion, Metaphors of Change,' *Arctic Anthropology* 34, no. 1 (1997), 108; Ann Fienup-Riordan, 'Yup'ik and Christian Encounter,' in Ann Fienup-Riordan, with William Tyson, Paul John, Marie Meade, and John Active (eds.) *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World: Yup'ik Lives in Alaska Today* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000), 97.

³⁶ Fienup-Riordan, 'Metaphors of Conversion, Metaphors of Change', 108.

life.³⁷ He compared the Korana to dogs, who did little but, ‘squat upon the grass enjoying the sunshine until the next meal.’³⁸ The idleness of the Korana, Campbell believed to be ‘heart-rendering.’ In particular, the youth who, ‘having nothing either to do or to learn; their parents having no more to inform them of than the cattle have to tell their young.’³⁹ Shaw strongly agreed with the concerns of Campbell. ‘The natives,’ he wrote, ‘are of a roving disposition and nothing but time and perseverance can break off those lazy insolent habits to which they have been too long addicted.’⁴⁰ The missionary societies in general objected strongly to nomadic-pastoralism. On an ideological level pastoralism was viewed as a lower form of civilisation than sedentary agriculturalism.⁴¹ In his publication, *Researches in South Africa*, Dr. Philip noted that, ‘the advancement of a people from the pastoral to the agricultural state is the grandest and most important step in civilisation.’⁴² In Namaqualand the transhumance of the Namaqua further frustrated the missionaries, interrupting their attempts to collect the people at one location and establish permanent mission stations. Fishing and sealing, prominent amongst the communities on the coastal tracts of Little Namaqualand, would on an ideological level likely have been perceived as an even less civilised economy than pastoralism. The Namaqualand missionaries do not seem to have decried the activity, although their preference for agriculturalism is prevalent in their accounts. Schmelen himself, unable to subsist on agriculture alone, often removed to the coast to fish. According to Shaw many Namaqua did not like the taste of fish, others believed it to be poisonous.⁴³ The majority of their catch, after being salted, was not consumed but bartered in the interior for tobacco and other goods. Only few liked the taste. Most preferred seal meat which, was more commonly consumed, and only resorted to the eating fish during periods of extreme drought when their primary pastoral economy was compromised.

The Namaqua’s propensity for swimming, on account on their fishing activities and necessity to cross the Orange, and sometimes Olifants River, also provided an array of appropriate metaphors with which to understand and express certain components of Christianity. In 1836 Schmelen, then at *Autkotowa*, was visited by a man from a nearby village. The man told

³⁷ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 279.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Shaw, 21 August 1820.

⁴¹ Legassick, *The Politics of a South African Frontier*, 86.

⁴² Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, 57.

⁴³ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 152; Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 184

Schmelen that, ‘when he had first heard the Gospel preached, it was only with one ear, but he had held it fast by the tail, and now he was come to hearken with both ears.’⁴⁴ The metaphor of holding fast by the tail, Backhouse later explained, ‘was borrowed from swimming across the Orange River by means of a tail of a cow, which is a common practice in this country; and the life of the man depends on keeping fast hold.’⁴⁵ What is perhaps most pertinent about this anecdote is that the metaphor used to describe Christianity was not designed by Schmelen but by the Namaqua. The comparison of the gospel to a cow’s tail would have likely been distasteful in Europe, but, in Namaqualand, would have been apt and poignant. The miry tail of a cow, during an often treacherous Orange River crossing, was a lifeline to a swimmer. The agency placed on the swimmer to grab a hold of the slippery tail physically emulates the invitational nature of the Christian message – requiring action on the part of the believer. One could, though treading carefully, go a step further and suggest a link to the Protestant, and often Arminian, doctrine of universal atonement which, in promoting the unlimited access of all humankind to salvation, in turns highlights the role of the convert in responding to salvation. The need to maintain a ‘fast’ grip, or to on occasion regrip, in the face of difficulty or ‘temptation’, alludes to the gospel message of grace.⁴⁶ Worth mentioning is that water, to many Khoikhoi in the nineteenth century, was perceived as a living and supernatural being. It took on many forms, some of which, though not all, were life-threatening to humans.⁴⁷ The form most relevant to this discussion is that of the ‘water snake’ which was often blamed for drownings and death by water.⁴⁸ The snake imagery aptly captures the dynamic and sometimes dangerous nature of water as it entangles and suffocates its victim.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Backhouse, *A Narrative of a Visit to the Mauritius and South Africa*, 539.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Hindu mythology relating to the afterlife speaks of the ‘*Vaitarani cow*’. After death the soul is to cross the *Vaitarani*, a filthy river of blood separating earth and the kingdom of Yama (the god of death). Those who committed good deeds throughout their life are able to easily cross the river into ‘heaven’. Sinners however have but a few strategies to cross – one of which being the donation of a cow to a priest. The sinner, gripping onto the tail of the cow, is able to cross the river and be rescued from hell, *Garuda Purana Preta Khanda*, Chapter 47:37-38 & Chapter 5: 123-136; See Sharma, Ridhima, ‘Revisiting the Cow Protection Discourse: Gender, Caste and Labour at a North Indian Gaushala,’ in Avishek Ray and Ishita Banerjee-Dube (eds.) *Nation, Nationalism and the Public Sphere: Religious Politics in India* (New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2020).

⁴⁷ J.M De Prada-Samper, “‘Have Already Seen in the Clouds’: The Nature of the Water-creature among the |xam Bushmen and their Modern Descendants,” *Фолклористика: часопис Удружења фолклориста Србије*, 3(1), 2018, 13-37.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 27; Anne Solomon, ‘Rain stories: Interpreting water beings in the folklore of the southern African Khoisan and their descendants’ in *Оригинални научни рад*, 4 (2019) 196.

⁴⁹For a more detailed analysis of the water-snake and other water-creatures in San belief see Wilhelm H.I Bleek and Lucy Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore* (London: George Allen & Co., Ltd, 1911); Matthias Guenther, *Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); J.M De Prada-Samper, “‘A Partial Clue’: The Genesis and Context of Qing and Orpen’s Conversations’ in J. M. De Prada-Samper, M. du Plessis, J. Hollmann, J. Wientroub, J. Wintjes and J. Wright (eds.) *On the Track of Qing*

Not all Namaqua were strong swimmers and some were unacquainted with the Orange River completely. In 1820 Shaw and a group of Little Namaqua from Leliefontein reached the Orange River. The Namaqua were fearful in their approach of the river. They, according to Shaw, ‘were unaccustomed to seeing the swell of a river, or to hear its tremendous roar over the hidden rocks...some said the river was angry and the torrent might take them away.’⁵⁰ An underlying fear of turbulent bodies of water was likely present in many Namaqua, even those who swam and crossed the river regularly. The group of Leliefontein Namaqua accompanying Shaw were, in their unfamiliarity of the river, an exception. The majority were known to cross the Orange River on occasion, and, during times of aridity at the station, several travelled to the sea to fish.⁵¹ The Little Namaqua’s reliance on, and sometimes fear of, unpredictable bodies of water during the nineteenth century must have influenced the creation of the ‘holding fast by the tail’ metaphor. Rough waters, known to commonly represent evil and destruction in Khoisan belief, could only be traversed and conquered through the steadfast acceptance of Christianity. The mixed pastoral and water-related components of this metaphor compounded its communicative efficacy. It is a striking example of a Namaqua translating the gospel message into a culturally appropriate template which amplified its significance, reception and further transmission by the Namaqua. There would have been many more examples like these which did not make it into the missionary records. Many more would have been communicated in Nama, the preferred language of the African preachers.

The Khoikhoi’s ability to relate to the pastoral tenets of Christianity should be considered as a means by which to explain their receptivity to Christianity in comparison to other groups in southern Africa at the time. The *WMMS Report for 1817* describes the Little Namaqua at Leliefontein as ‘not only willing, but eager to be instructed.’⁵² They were, the report continues,

and Orpen. (Johannesburg: Standard Bank, 2016), 29–101; M. Lange, *Water Stories: Original !Garib Narrations about the Water Snake / Waterstories – Oorspronklike !Garib-vertellings van die Waterslang*. (Johannesburg: UNISA Press, 2015); Chris Low, ‘Khoisan shamanistic relationships with snakes and rain’, *The Journal of Namibian Studies*, 12 (2012), 71 – 96; A. Hoff, ‘The Water Snake of the Khoekhoen and /Xam’, *South African Archaeological Bulletin* 52 (1997) 21–37; A. Hoff, ‘The Water Bull of the /Xam. *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 53 (1998), 109–124; A. Hoff, *The /Xam and the Rain: Views by a Group of Southern San* (Köln: Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2011); Sigrid Schmidt, ‘The Rain Bull of the South African Bushmen’, *African Studies* 38(1989), 201–224.

⁵⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN, B. Shaw, Extracts from journal, 18 November 1820.

⁵¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. IX, Lily-Fountain, 1846.

⁵² *WMMS Reports* 1817, 23.

‘a people prepared for the Lord.’⁵³ Penn posits that the San, amongst whom missions such as that at Zak River consistently seem to have failed, were more resistant to Christianity. A brief perusal of the missionary records sheds initial concern over the validity of this claim. Many accounts can be found of ‘bushmen’ visiting the various mission stations in Little Namaqualand to seek out religious instruction or join in worship.⁵⁴ These stations subsequently supplied neighbouring San groups with African and European missionaries. Bushmanland was the location of Leliefontein’s first outstation, and the field of Jacob Links’ early labours.⁵⁵ Shaw explains though that although called Bushmanland, at the time, many San did not live there as they once had.⁵⁶ The Bushmanland outposts were occupied rather by groups of basters. At Reidfontein and Byzondermeid, the outstations of Steinkopf, mixed groups of followers, including San, were attended to by mostly baster missionaries and teachers.⁵⁷ In 1822 Stephen Kay spoke of the San, who had often been regarded as ‘the lowest caste...placed in general on a level with creation’, in high regard.⁵⁸ To the WMMS Committee, he wrote, ‘...the more I see of the real character of the Bushman, the more I feel disposed to rank him first. He is much more active, ingenious, teachable, and apt to learn, than either the Hottentot, Namacqua, or the Coranna.’⁵⁹ Another account which could be said to discredit the San’s supposed aversion to Christianity is described in a letter of Shaw:

One woman whom I knew not being asked, do you know anything of Jesus, answered: ‘No, I have heard the people speak of him since I came here but I do not know who he is, yet from who I have heard I think he is the sinners help.’ Were you ever by any missionaries to hear the gospel? “No, never. But I met with a bushman about a year ago, who preached to me like a missionary. I do not know whether he had been among missionaries or not. He then lived alone by the Great Orange River. He told me that he had formerly been a great murderer, but that the Lord had given him to see his sins, and power to leave them - He also told me that I must begin to pray to God, and exhorted

⁵³ *WMMS Reports* 1817, 23.

⁵⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 18 November 1820.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, B. Shaw, Leliefontein December 1817.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, B. Shaw, Extracts from Journal, 2 September 1818.

⁵⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (9) 2F, Wimmer, Reidfontein, 27 December 1824.

⁵⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. IV, Extract of a letter from Mr. Kay, Boschuana Country, 20 March 1822, 4.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

me, and said many things. This was the first time I had ever heard anything of the kind, and now I have come to learn by Myn Heer.⁶⁰

This account, of a San evangelising to a Namaqua, is fascinating. Shaw himself was enthralled: 'The Bushman' arrows had touched her heart' he proclaimed, 'and made her long for some healing balm, of which however she was totally ignorant.'⁶¹ It was certainly a rarity at the time and goes against the more general trend which does suggest that the San were unreceptive to Christianity. This is not to say that they were not attracted to Christianity. Many were quick to flock to the waggons of travelling missionaries and to the instruction held at outstations, they were just as quick to 'accept' Christianity.⁶² A conversation held between Schmelen and a San near Henkries shows an almost blind-acceptance of Christianity and its foreign concepts by the San in question:

Question - Did you ever hear of missionaries being in this country?

Answer - No

Question - Did you ever hear of God, or of Jesus Christ?

Answer - No

Question - What actions do you think good and what bad?

Answer - All we do are good, none bad.

Question - Do you ever drink more beer than you ought to do?

Answer - Yes

Question - Is this a good work?

Answer - No, this is bad, which we must confess.

Question - What is the sun, who puts it there, who keeps it from falling on you?

Answer - Indeed we do not know, but have often wondered at it before.

Question - Do you supposed men made the sun, moon, stars, mountains, woods, sea etc?

⁶⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, Extracts from Journal, 12 April 1819.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² At Pella in 1813, Albrecht conversed with a San who believed the gospel to be only for 'the Hottentots or Namaquas not for Bushman'; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2A, Albrecht, Schmelen, Ebner & Helm, 'Extracts from the Missionaries Reports at Kamas from January 1 1813 to July 1813', 9 May 1813.

Answer -We know not.⁶³

After the exchange, Schmelen informed the man, ‘that God had made all these things and kept them in order and that this God loves you, and had sent his only son into the world to redeem us from our sins.’⁶⁴ The San’s response was hasty, and likely not well-considered: ‘This we love to hear, it is pleasant to us.’⁶⁵ It was only when Schmelen continued to explain the immortality of the soul, and God’s eternal judgment of the deeds of men, that the men refused to believe Schmelen. Schmelen does not continue on to explain what became of these men, but it is likely that little in the way of Christianity did. Penn claims that the inability to Christianise the San was not on account of their unreceptiveness, but their over-receptiveness of new ideas and stories.⁶⁶ The belief systems of the San, like many hunter-gatherer groups, were thus, much like their socio-political systems, hyper fluid and very permeable.⁶⁷ New ideas were released just as quickly as they were seized upon. Thus, despite the fact that many Namaqua and San had very similar religious belief systems, the volatility of San socio-religious structures did not allow for a sustainable incorporation of Christianity.⁶⁸

The Xhosa, whose widespread acceptance of Christianity took place later than that of the Khoikhoi, had difficulty understanding certain doctrinal ideas which were incongruous with their existing belief systems. In 1837, from the WMMS station of Clarkebury in Xhosaland, Rev. W. Davis spoke of their inability to grasp ‘the doctrine of atonement.’⁶⁹ This he believed to be a result of the Xhosa having no ‘false god, the wrath of which they are anxious to appease, either by offerings of property, or human sacrifices.’⁷⁰ When taught about the atonement of sins, ‘strange things are brought to their ears, and they have a difficulty in understanding the doctrine in the abstract, and much more so when applied to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.’⁷¹ The

⁶³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 45, Schmelen, Pella - Journey from Pella to explore mouth of Orange River and Great Namaqua and Damara countries, 13 April- 1 June 1814.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Penn, ‘The Northern Cape Frontier Zone’, 431.

⁶⁷ For more on San mythology and religion see Mathias Guenther, ‘Bushman religion and the (non)sense of anthropological theory of religion’, *Sociologus* 29, no. 2, (1979), 102-32; Guenther, *Tricksters and Trancers*; Alan Barnard, ‘Structure and fluidity in Khoisan religious ideas’, *Journal of Religion of Africa* 18 (1988), 216-236; Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 160; Bleek and Lloyd, *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*.

⁶⁸ For a comparison of Khoikhoi and San see Alan Barnard, ‘Aspects of Khoisan religious ideology’ in *Hunters and Herders*, 251 – 262.

⁶⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. VIII, Rev. W.J. Davis, Extract of a letter, dated Butterworth, 19 June 1837, 571.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 572.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Xhosa were accustomed to the concept of sacrifice, but only for the purpose of feeding hungry ancestors rather than appeasing a wrathful god.⁷² The Xhosa, Davis wrote, ‘are under great disadvantages with regard to their understanding this doctrine, compared with most other heathen nations.’⁷³ The Khoikhoi, for example, were accustomed to pacifying an angry god through sacrifice and prayer. This is most evident during *guri ≠ab*, a rain making ceremony and feast, in which the uteruses of pregnant cows are pierced with sticks over a fire. With the smoke rising from the fire, the people dance and pray to *Tsui//Goab*, a supreme being, to send rain. *Tsui//Goab*, as will be discussed shortly, was regarded as a rain god. Thunder, although often bringing with it rain, signalled the anger of *Tsui//Goab*. Valentijn who visited the Cape in 1705, noted that the Khoikhoi showed *Tsui//Goab* much respect, ‘especially during great storms of thunder and lightning...saying, if it thunders, the Great Chief is angry with us.’⁷⁴

Theophilus Hahn, the Nama-speaking son of Rhenish missionary Johannes Hahn, heard a similar account from a Namaqua man who said, ‘The people say if it is thundering, the Lord (!*Khub*, i.e. *Tsui//Goab*) is speaking; he is scolding them.’⁷⁵ During the storm, the Khoikhoi would assemble for a religious dance known as a *!gei* and would sing the ‘Hymn of thunder’ or ‘!*Gurub di /Geis*’:

!Nanumatse!
!Gari-khoi, !Gurutse!
 ≠*Ouse gobare,*
 |*Havië t’am u-hã-tomaö;*
 |*Ubatere*
 ≠*Outago xuige.*
 !*Gurutse !*
 |*Nanus oatse*⁷⁶

⁷² *WMMS Notices*, Vol. VIII, Rev. W.J. Davis, Extract of a letter, dated Butterworth, 19 June 1837, 572; for more on Xhosa belief systems see Hodgson, *God of the Xhosa*; Hodgson, *Ntsikana’s Great Hymn*; Fast, *African Perceptions of the Missionaries and Their Message*; Fast, ‘In at One Ear and out at the Other’; John Henderson Soga, *The Ama-Xosa: Life and Customs* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); Monica Wilson, Francis Wilson and James Elison *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* New (eds.) (Münster: LIT on behalf of the International African Institute, 2009).

⁷³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol. VIII, Rev. W.J. Davis, Extract of a letter, dated Butterworth, 19 June 1837, 571.

⁷⁴ Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 381.

⁷⁵ Theophilus Hahn, *Tsuni-IlGoam*, 91-92.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 59-60.

Son of the Thundercloud!
Thou brave, loud-speaking !*Guru* !
Talk softly, please,
For I have no guilt;
Let me alone! (Forgive me!)
For I have become quite weak.
Thou, O !*Guru* !
Son of the Thundercloud.

These songs and practices suggest that the notion of a wrathful god, or being, requiring placation was one understood by the Khoikhoi. The Namaqua predisposition and receptivity to Christianity can be thus used to explain their emotional, and sometimes theatrical, responses to the gospel message. The missionary records, promoting their work to their home societies, contain countless accounts of these responses.

At Leliefontein the Namaqua responded so loudly and emotionally to this sermon that he was forced to cut it short. The wailing Namaqua, he explained, ‘appeared to feel the burden of sin.’⁷⁷ Episodes like these were common. In 1817 Shaw preached on the woman of Canaan, to which a woman cried ‘Lord, help me.’ ‘The poor creature’, Shaw explained, ‘laid upon the floor, and wept, where she continued long after the people had gone; she afterwards said she was *’al he veel Jondiy*’ (very sinful) which was the cause of her distress.’⁷⁸ These responses were promising to Shaw who was astonished’ at their almost instantaneous acceptance of their sinfulness ‘considering the little they have heard.’⁷⁹ This points to the fact that Christian ideas had infiltrated Little Namaqualand long before Shaw’s arrival. This was likely not the first time the Namaqua heard of their sinfulness. Shaw was, in many respects, reaping the benefits of many who went before him. This is confirmed through the words of one of Shaw’s followers who said, ‘before I heard the gospel it seemed to me as if someone were saying to me you are a sinner; you have committed such and such sins.’⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VIII, Edwards, September 1821, 327.

⁷⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 19 January 1817, 153.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Elphick believes that, unlike other Africans who were not easily convinced of their sinful nature, the Khoikhoi ‘manifested a lively sense of sin.’⁸¹ Jonis April, the missionary assistant at Pella, serves as an apt example of this. He told Schmelen that:

His heart was full of the Lord Jesus Christ and according to his own saying, it was unspeakable for him, such sweetness and love he enjoyed in his heart, as he explained it. He also regretted much his former conduct, which had separated him, to be destitute from the enjoyments of the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour.⁸²

The Namaqua evangelist John Engelbrecht, in a letter to Albrecht dated November 1810, spoke of his sinful nature: ‘...with all the good works I do, I am still full of corruption and unrighteousness.’⁸³ He continued, ‘There are people who think that they are clean in themselves, but they are not clean.’⁸⁴ Furthermore, Engelbrecht believed there to be two types of people in the world, the first ‘thinks he is without guilt,’ and the second, ‘feels guilt in his heart...through hearing the preached word of the Gospel, becomes convinced in his heart that he is a sinner.’⁸⁵ Engelbrecht’s interpretation of guilt is noteworthy. Sin he believed to be innate to man. Only after exposure to the message of the gospel could man come to terms with his sinful nature and the natural feelings of guilt that followed. Engelbrecht is, perhaps unknowingly, describing the Christian notion of ‘conviction’ – the realisation of one’s sin, or sinful nature, through exposure to scripture, intervention of the Holy Spirit or wise counsel. Feelings of guilt, and often shame, can be attached to conviction. Elphick suggests a plausible correlation between the social disintegration of a society and their inclination to experience these remorseful feelings. This explanation seems fitting for the Namaqua who in the waning years of the nineteenth century were in the midst of a social and economic crisis.

Not all responded so positively to Christianity. Many lived upon the mission stations and attended instruction but did not believe, nor did they convert. In 1823 Archbell recorded the testimony of Cornelius who resided at Leliefontein. Cornelius stated that, ‘although the Gospel has been preached so long on Khamies-Berg, he had never till now paid any attention to it.’⁸⁶

⁸¹ Elphick, ‘Africans and the Christian Campaign in Southern Africa.’

⁸² CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 38, Schmelen, February 1814.

⁸³ *LMS Reports*, May 1812, 32-33; See Appendix V.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Archbell, 2 October 1823.

Likewise in 1828 Haddy reported that ‘I do not mean to convey the idea that they have all received and obeyed the gospel: no, much remains yet to be done.’⁸⁷ Many did not understand the scriptures and posed questions to the missionaries:

Who were the scribes and Pharisees? What kind of people were the publicans? Who were the Sadducees? Where, or in what country, was the first man created? Where is the country in which Jesus Christ was born? What kind of being is Satan? How does the light of God come into the sinner’s heart?⁸⁸

Others struggled to accept their innate sinfulness. ‘I do believe that the devil lingers in the hearts of children of disobedience,’ an old Namaqua told Shaw.⁸⁹ Many struggled to understand the notion of prayer. Edwards reported in 1821 that, “Cupido said ‘I pray but can find no answer to my prayer’”⁹⁰ Another said, ‘I pray and sometimes find it good, but frequently my prayer comes to have no effect.’⁹¹ Even Jacob Links initially struggled with the concept of prayer. In his letter, he explains response to hearing the Namaqua messenger speak of Jesus and sin:

By means of his conversation I was very sorrowful and much affected, and knew not what to do. My mother having some leaves of an old Dutch Psalm-book, I thought if I eat them I might there find comfort. I ate the leaves up, but my sorrow was not lessened. I then got upon the roof of an old house to pray, thinking that if I were high the Lord would hear me better; but I found no deliverance. I then ate all sorts of bitter bushes, for I thought the Lord might possibly have mercy on me. But my heaviness did not then go away. I then heard that I must give my cause over to Jesus, and tried to do so, by which I found much lighter.⁹²

Jacob Links certainly exhibited a remorseful response to his sinfulness, a feeling which he did not know how to shed. His attempts at doing so, though likely comical to the reader, indicate a misunderstanding, or partial understanding of the gospel message. His brother Peter Links faced the same difficulties and was recorded to have wandered about eating bitter bushes in an

⁸⁷ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 128.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 89.

⁸⁹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 24 July 1819.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, Edwards, 18 June 1821.

⁹¹ *Ibid*.

⁹² See Appendix III.

attempt to atone for his sinfulness. He later told Shaw that ‘I never found peace until I heard that Jesus came to save the lost.’⁹³

By 1818 however a conversation between Barnabas Shaw and Jacob suggests that he had by then reached a place of understanding and found both God and the bible to be a remedy to his unease.

A few evenings ago I asked Jacob the following questions:

Question: Do you really believe the Bible to be the word of truth?

Answer: Yes, I believe it is no fable but the word of god.

Question: What ground have you for this believing it to be the word of God?

Answer: O Sir how can you ask such a question. If anything had wound me severely should I not know it to be a sharp instrument? Now the bible Sir has wounded my soul. The bible discovered to me that I am a sinner which nothing else ever did. The Bible describes my state so exactly, that I am certain of its truth. I know by experience Sir that the bible makes lore, but I know also that it heals and comforts me.⁹⁴

7.3 Jesus Christ and Tsui//Goab

The continuity which existed between Namaqua and baster religious ideas and those of Christianity, was, in combination with other more material factors, crucial to the more effective conversion of the Namaqua over other African groups. The notion of ‘conversion’ should be held lightly and has lately been under increased scrutiny for its usefulness in explaining early African encounters with Christianity.⁹⁵ The form that early Christianity took amongst the Namaqua who first professed to believe in it strongly suggests that very few converted

⁹³ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 92.

⁹⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Shaw, 2 October 1818.

⁹⁵ For more on the concept of ‘conversion’ see Neal Salisbury, ‘Embracing Ambiguity: Native Peoples and Christianity in Seventeenth-Century North America,’ *Ethnohistory* 50, no. 2 (Spring 2003); Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, (eds.) *Conversion: Old Worlds New* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2003); Volz, *African Teachers*, 175- 179; H. Fisher, ‘Conversion Reconsidered: Some Historical Aspects of Religious Conversion in Black Africa,’ *Africa* 43, no. 1 (1973) 27-40; Landau, *Realm of the Word*; Robin Horton, ‘African Conversion,’ *Africa* 41, no 20 (1971) 85-108; Robin Horton, ‘On the Rationality of Conversion’ (part 1), *Africa* 45, no. 3 (1975), 219-235; Robin Horton, ‘On the Rationality of Conversion’ (part 2), *Africa* 45, no. 4 (1975), 373-399; Comaroff, *Revelation and Revolution, Vol. 1*, 250.

‘completely’, in the traditional sense, but rather negotiated the extent to which they embraced Christianity. Their prior religious beliefs and practices were not entirely relinquished.⁹⁶ Newer Christian ideas were rather added to the metaphorical pot. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century the Namaqua and basters can be said to have adopted a patchwork system of meaning, which, this thesis posits, can be best understood as ‘Nama-Christian’. These processes can be aptly explained through the concept of ‘translation’.⁹⁷ Religious historians have described translation as the filtration of new religious teachings through existing ideas and frameworks.⁹⁸ Bosch claims that translation has always been central to the Christian religion: ‘the Christian faith never exists except as ‘translated’ into a culture.’⁹⁹ In Little Namaqualand translation took on a multiplicity of forms, three of which are considered most important in this thesis - the role of Namaqua and basters as evangelists, the adoption of appropriate metaphors and frameworks through which to express foreign ideas and the continuity between old and new religious ideas and practices.

A pause is necessary before beginning the discussion on the continuities between Namaqua and Christian beliefs and its material expression. As per the theory of translation, no religious doctrine is ever fixed but is constantly undergoing translation and change. In Little Namaqualand, the transmission of Christianity did not follow a traditional or linear trajectory. It was in many sense a crucible, home to highly diverse and mobile populations who constantly brushed shoulders with migrants, neighbouring polities and travellers. The European missionaries were not the first to introduce Christianity into the region and thus the entanglement of belief systems pre-dated their arrival. For the purpose of succinctness this thesis attempts to briefly pause, for a moment in time, to analyse and untangle the hybridised version of Christianity which the inhabitants of Little Namaqualand forged during the early nineteenth century.

⁹⁶ See Elbourne, ‘Khoisan Uses of Christianity’ in *Blood Ground*, 186-188.

⁹⁷ David J. Silverman, ‘Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-Century Martha’s Vineyard,’ *The William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2005), 146.

⁹⁸ For more on translation see Lamin O. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989); Marilyn Robinson Waldman, Olabiyi Babalola Yai, and Lamin Sanneh. ‘Translatability: A Discussion,’ *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22, no. 2 (1992), 159–72; David Bosch. *Transforming mission: Paradigm shifts in theology of mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002).

⁹⁹ David Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 458.

An extensive literature on the religious beliefs of the Khoikhoi already exists and it is not the purpose of this chapter to regurgitate it in any way.¹⁰⁰ These beliefs will only be discussed insofar as they interact with, or can be connected to, newer Christian beliefs. The Namaqua's pre-existing idea of a supreme, god-like being and a malicious trickster is the most important of these continuities for obvious reasons. Seidenfaden and Albrecht's early descriptions of the Great Namaqua seem to disregard this. They suggest that they had 'no religion; but superstition'.¹⁰¹ The Little Namaqua, Shaw noted, generally have no idea of 'a Supreme Being'.¹⁰² In 1809 Albrecht did however note the prevalence of conjurers, men with the ability 'to make it rain, or to send lions in one or other village and to cure men of all sorts of maladies, which they undertake for an ox or sheep.'¹⁰³

What is noteworthy is that the missionaries travelling into Great Namaqualand, Albrecht, Seidenfaden and later Shaw, provided ethnographically styled descriptions of the Great Namaqua. No records of the same nature were taken of the 'Little Namaqua' or baster groups in Little Namaqualand. One can speculate that the Great Namaqua presented as a more 'intact' and 'traditional' society than the Little Namaqua, who had been exposed to baster groups and colonial farmers at much a much earlier date. After his journey to Great Namaqualand, Shaw gives a colourful account of the 'exceedingly superstitious' Great Namaqua, whose 'sorcerers exercise various tricks amongst them.'¹⁰⁴ The various sacrifices and rituals practiced are also mentioned. In spite of these accounts, Shaw maintains that 'they are totally in the dark respecting every truth even in natural religion.'¹⁰⁵ Seidenfaden turned a blind eye to these shamanistic characters, regarding them as mere 'follies' unworthy of further attention.¹⁰⁶ Even Schmelen and Wimmer, arguably the most Namaqua-sympathetic of the European missionaries, failed to make any detailed mention of their religious ideas. The Namaqua's 'ignorance of religion' would have better served and justified the missionary agenda.

¹⁰⁰ For more on Khoikhoi beliefs see Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*; Peter Kolbe, *The Present State of the Cape of Good-Hope*; Barnard, 'Aspects of Khoisan Religious Ideology'; Hahn, *Tsuni-llGoam*; Winifred Hoernlé and Peter Carstens, *The Social Organization of the Nama*; Barnard, 'Structure and fluidity in Khoisan religious ideas.'

¹⁰¹ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811; CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 1E, A. Albrecht, 'Observations made in the country of the Great Namaquas...'

¹⁰² Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 41.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 'Extracts from the journal of a visit to Great Namaqualand, containing also a brief History of the Namacquas', 18 November 1820.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Seidenfaden, Report for the year 1811, Salt River, 26 June 1811.

Theophilus Hahn provides perhaps the most detailed description of Namaqua religion and mythology. His work is based on ethnographic accounts relayed to him by Namaqua informants during the late nineteenth century. Unfortunately, for the sake of this discussion, Hahn acknowledges that he was cautious in omitting accounts of myths which displayed clear missionary influence. Despite his noble attempts one cannot conclude his data to have been void of all Christian influence which had penetrated Little Namaqualand by the eighteenth century. Hahn posits that the ‘superstitions’ of the Namaqua were considered satanic by the missionaries and thus little mention made thereof in the missionary record.¹⁰⁷

In 1819, Edwards recorded a conversation that he had with a young Namaqua woman which suggests the presence of a supreme-being in Namaqua belief:

One evening in May I asked the following question to one of the young female hottentots – Do you believe that God created all things by his own power? Her answer: I now believe there is a God who made all things by his own power but before I heard the word of God I frequently thought in my own mind that there must be a sort of a thing who made the great rocks and mountains which I saw every day yet at the same time I did not know that I had a soul.¹⁰⁸

Two years earlier, an account recorded by Ebner at Pella had shed light on Namaqua religious beliefs. An aged and unnamed Namaqua relayed the following tale to him:

Some of the aged Namaqua say: That there once had been a dispute between two men, one, said they, had been the devil, and the other a mighty man (by the mighty man they mean God). These two men, said they, were wrestling together at a large hole. The devil was endeavouring to cast the might man into the hole but we was not able to do it he was rather conquered by the mighty man who got the victory and cast the devil into the large hole, where he died. And because the mighty man conquered the devil, a great Lamb had been killed of joy and gladness.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Hahn, *Tsuni-IlGoam*, 51.

¹⁰⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 6 September 1819.

¹⁰⁹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3A, Ebner, 8 October 1817.

This is the first allusion that the missionary record in question makes to the presence of a god and devil-like figure, and the feud which existed between them, in Namaqua belief. The tale strongly resembles one relayed to Hahn by an aged Namaqua informant:

Tsui//Goab went to war with another chief, //Gaunab, because the latter always killed great numbers of *Tsui//Goab*'s people. In the fight, however, *Tsui//Goab* was repeatedly overpowered by //Gaunab, but in every battle the former grew stronger; and at last he was so strong and big that he easily destroyed //Gaunab by giving him one blow behind the ear. While //Gaunab was expiring he gave his enemy a blow to the knee. Since that day the conqueror of //Gaunab received the name *Tsui//Goab*, 'sore knee' or 'wounded knee.' He could do wonderful things, which no other man could do, because he was very wise. He could tell what would happen in future times. He died several times, and several times he rose again. And whenever he came back to us, there were great feasting and rejoicings...*Tsui//Goab* gave every man plenty of cattle and sheep, because he was very rich. He gives rain, he makes the clouds, he lives in the clouds, and he makes our cows and sheep fruitful...*Tsu//Goab* lives in a beautiful heaven, and //Gaunab lives in a dark heaven, quite separated from the heaven of *Tsu//Goab*.¹¹⁰

These anecdotes consider the supreme being of the Khoikhoi - *Tsuni-||Goam*. *Tsuni-||Goam*, or *Tsui//Goab* is believed to be 'a great powerful chief of the Khoikhoi; in fact, he was the first Khoikhoi, from whom all the Khoikhoi tribes took their origin.'¹¹¹ According to Wikar he created the earth from which the ancestors of the Khoikhoi were birthed.¹¹² Travellers had since the early eighteenth century made mention of *Tsuni-||Goam*.¹¹³ Moffat, during his travels to Great Namaqualand made enquiries regarding the name that the Namaqua used, if any, to denote the supreme being. He recorded that 'the name they use is *Tsui//kuap*, or as some tribes

¹¹⁰ Hahn, *Tsuni-||Goam*, 61.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 377.

¹¹³ Peter Kolbe noted that the Khoikhoi 'believe in a Supreme Being, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and of every Thing in them; the Arbiter of the World, through whole Omnipotence all Things live and move and have their being... the Hottentots call him *Gounja* or *Gounja Ticquoa*; that is, the God of all Gods.' Kolbe, *The Present State of the Cape of Good-Hope*, 93; French Jesuit missionary Guy Tachard visited the Cape between 1685 and 1687 and, referring to the Khoikhoi, commented that 'they believ'd there was a God, who made Heaven and Earth, and caus'd it to thunder and rain; and provided them with Nourishment, and with the Skins of Beasts for their apparel.'; The exact derivation of '*Tsui//Goab*' is under speculation. Hahn believes it to mean 'the Red Dawn' while Kronlein interprets the name in his Nama-German dictionary to 'painfully invoked one'; Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 377.

pronounce it *Uti'kuap*.'¹¹⁴ An aged 'sorcerer or doctor (*!gaiab*)' informed Moffat that *Tsui//kuap* was a 'notable warrior of great physical strength; that in a desperate struggle with another chieftain he received a wound in the knee; but having vanquished his enemy, his name was lost in the mighty combat which rendered the nation independent; for no one could conquer the *Tsui//kuap*.'¹¹⁵ Ebner also made mention of the term *Suquap*, which he believed to have also translated to 'sore knee.'¹¹⁶ These reports also show the prevalence of an evil being in Namaqua belief. This evil deity is most commonly referred to as *//Gaunab*. In 1819 Cupido Links told Edwards of an old Namaqua tradition in which, before a long journey, the Namaqua would say 'we shall return if the Devil will preserve us.'¹¹⁷ Schmelen on occasion was known to utilise the expression 'Tsoeikwap' (i.e. *Tsui//Goab*) for God and 'Kauaap' (i.e. *//Gaunab*) for the devil.¹¹⁸ The missionaries quickly capitalised on the Namaqua's conceptualisation of *//Gaunab* and replaced it with that of the devil.

In his *Reisenach Süd Africa*, published in 1829, Ebner provides a more detailed and likely revised version of the anecdote he recorded at Pella in 1817:

They did not know of a God, but they believed in a devil, whom they called Gaūab (i.e. *//Gaunab*). This *//Gaunab* fights with an old man, who is much more clever and wiser than himself. Because this old man could not bear any longer the wickedness of *//Gaunab*, he made a deep hole and planted sharp-pointed sticks at the bottom of it. And one day this old man challenged *//Gaunab* for a fight to this hole; and because *//Gaunab* was not as strong as this wise old man, the old man threw him into the hole, where he perished. Rejoicing over this victory, the people slaughtered a big fat sheep.¹¹⁹

Of the 1817 version of this anecdote Ebner commented: "This history brought me into my mind, that perhaps they must have heard for many years ago, that they by an old tradition knew, that Christ had suffered for our sins, that he as the Lamb of God has conquered the devil, but by dying and blood shedding. That history gave me opportunity to acquaint them with God, the mighty or as they express it also; 'the old man'"¹²⁰ What Ebner perceives as an alignment

¹¹⁴ Moffat, *Missionary Labours*, 258.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Johann Leonhardt Ebner, *Reisenach Süd Africa*, (Berlin, 1829), 340.

¹¹⁷ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 18 July 1819.

¹¹⁸ Hahn, *Tsuni-IlGoam*, 49.

¹¹⁹ Ebner, *Reisenach Süd Africa*, 237.

¹²⁰ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 3A, Ebner, 8 October 1817.

between Namaqua and Christian belief systems could also be perceived as the early entanglement of both systems. Many Namaqua believed Christianity to be a mere revelation from a higher being that they already believed in and worshipped, a being with the ability to intervene in earthly things. It was the idea of Jesus that was altogether new. By the early nineteenth century though it is likely that the Namaqua had been exposed to these ideas through interaction with colonists and baster groups from the Cape. Ebner's anecdote is thus a classic example of religious translation, suggesting the creation of hybridised belief, rather than the outright rejection of the old in favour of the new.

When Alexander visited Nisbett-Bath in 1836 he came across a group of Namaqua whom he deemed completely ignorant of religion. One of the group relayed an anecdote to him in which the enmeshment of the old and new is unquestionable:

The sun, by some of the people of this benighted land, is considered to be a mass of fat, which descends nightly to the sea, where it is laid hold of by the chief of the white man's ship, who cuts a portion of tallow off it, and giving it a kick, it bounds away, sinks under the wave, goes round below, and then comes up again in the east next morning, its fat having again grown.¹²¹

Moravian records also provide anecdotes in which Khoikhoi seem to retroactively include the arrival of missionaries and European into existing Khoikhoi traditions.¹²² Whether these traditions were merely adjusted to account for the presence of Europeans, or whether they were wholly new and produced more recently cannot be discerned.

Other early accounts of Namaqua belief suggest the existence of other lesser deities. The prophet, *Heitsi-eibib* was the most prominent in the missionary record. Many Namaqua considered him as their great-grandfather, a rich man, born after his mother chewed a type of grass. He is believed to have died in many places and his graves, in the form of a pile of stones, were scattered around Little Namaqualand. Upon passing these graves, Namaqua were on many occasions reported to throw stones upon the pile. In other cases offerings of honey and beer were left upon the piles. Thunberg, an early traveller to many Khoikhoi groups at the end

¹²¹ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 168.

¹²² Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 177.

of the eighteenth century, noted this practice: ‘By the side of the road I observed a stone heap covered with branches and shrubs, on which each of our Hottentots, in passing by, threw some branches. Asking them for their reason in doing so, they answered that a Hottentot was buried there.’¹²³ Alexander offers more insight into this, explaining that, ‘...if the Namaquas are asked what these are, they say that Heije-eibib – their great father – is below the heap; they do not know what he is like, or what he does; they only imagine that he also came from the East, and had plenty of sheep and goats, and when they add a stone or a branch to the heap, they mutter, ‘Give us plenty of cattle.’”¹²⁴ The earliest account of the worship of *Heitsi-eibib* in southern Africa can be found in 1665. During his travels at the Cape, Corporal Müller witnessed a group of Khoikhoi women who, with a green branch in their hands, laid their faces upon a large stone and murmured words which they explained to Müller, while pointing above, to be ‘*Hette hie*’.¹²⁵ Early travellers to the Xhosa also recorded this tradition, which they called *Izivivane*, which must have been borrowed from the Khoikhoi. While dropping the stone on the pile, the Xhosa would offer a prayer to *Heitsi-eibib* for ‘success in hunting, plentiful cattle and other material benefits.’¹²⁶ Neglect of the ritual, in turn, would lead to misfortune.¹²⁷ Hodgson states that the prayers of the Xhosa ‘were never as elaborate as those of the Khoi.’¹²⁸ It is unclear what she means by this but one can assume it is a reference to the length and detail of the prayers.

In his *Memorials* Barnabas Shaw noted the prevalence of these piles of stones and the Namaqua habit of placing a stone or branch upon passing them. He failed however to note or understand the religious significance of such acts for the Namaqua. This is understandable considering the fact that upon the death of the Namaqua a large pile of stones was often placed upon the grave site with the very practical intention of warding off wild animals. It is uncertain whether all grave sites were considered to be those of *Heitsi-eibib* or whether the Namaqua placed stones and tributes upon any grave site and heap of stones that they passed. What is clear however is that the act was not a meaningless one. Peter Kolbe notes that,

¹²³ Carl Peter Thunberg, *Travels in Europe, Africa, and Asia: Performed Between the Years 1770 and 1779* (London: Richardson, 1793), 84.

¹²⁴ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 166.

¹²⁵ Hahn, *Tsuni-llGoam*, 36.

¹²⁶ Hodgson, *God of the Xhosa*, 83-84.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

these Hottentots have neither churches nor chapels...but they consider in their mind that certain places are sacred...those places are to be found in the deserts, and consist of stone heaps, others are rivers,...and they never pass such a deserted spot or hill without offering worship to the saint who, according to their belief, inhabits the place, and who has done so much good for many of them.¹²⁹

Shaw clearly did not perceive the act as a religious one. This is evidenced after the death of Shaw's second child at the end of 1816. Shaw was assisted by the chief's sister to consign the infant's remains to the earth. He explains, 'we placed it in a solitary grave, situated at the foot of a rock, which was surrounded by straggling brushwood, putting stones upon it after the manner of the natives, both to prevent its being carried away by wild beasts, and to distinguish the place of sepulture.'¹³⁰ In 1833, almost twenty years later, Shaw and his wife visited Leliefontein. Here, some Namaqua led them to the grave of his second-born. Shaw comments that 'We could not refrain from adopting the custom of some of the Namaquas, who, on passing the graves of their friends, put on them additional stones.'¹³¹ Shaw's seemingly ignorant adoption of Namaqua religious practices is noteworthy, but even more noteworthy is that almost twenty years after the arrival of missionaries in Little Namaqualand, many Christian Namaqua still continued these traditions. The spiritual weight that these practices held is evidenced by the actions of Kakkerlak in the Overberg. Whenever he came across a pile of stone placed upon a grave he was reported to have furiously scattered the stones.¹³²

Although a prominent figure in Namaqua mythology, *Heitsi-eibib* was not perceived as a supreme being nor did he possess creative powers. The presence of a lesser deity in addition to a supreme being in pre-Christian Khoikhoi belief frameworks could arguably have provided a malleable template in which to situate God and Jesus. The notion of a higher or supreme being seems to be one easily accepted and adopted by many Namaqua converts and understandably so considering their prior understandings of *Tsui//Goab*.

¹²⁹ Kolbe, *The present state of the Cape of Good Hope*, 418.

¹³⁰ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 84.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 136.

¹³² Malherbe, 'The Life and Times,' 370.

7.4 The Kaross and the Snake

What was evidently a wholly new concept for the Namaqua to fathom was that of the soul and the afterlife – ‘When a man dies does he die forever?’¹³³ The missionaries partook in several conversations with their converts surrounding the idea of the soul. Cupido Links told Edwards that, ‘Before we heard God's word we were very dark and ignorant and did not know anything about the soul that must live for ever’¹³⁴ Another told him that ‘we were never troubled about our souls, we supposed that when dead all was dead with us.’¹³⁵ Another, ‘I never heard that there was a God, or that man had a soul. I knew not but people died the same as beasts.’¹³⁶ A Namaqua from Pella told Schmelen that he could not believe he had a soul but instead, according to his ideas, thought that ‘when he died no more was to be expected for him.’¹³⁷ The Namaqua, however, slowly seemed to grasp the concept of the soul. An old woman explained to Shaw: ‘This body is quite different from the soul it is from the ground, but the soul belongs to another place. All is praise in heaven; it is a happy place.’¹³⁸ The concept of heaven was at times so appealing to the Namaqua that they longed for death. An elderly woman told Shaw that:

I sometimes wish dat (sic.) I might die, because believers do not die de (sic.) same as unbelievers; de (sic.) people dat (sic.) know Jesus not are terrified when they die; when their eyes be closed, and we think him dead, he is not dead; the soul, tho we thought it gone, returns again, it is unwilling to leave the body, and is at last forced to go. De (sic.) who believe and know Jesus, is willing to go.¹³⁹

Another elderly woman known as Troy spoke of a good hope that she possessed. She explained ‘it is the sweetness that I sometimes find in my heart, when I think, one day the Lord shall bring me to heaven.’¹⁴⁰ Their newly found knowledge of the soul brought the Namaqua a constant anxiety about the state of their souls which had to have played a central role in their

¹³³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, ‘Extract of a letter from Edward, Buffels-River Hills, Namaqualand, 22 August 1822.’

¹³⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 18 July 1819.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, Edwards, 6 September 1819.

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, Shaw, 22 January 1820.

¹³⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 38, Schmelen, 14 December 1813.

¹³⁸ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 January 1820.

¹³⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 20 February 1818.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, B. Shaw, 11 January 1819.

acceptance of Christianity. This concern caused many to seek out baptism. The missionaries however were hesitant to baptise and chose to put their candidates for baptism through a probation period of sorts. Their conduct would be under scrutiny for a period of months and their knowledge of the gospel and the ordinance of baptism tested publicly before they were found to be eligible for baptism.¹⁴¹ Edwards in particular seemed to understand the political weight that baptism held. They ‘are always wishful to get the name of *Criste Menchen* (or Christians),’ he explains, ‘whether God has begun a work of grace upon their hearts or not.’¹⁴² It was not always easy for the missionaries to keep tabs of their candidates, especially considering the constant movement of the Namaqua to and from the station. In his 1811 report Seidenfaden explained his hesitancy to baptise on account of the wandering habits of his people. He postponed baptism completely until he could find a proper abode where his people could remain and ‘lead as well a civilised and moral as religious mode of living.’¹⁴³ On another occasion Schmelen denied the baptism of a Namaqua outright because, ‘his conduct was not upright and besides this he had two wives, and would not separate from one.’¹⁴⁴ Yet many still met the necessary requirements and were baptised accordingly.

The ordinance and religious ramifications of baptism were evidently understood by many of the baptismal candidates. The act of being lifted up out of the water during baptism symbolised the believers’ re-birth and new life in Christ. The Namaqua were able to employ more fitting metaphor for their re-birth. In August 1814, Ebner had the following conversation with Zwartboi, a candidate for baptism, at Pella:

One of our people called Zwartboi, who are to be baptised, was asked if he also would make a covenant with Christ.

Answer - Yes, I stood long enough behind and would help myself and then come to Jesus – but I see now it is in vain. I am poor and weak, and without help.

Question - But are you a sinner, and do you hate your sin?

Answer - Yes, I am a sinner, and I hate also my sin, but Christ must cleanse me from them when I will be happy. I have also cast of my old Kaross (made of sheep-skin) and

¹⁴¹ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (5) 2B, Ebner, 1 April 1813; *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 20 February 1818; *WMMS Reports*, Vol X, J. Bailie, Extract from District Report 1846.

¹⁴² *WMMS Notices*, Vol III, Edwards, 4 November 1821.

¹⁴³ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (4) 5B, Seidenfaden, 21 September 1811.

¹⁴⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (12) 4B, 22 November 1831.

got a new one which is also warmer and better than my old one (an allusion to Jude 23 and Hbr 10).

Question - But do you think it is easy to cast of your old Kaross?

Answer - I know it shall be difficult for me but the Lord shall assist and help me.¹⁴⁵

The replacement of an old and worn kaross for a new and warmer one is perhaps the most powerful metaphor for conversion and rebirth present in the Namaqualand missionary records. It is also a pertinent example of translation. Many other Namaqua framed their understandings and expressions of Christianity through imagery of the kaross. One of Ebner's converts stated, 'I wished that I could jump out of my old Kaross'.¹⁴⁶ A Namaqua at Leliefontein shared his testimony with Shaw, in which the kaross is central:

I am more than ever convinced that all things come from God. We are naked he clothes us with Karosses (cloaks of skin). We are hungry he gives us meat. He gives food both for soul and body, he gave Jesus. Heaven is a happy place, I have tasted it on earth. It is sweeter than honey.¹⁴⁷

The metaphor of 'casting off the old kaross' is symbolic of the nature of the Namaqua negotiation of Christianity. Most noteworthy is that in Zwartboi's metaphor the kaross was not entirely rejected as a garment. It was not replaced by a jacket or a more westernised item of clothing. It was replaced instead with another kaross albeit in a newer and better condition. Functionally the kaross served the needs of the Namaqua who wore it and thus there was no need for something completely new.

This is interesting because on a material level the Namaqua proved very eager to obtain European clothing. Shaw noted that many wore whatever they could get their hands on, despite often looking strange. His wagon driver upon a trip to the Cape, procured many cotton

¹⁴⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 40, Albrecht & Ebner, 10 August 1814; 'And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh' Jude 23 (KJV); 'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' Hebrews 10:19-22 (KJV).

¹⁴⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 40, Albrecht & Ebner, 10 August 1814.

¹⁴⁷ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 10 March 1820.

handkerchiefs and wore many of them on his head and around his neck. Jacob Links is reported to have laid his kaross aside when he interpreted in the chapel. He replaced his kaross with his mother's red baize petticoat which Shaw reports 'answered as a gown'.¹⁴⁸ Trooi, the sister of the chief at Leliefontein, wore a white cap on her head when attending chapel. When Alexander travelled through the Tweerivier valley near Leliefontein in 1836 he came across a group of Little Namaqua living in mat huts – 'The men were decently dressed in leopard skin or tanned jackets and trousers; and the women in sheepskin karosses and tanned petticoats.'¹⁴⁹ What is evident here is that on a superficial level the Namaqua were not attached to their karosses and were willing to readily replace them with European garments. On a spiritual level though, the Namaqua were unwilling to fully relinquish old beliefs and practices.

A very brief comment should be inserted here to highlight the poignancy of Jacob Links replacing his kaross with a petticoat when preaching in the chapel. It is a further example of translation and the Namaqua's selective adoption of Christian ideas. Another statement made by a Great Namaqua confirms this: 'there is a need for God at the station but not in the veld.'¹⁵⁰ Perhaps, despite its similarities to Namaqua religion on many levels, Christianity did not sufficiently answer to the Namaqua's nomadic lifestyle.

The missionary records allude to other metaphors which the Namaqua adopted in their translation of Christianity. An old Namaqua told Shaw, 'Mynheer, before we received the gospel, we were like an egg, before the chicken is hatched; we were surrounded with darkness, and could see nothing, but when the gospel came, it broke the shell, and we now see the light of day.'¹⁵¹ The imagery of dark and light is a metaphor found throughout the bible. Matthew 4:16 states: 'The people who sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.'¹⁵² The reference to the egg is a new one.

Another Namaqua woman explained that 'tigers in general do not like to be seen but hide themselves behind a bush or after a large rock in order to spring upon their pray unaware. Exactly so said the old Namaqua does the 'Devil lay in wait for sinners therefore we must

¹⁴⁸ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 116.

¹⁴⁹ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 55.

¹⁵⁰ Dederling, 'Southern Namibia,' 21.

¹⁵¹ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 113.

¹⁵² Matthew 4:16 (KJV).

always watch and pray that the devil does no harm.¹⁵³ Similarly, the snake played a very central role in Namaqua symbolism. One of Ebner's converts at Peace Mountain likened her salvation to 'a serpent when skinning she creepeth out of her old skin, leaving also her old hole and running away from it into another and never cometh again into the old hold; so we must skin of our sins and creep out of the old state and live a new life, and never return any more to our old former state.'¹⁵⁴ The skin-shedding of the snake is here used to explain Christian re-birth.

Ebner recorded that Zwartboi's daughter Elizabeth also considered this metaphor, albeit in a negative light. She told him with 'a sighing heart' that 'I wish that I could skin off (*afstroppen*) all my sin, and run away from them, like we do before a serpent'.¹⁵⁵ The metaphor is multifaced, also referring to the Namaqua's fearful response to the sight of a snake – a continuity between biblical comparisons of the serpent to the devil. This can be seen in a conversation between Shaw and a Namaqua:

Woman said, she felt something like *een slange* (or serpent) in her heart, which so tormented her, that she had the greatest hatred thereto: but knew not how to get rid of it; I told her of course, that 'the seed of the women' was manifested that she should bruise the serpents head, and destroy the works of the evil.¹⁵⁶

Shaw's explanation echoes the message of Genesis 3:14-15 which alludes to Christ's defeat of the devil and sin on the cross: "So the Lord God said to the serpent,

Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals
You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will
put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring(or seed) and hers
and she will crush(or strike) your head, and you will strike his heel.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Eighteenth and nineteenth century accounts of the Namaqualand region generally mistake leopards for 'tigers'. Leopards were known to prey on the cattle of Namaqua groups in and around the Kamiesberg.

¹⁵⁴ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 5A, Ebner, 28 August 1816.

¹⁵⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 40, Albrecht & Ebner, 10 August 1814.

¹⁵⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 19 January 1817.

¹⁵⁷ Genesis 3:14-15 (NIV).

The snake was central to many Namaqua and San beliefs. The Corannas believed that when *Tsūi//Goab* made the first man, the snake too was present. This can be said to align with the presence of the snake alongside Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In Namaqua beliefs it was in most cases connected to water, as the ‘water-creature’ signifies.¹⁵⁸ A snake, known as *Gábeb* meaning ‘the one who lives in a hole’, was believed to occupy every fountain.¹⁵⁹ If the snake were to leave the fountain, or die, the fountain would dry up completely. The presence of snakes moving about prior to the rainy season was believed by the Namaqua as a sign of an abundance of rain ahead. Hahn believes the connection between the snake and water can be explained etymologically between the fountain water *|au-s* (singular feminine) and the snake *|au-b* (singular masculine). The *|au* meaning ‘to flow’.¹⁶⁰ According to the Khoikhoi custom of the daughter being named after the father, the fountain water is considered to be the daughter of the snake.¹⁶¹ The body of the snake is also associated with ideas of rain: ‘Its roundness, coupled with length, is related to gendered and personified cloud formations that become angry and beat a person with their lightning or bring rain and easy living.’¹⁶² The negative associations of water is relevant here, linking the ‘water-creature’ to bad weather.¹⁶³ The serpent played as much of a role in Namaqua cosmologies as it did in Christian rhetoric. Many other interesting metaphors can be found in the missionary record which describe the state of the soul.¹⁶⁴

7.5. Moonlight Dancers

The physical manifestations of Christianity amongst believers in Little Namaqualand also indicate an amalgamation of old and new practices. Many accounts of these are littered in the

¹⁵⁸ See page 245.

¹⁵⁹ Hahn, *Tsuni-llGoam*, 7; An extensive literature exists which considers the relationship between water and serpents in Khoisan religion, see page 245, fn49.

¹⁶⁰ Hahn, *Tsuni-llGoam*, 78.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Chris Low, ‘KhoeSan shamanistic relationships with snakes and rain’, 93.

¹⁶³ See page 245; Solomon, ‘Rain stories: Interpreting water beings in the folklore of the southern African Khoisan and their descendants’, 197.

¹⁶⁴ A Namaqua told Ebner: ‘Compare men's heart still dead in sin and trespass with that of a *tondedoos* or English tinderbox, and say: the tinderbox when shut, no life is, in the tinder but as soon as we open the box and make fire with stone and steel the sparks make the tinder a life. So they said is: our heart dead by nature, and shut like the box but when the Spirit of God comes he opened the heart and taketh away the cover and inflamed or kindled it with his heavenly sparks and he got life but if we sin again wilfully we cover our heart again, and lose the life of God becoming like the tinder when we shut the box’, CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (6) 5A, Ebner, 28 August 1816.

missionary records. Modes of prayer are one of such. In 1812 Sass recorded from Silverfontein an account of Cornelius Kok's daughter in law:

The word of God seems to make deep impression in her heart, so that she in the early morning goes into the bushes to pray to Him, who has promised to answer the prayer of poor laden sinners. O what a blissful sight has this sometimes been for me, she seemed to go into the bushes, but she indeed was going to heaven.¹⁶⁵

In 1818 Kitchingman too recorded that, 'whenever I have taken a walk in the morning before the rising of the sun, I have frequently found people praying among the bushes; this makes me hope that there is some concern for salvation among them.'¹⁶⁶ Similarly Paul Engelbrecht reported to Schmelen that, 'when he went this morning into the field to pray he found almost behind every bush one praying so that he was obliged to run ever so far before he could find a place where he could pray.'¹⁶⁷ This practice of prayer at dawn, often facing an easterly direction, correlates closely with the worship of *Tsui//Goab*. The Namaqua, Hahn notes, would 'go out away from the house as soon as the first beams of the dawn shoot up in the East, and to kneel behind a bush to pray.'¹⁶⁸ '*//Goab*' in *Tsui//Goab* translates to 'the dawn' which seemingly suggests the centrality of this practice to Namaqua conceptualisations of *Tsui//Goab*. Many Namaqua, influenced by these ideas, were under the impression that prayer would only be deemed acceptable from the location of the bushes. In 1820, Jacob Links recorded a visit with a sickly woman.¹⁶⁹ Upon questioning as to her state, the woman told Links that 'she prayed but did not go into the bushes for prayer. I told her that the Lord would hear and answer hear prayer as she laid in the hut.'¹⁷⁰ In 1818, Shaw faced a similar anomaly when a young boy informed him that 'I often feel a desire to pray, but when I am about to go, (amongst the bushes) I feel afraid lest the tigers should come and catch me. I never prayed but once, and that is now some time since. I don't mind the jackals, but I fear the tigers.'¹⁷¹ Religious continuities are evident in these accounts, suggesting that the early Namaqua Christian had difficulty in reconciling their old notions of prayer with newer Christian ones.

¹⁶⁵ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 34, Sass, 15 May 1812.

¹⁶⁶ CWM, LMS, South Africa Incoming Correspondence (7) 5B, Kitchingman, 27 August 1818.

¹⁶⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa Journals (2) 38, Schmelen, 16 January 1813.

¹⁶⁸ Hahn. *Tsuni-IlGoam*, 123; Elbourne, 'Early Khoisan uses of the Mission Christianity', 14.

¹⁶⁹ See Appendix IV

¹⁷⁰ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Jacob Links as cited in B. Shaw, 28 January 1820.

¹⁷¹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, 12 September, 1818.

Methods of worship on the mission stations further exhibit this. At Leliefontein, the Namaqua were often in the habit of singing and praising late into the night. In a letter addressed to his father, Shaw recounts awakening in the middle of the night:

On hearing several voices at a distance I arose from my bed and opened the window, when all around resounded with the high praises of God. O how delightful! All nature seemed to favour the song. The moon shone with her borrowed splendour, the glittering stars twinkled in their spheres, the jackals and wolves made no disturbance, the everlasting rocks gave echo to the sound and raised the charming melody. The music was so sweet that at the time I supposed I had never heard anything so delightful. The company of those who sang consists of about thirty who also joined in prayer. They sung from hut to hut, calling upon the Master of each to engage in prayer.¹⁷²

Ten years later Edwards similarly noted that, ‘the Lord is graciously present with some of our people and they have spent whole nights in singing the praises of Jehovah and in convening together respecting the way of salvation.’¹⁷³ The missionaries were delighted by what they perceived to be the enthusiasm of their followers toward worship. They did not however partake in these nights of joyous worship. Edwards and Shaw were ignorant of the association these practices had with the Namaqua’s prior worship practices. The moon had commonly been worshipped by the Namaqua as it was believed to be a tangible representation of *Tsui//Goab*. Kolbe noted that the Khoikhoi of the Cape believed the new moon to be their ‘visible God’ which called *Gounja* or ‘Great Chief.’¹⁷⁴ They would ‘dance, jump, and gesticulate all through the night in its honour, and looking towards it would sing; Be welcome, give us plenty of honey, give grass to our cattle, that we may get plenty of milk.’¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818.

¹⁷³ Ibid, Edwards, 1 August 1828.

¹⁷⁴ Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, ' 375.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.



Figure 17. 'Hottentots Worship the Moon'.

Whiteside notes that, 'formerly when the moon was at the full, they had been accustomed to spend the night in the Bacchanalian dancing, drunkenness, and debauchery.'¹⁷⁶ Later, in his *Memorials*, Shaw does briefly recognise the significance of these nightly celebrations. He writes, 'In their state of ignorance, they had often danced to the sound of the Rommel-pot, while the moon was walking in brightness, but by means of the gospel, they had learned a new song.'¹⁷⁷ The structure of praise was certainly congruent with old practices, but the content had been transformed – the full moon led to nights of hymn-singing.

Kupido Kakkerlak, who had once scattered the mounds of stones made by Khoikhoi to demarcate graves, was also recorded by Campbell to have dispersed a group of Khoikhoi that he had found dancing around a great fire to the new moon.¹⁷⁸ Kakkerlak's actions confirm that the practice held religious meaning to the Khoikhoi and he thus strongly condemned it. It was the worship of a false god and was thus not compatible with Christianity. The Little Namaqua seemed to believe otherwise. The WMMS missionaries were just as intolerant of the dancing which at times accompanied these nightly worship gatherings. They had likely learnt of the

¹⁷⁶ Whiteside, *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa*, 45.

¹⁷⁷ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 95.

¹⁷⁸ Campbell, *Travels in South Africa*, 170

role dancing played in Namaqua religion from their assistants and subsequently renounced it. Dancing to the tune of a fiddle, was further condemned, for the reason that the ‘natives themselves were generally so fond of it in their natural state.’¹⁷⁹ As Shaw notes of his converts:

Once they were in the thick gloom of midnight darkness, but now enjoy the light of gospel day. Once without God and without hope in the world, but now in the enjoyment of pleasing prospects of a glorious immortality. Once aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, but now fellow-citizens with the saints of the household of God. Once their evenings were spent in dancing to the Ramking, and in the commission of crimes, but now they are spent in prayer and praise.¹⁸⁰

In 1779 Gordon recorded the details of a Little Namaqua kraal with dancers and musicians. He provides a colourful account of the proceeding. Flutes made of thorn-tree bark were played, producing a ‘very wild melody.’¹⁸¹ Stamping and dancing followed shortly after: “the women stand up at a distance of ten paces, skipping and singing ‘ho, ho, ho: ha, ha, ha,’ clapping their hands...”¹⁸² The dancing women, Gordon recorded, would then approach the men ‘as if to rouse them, turning quickly back to their former place.’¹⁸³ The scene witnessed by Gordon is likely what Shaw would have referred to as the ‘natives’ in their ‘natural state.’



Figure 18. A Khoikhoi kraal with dancers and musicians.

¹⁷⁹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 3 June 1828.

¹⁸⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, September 1819.

¹⁸¹ Gordon, *Cape Travels*, 4th Journey, 17 September 1779.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

In 1828 the fiddle itself was banned at Leliefontein. Its ability to seduce the Namaqua into dance, was believed to be too great a temptation for the vulnerable youth at Leliefontein who, Edwards feared, would be led astray from the station for the purpose of dancing. Edwards feared that:

If such thing were allowed at the Institution they might prove introductory to something worse and our young people and cattle watchers tempted to spend their nights in dancing when nature required they should be rejoicing under their Karosses in their houses. And although it might be urged sacred music was not improper and might be allowed yet it was proved that previous times and even the old native tunes had been heard played...therefore the overseer should inform them that instrument in question should not be allowed here.¹⁸⁴

This comment suggests that in 1828, twelve years after the establishment of Leliefontein, some Namaqua still resorted to the playing of old songs, much to Edwards' disdain. Some Christian Namaqua were just as concerned about the prevalence of dancing and fiddle-playing among their people. One of Tindall's converts at Nisbett-Bath spoke of his sinful state prior to his acceptance of Christianity: 'I was formerly a great sinner, foremost in the ways of sin and ungodliness, always ready to go on commandoes, to steal cattle, to join in drinking, dancing, fiddle-playing, and all manner of wicked works; but God has given me light to see the evil influence of those things; and ever since I have received the word I have felt no desire to return to them, and I feel no desire now.'¹⁸⁵ Broadbent noted that the Coranna were also accustomed to dancing through the night though he did not recognise the significance of the practice. He noted shortly after that amongst them, he had 'heard of no kind of worship.'¹⁸⁶ At Baviaanskloof the renouncement of the nightly dancing, by some Khoikhoi, does suggest it held religious significance. The Khoikhoi's perception of these activities as sinful can be said to confirm their supposed association to prior forms of moon worship.¹⁸⁷ Had the missionaries been aware of this, they likely would have been more concerned about the nightly singing.

¹⁸⁴ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, Edwards, 3 June 1828.

¹⁸⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol XIII, Henry Tindall, 27 February 1853.

¹⁸⁶ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extracts from the Journal of Broadbent, undated, 259.

¹⁸⁷ 'Khoisan Uses of Christianity' in Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 186.

Dreams are another area of continuity which the missionary record touches on, though briefly. The Khoikhoi had long placed great meaning in dreams as omens. In September 1818 Shaw was visited at Leliefontein by a ‘baster-hottentot’ residing nearby.¹⁸⁸ The man had previously approached Shaw in an attempt to procure a missionary for his people who had never before heard the gospel preached. During the conversation, the man relayed to Shaw a dream he had had:

‘I was,’ said he, ‘one evening lying in my house, but had not closed my eyes in sleep, nor could I, that night, when supper was ready, either eat or drink. After having lain some time, there were two ships presented before me, which appeared to be sailing on the great waters. Someone then informed me, that the one ship was filled with believers, who were holy people, and on their passage to heaven; and that the other was full of impenitent and wicked sinners, who were on their passage to hell. A person then asked me, in which of those ships will you go? But before I could give an answer, the ship loaded with sinners began to sink, gradually descended out of my sight, and I saw her no more. From whence these things come, I know not; or who he was that appeared to speak with me, I know not, but I was sore afraid, and determined, as speedily as possible, to procure a Missionary, that we may be taught how we can be saved. This is the only end I have in view of coming to invite you to come to us with the Gospel.’¹⁸⁹

The man had clearly been previously exposed to tenets of the gospel message but the dream provided him with the sense of urgency required to actively procure a missionary for his people. The man claimed however to not have been asleep causing the dream to better be described as a vision. These are but semantics. The vision induced fear in the man, warning him of the damnation awaiting him if he were not ‘saved’. What is more important is that the event was perceived by the man was a foreboding intervention by a supernatural being – which one cannot at this stage presume to have been the Christian God. Elbourne claims that dreams such as these often convinced Khoikhoi to adopt Christianity – this is undoubtedly the case here. The missionaries, on the most part, strongly believed that dreams were a vehicle through which God communicated with his people. The Methodists placed the most meaning on dreams, unlike the Moravians who were far more cynical.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, 12 September 1818.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ Robert Webster, ‘Seeing Salvation: The Place of Dreams and Visions in John Wesley’s Arminian Magazine’, *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005), 376–88; Clive Norris, ‘Wesley’s Methodism and the Supernatural,’ in Clive Norris, *Thomas Wride and Wesley’s Methodist Connexion* (London: Routledge, 2020), 178-198.

By the 1830s many Namaqua held strongly onto their old beliefs and practices. In 1836 Alexander observed that:

The Little Namaquas are sensual, and have two or three wives if they can afford to keep them- though the missionary does all he can to prevent this sinful practice. Through him also, they have a knowledge of religion. Though dancing is discouraged by the missionary, yet both it and the drinking of honey beer is practised privately.¹⁹¹

In the same year, Schmelen rebuked some of his followers at Nisbett-Bath who were found to be practising witchcraft through the use of charms and various articles they had acquired through the Bondelswarts. Schmelen enquired as to the purpose of each article.¹⁹² A piece of wood which, once chewed and blown toward an enemy, would defeat the enemy. A bone which, if carried on one's person, would offer protection against a lion. A greasy rag which, upon placement on a door, would bring plenty wives. Schmelen threw the charms onto a fire. The blue flames, he went on to explain to the group, 'is a sign of hell, of the punishment which awaits those who place trust in witchcraft and not in God.'¹⁹³ The Namaqua were not remorseful in the slightest. Unable to see their wrong doing, they believed 'some terrible judgement would fall on Mr. Schmelen for having used them as he had done'.¹⁹⁴

We cannot say why the Namaqua were willing to give up some old practices but others not. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the missionary record suggest that some of the European missionaries, for various reasons, adopted Namaqua rituals and practices. Shaw's placement of stones on his daughters grave is a fine example of this.¹⁹⁵ He was likely unaware of the significance of the ritual in the worship of *Heitsi-eibib*. In 1818 Shaw was also recorded to have used a Namaqua healing technique to treat lameness in his knee. Aware of Shaw's condition and the failure of his previous attempts to cure it, the chief of the Little Namaqua suggested that lame knee should be blistered with a piece of heated iron. Shaw was hesitant to this as he 'could not stand fire.'¹⁹⁶ He eventually agreed to try the Namaqua practice of cupping

¹⁹¹ Alexander, *Expedition Of Discovery*, 100.

¹⁹² Ibid, 167-168.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 168.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ See page 261-263.

¹⁹⁶ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*,121.

or sucking. Jacob Links performed the operation in which ‘several incisions were made in the part affected, from which old Keudo Links sucked a quantity of blood.’¹⁹⁷ The operation was partly successful. It immediately alleviated his pain but left him with a limp. The method of cupping was commonly used by the Khoikhoi, especially in the treatment of localised pains in the limbs, stiffness or swelling. In most cases a cupping horn was used, prepared from the tip of a calf or goat’s horn. The targeted area would be scarified with superficial cuts. The horn, open on both ends, was then placed over the incised skin, while the healer would suck on the horn and extract blood from the wound.¹⁹⁸ In this instance cupping served a remedial purpose but that is not to say that it was void of meaning. Schapera notes that cupping was used in several rites of passage ceremonies of Khoikhoi groups.¹⁹⁹ Those in a state of transition such as childbirth, marriage, remarriage and puberty were believed to be in a state of ‘!nau’.²⁰⁰ Low describes how traditional Khoikhoi healers performed a ‘healing dance’ which provided them with the healing properties necessary to cure the sick.²⁰¹ At the conclusion of the dance, the healer is known to stagger and collapse, signalling their readiness to begin the healing. This took many forms, one of which was sucking. Through sucking “the sickness is often described as being pulled from the ‘patient’ into the healer, whereupon it runs up his arms to be expelled.”²⁰² Shaw would have been unaware of the spiritual weight attached to these healing methods, much like the stone piling. He had been in pain for so long, and tried countless other remedies, to no avail, that he was likely desperate.

7.6 ‘A Healing Balm’

In 1828 Edwards recorded that, much to his displeasure, some of his followers smeared their bodies with *Buchu*.²⁰³ The scent of the *Buchu* he found to be putrid. The congregation of Namaqua, confined to the small chapel, produced ‘an unpleasant odour’.²⁰⁴ On account of the odour many of the Dutch farmers who had sometimes joined for service had lately been absent.

¹⁹⁷ Shaw, *Memorials of South Africa*, 121.

¹⁹⁸ For more on cupping see Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 409; W. Hoernlé, ‘Certain rites of Transition and the Conception of !Nau among the Hottentots,’ *Harvard African Studies*, ii (1918), 65-82.

¹⁹⁹ Schapera, *The Khoisan Peoples of South Africa*, 409.

²⁰⁰ Peter Carstens, ‘The Socio-Economic Context of Initiation Ceremonies among Two Southern African Peoples,’ *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, vol. 16, no. 3 (1982), 505–622; Hoernlé, ‘Certain rites of Transition’.

²⁰¹ Low, ‘KhoeSan shamanistic relationships with snakes and rain’, 54.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VI, Extract of a letter from E. Edwards, Kamiesberg, 28 December 1828, 120; *Buchu* is an aromatic mixture of ground plants used commonly by Khoikhoi and San.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

Edwards hoped that the, ‘old customs...so degrading to persons who profess to be followers and imitators of Christ and his Apostles’ would be abandoned.²⁰⁵ He was unhappy with the practice on account of its vulgarity and barbarism but does not seem to have been aware of its ritual purposes. *Buchu*, known to the Khoikhoi as ‘*Sa*’, was commonly mixed with fat and rubbed on the body for its protective and healing properties.²⁰⁶ The practice was not only pragmatic. Both fat and *Buchu* held an array supernatural properties to the Namaqua. The *Buchu* and fat balm was believed to transfer swiftness and strength onto its host. For this purpose it was often rubbed onto babies. It was also used by women as a potent perfume which, they believed, promoted fertility.²⁰⁷ During Khoikhoi marriage ceremonies, *Buchu* was mixed with other fats, and the man and wife would eat the fatty mixture from one another’s hands.²⁰⁸

In 1819 a Little Namaqua at Leliefontein used the metaphor of a Christianity as a healing balm. He explained his metaphorical ailment: 'I have for a long time felt something heavy on my heart; my soul is very sore; it seems as if a nail were stuck in my breast, and I have no peace?'²⁰⁹ The man continued, ‘comparing Christianity to ‘a healing balm which makes the wounded whole.’²¹⁰

The apt metaphor of Christianity as a healing balm served as a powerful symbol of the restorative message of Christianity. Elbourne argues that Christianity, in particular Calvinism, offered the Khoikhoi a ‘theology of evil’ through which they could better understand the unwarranted suffering that they faced on both a societal and an individual level - a theology which their existing belief systems failed to provide.²¹¹ Christianity’s ‘call to suffer’, based on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, formed an integral part of this.²¹² The testimony of a Namaqua woman called Trim, emulates this:

²⁰⁵ *WMMS Notices*, Vol VI, Extract of a letter from E. Edwards, Kamiesberg, 28 December 1828, 120.

²⁰⁶ Low, ‘Khoisan shamanistic relationships with snakes and rain’, 36.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 37.

²⁰⁸ Gordon, *Cape Travels*, 4th Journey, 23 September 1779.

²⁰⁹ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, Extract of a letter from B. Shaw, Leliefontein, 4 August 1819. 214; The symbolism of the nail is also a common one. Jacob Links, after hearing the gospel, explains that, ‘through distress of mind, I fell to the ground, and found my sins as a spiker (or large nail) fasten me to the earth.’; *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 19 January 1817, 153.

²¹⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol I, B. Shaw, 19 January 1817, 153.

²¹¹ Elbourne, *Khoisan Uses of Christianity*,’ 159.

²¹² ‘The call to suffer’ refers to the scriptural encouragement for the Christian to embrace suffering in order to promote the goodness of God; ‘But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong,’ 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (KJV).

We have now heard the Gospel so long and so frequently, yet it always appears to me to be new; it is a word of life, and always good for my soul. The Lord has taken away my flower, a daughter eleven years of age, from me. He saw it would be good for me, and I now feel reconciled to the Lord when I think of my child; my mind is thereby always led to the Lord and spiritual things, and it appears to me as if the Lord was conversing with me.²¹³

It was on a societal level that Christianity could better explain the oppression of the Khoikhoi. The subjugation the Khoikhoi had faced could be explained as part of God's sovereign plan to save and provide refuge for them. Much like the paradoxical theory of the 'fortunate fall' it explained how a supposedly loving God could allow suffering.²¹⁴ This was the case with many indigenous societies in the throws of colonial conquest. James Axtell contends that, in reference to the missions in colonial North America, 'Christianity provided a better – comparatively better – answer to the urgent social and religious questions that the Indians were facing at that particular juncture in their cultural history.'²¹⁵ This theology of evil served the Khoikhoi as an explanation for the past and optimism for the future. Just like the soothing and pain-killing properties of the balm, Christianity would have comforted the distressed Khoikhoi. It could not however completely safeguard them from future persecution, but rather it provided them with a framework through which to negotiate and combat it.

Links speaks of the resistance he faced from 'Christians (so called)' when he first began to pray.²¹⁶ He refers here to the Kamiesberg farmers who on many occasions, as shown in this thesis, attempted to obstruct the Namaqua's access to Christianity:

²¹³ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 25 October 1825.

²¹⁴ 'The fortunate fall theory', or *felix culpa*, considers the 'fall of man' in the garden of Eden to be a necessary evil which allowed for and necessitated the resurrection of Christ and the display of God's grace and love. It is referred to in *The Exsultet*, a Catholic Liturgy written by St. Ambrose. Ambrose wrote: "O happy fault, O necessary sin of Adam, which gained for us so great a Redeemer!" It is also mentioned in John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost*; John Milton, Stephen Orgel, and Jonathan Goldberg, *Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); The 'fortunate-fall' theory was also adopted by African-American Christians to explain the evil of slavery, see Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2005); and Carretta, (ed.), *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996).

²¹⁵ James Axtell, 'Some Thoughts on the Ethnohistory of Missions,' *Ethnohistory* 29 (Winter 1982), 36.

²¹⁶ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818; Appendix I.

The farmers around us told us that if we prayed they would flog us. Some of them threatened to shoot us dead should we Namacquas call on the name of the Lord. They said we were not men but baboons, and that God was blasphemed by the prayers of the Namacquas, and would punish us for it.²¹⁷

Links would have been affronted by these threats. He had no means by which to defend himself and an insufficient knowledge of biblical doctrine to dispute the farmers claim regarding the prayers of the Namaqua. This would not be the case for very long. After a brief period under the mentorship of Shaw, Links and many others were able to rebut the farmers' unsound theology.

In 1818 a conversation took place between a Kamiesberg farmer and three Namaqua preachers, Jacob Links, Jan Links and Hendrick Smit, in which their scriptural knowledge surpassed his. The Namaqua had accompanied Shaw to a nearby farm and after dinner had engaged in worship. Witnessing the sight, the farmer was astonished, 'What sort of singing and praying is this that you have had? I never heard anything like it, nor can I understand anything you have said?'²¹⁸ Jacob, aware that he was being mocked, passed the farmer a bible and asked - 'does Master understand this chapter?'²¹⁹ The chapter in question told the story of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus the Pharisee on the concept of being born again. 'Who are the persons that must be born again?' Jacob asked the farmer. The question had certainly come at a surprise and the farmer conveniently claimed that he could not see well. The answer which he then provided, and the conversation which followed, revealed his complete ignorance of the scriptures - 'I suppose Jesus Christ is the person who must be born again.' Jacob offered a correction but his brother Jan shortly cut in:

Master, you once told me that our names did not stand in the Bible, and that the Gospel was not for us. Will Master now tell me if the name of Dutchman or Englishman is found therein?²²⁰

²¹⁷ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 January 1820.

²¹⁸ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, October 1819, 149.

²¹⁹ For a full account of the conversation see Appendix II.

²²⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, October 1819, 149.

With this comment Jan was referring to the commonly held belief amongst the Dutch farmers that the gospel ‘did not belong’ to the Namaquas.²²¹ The farmer had no answer but Jacob continued, ‘the Book says, Jesus came a light to lighten the *heathens*: we read *our* name in the Book.’²²² Jacob’s comment was cheeky. He knew that the farmers called the Namaqua ‘heathens’ and his statement insinuated that the gospel was for them alone. It is likely that Jacob knew he was misconstruing the scripture but the apparent ignorance of the farmer allowed for it. Was Jacob now mocking the farmer? We don’t know how Jan and Hendrick responded to Jacob’s statement, but one can imagine that they held back smiles. The farmer remained dumbfounded but he could not refute the claim. Instead he pivoted, directing his criticism to the missionaries:

Your missionary baptized Hottentots, and that before they know their catechism. You must first know this: then the missionary must stand upon a high place, and ask all the questions. If you cannot answer all these out of your heads, you must not be baptised.²²³

The farmer’s words are ironic, considering his own inability to answer the questions posed to him. Jacob, again relying on the scriptures, responded, ‘Where is it so said in the Book?’ In the conversation which followed the Namaqua continued to poke holes in the farmer’s theology until he offered another excuse, ‘I cannot understand you; your Dutch is not good.’ The excuse was weak, and Jan didn’t hesitate to point it out – ‘How...do you not understand, when Mynheer (missionary) understand all the brother says?’²²⁴ The farmer continued, claiming that Shaw was incompetent in the Dutch language. Jacob defended Shaw, ‘Our mynheer learns the Dutch from the book: you learn the Bastaard Dutch, without book. It is not wonder then that you think out mynheer speaks not good Dutch. He speaks as the book speaks: you not understand de book, and therefore not mynheer understand.’²²⁵

The parallels are striking. The bastardised version of Dutch spoken by the farmer mirrored the version of Christianity he brandished, an illiterate and scripturally unsound one. Hendrick Smit, silent up until then, remarked, ‘That you, Master, cannot understand many things in the Book,

²²¹ Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 190-191.

²²² *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, October 1819, 149.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

is not a wonder'. Hendrick alluded to 1 Corinthians 2:14 and suggested that the farmer's inability to understand the scriptures meant that he was not truly converted.²²⁶ The Namaqua were not merely flaunting how well-versed they were but were in effect reclaiming their humanity. Their access to Christianity and literacy threatened the hierarchy upon which the farmers had profited for so long. At Bethelsdorp, similar conversations were being had. In his correspondence Read noted that the farmers believed the conversion of the Khoikhoi to be 'the work of the Devil, some say it is madness.'²²⁷ Yet other farmers 'acknowledge it to be a work of God, and prophecy, that God is about to make the Hottentots Christians and the Christians (so called) Heathen.'²²⁸ Read added that ideas such as these were held by many of the older Namaqua at Bethelsdorp.²²⁹

In 1824 a similar conversation took place between Shaw and three Dutch farmers at Modderfontein. One of the farmers told Shaw that he considered the Namaqua 'in no other light than wild dogs.'²³⁰ In response, Shaw presented the man with a bible and asked that he show the source of his information. The man appeared agitated. He could not do as Shaw had asked. It is likely that he could not read at all. Instead he stubbornly asserted that 'the heathen had no souls.'²³¹ Shortly after, a Namaqua, present for the entirety of the conversation, opened his bible to Matthew 23:13 and asked if the verse were applicable to the case at hand. The scripture was indeed fitting and the farmer would have been humiliated that it was a Namaqua who had observed it:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.²³²

Not all Dutch farmers were threatened by the literacy of the Namaqua. In 1826 a Little Namaqua visited a farm in the neighbourhood of Leliefontein. There the farmer asked him to read from the bible. Shaw recorded that the 'farmer extolled the Namaqua as a reader,' even

²²⁶ 'But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.' 1 Corinthians 2:14 (KJV).

²²⁷ CWM, LMS, South Africa, Incoming Correspondence (6) 2E, Read, Bethelsdorp, 31 December 1815.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ See Ross, *These Oppressions Won't Cease*.

²³⁰ *WMMS Notices*, Vol IV, Extracts from the Journal of B. Shaw, October 1824, 491.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Matthew 23:13 (KJV).

in those places where the pages were soiled and the letters barely discernible.²³³ The other Namaqua who accompanied him laughed at the farmer who seemed ignorant of the fact the Little Namaqua reader 'had soiled those places himself, by the frequent perusal of them.'²³⁴

These accounts shed light on the brand of Christianity wielded by the Namaqua preachers in the early nineteenth century. These men caused a stir amongst many Dutch farmers who they overshadowed and outplayed in many ways. The intellectualism they exhibited is impressive and in stark contrast to the more simplistic, although very useful, metaphors adopted by other Namaqua as discussed in this chapter. Responses to Christianity were diverse and complex. Continuities with prior beliefs existed, to varying extents, and in many senses shaped the form that Christianity took in Little Namaqualand. It would be somewhat inaccurate to say that some parts of Christianity were accepted and others completely rejected, instead something entirely new was being created. A series of cultural, linguistic and religious negotiations took place on a daily basis in which the Little Namaqua were the sole brokers. They devised a framework through which to advance their social status secure access to resources and comfort their troubled souls.

²³³ *WMMS Notices*, Vol V, Extracts from the Journal of B. Shaw, 31 October, 1826, 68.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

Chapter 8: Conclusion

By the mid-nineteenth century a series of changes had taken place which altered the nature of the missionary project in Little Namaqualand. In 1847 the northernmost border of the colony was extended from the Buffels River to the Orange River. The vast expanse of land between the two rivers had been annexed. This move can be said to have signalled the beginning of the political closure of the northern frontier. In reality though, the authorities still had little influence in the region and were unable to appropriately address and curb the rampant killing of San in Bushmanland and, later on, the Korana wars along the Orange River.

The Buffels River had long been an inconvenient boundary, cutting directly through Little Namaqualand, and disrupting the livelihoods of the Little Namaqua and San groups who had inhabited the region for centuries prior. The boundary had been a permeable one and was commonly crossed by Khoikhoi and baster groups fleeing the colony. A handful of colonists, such as Guillian Visagie and Jan Bloem, had by the late eighteenth century ventured across it and travelled even further north across the Orange River where they took part in trading expeditions and left much destruction in their wake.¹ Fleeing Khoikhoi and baster immigrants from the Cape penetrated Little Namaqualand in waves, some settled in the Kamiesberg and others continued onto Great Namaqualand where they established a pastoral livelihood supplemented by hunting, trading and sometimes raiding. Exposed to European commodities such as firearms and horses, they quickly established their dominance in the region and assumed a status superior to that of other Namaqua groups. In the northerly tracts of Little Namaqualand the Koks and the Witboois established their hegemony, and across the Orange River the Afrikaners and Bethany people did the same.

Those groups who chose to remain in the Kamiesberg, alongside the Little Namaqua, saw greater interaction with colonists than those in Great Namaqualand. White farmers claimed vital water sources and grazing grounds, encroaching on land once occupied by the Little Namaqua and interrupting their transhumant patterns. With their livelihoods under threat, many were forced to find employment on farms, perpetuating their reliance on their European neighbours. Labour conditions were often cruel. By the end of the eighteenth century tensions arose between these Namaqua groups, farmers and local authorities leading to violent clashes.

¹ Penn, 'The Northern Cape Frontier Zone,' 329 – 331.

Governments attempts to intervene in Namaqua, baster and oorlam affairs had not been well received and led to the unification of these aggrieved groups which resulted in the Namaqualand revolt of 1797. By the time the LMS missionaries entered the region treaties had been agreed upon and the dust had, in some respects, settled. The mood, however, remained tense.

Responses to the missionaries varied. Farmers and local authorities were the most vocal in their opposition to the establishment of mission stations in the Kamiesberg. They believed the mission stations would threaten their labour supply and create a breeding ground for criminality and revolt. Powerful baster groups, such as the Koks, welcomed the missionaries and supported their presence both politically and financially. The Batavian government's 1804 edict banned the establishment of mission stations within the colony. With the transferal of the Cape back into the hands of the British, the ban was nullified in 1806. Despite this, local authorities clung tightly to its tenets. The British government permitted the LMS missionaries to cross the boundary and settle as far as Great Namaqualand where they established themselves at Warmbath in 1806.

The Little Namaqua were inconsistent in their response to the first missionaries. They had welcomed religious instruction by those passing through the region but were hesitant to support the establishment of a mission in the Kamiesberg. Government attitudes toward the mission were also prone to change. In 1809, with the informal trial of Seidenfaden, there seemed to have been no official government policy toward missions – with opinions varying from one authority to the next. The likes of Caledon, Van Ryneveld and Barnard urged the missionaries to relocate to Little Namaqualand, within the borders of the colony. The missionaries were seen as both a civilising and politically stabilising force and would have, in the eyes of the government, facilitated peace in the region. The relocation also served the interests of the SAS who strongly supported it. The Warmbath mission had become a financial burden, incurring far greater expenses than any other LMS mission. Despite overwhelming support for the move, the Albrechts chose to remain at Warmbath, loyal to their followers who refused to leave their country. For almost five years after the founding of the Warmbath mission, the location of the mission had been a topic of great debate and a cause for grave concern. Only in 1811, after the violent attack on their station by the Afrikaners, would the missionaries concede and, with little other alternative, move into Little Namaqualand.

The attack exemplifies the volatility of the region, the missionaries' inability to protect themselves and their reliance on local oorlam and baster groups. Vlermuis and his followers, in an attempt to protect the Warmbath missionaries, had become engaged in a skirmish with the Afrikaners and bore the brunt of an attack which would otherwise have been directed toward the missionaries who had yet to flee Warmbath. In Little Namaqualand the missionaries once again relied upon the financial support of the Koks. Their assistance was essential to the survival of the missionaries in Namaqualand. The missionaries' reliance on power-brokers, such as the Koks and Vlermuis, shaped the nature of the missionary effort in Namaqualand. Their existence in the region thus depended on the extent to which they could form alliances with these prominent groups.

The 1811 attack shaped the future of the Namaqualand missions. It forced the Albrechts and their followers to retreat into Little Namaqualand and re-join the communities they had previously ministered to at Steinkopf and Pella. The groups had since become scattered and, with the return of the Albrechts, a semblance of a mission settlement was formed at both locations. The arrival of a new group of LMS missionaries in 1812 coincided with the revitalisation of the Little Namaqualand missions. Schmelen became prominent in the Kamiesberg and with the assistance of the Engelbrechts, an influential baster group, consolidated the LMS stations. At Pella, many other notable African assistants became prominent and integral to the functioning of Steinkopf and Komaggas. Of the LMS Schmelen, Bartlett, Kitchingman and Wimmer oversaw the Little Namaqualand missions until the mid-nineteenth century. The work they did however, paled in comparison to that of the Africans who worked alongside them. They were, in many instances, able to more effectively translate and communicate the Christian message to their countrymen on both a linguistic and cultural level.

By 1816 the Little Namaqua residing in the Kamiesberg had become eager to procure a missionary and gladly welcomed the Wesleyans at Leliefontein. Their situation differed from those Namaqua groups to the north. Their location within the colony placed them in greater proximity to colonists and exposed them to ill-treatment at their hands. As a society they were also recovering from the early, and often cruel, livestock trade with the Cape. Mission stations long attracted the impoverished and the marginalised who sought out protection and sustenance. Women especially are recorded to have found refuge at the Great Namaqualand missions. The Leliefontein station differed greatly from the LMS stations which neighboured

it, in that not only was it run by the Wesleyans, but its population was predominantly comprised of Little Namaqua. Few basters resided at Leliefontein. The majority lived at Steinkopf and Komaggas, stations which had been established at the request of the baster communities who had occupied the areas. All of the stations, nevertheless, did have mixed populations, although the ratios differed. Social stratifications between the groups did exist and, in some cases, led to inter-group competition and hostilities. These tensions did not escalate to the level of those in Great Namaqualand. The most evident of which was the conflict between the Engelbrechts and the Witboois at Steinkopf. These baster and oorlam groups had long been in competition for political power. Extreme rivalries like these did not exist at Leliefontein, most likely because it was not home to any prominent baster groups.

Social and racial stratifications, though present, were extremely fluid. Racial identities were not as easily distinguishable or definable as those across the Orange River. This could explain why inter-group rivalries in Little Namaqualand were mild in comparison. Greater proximity and interaction with colonial society further blurred racial boundaries in Little Namaqualand. Early *trekboers* from the Cape married Khoikhoi women which gave rise to a generation of mixed-race, or baster, children. Many basters in turn married Namaqua women. For these reasons race was not as much of a marker of social status as it was at the Cape. Many thus relied on material and cultural acquisitions to enhance their social status – such as firearms, horses, Western dress, literacy and Christianity. These in turn, became outward markers of social status and saw to the rise of groups who became known as oorlams. The balance of power in the region was delicate and caused many white farmers much anxiety over the influence mission stations and Christianity would have on their fragile dominance in the region.

The missionaries themselves occupied a peculiar socio-political space. They were initially weak and wielded very little power over their followers. Unable to induce their followers to adopt a sedentary agrarian lifestyle, they were themselves forced to move between outstations in their huts made of reeds. In order to endure Namaqualand's challenging ecological conditions they took on many material aspects of Khoikhoi culture. Only those missionaries who were able and willing to adapt quickly to local conditions saw some kind of results. They were poor and relied in many instances on a diet of milk alone. Most married Namaqua or baster women and were consequentially chastised by colonists and factions of the LMS. They resembled John the Baptist more than they did Jesus. At the same time as many Namaqua and basters took on aspects of Western culture, the missionaries relinquished them. The

‘Africanisation’ of the missionaries, and their inability to establish settled communities and promote civilisation, deemed them weak in the eyes of colonial society. They were not a sufficiently stabilising force in the region, nor were they effective torch bearers of capitalism. They did however prove useful to those attached to their stations, intervening in labour and land disputes between them and farmers on occasion. Their attempts at mediation and conflict-resolution was not always successful. These social dynamics present an interesting and complex context in which to study an early missionary encounter – which this thesis has done.

The missionaries’ reliance on African assistants and evangelists also put the Europeans’ usefulness into question. As this thesis has shown, since their first arrival in Little Namaqualand, the missionaries were completely dependent on Africans for logistical, financial and political support. Their every movement in and around Namaqualand relied on the support of Namaqua guides and their every communication to those around them made possible by Namaqua translators. From Leliefontein several Little Namaqua evangelists were raised who accompanied residents travelling with their cattle to various outstations for the purposes of grazing. Most importantly, though, they were dispatched to evangelise amongst groups of San, Coranna, Sotho-Tswana and Great Namaqua. In doing so they formed a network between Little Namaqualand and the Middle Orange. In this way Leliefontein differed from the other LMS stations whose baster assistants itinerated solely to the outposts, not venturing as far east as the WMMS assistants. John Engelbrecht, long attached to the LMS, was an exception to this, working independently along the Orange River for much of his life. Through these men, the gospel was propagated in Little Namaqualand.

The African evangelists were barely compensated for their work and only in few instances did they rise to a notable social status. Only those who had occupied positions of authority prior to the arrival of the missionaries acquired greater material and social benefit from their newly acquired positions. Access to the missions thus further cemented their hegemony in the region. It seems that that LMS missionaries in Great Namaqualand, the Albrechts and Seidenfaden in particular, were more willing to provide those attached to their station with stocks of firearms and ammunition than their Wesleyan counterparts at Leliefontein. There is no evidence of the Leliefontein missionaries’ procuring gunpowder for their followers nor is there evidence of the Little Namaqua having made requests for it. It does seem, though, that some Little Namaqua had managed to procure firearms prior to the arrival of the Wesleyans, likely as a result of their

interaction with oorlam immigrants. Those Little Namaqua along the coast, involved in fishing and sealing, were able to acquire firearms and other European commodities through trade.

The missionary record pays little attention to the female figures who became prominent in their positions as teachers or evangelists. The existence of Namaqua women, such as Zara Hendricks (later Schmelen) and her sister Leentjie, suggest that they did in fact play an integral role in both the dissemination of Christianity and the everyday workings of the mission communities. After marrying Schmelen, Zara did not play a passive role in her new position as missionary's wife but instead it seems her fervency for her work merely increased. Wimmer's first wife, Susannah, despite dying a mere year after the couple's arrival at Steinkopf, also contributed significantly to the functioning of the station. Her early death, leaving behind three young children, was a common occurrence among the wives of the Namaqualand missionaries. Many succumbed to childbirth or illness, often brought on by the harsh conditions of the region and its distance from any formal medical care. Children too were known to die young and many a missionary buried the remains of their infants. Wimmer's second wife, Magrietha Beukes, instructed the children at Steinkopf and later Reidfontein for many years. The couple's teenage daughters, Magriet and Marri, were also recorded to have played a significant role in the schools.

By 1820 the missionary presence in Little Namaqualand had increased. Bartlett had recommenced the mission at Pella, Kitchingman had arrived at Steinkopf, and Edwards had joined Shaw at Leliefontein. Despite this, the 1820s were a time of increased turbulence in Namaqualand. Schmelen's attempts to establish a mission at Bethany had been unsuccessful, causing his eventual retreat back into Little Namaqualand. Unrest taking place above the Orange River spread into Little Namaqualand when Vlermuis fled to Pella after an altercation with Schmelen and the Afrikaners. Drought and famine caused the occupants of both Steinkopf and Pella to move even more sporadically in desperate search of grazing. Schmelen's final attempt to settle at Bethany failed once again causing his final retreat in 1828. With yet another LMS failure in Great Namaqualand, Schmelen decided that it was of the utmost importance that, in order to secure the success of a future station in Great Namaqualand, one unified LMS station should be established in Little Namaqualand, which would become a stepping stone into Great Namaqualand.

This came at a convenient time for the government who had become increasingly threatened by the events taking place on the northern frontier. The death of Threlfall in 1825 as well as a surge in the movement of firearms across the northern borders of the colony had raised concern and panic amongst government and colonists alike. The missionaries did not have control over the groups across the border and were not the stabilising force that the government had hoped for. Government sanctioned expeditions to the Orange River presented an array of solutions – from the extension of the border to the Orange River to the engagement in treaties with neighbouring oorlam and Namaqua leaders. In 1830 the government entered into an alliance with the Bondelswarts in an attempt to regain control over the region.

It is understandable then that the government supported Schmelen's attempt to create a unified LMS station in Little Namaqualand. As a result the station of Komaggas was established amongst a group of basters in 1828. Wimmer, who had replaced Kitchingman at Steinkopf, was less than pleased with the idea and chose instead to remain at Steinkopf with his followers. Despite the attempts to consolidate the Little Namaqualand stations, the environmental conditions would not allow for it. Though now officially deemed an outstation of Komaggas, Steinkopf and Pella continued to exist as they had before. By the 1830s Wimmer, then aged and not as useful as he had once been, oversaw several baster assistants and missionaries who moved between Steinkopf and its several outstations.

Not long after the establishment of Komaggas, the LMS in South Africa entered a trying and precarious period. The outbreak of war on the eastern frontier disrupted their missions and resulted in huge financial losses. The LMS were accused, and rightly so, of meddling in political affairs in the east causing a deterioration in both public and government opinion. Back in London, the South African missionaries came under scrutiny, and support for their continuation in the region waned. They faced opposition on all sides and continued to drain the pockets of the society. By 1840 the various LMS missions in South Africa were encouraged to become financially independent of the society. It is no surprise then, that with the arrival of the RMS in Little Namaqualand in 1836, and the death of the last LMS missionaries, Schmelen and Wimmer, the LMS chose to discontinue their missions in Namaqualand in 1848.

The RMS had arrived at the Cape in 1828 and were enthusiastically welcomed by the government who preferred well-behaved Germans over the troublesome British missionaries. The RMS, much like the Moravians, were well-liked by both settler and government for their

apolitical stance and focus on industry. In Little Namaqualand, the RMS missionaries were well received by Schmelen and Wimmer, who had become desperate for assistance in any form. In 1840 Kleinschmidt worked alongside Schmelen and Wimmer, itinerating between Steinkopf, Komaggas the various outstations.

At Komaggas, under the management of Budler, the RMS established a training institution for 'native assistant missionaries'. They had clearly realised that the success of a potential mission in Namaqualand relied almost solely on the assistance they could procure from young Africans. This was not a new concept, Leliefontein had for years served as a *de facto* training ground for Namaqua assistants and translators. The RMS were merely identifying and formalising a system that had long existed. In the first years of the institution twelve young assistants were trained and released to work at the various outposts and near the Orange River. Budler's time at Komaggas was short-lived as was the training institution. The death of Schmelen in 1848 saw the final transferal of the LMS missions in Little Namaqualand to the RMS. The Wesleyans continued somewhat more successfully at Leliefontein and at Warmbath where they were soon accompanied by the RMS.

The WMMS were able to outlast the LMS in Little Namaqualand for a variety of reasons. The area they occupied at Leliefontein was in many respects more suitable for occupation than those areas to the north both environmentally and politically. The region, though not immune to drought, was better watered and more suitable for grazing, than Steinkopf and Pella. Its distance from turbulent Great Namaqualand safeguarded it against political disruption. Komaggas was better positioned than Steinkopf and Pella, its establishment just happened to come at a precarious time for the LMS. At Leliefontein the transferal of full authority from the Namaqua chief to the resident missionary in 1824, authorised by Governor Somerset, placed greater control in the hands of the missionary. The Leliefontein mission can thus be said to have been far more politically stable and better regulated than the LMS stations. Unlike the LMS, the WMMS was not as preoccupied with Great Namaqualand. Had Schmelen been able to direct all of his attention toward Steinkopf, it is likely that the station would have been altogether more successful. The WMMS were not disinterested in Great Namaqualand nor opposed to the extension of their missions thereto. In fact, several exploratory trips were taken to establish the viability of the WMMS to the north of the Orange River. They did not, however, like Schmelen, attempt to juggle an altogether unsuitable mission in Great Namaqualand with

one in Little Namaqualand. In this way, one could say that the WMMS were more focused and able to spend much more time seeing to the material and spiritual progress of their station.

Unlike the early LMS missionaries in Namaqualand, the majority of whom were married to Namaqua or baster women, the Wesleyans brought European wives with them to Namaqualand. To the Wesleyans, having a wife was important. A single man in a mission field so far from settler society, they believed, would be too easily tempted to form relations with indigenous women. The WMMS missionaries in Little Namaqualand frowned upon the union between European and African. They believed it to tarnish their reputation in the eyes of colonial society whose favour they deemed important. The WMMS were very critical of the LMS missionaries' tendency to marry Namaqua and baster woman but the need for congenial diplomatic relations and close co-operation between the two societies, which the trying and unique conditions of Namaqualand necessitated, led them to withhold their opinions. For these reasons, the WMMS had a better reputation than the LMS. They did not engage in relations with African women, nor did they meddle in political affairs.

In the 1850s, a period beyond the scope of this thesis, several noteworthy events took place which impacted on the missions in Little Namaqualand. Compared to the years prior, the 1850s were a relatively peaceful time in both Little and Great Namaqualand. Oorlam groups, such as the Witboois, migrated north into Great Namaqualand where they met newly established oorlam groups such as the Berseba people. The Afrikaners moved further north into the interior of Namibia where they established themselves amongst the Herero and Damara and consolidated their power in the region. In Great Namaqualand the WMMS continued work at Nisbett-Bath and the RMS at Rehoboth. Diplomatic ties between the government at the Cape and groups along the Orange River, such as the Bondelswarts, stabilised the region politically, albeit temporarily.

In 1852 the RMS commenced a station at Concordia, to the east of Steinkopf. After the discovery of copper in the region, in 1855, copper mining in Little Namaqualand was commenced and, for a brief period, many flocked from the Cape to the Kamiesberg. The mission stations provided a necessary pool of labour. Many became migrant labourers and proved incredibly useful in transporting the ore by ox from the mines at Spektakel, Concordia,

O'okiep and *Nababeep* to Hondeklip Bay on the coast where it was shipped out.² Outstations were established near the mines and many Namaqua missionaries saw to their management. Barnabas-Shaw Links, the son of Peter and Troy Links, was perhaps the most notable of the new generation of Namaqua assistants. In his twenties he itinerated between Leliefontein and the WMMS outstation of *Norap*, near the copper mines.³

The story of the missionary endeavour in Little Namaqualand is one that has often focused on the lives of a handful of heroic Europeans and negated the contribution made by hundreds of African individuals and historical agents. The European missionaries in Namaqualand, though stubborn and fiercely loyal to their followers, were hut-dwellers, often impoverished and heavily reliant on the financial and political support of African intermediaries. They were weak, and at times barely in control of their followers. They orbited a politically and environmentally turbulent region – a task made possible by the financial support they received from powerful baster groups, and the practical support they received from the numerous guides, translators and assistant missionaries they employed, although rarely paid. The majority of these men and women are not included in the official records and, those who are, often remain unnamed. Through a very fine reading of the missionary archives this research has excavated the names and stories of these historical players and in doing so has brought them and their contribution to the foreground. Many of these African agents discussed above had been responsible for the propagation of Christianity prior to the arrival of the European missionaries at the start of the nineteenth century. The missionary project in Little Namaqualand was thus as much of an African project as it was a colonial one. By the mid-nineteenth century the missionaries cannot be said to have completely transformed the African occupants of Little Namaqualand into colonial subjects. This brings into dispute the notion of the European missionaries as agents of civilisation and imperialism. Without these Africans it is likely that the missionaries would not have lasted longer than a few days in Namaqualand, and Christianity would not have taken root.

This is not to say that Christianity was whole-heartedly embraced in Little Namaqualand. By the early nineteenth century Little Namaqua society was in many senses vulnerable and rapidly fragmenting. Christianity was attractive. It offered remedy to their suffering and a hope for the

² Bregman, 'Land and Society', 65; John Smalberger, 'Aspects of the History of Copper Mining in Namaqualand' (MA Thesis, University of Cape Town, 1969).

³ *WMMS Reports*, 1856, 42.

future. Continuities between existing frameworks of meaning and Christianity helped facilitate the smooth but often convoluted transition. Older frameworks were not completely surrendered and in some cases Christianity was accepted only to the extent to which it served their immediate needs. The spiritual and material tenets of Christianity took on different meanings as they were filtered and translated by those who encountered them. Processes of translation took place during which beliefs and symbols were negotiated upon. The negotiation and transformation of existing cosmologies often took place, conveniently, in direct response to societal change. The Christian message was translated and transformed, mostly commonly, at the hands of the Namaqua missionaries who spearhead the missionary effort. With a kaross over their shoulder and a bible in their hand, they became the very embodiment of the metamorphic message they carried.

Appendix I

I. We have read of two blind men, men whose eyes were closed so that they could see nothing – We must recollect that we are also blind by nature; and in our state we know not the things of God. Our first parents having sinned, we are also sinful- This sinful nature is communicated from father to son. It is communicated as an inheritance, which proceeds forth to all generations. You sometimes ask "how is that, that we can be sinful by the sin of others?" I answer your sheep bring forth no goats, neither do your goats bring forth no sheep – It is so with mankind, the parents being sinful, the children begotten by these parents are also sinful – these children having a sinful nature soon begin to commit actual sin. Thus it is that all have sinned. We are by nature blind by sin.

II. We read that those blind men were sitting on the road where Jesus came – They had doubtless heard of Jesus, how he had healed the sick etc – they believed that Jesus could help them – they therefore called, "Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy on us." Tho' the other people told them to be still, they would not, but called so much the more. "Jesus Son of David!" We now sit in the way where Jesus in passing by. We heard what Jesus has done for sinners. We hear from the gospel that he forgives sin. Let us cry to him. Let us cry. "Jesus Son of David have mercy upon us." Jesus shall hear us, and ask, what shall I do for you? Let us say Lord open our eyes, Lord let our sins be forgiven. Jesus shall pity us, he is full of mercy, he will help us from our sins. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If a good man's promises to us anything that is for our comfort, we believe that he will fulfil his promise and help us – The Lord is more good than every man, and promises to forgive our sins. But a man that we think is good may deceive us, yet the Lord will never deceive us, he will do all that he has promised. But we must call upon him as the blind men called, and tho' some people should try to hinder us (as they have often tried to hinder me**)we must not be hindered, but call so much the more "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on us!"

III. The same day that those blind men called upon Jesus were their eyes opened and they saw the light. And their eyes being opened they did not continue sitting on the road, nor did they go another way, but followed Jesus. Whenever we call upon the Lord in faith, he will fulfil his promise, and forgive our sins - for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

O how great is the pity and compassion of God over us poor sinners. We never did anything to please God. We have done nothing but sin again him, yet Jesus died for us, and if we come to him with sorrow for our sins, believing on his name, the Lord says we shall not be lost. He says we shall be made free through faith, free from our sins, and obtain eternal life. He that believeth in Jesus is not commended he is made free through faith. But he that believeth not is condemned, he is condemned now while he lives is condemned if he dies, the wrath of God abides in him...

This language (the Dutch) is hard for me and I cannot say therein what I feel I wish yet certainly the way of salvation is through Jesus. Do you doubt of the power of God? Look upon those mountains and the world which God has made; prove to us the power of God. Yes God has power to save us, he has also power to destroy imperfect sinners. Let us like the blindman called in faith. Paul said, "Being justified by faith we have...with God." We shall find this peace through ..and prayer. Then like the blind man ever follow Jesus, that is we must obey him and...what the book says."¹

Appendix II

‘Farmer: What sort of singing and praying is this that you have had? I never heard anything like it, nor can I understand anything you have said?

Jacob: I think, Master, you only came to mock us, let me ask, does Master understand this chapter, (John iii) especially that part respecting the New Birth? Pray who are the persons that must be born again?

Farmer: (the New Testament being handed to him, he complained that he could not see very well: but said.). I suppose Jesus Christ is the person who must be born again.

Jacob: No Master, no such thing: Jesus Christ says that *we*, and *all sinners*, must be created anew, born again of the Spirit, and become new creatures, or we cannot enter heaven.

¹ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 27 March 1818.

John (brother to Jacob): Master, you once told me that our names did not stand in the Bible, and that the Gospel was not for us. Will Master now tell me if the name of Dutchman or Englishman is found therein?

Farmer: (No answer)

Jacob: But, Master, you who are Christians, call us Hottentots, *Heathens*. That is our name. Now I find that the Book says, Jesus came a light to lighten the *heathens*: we read *our* name in the Book.

Farmer (Yet dumb; but after some consideration, he proceeded): Your missionary baptized Hottentots, and that before they know their catechism. You must first know this: then the missionary must stand upon a high place, and ask all the questions. If you cannot answer all these out of your heads, you must not be baptised.

Jacob: Pray, Master, where is it so said in the Book? – (No answer)

Jacob: I learn from the Bible, that the people dat repent and believe, may be baptized; but the Book says not dat he who can answer all the questions, shall be baptized. If we had all in *our heads* that you say, what better if our hearts not converted be?

Farmer: There is no conversion in this life; that must be after death.

Jacob: If I right understand, a man who is of sin convinced, - who also sin forsakes, and upon Jesus Christ believes, is converted: this man can be baptized. John baptized in Jordan them dat sin confessed.

Farmer: It is time enough to repent when we are sick, and likely to die.

Jacob: Dat you not find said in de Book. No; we must repent now, as the Lord says in the Word.

Farmer: I cannot understand you; your Dutch is not good.

John: How is it, Master, that you do not understand, when Mynheer (missionary) understand all the brother says.

Farmer: Your missionary cannot understand or speak good Dutch.

John: Our mynheer learns the Dutch from the book: you learn the Bastard Dutch, without book. It is not wonder then that you think out mynheer speaks not good Dutch. He speaks as the book speaks: you not understand de book, and therefore not mynheer understand.

Farmer: This is partly true; there are many things in the bible that we do not understand: and that when I come to your place, I shall ask your missionary the meaning of Gog and Magog.

Henry (one of our interpreters) That you, Master, cannot understand many things in the Book, is not a wonder: Paul says, ‘The natural man understandeth not the things of God, but they are to him foolish.’

Farmer: Who is the natural man?

Henry: We are all natural men in our sinful and natural state, and can only understand the things of God by the help of the Spirit of God.

They then asked him the meaning of several passages, but he said, ‘I am no missionary, and therefore cannot explain’ Jacob then enquired if he did not teach his own people, slaves, or servants: and his answer was ‘No; for they would then be as wise as I am myself!’²

Appendix III

“Africa, Leelie Fonteine, Nov. 19, 1819.

Unknown but revered Gentlemen.

The salutations which you sent I received from our beloved teachers, and wish you and the society much peace and prosperity in the name of our Lord. I have long been desirous of writing you concerning my former and present state, but on account of weakness in the Dutch language,

² *WMMS Notices*, Vol II, October 1819, 149.

I have been hindered. I hope, however, that your goodness will excuse and wink at my mistakes.

Before I heard the gospel I was in gross darkness, ignorant of myself as a sinner, and knew not that I had an immortal soul; nor had I any knowledge of him who is called Jesus. I was so stupid, that when a Hottentot came by us who prayed to the Lord, I thought he was asking his teacher* for all these things of which he spoke in prayer. Sometime after this another Namacqua came upon our place; he spoke much of sin and also of Jesus. By means of his conversation I was very sorrowful and much affected, and knew not what to do. My mother having some leaves of an old Dutch Psalm-book, I thought if I eat them I might there find comfort. I ate the leaves up, but my sorrow was not lessened. I then got upon the roof of an old house to pray, thinking that if I were high the Lord would hear me better; but I found no deliverance. I then ate all sorts of bitter bushes, for I thought the Lord might possibly have mercy on me. But my heaviness did not then go away. I then heard that I must give my cause over to Jesus, and tried to do so, by which I found much lighter. There was then no one in this country to tell us of Jesus, and I desired to go to the great river to learn from the word.

I was now persecuted by black and white. The farmers said, if we were taught by missionaries we should be seized as slaves. Some said I was mad; and my mother, believing the Christian men, wept over me. After this, a missionary, on his journey toward Pella, remained some weeks with our Chief; but being in Bushman Land with cattle I heard nothing. Then our Captain and four people went to seek one who could teach us. I was at this full of joy, and when they returned, and I saw our teacher, whom the Lord had sent us, that was the happiest day for me that I ever knew. Through the word that the Lord gave our missionary to speak, I learnt that my heart was bad, and that the precious blood of Jesus alone cleanses from sin. Now I found that Christ is the way, and the sinner's friend. I feel pity over all people who do not know God. I often feel sweetness for my soul whilst I speak about the gospel, and my own experience in the Lord.

Before our English teacher came we were all sitting in the shadow of death. The farmers around us told us that if we prayed they would flog us. Some of them threatened to shoot us dead should we Namacquas call on the name of the Lord. They said we were not men but baboons, and that God was blasphemed by the prayers of the Namacquas, and would punish us for it.

Now we thank the Lord he has taught us that he has also given his Son over to death for us. We hear that English people pray for us, and hope they will not forget us.

The society of all praying people are by me saluted.

An unworthy Namacqua,

Jacob Links

*This was the late Mr. Albrecht, long a missionary at the warm bath and Pella. The Hottentot above mentioned held service amongst the people where he happened to go; Jacob heard him pray, but had no idea of God as a Being to be thus addressed 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed.'"³

Appendix IV

B. Shaw

10/3/1820

Namaqualand

Extracts from journal of Jacob Links

Dear Brethren,

Should the following simple extracts from the journal of Jacob (our fellow Labourer) be in any way satisfactory to the Committee it will be a sufficient reward for my labour in making them.

Oct 1819-

16. I went to the after people (the furthest outpost) and coming heard that one was sick. I desired to speak with him of spiritual things, and of Jesus. I asked if he had in his life ever heard the word of God and he answered yes. Then if he knew that he had a soul and he said yes. Then if he knew that he was a sinner and he answered yes again. Then if he knew how man can be made free from his sins, and he said no. I asked how he felt now that he was so sick, but he was so sick that he said he could not tell. Asking if he prayed to God, his wife said he had

³ WMMS, South Africa Correspondence, FBN1, B. Shaw, 12 January 1820.

always prayed, but was now too weak. I then said I wish to know if he prayed in his heart. Spoke to him then of Jesus, exhorting him to believe in his blood, and prayed with him.

18. Travelled upon the mountain with my wife, house & C.** Found all well excepting my mother who is weak and sickly. Our old Teacher* preached from "what meanest thou O sleeper, rise and call upon thy God." &c.

24. The Sabbath. Spoke of the weakness of man, because some think they still perish on that account. This appeared to me impossible because the gospel publishes Jesus to be the power of God. In the forenoon I found much heaviness, but in the afternoon the Lord gave me freedom.

Nov 1. Went again to the Captain*** with desire to speak from the word of God, which was so long to me unknown. Spoke on the words of Isaiah: 'He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows': and also from "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptations, that Christ Jesus came into the world to love sinners; of whom I am chief." Herein I find it good, but sometimes I am tempted to evil. Sometimes I think they receive not the word and I am filled with pity over them, and think of these future things, which have no end.

[Notes at the bottom of page by Shaw]

* The first missionary (however young he may be) always obtains the title of 'old' amongst the Namacquas and the second (however old he may be) the title of 'little' or 'young'.

** The whole house and furniture of a Namacqua are on his removal packed upon an ox.

*** He means to all those who were laying on the same place.

[end of notes]

Next page -

Hendrik and me went again to them* and spoke from the word of Peter, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again" &c and because the things they had forsaken, they won't fall into as before.**

14. Our old Teacher preached in the forenoon from Jesus the good Shepherd and our young one in the afternoon from the duty of parents towards their children. At night by the Sacrament the preciousness of Jesus to them that believe was mentioned. Believers view him as their Prophet, Christ and King.

Dec 18 - Rode to Mr. Archbell by the Reed Fountain and found all well: he spoke at the Reed-Mouth from Is. 1.2. "Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me."

25. This is called Christmas-day. The Christian church I hear hold it to the remembrance of the birth of Jesus. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." The scape-goat taking away sin was spoken of.

29. Went from Reed Fountain.

30. Got home to Lily Fountain

31. Was in the school with the children.***

January 1820:

Read the fifth chapter in the Book of Kings, respecting the little maid who waited on Namaan's wife. It appeared to me as if she were certain that the prophet could make the man whole.

3. Went to Reed Fountain again to fetch Mr Archbell.

7. Got home and made to my Corn-Land.

9. Mr. Archbell spoke of the blowing of the great trumpet and the coming of those who were ready to perish.

13. I was in the field reaping.

14. Our young teacher left this village ****

15. Jesus died out of love for me, herein I have life and peace: and I must exhort in love.

16. Our old teacher spoke of sinners who are past feeling, who are laid against the true word of God. The same day we exhorted Hans Links respecting his taking a woman to him (whilst he has a wife in Great Namaqualand) and showed that it was displeasing to God. Andreas said the devil wrote sin upon his heart and made it sweet. Jacob Cloete said God would not be mocked. Peter said a man who confesses Christ and denies him again, is like those who break their covenant. Old Hans said he found it very hard to leave the woman. I asked whether that or the hell would be the hardest.

18. Somethings appear to me in this life dark.

19. The Lord learns me to know more things, than I knew before.

21. Received four Books from our old Teacher, I am thankful to him and to people who send us books and to the Lord who has given us his Word.

[Notes at the bottom of page by Shaw]

*To the outposts.

** Some of the old Namacquas had been making beer from honey and had drank too much, but they promised to leave it off.

*** Whether here, or Reed Mouth, or the outposts, he attends to the instruction of the children and adults.

**** Brother Edwards

Next page -

23. I had an old man to speak with who will not come to the house of God. He told me he now thought that the Lord punished him with sickness, because he did not believe the things we told him. I spoke to him of what we had heard today, and then prayed with him.

Thirteen men and ten women were received as members of our church. They all confessed their faith in Jesus. I prayed afterwards, and was rejoiced because the Lord is true to his word, and "not willing that any should perish."

24. Met the women's class in the church, to speak with them of spiritual things. One woman said she felt her sins very heavy. The Lord says if we forsake sin we should find peace.

28. We went to visit a woman who is sick. We sung and prayed with her and I then asked how she felt, she said she prayed but did not go into the bushes for prayer. I told her that the Lord would hear and answer her prayer as she laid in the hut: she had no fear in thinking of death but joy.

31. The sick woman said today that she had peace and joy, but that the people who are with her speak of their cattle and worldly things which conversation does her no good. She said I had rather hear the word of God than all other things.

February 3. Mr Archbell returned from Cape Town, the Lord be praised by us. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace".

4. All the people met together to speak of building a house for the tools & c.

5. They begun to work.

6. Mr Archbell spoke of two men who went up to the temple to pray: and our old teacher of the idols amongst the Israelites: "These men have set up their idols in their hearts."

16. Learnt today that "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes."

19. We are intending to go to Great Namaqualand if the Lord shall spare our live, and all he will with us. In this I have pleasure and hope through the grace of God that good will be done.

[Shaw now writing]

Can you send(?) a writing desk for this poor Jacob - He is worthy not only of such a trifle but of anything and everything we can give him. A pen knife or two - blacklead pencils -

A few days ago he came and blessed (?) Lord for a Book, as he said to write the texts of scripture in that he best understood (whilst reading his bible) that he might know where to find them again.

Appendix V

Copy of a letter to Mr. Albrecht from Brother John Engelbrecht, one of the converted Namaquas, in 1810.

‘From Karregas, the year 1810, 15th November. I John Engelbrecht, wish you, sir, health in the Lord. I have found in the Holy Scripture what St. Paul speaks in the third chapter of the Galatians, the 10th and 12th verses. ‘For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God it is evident; for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith, but the man that does them shall live in them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.’ So then salvation is through grace, through free grace comes salvation unto man; not by his works, but through pure grace. But I must still do good works; yet with all the good works I do, I am still full of corruption and unrighteousness. So that I have found, that I can deserve nothing by my thoughts or works; and that, if I have transgressed but one commandment, not a tittle of the law shall pass away. Then it is alone from love what the Lord has done, that he died on the cross for us weak and wicked men. There are people who think that they are clean in themselves, but they are not clean. There are two descriptions of people I have found in the world: the one is without guilt; the other feels it in his heart, through the hearing of the preached word of the Gospel. That is to say, the

one thinks he be without guilt; but the other through hearing the preached word of the Gospel, becomes convinced in his heart that he is a sinner. I feel desire for further instruction, to know whether I have understood the ground of these things; for I am very weak, and withal in the wilderness; I can therefore not know it, and I cannot, in due time, get to church. My heart is willing, but with me there is much want of food, as also many other obstacles. The children will also come, and all the people will also go; but then I am at a loss about the people, for there is not one who has food to go so far to church. And farther, salutations to all who are in the Lord from my heart,

I, John Engelbrecht.’⁴

⁴ *LMS Reports*, May 14th, 1812, 32.

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Maps

Figure 1. 'Select Missions in Southern Africa to 1848', designed by Dani Fleischman, 2021.

Figure 2. 'The Namaqualand Mission Stations, 1799-1848', designed by Dani Fleischman, 2021.

Figure 3. 'Illustration of the LMS settlement at Pella, 1813' in Campbell, *Travels in South Africa, vol. 1*, 417.

Figure 4. 'Depiction of the Little Namaqua, with Noebee on the far right (1780)' in Raper, P.E and M. Boucher (eds.) *Robert Jacob Gordon: Cape Travels 1777 to 1786, Vol. 1*. Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1988, 377.

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Figure 6: 'Missionary village in the Kamiesberg, 1827' in Thompson, *Travels and Adventures*, 1968, 304.

Figure 7. 'Reverend Jacob Links' in NLSA, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Archive. Africa: Photographs. Box 119: 'Portraits of Missionaries'.

Figure 8. 'Inhabitants of the Leliefontein Mission, circa. 1880' in NLSA, INIL 11384, HR Moffat Album.

Figure 9. 'The Leliefontein Mission, circa 1855' in NLSA, INIL 11392, HR Moffat Album.

Figure 10. 'Illustration of Bysondermeid, 1840' in Backhouse, *A Narrative*, 544.

Figure 11. 'Illustration of Kok Fountain, 1840' in Backhouse, *A Narrative*, 544.

Figure 12. 'Illustration of Komaggas, 1840' in Backhouse, *A Narrative*, 531.

Figure 13. 'An excerpt of a map illustrating the route taken by Alexander in 1836' in Alexander, 'Report of an Expedition', 1838, 33.

Figure 14. 'The settlement of Aris' in Alexander, *Expedition of Discovery*, 1867, 102.

Figure 15. 'Districts of the Cape Colony in 1838', designed by Dani Fleischman, 2021.

Figure 16: 'Frederich and Elizabeth Hein' in Strassberger, *Rhenish Missionary Society*, 1969, 71.

Figure 17: 'Hottentots Worship the Moon' in Kolbe, *The present state of the Cape of Good Hope*, 97.

Figure 18. 'A Khoi kraal with dancers and musicians' in Raper, P.E and M. Boucher (eds.) *Robert Jacob Gordon: Cape Travels 1777 to 1786, Vol. 1*. Johannesburg: Brenthurst Press, 1988.