

[8.4.2]

I.

To the Study Group meeting at Elim Hospital. Elim 15th July, 1975.

(By D.C.Marivate)

Dear friends, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel extremely honoured to find myself speaking to you this evening on my "EXPERIENCES FROM CHILDHOOD IN THE TSONGA PRESBYTERIAN (SWISS MISSION) CHURCH IN S.A. DURING THE 100 YEARS SINCE ITS INCEPTION."

I am not 100 years old, therefore I cannot tell you what happened before I was born. I came into this world only after 25 years since the Church was started.

I found myself in the house of a teacher, who was my father. My mother was already a Christian knowing how to read and write. All her sisters and a brother knew how to read and write and all were Church people. My mother was the last born. She grew under Mr and Mrs Grieve who had resided near the Mission Station.

During her wedding all preparations were made by the Grieves. She was like a daughter to them. She lived and ate and played with the Frieves daughters Meriam, Anna, and Kitty. She put up in the same rooms with them. My father took her from there.

I attended school in the Church. There was no school building during that time. All classes were accommodated in one big church. We were learning from charts. Our teachers were Samuel Malale, my father Cornel Marivate, Yoshua Marule, Frank Hlaisi, Stina Makhalelisa or Ramakuwela, Stefani Furumele, and later on when a school building was erected by Rev. Rosset, there came Azael Solomon Tsongainwe who was educated at Shiluvane Teacher's Institution. My Sunday School teacher was Miss Martha Grand. The Missionary then was Rev. Henri Berthoud who baptised me in 1903. Rev. Rosset confirmed me in 1911.

I grew up in the house of Rev. Rosset who taught me Woodwork, book-binding, gardening etc. He was like a father to me. I was like one of the Swiss children.

In 1912 Rev Rosset took me to Lemana Training Institution, which was then under Rev. A.Eberhardt. This Missionary was wonderful in his Bible teaching. Nearly all his students became useful people later on in life. Some became Pastors, others teachers etc all through his influence.

EDUCATION.

Speaking about schools: The first teachers were Missionaries and African Evangelists mainly Basutos from Basutoland.

In 1903 or thereabouts the schools were supervised by the Education Department under Inspector Jones. English was then introduced.

In 1906 Lemana was started.

II.

In 1909 Girls were admitted as trainees at Lemana Institution. Only about three of our Mission girls attended. Later on, when Lemana came nearer Elim in 1922 more of our girls came in. In 1929 Domestic Science was introduced at Lemana and the first High School in 1933 was started, also at Lemana.

Elim Hospital ~~started training nurses~~ was founded in 1899. Later on it started training our girls. This you all know about, or even better than I do. Shiluvane and Masana also started training our nurses. Today we can boast of a large number of Shangaan nurses. Some of them are Sister Tutors and others are Senior Nurses.

Scouting was started in 1928 and Girls wayfarers followed suit. Here I must say that Scouting though popular with majority of our Missionaries others did not seem to like the Movement. They looked at it with suspicion and called it an English Movement. But I am glad to say Majority of our Missionaries were very much in favour of it. Our African ministers were too busy to take part like Ministers of other Dominations *who used to take part.*

The Wayfarer Movement was under the Swiss Mission Sisters assisted by African School Mistresses. Both Movements went on very well until Bantu Education was taken over by the Government. This was after 1940. Today nothing is heard of them *except in Towns or at Lawrence Margins where there are Patrols.*

HIGHER EDUCATION.

During the period in review Higher Education was gradually introduced in our Schools. Many Secondary and ~~High~~ ^{high} schools have sprung up here and there among the Tsongas.

Besides these, many teachers are busy qualifying through private studies for degree courses. Some actually go to Colleges for Medical and other Courses. Today we have many graduates, some Doctors, Senior Lecturers in Universities Qualified Ministers of Religion, Principals of High Schools, Inspectors of Schools, Brick layers, Sister-Tutors, Agricultural Demonstrators, Social Workers, Brick-layers, Business men, and land-owners. All within this period of 100 yrs.

HOW WAS THE TAKING OVER OF SCHOOLS ?

At first many teachers rejoiced that schools were now under the Government. They looked at it as a step towards getting more pay. They were no longer going to be employed by the Missionaries. A Principal would be appointed as such not by any go-between agency. Besides, teachers would deal directly with their employer and not through some one who does not pay them.

All this was good but I do not know whether this practice is ~~for~~ ^{to} the advantage of the spiritual life of our Children. Now-a-days many teachers have nothing to do with churches. So the children copy this kind of life. It is still too soon to know whether the taking over is advantageous spiritually for our Children ~~or not.~~ In a way it is good because character will prove its presence in a child whether good or bad because now the umbrella has been removed.

With the large number of schools all over Shangaandom the church will benefit if it follows every pupil through its religious education. I think the Church will not lose in the future because more people will be able to read read or study the word of God by themselves from the Bible. What is obtaining now in some parts of the world will obtain here as well. I have a hope for the future.

ON WHY DID THE CHURCH NOT GROW BIGGER?

I have no idea what is meant by growing bigger. I do not know whether it is the size of the Church buildings, or the number of Christians, or a large number of Churches all over the country. Let us remember that the Tsongas are few in numbers here in the Republic. Go to Mozambique and there you will see how many people flock into the churches. The Swiss Mission Churches I mean.

Here in the Republic nearly every Tsonga has heard the word of God. Nearly every child knows there is a school somewhere. I do not believe that there is a Tsonga here in this country who has not heard that there is a Church somewhere in this country.

Why then do the people not come in to fill the Church?. It is not in our church only where people do not flock in. All the other churches experience the same thing. I once attended a church in ~~London~~ Bridgewater, England where there were pews and pews and pews all empty. I counted only about twenty people in that big church.

Human beings are a difficult lot to look after. Each one has his likes and dislikes. They do not like to be herded together like sheep or goats. Many factors are contributory to the emptiness of the church. We may not blame the Church or its leaders. It is the work of the Devil.

The duty of the Church is to sow the seed. It will grow in its own time. Every now and then the Church grows up by stages. There are stages of stagnation and stages of rivaval. John the Baptist never bothered to see large numbers of converts he just preached the word broadcast. He who had ears to hear repented. He who did not want to repent remained unrepentant.

If it is the question of figures, other churches may have more in their books because they, unlike our Church, do not concentrate in one language Group. They have churches among Pedis, Churches among Xosas, Basutos, Vendas, Coloureds, Indians, Whites, Zulus, Swazis, Bachuanas, Hereros, Shangaans, and many other nationalities. Uor Chrch concentrates only on Shangaans. How can our Church compete with them for numbers. It is only recently that we have a church in Zululand. Even there we do not seem to take greater interest in them.

If it is the question of the size of church buildings, I may say that finances sometimes control the erection of buildings. Besides this, the land question makes it doubtful to erect a building today and tomorrow people are removed to other centres. It is only in Mission farms like Elim, Valdezia, Kurulen, Shikuvane etc that our Churches have permanent homes. This was due mainly to the first Missionaries who had some foresight. Otherwise where would we be? With the exception of the Chiefs' lands like Mhinga, Shikundzu, Mohlaba and such like places the Mission builds with great uncertainty. It is only in Urban areas where the Church may build with some degree of confidence because the members there are more or less gathered nearer one another. They cannot be dispersed like country folks.

Another factor contributory to the smallness of numbers is tendency to backsliding. I could enumerate why this is so, but I reserve this for another day and for another group of people who are more directly concerned with the running of the Church. Many Bantu customs come into this backsliding question.

IV.

WHAT HAS THE T.P.C DONE FOR THE SHANGAAN DURING THESE 100 YRS ?

It has united us. Otherwise we would have been absorbed. We have that weakness of cringing. We look upon other people as greater or cleverer than ourselves. That is why the Late Mr. E?A Tlakula was not in favour of joining up with the P.C.S.A and the B.P.C. He ^{feared} that as Shangaans we would occupy back seats in the Synods and we would be led by the nose by other people because of our meekness. The Tsongas are not self-assertive. They are too cautious and too reserved. It is only when they are together that they may speak their mind. I said the Swiss Mission has built us up. Today we have men who are able to speak out on the same platform as other great men. ^{of the world} Those that are running our Government today are children of the Swiss Mission. We were nearly absorbed when the rulers of this land started Territorial Authorities. All of us were under Venda Chiefs but we who sensed the danger refused to be under other nations. I am one of those who kicked. Today we stand shoulder to shoulder with the other Bantu tribes. We have our own Prime Ministers and our ^{own} Ministers. All of them or nearly all of them are products of the Swiss Mission in South Africa. What about Mozambique, who do you think was instrumental in bringing about the Freedom that our brothers and sisters enjoy today? Mondlani! A product of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church. He was against blood shed. He did not want war. But his ideas triumphed.

The Church has put us on the map today even here in the Republic. We are a people with our own way of life to the common good of the whole country.

The Church by putting down our language into writing has served to preserve our language which language will remain in books for years to come. ^{permanently.}

The Church has given us the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are no longer groping in the dark. We now know the one and true God, and nobody will ever lead us to any other Saviour except JESUS CHRIST.

I am afraid I have not ^{replied adequately} to your questions according to how you wanted them to be answered. But I thank you very much all the same for listening to me.

D.C. Marivate.

ELIM HOSPITAL

(FOUNDED 1899)

— THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA —

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Evelyne Müller

REGISTERED WELFARE ORGANISATION
REG. No. W.O. 977

2/7/75

Rev. Marivate
P.O.Box Valdezia
N.Tvl.

Dear Rev. Marivate,

with the informations I could get I will give you the following questions to your theme: "100 Years the Tsonga Presbyterian Church among the Shangaans".

- 1) In the passed 100 years the church was responsible for starting schools, hospitals and social activities e.g. scouts. How does the church in the next 100 years involve itself in the ministry of healing, in education and in social works?
- 2) What lessons can we learn from the passed 100 years for the next 100 years?
- 3) How did the church start with the schools and how was the taking over from the church to the state?
- 4) Why did the church not grow more?
- 5) Your early memories in the Tsonga Presbyterian Church.
- 6) How did the Shangaans react when the Tsonga Presbyterian Church started in Valdezia?

I hope to give you an idea about what you should inform us. But it is in your hands to choose about what you will talk on the 15th of July. May we hear you that Tuesday at 8.15 p.m. at the Sisters Residence.

Thanking you in advance, your faithfully

Evelyne Müller

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24/6/75

REGISTERED WELFARE ORGANISATION
REG. No. W.O. 977

Rev. Marivate
P.O. Box Valdezia
N. Tvl.

Dear Rev. Marivate,
thank you very much for your early answer. I hope we will hear you
at the Sisters' Residence on Tuesday the 15th of July. It is a great
pleasure for us that you will give us that talk about "100 years
of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church among the Shangaans".
Looking forward I thank you very much for your agreement.

Yours faithfully

Evelyne Muller

24th. June, 1975

Sister Evelynne Muller,
P.O.Box 12,
BLIN HOSPITAL, 0960
Northern Transvaal.

Dear Sister Evelynne,

Thank you for the honour of inviting me to come and talk to your study group on "100 years of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church among the Shangaans" on the 15th of July, 1975 at the Sisters' Residence. If I am spared I hope to come.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel C. Marwate