

NORWEGIAN MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE FROM  
NATAL AND ZULULAND DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by

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## SUMMARY

### NORWEGIAN MISSIONARY CORRESPONDENCE FROM NATAL AND ZULULAND, 1844 - 1899

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This documentary dissertation contributes to scholarly understanding of the history of missionary endeavours in Natal and Zululand by making accessible a carefully edited compilation of documents written by Norwegian missionaries in those areas between 1844 and 1899. From thousands of pertinent extant documents, the editor has selected a representative cross-section of the most revealing letters and reports that Lutheran and other missionaries sent to their sponsoring organisations and the related periodicals. Each document has been translated from Norwegian into English, suitably excised of superfluous material, and given a brief introduction. Annotations explain theological jargon and identify people, places, and phenomena to which the writers of these letters and reports referred. The documents are divided into four chapters, each of which begins with an introduction by the editor. An introductory chapter provides information about the Norwegian missionaries in question, the general history of their work, the nature of the correspondence, and the consequences of the failure of many other historians of foreign missions in Southern Africa to avail themselves of this invaluable historical source.

Key Terms: Norwegians; Missions; Missionaries; Zulus; Natal History; Zululand History; Lutherans; Anglo-Zulu War; Schreuder

## PREFACE

### The Purposes of the Present Compilation

This edition of missionary correspondence is the first half of a larger project intended to document the history of Norwegian missions in Southern Africa from the 1840s until the 1980s. Its purposes are four-fold. In the first instance, it makes available to historians, missiologists, and other scholars a cross-section of historically significant letters in English translation which illuminate the development of Norwegian missionary endeavours in Natal and Zululand from their genesis during the 1840s until the end of the nineteenth century. For decades scholars in South Africa, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, and possibly other countries have realised the potential value of this large body of documents but, owing to the linguistic barrier, have generally been unable to do more than merely acknowledge its significance. The present compilation obviously includes only a small fraction of the extant correspondence in Norway, but it has been carefully selected with a view to presenting in one volume many of the most illuminating documents from the period under consideration.

Secondly, to some extent this edition is itself a documentary history of Norwegian missionary endeavours in Southern Africa up to about 1900, though one incorporating only the most important of several genres of documents. I have not only translated and edited pertinent letters but also arranged them chronologically and, within this general framework, thematically, briefly introduced each document, and written contextual introductions to each chapter of documents. Several hundred annotations explain theological jargon and identify, wherever possible, the people, places, and events which are mentioned or alluded to in the letters.

Ideally, an edited compilation of this sort should be read in conjunction with a detailed general history of Norwegian missions in Southern Africa. Unfortunately, no such study has ever been published, and there is little reason to believe that one will be written in the near future. At present only fragments of such a history have appeared. Most of them, moreover, are in Norwegian and are of greatly varying quality. The most important and arguably best to date is Olav Guttorm Myklebust's brief history of the Norwegian Missionary Society's work in South Africa,

published in Norwegian in 1949.<sup>1</sup> Little has been published about the other Norwegian Lutheran mission in South Africa, namely that which bore H.P.S. Schreuder's name after that pioneer left the Norwegian Missionary Society (hereinafter abbreviated "NMS") in 1873. The non-Lutheran Norwegian or pan-Scandinavian bodies, moreover, have never been given their due in the historiography of missions. The Free East Africa Mission, founded in 1889 and absorbed by the Norwegian Mission Covenant a decade later, has been the subject of parts of a brief article<sup>2</sup> and a popular centenary history of the latter body's foreign missions programme.<sup>3</sup> The Norwegian Mission Covenant's subsequent Southern African field was chronicled in somewhat more detail in the same volume.<sup>4</sup> The Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America (since 1949 called The Evangelical Alliance Mission), founded by like-minded Scandinavians in the United States of America in 1890, also commissioned Norwegians to Southern Africa. To date, its history has also been published only in unscholarly books commemorating its founding. These reflect little use of the pertinent correspondence. The history of Norwegian Pentecostal endeavours in Southern Africa is even less well described in the professional literature.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of a general history of Norwegian missions in Southern Africa, therefore, the significance of a documentary history would seem all the greater.

Thirdly, and growing out of the second purpose, the present edition casts light on several issues in missions history, such as the rate at which different kinds of missionary organisations promoted the

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<sup>1</sup> Olav Guttorm Myklebust, *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie. Sør-Afrika* (Stavanger: Det Norske Misjonsselskap, 1949).

<sup>2</sup> Odd T. Ommundsen, "Det Norske Misjonsforbunds ytremisjon", *Norsk tidsskrift for misjon*, XXXIV (no. 3, 1980), pp. 171-172.

<sup>3</sup> Odd Ommundsen, "Den frie østafrikanske mission 1889-1899", in Kari Lorentzen, Odd Ragnar Nilsen, and Bjørn Melvin Owesen (eds.), *Det Norske Misjonsforbunds Ytremisjon* (n.p., n.publ., [1984]), pp. 19-36.

<sup>4</sup> Kari Lorentzen, "Det Norske Misjonsforbunds arbeid i Sør-Afrika", in Lorentzen, Nilsen, and Owesen (eds.), *Det Norske Misjonsforbunds Ytremisjon*, pp. 37-95.

<sup>5</sup> G. Tollefsen, "Misjonen i Swaziland", in *En såmann gikk ut til Swaziland* (Oslo: Filadelfiaforlaget, 1956).



indigenisation of the leadership of the churches which they had founded and the effectiveness of various forms of evangelisation. Indeed, a comprehensive catalogue of missiological topics on which the Norwegian correspondence from Southern Africa sheds light would include literally dozens of items. Among those for which it is an especially rich source are the roles of female missionaries and unordained European evangelists, the question of *Volkschristianisierung* as opposed to *Einzelbekehrung* as the primary focus of missionary endeavour, the difficulty of communicating fundamental Christian doctrines to African peoples (in this case principally Zulus) whose cultural background and cosmologies were radically different from those shaped by the Judaeo-Christian tradition, and the question of the relative effectiveness of the preaching of the Gospel as opposed to the inculcation of ostensibly "Christian" moral values (which were often confused and interwoven with European civilisation) in effecting conversions. Norwegian missionaries addressed all these themes and many more in their letters to their boards, missionary magazines, friends, and newspaper editors in Norway. At times they touched on them only implicitly, but the prominence of most of these topics in their correspondence is nevertheless obvious. It should be emphasised, however, that while the inclusion of a broad number of such themes was among the many desiderata in the selection of documents for the present edition, it was not always the determining one. Some issues consequently crop up much more frequently than others.

Finally, the history of Christian foreign missions is often inseparable from secular history. Perhaps nowhere is this more vividly illustrated than in Southern Africa, where such events as the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 made a profound impact on the propagation of the Gospel. In some instances, therefore, letters have been included because they *inter alia* shed light on secular matters, such as the 1879 war or the proliferation of alcoholic beverages in Zululand, insofar as the missionaries who wrote about them regarded them as important events and phenomena which affected their endeavours. Much more use could and should be made of these vivid eye-witness accounts, especially as sources for the study of early interracial contacts in Southern Africa. Perhaps the present compilation will stimulate secular historians to do so. If that

should eventually happen, an important secondary purpose will have been served.

### The Letters as Historical Sources

The nature and value of the Norwegian missionary letters are most fully understood when one has some grasp of why and how often they were written, what kinds of information they tended to contain, the extent to which they have been preserved and in what forms, and the problems which can arise in using these sources. The frequency with which individual missionaries wrote varied greatly. Some maintained a fairly regular schedule of reporting to their boards quarterly and, at greater length, once a year. Others wrote much less frequently; apologies for not providing sponsors with any news for as long as a year were not uncommon. At the other end of the spectrum, the men who served as superintendents typically wrote more or less monthly (although that could also vary), and during times of crisis, such as immediately before, during, and for several months after the Anglo-Zulu War, they reported even more often. These generalisations apply to both Lutheran and non-Lutheran missionaries.

No less varied was the length of their letters. A small percentage consisted of only a few sentences, usually dealing with administrative matters. More typical were letters of from 500 to 1 000 words in length, covering from two to five pages. Some missionaries, however, most strikingly H.P.S. Schreuder, occasionally rambled on for several thousand words of laborious prose.

The purpose and content of the missionaries' correspondence naturally went hand-in-hand. They were generally required to report periodically to sponsoring committees in Norway. In addition, many clearly understood the necessity of keeping individual Christian donors overseas who supported their endeavours informed about the progress they were making and were evidently delighted to report anything that could be interpreted as such. Hundreds of these letters, or at least long excerpts from them, were thus printed in the missionary societies' magazines. Many were clearly written with such publication in mind. A few missionaries,

including some who repeatedly professed that performing day-to-day duties at their stations occupied most of their time, also managed to contribute with surprising frequency to the press in Norway, informing Norwegian readers about living conditions and contemporary events in Natal and Zululand.

Other purposes for which missionaries wrote letters and reports obviously influenced the content of their correspondence to a considerable degree. This varied more than one might imagine, partly because of an apparent psychological need to share feelings with friends and acquaintances in Norway and, no less often, a desire to relate what they regarded as curiosities or historically important events. In brief, many of the missionaries understood that they were unique witnesses to religious, social, cultural, political, and military history and believed it was incumbent on them to record it.

Nevertheless, administrative and other practical matters occupy a position of priority in the correspondence and were the subject of the opening lines of a very large number of individual letters. Missionaries described in detail the difficulties they experienced in travelling upcountry to their own stations or those of their colleagues. They similarly wrote about frustrations endured in securing provisions, building materials, and the like. On a much more cheerful note, letters written at isolated outposts in the *bundu* annually conveyed the joy which missionaries felt when they gathered at their conferences or travelled to Durban. For decades these annual journeys to Natal's largest port also gave missionaries the opportunity to collect their salaries, a matter which occasionally caused administrative headaches and discord. Strained relations between individual missionaries (sometimes involving the superintendents) or between them and their sponsors overseas also were the subject of many letters. These documents illuminate one of the darker sides of missions history which rarely comes to light in the scholarly literature.

From the outset comments about indigenous African culture, religion, and, not least, moral turpitude occupied a prominent place in Norwegian missionary correspondence. Considered longitudinally, the letters not only provide a wealth of primary information (some of it, alas, unreliable, especially that recorded in the first few letters written by each

missionary) but also reveal how the Africans in question changed because of their contacts with Europeans. The hardships which the former endured when e.g. famines and epidemics struck them are also described in heart-rending detail.

Yet the heart of the correspondence is its religious content. Missionaries dwelt on any signs of progress they perceived in their efforts to propagate the Gospel, particularly before the Anglo-Zulu War when those milestones seemed to be leagues apart. Any interest in the Christian faith shown by servants at the stations, for example, was reported at length and with great hope. It is therefore surprising that when H.P.S. Schreuder finally baptised his first convert in 1858 - some fourteen years after landing in Natal - the event was given relatively little attention in the letters which he and his colleagues wrote. Perhaps the passage of so many years without a single conversion had blunted their enthusiasm. Conversely, the missionaries could write equally candidly about the heartaches which backsliding from the faith and the moral shortcomings of their converts caused them.

Educational and evangelistic efforts are also important and recurrent themes. Missionaries described the schools they established, the training of unordained African evangelists, the creation of networks of out-stations, and the ways in which they sought to bring the Gospel directly to the indigenes (as by visiting kraals) or them to the Gospel (most commonly by inviting interested people to reside at or close to their stations and attend services regularly). Again, they wrote openly of hindrances to their work, most often hostility on the part of those chiefs who perceived them as threats to their authority or the relatives of young converts who either feared the instability which foreign practices and beliefs brought to traditional familial relationships, or the supposed imperviousness of the Zulu mind to Christian doctrines. The former reveal much about religious education across cultural lines, particularly about the frustrations wrought by efforts to impart Christian teachings to Africans through rote catechetical means.

After congregations comprising converts were organised, the specifically religious content of the missionary correspondence changed somewhat. Such matters as ecclesiastical discipline and the disruption caused by the migratory labour system came to the fore. This was

especially the case after about 1890. Many of the themes which had caused consternation earlier continued, however. They were augmented by the attention paid to auxiliary ministries, such as the expansion of mission schools and the establishment of hospitals, and to evangelism in institutional settings, most notably prisons.

Two other kinds of religious material remain to be mentioned, one of them much more irenic than the other. Some missionaries spent a great deal of time putting pious thoughts on paper. Precisely why they dwelt on what is aptly termed devotional material is not possible to demonstrate, although one must suspect that they found it comforting to do so while isolated at distant stations and subjected to various kinds of tribulations. While lengthy discourses about God's preserving grace may have played a significant role in bolstering the flagging spirits of missionaries, they are of very limited value to church historians and have therefore generally not been included in the present compilation.

Just as significant to an evaluation of the missionary correspondence is an awareness of what these documents do not contain. Church historians and other readers will search in vain for any mention of many topics that one might reasonably expect to find, while some other matters were only rarely broached. One of the most obvious of these *lacunae* is the contextualisation of the Gospel. It would be fascinating to be able to trace through the missionaries' letters how they sought to express Christian doctrines in ways that would be readily comprehensible to the people whom they were seeking to convert. Occasionally they gave a few hints; more than one Norwegian reported how he had told Zulus that he had been sent by a king greater than any African chief or monarch. They usually admitted, however, that this only caused confusion and rarely told what they had subsequently sought to teach. We thus remain largely in the dark as to missionary homiletics. Related to this, there is little about the work of Norwegian missionaries in translating part of the Bible, Luther's *Small Catechism*, various hymns, and other Christian literature into Zulu, apart from that done by H.P.S. Schreuder.

Moreover, one will find practically nothing to indicate that missionaries believed they were engaging in what historians have retrospectively labelled "cultural imperialism", although some were aware that other Europeans, especially traders and liquor merchants in Zululand,

were doing so. One finds in the correspondence considerable evidence of attitudes of cultural superiority, but little that the missionaries felt the slightest compunction about being *de facto* if unintentional agents of cultural hegemony. When they taught transcendent monotheism, opposed the practice of paying *lobolo* for wives, urged converts to give their children Biblical names, or insisted that Africans who resided at their stations wear more clothing than was customary in kraals, they felt they were expressing God's will, not merely replacing indigenous values and mores with European ones. As a practical exception to these generalisations, it is evident that in the late 1870's several Norwegians in Zululand looked forward to seeing British military intervention against Cetshwayo and indeed co-operated to a limited extent with colonial officials before, during, and after the Anglo-Zulu War, though they did so because they envisaged a Zululand more open to the Gospel and free of religious persecution, not the incorporation of that realm into Natal.

Turning to more mundane matters, from time to time missionaries gave summaries of their daily activities, but much less often did they describe family life at their stations, something of obviously great importance to them. Not until late in the nineteenth century were many letters written by female missionaries from Norway, although the number after 1889 is quite large. Prior to the Anglo-Zulu War several unordained men did carpentry and other kinds of work at the Norwegian stations, but they do not appear to have written more than a handful of letters that have survived.

It is impossible to ascertain precisely how much Norwegian missionary correspondence from Southern Africa is extant. The manuscript letters and reports from that region are preserved in several archives, and printed versions of many of them are dispersed in the files of dozens of different newspapers and magazines that were published (and, for the most part, still exist) in Norway, the other Scandinavian countries, Germany, and the United States of America. In any case, there are at least several thousand letters all told.

The form in which the correspondence is preserved varies from one receiving organisation to another. To begin with the most obvious one, the Norwegian Missionary Society has very well-developed archives on the campus of its training institution in Stavanger. The collections contained

therein date from Schreuder's earliest times in Natal and encompass literally thousands of letters from Southern Africa. Most of these documents are arranged chronologically and are catalogued in a readily comprehensible system. From the outset the NMS printed a significant percentage of the letters it received from the field in its periodical, *Norsk misjonstidende*.<sup>6</sup> The files of this publication are also an indispensable source, because many of the letters that its editors shared with its readers appear to have been discarded. Many others were not, however, and have been preserved in their original form, making possible comparisons which are instructive to anyone who is curious about how the Society occasionally withheld information from its supporters, a subject touched on below.

A much smaller number of manuscript letters written by missionaries in the service of the Church of Norway Schreuder Mission survive. This is partly because that organisation did not come into being until approximately three decades after the NMS was founded and remained much smaller. Some of the pertinent documents are allegedly being held by a high-ranking Norwegian cleric for private research purposes and are thus not immediately accessible to other people.<sup>7</sup> Again, however, a large amount of the correspondence was printed, in this case in *Missionsblad* and its successor, *Zuluvennen*.

Turning to the Free East Africa Mission, only a few manuscript letters survive, but dozens of others were printed *Missionæren*, which was initially published in 1889. This nondenominational periodical served *inter alia* as its mouthpiece in Norway and as such was the principal means by which interested Norwegians could keep partly informed about the activities of the FEAM personnel in Natal.

As valuable as the extant letters are for the study of missions history, they pose certain problems for the unwary researcher. One is the fact that no collection of them is complete, even though that in the archives of the NMS are fairly comprehensive. It must be borne in mind

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<sup>6</sup> This is the modern orthography; the original title was *Norsk Missions-Tidende*, which was modernised to *Norsk Missionstidende* in the 1870s.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Archivist Nils Kristian Høimyr, Archives of the Norwegian Missionary Society, Stavanger, 11 August 1986.

that in most instances one is working with only a fraction of the letters written by the missionaries of the society in question and that the extant documents are not always sufficiently representative to allow one to make valid inductive inferences. Secondly, the technical preservation of the letters is not uniformly satisfactory. Reasonably high standards are maintained at the archives of the NMS, however. Thirdly, uninitiated researchers may encounter difficulties in deciphering the handwriting of some of the missionaries. This applies especially to the earliest letters, including those written by Schreuder. But even some letters from more recent times can challenge the patience of readers.

A somewhat different set of caveats must be issued with regard to the use of printed letters. The first involves quite simply finding that large segment of the correspondence, which has been widely diffused. Much of it can be readily found by systematically going through the periodicals of the relevant missionary societies. Other letters are scattered in daily or weekly newspapers in Norway or in the Norwegian-American immigrant press, diverse religious magazines in Norway and the United States of America, and, in a very few cases, in brief volumes of nineteenth-century missionary correspondence. Secondly, it is necessary to read printed letters with the awareness that some - perhaps most - of them were written with eventual publication in mind. Generally speaking, therefore, the published correspondence does not match the unpublished manuscript letters in terms of ingenuousness or candour. At the same time, it should be emphasised that taken as a whole the former is nevertheless an invaluable and reliable historical source.

Editors' treatment of missionary letters places the highest wall between what was written and what was printed. It has been asserted that zealous editors severely diminished the value of printed correspondence, not only by excising matter of historical significance but, even more irresponsibly, by fabricating or embellishing beyond recognition material in order to produce palatable copy for sponsors. Perhaps the most lucid and relevant indictment is that made by Norman Etherington. In a bibliographical essay about archival sources for the study of Christian missions in Natal and Zululand, he alleged that "missionary periodicals are an extremely unreliable source. Editors blue-pencilled missionary letters and reports with wild abandon when



preparing them for publication.... Conflicts with government officials and other missionary societies were routinely omitted. Detailed descriptions of the political affairs of African tribes were often omitted on the ground that they were unlikely to interest or inspire the general reader".<sup>8</sup>

A comparison of extant manuscript letters written by representatives of the Norwegian Missionary Society and the published version of the same, however, does not support Etherington's pessimistic generalisation. Admittedly, the editors of *Norsk misjonstidende* fairly often made minor stylistic improvements. They excised what they perceived to be extraneous content and practically never printed anything dealing with missionaries' salaries or the sporadic quarrels between the Society's superintendents and other personnel. But on the whole the correlation of veracity is high. Quite often passages that justifiably could have been dropped appeared in print without a hint of editorial tampering. Moreover, there is little if any evidence of outright fabrication by editors. Far fewer opportunities exist for testing the accuracy of letters printed in the periodicals of most of the other societies, but again the tone and content of most of them seem authentic.

Whether printed or extant as manuscripts, the letters must be read critically. Discerning readers should be conscious that they are viewing complex interpersonal relations and the interplay of northern European and African cultures through Scandinavian eyes which inevitably failed to perceive a great deal and tended to look down at the indigenes, their religion, and their folkways. Even after decades in the field missionaries were still fallible in their perceptions, as Schreuder's correspondence from the time of the Anglo-Zulu War makes clear.<sup>9</sup> Complicating matters further still, from time to time missionaries punctuated their Norwegian prose with Zulu words or phrases and did not always remember to translate these foreign elements for Norwegian readers. When venturesome editors printed the Nguni terms - presumably to perk interest on the

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<sup>8</sup> Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> Some of the problems in Schreuder's letters from 1878 and 1879 pertaining to the Anglo-Zulu War, the events preceding it, and its aftermath with regard to missions will be indicated in Chapter III.

part of their readers - they sometimes misspelt them. Subsequent orthographic reforms make it doubly difficult to decipher what was originally written.

### Consequences of Ignoring the Correspondence

The significance of the correspondence as a collective historical source and its accessibility in a global language become apparent when one reviews what people who cannot read Norwegian or for some other reason have not availed themselves to these letters and reports have written about Norwegian missionary endeavours in Southern Africa. Undoubtedly owing to the linguistic inaccessibility of pertinent archivalia, scholarly treatment of the subject has generally been sketchy and derivative at best and, more often, misleading and error-ridden at worst. With the exception of a few studies by Olav Guttorm Myklebust and other Scandinavians this indictment, though harsh, applies to historical surveys of Christian missions in Southern Africa and to those encompassing the entire African continent or the world. A brief review of both kinds of histories will illustrate the point.

The first comprehensive historical study of missions in the sub-continent written in the twentieth century was Johannes du Plessis' *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, published in 1911.<sup>10</sup> This seminal work, which was unquestionably one of the most solid South African historical treatises of its time, has received considerable praise through the years, and its republication in 1965 was arguably justifiable from a scholarly viewpoint. Yet the Norwegian component hardly was given its due in the 494 pages of this tome. In all likelihood this can be attributed to the unavailability of primary documents, for it seems utterly implausible that du Plessis was incognizant of the significance of Norwegian missionaries to his topic. Unable to employ written Norwegian sources, du Plessis, to his credit, took the next best approach to the subject by availing himself of the expertise of Norwegian missionaries who

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<sup>10</sup> J. du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa* (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1911).

were still active in or had recently retired from the Southern African field.

Du Plessis' account is thus understandably little more than a brief synopsis of major events occupying ca four and one-half pages - less than 1 per cent - of his survey. Much of it is accurate, but facts are nevertheless intermingled with errors and misleading generalisations of the sort which are nearly inevitable when relying on second-hand information. Du Plessis, for example, declared that "in 1844 [H.P.S.] Schreuder was sent to inaugurate the foreign mission of the Norwegian Society, Zululand being the field selected". In fact, Schreuder left Norway in 1843, though he arrived in Natal in 1844, and he was not initially commissioned by the Norwegian Missionary Society, but by its local affiliate in the Norwegian capital. Nor was specifically Zululand the field in which he first intended to propagate the Gospel. Schreuder's first three assistants who remained in the Society (Lars Larsen, Ommund Oftebro, and Tobias Udland) did not arrive in Africa in 1848, as du Plessis stated, but during the following year. Du Plessis fairly accurately related how Schreuder gained access to Mpande's kingdom north of the Tugela River in 1850 but was confused about the dates of the stations subsequently founded in Zululand and gave an incomplete list of them. His register of representatives of the Norwegian Missionary Society who joined Schreuder in Southern Africa, moreover, is woefully incomplete. Schreuder left that organisation in 1873, not 1872, as du Plessis claimed, and the rival Norwegian Lutheran missionary society which bore his name, the Church of Norway Schreuder Mission, struggled to survive for many years after his death in 1882. Reinforcements were not "soon forthcoming", as du Plessis believed. Du Plessis' account of the Free East Africa Mission (which he erroneously called the "Norwegian Free Mission to East Africa") is limited to a sentence and gives the incorrect impression that it was still functioning when he wrote in 1910. In fact, the Norwegian Mission Covenant had absorbed it eleven years earlier. Du Plessis devoted slightly more space to the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America, which first sent Norwegian and other missionaries to Natal in 1892 but gave that as the date of its founding. In fact, it had existed since 1890, was founded by a Swedish-American lay evangelist, Fredrik Franson, not "Pastor Franson", and its personnel in South Africa

when du Plessis wrote were not "chiefly ... American Swedes" but actually included more Norwegians than Swedes.<sup>11</sup>

Jane M. Sales' *The Planting of the Churches in South Africa*, which from a scholarly viewpoint is markedly inferior to Du Plessis' venerable study, provides a more recent example of what can go wrong in the absence of reliable sources. Sales makes several references to Norwegian Lutheran missionaries, appropriately beginning with H.P.S. Schreuder, whom she correctly describes as arriving in Africa in 1844. Less accurately, Sales declares that his initial purpose was "to open a mission station near Mpande's village" and attributes this Norwegian's first departure from Southern Africa to his inability to secure from that Zulu monarch permission to do so. Continuing through the faintly illuminated wilderness unguided by genuine sources, Sales asserts that Schreuder and his colleagues gained access to Zululand when Schreuder was summoned to heal Mpande "within a few years" after opening their station at Umpumulo in 1850. Moreover, she insists, "no converts [*sic*] were made until the 1880s" and "Zulus who became interested in the gospel either had to flee to Natal or face death from one of Mpande's men". Sales correctly points out that Schreuder resigned from the Norwegian Missionary Society but wrongly states that he then "founded a group of mission stations on his own".<sup>12</sup>

In fact, Schreuder first sought to evangelise Zulus in Natal, not in Mpande's kingdom (although he tried without success to penetrate Zululand in 1845), and he managed to gain royal acceptance in Zululand in 1850, only a few months, not years, after founding his station at Umpumulo. Schreuder baptised his first Zulu convert in 1858, not in the 1880s, and although not many others converted to Christianity before the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, those who did so escaped persecution during Mpande's reign and for a few years after Cetshwayo, his successor, acceded to the throne. Finally, after his break with the Norwegian Missionary Society, Schreuder was too preoccupied with administering his

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<sup>11</sup> Du Plessis, *A History of Christian Missions in South Africa*, pp. 380-385, 388.

<sup>12</sup> Jane M. Sales, *The Planting of the Churches in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 113-115.

station at Ntumeni and, for seven exhausting years after 1875, one at Untunjambili in Natal, to establish another "group" of them.

Turning to denominations and societies not attached to the state churches of northern Europe, Sales suggests weakly that "the Scandinavian Lutherans may have had something to do with the other Scandinavians who arrived later in the country: the Swedish Holiness Union Mission, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America, the Norwegian Free Mission, and the Scandinavian Baptist Union".<sup>13</sup> Indeed they did; occasionally Lutheran missionaries assisted countrymen from other denominational traditions who had just arrived in Southern Africa, though at other times they refused to do so and resented their incursions into what they perceived as a crowded mission field. Again, relations between these various groups of Nordic Christians could have been succinctly characterised had Sales been in a position to examine that topic in the relevant historical documents.

The confusion continues in Sales' treatment of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America. Inexplicably, she asserts that the Swedish-American evangelist Fredrik<sup>14</sup> Franson began that organisation's endeavours in Southern Africa by leading a group of eight missionaries to Matabeleland (now in Zimbabwe) in 1892 in search of a site for a mission. Lobengula, the Matabele chief, ostensibly refused to give him permission to evangelise in his realm, however, thereby compelling Franson to lead his colleagues to Swaziland instead. Sales continues her misdirected narrative by declaring that "by the time they were ready to go to Swaziland, all the men of the original group had died or had abandoned the venture, leaving only four simple women to undertake the work".<sup>15</sup>

Almost all of this is mistaken but need not have been had Sales been in a position to use a mere handful of letters written by the missionaries in question. In this instance they were conveniently printed - though in Dano-Norwegian - in *Evangelisten* (i.e. The Evangelist), a

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<sup>13</sup> Sales, *The Planting of the Churches in South Africa*, p. 120.

<sup>14</sup> Sales Anglicises Franson's forename to "Frederick".

<sup>15</sup> Sales, *The Planting of the Churches in South Africa*, pp. 134-135.

periodical which served as a means for publicising the work of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America. Those documents would have revealed that Franson did not go to Southern Africa at that time (in fact he did so only after the conclusion of the Second Anglo-Boer War) and that the man who served as the *de facto* leader of the 1892 missionaries, Andrew Haugerud, was given three sites from which he could choose north of the Limpopo River but that he died early in 1893 before work could be undertaken there.

General histories of missionary endeavours in Africa as a whole have usually devoted less space to the southern end of the continent than have more specialised studies such as those by du Plessis and Sales. The specifically Norwegian missionary factor in Southern Africa would thus be understandably paid less attention regardless of the availability of relevant sources. Virtually compelled to rely on secondary literature, missionary historians have inescapably reproduced some of the errors in it. In their sketches, however, the subject is not necessarily distorted beyond recognition. C.P. Groves' monumental *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* is a case in point. Groves gives a fairly good summary of Schreuder's work amongst the Zulus and accurately describes the genesis of the Schreuder Mission, the Norwegian undertaking which resulted from its namesake's resignation from the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1873. On the other hand, Groves incorrectly states that it was that former, national Lutheran body which sent Schreuder to Africa in 1843 (in fact it was a local missionary committee in the Norwegian capital) and anachronistically declares that "Zululand was the field chosen by the Norwegian Missionary Society...."<sup>16</sup> Actually, Schreuder's assignment was not to penetrate Zululand, but rather to evangelise Zulus, and until 1850 he did so almost exclusively in Natal.

When Groves subsequently turns to the influx of other missionary organizations in Southern Africa, further inconsistencies arise. The Free East Africa Mission and its successor, the Norwegian Mission Covenant, are missing from his catalogue of societies which entered the field in the 1880s and 1890s. This oversight is arguably a technicality, but Groves'

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<sup>16</sup> C.P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*. Vol. II. 1840-1878 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1954), pp. 144-146, 266.

generalisation about Scandinavian missionaries' "sympathies with the Boers" during the 1899-1902 war is clearly mistaken and presumably would not have been made after an examination of the comments, the majority of them actually favouring the British, which these men and women made frequently in their correspondence at that time.<sup>17</sup>

Peter Falk's more recent, one-volume treatment is vastly inferior to Groves' work, both generally and with regard to the specifically Norwegian role in the evangelisation of Southern Africa. The latter is limited to an eight-sentence section which merits quotation *in extenso*, if only as a crystal-clear example of how far afield one can run when essential sources are not accessible:

Hans P. [sic] Schreuder began the work of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in the independent Zululand at Umpumulo in 1848. He hoped that the chief, Mpande, would permit the proclamation of the gospel in his region. But Mpande persecuted the Christians and they were obliged to seek refuge in Natal. Cetshwaya [sic] succeeded Mpande and continued his policy. The Christians passed through a difficult period. In 1879 Cetshwayo attacked the British. As a result of this disturbance, Zululand was incorporated into the British Empire. By 1881 the Norwegian Society [sic] had established ten stations between the Tugela and Umfalozi [sic] rivers.<sup>18</sup>

Part of the confusion in Falk's summary can be dismissed as a fundamental misreading of well-known secondary literature regarding missionary, political, and military history. It is an established fact that Mpande was fairly tolerant of the few conversions that were affected during his reign. Moreover, Falk could have read in any of several histories of the 1879 Anglo-Zulu War that the British invaded Zululand when Cetshwayo refused to submit to the terms of a British ultimatum in

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<sup>17</sup> C.P. Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*. Vol. III. 1878-1914 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), pp. 177, 242.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Falk, *The Growth of the Church in Africa* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), p. 173.

January of that year. But even if Falk had carefully read those accounts and faithfully reproduced the relevant facts, he probably would not have escaped making numerous errors concerning specifically Norwegian missionary matters. To mention only a few, Schreuder did not represent "the Norwegian Lutheran Church" but rather voluntary organisations comprising individual Norwegian Lutherans.<sup>19</sup> His station at Umpumulo was founded in 1850, not 1848, and it lay in Natal, not in "independent Zululand". As mentioned earlier, Mpande's willingness to allow evangelisation in his domain was an important factor in the proliferation of early Norwegian missions, not a hindrance to it. Finally, the Norwegian Missionary Society had established eleven stations, not ten, by 1881, and not all of them lay between the Tugela and Umfolozi rivers. In addition to these errors of commission, Falk makes no mention of the other Lutheran and non-Lutheran missionary societies which sent Norwegians to Southern Africa.

The Norwegian role in Southern Africa naturally fades even further into the background in global surveys of Protestant or general Christian missionary history. One of the earliest was Gustav Warneck's *Abriß einer Geschichte der protestantischen Mission von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart*.<sup>20</sup> In it the eminent missiologist at the University of Halle briefly summarised the early work of the Norwegian Missionary Society amongst the Zulus.<sup>21</sup> He also mentioned the founding of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America but incorrectly dated it from 1891, not 1890, and mistakenly declared that most of its emissaries were Swedes.<sup>22</sup> Warneck also appears to have been unaware that the Free East Africa

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<sup>19</sup> The point is more important than it may seem. The Church of Sweden, to cite a convenient parallel, began in the 1870s to conduct missionary work amongst the Zulus, but the Church of Norway *per se* has never done so.

<sup>20</sup> Berlin: Verlag von Martin Warneck, 1910.

<sup>21</sup> Warneck, *Abriß*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>22</sup> Warneck, *Abriß*, pp. 131-132, 163.



Mission had been absorbed by the Norwegian Mission Covenant shortly before the close of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

The most renowned of Warneck's North American counterparts, Kenneth Scott Latourette, included two short references to Norwegian missions in Africa in his monumental seven-volume *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*. One was to Schreuder's ostensible commission by the Norwegian Missionary Society in 1843, the other to the origins of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America's endeavours in Swaziland, for which Latourette relied on T. Olson's *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa*.<sup>24</sup>

Two more recent global surveys can be dealt with in short order. In his popular book *Christian Missions*, Stephen Neill devoted less than a sentence to the Norwegian Missionary Society and did not mention any of the other organisations in which Norwegian missionaries were involved in a major way.<sup>25</sup> J. Herbert Kane, on the other hand, includes a few lines about the latter, but allows his denominational proclivities to create a serious imbalance in this regard. Amazingly, in six and one-half pages about Southern Africa in his *A Global View of Christian Missions from Pentecost to the Present* he makes no mention of Schreuder and the other Norwegian pioneers who played unparalleled roles in opening Zululand to the Gospel but includes a relatively long paragraph about the work of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (the name which the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America has borne since 1949) in Swaziland, Zululand, and elsewhere in the sub-continent.<sup>26</sup>

Going beyond general surveys, some historians writing about specific aspects of interracial contacts in Southern Africa that have

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<sup>23</sup> Warneck, *Abriß*, p. 160.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*. Vol. V. *The Great Century in the Americas, Australasia and Africa A.D. 1800 - A.D. 1914* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1943), pp. 362, 370.

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Neill, *Christian Missions* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 242.

<sup>26</sup> J. Herbert Kane, *A Global View of Christian Missions from Pentecost to the Present* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), pp. 409-415.

involved Norwegian missionaries have been aware of the great potential value of the latter's correspondence but have done nothing or very little with it. In his commendable study of the origins of churches amongst the Zulus, for example, the Australian historian Norman Etherington admits candidly that he was unable "to draw on the unpublished resources [of the Norwegian Missionary Society] in Stavanger because competent translators could not be found".<sup>27</sup> Etherington consequently makes little use of Norwegian evidence, which in many instances would have bolstered his arguments, and, ironically, pays more attention to British missionaries like John Colenso and even Robert Robertson than to Schreuder. Etherington's treatment of the Norwegians, considering his lack of adequate sources, is nevertheless more accurate than one might fear.

Shula Marks' detailed study of the 1906 Bambata rebellion and related events makes limited use of the extensive Norwegian documents from that period. A grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London enabled her to hire a contemporary Norwegian missionary, Ingolf Hodne, to translate some of them into English.<sup>28</sup> Yet Marks' book indicates that she availed herself of only a small fraction of the letters and reports written by representatives of the Norwegian Missionary Society (with which Hodne was then affiliated) in Natal in 1906. Even more seriously, there is no evidence that Hodne translated any of the many available documents written by missionaries in the Schreuder Mission, the Norwegian Mission Covenant, or the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America. The unused materials preserved in the archives and publications of these four organisations cast light on the prelude to the rebellion, military clashes during it, the administration of justice and injustice thereafter, attitudes of whites in both Durban and several other areas towards the Zulus in 1906, and several attendant matters of historical and historiographical significance.

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<sup>27</sup> Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>28</sup> Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion. The 1906-8 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), vi.

### Structure and Translation

Following an introductory chapter, The present compilation comprises letters divided into four chapters. The first of these includes correspondence from H.P.S. Schreuder and his colleagues in the Norwegian Missionary Society, beginning in the mid-1840s and ending in the mid-1870s, immediately before the crisis which precipitated the Anglo-Zulu War. The second chapter of documents focuses on that conflagration, the events which led to it, and its aftermath which affected the history of Norwegian missions in Zululand. The third covers the last two decades of the nineteenth century, a relatively fruitful period for the Norwegian Missionary Society, though one of continuing frustrations. The Free East Africa Mission began to evangelise in Natal in 1889; its endeavours form the backbone of the final chapter.

Each chapter begins with several pages of introductory contextual remarks which are intended to serve two fundamental purposes. In the first instance they are a general synopsis of the history of Norwegian missions in Southern Africa during the particular period covered. Secondly, they highlight salient themes in the letters and call attention to the church historical and missiological issues discussed therein. An introduction also precedes each document. In most cases these are brief, i.e. no more than 100 words in length.

Certain problems arose in translating the letters, none of them insurmountable. One was the cumbersome syntax and inordinate length of many of the letters, chiefly those written by Schreuder and some of his early colleagues. In order to avoid inflicting the same kind of seemingly interminable sentences on modern readers which Schreuder's editors placed before his sponsors for nearly four decades, I have taken the liberty of dividing a large number of sentences and untangling the syntax made hopelessly cumbersome by series of dependent clauses and other departures from simple sentence structure. Furthermore, I have given priority to the spirit and sense of sentences, not the letter of them, when a slavishly literal translation would have been misleading or linguistically awkward. In most instances atavistic units of measure have been converted into metric expressions. Whenever it was deemed necessary or particularly helpful to readers of English, I have explained in the

annotations Norwegian terms which were difficult to render precisely into English.

Analogously, I have sought to give Zulu place-names and personal names in their most common twentieth-century forms, which often differ markedly from what Norwegian missionaries wrote. They found it difficult to express in Scandinavian orthography many of the exotic sounds which they regularly heard uttered by Zulu, although they often sought to do so. In their letters, for example, Eshowe could appear as "Ekjove" and Cetshwayo as "Ukekjwajo". There seemed to be little point in reproducing for modern-day readers these attempts, which probably did not even have much meaning to recipients of the letters in Norway.

An important aspect of the editorial process has been the abridging of the documents. As indicated earlier, some of the missionaries sent letters of well over 1 000 words to their governing boards in Norway, and reports extending to over 2 000 words are not uncommon. To include entire letters in the present compilation would therefore necessitate either a second volume of nineteenth-century documents or a drastic reduction in the number of documents to be translated. Neither of these alternatives seemed desirable. I have therefore abridged more than half of the letters selected for inclusion, excising those sections that were deemed to be of little or no significance to the history of missions. Paragraphs that were largely devotional, for instance, have been routinely deleted, as were most of those dealing with the weather and certain other mundane topics. Only a small amount of those kinds of material has been retained to give readers an indication of how missionaries occasionally dwelt on non-missiological matters and to give a more realistic and vivid view of the lives they lived in exotic lands one-quarter of the way around the globe from their native country. In all cases ellipses indicate where sentences or paragraphs in the original letters have not been included in the translation.

These documents, fascinating as many of them are, would be of limited value to most modern-day readers without extensive annotation. They contain hundreds of allusions to now obscure people, places, and events, many of which are not mentioned in reference books in Norwegian or any other language. They are therefore identified in the annotations. Theological jargon and related religious terminology also occur

occasionally in the letters. Most of these words and phrases will be comprehensible to some readers today, though others will not. It therefore seemed judicious to explain them, too, in the notes. Similarly, from time to time Norwegian missionaries used Zulu loan-words or phrases in their reports without translating them. These have also been rendered into English in the annotations.

### Acknowledgements

In preparing this compilation, I have incurred a great debt of gratitude to a large number of archivists, theologians, historians, librarians, friends, and acquaintances in Norway, the Republic of South Africa, and the United States of America. It is unfortunately virtually impossible to name them all, partly because several of them rendered services to me anonymously. Nevertheless, it would be a serious breach of courtesy not to mention Nils Kristian Høimyr, archivist of the Norwegian Missionary Society, for his unfailing assistance on my many visits to Stavanger. I am also indebted to the personnel at the Natal Archives Depot in Pietermaritzburg, the Killie Campbell Africana Library at the University of Natal in Durban, and at the libraries of the University of South Africa, the Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Oslo, the University of Minnesota, the University of California at Berkeley, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, and the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. They placed a large number of documents and other materials at my disposal and extended many courtesies and favours to me. I am grateful to Professor W.A. Saayman and his colleagues in the Department of Missiology at the University of South Africa for allowing me to submit this documentary dissertation rather than one in more conventional form. Last not least, my hosts in Pretoria, Irene, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town, Milnerton, and Durban merit a word of thanks for both putting me up and putting up with me on my annual visits to South Africa.

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way of annulling one's membership in it. Even then few Norwegians did so. At the end of the nineteenth century nearly 98 per cent of the national population was still nominally on the parish rolls of the Church of Norway. In short, for at least a generation after the first Norwegian missionaries arrived in Natal in 1844 and penetrated Zululand six years later, being Norwegian almost invariably meant being officially Lutheran. To these early pioneers who were quite unfamiliar with religious pluralism, even other Protestant denominations, which nineteenth-century Norwegians Lutherans tended too loosely to classify collectively as "Reformed", were inherently foreign and at least a bit suspect, despite several instances of co-operation with them.

During the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, however, denominationalism began to flourish in Norway, albeit on a modest scale. Congregations of various communions which had first appeared there in the 1850s became fairly common, at least in Kristiania (the nation's capital which since 1925 has been called Oslo) and many other coastal towns. Baptists, Methodists, Free Lutherans, and other nonconformists challenged the religious monopoly of the state church, making the leadership of the last-named body more defensive but also forcing it to recognise that competition from other religious groups was an inescapable consequence of increased contact with foreign cultures. This, of course, was something which Norwegian Lutherans had already learnt in Southern Africa, where interdenominational competition for stakes in the mission field and the souls of the indigenes had influenced Norwegian missionary strategy since the mid-1840s.

Not coincidentally, the first non-Lutheran missionaries sailed from Norway to Natal during the watershed decade of the 1880s. Sponsored by a nondenominational organisation called the Free East Africa Mission, these nine men and women signalled a new era in Norwegian missions history. Their organisation encompassed several fairly prominent Norwegian clergymen and lay people, some of whom had popularised recent Anglo-American millenarian currents in Norway. These pioneers of 1889 were not the only dissenters from Norway who propagated the Gospel in Southern Africa. After the turn of the century, revivals wrought by the advent of the Pentecostal movement gave rise to other Norwegian missionary undertakings in Natal, Zululand, and Swaziland. At no time did a

denominationally wide spectrum of Norwegians take the Gospel to Southern Africa, but the incipient pluralism, dating from 1889, left a vivid mark on documents pertaining to those endeavours. As will be apparent, letters and reports written by non-Lutherans tended to differ somewhat from Lutheran missionary correspondence in both tone and content.

Within the state Lutheran establishment, certain characteristics are noteworthy in shaping both missionary efforts and perceptions. First, the leadership of Norwegian Lutheranism was profoundly male-oriented. Not until 1961 was a woman ordained in the Church of Norway. Until not long before that time it was virtually unthinkable for women to serve in most positions of ecclesiastical responsibility. True, this generalisation can be carried too far. Beginning in 1868 deaconesses became a visible element in the Norwegian lay ministry, and women served in a variety of church-related voluntary organisations. But until well into the twentieth century there was a low ceiling on the heights to which they could rise in terms of ecclesiastical leadership.

This was reflected in the roles Norwegian Lutheran women played in Southern Africa. For several years there were none. Schreuder, who was not only the first missionary from Norway amongst the Zulus but also the first superintendent of the NMS field and the first Norwegian missionary bishop, initially insisted that the mission field was no place for women and urged his colleagues to remain celibate. By 1858, however, he had undergone a change of heart and taken a wife. In the meantime several other Norwegian missionaries, both pastors and lay assistants, had either been sent from Norway already married or had become married after beginning their service in Natal or Zululand. Norwegian missionary wives thus became quite common, and their correspondence is a key source of information about diverse aspects of life at scattered stations. As might be expected, their letters shed much light on domestic and familial circumstances, although these women also commented on such matters as tensions between Zulus and whites, various kinds of converts, moral conditions, and armed conflicts near the stations.

Beginning in 1858, the NMS sent unmarried women to the Natal-Zululand field, although very few of them served there until the 1880s. At first they taught missionaries' children. Within a few years, however, some were engaged in social ministries, educating indigenous girls,



administering homes for children and youth whose circumstances prevented them from living in conventional surroundings, and, after the turn of the century, serving as nurses at a growing network of rural hospitals. It would be difficult to overestimate the significance of female employees to the work of the NMS or to the Africans whom that organisation served. As in the case of missionaries' wives (which several of these women eventually became), their letters and reports shed light on many facets of both ministry and secular matters, even though the number of such extant documents is not large.

Most of the Lutheran missionaries were not only men but also ordained pastors. An unordained assistant accompanied Schreuder to Natal in 1844, and several other laymen followed in their wake. Some of these assistants were eventually ordained, thus further bolstering the clerical factor in the Norwegian Lutheran field. These men naturally acted and reported as pastors, not as lay evangelists, who were quite common in Norway beginning early in the nineteenth century. They were conscious of clerical prerogatives as defined by Article XIV of the *Augsburg Confession*, which authorised only those who were properly called, or *rite vocatus*, to preach and administer the sacraments. This is not to say that Norwegian Lutheran missionaries were categorically authoritarian (although Schreuder, in the eyes of many contemporary and subsequent critics, could be autocratic), but rather that they were well aware of their official status. Some seem to have found it difficult to delegate authority. At their individual stations and in their congregations they made decisions which no parish councils existed to challenge. Some decisions regarding such matters as missionary strategy and finances were made collegially at annual parleys. The superintendent, moreover, invariably one of the missionaries with long experience in the field and often stationed at Eshowe, wielded some degree of power and reported frequently to the headquarters of the NMS in Stavanger. Collectively, however, the correspondence of the successive superintendents reveals more about individual matters of all sorts than about the exercise of power, although administrative questions are also prominent in their letters.

No less important than the factors of male domination and clerical imperative was that of cultural parochialism. In the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth, Norway was one of the most homogeneous

societies in Europe. With the exception of perhaps 10 000 Sami people, or Lapps, most of whom then lived above the Arctic Circle, there was no ethnic pluralism in the country. The tribal differences dividing German-speaking peoples in central Europe, for instance, were quite absent. True, well before 1900 Norway had a merchant navy which provided much of the nation's income and countless contacts with peoples overseas, but only a tiny fraction of the Norwegian population ever served in it. Most people in Norway had never been outside Scandinavia until after the Second World War. This generalisation holds true for those who were to take the Gospel to Southern Africa. In most cases their only foreign experience before reaching the shores of Africa involved changing ships in England after crossing the North Sea. Many, moreover, had probably never even been in the Norwegian capital, having instead received their theological education at the NMS training school in Stavanger, an important but nevertheless relatively small port city. "Culture shock", to use a term of more recent origin, was thus a reality for neophyte missionaries from Norway when they stepped ashore in Durban.

Compounding their own provinciality, nineteenth-century Norwegians were educated to have a thoroughly distorted image of Africa. Beginning in 1842, two generations of Norwegian school children were subjected to Ludvig Kristian Daa's *Udtog af Geografien* (i.e. Elements of Geography), a textbook which revealed its author's ignorance of Africa and passed it on to readers. That "immense peninsula", as Daa described the continent, supposedly lacked high mountain ranges; consequently, "there is little variation in temperature on the African landscape. Nearly the entire continent belongs to the hottest regions of the world". Even its ostensibly few fertile areas, he cautioned, are "unhealthy, indeed lethal, for Europeans". The indigenous African peoples fared poorly under Daa's unenlightened pen, which probably helped to shape prospective missionaries' expectations of the people whom they planned to evangelise. "The actual Negroes and Kaffirs are semi-wild barbarians", he declared. "Some tribes are as anarchic as the American Indians".<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ludvig Kr. Daa, *Udtog af Geografien*, 5th ed. (Kristiania: J. Chr. Abelsted, 1875), pp. 122-130.

Norwegian provinciality was accompanied by a firm attachment to deeply ingrained folkways. Like most other missionaries, those from Norway arrived in Southern Africa heavily laden with cultural baggage which exercised a great influence on their ministries and shaped their contacts with Africans. The hymns they taught their congregations were naturally the ones they had learnt in their homeland. The food they ate and served their servants and converts in the African bush was often much like traditional Norwegian cuisine. The curricula in the schools they administered at their stations bore considerable resemblance to that of Norwegian primary education. On Christmas Eve these expatriates and the Africans who stayed with them celebrated by walking around Christmas trees hand-in-hand and singing familiar carols, sometimes alternating Norwegian and Zulu stanzas. One could multiply examples, but the documents speak clearly for themselves.

Undeniably, an attitude of European cultural superiority permeated the mind-set which accompanied these missionaries to Africa. This did not, of course, set the Norwegians apart from most of their counterparts from elsewhere in Europe, but it contributed to keeping them at a distance from much Zulu and other indigenous African culture. Apart from learning Zulu or Swazi and paying homage of questionable sincerity to the Zulu monarchs, the Norwegians rarely did anything to assimilate indigenous ways. Given the *de facto* linkage of European civilisation and the forms of the Christian religion, and the generally unarticulated assumption of the missionaries that their familiar cultural shell of Christianity was somehow part of the essence of the latter, this reluctance to exchange their own culture for that of the people to whom they were seeking to convey the Gospel becomes comprehensible. This religio-cultural bias was an unintentional but prominent *Leitmotiv* in the missionaries' correspondence from the outset.

Some of these determinative characteristics also applied to non-Lutheran missionaries, but others did not. Most obviously, for decades after 1889 a majority of Norwegian free-church missionaries were women, even though nearly all the nonconformist pastors in Norway were men. Secondly, many and perhaps most of those sent to Southern Africa were lay evangelists with little or no formal theological education. Some, in fact, had attended primary school for only a few years before entering various trades. Others had attended Bible colleges or, in the case of some of the

first men and women whom the Free East Africa Mission commissioned, had participated in a training camp of a few weeks' duration. Possibly owing to these traits, and to the fact that a democratic spirit had begun to permeate both political and ecclesiastical life in Norway by the 1880s, there appears to have been less authoritarianism amongst the free-church missionaries than amongst the Lutherans. From the outset they had designated leaders, but deaths and dismissals long prevented stable leadership from developing. As a result, their letters and reports indicate a considerably lower level of erudition, a higher proportion of female viewpoints, and greater flexibility in devising missionary strategy and forms of organisation than are to be found in the Lutheran correspondence.

Yet the differences should not be exaggerated. Like their Lutheran counterparts, the free-church missionaries were financially insecure, indeed usually more so. They were also inescapably Europeans with little understanding and even less appreciation of African cultures. Some had probably had more contact with other Europeans or North Americans before leaving for Southern Africa than most Lutheran missionaries could claim, and their forms of Protestantism were partly of Anglo-American origin. Nevertheless, the free-church men and women initially found life in Natal and Zululand utterly foreign and often wrote disparagingly about the Africans. Although they rarely said so explicitly, it is evident that an attitude of cultural and moral superiority was one force driving their attempts - as they saw them - to enlighten and uplift the subjects of their evangelisation.

Specifically theological and moral emphases of Norwegian Protestantism, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, shaped the expectations of missionaries from Norway and frequently frustrated their efforts amongst the Nguni peoples. In Lutheran history, confessional orthodoxy and pietism have often been at odds with one another, but in nineteenth-century Norway the two could go hand-in-hand, despite undeniable inner tensions. Owing largely to the profound influence of the lay evangelist Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824) and his many followers, pietism remained a potent force in the Church of Norway for at least two generations after Hauge's death. It was particularly dominant in the southern and south-western regions of the country and amongst active lay people but also affected many clergymen whose spiritual roots were embedded in it. Against this wide popular background, which

emphasised *inter alia* individual conversion experiences, personal sanctification, and rigorous moral codes, post-Enlightenment confessionality regained a central place in theological education. Much of the impetus for this swing of the doctrinal pendulum came from Germany, where such "Repristination" theologians as Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869) and Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872) had been reasserting central tenets of Reformation theology against the liberalism and subjectivism of *inter alia* Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and David Friedrich Strauß (1808-1874). Their conservative voices resonated in Norway, where a century earlier the pietistic bishop of Bergen, Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764), had published his immensely influential "Explanation" of Luther's *Small Catechism*. By the 1850s Norwegian theology had largely returned to the confessional fold, where it remained until controversies concerning Biblical criticism ended the conservative consensus late in the century. This conservative Lutheranism characterised most of the men whom the NMS commissioned to Southern Africa, including H.P.S. Schreuder. Some, however, were much more theologically inclined than others.

The resurgence of confessionality did not subdue pietism, which had given rise to the foreign missionary impetus in Norway and which accompanied confessional orthodoxy to Natal and Zululand. In brief, the men of the NMS sought to propagate amongst the Zulus a form of Christianity which was at once rigidly objective, demanding acceptance of detailed doctrines, and unrelentingly subjective, stressing moral change as a necessary sign of conversion. By and large, Norwegian Lutheran missionaries refused to baptise Zulus until they could see noteworthy progress on both scores.

But on neither did it come rapidly, as is indicated by the fact that Schreuder did not baptise a single convert until 1858, some fourteen years after his initial arrival in Natal. In retrospect it is not surprising that few Africans satisfied the Norwegians' dual-focused demands during the first thirty-five years of Norwegian evangelisation amongst them. The Zulus not only had to abandon their deeply ingrained animistic religion and suffer familial and tribal ostracism for doing so; they also were expected to acquire by rote learning the ability to parrot responses to what must have seemed like endless catechetical questions. Two recurrent themes in the missionaries' reports from the 1840s until well into the twentieth century

were the unwillingness of the Zulus to give up their traditional beliefs, even if they had accepted Christianity, and that many of those who at least expressed a willingness to do so simply could not memorise the fundamentals of the faith. One Norwegian after another wrote to his superiors in Stavanger about the futility of efforts to hammer Christian doctrines into the resistant heads of the Zulus. The problem was made all the more difficult in the case of older Africans whose minds were even less capable rote memorisation of abstract material.

### The Personal Backgrounds of the Missionaries

The Norwegian missionary correspondence from Southern Africa is not, of course, an objective source, but a set of disjoint, subjective sources that in many ways reflect the personalities of the people who wrote these letters. Consequently, some awareness of what kind of people they were is essential to an understanding of what they wrote. Fortunately, enough is known about many of them to allow cautious generalisations about their characteristics which had a bearing on their perceptions and, in turn, their written reports.

An analysis of nineteenth-century candidates of the NMS completed by the Norwegian historian Vidar Gynnild sheds much light on the social and religious backgrounds of these young men. Gynnild discovered a wealth of information by perusing the applications they had submitted to the Society's school in Stavanger. Some of his data are pertinent to an understanding of the Norwegian factor in Southern African missions history and contribute to a more informed reading of the missionaries' letters and reports.

Most came from relatively humble circumstances. 78,5 per cent had been born in *bygder*, i.e. villages or the countryside. Only 21,5 per cent were natives of *byer*, or cities and towns, an appellation which did not necessarily imply a large population in overwhelmingly rural Norway. Nearly one-third of the applicants (30,8 per cent) had moved at least three times,

and on average they had done so 1,9 times.<sup>2</sup> Yet they were not, by and large, members of indigent families. 60 per cent indicated that their fathers were either smallholders or independent fishermen. An additional 11,8 per cent were sons of men who were self-employed in commerce, various trades, or transportation, and 4,7 per cent of either officers in the merchant navy or men who held other posts in the private sector. Relatively few - 9,4 per cent - were cotters' sons, and only 3,5 per cent were the sons of labourers. Gynnild could find only one applicant whose father was a pastor in Norway (as opposed to clergymen in mission fields) and three who were sons of foreign missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

The last of these statistics may reveal something about the limited amount of prestige associated with missionaries in Norway during the nineteenth century, at least when juxtaposed with that enjoyed by parish pastors in the established church. Another Norwegian historian, Dagfinn Mannsåker, found in 1954 that approximately one-third of the Norwegian Lutherans who were ordained between 1800 and 1900 were the sons of pastors. He also discovered that when sons of farmers were fortunate enough to qualify for admission to university studies, they chose theology more frequently than any other subject and, if they took degrees in it, they usually became parish pastors. In short, to the extent that the search for prestige and social perquisites played a role in the selection of careers, it is evident that young men who had been raised in the privileged manse of the Church of Norway very often chose to continue in the clerical class but almost never elected the hardships and uncertainty of life in Southern Africa or in other mission fields. But their schoolmates from farms who felt called to religious vocations could be found in considerable numbers both in the parishes of the established church in Norway and at mission stations abroad.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Vidar Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet. Geografisk, sosial og religiøs bakgrunn" (*candidatus philologiae* thesis, University of Trondheim, 1981), p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet", pp. 52, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Dagfinn Mannsåker, *Det norske presteskapet i det 19. hundreåret* (Oslo: Det norske samlaget, 1954), pp. 144, 151.

The greater tendency of young men from farms to become missionaries can also be attributed in part to the relative ease with which they could do so. Whereas admission to theological studies at Norway's only university to prepare for the parish ministry required the *examen artium*, or school-leaving certificate, no such prerequisite existed for matriculation at the NMS school in Stavanger. In many instances, therefore, rural youths without access to secondary education were compelled to choose the latter institution. Moreover, missionary candidates received free accommodation and board, whereas theology students at the university in Kristiania did not. It seems plausible that this discrepancy may have helped to persuade some poverty-stricken young men to choose Stavanger.

As might be expected in the light of the relatively loose scholarly requirements for admission to the school in Stavanger, many candidates did in fact begin there without much secondary education. Fully 26,2 per cent of those whose educational backgrounds Gynnild was able to trace had not earlier gone beyond primary school. 12,3 per cent had attended junior secondary school, however, and another 10,8 per cent had received training to teach in primary schools. Only one candidate was unquestionably qualified for university studies. The average age of the applicants was 22,2 years at the time of their admission to missionary studies.<sup>5</sup>

The varied professional status of the candidates is also significant for understanding the skills they brought to the mission field. Nearly one-third of them, 29,1 per cent, had been teachers, but the same percentage had been journeymen or apprentices. 16,4 percent were engaged in a variety of service positions, largely in business. 12,7 per cent applied to the missionary school while being educated elsewhere. The next largest group, comprising only 7,3 per cent, had been agricultural labourers. The others were distributed in small numbers in various other occupations.<sup>6</sup>

The religious backgrounds of applicants for service in the NMS are arguably more significant than their social circumstances, even though the former are unquestionably more difficult to express statistically. Nevertheless, on the basis of autobiographical statements Gynnild found that

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<sup>5</sup> Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet", pp. 73, 80.

<sup>6</sup> Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet", p. 87.



slightly over one-half, 53,8 per cent, had what he termed "believing Christian parents" (*troende kristne foreldre*), while only 1,5 per cent stated that their parents were non-believers. Fully 44,6 per cent, however, of the candidates did not provide information about their parents' religious views or lack thereof. By similar margins, namely 56,9 per cent over against 1,5 per cent, a large majority of successful applicants declared that their parents had given them a Christian upbringing.<sup>7</sup>

"Christian" and "Christian upbringing" can mean different things to different people, even in a country where approximately 98 per cent of the population belonged to the state Lutheran church during the latter half of the nineteenth century. If one can nevertheless make a qualified generalisation, there is considerable evidence that many prospective missionaries viewed their personal faith and their missionary task through pietistic eyes. Again, "pietism" was not an unambiguous concept, even amongst Norwegian Lutherans, but in general those who were in the neo-pietist movement in Norway during the nineteenth century upheld Lutheran sacramental theology while putting more emphasis on the preaching of the Word, individual conversion experiences, and sanctification than on their infrequent - usually semi-annual - celebration of the Lord's Supper. Their spiritual path, therefore, tended to stress what might be termed the subjective steps in what had become the conventional Scandinavian Lutheran *ordo salutis*, or order of salvation. This provided, for better or worse, a convenient measuring stick for evaluating the progress which converts or potential converts in the mission field were making. It also placed great responsibility on missionaries for coaching the subjects of their evangelisation along the road to salvation.

The leadership of the NMS appears to have placed considerable weight on applicants' consciousness of the pietists' *ordo salutis*. Fully 72,3 per cent of those whom it admitted had mentioned personal conversion experiences in their autobiographical statements, compared with only 33,8 per cent of those who were rejected.<sup>8</sup> Apparently the Society was keenly conscious of its role in a global drama in which the protagonists were expected to fight

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<sup>7</sup> Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet", pp. 91-92.

<sup>8</sup> Gynnild, "Norske misjonærer på 1800-tallet", p. 107.

doggedly for the conversion of individual souls, a struggle best fought by those who had vividly seen the process at work in themselves.

No such detailed data exist for making generalisations about the social and religious backgrounds of the Norwegian men and women whom the Free East Africa Mission and other organisations commissioned to Southern Africa, although enough is known about many of those missionaries to sketch a general group portrait of them. To a considerable degree, for several decades these people and their loosely organised sponsoring bodies fitted the model of the so-called "faith mission". The late South African missiologist David J. Bosch provided a convenient characterisation of this type of evangelistic body:

Typical of such an enterprise is that it usually issues from the vision of a single man, that it works in isolation from and frequently directly over against the institutional Church, that many of these agencies (though certainly not all) in their earlier years tend to evangelise rather superficially, that they are spurred on by a strong apocalyptic consciousness, that their missionaries are often prepared to make extraordinary sacrifices, and that they, as their name indicate [*sic*], labour "in faith", dependent only on voluntary financial support.<sup>9</sup>

Within this general type certain differences existed, and none of the Norwegian free-church enterprises was a perfect specimen of it. Nevertheless, the degree to which the "faith mission" model fits is sufficiently high to warrant its use as a characterisation.

When compared with their counterparts in the NMS, the free-church missionaries who went to Southern Africa reveal both similarities and dissimilarities. Most of the latter appeared to have undergone conscious conversion experiences, usually in some kind of revival. Furthermore, the majority seem to have come from relatively modest circumstances, although, as we shall see, at least two of the men whom the Free East Africa Mission commissioned to Natal in 1889 were the sons of a former Lutheran pastor and

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<sup>9</sup> David J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), p. 133.

one of the women in the same pioneering group had been a teacher. Finally, like the candidates to the NMS, they represented a wide spectrum of geographical and social backgrounds with many coming from small towns.

On the other hand, several striking differences gave the non-Lutheran missions a different flavour from that of the NMS. First, a much higher percentage of the free-church personnel were women, and, in contrast to female Lutheran missionaries, their ministries included preaching the Gospel from the outset. This was in accord with Fredrik Franson's emphasis on the use of women as evangelists.<sup>10</sup> Secondly, most of the free-church people arrived in Southern Africa with only minimal theological education, in many instances limited to attending a course of a few weeks' duration in evangelism. Thirdly, in most instances they were unordained, although this did not necessarily prevent them from administering the sacraments. Fourthly, the Norwegian free-church missionaries in Southern Africa were less under the control of steering committees in Norway or elsewhere than were their counterparts who served the NMS. Such boards did in fact exist, but they were less firmly organised than the Lutheran one in Stavanger and did not have the means to supervise closely and consistently their personnel in Southern Africa, at least not in their early years. From the outset, the NMS, representing almost exclusively members of the Church of Norway with its episcopal polity, had powerful superintendents in Natal and Zululand, most notably the authoritarian H.P.S. Schreuder, who was named bishop of the Norwegian foreign mission fields in 1866. Among the free-church missionaries, however, governance was usually much different. Few of them came from denominations with well-developed polities, and in Southern Africa they lacked consistent leadership anyway. This was partly due to numerous early deaths amongst the personnel in the Free East Africa Mission which compelled the survivors to piece together interim arrangements for continuing their endeavours. Complicating matters, after four years in Natal the superintendent of the Free East Africa Mission, Olaf Wettergreen, resigned under duress in 1893 after he came under Christadelphian influences. This and other incidents

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<sup>10</sup> Franson, discussed in the introduction to Chapter V, provided much of the personal impulse for the founding of Scandinavian free-church missions. He defended his use of female evangelists, which had caused controversies in both Scandinavia and Germany, in a brief treatise titled *Weissagende Töchter* (Emden: Anton Gerhard, 1890).

made the free-church missionaries more autonomous and compelled them to use their own devices more freely in seeking to establish programmes of evangelisation and ecclesiastical nurture. Their weakly developed and usually unarticulated ecclesiology also militated against the founding of a well-defined polity in the field. All of this left vivid marks on their letters and reports.

## CHAPTER II

### PENETRATING NATAL AND ZULULAND, 1844-1877

#### Introduction

The NMS occupies a pre-eminent place in the history of Norwegian missions in Southern Africa. Not only was it the first of several organisations in Norway to commission missionaries to that field, for nearly a half-century it was the only one to do so. During those decades before 1889 it became the first society to have permanent stations in Zululand, where it initially succeeded in establishing one in 1851. Moreover, by the 1870s the NMS had become a well-known fixture in the religious landscape of Natal and Zululand. The men who represented it had gained the respect of missionaries in other societies (despite occasional tensions with them), British colonial officials, and, to some extent, Zulu chiefs and other leaders. It is thus not only appropriate but indeed necessary to commence this edition of Norwegian missionary correspondence with letters written by H.P.S. Schreuder and his colleagues beginning in the 1840s.

The purpose of the present introduction, in brief, is to provide essential background information about the founding of the NMS, its forerunners in Norway, the religious climate of that country during the first half of the nineteenth century, and Schreuder, who for nearly thirty years was the acknowledged standard-bearer of the NMS in Natal and Zululand.

Like their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, the British Isles, and North America, Scandinavian Protestants were strongly affected by the wave of missionary interest which swept across much of Christendom late in the eighteenth and early in the nineteenth centuries. It gave rise first to societies across the North Sea, such as the Baptist Missionary Society in the United Kingdom in 1792, the largely Congregationalist London Missionary Society three years later, and the Anglican Church Missionary Society in 1797. Numerous Continental organisations followed, many of them in the Protestant German principalities. Among those which became active in Southern Africa, the Berlin Mission was constituted in 1824, the Rhenish Mission in 1828, and the Hermannsburg Mission in 1849. Across

the Atlantic, meanwhile, Congregationalists had founded the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. All these bodies sent missionaries to Southern Africa by the 1850s, and several of the men who served them interacted with Norwegian counterparts there. But the international, indeed intercontinental resurgence of missionary fervour reached the northernmost European kingdoms relatively late, at least if one uses the establishment of national missionary organisations as chronological bench-marks. The Danish Missionary Society (*Det danske Missionsselskab*), the Swedish Missionary Society (*Svenska missionssällskapet*), and the NMS (*Det norske Misjonsselskap*) were not founded until 1821, 1835, and 1842, respectively.

The NMS owes its existence in large measure to a fundamental transition of religious life in Norway which began during the first quarter of the nineteenth century and continued for several decades thereafter. The external structures of the Church of Norway remained essentially intact. The constitution of 1814, ratified when the country was released from Danish hegemony only to be linked with Sweden in a personal union with the Swedish Crown, reconfirmed Lutheranism as "the official religion of the state". For another generation the government sought with partial success to maintain its control of national religious life through the Department of Ecclesiastical Affairs, beating back attempts by the parliament to liberalise the legislation which ensured the state church an unchallenged position. The clergy, moreover, continued to loom socially above most of their impoverished flocks and had a virtually exclusive right to preach the Gospel in Norway.

In the ranks of the awakened laity, however, neo-pietistic winds of change were blowing. Among the first of these was a challenge to clerical prerogative in preaching. Pietistic laymen preached with increasing frequency in informal settings, thereby violating Article XIV of the *Augsburg Confession*, which reserved the proclamation of the Gospel to those properly called, or *rite vocatus*. These unordained revivalists perceived extensive spiritual lethargy in the wake of the Enlightenment but few vigorous clerical attempts to rectify it. They therefore sought to rekindle the fires of Christian spirituality "from below". None of these preachers, many of whom were itinerant, had more influence than Hans Nielsen Hauge. A self-tutored farmer's son, Hauge underwent a conversion

experience as a young man and began an evangelistic crusade which took him through much of Norway and to Denmark. His violation of the Conventicles Edict, a statute of 1741 which forbade lay preaching, and his vituperative criticism of the clergy repeatedly led to conflicts with government and ecclesiastical authorities in both countries. Hauge's popularity increased, however, as did that of his publications, some of which he wrote in prison. His followers, called Haugeans (*haugianere*), soon became and long remained a powerful factor in Norwegian religious life, especially in the southern and western regions of Norway, which were to contribute a heavily disproportionate number of men and women to the service of the NMS. They emphasised *inter alia* individual conversion experiences, informal and often lay-led worship, evangelism, and personal morality as a sign of spiritual growth. Despite their occasional castigations of the Lutheran clergy, the overwhelming majority of the Haugeans remained in the Church of Norway, a fact which profoundly influenced the history of that denomination.

In several other countries, pietism and closely related developments provided the major impetus for the formation of missionary societies. This was also the case in Norway, where Haugeans and, to some extent, Herrnhuters, who had become a fixture on the religious landscape of the country during the eighteenth century, advocated the undertaking of foreign missions. Precisely how pietism and neo-pietism gave rise to the NMS is a relatively complicated and debated story, and most of the details need not concern us here.<sup>1</sup> In brief, stimuli came from abroad to galvanise incipient interest amongst Norwegian religious leaders, both lay and ordained. Amongst the most prominent of these, the Anglican periodical *Missionary Register* began to appear in some Norwegian Lutheran parsonages early in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, both the English edition and a Danish translation of 1804 of James Wilson's account of his journey to Tahiti in the service of the London Missionary

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<sup>1</sup> The history of the developments which led to the founding of the NMS is told most fully in John Nome, *Demringstid i Norge. Fra misjonsinteresse til misjonsselskap* (Stavanger: Det Norske Misjonsselskaps Forlag, 1942).

Society during the 1790s circulated in Norway.<sup>2</sup> Specific interest in what eventually became the first NMS field may have been prompted by John Campbell's inspection tours of Southern Africa during the 1820s. The largest newspaper in the Norwegian capital reported his journey of 1819-1820 at length.<sup>3</sup> Missionary interest elsewhere in Scandinavia also nurtured that in Norway. In 1821 Peder Olivarius Bugge (1764-1849), bishop of Trondheim, began to publish the nation's first missionary magazine, *Underrettelser om Evangelii Fremgang i alle Verdens-Dele* (i.e. Reports on the Progress of the Gospel in All Parts of the World). It consisted primarily of material taken almost *verbatim* from a Swedish Herrnhut periodical of the same title. Before Bugge's magazine ceased publication in 1823, it exposed Norwegian readers to the efforts of the London Missionary Society and other organisations to propagate the Gospel abroad. *Underrettelser* was probably a contributing factor to the formation of local missionary societies in Norway during the 1820s. The first of these was organised in Trondheim in 1825. They proliferated rapidly, and in 1842 no fewer than sixty-five of them sent delegates to the convention, held in Stavanger at the invitation of that city's missionary society, which constituted the NMS. That body continued to grow, and within three years it had 108 local affiliates. These were largely in areas where Hauge were strongly represented. No-one played a more instrumental role in bringing about the constituent assembly than John Haugvaldstad (1770-1850), a prosperous Haugean layman in Stavanger. The first eight-man steering committee of the NMS included three Haugeans, three Herrnhuters, and two university-educated theologians. Another pastor in the state church, Andreas Hauge (1815-1892), a son of the eminent revivalist, founded privately in 1845 and served as the first editor of *Norsk Missions-Tidende*, which five years later became the monthly organ of the NMS. The presence of both Haugean and non-Haugean clergymen on the committee assured the fledgling organisation contact with a wide spectrum of Norwegian Christians.

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the advertisement for the Danish version in *Morgenbladet* (Kristiania), 9 February 1820.

<sup>3</sup> *Morgenbladet*, 13 March, 12 and 15 September 1822.



Interested parties in the Norwegian capital also played a vital if independent role in the genesis of the Southern African field. The Kristiania Missionary Society, or *Christiania Missionsforening* in the orthography of that day, was not a founding member of the NMS, although it sent a delegate to the constituent assembly in Stavanger, none other than H.P.S. Schreuder. Another group in the capital, an *ad hoc* committee formed in August 1842 to promote the commissioning of Schreuder as a missionary of the Church of Norway itself as opposed to a voluntary society whose members also happened to belong to the state church. These four theologians declined overtures for co-operation from the NMS, which was already seeking to recruit Schreuder as its first missionary.

Schreuder's preparation for and keen interest in foreign missionary work make it understandable why both parties were eager to sponsor him.<sup>4</sup> Born in 1817, this jurist's son had excelled in both secondary school and at Norway's sole university in Kristiania, where he received a theological degree with the rare distinction *laudabilis et litteris commendatitiis ornandus* in 1841. To enhance his preparation for ministry in Africa further still, Schreuder then studied medicine in Kristiania for a year and also acquired some competence in carpentry and other practical skills. He was a physically imposing man, broad-shouldered and nearly two metres tall, attributes which reportedly helped him gain respect amongst the Zulus.

While waiting to sail to a foreign missionary field, Schreuder wrote tracts to stimulate public interest in his undertaking. In what was probably the most noteworthy of these, *Nogle Ord til Norges Kirke om christelig Pligt med Hensyn til Omsorg for ikke-christne Medbrødres Salighed* (i.e. Some Words to the Church of Norway about Christian Duty Regarding Concern for the Salvation of Non-Christian Brothers),<sup>5</sup> he contended that the church as such should constantly be in mission. It should not leave the task of evangelism to voluntary organisations. This

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<sup>4</sup> Schreuder has been the subject of several books for over a century. Among the most recent and academically solid of these are two by Olav Guttorm Myklebust, one of Schreuder's admirers, *H.P.S. Schreuder. Kirke og misjon* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1980) and *En var den første. Tekster og studier til forståelse av H.P.S. Schreuder* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1986.)

<sup>5</sup> Kristiania: Guldberg & Dzwonkowski, 1842.

position, in effect, placed Schreuder at odds with the neophyte NMS and foreshadowed later tensions between him and that para-church body. At the same time, however, it reflected the stance of his promoters in Kristiania.

Schreuder also began to consider several possible mission fields, including Southern Africa, Argentina, and India. Andreas Hauge, who by the early 1840s had taken a keen interest in the endeavour, assisted him in this search. At a meeting in Great Britain, the internationally known Robert Moffatt (1795-1883) of the London Missionary Society who had spent two decades in Southern Africa advised Hauge to encourage Schreuder to take the Gospel to the Zulus. The British were then gaining control of Natal, so it probably seemed like a logical choice, at least to a Scotsman who represented an English missionary society.

In June 1843 the NMS agreed to support Schreuder's committee in Kristiania until the latter body ceased to exist, whereupon Schreuder would enter the service of the NMS directly. That did not happen until 1846, more than two years after his arrival in Natal. Before this temporary *modus operandi* was arranged, Schreuder had been ordained in Kristiania in May 1843. In July of that year he sailed to London, where he spent several weeks. Together with E.E. Thommessen (1819-?), another Norwegian bachelor who had been educated as a smith and veterinarian, he sailed to Cape Town, arriving there on 10 November. The two Norwegians continued their voyage to Natal, where they disembarked in Durban on 1 January 1844.

Their initial year and a half in Natal was a time of preparation for the zealous missionary and his first "economic assistant". They spent most of this period at Umlazi, an American Congregationalist mission station south of Durban. Schreuder made rapid progress in mastering the Zulu language, in which he had begun to preach by November 1844. By mid-1845 Schreuder and Thommessen felt sufficiently confident to attempt to penetrate Zululand, something that the Congregationalists had managed to do only temporarily in the late 1830s and early 1840s. The Norwegians discovered that Mpande, who had acceded to the Zulu throne in 1840, and some of his chiefs adamantly opposed incursions by missionaries, reportedly owing to memories of disloyalty by subjects who had come under the influence of Christianity a few years earlier.

With their initial hopes thus dashed, Schreuder and Thommessen retreated to Natal and established a station near the Umhluti River. They remained there for approximately twelve months beginning in August 1845. This was evidently a frustrating period for them. No conversions were effected, and it became increasingly clear that the British colonial authorities in Natal preferred Anglophone missionaries, giving preference to British Methodists and American Congregationalists when they assigned "mission reserves". The Berlin Mission, however, which entered Natal while Schreuder and Thommessen were at the Umhluti site, was granted land in the northern part of the colony. The Norwegians were not. Thommessen left the NMS and Southern Africa early in 1847. Schreuder, whose communications with the NMS had become infrequent, also left Natal that year and, on his own initiative, sailed to Hong Kong in the hope of establishing a Norwegian mission in China. Never enthusiastic about that alternative undertaking, Schreuder remained only very briefly in the recently acquired British colony after it became obvious to him that his domineering, Nordic physical appearance would make his assimilation there extremely difficult. By September 1848 he had returned to Natal by way of Cape Town. On his way he had recovered enough of his original enthusiasm for evangelising the Zulus to write a grammar of the Zulu language in Dano-Norwegian, a brief volume which was published in Kristiania in 1850.<sup>6</sup>

1849 brought two important developments to Schreuder's renewed effort to establish a mission to the Zulus. One was the purchasing of a farm called *Uitkomst* between Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Schreuder paid £1 500 for 19 000 acres there when it became apparent that a mission reserve closer to the Tugela in the Umvoti district would not be available. The location of the farm, far from Mpande's kingdom, did not please Schreuder, but the more than 100 families who resided on it gave him many people to evangelise. The NMS sold it in 1854 in order to concentrate its efforts in Zululand. Secondly, three additional assistants, namely Ommund Oftebro (1820-1893), Lars Larsen (1812-1890), and Tobias Udland (1819-1875), arrived to aid Schreuder. All of them had studied at

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<sup>6</sup> H.P.S. Schreuder, *Grammatik for Zulu-Sproget forfattet* (Kristiania: Fabritius, 1850).

the training school the NMS had established at Stavanger in 1843, although none of them was ordained until Schreuder, then the superintendent (*tilsynsmann*) of the NMS field in Southern Africa, independently initiated them into the ranks of the clergy in 1860.

An even more momentous breakthrough occurred in 1850, shortly after the NMS had finally been awarded a mission glebe at Mapumulo, just south of the Tugela, and established a station called Umpumulo there. Schreuder had employed his rudimentary skills in medicine at Umpumulo and apparently healed several indigenous patients there. Late in 1850 Mpande requested Mkonto, the local chief, to recommend someone in Natal who could cure his rheumatism. Mkonto suggested the Norwegian, who was called to Mpande's residence at Nodwengu shortly before Christmas. Schreuder treated the king, his prime minister, and other high-ranking Zulus. This gained him royal favour and permission to establish a station near Mpande's kraal in exchange for occasional medical services. Schreuder gratefully accepted the arrangement.<sup>7</sup>

A network of Norwegian stations gradually linked several parts of Zululand. Empangeni was established in 1851 and Ntumeni the following year. Mahlabatini, near the site of Mpande's kraal at Nodwengu, was established in 1860. Eshowe and Nhlazatshe followed in 1861 and 1862, respectively. The station at Mfule was founded in 1865 and that at Umbonambi in 1869. Ekutembini station also was established in 1869 but was moved to Emzinyati a year later. In north-eastern Zululand, Hlabisa became the site of a station in 1871.

It should be emphasised, however, that this wave of construction and the influx of missionary personnel which made it possible did not signal a dramatic increase in the number of conversions amongst the Zulus. Representatives of the NMS did not baptise a single convert until 6 June 1858, when Schreuder administered that sacrament for a Zulu girl named Matenjwaze. This long-awaited event caused flagging missionary interest in Norway to surge anew, but baptisms remained sporadic during the 1860s and 1870s. Not until after the conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War

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<sup>7</sup> Schreuder's account of this turning point in the history of missions to the Zulus is given in his letter dated February 1851 to the NMS (NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2). Much of that letter is included in the present chapter.

of 1879, which effectively crushed indigenous resistance to British imperialism in the region, did the rate of conversions accelerate markedly.

Although the number of Zulus whom the men of the NMS baptised remained low for approximately thirty-five years after Schreuder and Thommessen disembarked at Durban in 1844, considerably more indigenes were culturally affected by these Norwegians during those decades. When it became apparent that on most occasions few Zulus accepted missionaries' invitations to worship with them, the Norwegians in effect gave up their goal of Christianising African tribes *en masse* and focused their attention on influencing individuals. They did this in large measure by employing them in various capacities or educating them at or very near their stations. Only on rare occasions did the missionaries articulate the missiological issues which this change of approach entailed, but two fundamental ones are nevertheless evident in it. First, it signalled a change from a general if very short-lived vision of *Volkschristianisierung* to arguably more realistic *Einzelbekehrung*, even though the Norwegian missionaries gave no indication of being aware of the debate over those two approaches in German missiological circles and did not use those terms in their correspondence and reports.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, it dawned on at least some of the Norwegians that generally speaking Christian values, intertwined with a European life-style, meant much more to the Zulu mind than did Christian doctrines. A recurrent theme in the missionaries' correspondence, especially prior to the war of 1879, was the difficulty of making even the most fundamental theological tenets of the Christian faith comprehensible to the Zulus. At the same time, these Norwegians frequently wrote that Zulus, particularly the young ones, were coming to their stations in increasing numbers to learn and work. This seeming paradox and an emphasis on the evangelisation of youth were essential factors in Norwegian missionary work in Zululand and Natal both before and after 1879. An awareness of them is indispensable when reading the missionaries' correspondence, especially that from the early period.

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<sup>8</sup> For an incisive discussion of this crucial difference in the goals of missionary endeavours, see David J. Bosch, *Witness to the World: The Christian Mission in Theological Perspective* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), pp. 120-139.

The foundation which Schreuder and his colleagues so painstakingly had laid was shattered in the early 1870s. In 1872 Schreuder left the NMS and continued his missionary work independent of that organisation. The split involved both differing viewpoints of his authority and personality conflicts. In brief, Schreuder had been elevated to the episcopacy of the Norwegian mission field and enthroned during his visit to Norway in 1866. It soon became apparent, however, that his desire to have the same powers as the bishops in Norway - in accord with promises made to him and with his consistent opinion that he was serving the established church of that country as well as the NMS - clashed with a democratising trend within that organisation. During the decades since Schreuder had left Norway in 1843, lay initiative had grown considerably, giving unordained men a much stronger voice in various para-church bodies, including the NMS. In harmony with this, some of the Society's supporters were displeased with the introduction of the episcopal office. Despite the promises made to Schreuder, the leaders of the NMS - some of them unordained - were affected by this changing spirit and wished to formalise the practice of the missionaries making many decisions collegially at annual conferences. When neither side was willing to compromise enough to satisfy the other, Schreuder submitted his resignation in June 1872. A committee of conservative pastors in Norway then formed the Church of Norway Schreuder Mission to enable him to continue his endeavours. Schreuder was the only ordained missionary whom that organisation (which never became an integral part of the state church) had until his death in 1882. During his last years, when there were two Norwegian missions in Southern Africa, Schreuder's relations with his erstwhile colleagues were generally amiable if somewhat distant, undeniably strained by intemperate language between Schreuder and the leadership of the NMS in Stavanger and his criticism of the other missionaries for leaving their stations in Zululand for the relative safety of Natal on the eve of the Anglo-Zulu War.

During the final decade of his life, Schreuder worked indefatigably at Ntumeni and Untunjambili, a station which his new society developed at a site between Kranskop and the Tugela River in north-western Natal in 1875. Administering both stations simultaneously took its toll on him, as did his efforts to assist the Church of Sweden Mission, which began

to function in Natal in the mid-1870s. After the death of his first wife, Jakobine Løwenthal (1814-1878), Schreuder married another Norwegian woman, Johanne Vedeler (1835-1898). He died at Untunjambili in 1882 before his herculean efforts to propagate the Gospel had borne more than a small fraction of the fruits which they eventually yielded.

### Correspondence

*After approximately seventeen months in Natal, most of them spent at the American Congregationalist station, Umlazi, south of Durban, Schreuder laid plans for approaching Mpande and requesting permission to undertake missionary work in Zululand. His conversations with Aldin Grout, who had been unsuccessful in a similar undertaking, did not elevate his expectations to unrealistic heights. This was the first of Schreuder's many acknowledgements of Mpande's sovereignty. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, I, no. 7 [December 1845], pp. 103-104)*

Umlazi

11 June 1845

...It is my intention to begin my travels by going north to Zululand, north-east of this colony. Travelling will be slow, because I intend to use every favourable opportunity to become familiar with the character and language of the people. Therefore, I will hardly be able to reach the Tugela, the river which is the border of Zululand, within a month. At least a month and a half will pass before we reach King Mpande's residence approximately 500 kilometres<sup>9</sup> from here. If Mpande allows me to remain in his domain, I will seek to do so in his immediate vicinity, if that seems advantageous to my purposes. That would allow me to prevent, if possible, all misunderstandings that could harm our mission. One of the

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<sup>9</sup> Schreuder estimated the distance at approximately "forty to fifty miles", meaning Norwegian *mil*, a now antiquated unit of measurement which corresponded to 11,295 kilometres. This was an exaggeration of the actual distance to Mpande's royal kraal at Nodwengu.

chief misunderstandings between him<sup>10</sup> and Grout was the accusation that Grout was luring his people away from him, because Grout lived rather far away. Several people began to flock to his station. Mpande claimed that they grew lax in the services and obedience they owed him.

On the other hand, if Mpande denies me permission to remain in his country, I shall consult the Master in whose service I am, to learn where I should go. I have, however, become familiar with the main rules regarding communications between Port Natal and my intended place of residence. . . .



*A month after returning to Natal from his unsuccessful foray into Zululand, Schreuder described his meeting with Mpande and explained why the Zulu monarch had denied him permission to establish a station. He attributed the king's resistance to fears of potentially divided loyalty on the part of his subjects, apprehensions which foreshadowed later developments. Schreuder wrote from a temporary station he and Thommessen had founded near the Umhluti River. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, I, no. 9 [February 1846], pp. 129-137)*

Umhluti River

12 September 1845

... As indicated in my last letter, written in June of this year, I was then ready to begin my journey. Some difficulties with the oxen and the driver delayed my departure until 24 June, when we finally left the mission station at Umlazi. The driver got us down to Port Natal where, with the aid of acquaintances and with considerable difficulty, we hired the only capable driver who was home. His salary was £3 per month. That man, a Hottentot, was not able to reach the wagon until 26 June midway between Port Natal and the Umgeni River, which is said to contain a lot of crocodiles during the rainy season and claim several people almost every year....

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<sup>10</sup> Meant is Mpande.



On 5 July we crossed the Unonoti and Inkevazi brooks, and that afternoon we crossed the Tugela, which was then very low, even at the deepest points. The Tugela enters the sea over 100 kilometres north-east of Port Natal....

We spent Sunday, 20 July, some distance from two of Mpande's kraals, where his soldiers are garrisoned under the command of a specified chief (*induna*). On Sunday afternoon Thommessen and I went to one of those kraals. The superior of the place received us in the cattle byre and had a jug of their Kaffer beer brought to us. We tasted it but did not like it. Both there and at several places subsequently we had to admire the order and quietness, which were much different from what one sees and hears in the natives' kraals here in the colony. Nevertheless, these large royal kraals have an unattractive and faulty exterior. The cattle byre is the central thing. It can often be 300 metres in diameter. Between the fence of the cattle byre and the fence around the kraal is an area with buildings. It was filled with the conventional low huts. The highest dome of them is about as high as the top of the fences. From a distance one sees only part of the curved row of huts, because the large kraals usually are stretched across dome-shaped plains. Inside this narrow row of huts is an empty space, and outside it is another. At the upper end of the cattle byre is a pen for the calves, and across from it are the king's quarters. They are divided into several parts, the interiors of which are somewhat more attractive, but the doors of both the king's and the poor people's huts are so low that only by crawling on all fours can one enter or leave them.

On 21 July we were only a few kilometres from our destination, having crossed the Umfolozi River. On 22 July we prepared to go to Esiklepene, Mpande's second-largest royal kraal. Mpande was then at his main kraal, Nodwengu, some ten kilometres to the east, so a messenger was sent to inform him of our arrival. The impassable road between Esiklepene and Nodwengu prevented us from travelling farther with our wagons. Immediately after our arrival I had the opportunity to speak with the chiefs who were then at Esiklepene. On the whole both they and the common people gave me the impression that I could expect a favourable reception [from Mpande], so some unfavourable reports we had heard earlier on our journey seemed to lose their cogency.

On 23 July the messenger returned and said that the king wished to see both the merchant<sup>11</sup> and me that day. He could not come to Esiklepene, because he was too busy hunting, building houses, etc. I therefore had no choice but to walk to Nodwengu, however unfortunate it was that Mpande was going to receive both the merchant and me at the same time. It is the custom of the important natives to show their importance by making people who wish to visit them wait for a long time before granting them an audience, so we did not get to speak with the king immediately. That finally happened, however, but trade was naturally discussed first, since I had not brought along my gift whereas the merchant had taken several of his with him and immediately displayed them.

When the trade discussion was finished I had my turn. I told the king that I had long been keenly interested in his welfare and that of his people, that I had therefore come to this distant country, and that I was happy to see my heart's desire fulfilled, namely to see him and his people. I looked forward hopefully to being permitted to live in peace in his country. I told him that unfortunately I had not been able to bring my present with me, but that it was in the wagon and would be given to him at the first opportunity. He seemed cold and somewhat morose during the entire conversation, which he concluded by announcing that he first would have to speak with his chiefs and hear their opinions before deciding about my stay in his country....

We spent two Sundays at Esiklepene, and on those days the natives distinguished themselves by their quite unexpected quietness and peacefulness, even though none of Mpande's subjects attended our devotions and I did not believe it proper to request permission to preach publicly to the people before receiving a decision from the king. On 29 July I finally heard that the royal council meeting did not promise anything good for missions. I therefore decided to go to the king with the gift I had promised him. On 30 July I was at Nodwengu. After I had waited for a while a group of chiefs appeared and assembled under a dry tree. I was requested to come forward and sit amongst them. The

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<sup>11</sup> Schreuder is referring to a trader who, by coincidence, travelled with him and Thomessen in hopes of being granted an audience by Mpande.

following conversation then took place. One of the chiefs began by saying that they were afraid that any missionary should stay in the country. They were afraid and wept for the king and the royal throne because the people would become attached to the missionary, abandon the king, and leave the throne empty. That was what had happened with Grout; the people had left and gone to him. When the necessary punishment was to be meted out to those who had left, Grout had fled. The worst thing was that he had taken so many of the king's people with him. The kingdom had suffered such a great loss in terms of political flight to the Port Natal Colony that they inevitably had the greatest fear of having a missionary in the country....



*Schreuder and Thommessen remained at their Umhluti River station until August 1846. They had little visible success there and did not effect any conversions. In the following letter, Schreuder gave some insight into his efforts to make Christian worship meaningful to interested Zulus without necessarily indigenising it and the frustrations he encountered when those who attended his services envisaged little more than gustatory rewards for doing so and for professing obedience to the God whom Schreuder proclaimed. He also initiated what became a tradition of Norwegian missionaries making disparaging remarks about moral turpitude, fear of ancestral spirits, and sorcery amongst the Zulus. At no time would Schreuder laud or in any way condone tribal religious practices. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Umhluti

1 May 1846

Nearly a year has passed since I began my work here,<sup>12</sup> so I feel obliged to inform you, dear brethren, how it has gone. According to the grace God has given, I have strived to preach the word of salvation to this people on both Sundays and holidays. The natives have regularly

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<sup>12</sup> In fact only about nine months had passed since Schreuder's arrival at Umhluti in August 1845.

attended services here on Sundays. In the beginning there were often 700 - 800, but for reasons I shall mention below considerably fewer came later. Worship has proceeded as follows: first one of the hymns that I have translated; then a short prayer and the Lord's Prayer; then the sermon. Usually I then have those assembled recite the Ten Commandments, and I give an explanation of the commandment or commandments whose content is most directly related to the sermon or to present circumstances. Finally, we sing another hymn, and those assembled are admonished to go home decently on this day of the Lord.

With regard to song, one can remark in passing that as a rule these natives have only very mediocre voices for singing, but some attempt to sing the few melodies that I, myself an extremely mediocre singer, know and have sought to use with the translated hymns. As the basis of the sermon I select partly Biblical stories, which I try to apply to my listeners' own lives and history, so that the teachings they contain may be much more understandable and graphic, and partly the doctrines of Scripture, constantly striving to limit myself to the simplest matters and lower myself as far as possible to what I know to be my listeners' ability to understand....

I have often had the opportunity to repeat and expand in conversations that which I have preached to them. On those occasions it has been obvious that they could understand me if they would only attempt to do so. They seem to be a strange people, though. By nature they are well-endowed, but a very heavy spirit of indifference and immorality prevails amongst them. Like an unscalable wall it seems to block access of every serious thought to their interior, which in terms of religion is sorely empty. Not infrequently they begin to talk in a comforting way about how they have now left their old, evil ways, how they are now going to heaven, how they now have white, perfect hearts and are now doing the will of the Lord, how they now love and serve God, and - to get to the main point - that they hope to get a lot of food so that they can become very fat. (At this point they stretch out their arms to indicate the size of the stomach they want to have.) Unfortunately, one must say that the belly is their God, indeed their only God. In the beginning it made an ugly and depressing impression on me

to hear that ending of their tale, but now frequent repetition has unfortunately produced a mournful outlook in my soul...

Their entire concept of anything supernatural is united with their belief in or, more correctly, fear of witch-doctors and witches. In many aspects of life they assume the mysterious, supernatural influence of a foreign power. If sickness or death strikes people or cattle, it has been caused by magic power, and if a witch-doctor (*nyanga*) does not undertake to remove the evil, or the witch is not exterminated, one must move to another place. There is an abundance of the most irrational witchcraft stories. People believe that the witch-doctors have an animal that resembles a cat and with whose assistance they carry out their evil plans. On its master's order this animal is said to be able to go anywhere and secretly kill a designated person or people, etc. They widely regard me as an *nyanga*, and I find it difficult at times to make the real cause of sickness or accidents understandable to them. In the event of illness they therefore go first to their *nyanga*, whom they must pay a great deal, and usually it is too late when they go to him for advice or medicine. At the moment there are not any chickens in Zululand. The reason for this is that Dingane's<sup>13</sup> greatest *nyanga* pretended that the crowing of the cock caused thunder, so it became forbidden to keep chickens. The Zulus also believe in the ghosts of their deceased, or *isitula*. If a snake appears in the house of a deceased person, it is regarded as the ghost, and no-one touches it. In some cases they appear to attribute to these *isitula* influence on their fate. For example, Mpande, when he returned to Zululand as king, honoured Shaka's<sup>14</sup> *isitula* by slaughtering some cattle at the place where he had been killed in order to assure good fortune in his kingdom.

The customs of the Zulus show that they lie captive beneath the yoke of sin. Polygamy prevails among them, as do all the evils which result from it. The wife is the slave of the husband, and she is

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<sup>13</sup> Dingane (ca 1795-1840) had been the Zulu monarch from 1828 until 1840. He was a half-brother of Mpande, who succeeded him.

<sup>14</sup> Shaka (ca 1788-1828) had vastly extended the Zulu empire by subjugating other tribes during the last decade of his life. His memory was revered because of his military prowess. Heirless, he was succeeded by Dingane.

purchased for a certain number of cattle - from four to eleven - upon which her father and the groom agree. Divorce is common, and then the husband demands his cattle back. This gives rise to the longest disputes. If one spouse dies, the nearest relative must bring an action.

At weddings they pass time by eating, drinking, and dancing until at last they are so drunk that pneumonia, which is widespread amongst them, can in large measure be attributed to it. When a girl is married, she receives a hut in her husband's kraal, and she is chiefly responsible for all the housekeeping and cultivating the fields. The husband helps her only by hoeing the fields and building huts and fences. The women carry the year's harvest on their heads, which is the way everything is carried. The harvest consists of their two kinds of corn, which they store in a larger or smaller number of holes in the cattle byre, gourds, melons, beans, and a kind of potato. They eat the meat both of animals that have died naturally and that have been slaughtered.

In the winter the husband goes hunting, especially for antelope. Otherwise they pass their time in idleness, by visiting friends near and far, and by drinking beer, if possible every day. Both men and women participate in their drinking parties, and one can say that this people is given to drink, for there can be no doubt that if they knew of a stronger beverage than their beer they would make just as much use of it. By nature they are very sociable, and the men spend much of the year wandering about. They receive each other very hospitably. This is not the case, however, when the missionary (or indeed any white person) visits them. Then they often demand twice as much in return. The Zulus use snuff and smoke enthusiastically. As soon as they meet they sit down to have some snuff. That is a sign of friendship, and they use this stimulant so much that many have destroyed their voices by doing so. They smoke from a horn and, like the Turks, draw the smoke through water. They can smoke until they are quite intoxicated.

One of the darkest facets of the Zulus' character is their terrible immorality. They are so given to profanity that every other word that comes from their mouths is an oath. They swear by their deceased kings Shaka and Dingane. The propensity for dishonesty is so entrenched in them from childhood that it is difficult for them to grasp how wrong it is. One can hardly believe half of what that say in unimportant matters,

and in matters in which their personal interests are involved one cannot believe a single word without having additional information. But even though lying is so closely related to stealing, there are probably few places where one is less vulnerable to theft than in the Port Natal Colony and Zululand, whereas the Kaffers in the Cape Colony are as well-trained thieves as it is possible to be.

Disunity and quarrels often arise between tribes, and one such dispute which began at one of my services was the reason why the large number in attendance dwindled so markedly. Recently only between thirty and 200 have attended. As one can well imagine, vengefulness is a characteristic of their wild minds. Once I was caring for a chief who had fled Zululand with a life-threatening wound. Another refugee from there, an enemy of the chief, came later to see me and was ready to murder him. Only with difficulty did I manage to prevent him from carrying out his evil intention. Shortly thereafter two of my cows were speared, and I fear that misdeed was related to the other one. Gratitude does not appear to have found its way into the hearts of these wild people. Even when a missionary helps them in their illness and other physical need, it does not occur to them to feel, let alone show, any gratitude or acknowledgement. They believe that he actually has come in order to serve them in whatever way they demand and even believe that they are thereby doing him a favour. Even serving as a doctor can therefore often become a burden for the missionary instead of clearing the way for and making them more receptive to spiritual healing. So long as their ears are deaf to the Gospel, we cannot hope that the more noble feelings of their hearts will wake up and manifest themselves.



*By mid-1847 Schreuder had nearly abandoned hope of being allowed to function as a missionary in either Zululand or Natal. Mpande had refused to give him access to the former, and Anglophone missionaries appear to have been given priority in the latter, where the system of "native locations" was being established. The perennial problem of legal restrictions on missionary endeavours was thus an interracial one virtually from the outset. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Cape Town

29 September 1847

... I saw no other alternative, as conditions were then, but to go back to Zululand and try to get permission to evangelise there. From my letters written in May and June last year you know what the prospects for missionary activity within the borders of the Port Natal Colony were at that time, and my letter sent with Mr Thommessen in April this year will have informed you of the subsequent development of things here in Port Natal. In March 1846 I visited the governor<sup>15</sup> and sought to learn what rules the government was considering applying with regard to the natives living in the Port Natal Colony, but the only answer I received was that a commission would first travel through and become familiar with the various parts of the colony where natives lived. After that task had been completed, the commission would report its findings to the government, and then the government would finally be able to make and implement its plans with regard to the natives' future locations. But even before this commission had begun its work, it induced the governor to set aside provisionally a piece of land at Umlazi where Dr Adams<sup>16</sup> stayed, one at Umvoti, where Grout stayed, and a third in the vicinity of Pietermaritzburg, where the third American missionary, Lindley,<sup>17</sup> intended to settle, as locations for natives. This first step by the commission, of which one American missionary was a member, made it quite obvious that those missionaries were seeking, if possible, to appropriate for themselves and their colleagues who had not yet arrived the entire mission field in the colony. Those Wesleyan missionaries who had already arrived, however, were not willing to let them take the whole field for

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<sup>15</sup> Martin West (ca 1804-1849) was sworn in as the first Lieutenant-Governor of Natal in Pietermaritzburg in December 1845.

<sup>16</sup> Newton Adams (1804-1851), an American missionary, had opened the first station at Umlazi in 1836.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Lindley (1801-1880) had come to Natal in the service of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He was a member of the Native Affairs commission which in March 1847 had recommended the establishment of reserves for the Zulus. In 1847 he founded a station in the Inanda location.



themselves and worked to bring about an exchange of property so that the Americans would take all the coastal district for the natives and the Wesleyans the inland districts south of Pietermaritzburg.

The commission finally began to move a bit last August to inspect the districts north towards the border river, the Tugela, and when two of its members, the surveyor Stanger<sup>18</sup> and the government interpreter Shepstone<sup>19</sup> arrived at Umvoti, where Grout lived, they discovered that they had made a major error by recommending that the region be made a Kaffer location without first inspecting it, for it was the best part of the entire coastal region for white colonists. Since then there has been a confused struggle between Grout and Stanger especially, who wanted at least part of the land at Umvoti to be taken back and given to those colonists. Some of them had already received property there; others had the right to get it, especially because at that time the number of natives living at Umvoti was quite insignificant.

As they were considering having at least one Kaffer location on this side of the Umgeni River, and the area where I lived was very densely populated and quite a distance from Umvoti, approximately twenty or thirty English miles, I regarded it as my duty to give the commission all the information I could about the natives residing there and the region in which they were living, so as to direct their attention to it. All the members of the commission were at my place of residence, so I had the opportunity to speak with them there: Stanger, Shepstone, Dr Adams, the engineer Gibb, and Lindley. The last two were later added to the commission. Near the end of the year this commission recommended a new Kaffer location on the north-east side of the Umgeni. Its southern border, however, runs about six English miles north of my place. At the same time when the government decided to make a Kaffer location where the commission had suggested one, I learnt that Lindley, who had had to cede the previously mentioned Kaffer district in the vicinity of

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<sup>18</sup> William Stanger (1811-1854) had been the Surveyor-General of Natal since 1845.

<sup>19</sup> Theophilus Shepstone (1817-1893) had arrived in Natal in 1838 and served as both an interpreter and a liaison between the government of that colony and the Zulus.

Pietermaritzburg to the Wesleyans, had chosen it for his work. With these measures by the government and the commission, it seems that everything here is closed to our mission....



*With Zululand apparently closed to him, and with little prospect of securing a site for a permanent station in Natal, Schreuder considered leaving Africa in favour of a mission field elsewhere. He prepared to sail to Hong Kong and lay the foundation for Norwegian missionary work in China, where the Peace of Nanking had recently opened several coastal cities to foreign missionaries. In Cape Town he waited for instructions from the NMS. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Cape Town

25 October 1847

... Until I receive your letter and your final decision about the missionary question, which I hope will happen soon, I am using my time to become acquainted with Indian and Chinese conditions. I have a good opportunity to do so here, because the local library is well stocked with various and quite new works about India and China. I have been in Cape Town for more than a month waiting for your letter and am beginning to fear that it may have been misplaced in some way or other or even lost because, despite countless arrivals from London, it has not appeared. On the other hand, Swedish newspapers dating from as late as the end of June have arrived. And if your letter, which was probably sent from Norway in the middle of June, has really been lost, it will take a long time to arrive at a decision in accord with the plans and wishes of Norwegian supporters of missions. Under those worst possible circumstances I would decide after mature consideration to do something certain rather than waste time and money in a protracted stay here. I have an opportunity to travel on a Swedish ship for £12.15.0 to Batavia, whereas the same voyage would cost approximately £40 on an English ship. It is difficult to let such an economical opportunity go by, if you have now decided for China which, according to the reports I have read so far, appears to be the mission field that corresponds best to the plans

for our missionary activity but which, on the other hand, would in many respects be the most difficult and trying for the missionary. In the event of our mission being moved to e.g. China, our line of communication would be changed to go through the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and India.

May the good Lord act soon, so that something concrete with regard to our mission will become clear!!! My heartiest greetings to the brothers and sisters in God who may be interested in our mission and whose continued intercessory prayers I so greatly need. May God be gracious to all of you for the sake of Jesus and the Holy Spirit!



*Instructions were not immediately forthcoming from the NMS, however. Schreuder thus felt compelled to take the initiative, as he would do on many subsequent occasions, and travel to China. He did not do so wholeheartedly. His independent action foreshadowed future conflicts that reflected Schreuder's understanding of his role vis-à-vis the governance of the NMS. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Cape Town

18 November 1847

... These days have been difficult ones of trial when I have been able to do little else than investigate and analyse all the accessible documents that appeared to offer some help in reaching a well-grounded view of what would be right to strive for. My investigations and reflections based on them have led to the result, with regard to the plans of the NMS as well as pecuniary and individual considerations, that China must be given precedence ahead of the other mission fields known to me. Personally I would have preferred to be able to continue where I have laboured so long in body and spirit, but I cannot assume that our Society, whose growth God has so richly blessed in the Fatherland, will at present be able to support two missions that are so expensive and far removed from each other as those in Zululand and China. I have therefore subordinated regard for myself to general regard for the interests of our Society as a whole.

... What in the final instance prompted me not to postpone making a decision is that there is now an opportunity to sail directly to China. This is seldom the case; normally one must first go to the East Indies and from there to China, so I am avoiding using twice as much time and paying twice as much money. I have already let two cheaper opportunities to sail on Swedish ships to Batavia pass, because I was waiting for a letter from Norway. But now there is an opportunity to travel directly to China, and in addition it is best for foreigners to acclimate themselves there, so I hardly find it defensible to wait even longer for something uncertain. I certainly do not have to report that from Cape Town it is not possible to reach the west coast of Africa north of the Tropic of Capricorn without first going back to England or North America.

Letterstedt<sup>20</sup> has been notified to forward those letters to me which might arrive after my departure from here, addressing them to Gützlaff<sup>21</sup> in Hong Kong. May the good Lord, before whose countenance I, during prayer and struggle, have had to decide to take this important step, continue to seal the act mercifully with his holy name to honour and praise!!!!....



*Thommessen resigned his position in the NMS in 1847. Schreuder arrived in Hong Kong early in February 1848. He was discouraged by legal restrictions placed on aliens in China. More forbidding, however, was the cultural barrier. In the sixteenth century, the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) had found it necessary to become, culturally speaking, a Chinese in order to reach the people of China with the Gospel. To the towering, red-haired Schreuder, however, such physical assimilation seemed impossible. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, IV, no. 1 [June 1848], pp. 11-16)*

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<sup>20</sup> Jacob Letterstedt (1796-1862), a Swede, had settled at Cape Town in 1822 and become a prominent figure in import and export trade there.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Gützlaff (1803-1851), a Pomeranian by birth, had served the *Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap* in Java during the 1820s but resigned and become an independent missionary in China. A classic study of this pioneer is Herman Schlyter, *Karl Gützlaff als Missionar in China* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, and Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1946).

Hong Kong

28 February 1848

If my letter of 2 November 1847 from Cape Town has arrived, you already know that under very trying circumstances and with a quaking heart I believed I was obliged to go to China, where I expected to receive mail from you upon my arrival, as Mr Letterstedt was requested to send it by post to me in Hong Kong. But even though we were at sea for nearly two and a half months beginning on 24 November before arriving here, because the north-eastern monsoon forced the ship to ply to the east between the Moluccas and the Barchi Islands,<sup>22</sup> I have still not had the relief of receiving any letters from the esteemed steering committee, even though one sent by mail from Cape Town would have taken only six weeks to arrive here. I am therefore even more afraid that some misfortune has befallen that long awaited letter from home....

In contrast to what one currently believes in Europe, I have learnt that it is strictly forbidden for foreigners and missionaries to stay and travel outside the five ports: Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai, and I enclose a government proclamation, complete with translation, as proof of this. The Basle missionaries also came here with that common European belief, and Gützlaff led their preparatory steps as though no such prohibition existed until their eyes were opened by experience.

Both Hamberg and Lechler<sup>23</sup> have begun to wear Chinese clothing and, like Chinese, have shaved their heads except for a handful of hair in back which forms the floor-length braid worn by all Chinese men. Judging from the information I presently have, the only way to evangelise in China with any prospect of success is to dress like and pass for a Chinese. This is even the case if one uses indigenous preachers, because

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<sup>22</sup> Schreuder's route to Hong Kong is vague and is not made any less so by this ambiguous description of the route through the East Indies. The ship probably sailed north through what is now Indonesia, then past the Philippines to Hong Kong.

<sup>23</sup> Schreuder was truly in international company. Knut Theodor H. Hamberg (1819-1854), a Swede, and Rudolf Lechler, a German, had recently arrived in Hong Kong in the service of the Basle Mission.

in their present state they invariably need a missionary to supervise, lead, and inspect them. But in order to evangelise in the way described above, there is one other condition which a missionary must meet. He must have at least dark and if possible black hair and facial features similar to those of the Chinese physiognomy. A perfect command of the language, on the other hand, is of lesser importance, because there are so many widely differing dialects in the Chinese Empire that one can easily pass for a native Chinese from another province if one's external appearance allows it. Having little or no knowledge of another province's distinctive dialect is merely regarded as a consequence of being from another district....

With regard to myself, with deep humility I must confess that under present conditions I am not suited to this mission field. If I were to intrude into one of the fields that have been adopted by the English and other societies, which Gützlaff not incorrectly calls the *gentleman's* method, I would neither be able to perform real missionary service (for the reason cited above) nor be doing the NMS a favour corresponding to the great expenses involved. If I were to take the approach mentioned first (which only the above-mentioned German and Catholic missionaries have done), I would also have my entire physical appearance against me. After becoming familiar with the necessary personal conditions and unique conditions of this means of evangelising, I must confess with a bleeding heart that I am not suited to it but must return to my dear Kaffer people, for whom my heart has burnt increasingly warmer....



*After a few more trying months in Hong Kong, Schreuder abandoned the little hope he had of penetrating Chinese culture and returned to Southern Africa. Natal still seemed to be the least forbidding place for him to establish a mission. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Cape Town

19 September 1848

As it has pleased dear God to lead me back here through many dangers to my life, I hasten to report to you, dear brothers. I arrived

here on 17 September and finally had the joy, which I long ago had given up hope of having, of receiving your detailed letters of 11 September and 14 October 1847 together with a large number of other letters. After my many, and I could almost say overwhelming, tribulations during the past year, during which the all-merciful God did not allow me to succumb, it was refreshing for my weary soul to see that the solution you arrived at independently corresponds to my own hard-won experiences with regard to me personally.

If it is the Lord's will, I intend to go back up to Natal in a month's time to begin anew my work as an evangelist in the way that experience shows to be most suitable. If the NMS still agrees to support the Zulu mission, that will be in the way I described in my letter of 29 September 1847, and that is why I need immediately the assistance discussed therein....



*Returning to Natal from Cape Town proved less easy than Schreuder had hoped. He described both the difficulties he had encountered in trying to sail from Hong Kong directly to Natal and some of his activities on board a ship bound for St Helena. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 1)*

Cape Town

7 November 1848

... My stay here this time has lasted much longer than I first anticipated, but since an opportunity is finally at hand with God's help I shall be on my way back to Natal within a few days. During my stay I have had a wagon built, because it is extremely difficult and more expensive to get such an apparatus in Natal. Nevertheless, it has been terribly much trouble to see that the bungling wagon-makers did not get an opportunity to do poor work or use bad materials in the wagon. I have also had a little Zulu reader printed for use at school, and by way of

Professor Kaurin<sup>24</sup> in Kristiania I shall send you several copies of it, one of them with the necessary symbols and letters added which could not be printed here and an interlineal translation of important parts....

The conditions of the agreement for my passage from China were that if possible the ship would try to put me ashore in South Africa, although the captain did not dare to enter the harbour except in case of an emergency. Nevertheless, he sailed fairly close to the coast of Africa, only 150 English miles south of Natal. But even though we sailed down the coast for eight days the stormy weather prevented us from sighting any coastal vessels, and we were already in the vicinity of Cape Agulhas ... when early one morning I discovered a small sail. Upon approaching it we learnt that it was a little cutter of only six or seven lasts,<sup>25</sup> in ballast and headed for Cape Town. We had come so far down the coast that there was practically no hope of meeting another ship before our ship had rounded the Cape. In order to avoid having to continue on board to St Helena and from there pay a high fare to return to Cape Town..., I decided to risk my life in the performance of my duties in order to take up my real work. Aided by a calm if open sea, I took my belongings on board that little cutter and, without regret, bade farewell to the *Aden*, which had brought me to China and that far back. In addition to having participated in the astronomical observations which were necessary for navigating, I had had to serve as the doctor and pay full freight, from which I should have been excused under the circumstances....



*After returning to Natal, Schreuder continued to search for a site where he could establish a mission. One in northern Natal initially seemed relatively promising, although whether its merits were purely pragmatic or for some other reason seemed favourable to missionary strategy Schreuder did not say. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

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<sup>24</sup> Jens Kaurin (1804-1863), a professor of theology at the Royal Frederik University in Kristiania, had served on the committee which had initially sought to commission Schreuder as a missionary of the Church of Norway as such.

<sup>25</sup> "Last" is a unit of weight whose meaning has varied greatly. It has usually indicated approximately two tons.



Uitkomst

18 August 1849

... Since my last letter I have made a journey to the kaffer district on the Innati River about eighty kilometres north of Pietermaritzburg. My health allowed me to work there for only a short time, however. Probably as a result of exposure to the more severely cold weather, I was struck by a dangerously swollen throat, and after three weeks of increasingly greater pain I almost gave up all hope of surviving this attack. The swelling threatened to strangle me and break out internally in my throat so, in physically miserable condition, I had to begin my journey back to Pietermaritzburg, three days across practically uninhabited country at an unfavourable time of year, hardly expecting to arrive alive. But the mercy of the Lord revealed itself this time too, for before we reached the city the swelling subsided.... After three weeks under the care of a doctor in Pietermaritzburg I could return here, even though the case is still not entirely over. By the way, I found a not unfavourable place up there in the Innati Valley to found a little station if some present difficulties are resolved....



*The problems remained unsolved, so Schreuder acquired a farm called Uitkomst midway between Durban and Pietermaritzburg and began to evangelise the Zulus who resided on it. He was disillusioned when one prospective convert, a young man whom he had employed, reverted to unspecified immoral conduct. This incident was one of the first in a long series of episodes involving employees on whom Schreuder and his colleagues sought to impress Christian values through close, daily contact. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

Uitkomst

3 September 1850

... The native, Umboto, about whom I have written in previous letters, and who from time to time appeared to have achieved some understanding of Christianity and to feel the beginning of a new life, has

behaved unsatisfactorily recently and gives renewed evidence of what a wonderfully great thing the work of the Holy Spirit towards conversion is. The resistance of the wicked person increased and reveals itself in proportion to the progress of the Lord's work. It was clear that the evil spirit had again gained control of him. This made itself manifest in his conduct to the degree that I have had to dismiss him from my service until further notice....



*In 1849 the NMS dispatched to Natal thrmen, although he eventually ordained them without receiving permission from his superiors in Norway to do so. Oftebro described their difficult passage from England to Cape Town. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

Cape Town

12 September 1849

... There is a great reason for joy and thanksgiving, for not only an uncomfortable, trying voyage of fifteen weeks' duration is behind us and we have finally arrived safely ashore with all the trials of the journey behind us, but here too we have been refreshed, encouraged, and pleased in every respect. I could now write you an extremely long letter, but unfortunately I am a lazy writer<sup>26</sup> and have so much to do here that distracts me from sitting down and writing, and I would have to write much too long a letter if I were to give you anything approaching a complete description of the voyage. With regard to it, therefore, I shall be brief and only state that on 12 May we boarded the brig *John Gibson* which, [under the command of] Captain Halladay, was destined for the Cape of Good Hope and Natal with emigrants and general cargo on board. At Gravesend the ship stopped, and we were held up in the Channel for a week and a half by northerly winds. On the afternoon of Pentecost we began to have good wind, and later that evening we saw the European

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<sup>26</sup> This hardly indicates how prolific a writer Oftebro became, especially after he became superintendent of the NMS field in his dozens of letters from Zululand and Natal are an invaluable source for the history of the NMS.

continent for the last time. On 8 June we were near Madeira which, however, we were unable to see. We lay there an entire week fighting a head wind. Finally we got into the north-west trade winds and glided smoothly forward until at nine degrees north latitude we lost them and again lay becalmed or faced a head wind. Thunderstorms brought us ahead little by little, however, so that we crossed the Equator on 7 July. Aided by the south-east trade winds, we again sailed along smoothly, so on 20 July we left the tropics, but when we did so all the favourable winds left us. It was said that within fourteen days, or even eight days if all went well, we would see the Cape, but instead of a week or two, our patience was tested for six weeks. And what long weeks they were! When the wind blew it was against us, and when it was not against us we were becalmed. On 23 August we had finally reached thirty-five degrees south latitude, but we were almost closer to America than to Africa. After lying there for several days we finally received a dearly welcome breeze as an answer to our prayers. Towards evening on 25 August this wind became so strong that only two small sails were left, and no-one on board could sleep the following night. The next morning, Sunday, 26 August, several other people and I crept up on the deck to see how things stood, but I never imagined that a storm could produce such a sight. Even though we were sailing with the wind, gigantic waves broke over the entire ship, so we were happy to go below again. We were rocked and hurled about, all the more violently because out of fear of our proximity to land we had to lie at anchor so that we just drifted to the side all day. As evening approached the wind slackened a bit, and gradually more, so that at midnight sails could again be set, and the following morning land was in sight. Then, as you can believe, there was jubilation on board, and although it was blunted when the ship turned away from the land to which it was so close and had almost come too close, my joy could not be blunted when I learnt that we were near St Helena Bay instead of Table Bay. The wind then complied with us, and the following morning we saw the Cape Mountains. At 14h00 on 28 August we lay at anchor in Table Bay. There were ships that had left London three weeks later than we but had arrived two weeks earlier....



*Late in 1850 Schreuder, then at Umpumulo just south of the Tugela, was summoned to Mpande's royal kraal, Nodwengu, to treat the Zulu monarch. As he explained to the NMS, this proved to be a watershed event in the history of its Zulu mission, as it prompted Mpande to give Schreuder permission to establish the first permanent station in Zululand. It underscored the reliance of missionary endeavours on the goodwill of the Zulu leadership and the value of social ministry from a very early stage. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

Uitkomst

February 1851

... At the end of last year Mpande sent a message to Mkonto, a kind of chief at Umpumulo, summoning him in order to give him some cattle, something he (Mpande) had done several times before in recognition of the service Mkonto had performed by being his spokesman amongst the Netherlanders when Mpande, fleeing Dingane and Zululand, sought shelter and protection amongst them.<sup>27</sup> During Mkonto's visit, Mpande was stricken by his old nemesis, rheumatism, and, having already sought assistance from his own doctors, asked Mkonto whether he knew anyone who could and was willing to come from the colony (i.e. Natal) to try to help him. Mkonto answered that he ought to fetch me and all my gallipots. Consequently, in the middle of December I received a delegation from Mpande, headed by a chief, requesting me to come as soon as possible with medications. Even though it was a difficult and dangerous time of year to undertake such a journey, which, because of the terrain and the season I would have to make on foot, since no horse can hold out in Zululand at that time of year and be of use in the broken, hilly landscape, I regarded it as my duty to try. Perhaps God had greater things as the purpose of such a modest venture. After six days of toil we reached Nodwengu on 21 December. I remained there for a little over a

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<sup>27</sup> Schreuder assumed a greater knowledge of Zulu history on the part of his Norwegian readers than they could reasonably be expected to have. After several clashes with Voortrekkers in the late 1830s, Dingane was defeated by his half-brother Mpande in 1840 and fled to Swaziland, where he was murdered.

fortnight and during that time performed some medical services for the king but more so for his prime minister Masipula, a princess, and some other important people. Owing to various conversations regarding missionary work which I had had the opportunity to have with the king from time to time, I decided not to discuss any desired or intended activity in his country this time. This was not the will of the Lord, however, because when I expressed to the king on 2 January my intention of leaving, he asked me what he should do if the rheumatism returned and I were not present. He asked me whether he should consult his own doctors. I remarked that in all probability it would be harmful rather than helpful to combine two so vastly different means of healing as those of the whites and those of his doctors. [I added that] I would be willing, given sufficient time, opportunity, and strength, to give him direct or indirect aid if it did not interfere with my other work and if various unforeseen circumstances did not make it difficult or impossible for me. [I also said] that I could not promise him any prompt or readily available help as long as we were forbidden to live and teach there in his country. To that he replied with the greatest determination and without reservation, *gonga vuma*, I am willing to give you permission to live, build, and teach my people at Impanga and make use of your medical skills from time to time when I call upon you. I thanked him and promised to come back as soon as I had attended to my affairs here in the colony. Later he sent his local prime minister to me, who said: "The king says, you see what a magnificent tract of land I have given you. All the whites desired it, but I gave it to none of them. I have given it to you. It therefore seems proper that you come with so much medicine that you will always have enough of it for my vast realm". Even though I had sought to decline gifts from the king, he sent me by a bombastic delegation and with great self-praise four elephant tusks worth between £15 and £20 and gave me ten head of cattle for the journey. They would more or less cover my expenses of the journey, which amounted to the equivalent of twelve cattle. I had to slaughter four of them for his delegation here in the colony, because when I returned here a delegation accompanied me in order to fetch some medicine for temporary use until I myself could go back. During my stay at Nodwengu I became sick and felt miserable, however, and almost gave up all hope of being able to return alive. The

climate there is so terrible in the summer that you would not be able to understand if I tried to describe it. Yet I returned strong in body and soul, arriving at Umpumulo on 9 January.

After several days of rain I set out again on the natives' trails on foot because of the death of my horse. I was on foot, chiefly, with an ox, for three days on my way here, and nearly drowned in the swollen rivers. After I was sick here for a day my journey continued to Pietermaritzburg, where I bought the medicines discussed earlier and sent them on 22 January with Mpande's delegation, which had accompanied me to Uitkomst. On the way to Zululand we met so many buffalo and elephants in the forests of the Tugela Valley that it was very dangerous. Approximately 100 elephants blocked our way right where we were to ford the Tugela and had to be driven off with rifle fire. On the way back the Tugela was so high that only in obvious danger were we able to get across it....



*Schreuder continued to avail himself of opportunities which his medical skills provided to gain a foothold in Zululand, apparently confident that this activity, which he never appears to have called a specifically Christian ministry, would allow him eventually to evangelise there. As early as 1851 he had to deal with the perennial issue of Zulu loyalty to Mpande as opposed to attendance at Christian worship and avoid compromising his primary task merely to meet the Zulu monarch's requests for firearms. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

Zululand

20 November 1851

... Upon arriving here we discovered that a deadly epidemic had raged for quite some time in the coastal regions to a degree that, according to rumours, in some areas there were not enough people left to harvest the crops. Immediately there were requests for medicine, not only from blacks but also from whites, because several of the numerous itinerant English cattle traders who had been here were struck by the

same epidemic and naturally sought to save themselves, partly by seeking medical help and partly by packing up and leaving the country. Nevertheless, several Englishmen died, some here in the country, others on their way out of it. I myself had three or four minor attacks of the fever. A few days after our arrival, a messenger came from the royal kraal with a message to the people here. They were not to be scared at seeing me settle in Zululand, because the king himself had given me a permanent place to stay. They should aid me in whatever way possible and were to build a cattle kraal and temporary huts for me, lift my belongings off the ground so that ants and hyenas could not destroy them, etc. The people were prevented by the raging epidemic from carrying out this royal decree. By way of the messenger I sent the king a gift of four royal blankets and a large rain hat. No-one came to worship on Sunday, however, because, as the natives here said, "According to the custom of our country a special messenger has to come from the king ordering them specifically to learn and to keep Sunday".

We ourselves then had to drag, with the help of oxen, thornbushes together to make a fence for a cattle kraal and look for a way to erect some shelter. In that respect the possibilities were so few that I had to order some planks and galvanised iron sheets from the Bay of Natal. A month's time passed with these activities and serving as a physician, but I had not yet been able to take the time to pay the king a visit. Then the great king Umundi at Umfolozi gained royal permission to ask me to come to him and give him medical help. I was prevented from heeding this request for a day, and as I was preparing to leave the following day an urgent message came from the royal kraal stating that I had to go there, so Umundi's messenger had to return alone that time, though with the medicine I thought was needed. I made the journey up to the royal kraal partly on foot and partly riding on an ox. Clothes and medicine were carried by natives, and as we approached the royal kraal Nodwengu early on the third day, a runner, who had gone ahead of our party the day before, met us with the message that we had to go to Umlambongwenja (the king's former main kraal and now his mother's residence), approximately five kilometres from Nodwengu. I finally learnt for certain why I had been summoned. When I arrived there were already gathered queens, former queens, princesses, etc., and during my stay at

Umlambongwenja even more arrived, burdened by various illnesses, especially several kinds of scurvy and chest illnesses. For nearly a fortnight I had more than enough to do. Besides the royal women mentioned earlier, I had to doctor many others sent by the king. When those cases for which I was actually summoned had been treated as well as conditions allowed, and particularly the scurvy cases were improving, I was forced by violent chest pains (presumably resulting from endlessly creeping into and out of the huts) to return home, and upon my request the king sent a special messenger calling on the people to attend Sunday instruction. During my stay at Umlambongwenja the king's old, good-natured mother Usongja was my hostess, and she made sure that I was well-provisioned with foodstuffs. She also received the blanket which she had already requested last summer. I went to Nodwengu twice to visit the king. He seemed very friendly, but the second time he made a strange request of me to give him rifles. I brushed aside that request with a definite refusal, informing him that it was an extremely serious crime according to the laws of Port Natal and no more here in Zululand than previously in Port Natal did I intend to do anything which could properly be called illegal....



*While Schreuder was developing the earliest segments of the NMS network of stations in Zululand, Oftebro spent approximately four years at Umpumulo, the mission glebe which Natal had awarded Schreuder in the Mapumulo magistracy in 1850. It later developed into the most important NMS station in Natal, and eventually a college for educating African Lutheran pastors was located at it. Oftebro struggled initially with the Zulu language but praised Schreuder's facility in acquiring this primary tool of cross-cultural evangelism. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 2)*

Umpumulo

18 February 1850



... Personally, I have never been in better health than since my arrival here. The climate here, especially at this time of year, is oppressively hot, but it is undoubtedly healthy, for one hears little about illness here. I shall not remain long at our current place, as I assume you know from Schreuder's letters to the directors [of the NMS]. Let me just say that with regard to the language, that great hindrance which prevents us from being able to speak to these poor people about whom we have thought so much for so many years and amongst whom we now are and can see with our very eyes, we have made little progress thus far because we have had so much else to do. But I can already see enough in this darkness that I hope to overcome this great difficulty in time. You should just hear the ease with which Schreuder preaches and prays in this language. During the first two months I was always weary of his preaching, though, because even when paying strict attention I could not understand a word of what he was saying, but now the light is beginning to shine, and, believe me, that light is precious. Unfortunately, the listeners are generally inattentive, but it appears that some of them hear what is being said. This is apparent when, as he recently began to do, he asks them on Sundays what he preached about the previous time. Several of them can answer correctly. If they know something, it is easy for them to come forth with it, and when they answer one could almost believe that they are beginning to preach. After the service we have school, in which all, including Marthe Larsen,<sup>28</sup> participate. We can read to them and show them the letters, telling them when they read correctly and when not, but when we try to teach them with words or explain something to them, then our tongues stop. Some can spell a little, but most are still struggling with the letters. They can immediately memorise them in sequence, but to distinguish them from each other and know them by their forms is more difficult.

For more than a year Schreuder has spent an hour or two every day teaching his boys how to read, but while one of them is beginning to read a bit the other has not yet understood enough to differentiate "m" and "n", for example, from each other. They do not seem to be

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<sup>28</sup> Marthe Larsen (1809-1890), the wife of Lars Larsen, had arrived in Natal in 1849.

slow-witted, but they lack motivation. If they get that, they will learn a lot soon.

One of Schreuder's boys sometimes seems to be very moved, and he definitely wants to become a Christian, but his heart has not yet changed. Judging from the few converts I have seen, heathens must undergo a great change, more obvious than Christians back home, for heathen mores and heathen character must be made Christian, and only a complete change of heart by grace can bring about this transformation. Sometimes we hear him [i.e. Schreuder's prospective convert] praying by himself and sometimes with the others, and he does so with the voice and pomposity of the best clergyman. He sometimes preaches to those in attendance on Sundays until Schreuder arrives, and when he does so not only his mouth but also his hands and feet move. Whatever his condition may be, he gives reason for hope, and one must always find joy and encouragement to pray in hope. Otherwise the prospects of fruit from preaching the Word amongst these people are small. The American missionaries are said to have baptised many recently, and they see much rustling amongst the dead bones....



*Lay assistants with little or no formal theological education played a relatively important part in the work of the NMS amongst the Zulus for many years. Writing from his station in Zululand, Ntumeni, Schreuder described the work of two of them who had recently arrived there. By 1857 both men had left the NMS and joined the Anglican missionary John Colenso. According to disgruntled erstwhile Norwegian Lutheran colleagues, Colenso had inveigled them with promises of ordination, something which they probably would not have attained in the NMS. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 5)*

Ntumeni

22 November 1854

... I have heard only a little from Umpumulo since my last letter, but according to the latest reports from there Samuelsen<sup>29</sup> has recently built some rooms in the wagon shed so that he can have his own household, just as Olsen<sup>30</sup> will probably want to have a small house for himself, so that the Larsens<sup>31</sup> can have the old residence for themselves. He dearly wants that because of his weakened state of health. I also hope that Samuelsen and Olsen do everything possible to erect a new, permanent chapel, because the old one has decayed.

When Tønnesen<sup>32</sup> and Samuelsen first arrived at this station and we were thus three men here, I had to try to arrange my schedule so that each of us would have enough work to do in his respective position. In the first instance this affected my programme of winter construction, which I sought to divide between Samuelsen and Tønnesen. Tønnesen got mainly the actual carpentry, while Samuelsen was to try to get bricks made, although the latter task went poorly, partly because of a shortage of boys to assist in it, so that last winter only about 1 000 bricks were produced. Regarding secular work this summer, I made provisions to try agriculture, and to that end I had Samuelsen begin to make a plough using as a model the simple but very practical Dutch ploughs here. Before his departure, however, he finished only most of the wooden part of the plough, so I had to do the rest of the work of assembling it myself, which took much of my time. I had to do it, however, so that half-finished work would not be useless. Admittedly, Samuelsen's departure removed an essential reason for attempting agriculture, because Tønnesen had enough to do completing work on the buildings before summer sat in with weather that was unfavourable for construction because it was either too hot or

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<sup>29</sup> Siver Samuelsen (1828-1916), a carpenter, was sent by the NMS to Zululand to aid Schreuder in 1854. He soon left the NMS, however, to work for the Anglican missionary John Colenso.

<sup>30</sup> Johan Olsen (1826-?) was also a carpenter whom the NMS sent in 1854 to aid Schreuder. He left the NMS in 1862 and returned to Norway in 1865.

<sup>31</sup> Meant are Lars and Marthe Larsen, who had been with Schreuder since 1849.

<sup>32</sup> Arnt Tønnesen (1827-?) had been sent by the NMS to assist Schreuder but, like Samuelsen, had soon left the NMS to work for Colenso and the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

too humid, and subsequently he has had and will continue to have enough to do taking care of continuing work at and care of the station. Nevertheless, having laid plans for it, we have made an attempt at agriculture by ploughing a plot of land and sowing it with maize, potatoes, oats, and various vegetables. We have also planted some trees - citrus, orange, and mulberry trees, etc. In addition, before our labourers go back home after doing their winter work, I would like to take care of some things which have been needed to be done for a long time, namely improving some bad and dangerous places in the wagon road that leads from here down to the main road along the coast. I equipped myself for a week, i.e. 16 - 21 December, to do this road work expeditiously, travelled with a wagon, five boys, and tools for digging, and, especially with the help of the many strong (and paid) natives living in the area for the three days we could work did work that surpassed what we had dared to hope for and expect.

After returning from this work I prepared to visit the king, partly to bring him one of the two cloaks that had been sent from Norway and partly simply to visit the king, whom I had not seen since April 1853....



*Oftebro, still unordained but responsible for the station which had been established at Empangeni in Zululand in 1851, described how Cetshwayo, who would become the Zulu monarch in 1873, attended services at the new station. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 8)*

Empangeni

15 January 1858

The old year has already ended, and I am sending you a report for the latter half of it. Thank God that I can say this time we have enjoyed life and good health and had peace in the country, so that we have not been disturbed in our work. I have nothing new to report regarding it; it has proceeded as usual. The number of people in attendance has been

greater than at any time since the war, and Cetshwayo<sup>33</sup> himself has attended our meetings. He has often said that he wanted to come and visit us, but he began to prepare to leave Amangve and go to Nodwengu without fulfilling his promise when he quite suddenly came early one Sunday, the twentieth after Pentecost, accompanied by his brother Uzizetu and a band of servants. They attended the entire service, and when people said in their kraals that *Cetshwayo sonda*,<sup>34</sup> they thronged in until the service had ended, causing a lot of confusion by constantly coming through the door. I had had chairs set up for the princes, and as they sat together they could not refrain from whispering and speaking to each other, so it is impossible for me to praise their attentiveness.

Both before and after the service our house was full of important people, and we grew weary of them, because they did not leave until late in the afternoon. Cetshwayo himself behaved very well, and he told his servants to be quiet when they seemed to him to be too loud and impertinent. He examined our house closely, made comments, and asked questions about everything that caught his attention. He stood for a long time by the chimney and amused himself with the bellows, occasionally blowing them in the ears of his servants. We could only treat him to sugar cane, sugar, and coffee, although he did not like the last-named. It appeared that he had never tasted it. It was too black for him (for milk could not be put into it) and bitter, although certainly no European prince would have sweetened it more than it already was. The Zulus in general, and especially their leaders, are very afraid to eat our food, with which they are not familiar. They believe we have milk, butter, and eggs in everything we eat, and even though they eat meat in their kraals, they are strongly prejudiced against eating it anywhere except in their homes, and they like the butter and eggs.

As mentioned earlier, services have been much more heavily attended since then, either because Cetshwayo himself had *sonda* or by

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<sup>33</sup> Cetshwayo (ca 1826-1884), a son of Mpande, had defeated a half-brother, Mbulazi, in a Zulu civil war in 1856. This poised Cetshwayo for his official appointment as Mpande's heir in 1861 and coronation as the Zulu monarch in 1873.

<sup>34</sup> *Sonda* was the Zulu mispronunciation of Sunday, or *søndag* in Norwegian, and meant to attend services on Sundays.

coincidence. I do not know, because heathens still tell me that they are prevented by fear of the king from hearing the Word of God frequently and taking it to heart, but I think they probably just say that in order to have an excuse for their indifference to the Word of God and their desire to persist without interruption in their heathen ways. More recently the gatherings have been smaller because the fields have had to be guarded against the birds, but on Christmas Day the chapel (which accommodates over 200 people) was quite full. I tried to the best of my ability to present to them the great fact of God's mercy and concern for the eternal salvation of people, about which the day was a reminder.

Although we are living in a dark, heathen country where both nature and the realm of the spirit are much different from those which accompany Christmas in our dear fatherland, we do not allow Christmas to become just another holiday. We try to keep it with its uniquely festive character as well as we can under these circumstances and let the heathens see that we are having an *umkhosi* (festival). On Christmas Eve the heathens who work for us also expect to get Christmas pudding.

Some time ago a leopard killed both of our good watch-dogs, to our great dismay. With the dogs gone, the hyenas become so bold around all our walls that we could not get rid of them. I soon trapped four of them, and then we had peace. I poisoned the leopard after it had killed our last dog....



*After nearly a decade amongst the Zulus, Oftebro had still not seen any of the people whom he had evangelised convert to Christianity. His spirits were buoyed, however, by the construction of a new chapel at Empangeni and the start of a basic educational programme at that station.*  
(Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 8)

Empangeni

1 April 1858

With God's help another quarter of a year has passed, and it is only with gratitude that I take pen to hand to write to you. Again this time I can report that my family and I are alive and in good health, and

that we have not in any way been disturbed in our work here at the station. But I cannot say anything more, for we still cannot see any fruits of our proclamation of God's Word. But God's Word and promise still prevent us from believing that proclamation of the truth is in vain and that we are living our lives in vain. But God's Word about this is at hand, so I cry, "Do not be discouraged!" again and again in my heart when a voice of doubt, discouragement, and despair sounds in it.

Last Sunday, Palm Sunday, a little group of heathens who had come to the service and I were able to enter the little chapel, the likes of whose beauty the Zulus had probably never seen. "*Bantu baka, baba*", said several of them as they, with their hands in front of their mouths, looked at the white walls with windows in them, which rose in great majesty (in their eyes) from the spacious, mat-covered floor on which they were to sit. Those words are a common expression of admiration meaning "Relatives! Siblings!" The interior of the building is also quite nice, so I enjoy being in it. It is nearly ten metres long and five metres wide, and it has a one and one-half metre veranda around it. It is decorated with a pair of twelve-pane windows along each side. At one end are double pane doors and at the other a single one that leads up to a little elevation with the pulpit. The windows and the walls are whitened with white clay, which in terms of beauty is not as good as lime. The tamped earthen floor is covered with beautiful straw mats which make up for the lack of a wooden floor, and the entire building looks rather good except the roof, for there is still nothing to hide the rafters and laths or the reeds and grass. In addition to the new building, there was also a new song on Palm Sunday, for I led the singing with a serachime which missionary Grout had purchased for me from America. I could not refrain from making the heathens aware that this building was built for them, that they could gather there to listen to the proclamation of God's Word, so they had to become acquainted with him who, as they had heard, one day had entered Jerusalem to die for their and all the world's sins, and who had now come to them with his Word so that they too would have an opportunity to participate in his reign. I reminded them that they had already had the opportunity to hear God's call for several years; the building that had been constructed for the proclamation of God's Word several years ago had become old and dilapidated, but there still was not

anyone who greeted the Saviour with a hosanna. I asked them whether they would allow this building, too, to become old and dilapidated before they began to convert to him for whose name's proclamation it was built. The gathering was not large, hardly more than fifty souls, but they sat quietly and seem to be attentive.

Only about three weeks ago I began to teach school on a daily basis for the children in the area. The first few days forty or fifty children came from two or three kraals, but then all sorts of hindrances arose, so I have had only eight to twelve, but there have always been some. I hope to convince them to come more regularly and in greater numbers after the harvest is completed. Until now they have come at 8h00, but now the morning air is beginning to be cold, so they come freezing and shivering, so I will probably have to schedule instruction later in the day, regardless of how inconvenient this will be for me. My various daily affairs are already rushed enough, but nothing can be done about that. If I can merely get the children to attend school regularly I will feel very satisfied with my endeavour and will work with greater hope than when I simply preach to deaf ears. Unfortunately, it will still be difficult to start a proper school, but the Lord can also help in this matter if it is his gracious will and we can believe and in confidence call upon him....



*Beginning in the early 1850s, Schreuder shuttled for many years between two stations, Umpumulo in Natal and Ntumeni in Zululand. At the former station he baptised his first convert in 1858, some fourteen years after initially arriving in Natal. Like most other early converts baptised by Norwegian missionaries, she had been employed at a station and had been exposed to Christian values and living for a relatively long time before her conversion. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 8)*

Umpumulo  
3 June 1858

... After my last visit to the king last December and January I was ready to come to this station, but I did not think it was practical to



begin a school for the children in the neighbourhood, although the king had given me permission to do so. Besides, at that time many [of the children] were busy guarding the fields. In order to avoid having to make two journeys to Port Natal,<sup>35</sup> i.e. both to visit the Umpumulo station and administer the Lord's Supper, and later to collect the female assistant sent to me from Norway, I thought it best to wait until the arrival of the *Candace*<sup>36</sup> and then do both errands at once. We were pleased by the happy arrival of the *Candace* at the end of February, but word of it reached me only in the middle of March, and because Easter was at hand I could come here only on 9 April. I found our missionaries generally well with the exception of Sister Udland,<sup>37</sup> who the previous night had had a quite inordinately violent, sudden, and dangerous attack, and of Miss Løwenthal,<sup>38</sup> who even then was far from being fully recovered from the many difficulties of her voyage.

If Miss Løwenthal, as is her innermost wish, is to work with me at the mission in Zululand, conditions of accommodation, etc. at Ntumeni make it necessary for us to be married. I indicated this to her in writing before I arrived here.<sup>39</sup>

As mentioned, I arrived at Umpumulo on 9 April. I wanted to continue immediately to Pietermaritzburg with a special message from Mpande to the English government in Natal, but Sister Udland had another very serious attack, so instead of getting married after my return from Pietermaritzburg I had to wait until the wedding could be performed on 25 April. On that day all our missionary personnel here also partook of the Lord's Supper. However, a native girl who had worked for the Larsens for several years and who was engaged to Umbijane (an

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<sup>35</sup> Schreuder is referring to the Port Natal Colony, not the city once known as "Port Natal" - present-day Durban.

<sup>36</sup> Meant is the *Kandaze*, the ship of the Hermannsburg Mission. Before the NMS acquired its own vessel, the *Kandaze* occasionally transported Norwegian missionaries.

<sup>37</sup> Guri Udland (*née* Messing) (1818-1888) had married Tobias Udland in 1853.

<sup>38</sup> Jakobine Løwenthal (1814-1878) married Schreuder in 1858.

<sup>39</sup> There is no evidence that Schreuder had ever met Løwenthal before he proposed to her.

ox-wagon driver, a native converted by the American mission and who stays here) asked to be baptised. Her preparation as a catechumen has taken about two months, and last Sunday, 6 June, I baptised her. The following day, 7 June, I married them after publishing the banns for three Sundays. Our imminent annual conference compelled me to make the preparation for baptism shorter than would have been desirable; she is particularly in need of more instruction in order to understand and partake of the Lord's Supper. After the sermon on Pentecost a married man, Utotongwane, who lives in this area, asked to be baptised. The brethren here are continuing to prepare him as a catechumen. If God gives his blessing, he too will be able to be baptised before the end of the year. This man appears to have it very much on his heart to be baptised. The misery he has suffered from his own people has become more tolerable in recent times. His wife has also accepted the Word of God, and their two children will probably also be baptised. On behalf of the mission I have given that couple a woollen blanket to sleep in, a pot, two tin dishes, and two pairs of knives and forks for their kitchen. For a long time the man has been busy building a proper house in the style of white people, but it is not yet finished. May everyone in our mission, both here and in Norway, appreciate and heartily thank the Lord for this blessing of our humble work; we hope that he will continue to quicken us in that respect in future.

Shortly after the Samuelsens and Tønnesen had gone to Colenso, I received a letter from Samuelsen reporting his disagreement with and departure from the bishop and one from Tønnesen in which he indicated his intention of leaving Mr Colenso and asked me whether he still had permission from our Society to travel to Europe. Before Tønnesen received my reply, however, he had decided to remain where he was. Samuelsen has asked in writing to be taken back by our mission. In accord with the views of our missionaries here and those of the steering committee expressed in a letter of 12 November 1857, I decided to re-admit him temporarily to our mission. I spoke with him in Durban on my journey to Pietermaritzburg and believed we had reached an agreement, but upon my return from Pietermaritzburg I discovered that he had been snapped up by an Anglican missionary who is presently at odds with Colenso. It is

said that Samuelson was lured by the prospect of some kind of ordination....<sup>40</sup>



*Despite the baptism of the first convert, Schreuder occasionally found his responsibilities as an evangelist and mission administrator burdensome. He also found it necessary to curry favour with Mpande to allow other Zulus to become Christians. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 8)*

Ntumeni

20 July 1858

Since the beginning of last December I have hardly been at rest here at the station, because most of the time I have been travelling or ready to travel, and naturally my missionary activity has stood still. My position in the Norwegian mission is now beginning to weigh heavily on me and depress me in many respects, and I wish I could hope for a change in this. Not only has the actual missionary work gone poorly, but also the secular work of building a chapel and residence has unfortunately progressed very little for various reasons chiefly owing to my absence. I hired an English labourer for four months at £5 per month to help with the carpentry, but he has now been here for a month and done next to nothing because of my absence, first at our conference at Empangeni and then my visit to the king, from whom I returned only on 17 July. He has allowed so much work of various kinds to mount up that with winter work so far advanced I do not know where to begin. In addition to all that, yesterday I received the troubling news from Umpumulo that Utotongwane, our promising catechumen, had gone elsewhere to have his heart's desire fulfilled. You will be able to understand this loss to our mission by remembering that his wife wanted to become a Christian and his children would have been admitted to the church of Christ by baptism.

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<sup>40</sup> Samuelson was ordained an Anglican deacon in 1861 and an Anglican priest in 1871. His education in Norway was that of a carpenter.

On the way home from Empangeni, I stopped at the kraal where that Zulu girl, discussed in previous letters, who had been influenced by God's Word lives with her parents. I spoke with her family for a long time, and the result was that if the king agrees to it and the girl so desires, she will be allowed to return to us and become a believer.

I returned here on 3 July and three days later set out on my journey to the king, arriving back here on 17 July. This time I visited the king to take care of that [i.e. securing permission for the previously mentioned girl to return to the station] and other business. I brought him gifts he had requested from Natal, namely a colourful blanket, cloth slippers, a pot for cooking, and three candle forms. The king gave unconditional permission for the girl to come to us missionaries and, if she so desired, to become a Christian, and I have already written to Brother Oftebro in this regard.

Brother Udland, in his mission report which accompanies this letter, requests a suitable church bell. I suggest that the supporters of our mission in Stavanger take this matter to heart and be challenged to make an especially generous contribution to it. A bell costing approximately £20 will fill the need in the first instance. A merchant from Port Natal who is presently in England has promised to arrange for us through his contacts in England a direct, safe, and easy means of transporting things sent here from Norway. As soon as this means of transportation has been arranged I shall inform our steering committee. Later I intend to request supporters of missions in Bergen or Kristiania to give a church bell to Ntumeni as well as altar paraments, candlesticks, and other small items which I assume participating brothers and sisters back home especially wish to give or make special contributions towards giving. In the hope that the Society appropriates money for the building, I intend to take preliminary steps towards it by having bricks made, cutting and forming wooden materials, etc. Udland has already begun to make bricks for the church at the Umpumulo station.

Political conditions in this country are peaceful at the moment, as they are in the Port Natal Colony. On the other hand, a war has been raging between the Basuto people and the bordering Orange Free State,

and the Dutch farmers are said to have destroyed two of the Parisian missionaries<sup>41</sup> most flourishing stations in Basutoland....



*Tobias Udland, one of the three lay assistants who had arrived in 1849 to aid Schreuder, described Schreuder's marriage and the baptism of the first convert at Umpumulo. He also mentioned one of the first signs of strained relations between the NMS and Anglican Bishop John Colenso. (Source: NMS Archives, box 130, folder 8)*

Umpumulo

9 July 1858

... As you already know, I was down in Durban to accompany Miss Løwenthal up here, where she had to stay temporarily. For a long time Pastor Schreuder had thought about coming here, but in addition to his accident there were other things which prevented him from coming here until after Christmas. He had hardly arrived when a girl asked to be baptised. This girl had worked for the Larsens for about four years and was engaged to our wagon driver Umbijane, whose name you will probably recognise because he has been mentioned so many times. Pastor Schreuder immediately began to give this girl baptismal instruction, and when some of the [other] servants wished to participate in the instruction they were allowed to do so. Among them were a man and his wife about whom I had previously expressed hope that they had decided to become Christians. Pastor Schreuder and Miss Løwenthal had decided to enter into a closer relationship, however, and one of the Hermannsburg missionaries, Hohls,<sup>42</sup> was requested first to announce the marriage in Hermannsburg according to the custom of the church and then to come here and officiate at the wedding, which he did. We therefore had the pleasure of having that ritual performed here on the afternoon of 25 April, and that evening all

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<sup>41</sup> The *Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris* was founded in 1822 and opened a field in what was then called Basutoland (now Lesotho) in 1833.

<sup>42</sup> Karl Hohls (1827-1889) was one of the first Hermannsburg missionaries in Natal.

of us Norwegians who were present partook of the Lord's Supper. Pastor Schreuder had business to do in Pietermaritzburg, however, so he left here on 27 June. In order to avoid interrupting the baptismal instruction, Larsen and I continued to give it alternatively until he returned here on 17 May.<sup>43</sup>

At about the same time the period of service was over for two of the boys who had participated in the instruction, so they went home. They have been here often since then, and one of them wanted to work again, but when he demanded higher wages than I thought appropriate I had to let him go. Nevertheless, he came back and accepted my offer, and he now works here again. The other one was here to collect a book to read at home, and he received the Gospel of Mark translated by one of the Americans.<sup>44</sup> So while some avoided instruction, it appeared that this man's heart was being opened more than ever to the Gospel. On the day after Pentecost he asked to be baptised by Pastor Schreuder or, as he himself put it, his heart had been awakened with power, and he wanted to be washed. Although Pastor Schreuder could not doubt Utotongwane's sincerity, because it was not an impulsive move, he thought he ought to wait a bit and continue to give him baptismal instruction. Utotongwane agreed to this. Pastor Schreuder also wanted to prepare further the girl mentioned earlier, but as he had already been away from his station, Ntumeni, for a long time and had to go there before the conference, it was decided that the baptism would take place on the first Sunday after Pentecost, 6 June. The Hermannsburg missionaries had previously asked Pastor Schreuder to visit them, and he had promised to do so. He wanted to be there on a Sunday, and Pentecost was the only one he could afford, so on Saturday, 29 May, he and Mrs Schreuder, together with my wife and me, travelled there.

Finally 6 June came, the time for which we had long prayed and waited, when the Norwegian mission would lead the first heathen into the Christian church by baptism. The service lasted approximately three

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<sup>43</sup> Udland's chronology is obviously confused with regard to the dates of Schreuder's journey to Pietermaritzburg.

<sup>44</sup> "The Americans" in this instance were Congregationalists representing the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

hours, and you can imagine that tears ran down the cheeks of the girl as well as those of other people. She was Christened with the name she had borne before, Umatendhjwaze.<sup>45</sup> Her father was present and listened and watched with visible attentiveness, and as it was a Sunday many others were also present. We later heard, however, that far more would have attended had it been more widely known. On Monday, 7 June, Umbijane and Umatendhjwaze were married after the customary publishing of the banns three times. Even though it was a weekday a lot of people were present. They listened and watched attentively and with pleasure. For me, and presumably for all of us, it was a day of joy and celebration....

When I heard that the Larsens wanted to go to the conference,<sup>46</sup> I considered not attending, because one from here was enough and Pastor Schreuder had recently been here. Both my wife and I were ailing, however, so we thought a journey would be good for us and justify the expense. All of us gathered at the Norwegian mission station at Empangeni. The most important of the discussion concerning this station was a suggestion to build a new chapel. In the hope that you will consent to this, preparations for its construction are already being made. In connection with this, I would like to point out that the lack of a bell has long been felt, not only at this station, but also at the others, and for a long time I have thought about asking you to help fill this need. I know that women's and children's missionary societies in England, America, and Germany provide not only bells but also other things for missionaries. Perhaps it would not be without purpose for the esteemed steering committee to take care of the matter in a similar way.

Upon returning from the conference we naturally wanted to continue to give baptismal instruction, but we had hardly arrived when the baptismal candidate bade us farewell and went to the [Anglican]

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<sup>45</sup> The variant orthography represents the historic inconsistency in the spelling of Zulu names.

<sup>46</sup> Udland is referring to the annual conference at which he and the other NMS missionaries in Natal and Zululand made decisions concerning their work. It was important both in terms of missionary strategy and socially, providing Norwegians who were scattered on isolated stations an opportunity to have fellowship with each other.

Bishop of Natal, Colenso. This was an unexpected and hard blow to us, and it dashed the hopes we had dared to begin to have.... Utotongwane professed that he would not return to heathen ways, but rather remain close to the Lord and be taught and elevated when he was with the bishop. That was some consolation, but it hardly fulfilled our wishes. We still do not know what enticed him to go to the bishop. We only know that one often hears complaints by missionaries in Natal that the bishop uses bait to lure people from other stations to his own.

The Sunday meetings have been more heavily attended in recent times than normally. This was the case especially during the first part of Pastor Schreuder's stay here and prompted suggestions of erecting a new church, because the building presently used for that purpose is so small that on several occasions we have had to hold services outdoors in the shade of some trees.

Apart from that, nothing special has happened at this station. We hope to see the dawn and that the sun of grace will appear, but clouds have again darkened its shining....



*The establishment of more stations in the 1860s made it necessary for the NMS to dispatch more men to Zululand. Karl Larsen Titlestad (1832-1924), who had graduated from the NMS missionary training school in Stavanger in 1864 and been ordained that year, described the trials and the joys of his voyage one-quarter of the way around the world en route to the station at Nhlazatshe, which Lars Larsen had founded in 1863. (Source: NMS Archives, box 131, folder 2)*

Port Elizabeth  
22 June 1865

Naturally it is a pleasure to report to you on behalf of myself and my fellow passengers our fortunate arrival in Africa and to tell you a few things about our voyage here. As you perhaps know, we left Shields, England, on 23 March with a favourable and fresh wind, which already on 25 March had put us on a line with Deal, where we had to put into port because of a storm. The following afternoon the wind and weather were



again of such a nature that we could weigh anchor and continue our journey. We progressed forward at a speed which we seldom matched subsequently, because the *Elieser*<sup>47</sup> is not a good sailor. We considered the possibility of sending you some lines before leaving Europe for good, and Brother Gundersen<sup>48</sup> wrote the following day in that regard, but as we had already come to the mouth of the English Channel on 29 March, our hopes of getting the letter ashore were dashed.

We began to notice the difference in temperature to the degree that we could walk on the deck wearing summer clothes. For several days the weather was lovely and the wind was generally smooth and favourable, so we made daily progress, and on 7 April we were straight out from Madeira, which we could see. On 11 April we encountered a head wind, which on the following day became a storm, perhaps the worst of the entire voyage. We decided to have communion for those on board who desired it on Maundy Thursday, but the effects of the storm on those of us who had been very seasick and on the ship itself, which had continued its strong pitching on the choppy sea, made it necessary for us to change our plans and postpone communion until the day after Easter. Then the Lord gave us good and quiet weather and so much strength that all of us and our entire crew save two men were able to participate in this heavenly meal of grace. Brother Leisegang<sup>49</sup> officiated and administered the entire ceremony in accord with the liturgy of the Church of Norway. The Lord was amongst us with his blessing, so we all felt edified and strengthened.

We were then in the tropics, and the heat gradually became oppressive, though not terribly so, because we always had some wind. It was worst at night when we had to pack ourselves together in our cabins. On 24 April we were only three degrees north of the Equator. In

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<sup>47</sup> Launched in 1864, the *Elieser* was operated by the NMS, whose personnel in transported between Norway and the NMS mission fields, initially Southern Africa.

<sup>48</sup> Gundvall Gundersen (1835-1902) accompanied Titlestad to Southern Africa in 1865. He spent the rest of his career there in the service of the NMS.

<sup>49</sup> Hans C.M.G. Leisegang (1838-1914), though Danish by birth, began his missionary career at Mahlabatini in 1865 in the service of the NMS.

the twilight a dark cloud appeared, accompanied by lightning and thunder, which gave way to a downpour. All our tubs and buckets were filled with water, and on the following days nearly all hands were busy washing. At 18h00 on Sunday, 30 April, we crossed the Equator while singing, reading the Holy Scriptures, and praying as an expression of our hearts' thanks to him, who had led us so fatherly that far. On the next day we had a good wind, so we glided downward beautifully again, although somewhat westerly, so that on one occasion we were not more than approximately 400 kilometres from the coast of South America. At 23h00 on the day before Prayer Day<sup>50</sup> we hoped to see Trinidad, a small island at twenty-one degrees south latitude,<sup>51</sup> and at midday we passed quite near its western side. On 15 May we set our course for Africa, and on Ascension Day we were at Greenwich Heights. We hoped to reach harbour by Pentecost, but as we approached the Cape the winds became partly unfavourable and partly insignificant, and in our hope we remained at the Cape of Good Hope where, however, we had a rather quiet and blessed festival. To our common joy, we saw land on 10 June not far from Algoa Bay, and two days later we anchored at Port Elizabeth at 15h30, eighty-one days after leaving Shields. On, how glad we were! The memory of the grace which the Lord had shown us on the entire voyage and the joy of having put into port so intact and well must arouse feelings of gratitude in the hardest heart. True, the voyage was not without trial for some of us, but we can say to the praise of the Lord, not to the degree which we had expected. Seasickness has left its mark on some of us, but it too could have been worse. Now, praise God, we are all well, and we hope to regain our lost strength soon.

Of the hermetically preserved goods, such as meat, fish, and milk, to which we had looked forward in our sick condition, almost half had been so severely damaged by the heat that they were inedible. We have not lacked anything physically, however, just as spiritually we have been

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<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, it is impossible to be certain which kind of "miles" Titlestad meant, although it is most probable that he was referring to the Norwegian unit of measurement, which would indicate that the *Elieser* had drifted to within approximately 400 kilometres of South America.

<sup>51</sup> This Trinidad is not to be confused, of course, with the much better known island of the same name in the West Indies.

fulfilled. Every Sunday since we left our dear fatherland we have had worship beginning with a hymn, after which we had prayer and a reading of the day's epistle and Gospel texts. If the person officiating had the opportunity to prepare during the course of the week, he explicated the Gospel. If not, he read a sermon by Luther, Harms,<sup>52</sup> or another believing author. Usually the person officiating was one of the ordained men, and he concluded the service with the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed. All of us, however, including dear Captain Clausen,<sup>53</sup> took turns leading morning and evening devotions, and on those occasions we went through the Gospel of Matthew with annotations and part of the Acts of the Apostles and Psalms of David with Fjellstedt's<sup>54</sup> commentary....

As mentioned earlier, we arrived here on 12 June. An English pilot guided us to the quay, where between twenty and thirty ships are presently docked, among them a Swedish one whose personnel have visited us a few times for devotions.

The harbour is very exposed and dangerous here. The entire sea rolls in when the south-easterly wind blows, and this usually begins in August. The city, which looks very beautiful from the quay, lies on a sandy slope, has many nice buildings, some churches, and between 9 000 and 10 000 inhabitants, chiefly Europeans. The streets are roomy and straight but not paved. Everything is very expensive here....



*Living on far-flung stations in Natal and Zululand, missionaries experienced a great deal of cultural isolation which could be emotionally depressing. Annual or semiannual trips to Durban provided welcome relief. Oftebro expressed his feelings when he went there in 1865 to meet*

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<sup>52</sup> Louis Harms (1808-1865) was the founder of the Hermannsburg Mission.

<sup>53</sup> F.W. Clausen was the first master of the *Elieser*.

<sup>54</sup> Titlestad is referring to one segment of the multi-volume work of the Swedish missionary and Biblical scholar Peter Fjellstedt (1802-1881), published between 1849 and 1855. A Norwegian translation of Fjellstedt's commentary on the Psalms was published in three short volumes in 1864 and 1865.

*Titlestad and several other compatriots who arrived on the NMS ship, the Elieser.* (Source: NMS Archives, box 131, folder 2)

Eshowe

28 September 1865

I must finally put aside all hindrances and write to you again, and I must begin by asking you to forgive me for not sending you a report at the end of last quarter. The last time I wrote we were beginning to wait to hear that the missionary ship was on its way down here, and we waited all the more. I decided to postpone the journey to Durban until the ship had arrived. There were many factors which made us wait longer than was good. Only on 18 May did we learn by way of private letters of the ship's departure from Norway and arrival in Shields. Then we had to wait again until 1 July, when we learnt of its arrival at Port Elizabeth. On 5 July I travelled with Kielland<sup>55</sup> to Durban, where we had to wait for more days until the *Elieser*, which during most of those days was seen off Natal, finally came so close on 15 July that it could show its name and beautiful flag. It was so close that at sundown we could wave our hats to the brethren on board and they theirs to us. What a magnificent sight to stand at the Point of the Bay of Natal and see this beautiful ship! In beautiful weather and with a favourable wind it glided in over the bar, around the Point where we stood only a stone's throw away, and into the still, beautiful harbour, where we were immediately called on board! It was a joyous moment which we wish you and all other supporters of missions could have shared with us. On board we felt as though we were standing on Norwegian soil again, immediately in the midst of good old dear Norwegian friends and acquaintances. It was a Saturday evening, and we remained on board until Monday. As far as business matters allowed, we spent at least the evenings and nights there until the following Monday and had particularly pleasant accommodations. We truly enjoyed more cordiality than I can describe in passing.

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<sup>55</sup> Jan Olaus Kielland (1833-1898), an ordained pastor, was sent by the NMS to Zululand in 1863. He was responsible for the station at Empangeni.

When we left on 25 July to travel onward, we made so little progress that we came no farther than to Umgeni. The reason for this was that the oxen, which had been bought for the Mfule wagon, were so wild and untrained that they would not pull it. The following day also went slowly, and as I had been away for so long, and according to rumours Zululand was on the verge of war again, I hastened ahead while Wettergreen<sup>56</sup> and Kielland led the caravan. Accompanied by Leisegang and three freight wagons, I reached home by 1 August. On 5 August Wettergreen arrived with his bride, the Titlestads, Gundersen, Dahle,<sup>57</sup> and N. Nilsen.<sup>58</sup> Quite a group of us Norwegians were together here for a few days. Then the Titlestads, Dahle, and Gundersen continued their journeys to their respective destinations....



*After a furlough in Norway, his first visit to his native land since arriving in Southern Africa in 1849, Oftebro returned in 1874 to the important station at Eshowe, which he had founded in 1861. Shortly after his arrival there, he had a lengthy audience with Cetshwayo, who had been crowned the Zulu king fourteen months earlier. Oftebro remained on friendly terms with Cetshwayo until the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 9)*

Eshowe

4 November 1874

The long voyage across the sea is fortunately complete and already lies behind us. We could only look back at it with grateful hearts, for it

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<sup>56</sup> Paul Peter Wettergreen (1835-1889), an ordained pastor, was sent to Zululand by the NMS in 1861. He worked at the Nhlazatshe, Mahlabatini, and Ntumeni stations but returned to Norway before completing a decade of service in the mission field.

<sup>57</sup> Markus Dahle (1838-1915), an ordained pastor, was sent to Zululand by the NMS in 1865. He established the station at Mfule shortly after his arrival.

<sup>58</sup> Nils Nilsen (1834-1923), an ordained pastor, served the NMS briefly in Zululand before being transferred to the new NMS field in Madagascar in 1866.

was as fortunate and comfortable as a long journey could probably ever be. I was well all the time. Our son Svend and my wife and daughter escaped being seasick. With the exception of a few stormy days in the vicinity of the Cape, we had only good weather from Norway to Natal. At Algoa Bay we were transferred from the *African* to the *Kaffir*. While we lay there at anchor and along the entire coast we had the most beautiful weather, and when we arrived at Natal we did not even need to drop anchor at the quay but came directly into the harbour. The same evening we were surprised by Brother Gundersen's visit on board. He and his family had come from a meeting at Umpumulo and had an errand to do in Durban. On the way he had met a good friend of ours, the German freight forwarder W. Meyer, and made us happy by telling us that in two days Meyer would be in Durban with two wagons. [Meyer] was willing to take us to Tugela along with all our goods sent on the *Elieser* which were already in Durban. We were thus freed from worrying about how we would be able to get out of Durban without staying there for a long time. Because of the cattle pestilence, freight wagons are not only terribly expensive but also difficult to get. The next morning Brother Gundersen and Mr Blackwood's deputy came on board and took us ashore. Blackwood's man arranged to have our belongings brought up to the city by rail while we attended to purchasing provisions for the year. A few days later the German came with his two wagons, so after a stay of only four days in Durban we could set out for Zululand. We dropped anchor in the Durban harbour on 31 August, went ashore on 1 September, left Durban on 5 September, and arrived at Eshowe on 14 September. In other words, it took exactly the same number of days to travel from here to Norway as from Norway to here. We left Eshowe on 17 April 1873, arrived in Norway on 14 July, left from Kristiansand on 17 July 1874, and arrived in Eshowe on 14 September. What we gained this time by going faster at sea (it took only twenty-seven days to sail from Southampton to the Cape and five days from the Cape to Natal) we lost on the journey from Durban to Eshowe. If it was good and comfortable at sea, it was anything but comfortable for us on this last stage of the journey. The freight wagons were so fully laden that there was not any room to sit or lie down in them. (One did not have a raised covering, but only a tarpaulin for protecting the goods from the rain.) My wife and daughter slept in

Gundersen's wagon with Mrs Gundersen and the child, while Gundersen, my son, and I had to sleep on the ground under the wagon, and when it rained it was not easy to sleep there. We missed immensely not having a tent. We sent a message from Durban to Eshowe that the wagon from there could meet us at the Tugela, for Meyer was not supposed to take us farther than the Tugela, but he generously drove us over the river anyway. There we deposited those of our belongings that we could not load on our two wagons so that we could collect them later. Sunday, 13 September, we spent at the German mission station Injesane, and on Monday we reached Eshowe. Here we met Brother P. Nilsen<sup>59</sup> and his family living at Kyllingstad's<sup>60</sup> place. All were well. Our natives came that evening in order to greet us and express their joy at seeing us again. We found our house just as we had left it, although the brick cover in the bedroom and lounge had recently been tarred by Brother Gundersen, and it smelt so bad that it bothered us a great deal. Moreover, in our absence a new carriage house had been built. There was still a surplus of oranges in the garden, but the cattle were doing poorly. Tuberculosis had raged, and there have never been so few cattle at the station as now, and they are still dying. I do not have enough oxen for the wagon and must therefore borrow or hire some. Only half of the team is still alive. The first few days, or rather weeks, we were not well, which made it even more trying for us to get into the old Zulu lifestyle and ways of doing things again. We still do not feel that we have done so. Our neighbours came immediately the first few days, expressing in their grand ways their joy and good fortune at seeing us again. Then they began their old begging. I had to resume my duties of extracting teeth, distributing medicine and otherwise serving as a quack, and warding off beggars.

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<sup>59</sup> Petter Nilsen (1836-1906), though not yet ordained, was sent by the NMS to Zululand in 1865. He served as an assistant for several years before being ordained in 1880.

<sup>60</sup> Johannes Kyllingstad (1829-1890), was sent to Zululand by the NMS in 1863 as an unordained assistant. He returned to Norway in 1879 and eventually became a pastor amongst Norwegian immigrants in the United States of America.

The natives attend services in greater numbers than previously, and as we have had three of us here - Gundersen, Nilsen, and myself - we have preached in rotation. A few days after our return I called the congregation together, told them about people in Norway who supported the mission, that they indefatigably prayed for them and worked for their good, how happy they were to see us missionaries and hear us tell about our work here, and how it grieved them to hear reports about the debauchery and backsliding of several people here. I told them that I had been given so many greetings from groups of friends in Norway that I did not know how to deliver them in a way that would allow the congregations here to have some idea of how they were in their prayers. Then we distributed the clothes we had received from the missions school<sup>61</sup> for that purpose, as a greeting from supporters of missions in Norway. They gave thanks for the greetings, expressed joy that they were in the hearts of the church in Norway, and asked me to thank you for that. I hope that they themselves will also write. From people at the children's home in Bergen I had received over six specie dollars to give to the Christians here, either in cash or as useful items. I therefore bought things that I regarded as useful, such as planes, knives, forks, spoons, drills, and scissors, and I have distributed them to the families, the tools to the men and the scissors to the women, telling them where they came from and about my visit to the children's home. A little money is still left, so I shall buy books for a few people.

Isaac and Paul, together with their families, have left here and moved to Natal. The former is now a polygamist, and Paul is in danger of becoming one. His wife is said to be resisting it strongly, whereas Isaac's wife appears to have capitulated. Lydia has returned. Her husband had feigned conversion at Umpumulo and convinced her to follow him back to Zululand, but as soon as they had crossed the Tugela he took off his mask and took her to his father's home, where she was in captivity and closely guarded so that she would not be able to flee here to the station. A short time later, however, both the father and the son were discovered

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<sup>61</sup> The NMS established a training school for prospective missionaries in Stavanger in 1843. It closed in 1849 but began to train candidates again in 1859.



to be sorcerers, so they fled to Natal in order to save their lives. As soon as they were there Lydia went to Umpumulo and was free. She has now come here with a sister of Biliose who wants to become a Christian. Lydia is grateful to the Lord because he so unexpectedly helped her to return to the congregation. She says that even her heathen father-in-law regarded their sorcery and flight as a punishment from God for Biliose's sins, and Biliose agreed. Biliose has been here trying to gain entrance to the station and access to Lydia by confessing his sins and using fine words, but his hypocrisy has been so bad that I asked him to convert first and show me better proof that he was not a hypocrite than he could produce then. There are now six families left at the station and two unmarried people. The others have moved to other stations or are working in Natal.

Naturally I had to go up to Mahlabatini to greet the king.<sup>62</sup> There were so many hindrances, however, that I was unable to leave here until 20 October. A few days earlier a messenger had come from the king asking me for three doors and two windows for the new "white man's house" at the royal kraal. I could not make doors for him, and I did not have any glass for windows, but I promised to bring him boards for the doors so that he could have carpenters or one of the many Englishmen who work as peddlers in his neighbourhood make doors for the house. Brother Gundersen had the task of providing him with galvanised gutters for the house, and he came along in order to bring him the rest of these. We hoped that the king would reimburse him for the gutters and other materials, about £12. In order not to be tied to the slow wagon, we took horses, which we are fortunate enough to have. On the first day we reached Samuelsen's station, St Paul's, and the next day we were at Mfule. We found the Kyllingstads to be well, but their house had large holes in the roof, and Kyllingstad was busy thatching it with little help from the boys. At home we had spoken about visiting Nhlazatshe, where I had never been, but upon arriving at Mfule we were so exhausted from riding that I did not believe I could consider it. The next morning it rained, so we could not leave until afternoon. The following morning we

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<sup>62</sup> The coronation of Cetshwayo as king of Zululand had taken place on 1 September 1873 while Oftebro was in Norway.

had lost our oxen and did not know when the boy would find them, and as I no longer felt so unwell from riding I suggested that we make the journey to Nhlazatshe. After riding hard for seven hours we surprised Larsen with a visit. It was a short one, though, for the following morning we travelled to Mahlabatini. Nhlazatshe is a beautiful and certainly a healthy place. It seems good just to inhale the pure highland air into one's lungs. At Mahlabatini, on the other hand, it was depressing and dry; in only a few places was it beginning to turn green. We found Brother Skaar<sup>63</sup> to be well. He was busy constructing a building at the new site to which the station is to be moved. He had got the pillared house which he is building there thatched, built a chimney in the kitchen, and was putting in a reed wall. It is approximately five kilometres from the old station. We arrived at Mahlabatini on a Saturday afternoon. A quarter of an hour behind the old station lies the great new Undi, the king's residence. One also sees many recently built royal kraals in the area, but you could hardly imagine how little these kraals decorate the vicinity. One sees only a dark, large ring several hundred paces in diameter. Within this is another ring, and the space between these two rings is tightly packed with hundreds of huts which from a distance look like weather-beaten hay-stacks. The plot must always slope a little; the main entrance is always at the lower end and the king's quarters at the upper end. There is a labyrinth of divisions with high, attractively woven fences with wreaths of thorns on top of them, probably to prevent sorcerers from climbing over them. In each of these divisions are a greater or smaller number of huts. In the centre of the labyrinth is the king's own division with the kraal's largest and prettiest huts. The largest was about eight metres in diameter and so high that even with an umbrella I could not reach higher than two or three feet below the vault. But the door was so small that I cannot understand how the king can comfortably creep in and out, for I thought the opening was too small even for me to creep through on all fours. In one division behind the

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<sup>63</sup> Knud Ellingsen Skaar (1837-?) was sent to Zululand by the NMS in the late 1860s and was stationed at Mahlabatini when Oftebro wrote the present letter.

king's and near the outer fence of the kraal stood the "white man's house", which was not quite finished.

After the morning devotion on Sunday, Gundersen and I went to greet the king. We also thought we might get permission to preach at the royal kraal. When we arrived there it looked like anything but Sunday. A large group of young men sat outside the royal cattle kraal, while a servant went back and forth with messages between them and the king, who was sitting in the cattle kraal. We remained sitting, waiting for an audience, and finally we grew impatient and were ready to return to the station in order to preach there. Finally a servant came to take us to the king. He was sitting on a mat under the veranda of the new European house. We took off our hats, cried "*bayede*",<sup>64</sup> and stepped forward to shake his hand with the customary greeting, "*sakubona nkosi!*" He took my hand firmly, held it for a long time, and looked at me as cordially as if he were an old supporter of our mission. "Is it you, Monde,"<sup>65</sup> my good friend? So I get to see you again!" "Yes, it is I; I am glad to see you again, and to see you as king. I greet you now as king and pray to God that he will bless you and allow you to reign as a good king". After he had shaken my hand for a while, he extended his hand cordially to Gundersen and asked us to be seated beside him on a roll of mats which he ordered brought in, a courtesy not often given by the Zulu king. Then we began to talk about our voyage across the ocean. He asked questions; I answered them. Finally he said, "You have great courage on the water!" I answered that I, too, was afraid at sea, but that I believed God wanted me to travel on the water, so I was bold in my confidence in him who is mighty enough to protect me just as well at sea as on land. If he was with me and I in him, no harm would be done if I died on the water. I told him about you in Norway, how you prayed and worked with us for the coming of the Kingdom of God in Zululand, and that many asked about the Zulu king and whether he, who for so long had had teachers in his country, had begun to take the Word of God to heart. "I had to answer", I said, "that we have not yet had the joy of seeing that, but we still hope to, that we are still waiting for you", I said as I looked straight at

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<sup>64</sup> The Zulu salutation corresponds roughly to "Hail, Your Majesty!"

<sup>65</sup> Monde was the Zulu pronunciation of Oftebro's forename, Ommund.

him. He lowered his eyes and smiled with an expression of shyness mixed, as Brother Gundersen later remarked, with one of being moved. He asked whether I had seen Queen Victoria, had met Shepstone,<sup>66</sup> or had seen Langalibalele (the Natal chief who was banished to Robben Island because of a revolt). I had not met any of these people, but I told him that I had seen and spoken with our king, and he had asked what the Zulus worshipped. When I answered that they worship the spirits of their deceased ancestors in the form of snakes, he, King Oscar,<sup>67</sup> said that it was sad to think there were still so many people in the world who did not know the true God. I told him [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] how much the people liked this king<sup>68</sup> and what a good king he was. He asked what kind of house he had, and I described it briefly to the best of my ability. I also told him that I had seen the German crown prince,<sup>69</sup> who had come to visit our king, and how they had greeted each other. He asked whether I had seen Umangakanana, *i.e.* Bishop Schreuder, since my return. "Yes", I replied, "I have been up at Ntumeni to greet him". When the king became silent and played with his blanket for a moment, I was afraid he would begin to talk about the matter between us and the bishop,<sup>70</sup> but it passed over, and the matter was not mentioned either that day or the next. He probably expected me to say something about the bishop, but I had no desire to talk about that matter unless it was necessary to do so. I considered asking him to have a service then at the kraal, and Brother Gundersen encouraged me to do so, but the opportunity to do so slipped away.... and I had said that we had just come to greet him because it was Sunday. I was afraid he would say as an excuse that there were not any

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<sup>66</sup> Meant is Secretary for Native Affairs Sir Theophilus Shepstone.

<sup>67</sup> The Swedish monarch Oscar II served as king of both Sweden and Norway from 1872 until 1905, when Norway became an independent country for the first time since the fourteenth century.

<sup>68</sup> Norwegian affection for Oscar II was tempered by Norwegian nationalism and widespread support of the increasingly vocal movement for national independence from Sweden.

<sup>69</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia (1831-1888), the German crown prince, was crowned Kaiser Friedrich III in 1888, the year of his death.

<sup>70</sup> Oftebro is referring to Schreuder's resignation from the NMS, which had become official in 1873.

people present because they had already gone to work. I preferred not to make a request of him than to risk having it rejected. I later regretted this, because when Gundersen, Skaar, and I were engaged in a friendly conversation with him the following day he asked whether we had had *sonda* at the station the previous day. I told him that we had considered requesting him for permission to have a service at his kraal but had not done so out of fear that he did not desire it. Oh yes, he said, we would have permission to have a service there. I apologised for our neglect, as we had had so few hearers at the station. I took my copy of the Gospels out of my pocket and read to him yesterday's Gospel text about the kingly man and explained how we could become acquainted with our Saviour from that small part of God's Word, how powerful and willing he was to help us in everything, and how we could learn to see what it was to believe and what power this faith in the Word of the Lord was. Then I read the epistle text for the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity saying, now you shall hear that the believers are soldiers and how they should be armed.<sup>71</sup> While I was speaking about this struggle and these weapons, I was interrupted by a servant who had to speak with the king about something.

I then brought him the gifts, which consisted of one of the chests I received from the missions school for our goods and which I had painted green and, in it, a small tool-box, two woollen blankets I had bought in Durban (in London I could not find any of that kind), a rag rug from the ladies' society in Arendal or Natvig, a hunting bag from a supporter of missions in Bergen, and a simple mattress. He thought highly of the tool-box and looked carefully at all the attractive cutting tools, drills, etc. I had to explain to him the use of each one. He praised the rag rug but suggested that it could have been a bit larger. The mattress was also too little for use on the floor, but he would place it on a bench in his European house and use it for resting in hot weather.

We spent three hours with him that time, and he was extraordinarily cordial and friendly without all the royal airs he sometimes had before he bore the title of king, such as interrupting conversations by talking to

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<sup>71</sup> In all likelihood the reference is to Paul's "armour of God" metaphors in Ephesians 6.

the servants or beginning to sing, etc. The day before we had seen his house. Today he went with us into the house, and we were surprised to see many parts of the Bible hanging on the walls and also a ship's clock. I immediately blurted out, "How cosy it is here in your home today!" Missionary Robertson<sup>72</sup> had told me that he had brought him these pictures, and that the king had said he would put them up on the wall in the house when it was finished. That had already been done, even though the house was not yet floored. I knew that Robertson had explained the pictures to him, and it was a pleasure to do the same so the king could hear that our explanation agreed with Robertson's. The pictures included "the birth of Jesus", "the Magi from the East" in which one of the three kings was black, "Jesus blesses the children", "Jesus heals the sick", "Jesus rides into Jerusalem", and the Last Supper, in which Judas sat looking so sinister and dark with the purse in his hand. He [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] stood a long time looking at this. "One can see that he is not glad in his heart, because he is sitting this way", he said as he imitated him. "Look at the purse", I said. "There is his heart. The love of money took it from Jesus into the purse, but now the money is beginning to burn his heart as he notices that Jesus reveals him to the other disciples, so he knows in his heart that, unlike the others, he will not be with Jesus, so you can see how dark and evil he looks. When he saw how Jesus allowed himself to be bound and crucified, he despaired, threw the money away, and went and hanged himself, etc."

We had an enjoyable time visiting the Zulu king. When we left he gave us two oxen. By telling him how tuberculosis had raged at the station and how concerned I was about the oxen, I let him know that I would not have anything against it if he gave me some. Happy about our cosy meeting with the king, we took our leave, returned to the station, and travelled as soon as possible with Brother Skaar up to the new construction site, where we spent a few hours. The next morning we left Mahlabatini and visited Ubatonjile in Bulawajo to convey to her greetings from Norway, especially from Wettergreen and various supporters of missions in Norway and to give her a package from Countess

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Robertson was a relatively well-known Anglican missionary in Zululand.

Wedel-Jarlsberg.<sup>73</sup> She seemed very glad to see us, and although a bit sheepish at first she became quite talkative and said repeatedly that it was so good to sit together with *abafundisi* [i.e. missionaries or teachers]. Unfortunately, she is probably becoming an *isanusi*, or witch-doctor. The witch-doctors claim that her illness means that, and they further say that her illness means that the *idlozi* [i.e. ancestral spirits] are calling upon her to be their instrument....



*Ole Olsen Stavem (1841-1932) arrived in Zululand in 1869 and was ordained at Ntumeni that year. At his station at Mbonambi in north-eastern Zululand, he perceived certain Viking traits reflected in the indigenous people but found little common ground between the Zulu mind and Christian concepts of sin, grace, or other essential elements of Christian theology. The following letter, written approximately five years after Stavem's arrival in Zululand, is of almost singular importance because of the light it sheds on missionary attitudes towards the Zulu mind-set and the difficulties it posed for cross-cultural evangelism. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 9)*

Mbonambi

31 December 1874

... We should write reports at regular intervals, but about what? It is strange that supporters of missions in Norway wish to read more interesting reports about e.g. revivals, conversions, true faith, and the fruits of faith amongst the natives who live here. All the missionaries wish the same. But the kind of conversions and godly seriousness one can observe in the old Christian countries can hardly be detected here yet. I do not believe, however, that the weak Christians here are completely lacking in faith.

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<sup>73</sup> Countess Ida Wedel Jarlsberg (1855-1929) later became a maid of honour to Queen Sofia of Sweden and a well-known philanthropist in Scandinavia.

Perhaps many people [in Norway] tend to overlook the spiritual ground on which the Zulus stand. Does not one often imagine that they resemble unawakened Christians? When Asbjørn of Medalhus in Trøndelag made his famous speech against Haakon the Good's proposal of Christianity,<sup>74</sup> the Norwegians were at a stage of their development which in many respects resembled that of the Zulus, although they had not sunk so deeply as these people. When I see the wild bravery of the Zulus, their indifference to death, their pride and desire for freedom, their respect for their chiefs, and other such characteristics, I am reminded of what I have read about our forefathers. But is it probable that revivals like those of today would have taken place between the mountains of Norway at that time had the Olafs<sup>75</sup> preached the Gospel instead of Christianising with the sword? I hardly think so. Of course, God could have performed a miracle, but a revival at that time would have been a miracle in another sense than revivals in the Christian societies of today.

Let me try to express my opinion more clearly. In Christian countries small children are carried forward to the Lord and initiated into the Kingdom of God by baptism. God meets them in many ways while they are growing up. Mother and father tell about him, as do the school, the pastor, and many others. If a child, even though it is reborn in baptism and despite admonitions from its parents and teachers, leaves God and goes into the world, it takes along a spark in its conscience. There is a weak point in the wall that has been built up around the heart, and at that point it can often be wounded. This wall around the heart can withstand many attacks, but the weak point is not healed. Not infrequently, therefore, such a heart is won back to the Lord and becomes his undivided possession.

But how does the Zulu grow up? He grows up without receiving better impressions. No-one tells him about God. No consciousness of God

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<sup>74</sup> Stavem is alluding to Asbjørn's opposition to an attempt by Haakon the Good to introduce Christianity to Norway in the middle of the ninth century. In fact Norway was not nominally Christianised until the 1020s.

<sup>75</sup> Stavem is referring to the Norwegian Kings Olav Tryggvason, who ruled from 995 until 1000, and Olav Haraldsson (Saint Olav), who ruled from 1015 until 1028. Both men were baptised abroad and sought to introduce Christianity to Norway by force, the latter with some success.



develops in him. He sees heaven with its army and the earth with the wealth God has given it, but it has never occurred to him to think more deeply about existence. He does not let the question of how it came to be bother him. He has a legend of a creator, but this is dead, as are his forefathers. The spirits of the dead and the witch-doctors take the place of God. Fortune and misfortune, health and sickness, yes, even life and death are caused by these supernatural beings.

The Zulu's concepts of life after death are quite without content. Just as he does not know any holy, just God, he knows nothing about retribution in eternity. He knows nothing about a heaven or a hell. Not even concepts of an Elysium or a Tartarus, a Valhalla or a Hel<sup>76</sup> have arisen in his heart. To be given a place in a snake is everything, the destiny of both the good and the wicked. He has no salvation to hope for, no punishment to fear, nothing to win or lose in eternity, regardless of how he lives in this life. He can therefore easily be the greatest man of misdeeds.

The Zulu's awareness of sin stands in relation to this concept of the afterlife. No Zulu admits that he sins. Indeed, he knows nothing of sin in its deeper meaning. All sin is offence to people who can punish him for it. So why should there be any retribution in eternity? The first three commandments are entirely absent from the tables of his heart.<sup>77</sup> There are still remnants of the others. He honours his elders; heinous murder is a sin under certain conditions; adultery by a wife is an offence, while many other kinds of violations of the Sixth Commandment<sup>78</sup> are not. To

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<sup>76</sup> In Greek mythology Elysium is the abiding place of virtuous people after death and Tartarus the infernal abyss below Hades into which Zeus hurled the rebellious Titans. In Old Norse mythology Valhalla, meaning the "hall of those slain in battle", is where Odin, chief of the gods, receives heroes whereas Hel is the nether world to which people not killed in battle were believed to have been sent.

<sup>77</sup> Stavem naturally used the Roman Catholic-Lutheran tradition of dividing the Decalogue into two tables of three and seven commandments, as opposed to the Reformed tradition of dividing it into two tables of four and six commandments. He is thus referring to Exodus 20:3-8, as taught in Luther's *Small Catechism*.

<sup>78</sup> Again, Stavem is using the Roman Catholic-Lutheran enumeration of the Ten Commandments, in which Exodus 20:14 ("You shall not commit adultery") is the Sixth Commandment.

steal and rob is bad but not so dangerous. The fundamental sin is witchcraft, and the sorcerer or warlock is the real sinner. For that reason the contrast between good and evil is expressed in the concepts of human being and sorcerer.

Since the Zulu has no awareness of sin, he does not really have a guilty conscience. His guilty conscience consists solely of fear of his chief or king. When he knows that he is in favour with them, his conscience is, as a rule, in perfect order. True, he has another fear, but it is not related to guilt. He is afraid of the treacherous sorcerer and his forefathers' capricious spirits. This fear is the snake in him which never dies, but what can he do about it? Under these powers he is the innocent sufferer. Even the sorcerer is innocent, for other sorcerers have cast a spell on him. The conscience of such a person offers few points of contact for the truth of God's Word. Of course, the Zulu does not entirely lack such points of contact. If that were the case, his condition would be helpless. The difference between him and a Christian whose conscience is asleep, however, must be striking. A long period of influence is necessary before his conscience begins to convict him.

The Zulu lacks nothing externally. Apart from some years of starvation, he has enough food. He does not need clothes, but if he wants to buy a cotton blanket he can do so. He has his pleasures. One day he hunts wild game, the next day he sleeps, and the third day he goes to a beer party. He does not work much but lives each day grandly and, in his own way, in joy. The women have a worse lot in life than the men, for whom they must provide, but they are not aware of their degradation and do not feel it. It is a bad state of affairs when one fine day one is summarily killed, but the Zulu accepts this, for in his opinion it is unavoidable. If the witches are not killed, the people would have to die.

When a missionary has to appear with God's Word before people of this kind, he often has the feeling that he will have to move mountains. He sees nothing but impossibilities. All talk of God, salvation, and damnation is just a fairy tale to the Zulus. He has no use for the love of God, and God's wrath does not scare him. But faith moves mountains. Impossibilities disappear before it. It knows that the African, like the European, will one day kneel before Jesus Christ. God does not wish the death of the sinner; he wants all people to be saved. That is certain. But

the time of preparation is not yet finished for the African. The way of the Lord was prepared amongst the Jews, within the Roman Empire, and amongst the Germanic peoples. Why should we expect anything different in Africa? It may well be that the present generation of missionaries and their supporters will see only a few Africans come to the Lord. Our descendants will see more, however, and sometime we shall see many of them with God.

Regarding this station, I can say that nothing has been done here and that something has been accomplished this year. It depends on how one views the matter. What was printed in *Missionstidende*<sup>79</sup> a while ago, namely that "numbers are of questionable value in the Kingdom of God", is very true. If it were a matter of numbers, then I would have to admit that our work has been in vain. But since I believe that the Word of God, despite all resistance, does not return empty,<sup>80</sup> I dare to state that the Gospel has not been preached here for nothing. That man whom I mentioned in my previous report is still receiving baptismal instruction. He understands well and has a good memory, but I am afraid that sin has not become especially sinful in his eyes and therefore the grace of God is not correctly recognised either. His eldest son, a boy of approximately twelve years, came right before Christmas to request baptismal instruction. He said he wanted to convert. "Does your father say that?" I asked. "No, I am saying that myself; my father has nothing against it", he replied.

The proclamation of God's Word has continued in the same way as before. Every morning the boys are given a few verses of the Bible and a simple explanation of them. When I have finished the explanation, sometimes I ask the audience questions. At other times I catechise in the evening after reading-time; my wife sometimes assists in the instruction. On Sundays I begin with morning devotions for the boys, have the sermon around 11h00, and in the evening there is catechetical instruction about the Gospel. As we have had as many as twelve boys in addition to some sick people staying at the station, we can always have a small gathering. The number of people who hear the sermon has varied from

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<sup>79</sup> Meant is *Norsk Missions-Tidende*, the periodical of the NMS.

<sup>80</sup> Isaiah 55:11.

fifteen to sixty. Concerning physical work, I can mention the completion of an addition to the manse. I have also resumed my study of the Zulu language, which I had not studied since I was at Ntumeni. I have a Zulu tell me Zulu stories, which I write down in his own words. It is quite remarkable how these fairy tales give an accurate picture of the Zulus' life as a nation. At a later time I shall send some home in translation.

For some time there have been a large number of beer parties, fights, and badly wounded limbs in the kraals around here. How will it be when spirits begin to flow through the country? It is said that liquor has already begun to flow at the royal kraal, so it will filter down.

The day before yesterday a man came here to give me a great warning about a miraculous animal which had appeared in a tribe nearby. The animal resembled an elephant, but it had a kraal on its back. A chief had called out his people to kill it, but all their spears had fallen to the ground. It was impossible to kill it with iron. Hunters with firearms were then called, and they killed it, but when they wanted to burn it rain fell from the sky and extinguished the fire. Later it disappeared without a trace. I gave the man a rational explanation of the phenomenon, so that in the end the animal became a common elephant. My reasonable explanation appealed to him, because he too thought it very probable that the spear casters, not used to such large animals as elephants, did not dare to go close enough to it, and that as a result their spears, influenced by the law of gravity, fell to the ground before they reached the animal. It was also rational that rain put out the fire. The matter was a big secret, he said, and it had been told to the king.

Here at Mbonambi we now have the pleasure of seeing steamships pass by on their voyages between Zanzibar and Durban. In Norway that is perhaps regarded as a very modest pleasure, but here every bit of civilisation is of great value....



*During the 1860s and 1870s, i.e. while Zululand remained a sovereign state, conversions occurred only sporadically at the Norwegian stations. This was clearly discouraging to the missionaries, who continued to take prospective individual converts into their homes in hopes of influencing them with both Christian values and European civilisation. Whereas*

*Oftebro had emphasised the Zulu mind as the greatest hindrance to the acceptance of Christianity, Lars Larsen believed that such Zulu practices as lobolo, or purchasing wives with payments of cattle, and polygamy hindered the progress of the Gospel. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 9)*

Nhlazatshe

6 January 1875

... When will dawn come to these poor, spiritually darkened Zulus? The essential element in this regard is still missing, namely the hearts of people who truly regret their sins, convert from [the worship of] idols, and thirst for the living God and his eternally valid righteousness. The proclamation of the Gospel here, both publicly and privately, has, as in so many other places, been the difficult, two-fold task of first awakening consciousness of spiritual need and misery, working in the stony ground of the heart to make it receptive to the heavenly seed of God's Word, and, secondly, nurturing the weak sprouts which now and then grow from someone or other. Unfortunately, one often notices in despair that they fade and wither away. The words of the Lord: "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted".<sup>81</sup>

Oh, when will we see a spiritually refreshing rain fall from on high? When will the Lord pour out his Spirit on these dry bones and make them live? We still miss a broad, awakening outpouring of the Spirit upon these people, who have heard the Word. Therefore the natives who have been admitted to our congregations lead only spiritually sick lives. One cannot trace any spiritual freshness amongst them; one notices little or no growth in their goodness. There is regression, if anything....

In giving a report for the past six months - from June to December 1874 - I must unfortunately again begin by stating what I have already loosely indicated, namely that there is little of general interest to report with regard to the fruits of missionary endeavours. We have, however, had the pleasure of holding public worship regularly on Sundays and holidays. At the beginning of the six-month period only a few natives

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<sup>81</sup> Matthew 15:13.

from the kraals attended services. The able-bodied men and women have been so preoccupied with building the so-called royal kraals for Cetshwayo that only a few people from this vicinity were then home. But as people gradually became hungry and exhausted, they gradually left and came home, so the number attending increased. They seem to be interested in hearing the Word of God, because they sit rather quietly and are as attentive as one can expect. Bishop Wilkinson,<sup>82</sup> who once visited our service here, said to me, "I have never seen a more attentive gathering". It is also true that they are more respectful now than previously. But one cannot see any desire to allow the Word of God to have any influence on their lives and conduct. They do not dare to [have such a desire]. They therefore remain unchanged and live as heathens under the influence of the heathendom in which they were raised. They cannot, of course, escape from this unless a thoroughgoing moral transformation occurs in them. This can only with difficulty and in exceptional cases happen even amongst those who are constantly being taught and nurtured at a station, and much less often amongst those from the kraals who only occasionally find their way to public worship and do not hear the Word of God daily. How vastly different would the effect be on their minds and hearts if, as children, they had been sent to school and had grown up under its influence. But to date it has been impossible to organise schools for the heathen children, and that will hardly occur so long as the government of the country is heathen. We must therefore be satisfied with being allowed to be in the country, to keep our stations staffed, and to remain at our posts while God maintains the Society's desire and strength to work as it awaits more favourable times for its endeavours. With regard to ourselves, it seems to be God's will that our missionary service consists of waiting, but that too is a service. It is discouraging to know that at least 400 or 500 adults live close enough to the station that they easily could come to hear the Word of God preached but that hardly one-tenth of them actually come. But one must be satisfied as long as any want to come. The excuses for their absence are usually well-worn, and they have often been mentioned in our reports. It

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<sup>82</sup> Thomas Edward Wilkinson (1837-1914) had been the Anglican bishop of Zululand since 1870.

would be superfluous to give them again. But now they have a new excuse. They say that they do not know when it is Sunday, because in contrast to other stations we do not have a church bell to call them. This is a step in the right direction, however, because in the past their superstition would have scared them away if they had heard the loud peal of a bell. But now they want to have a bell.

We have not lacked the help of natives to do daily tasks at the station during the past six months. At the moment we have more than enough people. As several heathens have been taken in, we have generally had fourteen or fifteen natives at devotions and school every day. On the other hand, several Christians have moved away from the congregation, presumably only temporarily. Marcus is still at Umzinjati, Mathias at Intabankulu, and Barnabas with his relatives at Mapumulo. We do not know what has happened to Isaiah. It is said that he is staying with some important Zulus in the colony [of Natal] and has fallen away from the faith, but people here are not certain about that. It appears, however, that he intends to remain in the colony because in October his girlfriend, Lydia, who works here, received a letter from him asking her to join him in Natal. Judging from the fact that she wanted to throw the letter into the fire and that she referred to him as an *uhlanya*, or madman, one can conclude that she knows more about his conduct in the colony than we. He can legitimately demand her, because he has honestly and duly paid ten head of cattle for her to John, her brother, who is a Christian at Ntumeni.

Two Zulu girls and three Zulu boys are being prepared for baptism. One of these girls had asked for a long time to be baptised and was close being baptised several months ago. But then, at least momentarily, she was hindered by "the devil, the world, and her own flesh". Every weekday for several weeks she had special baptismal instruction. With my wife's assistance she had sewn her baptismal gown, and although I was not particularly eager to baptise her, there was no compelling reason not to. But when I wanted to call her to her lessons one day, I was told "*u balekile*", she had run away. Somewhat disappointed in my expectations and concerned about her, I had to investigate what had caused her to take that step. That source of consolation, which is always accessible to us in the infallible Word of God, becomes doubly indispensable. But also

the reports of those who in Christian countries have had "tramps" in preparation for baptism are helpful to have in such a case. This case certainly reminded me of what I had read about "tramps" who had run away from their teachers. On the other hand, I had to be consoled that if she had committed some crime, it would come to light before her projected baptism was announced. Investigations revealed that she had had an argument with her boyfriend, or rather her owner, who is here at the station. She set out on foot for Mfule surely knowing that he, who had bought her for ten head of cattle, would not hesitate to seek her out. We did not initially know where she had gone.

How demoralising this *lobolo* business of paying cattle for one's prospective wife is among these people! One easily accepts it if one does not have the opportunity to see the negative results of it every day. For those who either are or intend to become Christians, the principles of Christianity clash with the fundamental tenets of barbarism. A bachelor who has bought a girl is, because of human weakness, very likely to regard this woman almost like any other merchandise he has bought. A kind of civil marriage - and it is regarded as being at least that - has already been entered into on the basis of the promise made and the payment of cattle, even if they have not begun to live as man and wife. If he is taught the Word of God, he becomes aware that he, if he is to live as a Christian, must regard the woman as the weaker part. This contradicts what he hears and sees daily in the heathen milieu, for there the woman is physically subjected to the worst toil and in general is treated as though she were the stronger part. On the other hand, such a purchased wife is not always so lenient with the man who owns her. She knows very well that in relation to him she is not much more than his slave. From the Word of God, which penetrates so deeply into these relationships and is as clear as the sun, she hears and greatly appreciates what it teaches about a husband's duties to his wife. But she places less emphasis on her duties to her husband. An inner struggle then begins in a poor, purchased woman. The feeling of degradation arouses a craving for freedom - a freedom which she cannot achieve without breaking up the relationship and breaking Zulu customs, but having the relationship dissolved involves many great difficulties according to Zulu law. Moreover, the poor person regards it as a matter



of great honour that the Zulu custom of *lobolo* be maintained, for the more cattle that are paid for her, the greater proof she believes she has that all the desirable characteristics are embodied in her as an individual. If a problem arises between her and her owner - or boyfriend - it is terrible to hear how she - to use a Zulu expression which is more descriptive than tasteful, can "thrash him with her mouth", the poor chap, so that he must capitulate in order not to lose simultaneously both her and the cattle he paid for her. This is one of the evil results of that struggle between slavery and freedom. Oh, the poor Zulu woman. I do not believe that anyone with any familiarity with these conditions will call it an exaggeration when I say that all Christian endeavour in this country comes to ruin on the rocks of the degradation of the Zulu woman.

This is precisely the country in which to talk about doing something for "women's liberation". I would prefer not to delve in reflections, but rather return to the case itself. After that girl had been hunted for a few days in this area, her owner found her trail. He went to her and began to negotiate. After a few days she came up here and stayed at first in a Zulu kraal in this neighbourhood because she was afraid to come to the station. When she had stayed with her relatives for a while, people began to fear that her remaining there would become a bad omen, or *umhlola*, and they ordered her to take off her clothes so that she would look like other Zulu women. That, she thought, was asking a bit much of her. She sent us a message asking whether we were willing to let her return. My wife, who had had an immense amount of trouble with her, nevertheless thought we should allow her to come because if the Lord gets a place in her heart she will become an excellent person, but if not she will become, frankly, a pariah. She has great aptitude for either one. In her refusal to do what was demanded of her we want to see evidence that she has made progress in moral seriousness and modesty, which are otherwise quite foreign to a Zulu girl. I cannot say with certainty, however, that she really is that way, because it is reasonable that a person who has worn [European] clothes for several years would feel cold if she put on a Zulu costume, which consists of little more than some pearls. Necessity, therefore, may have compelled her to this virtue. She is still here, but her baptism will not take place until

a "longing for the gifts of the church" is evident in her. She is free to try to be baptised by other missionaries if it is not done here.

In mid-winter, especially in July, I had a cold and a fever for a while, although I could continue to work. When I recovered in August, I made a recuperative journey by ox wagon down into the country. So much time had passed since we had seen Cetshwayo that we thought it best to go down to Undi near Nodwengu to try to get permission to see and speak with him. He was not inclined to grant us an audience, however. Perhaps he was not in a good mood. It was a very mild day when we arrived at his kraal. Brother Skaar came with us. We asked one of King Cetshwayo's servants whether we could speak with him. He came back immediately with a message that "there was so much wind, but when the wind ended we could see him another time". We did not think there was enough wind to bother anyone. Nor could we detect in his answer any hint as to when he thought it might be opportune to accede to our request because he, no more than any other person, could not know when the self-contradiction "the wind ended" would be fulfilled. Since we, moreover, did not have a special purpose for our visit, we did not believe it profitable to make any great effort to achieve so little. We therefore went back to Nodwengu and left for home the same day.

The actual goal of our journey had been attained, however, and also in other respects it was quite rewarding. It was interesting to see the great work, by Zulu standards, that Cetshwayo's slaves had accomplished for him. The so-called "royal kraals" - Nodwengu, Undi, Emlambongwenja, Utulwana, Kwakegazi, and others - had taken an immense amount of labour, and a fire could destroy them in a matter of minutes, because they are all built of grass and timber. After one has overcome the difficulties of getting over the large manure piles right below the fence at Cetshwayo's quarters, it is quite clean and pretty within this fence. The ground has been levelled and strewn with sand. There are a lot of attractively woven, small labyrinths formed by the fences, but everything is exposed under the sky. A white man's house belonging to Cetshwayo was also under construction near his huts. I have heard that our mission supplied the gutters for that house.

I must mention a special instance of God's protection in an apparently very dangerous situation. This winter our schoolhouse was

being repaired. Two and one-half feet from the southern end of this building we have built a storm wall of timbers and grass to protect it against the terrible storms which we often have, especially in the summer. One day, as I stood between this wall and that of the schoolhouse, I looked up and saw a snake about fifteen centimetres from my head. It had coiled itself around one of the timbers and was ready to attack when I looked up. I have no faith in the theory that snakes do not attack from that position, so I jumped back in fear and called to one of our natives, who immediately came to my assistance by killing it. The snake was at least a metre and a half long and of a beautiful green colour. The natives call this kind of snake the *mamba*. Every native knows that its bite is deadly, so they are always ready to exterminate it.

No great changes have taken place at the station during the past six months. I must mention, however, that the disadvantages resulting from freer trade relations with the colony of Natal are now beginning to make work amongst these people more difficult than it was previously. Until now the natives have not had much contact with the white and black traders. Now and then a European came on foot with some Kaffers who carried his merchandise, but they usually stayed here for only a short time. Now, by contrast, since Shepstone opened the country to more free trade, whites as well as blacks come with ox wagons fully laden with merchandise. They stay near the station month after month to barter with the natives. The station does not own any land, so we cannot prevent them from staying wherever they want to. "Wherever the missionary goes, the trader follows on his heels". Yes, the mission is good for many things. The traders follow the same road on which we travelled when we came up here. They often complain that the road is bad, but they never repair it. If the traders have a conflict with the natives, the latter go to the missionary to complain about the traders' bad way of treating them. They believe that the missionary is on the traders' side because they [*i.e.* the traders] stay near the mission stations. They buy beer from the Zulus for themselves and their people. The people living at the station are invited to drinking parties, and those who cannot resist the temptation yield to it. Then we have the boozing of both the "wild" and the "civilised" (?) at unacceptably close proximity to the station. That makes it extremely difficult to keep an eye on the heathens who work here and to maintain

order amongst the Christians. It should be remarked that there are a few Christians here....



*Karl Larsen Titlestad, who had founded a station at Emzinyati in 1870, echoed the familiar refrain of stagnation in efforts to effect conversions. His laments about violence and other crimes at Emzinyati, which he believed were major hindrances to missionary progress, were frequent themes in the reports of colleagues at other stations too, as was his fear that Norwegian missionaries' children would be morally corrupted by exposure to the debauchery of the Zulus. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 9)*

Emzinyati

2 January 1875

...It often happens that just when we believe we have reason to expect a little visible fruit of our endeavours, all our expectations are dashed with one blow. That is what has happened to us during the past six months.... I have now been with these people for nearly a decade and worked towards the fulfilment of the goal (hopefully with no less fervour than the supporters of missions in Norway) of being able to tell you sometime about a heathen's conversion to the true God. But the longer I work, the gloomier the prospects seem of this wish being fulfilled. I have worked with one of the catechumens without interruption for over four years, but while his knowledge increases, the converting influence of the truth on his heart seems to dwindle. I hardly need to say that I am referring to the poor, once so promising boy, Ulogotwajo, about whom you have heard so much. A while ago he got so drunk one Sunday that I had to carry him home so that he would not lie outdoors and possibly die at night. His fighting, blatant dishonesty, and other obstinate ungodliness made me try to exclude him from baptismal instruction, but not even that seemed to have the desired result. It seems that he is becoming steadily more indifferent to the truth, so I am afraid that I soon may have to remove him from here.

Ulangi, whom I have also mentioned fairly often and who has tried to learn, both here and with Brother Larsen, I have had to chase away because of several burglaries he committed. Marcus, one of Brother Larsen's converts who worked here for over two years, went back to Nhlazatshe just before Christmas. On the other hand Umpukeni, whom I had to ask to leave last year because of his fighting, has come back, confessed his sin, and, without complaint, given me the two months' labour he owed me. During the ten months when he was away, he worked for one of the Hermannsburg missionaries, and that gave him quite good character. He is still receiving baptismal instruction and has the ability to learn. At present there are thus no converts but two catechumens, the one discussed above and Unjakonje, a boy whom I also mentioned in my last report to you, and the instruction of these two is continuing in the same way that I indicated in earlier letters to you.

Our two eldest small boys also need some education, so now and then I teach them a little. My wife has taught them how to spell and add. Yes, we are very concerned about the children, because we cannot see how, in the long run, we can protect them from the influence of the heathens, and there is no-one in Norway to whom we could send them. Nevertheless, we must train ourselves in the confidence that he who is the same unto eternity will protect and help them. It strikes me as a failure on the part of our Society, however, that nothing has been done, either here or in Norway, for the education of missionaries' children. There has been talk here of building a school for those natives who wish to get an education. Would it be impossible to have a school for our missionaries' children in connection with this as, for example, the Hermannsburg people have at Hermannsburg? Admittedly, one could not thereby completely protect the children from the heathens, but under the guidance and supervision of good, Christian teachers one could expect much good to come from such an institution.

During the past six months I have made two lengthy journeys, one to Ntabankulu in Zululand and one to Ntumeni in Natal.<sup>83</sup> On both trips I visited German missionaries, because I believe there is always something

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<sup>83</sup> Titlestad gave the location of Ntumeni incorrectly; in fact it too was in Zululand, as was his own station.

to be learnt from other societies' missionaries with regard to the work of a mission. I also visited a Coloured<sup>84</sup> family that had moved from the colony to Zululand a year ago and now lives about eleven kilometres from The man has been baptised, but not his wife or their children, three of whom are boys. I told them that they could send their children to us to be educated, but even though he agreed to this nothing came of it. A Zulu who has fallen away from the faith and his half-grown son live with this family. On St Stephen's Day I had a service at Usihajo's large kraal. He is expected to come home from the king soon. One of our closest neighbours, whose family were the most faithful people in attending services here, has been chased nearly ten kilometres away, but the worst man in the neighbourhood plans to move right next to us. Robbery, moving, murder, and flight from justice continue without interruption in these surroundings.

With the little assistance I have received, I have completed the kitchen which I mentioned and began earlier, made some bricks, built the walls for a cattle shed, and built a brick pen for my horses. We have worked in the garden, partly building an as yet uncompleted ditch for fencing it in, and partly fertilising, planting, and hoeing, so we hope to harvest good yields in our own garden this year. Since the rain began, the weather has been very good for the crops. Alternating warm sunshine and occasionally violent showers are almost routine....



*Lars Larsen, who had despaired of effecting conversions at Nhlazatshe in 1876, saw slight progress there the following year. His conventional emphasis on rote memorisation as a means of teaching Christian doctrines to the Zulus may have impeded his efforts to make Christianity meaningful to them. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 10)*

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<sup>84</sup> Titlestad used the word *Bastard*; the uniquely South African English usage of "Coloured" to indicate a person of mixed race was unknown and irrelevant to him.

Nhlazatshe

6 June 1876

At the beginning of the six months that have just ended, we again have had some domestic trials, as my wife was very ill for a fortnight. It was a real help for us that Kathrine, a daughter of D. Nilsen<sup>85</sup> was with us then. Zulu girls, of whom my wife then had five (in times of illness one could easily say unfortunately) cannot, despite their best efforts, be of much assistance on such occasions, just as most of the people are not here to help but to be helped.

At about the same time we began to worry about the true rumours of disputes between the Zulus in the upper districts and the Dutch-African farmers in the Transvaal Republic. This time it came closer to a general revolt than previously. The farmers demanded taxes from those Zulus who lived in the disputed territory. The Zulus regard these demands the farmers are making of them as a means of goading Cetshwayo into starting a war he wants the farmers to begin. Another cause of unrest was that a chief living at a Hermannsburg mission station had a Zulu murdered. As this chief lives in the disputed territory where the missionary has bought land from the Dutch<sup>86</sup> government, the farmers regarded this murder as an attack and had the chief imprisoned. 1 400 or 1 500 then took up their weapons and demanded that the chief be released. The missionary, who no longer felt safe at his station, took his family over to the encamped farmers. The Zulus then attacked the station, because they believed the missionary had made common cause with the farmers. The Dutch government then sent Cetshwayo a message that what the farmers had done had not been with its knowledge and approval. Cetshwayo demanded his chief released, and that was done. The strife should have ended with that. But the Zulus regarded this compliance on the part of the Dutch government as a sign of weakness and fear, and as a result they are becoming more of a nuisance and bolder. This also has a negative influence on the people around us, as we do not live far

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<sup>85</sup> Daniel Nilsen (1828-1911) had served the NMS as an unordained assistant from 1860 until 1867, when he became a farmer in Natal.

<sup>86</sup> Meant is the government of the South African Republic in Pretoria.

from the disputed territory. Until now the Lord has helped us amongst them, but it can be expected to become worse and worse until this dispute has been resolved. The English will probably not become involved in the dispute until it has reached its zenith and there is a danger that the Dutch will take the entire country.

Since I submitted my last report I have baptised a Zulu girl into our congregation. She is Jacob's fiancée. He is a Christian and has now prepared a place to live at the station. He intends to marry her this winter and therefore wished to know whether they could have a church wedding, since she was a heathen. He knew that that happens, in Natal, for example. I admitted that both in Natal and other countries a man and a woman can pay for and demand a letter stating that they will live as man and wife as long as they like each other. This is civil marriage. There are also missionaries who, in accord with their understanding of the meaning of marriage, marry a heathen and a Christian. But the church beyond the ocean, I told him, which has sent you the Word of God and the other means of grace, does not allow a Christian to marry a heathen in church, because it is meaningless. As he wished to take the discipline and consolation of God's Word with him in his new position, what could be done? What was easiest for him was to inform his fiancée of the state of affairs, and naturally she did not hesitate to express her desire to be baptised. Since the girl had not been adequately instructed and had not given adequate "testimony of serious penitence and faith", there were only two possibilities. They could be married in the Zulu fashion, but we could not allow a Zulu wedding with all its abominable spectacles at the station, or they could be ordered away from the station, where he is now building a little house for himself, but that was not desirable, either. There was nothing left but to instruct her further so that she could be baptised. Already on 24 August 1874 the girl had asked to be included amongst the catechumens, but the way in which we are compelled to proceed with the instruction of those partly grown and partly half-grown people who cannot read, namely by reading to them the five parts of



Luther's *Small Catechism*<sup>87</sup> word by word, sentence by sentence until they know it by heart, is so exhausting and boring for an adult to do year after year that I cannot, even if time allowed, devote more than an hour a couple times a week to this mechanical and mind-deadening work. We have to use this method to avoid scaring away anyone by demanding that he or she first learn to read before being baptised. To prepare them for baptism by giving them catechism lectures before they have memorised its wording would produce only meagre results. The positive side of the matter is that these mechanical people never grow weary or bored with this memorisation. Sometimes they learn a brief question and answer from Pontoppidan's *Explanation*<sup>88</sup> relating to the memorised piece they are to recite the next time, but that goes poorly. In this way the girl Umacege has memorised the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed. After she had worked with the piece on baptism every day for some weeks, and I had decided to teach her more about the meaning of baptism and its necessity and usefulness, so that she could answer "satisfactorily", as the *Ritual*<sup>89</sup> says, a few question about baptism, she was baptised on 19 March with the name Uhendriette. She is probably nineteen years old. There is no reason why we cannot have the same hopes for her as for the others who have been admitted to our congregations. Her behaviour has been satisfactory to date, considering the temptations and dangers to which these natives are subjected. We want to pray for her, that she may receive grace to allow God's spirit and means of grace to build further towards the eternal salvation of her soul upon the foundation of her baptism.

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<sup>87</sup> A Norwegian missionary, Johan Moe (1827-1899), who was in the service of the Hermannsburg Mission, had translated Luther's *Small Catechism* into Zulu. It had been printed as a book of ninety-five pages in Pietermaritzburg in 1875 under the title *Ikatekisismuse Lebanhla Lamalutere*.

<sup>88</sup> *Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed* (i.e. Truth unto Godliness) by the Danish pastor and later bishop of Bergen Erik Pontoppidan (1698-1764) was a commentary on Luther's *Small Catechism* published in 1737. It remained immensely popular until well into the nineteenth century, chiefly in Norwegian and Norwegian-American pietistic circles.

<sup>89</sup> Larsen is referring to the Dano-Norwegian *Ritual* of 1685, which was not only the liturgy of Danish and Norwegian Lutheranism but also stipulated conditions for administering the sacraments.

In my last letter I wrote that when natives who become Christians stay temporarily or even settle at our stations instead of amongst their heathen relatives this can be attributed to the difficult conditions under which we labour in this country. This time I shall discuss in a few words what at times supporters of missions in Norway have sometimes said, namely that we Norwegian missionaries in Zululand do not proceed with much respect for cultural identity and that we give different names to those natives who are baptised. There are many personal names here which are derived from other words to which no missionary would object using in baptising someone. Maternal love has been inventive in choosing quite pretty if rather long names. For example, the girl's name "Unomalanga" and the boy's name "Umalanga" come from *ilanga*, meaning sun. As soon as a child begins to crawl on the ground, it usually gets a name from its mother. And it is not difficult to understand that the child's eyes have given its mother this name. Other names are less fitting; they often result from events which occur at the time the child is born, such as Umaliba, from *iliba*, or grave. If there is much illness and many deaths at a kraal, a child might get this name. Then there are names at which even the Zulus smile when they first hear them, such as Ukopocwane. Isikopocwane is what a man is called on whom the [unintelligible word] is very far back, who has a very prominent forehead, and consequently has very recessed eyes. But a lot of names are so repulsive that no missionary would ever use them in baptism. The least odious of them are ugly enough. We know missionaries of the Reformed church<sup>90</sup> who do not care what name they use when baptising someone. One therefore often hears that natives who have been baptised by them have much worse names than, for example, Nyokane, from *nyoke*, meaning snake, and its diminutive ending, hence a little snake. This probably results from their desire to preserve the culture of the Christians. It is more likely that the reason lies in their conception of the meaning of baptism. For them, after all, it is nothing more than a symbolic procedure, that is, an external procedure which reflects what has

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<sup>90</sup> "Reformed" was used loosely by nineteenth-century Scandinavian Lutherans to indicate non-Lutheran Protestantism in general, not merely denominations which bore that label.

transpired or is assumed to transpire within the baptismal candidate.<sup>91</sup> On the other hand, it stands in a much closer relationship to the Word of God and the doctrine of our church regarding the meaning of baptism that the fathers<sup>92</sup> have found it fitting for heathens who convert to Christianity to assume new names.... Long before they are baptised they have usually decided for themselves the names they want to have. In general they choose Biblical names, because many of them are short and what a Zulu would call "smooth", or easy to pronounce. It is not easy for them to pronounce two consonants together without a vowel between them. I do not believe, moreover, that "culture" suffers from the new names. But if that happens, it does not suffer as much from that as when those who want to live as Christians put aside their old selves and become new people, as the Word of God teaches. Whenever this really happens, they must leave behind much of what the Zulus also regard as "culture"....



*Hans Leisegang (1838-1914), though Danish by birth, served the NMS from 1864, when he graduated from its training school in Stavanger, until 1911. He reported considerable progress at the large Umpumulo station, including the employment of Zulu lay evangelists, shortly before the Anglo-Zulu War. This was an important first step in the process of indigenising the leadership of the mission in Southern Africa, a process that would accelerate late in the nineteenth century and continue for several decades of the twentieth until African Lutherans gained general control of and took responsibility for their own churches. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, XXXII, no. 5 [May 1877], pp. 171-173)*

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<sup>91</sup> This gross oversimplification was typical of nineteenth-century Norwegian Lutheranism and had become current during the third quarter of the century when non-Lutheran denominations began to proliferate in Norway, evoking defensive reactions by members of the established church who were quick to point out what they regarded as heterodox or otherwise inadequate elements in other denominational traditions.

<sup>92</sup> Larsen's use of "fathers" is unclear. In any case, his generalization is overextended if he was referring to the history of Christian missions in general.

Umpumulo

January 1877

... During the past six months there have been four baptisms here. Two children and two adults have been baptised. One of the girls who was baptised was given the name Lea and soon thereafter was married to Levi. They live here at the station. The other adult who was baptised was previously named Unomawise (i.e. "she with the knob-kerry") but in baptism received the name Adina. She is the sister of a girl who ran away from here one night, from her boyfriend and baptismal instruction, to become the second wife of Paul Mkonto's son. It was naturally very depressing to discover her double duplicity against her fiancé and her teacher, but what can one say? I must say that I was not very disappointed, because I did not have the slightest faith in her statement that she wished to become a Christian. But when one cannot point to any obvious sin, one must instruct them in the hope that sooner or later God's Word, like the sharp sword, will bring about a decision. Even this case, however, has had to serve the promotion of the Kingdom of God. Paul's real wife, Martha, was driven to serious and persistent prayer by his polygamy. Unomawise, who lives next to her, noticed this, and it made such an impression on her that despite her father's beatings and resistance she went to Steenberg's station<sup>93</sup> in order to learn and become a Christian. Since it was a matter she had very much at heart she learnt very fast to read well. She had Luther's *Small Catechism* at her fingertips, and she understood the plan of salvation when, as I mentioned, she was admitted to the congregation and got the name Adina at night, has now returned without marrying Paul. She came and confessed her sin. She did not know what had been the matter with her; it could only have been a result of her spiritual death. She has asked to be allowed to participate in baptismal instruction again. Time will tell whether she is more serious this time....

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<sup>93</sup> Ole Sigbjørnsen Steenberg (1834-1906) was sent to Natal by the NMS in 1865. Until 1880 he served as an assistant, chiefly as a printer at Umpumulo. After his ordination in 1880, he administered the NMS stations at Mfule and Mahlabatini.

The congregation has attended worship faithfully during the past six months too, and even the heathens who live nearby have come regularly to our Christmas services on all three days.<sup>94</sup>

Simon and Kosi<sup>95</sup> have continued to go out and preach every Sunday. Simon goes to Timoni's people, and Kosi goes to people who live near the kraal that was once offered to the Society for sale. The kraal has now been sold to the Hermannsburg Mission, which will soon send a missionary there. I have had a building constructed there. It serves as a meeting-house on Sundays, so this work has not been wasted, either. Like all other missionary endeavours, their activity cannot be judged by its immediately visible fruits. I cannot point to any visible results of Kosi's work. Amongst the people to whom Simon has preached, one family has decided to become Christians, but I do not know how that will come to pass. They have expressed a desire to move to the station so that both the adults and their children could be taught more steadily and to avoid interference by their relatives and neighbours. I do not like that suggestion. I would prefer to see them form the core of a congregation amongst the people where they now live. That would be progress, if it could be done. They probably feel their great weakness, however, and it is hardly surprising that they are seeking permissible and perhaps still necessary fixed points in their lives. They live about fourteen kilometres from here....



*Gundvall Gundersen (1835-1902), who had arrived in Zululand in 1865, directed work at the Mahlabatini station from 1874 until 1878. He became acquainted with Cetshwayo during those years. His comments on intra-Zulu violence in 1876 suggest that Cetshwayo's control of his men was far from complete at that time. They also indicate that the Zulu king was then willing to take measures to remain on friendly terms with the missionaries in his realm. (Source: NMS Archives, box 133, folder 10)*

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<sup>94</sup> According to Norwegian tradition, Christmas services were held on 24, 25, and 26 December.

<sup>95</sup> Simon and Kosi were two unordained Zulu evangelists attached to the large station at Umpumulo.

Mahlabatini

19 June 1876

... One day last July Brother Skaar<sup>96</sup> and I went to tell the king that I would soon go to Emzinyati to visit a kraal that had been offered for sale to the mission and, if possible, to borrow a horse. As soon as the king heard that I would be travelling that long way without a wagon or my wife, he ordered a servant to accompany me to a chief, Usihajo, and to tell him that he was to get two dependable horses. Usihajo, who wanted to make a profit on the horses, replied that none of the king's horses was good to ride. The king became angry at him because of that, so he had to relent and call for a horse, but he brought such a sorry one that he owned and demanded so much for it that I was happy to have a good reason for refusing it and telling the king about the matter. Then a servant came to summon me a few days before I left. The king sent me to Uganze, where I received a magnificent horse.

That day I was summoned to the king to examine a lady-in-waiting on whom I had helped to operate for a large growth under her left breast a few days earlier. The chief surgeon was Usihajo, as I did not want to bear the responsibility if anything went wrong. She was the king's favourite girl. I was responsible for the sutures, however, and everything went very well. During the operation I had warned Usihajo not to cut holes between the ribs, which nearly happened. When the king was told about this he praised my caution but added in all sincerity that there would not have been any danger because the heart is right up under the throat, and a spear can therefore strike the lower part of the chest without threatening the life of the person, but if it strikes high in the chest or in the stomach death will result. This is the Zulus' belief about the location of the heart. Hence, when one is happy about something one's heart climbs right up into the throat, and gratitude is expressed by pointing to how high in the throat one's heart has climbed. Fear and

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<sup>96</sup> Knud Ellingsen Skaar (1837-?) had graduated from the NMS training school in Stavanger in 1868 and was serving as an unordained assistant at Mahlalatini.

anxiety, on the other hand, cause it to sink and get lost in great fear, anxiety, and grief, as the Zulu says.

On 3 August I brought my family up to the Skaars,<sup>97</sup> with whom they were to stay while I was away. The journey took me twenty days, and upon returning home I was completely spent, because both Brother Oftebro and I had been indisposed on the entire journey. At home I found my wife well, thank God, and my boys, who had watched the old station, in the best of health. They had just eaten and slept the whole time, so they looked completely satisfied. On 25 August I went over to the king to thank him and Uganze for the horse, which I praised. The king was happy that it had carried me so well. Immediately after our journey the king asked whether we had seen Leisegang and whether he would come soon. The king asked us to help him with the wagon, so that his sister, who was ill, could be brought to his residence. I promised to do so because it was not more than a day's journey, but with this freight it took five days. The king finally wanted either Skaar or me to accompany the wagon, but both of us were prevented from doing so. Finally, after a lot of discussion, he sent her with my driver and a group of men. Not long thereafter the king again asked about Leisegang's coming, and I could tell him that Brother Leisegang did not wish to come, but was looking for a place in Natal instead. As I did not know who would be coming to stay here, he asked, "Could you not stay here with us and build? We know you, and we do not want a new teacher. You may stay wherever you wish, either at Skaar's new place or where you already are. Could you not get a different teacher to stay and build at the kraal at Umbonambi? We want you to build here with us". A flock of servants joined in and repeated the king's words to me. I replied, "I cannot say anything about it today, but I shall write about it to the other teachers. We are all in one church and do not act according to our own will, but that of all".

At the beginning of November we were up at the Skaars, I to help him build the little schoolhouse in which we have lived since the beginning of the year, and my wife to help Mrs Skaar alter the large royal robe which the king had received at his coronation but had not

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<sup>97</sup> Skaar and his wife were then at an out-station near Mahlabatini.

even thanked us for because it did not have sleeves. Now it had to be cut anew so that sleeves of great width could be added. When we delivered it to him in the middle of last month, he thanked us profusely and praised the talents of the white women, saying that we must convey his gratitude to our wives. Later he sent each of them a cow and a calf. This robe required a lot of work. I do not know how many times it was returned for alterations, small things which he thought of one by one but which caused a lot of toil. This gave us a grand opportunity to remind the king of the request I had made of him earlier, namely to send our wives two girls who could help them with the children, for otherwise it would not have been possible for them to help him. When I asked him about girls, he replied that the country was quite dry (figuratively) and that he had none, or rather "we have none", as even the Zulu king usually speaks in the royal plural. He thought I wanted mature girls, but when I immediately understood this I said that I meant small girls. He did not say anything, which is more or less a "yes" from the king. A servant called to my attention that I ought to have thanked the king for this, because he "was silent and gave his assent". I forgot that and other things His Majesty spoke about, and on that occasion, as on others, I had the opportunity to speak a little about the Word of God....

At the end of November and the beginning of December Kyllingstad's family visited us for a fortnight because the river prevented them from returning home. They were here for the Lord's Supper and got the wagon repaired somewhat. The people then began to stream together for the little royal festival, whereupon the fights began again. I soon had plenty to do with the beaten wretches. We heard every day that two regiments that fought last year wanted to fight to the death this year, and that one or two additional regiments would help to crush the mighty Ukandempunfu. When I reminded them of the king's decree against fighting, they said, "We do it anyway. He cannot stop us". When we visited the king a few days before the little festival was over, I broached the matter and let him know what had been said, hoping that he could prevent the fights. He listened attentively and promised to stop those that took place at the festival so that it would not, as he put it, be defiled with blood. But a few days later the younger regiment in its enthusiasm wanted to salute the king, who came home from the festival



kraal, Nodwengu, and knocked down an overweight chief. The men of his age were so insulted by this that they grasped their sticks and wanted to kill these youths. The king immediately sent a message that those boys should flee, but they were too proud for that. They came off second-best. Several were killed and many were maimed....

On 12 January the king sent Brother Skaar and me the two girls I mentioned, and we immediately went to thank him with some small things. Brother Skaar brought a flannel blanked and I a hat and a razor. We did not get to talk with him but were informed that if we returned in five days he would speak with us privately. I moved my family and the most necessary things up to the Skaars at the new schoolhouse, however, because I had to begin my journey to Maritzburg immediately. Mr Stewart<sup>98</sup> stayed at the old station until the festival was over, attended to the sick, and preached to them and the fur-traders whom he called together on Sundays. They were satisfied after one time and did not come back. On 17 January we went to the king, who summoned us into his bedroom in the house. He sleeps royally, as the Bible says about David, in the afternoon but, because of fear, seldom at night. He shook our hands vigorously and expressed joy at seeing us, just like an old brother. We expressed our gratitude and apologised for our modest gifts. He replied that no thanks were due him, apologised that we had had to wait so long for the girls, and assured us that he would never be able to thank us enough for all the help we gave him and his people. The king appeared to be very moved during all this and complained about the disobedience of his people. They did not obey his laws or heed his threats regarding fighting, and he did not know what to do with those who had been responsible for his people being killed. He said he would find out who the perpetrators were, and see whether by killing them the others would be intimidated. The king had announced that if any people started to fight again they would be killed. I replied that we viewed with horror how lawlessness, disobedience, and a lack of respect for one's superiors were increasing, and that we knew that this was a sign of a

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<sup>98</sup> Stewart, a Scottish acquaintance of some of the Norwegian missionaries, crops up from time to time in their correspondence. Unfortunately, little can be discerned about his identity from these documents.

people's decline, and that the same thing happened wherever the Word of God was not accepted: "There is nothing but the Word of God that can save you and your people. It teaches the child to fear, respect, and love its parents and God and thus all its superiors, and that brings a blessing to this life and that to come. God has long waited in grace for you and your people, and many pray with us to God for your salvation". He sighed several times and replied that they (the people) stubbornly resisted the truth: "We hear it, but...." I replied, "Yes, the people are waiting for you, and you for the people, and in that way you hinder each other and are afraid of each other. It is a dilemma from Satan. But God is calling each and every one of you and will do so himself when you want him to". He asked if Jesus was the Son of God, giving me a new opportunity to speak at length about the wonderful Christmas story. We said that it was now New Year and that we Christians greet each other with "Happy New Year", which we also wished him and his people. In truth, however, a new and good year could come only when they accepted the Word, which we had now told him. We talked with him for more than an hour. He was attentive and bade us a friendly farewell. We could talk with him that way in private, but in the presence of servants and other people he becomes afraid and either remains silent or makes only small talk....



*Knud Ellingsen Skaar (1837-?), who had graduated from the NMS school in Stavanger in 1868, served as an unordained assistant at Mahlabatini from 1869 until 1877. He expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of construction at the station and blamed the Zulus' lack of energy for it. (Source NMS Archives, box 133, folder 10)*

Mahlabatini

January 1876

Although I have little to report, I shall nevertheless take pen in hand and tell you what we have done and how we have lived during the past year. As far as our activities are concerned, we have been sufficiently busy every day from morning until evening constructing buildings and doing other work that is necessary at a station like this

one, where everything must start at the beginning. To be busy with such tasks is a blessing out here in this heathen wilderness amongst people who are so unappealing as the Zulus. These poor people do not know the blessing of labour. All work is a burden to them, a burden they say is so heavy that it shortens their lives. They want to live for a long time and want to convince us that death has no power over them. When it nevertheless comes, it is because some sorcerer or other put it around their necks. For the believer, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain".<sup>99</sup> He knows that it is fitting to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow. He is therefore industrious in his work and does it with joy, because God has given it to him, and when death comes it is not because he has worked himself to death, but because God is bringing him home, where it is good to be....

You are probably expecting a report that the moving of the station, which was discussed long ago, has been completed. Unfortunately, it has not gone as fast as you perhaps expected and as I too thought it would go. When one considers doing something with the help of the natives, one must be satisfied with having it done at a snail's pace. At the moment it is not easy to get enough help, either people who can do something or those who only know how to eat and sleep. Both are too good to work. During the last months of last year we managed to take down a couple of the brick buildings at the old station and move them here. We got so many bricks from them that we were able to build a little schoolhouse here. (The bricks had not been burnt, so many were wasted.) The building is eight metres long and four metres wide, and when Pastor Gundersen wanted to move up here a kitchen and dining room had to be built at one end. This is about three metres wide and five metres long, divided in the middle. Besides this, a kind of wagon shed, a house for the boys, and a new cattle pen have been built. At the beginning of the summer I had a water ditch about 600 paces long dug. This is a great benefit here, where it is so dry. I hope that in time we will have an attractive station, for all kinds of trees do well here.

We have had about four native servants. Two of them have always been servants. For part of the year we also had a couple girls in our

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<sup>99</sup> Philippians 1:21.

service. A chief who is our neighbour placed one of them here to be healed, for she had a bad knee. But the girl became interested in the Bible, and wanted to be baptised, so he took her away from us.

In the month of June, after being home for several years, we had the pleasure of going to Durban by ox wagon and buying necessities. When we returned home we learnt that the conference<sup>100</sup> was to be held at Mahlabatini. This change made us happy, for it enabled us to attend and rejoice with the joyful. And indeed we had days of joy, for it is good when brothers live together in unity. Our stay at the old station ended with the conference. Immediately thereafter we moved here, and since then we have lived here steadily and like it quite well.

As far as health is concerned, I have been healthy all the time I have been here, but my wife was indisposed during the last months of the old year and at the beginning of this one. Strict measures involving a change of climates and adhering to a strict diet had to be taken, and they helped. She made a journey to Mfule, where she stayed with the Kyllingstads for six weeks. Since then she has improved slowly but steadily, although she is not yet well. How bad we poor people out here are when illness strikes! But praise God! He has been close, and he is a helper in times of fear. We have found him to be very great.

Pastor Gundersen and his family moved up here in the middle of January. He then began to use the schoolhouse mentioned earlier. We could then look forward to razing and moving up here the two remaining buildings at the site of the old station. Many unforeseen hindrances, however, have done their part to prevent anything from being done. We do not have as good plots as we had at the old station.

... Much seems to indicate that a change must take place here. The bonds are being tightened in every direction. The Dutch farmers and the English are beginning to speak more openly about deciding to whom the land is actually going to belong.<sup>101</sup> In March we seemed to be on the

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<sup>100</sup> Skaar is referring to the annual conference for NMS personnel in Natal and Zululand, which had regained its initial significance after Bishop Schreuder's resignation from the NMS.

<sup>101</sup> Skaar is referring to tensions between Natal and the South African Republic in which Shepstone effectively used Cetshwayo as a *de facto* ally, having convinced him that the South African Republic intended

brink of war. In any case that is what the Zulus believed. "The farmers are coming", they said. But now a decision will soon be made regarding the border between the Zulus and the farmers, and it depends on how that goes. The Zulus are not afraid. They are so sure of victory over the farmers that they are already singing long songs of praise about their exploits. The king told me in March that the Zulus will fight the farmers for only one day; that will be enough. The Zulus would lay all the farmers' soldiers, horses, wagons, etc. in a pile, for the Zulus were as thick as grass and, moreover, like wild animals. But destruction can come quickly to the Zulus, much more quickly than any Zulu believes. Besides, the Zulus do not seem to be holding the fort as redoubtably as before. Many of those who were most prejudiced against anything new have been swept away, and those who remain on the field of battle wanting to defend the ruined customs their forefathers handed down to them have dull weapons. Their fortifications are not being improved; instead, they are decaying day by day. If there were religious freedom in this country, many would certainly come over to our side. Religious freedom is lacking, however, and when it is lacking amongst people like the Zulus, who swagger about being "the people", more than mere human power is required [for a Zulu] to break through the wall and declare himself to be a believer, for this is a major scandal at present. If one were to judge by external appearances, no great change for the better has taken place here. Nevertheless, change is taking place. Life is moving here. At present the Zulus are living as in Noah's time: they eat, drink, marry, etc.; they live each day happily. At the beginning of this year an entire regiment of soldiers were ordered to marry, and in addition all the old princesses are marrying. In brief, everything is a whirl of pleasures. But it is impossible for a people who have completely forgotten their God to endure. Here is the prince of darkness' regiment from first to last. God pity the Zulus soon, for Christ's sake!

The king is still favourably disposed towards us, as are his chiefs. Indeed, I can happily say that the king has been "kinder" to us now than before, because at the end of last year he gave us a girl to help my wife. Admittedly, the girl ran away, for she was not a Zulu but a Tonga,

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to annex parts of Zululand.

but the king has promised us another in her place. One thing is certain: he who places his trust in the Lord shall not be disappointed at all. We want to rely on the Lord and live in hope of better times, and in this offered the Norwegian advice on how to reach more Zulus with the Gospel. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 5)

Mahlabatini

15 January 1877

... In April of last year I went over to Undi and found the king very friendly. He asked where I had been during the long period when he had not seen me. He knew that we had been in Natal and asked whether we had seen Mr. Shepstone, criticising him and the other whites for not allowing him to wage war.<sup>102</sup> I replied that it was good for his country to be at peace and that we prayed to God for that and thanked him for peace. When the king heard that we had had our conference at Empangeni and asked what we had done at it, I told him about the steering committee's letter concerning Christian Oftebro<sup>103</sup> and how we had answered it. He seemed to be very satisfied. I told him that we had asked the church in Norway to send more missionaries here, in the belief that the king did not have anything against it. For if we had understood the king correctly, he liked the missionaries, and we had the impression that the king had not meant seriously what he had once said about not allowing more missionaries to enter the country or new stations to be built. The king replied, "You are right, teacher. We like the teachers. We are not difficult when we are treated decently or asked nicely". He then asked me whether we had thought about places for new stations. I answered that we had spoken about the Umbetwa tribe and Upukunjovi. The king asked how we were faring at the site for the new station. I

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<sup>102</sup> While Gundersen wrote, Shepstone's force was marching towards Pretoria to annex the South African Republic. Shepstone had used Cetshwayo's *impis* as a treat against that country but apparently had little desire to or saw any purpose in inducing Cetshwayo to enter the conflict.

<sup>103</sup> C. Oftebro (1842-1888) served his uncle, Ommund Oftebro, as an assistant at Eshowe from 1865 until 1867. He returned to Zululand as a medical missionary in 1876.

answered, "The site is a more comfortable place to live; there are possibilities for sowing and planting, and the climate is colder. But for the work we have come to do it is not better, because we do not have so many people to talk with about God's Word, and no-one comes on Sundays. After I had spoken with him for a while about God's Word, the king began to feel sorry for those of us who were stationed here amongst important people who did not have ears to hear the Word. The people [here] thought only about finishing their service to the king in order to go home to their women. It was better at those stations that lay scattered around the country away from the royal kraal [said Cetshwayo], where the neighbours surrounding the stations could come and hear. They had their women with them, or, as he put it, the women have not turned their backs on them. When we had neighbours at the new place and could gather a congregation, we would be happier, but that was difficult here where there were only important people whose heads were full of the country's history and sagas and therefore did not have ears for other things. I replied, "Precisely the important people ought to hear the important truth, and as far as hearing and understanding what we preach are concerned, no-one understands us better than the king himself, and after him his important people, if they would only allow themselves to be convinced. Only then will they be able to govern and counsel the people well, for nothing but the Word of God could truly make them good and happy". The king answered with a sign and said "yebo" (i.e. yes). I said, "Since the people will not come to us, I want to visit the big kraals and preach the Word". The king replied, "Yes, then it will be possible to assemble them and they will hear, for they do not want to travel that long way up to you".

At the beginning of May, on the third Sunday after Easter, Brother Skaar and I were summoned to the king to help a girl who had got a bone in her throat. After treating her we used the opportunity to announce that it was Sunday and we wanted to preach at the royal kraal. The servants protested, but the king ordered them to call the people to worship, and the king himself sat and listened attentively to John 3:16ff, which I explicated briefly and placed on the hearts of those assembled. After the sermon we had a lengthy conversation with the king and his servants. From history and the Word of God I produced evidence that

there was punishment for those who despise the Word and blessings for those who accept it. We went home happy.

In October I ran out of food for my boys, a flock of eight, ten, twelve, or even fourteen whom I have had here off and on, so I had to go out and buy food. Before leaving I accompanied a young man from Natal to the king, who just then was being visited by three Netherlanders concerning the disputed territory.<sup>104</sup> I wanted to hear how the matter stood, because if war was in sight there was little point in travelling to get food. We were immediately granted an audience, and the king said that my situation as a widower with small children made him very sad. He thought God had treated me severely and smiled when I told him that I could honestly thank God in my grief for what he had done to me. In astonishment the king repeated my words to his servants. He asked me to pray for rain for his dry country. I reminded him of our conversation concerning it last year and that we always prayed that good would befall him and his people, but that the Lord had to punish when his Word was despised. I told him the story of Elijah and King Ahab.<sup>105</sup> He listened very attentively and repeated the main contents to his servants. When I asked about the matter with the Boers, he told me how it stood, namely that either they would have to admit that he was right in claiming that the land belonged to him and leave part of it or they would have to take it from him by force. That is how the matter still stands. These three emissaries only managed to ascertain that warfare will not begin soon on the part of the king. The Boers have their hands full with that war they have begun with a tribe farther north, which has made it hot enough for the Boers for several months.<sup>106</sup> No-one knows whether it will end in great damage to and misfortune for the Boers. If the king here were to attack them on their flank now, it would be the ruin of the Boers unless they got help from other whites.

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<sup>104</sup> Gundersen is referring to representatives of the South African Republic and negotiations between them and Cetshwayo regarding the north-western part of Zululand, which had been the site of armed conflict between those two countries.

<sup>105</sup> I Kings 18.

<sup>106</sup> In 1876 the South African Republic had unsuccessfully waged war against the Bapedi tribe of the eastern Transvaal.



We also spoke with those three Boers, and they seemed satisfied with being able to tell us that there would be peace with the Zulus for a while....

## CHAPTER III

### THE ERA OF THE ANGLO-ZULU WAR

#### Introduction

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and related events preceding and following it provide a lucid example of how the secular history of Southern Africa exercised great influence on the course of missionary endeavours in the region.<sup>1</sup> That bloody conflagration was not only a milestone but also a turning point in efforts to evangelise the Zulus, one whose outcome drastically reduced the strength of indigenous resistance to the Gospel and thus indirectly contributed to a subsequent sharp rise in the number of conversions to Christianity. Missionary correspondence relating to the events surrounding the war casts additional light on the history of Christian missions by showing how missionaries inadvertently became entwined in political and diplomatic affairs. The Norwegian correspondence from Natal and Zululand from the mid-1840s until the mid-1870s contain numerous examples of how missionaries brought to the Zulus a religion intimately linked to European civilisation. Their letters from the years 1877-1880 show how their missionary efforts became closely tied to British imperialism although, it should be emphasised, that was never the intention of the Norwegians in question.

Tensions between Zululand and Natal mounted in the second half of 1870s while the Norwegian missionaries on both sides of the Tugela River were harvesting increasing if still very modest and inconsistent fruits of their labours but were simultaneously experiencing a waxing number of frustrations. The political situation in Zululand during the 1870s boded ill for missionaries in general. When Cetshwayo was crowned in 1873, he declared them *personae non gratae* in his kingdom, a move which prompted Schreuder to lament that "our Zulu mission is in reality now dissolved, and as far as the practical arrangements are concerned it has

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<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Zulu War has been the subject of a large number of books and other scholarly inquiries. Donald R. Morris, *The Washing of the Spears* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1965) remains a generally reliable and comprehensive survey. For more recent interpretations, see Andrew Duminy and Charles Ballard (eds.), *The Anglo-Zulu War: New Perspectives* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1981).

already entered the first stage of its dissolution".<sup>2</sup> His pessimistic prognostication was exaggerated, however. Natal's Secretary for Native Affairs, Theophilus Shepstone, managed to arrange a compromise with Cetshwayo. He elicited from the Zulu monarch a promise to allow those missionaries who were already in Zululand to stay, although Cetshwayo nevertheless declared it illegal for his subjects to convert to Christianity without his permission.

The missionaries were naturally displeased with this decree but continued to proclaim the Gospel unhindered. No Norwegian appears to have been directly hindered in his work or felt threatened until 1877. To some of the missionaries, however, it seemed by the mid-1870s that tensions were obliquely affecting their work. Johannes Kyllingstad, for example, wrote from Mfule in 1875 that "political unrest" lay behind the low level of attendance at his services and the difficulty he had experienced in finding Zulus who were willing to work at his station.<sup>3</sup> This reaction may have been an exception or an incorrect perception. In any case, conversions continued to occur from time to time, although the numbers remained small. At all the stations which the NMS operated in Southern Africa, there were only fifteen adult baptisms during the triennium 1873-1875, and no fewer than eleven of these took place at Umpumulo, outside Cetshwayo's dominion.<sup>4</sup> "If there were freedom of religion in this country", wrote Knud Skaar from Mahlabatini in Zululand in 1876, "many would certainly convert to our side".<sup>5</sup> That assertion was not an empirical one, of course, but it indicates that shortly before the wave of persecution which preceded the outbreak of war some missionaries believed that the opposition of Cetshwayo's government to their work was impeding their progress. At the same time, however, it

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<sup>2</sup> NMS Archives, box 132, folder 13, H. Schreuder (Ntumeni) to NMS, 7 January 1873.

<sup>3</sup> *Det Norske Missionsselskabs 33de Aarsberetning (1874-1875)* (Stavanger: Det Norske Missionsselskab, 1875), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> *Det Norske Missionsselskabs 34de Aarsberetning (1875-1876)* (Stavanger: Det Norske Missionsselskab, 1876), p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> NMS Archives, box 133, folder 10, K. Skaar (Mahlabatini) to NMS, January 1876.

should be recalled that Cetshwayo at times sought to maintain cordial relations with those missionaries who had stations near his royal kraal and even advised them how to reach more of his subjects. In short, relations between the Zulu government and the Norwegian missionaries before the outbreak of war cannot be expressed in any one succinct formula.

The persecution of converts which began in 1877 forced the missionaries to view their situation much more critically and eventually led them into a partisan position in the conflict between the British and Cetshwayo's regime. Tensions mounted, though not in a straight line, over a period of approximately two years. Viewing events in Zululand retrospectively, NMS Superintendent Ommund Oftebro wrote metaphorically in 1880 that "the storm clouds began to gather in 1876, it began to thunder in 1877, and by the end of 1878 it had begun to pour down". Indeed, the first year of that fateful triennium was a promising one for the NMS. At Oftebro's own station, Eshowe, seven adults had been baptised in 1876.<sup>6</sup> Within a few months, though, the little bubble of hope which this increase in the number of converts had created burst. In March 1877 a recently baptised man named Umakamuzela, who had received instruction in Christianity at the Eshowe station, was killed by Zulus who the Norwegians believed were Cetshwayo's executioners. His survivors fled across the Tugela to Natal; other Zulu Christians at Eshowe and elsewhere feared for their lives. Several other Zulu converts were also executed during 1877.<sup>7</sup> Some of the missionaries and their families also evacuated Zululand that year.

Fearing for their own safety and the continuation of their mission in Zululand, the men of the NMS turned to the British colonial authorities in Natal for assistance. Their appeals to a foreign power seem strange at first glance and in fact rest on a curious turn of history a few years

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<sup>6</sup> *Det Norske Missionsselskabs 37te Aarsberetning* (Stavanger: Det Norske Missionsselskab, 1880), p. 21.

<sup>7</sup> For a partial exoneration of Cetshwayo, see Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1978), pp. 84-85. As will be from some of the documents in the present chapter, however, the Norwegian missionaries would not have agreed with Etherington.

earlier. In 1873, when Zululand was embroiled in a border dispute with the South African Republic, the government of the former country requested Theophilus Shepstone, then Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal, to instal Cetshwayo as king and establish an undefined "unity" between Natal and Zululand. This move was apparently made to solicit a *de facto* alliance against encroachments by the South African Republic. Shepstone did in fact go to Zululand in August 1873 and participate in the coronation of Cetshwayo. This Natal official also convinced the Zulu Council to promulgate new laws which *inter alia* forbade capricious bloodshed and limited the use of the death penalty in Zululand.<sup>8</sup>

To the Norwegian missionaries, the violent religious persecution which began in 1877 was a clear violation of these laws. At their annual conference in July 1877, therefore, the NMS men dispatched Ommund Oftebro and Ole Stavem to Pietermaritzburg to plead their case before Shepstone. As he was not then in the colonial capital, they spoke instead with Lieutenant-Governor Henry Bulwer (1836-1914), who suggested that they return to Zululand, advice which they voted unanimously to follow. Schreuder also conferred with Bulwer in 1877 and reported that the lieutenant-governor had washed his hands of the matter, refusing to take seriously the execution of Zulu converts, and had refused to do anything to quell violence in Zululand.

The persecution of Christians continued there in 1878. When the NMS missionaries held their annual conference at Mahlabatini in March, they sent Stavem and Dr Christian Oftebro to Pretoria to speak with Shepstone, who was serving as administrator of the recently annexed Transvaal. He informed them that war had become inevitable and advised them to leave Zululand as soon as possible. They did so, as did most of their counterparts in other missionary societies well before the end of 1878. The Norwegians and their families spent the balance of that year and the greater part of 1879 at various places in Natal.

Schreuder remained longer than any other Norwegian missionary in Zululand, where one of his stations, Ntumeni, was located, the other being

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<sup>8</sup> For a succinct synopsis of these events, see Edgar H. Brooks and Colin de B. Webb, *A History of Natal* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1965), pp. 96-98.

at Untunjambili in Natal. He left Ntumeni in November 1878, however, and later that month heeded Sir Bartle Frere's request to meet him in Pietermaritzburg. That meeting, which Bulwer and Frederic Augustus Thesinger, Lord Chelmsford (1827-1905) also attended, "far exceeded the [the] expectations" of the Norwegian bishop. The British briefed Schreuder on their plans for Zululand, giving him what he called "information no other outsider has yet been told". They also assured him, in Schreuder's words, that "the interests of missions would be taken into consideration with regard to various matters". In return, Schreuder agreed to provide the British with a detailed written account of his missionary work.<sup>9</sup> The co-operative Norwegian remained in Natal until the closing weeks of the war, spending most of his time at Untunjambili.

Unlike his counterparts in the NMS, Schreuder performed certain services for the British immediately before and during the war. Shortly after meeting Frere *et alia* in Pietermaritzburg, he sent Cetshwayo a message urging him to send a delegation of his chiefs to the Tugela to negotiate with the British. That parley took place on 11 December and ended when the Zulu delegates were given Frere's ultimatum to deliver to Cetshwayo. Eleven days later Schreuder, acting in the interests of his mission and not those of the British, sent a written message to the Zulu monarch asking him to ensure the security of the station at Ntumeni. Cetshwayo replied that it would be guarded by reliable men and stated that he did not oppose the terms of the ultimatum; indeed, he requested a conference with Frere and Shepstone.<sup>10</sup>

During their approximately twelve months in Natalian exile, the Norwegian missionaries from Zululand frequently expressed fears, most of them well-grounded, that their stations would be damaged or destroyed in the war. Only Ntumeni escaped virtually unscathed. Besides worrying about their stations, the Norwegians complained about the slow pace of progress the British were making as month followed month and no end was in sight. On the other hand, some expressed a belief that the British

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<sup>9</sup> H. Schreuder (Untunjambili) to J.J. Tandberg, 27 November 1878, in *Missionsblad*, III (February 1879), pp. 13-15.

<sup>10</sup> H. Schreuder (Untunjambili) to Mission Committee, 14 August 1879, in *Missionsblad*, III (March 1879), pp. 29-35.

army was an instrument of God's wrath. Economic exigencies were also felt. The war fuelled inflation which was not met by a concomitant rise in stipends from Norway. On at least two occasions, however, Frere gave Schreuder considerable quantities of maize to feed his congregation at Untunjambili, which had been swelled by an influx of refugees from Ntumeni.<sup>11</sup> All in all, the months of the war were a time of hardship and anxiety for the Norwegian missionaries.

Schreuder's involvement in the war took a dramatic turn after Cetshwayo's army had suffered a decisive defeat at Ulundi in July and the end of hostilities seemed at hand. Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913), who had succeeded the sympathetic Frere and held the title "High Commissioner for South-Eastern Africa", asked the Norwegian bishop to give him "able advice and counsel" in "settling matters finally with the Zulu people".<sup>12</sup> Schreuder agreed to assist the British, presumably because he believed that by doing so he could influence an eventual settlement that would establish more favourable circumstances for missionary work - as indeed Frere had promised him nearly a year earlier. Schreuder rode a British horse to Wolseley's camp at Emtongweni and met the British general there. The two strong-willed men soon fell out with one another, however, when it became apparent that Wolseley had little regard for missions and preferred to listen to the advice of John Robert Dunn (1833-1895), the infamous white polygamist who had lived amongst the Zulus for many years but who was rewarded for being an informer for the British during the war and given a chieftaindom when defeated Zululand was dissected. Disillusioned with Wolseley and disappointed by his failure to influence British post-war policy in Zululand, Schreuder left to prepare the resumption of his missionary work north of the Tugela. Wolseley was elated to see the Norwegian leave and wrote harsh words about him in his journal:

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<sup>11</sup> H. Schreuder (Untunjambili) to siblings, 10 January 1879, in *Missionsblad*, III (April 1879), p. 47, and H. Schreuder (Untunjambili) to J.J. Tandberg, April 1879, in *Missionsblad*, III (July 1879), p. 102.

<sup>12</sup> H. Schreuder (Untunjambili) to Mission Committee, 24 September 1879, in *Missionsblad*, III (December 1879), p. 176.

I am glad to get rid of him; he was of no use and I distrusted his judgement. He was very anxious that I should give him some guarantee about his land - 15 000 acres - at Entumeni, which he says Panda gave him & which Cetewayo afterwards acknowledged as his. I told him I could do nothing in the matter as land could not be alienated from the Zulus.<sup>13</sup>

The once lofty hopes of the Norwegian missionaries for a favourable post-war settlement of Zululand were dashed when Wolseley announced the terms of his ill-conceived scheme for that defeated kingdom in September 1879. In brief, it involved the dismemberment of the Zulu kingdom, which was divided into thirteen chiefdoms, each headed by a chief whom the British appointed. To ensure further still the security of Natal, Wolseley named Dunn chief of the largest chiefdom, which bordered on Natal. This was of great significance both to the Schreuder Mission and the NMS, for both had stations in it and the personnel of both were on poor terms with Dunn, as indeed were many other whites. Unbeknown to most of the Norwegians, Wolseley did not expect his settlement to last long. As he confided to Schreuder a few weeks before it was announced, "these small states will wage war internally and destroy each other like the Vulkany [*sic*] cats so we will be rid of them".<sup>14</sup>

Complicating matters, on 8 October 1879 Dunn published a list of "Conditions" which missionaries would have to meet if they were to resume their activities in his chiefdom:

1. He shall acknowledge my authority as Chief.
2. He shall acknowledge that he has no personal claim or title to land within the territory.
3. The Schools to be established on the Mission Stations shall be founded on the principle of an ordinary plain English School; both the Zulu

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<sup>13</sup> Adrian Preston (ed.), *The South African Journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley, 1879-1880* (Cape Town: A.A. Balkema, 1973), pp. 81-82, 98.

<sup>14</sup> H. Schreuder (Ntumeni) to Mission Committee, 24 November 1879, in *Missionsblad*, IV (April 1880), p. 59. Wolseley had presumably said "Kilkenny cats". This helps to explain why, in the words of Brookes and Webb, "the Natalians called the thirteen chiefs the 'Kilkenny cats'"; see *A History of Natal*, p. 148.



and the English Languages being taught, and no undue attention being given to accomplishments such as music, &c.

4. That any natives so inclined shall be taught some trade.

5. That no native shall be allowed to remove from any kraal to settle on a Mission Station without my consent.

6. That it be distinctly understood that no native becomes exempt from his tribal duties to his Chief by residing on a Mission Station.

7. That any native desirous of residing on any Mission Station shall be bound to erect a Dwelling House in European style.

8. That every encouragement be given to industrial pursuits, so as in time, to make the Stations self-supporting.

10. [sic] That the Stations shall not be allowed to make Trading Stations for dealing in Cattle for profit.<sup>15</sup>

The Norwegian missionaries protested vehemently against Dunn's "Conditions". Both Schreuder and Ommund Oftebro, the NMS superintendent, pleaded their cases in person before the white chief. Christian Oftebro, the nephew of the superintendent, went to Durban to discuss the missionaries' situation with George Cato (1814-1893), the consul for Norway and Sweden. Cato wrote to the *Natal Mercury* to protest against this possible exclusion from Zululand and urged the Norwegians simply to reject Dunn's terms.

Before the end of the year it became clear that their fears were exaggerated. Dunn did not modify his "Conditions", but he nevertheless allowed missionaries to resume their activities within his chiefdom. Despite their initial grouching, the Norwegians were not significantly restricted in "Dunn'sland", as the territory was known. Dunn's insistence that missionaries provide vocational training was one target of the Norwegians' attacks on his rule, but precisely that form of social ministry became a fixture in their missionary work, one which endured long after Dunn had departed from the scene.

Elsewhere in Zululand most of the Norwegian missionaries had little trouble in returning to their stations, although in nearly every case the buildings had been damaged during the war. Only Karl Larsen Titlestad was prevented from taking up his work at his former station, in this case

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<sup>15</sup> NMS Archives, box 135A, "Conditions".

Emzinyati. It lay in a territory which the British gave to a Zulu-speaking Basuto chief named Hlubi. Titlestad requested him to permit a resumption of NMS work at Emzinyati but received an unconditionally negative reply. The neophyte ruler pointed out that Anglican missionaries had already been promised permission to work in his territory. Hlubi claimed to fear the strife which denominational pluralism might bring.<sup>16</sup> The NMS station at Emzinyati thus became the only permanent Norwegian institutional casualty of the Anglo-Zulu War.

### Correspondence

*Cetshwayo's relationship to the missionary endeavours in his kingdom has never been satisfactorily described and can probably not be reduced to a simple, rational formula. On the one hand, there is evidence of a willingness to remain on cordial terms with Ommund Oftebro and some of the other missionaries who resided near the royal kraals. On the other hand, it appears that even their very modest success in effecting conversions in the late 1870s began to irk Cetshwayo, who may have perceived these conversions as potential threats to his position and the stability of his kingdom, caught as it was between British expansionism from Natal and border disputes with the South African Republic. This may explain in part why a few converts were executed in 1877, allegedly on orders from Cetshwayo. At the time Oftebro foresaw a violent climax to the impending struggle but believed that ultimately it would crush Zulu resistance to the Gospel. The Norwegian missionaries did not regard themselves as a vanguard of British imperialism, of course, but these comments by Oftebro foreshadowed their later support of the invasion of Zululand. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 6)*

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<sup>16</sup> NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1, K. Titlestad (Emzinyati) to NMS, 6 December 1880.

Eshowe

9 April 1877

... While the reports from this mission field consistently have so little to say about the visible progress of the mission, you, dear brothers, want us, your emissaries, to say just as consistently that we have not lost courage but are continuing to labour in the hope that better times await our mission. And as the time of awaiting long ago began to seem long, our longing for the time of refreshment must become greater and more intense if we are not to lose courage.

You will also have noticed in the reports from here that for a long time we have discussed both our work amongst these people and the conditions in this country giving the impression that we are approaching a crisis. We anticipate and expect it in the hope that after it has been fought through and experienced there will be new and better prospects for missionary endeavour in this country. For many, many years it has been our daily prayer that the Lord of the church ... will, in his great grace and for the sake of his name's honour, intervene with his strong arm and sweep away the great hindrances which, in the form of the people's customs and the governance of the country, in general stand so deplorably inhibitingly in the way of his Word's and Kingdom's progress.... One witnesses the hopelessness, emptiness, darkness, and misery of heathen life. The heathens hear us tell them about God, his love, his message of salvation, and the way to salvation through faith in Christ. The heathens listen, usually indifferently and without any visible impression being made on them. They often applaud us and admit that they are people who know nothing and that it would be good for them to become acquainted with their God and Saviour and to become his people. But they are immediately distracted from that thought by the view that it would be impossible for them to begin to do something like that. Again and again one gets the impression that if external hindrances did not scare them, many would at least pay a little serious attention to hearing about God and believing in him....

While we have always complained about these external hindrances to the progress of the Kingdom of God in this country, because they have prevented the people from allowing themselves to be taught and from daring to pay any regard to what they hear from the missionary, we have nevertheless lived

quite securely in this country and have been able to witness to everyone about the truth without often having met with obvious enmity on the part of the heathens. The king, the chiefs, and the people have looked the other way when individuals have joined us and been baptised. Although we have had ample opportunity to see that this has not pleased either the king or the chiefs, in most instances it has happened so peacefully with regard to those who have become Christians that we have sometimes been amazed.... When no fewer than twelve natives were receiving baptismal instruction here at the station last year, I heard that some of our neighbours were hinting that the king would be indignant when he learnt that so many of his people were leaving him and that soon he would surely chase the missionaries out of the country. Especially one of the king's servants who lives near us was grumbling and making threats because of this scandal, namely that so many Zulus were becoming *amakolwa* [i.e. converts]. "What wrong have you been done", he asked them, "that you are leaving the king and your home, and going to the whites? You shall see that we will soon take your trousers off". Moreover, our believers often heard people speak enviously about their - the believers' - large fields, abundant food, and [other] great advantages gained by *khonza abelunga* (i.e. going, over to the whites). Finally, there were rumours after the royal festival that all who had not attended it would be "eaten up" or killed, and that was to apply to the Christians at the stations. The chiefs of every regiment were thus ordered to punish their respective soldiers who had not attended the festival. That this also applied to those who had converted to Christianity was soon apparent, as Samuel at Mfule had to pay a fine of cattle, but otherwise he was pardoned by the king as a favour to Brother Gundersen. You have read about the king's statements in that regard in Brother Gundersen's report. These statements were ominous. The believers began to be afraid. A lot of Zulu boys were working at the station, some of them for the believers [i.e. Zulu converts to Christianity], others for us. At the station there were fields which, despite the drought, were luxuriant. With all the Zulus who worked for various people at the station we were quite a large group and practically filled the chapel when we assembled. One heard remarks which showed that this irritated the Zulus, even remarks like, "Truly God must be with you and protect you; otherwise you would not be able to live in peace as you do". All these rumours prompted us to have our last committee meeting at Mahlabatini, so that at the same time we could

go to the king and once again try to show him how unsatisfactory it was for both us missionaries and the converts that the king did not give them an opportunity to serve him in one way or another. We found the king so inordinately friendly that he did not give any indication of being opposed to *amakolwa* but said that they could rest quietly until he summoned them to build a house for them. He did not give me permission to baptise Umakamuzela, as I had wished and hoped, but even though it seemed that he did not want to reply to my request, he did not let any opposition become apparent, saying only that he could not give a definite answer, because the man's closest chiefs were not present.

I came back from the committee meeting on 22 February. On Sunday, 4 March, just as we were leaving the church, we heard a rumour that one of missionary Fröhling's<sup>17</sup> converts at the Inyezane station had been killed. A Zulu who had spent the night in the vicinity of Inyezane said that before dawn he had heard two shots. He had soon learnt that they had been fired at an *ikholwa* [i.e. convert]. Joseph, who had been killed because he had been discovered to have been an *umthakathi* (sorcerer). We soon heard that this Joseph was said to have got jackal poison at Ntumeni (or from me, according to other reports) and sold it to a Zulu, who used it to poison the carrion of cattle that had died of tuberculosis. He had done this in order to kill his chief's people, namely the wives who eat this carrion in keeping with Zulu custom. Several women had become ill, and one had died. A few days later Mr Fröhling wrote to tell us that they had been awakened on Sunday morning by noise when the executioners had simply stormed into the house where their victim lay, grasped and bound him, and driven him away from the houses with blows of cudgels in order to shoot him. The missionary had sought in every way to save him and offered to pay however many cattle were demanded - but to no avail. The executioners said they had been sent by the king to murder Joseph, and the king's orders had to be carried out. They took him down to the river, shot him twice, bashed in his skull, threw him into a pool full of crocodiles, and collected all of Joseph's possessions. This case could not but scare the [other] Christians, because if the king had begun to allow people to be sought out, killed, and robbed at the stations, then there was no safety for Christians' lives in this country.

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<sup>17</sup> Meant is J.F.T. Fröhling (1834-1887) of the Hermannsburg Mission.

Five days passed, and then a servant came running to tell us that Umakamuzela had just been killed! Umakamuzela was not home when I returned from Mahlabatini. He had gone to see his family and one of his brothers-in-law, who had been killed. On the day before his death he had come back and received baptismal instruction as usual. I spoke with him and told him about my request to the king to be allowed to baptise him. He thanked me profusely, because I had told the king that he loved the Word of God: "If he now has me killed, I will rejoice in it. I am not afraid. Is it not good to die for Christ's name? Did he not die for me? He will give me a little place in his kingdom up there". The next morning he attended devotions as usual; he was almost never absent, even though he had a long way to go. I then saw him for the last time. At dinner-time he wanted to go over to Chief Umujejane's kraal. On the way he met the executioners, who immediately laid their hands on him in order to bind him. When he asked why they were going to kill him, they told him it was because he believed and wanted to be baptised. He was happy and thanked God without showing any fear. It is said that he asked for time to pray and they gave it to him. He knelt down and prayed, stood up, and said, "Now I am ready; kill me!" They hesitated, not wanting to shoot him. It seemed strange to them to kill a man who had done nothing more evil than to believe the Word of God which he had heard. They were afraid that something would happen to them. One of them finally aimed. The rifle misfired, and he said that he did not wish to try again. Finally a young boy shot, and the victim fell. "He died keeping Sunday, it is said of him; he prayed for all of us and did not show the slightest fear". Umakamuzela is thus the first person in our Zulu mission to have lost his life for the sake of his faith.

We were happy that no other guilt was ascribed to him. He had not abandoned his chief, king, kraal, or Zulu costume. He wore only a shirt, which many Zulus are no longer afraid to do. His only fault was that he took to heart and believed the message he had heard about sin and grace, a message which we have had permission to preach in this country and which we have always made clear both to the king and the people that it was our work and our lives' task to preach, so that they might believe. I recently asked the king whether he realised that we missionaries were telling the truth when we said that we wanted nothing more in this country than that both he and his people hear, take to heart, and believe the Word of God so that they would

be eternally happy. He declared clearly that he understood that. If God gives me another opportunity to speak with the king, I therefore have some very serious things to say to him.

As far as Umakamuzela is concerned, the Lord has no doubt found a place for him amongst those who are saved and not allowed the hope which he expressed to me on the day before his death to be unfulfilled. His wife was able to hide, so the executioners did not find her. The executioners also looked for a son who works for Brother Nilsen and was getting baptismal instruction, but he and his mother fled to Natal. Under these circumstances it is hardly surprising that our Christians feel uneasy. On the following day - a Saturday - a group of men from the chief's kraal came here in search of the wife; they said they were not going to kill her, but only to remove her. It was said that a whole army had assembled in a chief's kraal nearby. One chap who walked past here had asked suspicious questions of some Zulu boys who worked for us, and fear gained the upper hand. The Zulu boys who worked at the station fled in haste, and the catechumens almost left too. In the evening all the women and children streamed into our house and filled the kitchen, the girls' room, and our lounge. All in all there were more than thirty people. Men and boys gathered to keep watch. They were afraid that the army they had heard had gathered at the chief's kraal would raid the station. We ourselves were quite at ease and thought they had been scared without reason. The next morning passed peacefully, and everyone did his normal work until we assembled in the chapel for worship.

But that was not enough. A few days later I received a letter from Brother Gundersen, who reported that Moses, who was staying at the royal kraal to do trading, had told him that the king had asked him (Moses) about the people at Eshowe and said he knew there were *abathakathi* (sorcerers, witches) there. Particularly Elijah's wife, who supposedly had been exposed as a witch before she came to the station, was the worst of all. She had also taught her husband this business, so he was also a trained *umthakathi*. After what had just happened at Inyezane, this talk on the part of the king awakened fright again, and all the *amakholwa* assembled to discuss what they could do. They seriously considered fleeing to Natal, at least some of them, so the ranks could become thin at the station because the Zulus believe there are too many converts now. They asked me to help them get a place in Natal where they could live together, so that they would not be dispersed as a

congregation. They believed the government of Natal would perhaps give them a place to live if I applied for one [on their behalf]. We decided to choose two who would go to Mahlabatini to hear more from Moses and Gundersen and to see how true these rumours were. Martin Luther and Elijah went. They returned six days later without having gained any more information about the matter.

We gathered together again to investigate as carefully and seriously as possible whether here at the station there had been any talk or suspicion concerning those people and those matters about which the king had asked and told Moses. We only discovered that Elijah's wife was said to have remarked that she believed others were suspicious of her. We heard, however, that the king was ill. Messenger after messenger came from the royal kraal, first to summon all the important people, then all of Ganze's<sup>18</sup> people, then all the men who were capable of bearing arms. It was said that war was in sight, that the Hollanders' army had already invaded Zululand, and that they [i.e. the Zulus] were now going to test their strength against the *amabhunu* (Boers). Our medical missionary<sup>19</sup> was still waiting to get his medicine from Durban so that he could move to Mahlabatini, so under the circumstances we found it proper for him to travel in haste up to the king in order to be of whatever service he could with the few medications he had. At least he could pay the king some attention by attending to him, as we had heard that he was ill. A couple *amakholwa* accompanied him to Mahlabatini to try to learn more about what was actually involved in those rumours concerning *amakholwa* here at the station and from whom they stemmed. They left here on the Monday after Palm Sunday, spent the Easter holidays at Mahlabatini, and returned on the Thursday after Easter. The king, who was recovering, had received the doctor with open arms, allowed him to examine him immediately, and found that the doctor could tell him what was wrong with him. There was no end of praise for the doctor who had come to him, and the king believed that his eyes and forehead placed him phrenologically amongst wise men. He felt the

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<sup>18</sup> Ganze was a regional chief in Zululand about whom little appears to be known.

<sup>19</sup> Christian Oftebro (1842-1888), who had served as an unordained assistant at Eshowe from 1865 until 1867, returned to Eshowe as a medical missionary in 1876.



good results of the medicine he received already the next day. Then he wanted the doctor to return soon with all his medicines and do battle against all the king's ailments. Gundersen had to write a letter for the king, which in translation is as follows:

I, Cetshwayo, King of Zululand, declare: Teacher Umonde,<sup>20</sup> Chief of the *amakholwa* at Eshowe! He summons the *amakholwa* to perform royal service by being the hands of Doctor Ukisana<sup>21</sup> and bearing his possessions and books in chests up here to Mahlabatini in Umadi's wagon. *Amakholwa* shall drive the wagon, cook for him on the journey, and accompany him beautifully. They shall help him bring the medicine into Gundersen's house and bring him and Gundersen to me if I am already at Mbonambi. This shall be done now, immediately, says the King!

The doctor had waited to receive the medicine chest, but he was disappointed again because Thorsen,<sup>22</sup> who should have brought it, discovered that it was too big and heavy for his wagon. His departure cannot, therefore be as soon as he had hoped and wished, and he has had to send a message to the king that his medicine has not yet arrived.

Concerning the matter mentioned earlier, two converts have visited the royal kraal again. They did not discover much but returned more quiet and relaxed, certain that those rumours were not a matter with which the chiefs had dealt.

They had misunderstood Moses when he told the chiefs what the king had said to him. But Moses had not done so. That the king had now ordered them to perform royal service appears to have had a quieting effect on the native Christians, so the fear has largely subsided.

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<sup>20</sup> "Umonde" was the Zulu nickname for Ommund Oftebro, whose station at Eshowe was called "Kwa Monde".

<sup>21</sup> "Ukisana" was the Zulu name for Christian Oftebro.

<sup>22</sup> Thor Christian Thorsen (1833-1912) had served as an unordained assistant from 1860 until 1865.

You will understand from all this that recent times have been very uneasy and that to a greater degree than usual we have been reminded that we are living amongst people whose feet are quick to run with blood. But even though it worries us and makes us shudder to hear about all the slaughter that has become inordinately common, it does not cause us to lose courage....

Services of worship, devotions, and our school have continued as usual without disturbance. After the baptisms mentioned in my last report, I soon had eight more people for baptismal instruction. The number has now dwindled to three. A girl whose parents live in Natal was taken home because she was ready to be baptised, at least as far as her knowledge is concerned. As her parents live near an American missionary, they promised that she would "still be able to live as a believer". Umakamuzela was murdered, two moved to Natal, and one moved to Mbonambi, so only three are left.

At the end of October an ill English peddler came here. We had to take him in and care for him. He was suffering from dysentery and died after three weeks. He was worried about the salvation of his soul and sought grace and peace. I hope he found them.

In November our new hymnal came from the press, and as both Brother Nilsen and I are something of book-binders we did the binding. On the first Sunday in Advent we were able to use it in worship. It includes 112 hymns. As the usual hymnal includes many new melodies, we have usually assembled at the chapel on Sunday afternoons to sing them and therefore not had an evening service.

On the first Sunday of every month we have a missionary meeting. When I opened the collection box at the end of the year, it contained £18.½. That is not a large sum, of course, but they seldom have money in their pockets. At the last missionary meeting I told them that according to Mosaic law the Jews gave to the deity one-tenth of what they harvested, and that there were supporters of missions who, not because of any law, voluntarily did the same today. As God had now blessed them with a rich yield, and they would presumably harvest more than they themselves needed, they now had a good opportunity to give to the missionary treasury one-tenth of what they could sell. Martin Luther later thanked me for calling this to their attention, and we shall see what they do.

On 5 January we had the joy of welcoming my nephew, the medical missionary.<sup>23</sup> It was very moving to have him back here. He was immediately busy with patients because here, as everywhere else, we have more than enough sick and feeble people.

Now we have again celebrated the blessed festival of Easter. During Lent we had a Lenten sermon every Wednesday. After what had happened we thought the heathens would simply stop coming to church, but no, they come just as before....



*The murders of several Zulu Christians in 1877 also seem to have alarmed Schreuder, who was then isolated from his erstwhile colleagues in the NMS and struggling to maintain his two stations at Ntumeni and Untunjambili. His limited respect for Cetshwayo had dwindled by mid-1877, when he returned to Zululand after concluding an agreement with the government of Natal which agreed to accept refugees from persecution north of the Tugela. (Source: Missionsblad, II, no. 2 [September 1877], pp. 17-22)*

Ntumeni

6 June 1877

... Since the beginning of March we were held in uninterruptedly fearful and extremely disturbing suspense by one piece of bad news after the other from the stations in Zululand. As a result I had a strong and uncomfortable attack, namely an extremely uncomfortable, scary, and violent heart palpitation which even bothered me a great deal at night. After coming here and now being able to confront matters face to face, I have been, thank God, freed of that evil....

As I had foreseen the flight from the stations in Zululand, I corresponded with the government of Natal and worked out an agreement so that the believers from the Zulu stations would be exempted from the laws which otherwise apply to refugees from Zululand, making them subject to three years of service to the colonists.

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<sup>23</sup> Oftebro is referring to Christian Oftebro, whom he often called "the doctor" in his reports to his superiors in the NMS.

On the way to Zululand we were constantly told that it was very daring for us to enter Zululand now, when other people were happy to be able to get away from there. But thank God that missionary duty is stronger than fear, so we continued, even though we feared that the people at Ntumeni would have fled, because one disturbing message after another had come to Untunjambili about conditions here. The believers here had not slept peacefully in their houses for a long time but had spent part of each night in the forests. It is the practice of the Zulu executioners to attack the kraals early at dawn, and if one is not home one at least has a greater chance of escaping than if one is inside the house.

Contrary to our expectations, however, we found the congregation still here, though in great fear and unrest. Only Thomas' wife had fled to her relatives in Natal in order to give birth. That infamous Moses, who had stayed at the king's kraal for a while on business, had, because of his old dislike of the believers here and at Eshowe, done everything possible in his well-known, cunning way to scare our believers away. Shortly before we came here, when the rumours were most disturbing, David, Zechariah, and John Haugvaldstad<sup>24</sup> from here had gone up to the king to find out whether and why the king wanted to kill our believers. The king, as usual in such cases, gave only an evasive answer and tried to push the blame for the bloody episodes at the stations over to his people who had acted without his knowledge. In order to conceal his displeasure, he stated that he wanted to summon the believers at the stations to make bricks for a European-style building at one of his military kraals. The unreasonableness of this real whim of the Zulu king is obvious when juxtaposed with the bloody episodes that had taken place against the believers at several stations. In the eyes of the natives it must have appeared that the king wanted to gather the converts for supposed work so that he could slaughter all of them at once. I advised them, however, that if a message actually came from the king to go up to that construction work they should declare their willingness to go as soon as the believers from other stations were ready to do so. To date, however, no such royal decree has come, and now it is too late, because everyone (both missionaries and converts) is preparing to flee the country.

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<sup>24</sup> Schreuder is referring to three Zulu converts, the third of whom was named after a Haugean supporter of the NMS in Norway.

To the believers, the following are the palpable facts which are driving them out of the country: 1) At the beginning of March a baptised person was executed at the German mission station Inyezane; 2) immediately thereafter a baptismal candidate at Eshowe; 3) later, a baptised person from another German mission station; 4) in mid-April a band of executioners went to Eshowe to kill a believer, Johannes, and another believer there, Martin Luther, was also sought. Fortunately, both of them were away and were thus saved....



*By August 1877 Schreuder had begun to doubt whether Norwegian missions would be able to continue in Zululand. He later criticised his counterparts in other missionary societies for leaving that imperiled country, because he believed that doing so encouraged Zulu residents of the stations to do likewise. It is evident, however, that he too was considering quitting Zululand. (Source: Missionsblad, II, no. 3 [November 1877], pp. 31-38).*

Ntumeni

6 August 1877

... For six weeks I did not get out of my clothes at night, because I had to tend to my wife constantly. In addition to this heavy and depressing domestic trial, a thicker and denser gloom was gathering over conditions here in the country. It seemed to bode ill for the mission and possibly soon lead to its complete termination.

As indicated in my last letter, it was impossible for us to leave the country because of my wife's illness. That filled the days of tribulation with expectations of the things that were to come, days that pushed many warm tears from our eyes and constant, heavy sighs from our oft-embraced breasts....

The talk here turned more and more markedly to the flight of the missionaries from the country. Several Hermannsburg missionaries had already fled with their families, and *to all intent and purpose* [sic] several Norwegian missionaries were on the verge of doing the same....

Our arrival here at the beginning of May succeeded in quieting the long restless minds of the believers here, so they did not consider fleeing or leaving. But when the missionaries began to move, several of them [i.e. Zulu

converts] saw with their own eyes how several missionaries had begun to pull out of the country with their families and property in an alarming way, and with their ears heard even more than they saw with their eyes, there was renewed unrest amongst them and more reason to leave the country....



*The extent to which Norwegian missionaries co-operated with the British on the eve of the Anglo-Zulu War has been debated.<sup>25</sup> In September 1877 Schreuder had one of several meetings with colonial officials, although he emphasised to his sponsors that he was not a lackey of the British. (Source: *Missionsblad*, III, no. 2 [February 1878], pp. 17-25)*

Untunjambili

2 November 1877

... On Tuesday, 25 September, we met the entourage of the Natal governor<sup>26</sup> in the vicinity of the Untunjambili station. The governor was touring the colony, and on that day he had left the main road in order to inspect the remote areas with Mr John Shepstone, the acting Secretary for Native Affairs....

We spoke with the governor for more than three hours until late in the evening about many topics that concerned missions and political conditions in Zululand. He first wanted to hear about the affairs last winter in Zululand,<sup>27</sup> but I was not willing to express myself about them unless he was willing to believe my word. He thought he was familiar with conditions in Zululand, but I doubted that because I knew the source from which the government was

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<sup>25</sup> For a synopsis of the debate in Norway up to 1981, see Frederick Hale, "Olav Guttorm Myklebust and the Historiography of Norwegian Missions in Southern Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, XIV (November 1982), pp. 95-101.

<sup>26</sup> Actually, Henry Bulwer's official title was then "Lieutenant-Governor".

<sup>27</sup> Schreuder is probably referring to the executions and attempted executions of several Zulu converts to Christianity and the missionaries' responses to those episodes.

getting its information.<sup>28</sup> I finally agreed to delineate the origin, cause, and development of last winter's movements and the fleeing of so many native believers and missionaries. After I finished making my presentation, he absolutely wanted me also to write it for him or, if I approved, he wanted to have it written down right there. Finally, after some negotiating, we agreed that as soon as time allowed I would write it down and send it to him. I have now done so through our consul,<sup>29</sup> and if time allows I shall send you a copy of it. Then he (the governor) told me in detail about a meeting, previously unknown to me, between him and two Norwegian missionaries.<sup>30</sup> He told me, as he had told them, that he disapproved of their way of proceeding in Zulu affairs. They had, without good reason, made movements which looked like fleeing in alarm and had thereby played Cetshwayo's game and put themselves into a bind.... He made it clear that he neither could nor would concern himself with that troubling matter. If the missionaries could not take care of their own interests, they could not expect him to take care of them. They had brought these hardships and complications upon themselves, he believed, through their hasty and unfounded fleeing from Zululand.

We naturally and without taking note of it got into several points in his answer to the Zulu missionaries' common petition (discussed in my last letter), and I proved to him from the facts that they had erred with regard to the premises from which he had proceeded and the conclusions he had drawn from them. He was dissatisfied with all the missionary work in Natal and could not see that the missionaries had accomplished anything. He wanted me to draw up a general account of what missions as such had accomplished, but I believed and still believe that since our missionary societies and supporters, our own consciences, and God are satisfied with our missionary work and allow us to continue, then we do not owe anyone else an account of our missionary work as such. We do not receive any pecuniary or other special help from

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<sup>28</sup> Schreuder probably means John R. Dunn, who was attempting to curry favour with both Cetshwayo and the British but eventually threw in his lot with the latter.

<sup>29</sup> George Cato then served as the consul for Sweden and Norway in Durban.

<sup>30</sup> Oftebro and Stavem had gone to Pietermaritzburg to voice their grievances to Bulwer and had sought, without success, to elicit from him promises of security for missionaries and converts in Zululand.

anyone out here, but missionaries on the other hand, have brought considerable sums into the colony for the exclusive purpose of doing the country good. I also pointed out how the government of Natal bore part of the responsibility for the fact that the missionaries' endeavours bore so few and such invisible fruits in the natives' lives generally, because the government allowed the natives to continue in their savage life and ways in precisely those matters that hindered the missionaries' most serious endeavours. He admitted that in part....



*Several months later Schreuder revealed more of his conversation with Bulwer. The Norwegian was dismayed at Bulwer's apparent lack of concern for the safety of Christians in Zululand. At no time, however, did Schreuder explain why the British should intervene in the internal affairs of that country, something which may have puzzled readers in Norway. (Source: Missionsblad, III, nos. 8-9 [August-September 1878], pp. 117-118)*

Untunjambili

14 May 1878

... As the basis for this unrest in both mind and body, we would have to give as a point of departure these facts: 1) the execution of a convert at Inyezane; 2) the execution of a convert at Umlalazi who had fallen from the faith; 3) the execution of a baptismal catechumen at Eshowe; and 4) an act of violence against Johannes at Eshowe. These are historical facts, even though the circumstances surrounding them have been and can be interpreted in various ways. In my long conversation with Sir Bulwer on 25 September 1877, he refused to admit, despite my objections, that these executions were different from the usual executions which regularly took place in the country according to national custom. He regretted that such cruel incidents had taken place and can take place, but nothing could be done about them as long as the Zulu king was the independent king of his own country. He himself (Sir B.) had attempted some time ago to protest to the king about these cruelties, but he had received a deprecating and impertinent answer. He [*i.e.* Bulwer] wondered why the missionaries made so much noise and fuss about a few (a very insignificant number compared to the masses of Zulus who were regularly



executed) of their converts who were executed according to national custom, while they (the missionaries) did nothing about the many Zulu who were constantly killed according to national custom. He (Sir B.) personally felt just as much compassion for the non-Christian Zulus as for those who had become Christians because, as he put it, "*I look upon the matter as a man of the world.*"



*By December 1877 Ommund Oftebro, still in Zululand, had nearly abandoned hope of a peaceful settlement of the crisis there which had been wrought in part by the murder of a few converts. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 6)*

Eshowe

8 December 1877

... The times are still critical. It is still possible that summer will pass peacefully, but it is equally probable that war will break out immediately. Sir T. Shepstone and the Zulu king are too far from agreement on the border for both to declare that they can or will give up their demands. Zulus are being sent to build a royal kraal deep in the area which Shepstone is demanding. Sir T. Shepstone's son<sup>31</sup> has visited the king and also visited our station at Mahlabatini. The king was very stiff and hard and received him almost with contempt. This Shepstone said he did not see how war could be avoided if the Zulu king did not relent. He promised to warn us in time. It is possible that the Zulu king is driving the matter to the brink and will retreat at the last second. It would certainly be very inopportune for the English to start a war now, but it almost appears that the Zulu king imagines that he is strong enough to tackle them.

Skaar is still alone at Mfule. He has only one boy. His wife is still weak. The physician<sup>32</sup> has been in Durban for provisions. Two days ago he went

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<sup>31</sup> Oftebro may be referring to either Henrique Shepstone or John Shepstone, both of whom eventually held their father's old position as Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal.

<sup>32</sup> Oftebro is again referring to his nephew, Christian Oftebro.

back to Mahlabatini. He has very trying work up there, and it takes patience to serve the king in that way, for he does nothing to help us in our task. Quite the contrary, he is our foe....



*At remote Emzinyati, intertribal warfare and the alleged pettiness of the local chief, Sirayo, added to the tribulations endured by the Titlestad family. Titlestad also commented on negotiations between Theophilus Shepstone and the Zulu chief over the location of the border between the Transvaal and Zululand. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 6)*

Emzinyati

28 December 1877

... We began the year with many worries, but we conclude it with thanks for the Lord's unchanging grace to us. The past half-year has been a long and sad time, but the Lord has faithfully helped us through it. As indicated in my last letter to you, conditions in this country were very threatening then, but we have nevertheless been able to remain at the station without interruption if often under very trying circumstances. What especially caused us unpleasantness was a feud between two tribes which went on for several months in our immediate vicinity. Sirayo, our chief, was on one side and tried to draw us into the stir. He wanted us to hide oxen and a loaded wagon for him and to help him lie in the event, as he then feared, that the king would side with his enemy. After he had kept all his cattle and people together near his main kraal for a long time, it was said that the king was angry at him. In great haste he fled down to a kraal closer to Emzinyati, and amidst the confusion he sent his belongings over to us. Since he asked me to support him with dishonesty, I had no alternative but to refuse to accept his things. This made Sirayo very angry, and he threatened to have us plundered at night and chased away. I did not give in, but I sent him another message stating that he could place some things here, just as the important people in the country did at other stations. I gave him our old house for his *impahla* (belongings), which consisted of gunpowder, lead, rifles, bullet moulds, chests full of wildcat skins, textiles, blankets and the like, kettles, calabashes, jars, mats, knives, forks, spoons, etc. There were also a lot of jars of fat which

broke during the journey, so for a long time an entire pack of dogs were busy licking up the fat along the road. I informed him that I could not guard his possessions at night and that our house had recently been burgled. All his things, along with his people and oxen, were here for several weeks until the king settled the dispute and the chief paid a small fine. His opponents, meanwhile, were "eaten up", as one says here; they lost all their cattle.

We often had restless nights during that period and were sometimes awakened by war-cries and alarms on the doors and windows. There were often swarms of people, cattle, and warriors here in the morning. Women with sucklings on their backs climbed out of ditches, caves, and mountain ravines in droves in the morning after a cold and hard night, because no-one dared to sleep at home. One day the two tribes were engaged in a real battle, using their rifles with full force for seven or eight hours. They did not seem to have good marksmanship, however because they left only two dead on the battlefield.

As I mentioned, Sirayo was ill-disposed towards us during this affair. We know that for a long time he wanted us to leave so that he could take control of the station. He said so openly to us and his people, but not until recently has he made an overt attempt to force us away. He certainly hoped that we would leave last winter when the Germans<sup>33</sup> left northern Natal, but he noticed that I thought it advisable not even to go to our missionary conference but rather to stay here and watch the station in hopes of better times. He probably now believes that it would be a rather long wait for an opportunity, so he began to construct a kraal right next to the station on 24 September. At that time I visited the chief quite often, did various kinds of work for him, and spoke a great deal with him about the construction of the kraal. I said that no-one in the country had yet tried to get a station in that way, and that perhaps we would have to speak with the king about it. He thought that he was the chief here and that the king had nothing to do with his construction of a kraal in this area. In that respect he could not be stopped. I concluded by saying that I could not condone the construction of a kraal so close by. I bade him farewell and left.

On Christmas Eve the chief came here to beg for some small things. I was sick in bed, so I called him in and used the occasion to speak with him

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<sup>33</sup> Meant are the missionaries of the Hermannsburg Mission.

again in private about the kraal. He gave me more or less the same answer, although he grew silent when I again mentioned that we would have to approach the king. I spoke with him about the meaning of Christmas, about the great drought in this area, and other matters. Concerning the drought, he said that they had all given up; the rain doctors could not do anything about it. They had therefore talked about gathering together, he said, and coming here so that we could pray with them to our God and they would also do their tricks. They believed this would work. I made it clear that it was not possible to combine their worship with ours in that way, but that if they would give themselves solely to our God he would show that he could make it rain. He would not go along with that, however.

When I said I would pray that they would become true believers, he replied that he had once thought about that, but the king would not tolerate it, and he had dropped the thought. I remarked that in this respect God stood far above the king, and when the salvation of our souls was concerned we must not fear any person so much that it restricts us. The king could take care of our lives, but he could not touch our souls, and our lives with the Lord would be much more glorious than life at the royal kraal. He was silent again, very silent, bade me a courteous farewell, and left. I lay silently in my bed and sighed for him and the Zulu people in general.

It is best to remain silent about the unpleasantness and troubles this kraal has already caused us, for there would be too much to discuss. If Sir T. Shepstone respects the last border agreed upon by the Zulus and the Boers during Mpande's reign, this station will be in the Transvaal, so we must try to hold out. The big royal festival will take place soon, however, and everyone fears that it will not be peaceful. Everyone is talking about "war", and if it comes to that there will be changes throughout the country. A conflict might easily arise, because Sir Shepstone has declared one border and the king another. Neither of them seems willing to yield. Yesterday a messenger sent by Sir Shepstone passed through here to tell the king that he should not be alarmed when he hears about white soldiers nearby. This does not mean war, but only the construction of some farms along the border. The king will naturally take that poorly, because the border which he has declared lies deep in the Transvaal, and he has said that he will immediately start construction at the border himself. It thus seems rather threatening. At

Biggarsberg not far from here a large camp is being built, and everywhere the whites are withdrawing from the border.

I was present at Sir Shepstone's first meeting with the Zulus concerning the border. His Excellency had only fifty English soldiers with him and drove his own "mule wagon" pulled by eight asses. All the soldiers were mounted. The Zulus, by contrast, were a collection of all the important people in the country or, as they themselves say, the *isisu sodwa* (only big stomachs), led by the greatest chiefs, about 1 000 people in all. As soon as Shepstone had arrived at the place he had designated, the Zulus who had gathered on this side of the Inzone (the meeting was on the other side) began to move one by one, driving three black and one wretched white oxen before them. That meant that matters looked dark in the eyes of the Zulus but that they saw some light with regard to what was to be negotiated. They appeared not to expect the result that they wished. After reaching Shepstone they encircled his wagon at some distance and sat down. After they had exchanged a few words with His Excellency about their peaceful intentions, the soldiers dismounted and removed the saddles from their horses. The negotiations then began. The Zulus' first demands were for land deep in Natal and the Transvaal; the king had told them to suggest the Drakensberg and the Tugela as borders, but they soon agreed to the Emzinyati. Sir Shepstone did not want to say then precisely where he wanted the border to be, but rather to hear the king's real opinion first. If the king was reasonable, Shepstone would do his best to fulfil his wish, but he could not say anything as long as the king's demands were so stupid, so no agreement could be reached that day. The meeting lasted from about 9h00 until 16h00. Since then many messengers have been sent back and forth, and Sir Shepstone has received many ugly and harsh words from the king, but he has nevertheless done everything in his power to avoid a war.

There is little to say about our missionary work under such transitory conditions. I have held services as usual on holidays for those who could be gathered, and school, when possible, on weekdays, but the latter has often been interrupted. Logotwao is still learning, but because of his great indifference he has not made any progress. He has requested a couple times to be baptised, but I have no desire to baptise him when he gives no clear

sign of needing grace. I have been out in the kraals now and then. I have also preached to Mr Surtee's<sup>34</sup> kaffers. They seem very attentive.

On the whole the people who live nearby are friendly to us. Many are sorry that Sirayo wants to chase us away. "When you are gone", they ask, "who will give us medicine or pull the sorcerers out of us?" They call a throbbing molar an *umthakathi*, or sorcerer. I usually reply that we are not even considering leaving....



*After Oftebro and Stavem conferred with Lieutenant-Governor Henry Bulwer in Pietermaritzburg, Stavem expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of British policy vis-à-vis the Zulus, who seemed to be increasingly violent and unruly. Clearly, Norwegian missionary sympathies were swinging to the British, despite frustrations in reaching a solution to the unrest in Zululand. There is little evidence of respect, however, for the sovereignty of that country. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, XXXIII, no. 6 [March 1878], pp. 113-115)*

Mbonambi

2 January 1878

... Since filing my last report, I have preached, spoken with the people about those things related to the Kingdom of God, and taught school as before. Attendance on Sundays has been about the same as before, although the average is perhaps a bit lower than last year. We have had enough servants, which is more than one could expect in such times. The people in the neighbourhood have been as friendly to us as ever. It has often amazed me that my neighbours would be so confidential with me at a time when war with the whites has been hanging over their heads like a threatening sword. There are not any catechumens here, however, and the two people whom I discussed in my last report as claiming that their goal is to become Christians do not appear to want to exert themselves to attain it. They live at home in a Zulu kraal, so one cannot expect much of them at this time.

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<sup>34</sup> Surtee was a farmer in the Transvaal, not far from Emzinyati.

Since Pastor Oftebro and I were in Maritzburg and heard statements by the governor,<sup>35</sup> Sir Henry Bulwer, I have not really been able to believe that a conflict between the English and the Zulus would begin soon. English policy in Africa, like the policy of that people everywhere, has something tormenting about it. For the most part it consists of intimidation and threats, deploying a few hundred soldiers, and moving a few ships from one harbour to another. All in all their soldiers are bogeymen who do not mean much and at whom people laugh. No doubt there are exceptions, as when they can take a country like the Transvaal without resistance.

In recent months matters have looked rather bad, however. The bone of contention between the English and the Zulus is now the Transvaal - Zululand border. In the end John Bull will probably give up something, just as the Zulu king will yield a bit according to the circumstances, and the result of all this tension, unrest, and fear will be that everything will be as it was before. But I do not know. The royal festival is being held right now, and I shall tell you what one Zulu reported to me yesterday. He said, "They have defeated the king". "Who defeated the king?" I asked. "The Zulus", was the answer. "The chiefs and the other important people in the country have defeated him". "What do you mean?" I persisted. "How have they defeated him?" "Oh", he said, "we hear that the king really was thinking about doing something evil at this festival. His intention was to murder a lot of people, then flee northwards with the young regiments. All the girls and young women were therefore summoned to the festival. But the old chiefs and important people resisted. They asked, 'When Dingane killed the Dutch farmers, was not the royal kraal burnt? Was not also Dingane himself killed when he tried to flee northwards?' The king replied, 'Do you want to serve the whites?' 'Yes', said the Zulu nation'. 'Will you do everything the whites demand of you?' asked the king. 'Yes', said the Zulu nation (I mean the chiefs and other important people; the unimportant ones, the dogs, were naturally not present.)" "What should we do? You say that you will flee, but where?" I asked the man who had told him this story. He answered that he had heard it from the brother of a royal servant who had come here. How much of it is true I cannot say.

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<sup>35</sup> Stavem incorrectly stated Bulwer's official position. Sir Henry Bulwer (1836-1914) was appointed Lieutenant-Governor in 1875. He remained in that position until 1880.

In any case it is not implausible that the king had something "evil" in mind, for the summoning of girls and young men to this festival was unusual, as was the order that all should attend with their rifles. But even if the report is true, it does not reveal what is developing amongst the people. Our position is not a comfortable one, but the Lord is at the helm.

Yesterday afternoon the Zulu soldiers began to come home from the royal festival. A terrible fight is said to have taken place between the youngest and the eldest regiments. Such are the Zulus' manoeuvres. They are not satisfied with merely fencing against the air. This fight was much worse than those of earlier years when the old regiment, Utuewane, used spears. Otherwise they are satisfied with killing each other with sticks on such occasions. The people are blaming the king. These young soldiers are his favourites. For example, they receive more meat to eat than the others. This made them arrogant, and they attacked the older regiments. Prince Uhamu ordered Utuewane to use spears. They cannot tell me how many have been killed. They only say that the dead lie like grass around the site of the old station at Mahlabatini. They cut the tendons and muscles of many at the knee. Even women were stabbed to death while they screamed over their husbands or brothers. Such are the heathens. Perhaps there is some exaggeration in this. The king is said to have become angry afterwards and threatened to exterminate all these boys. They could run to the whites, he said; he did not want to see them again. What a hypocrite! The people say that in his heart he likes the boys, but that he was scared by the threats of the old regiments. The old ones told him that it was his fault. Why did he admit these boys to the royal kraal at Undi together with the old men? Why did he not have the boys stay down by the river? Now *impis* [i.e. raiding parties] are expected to steal cattle from the parents of these boys over the entire country. A magnificent government this country has!...



*Early in 1878 the Norwegian personnel of the NMS temporarily left Zululand, fearing the imminent outbreak of war there. Gundersen defended the evacuation. He also pointed out that he was on good terms with Cetshwayo and indeed had served as a liaison between him and the colonial authorities in Natal. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 11)*



Umhlali

17 June 1878

... I arrived at the conviction that we should leave temporarily not out of panic or because the superintendent,<sup>36</sup> Dr O.,<sup>37</sup> and I were ungraciously received by the king in February. Nor did I reach that conclusion hastily, but after several months of struggle and reflection as conditions unfolded on our duty to God and to you.... I have considered that the mission's property, the great value of the buildings, might go by the board, but compared to our mission wagons and oxen that we could get out, that was not a great deal. I will not dwell on our persons, of whom hardly one in ten would come out alive if war were declared on the whites while we were still amongst the bloodthirsty Zulus. If God had permitted that, and we sat by idly, defying all the dangers and warnings, the young Zulus would surely have killed us just for fun, without considering our cattle and other belongings, so that they could boast later of having killed a white person. Perhaps we would have been called martyrs by you and others, but with what justification?

Around the middle of November [1877] I received several letters from both Norwegian and English brethren chiding me for having my family in Zululand and advising me to get them out as soon as possible. These were brethren who were observing conditions with their own eyes and ears, just as I was. Several times my heart burnt when I thought about my responsibility for my family who, like me, could be in danger of being massacred or the children dragged away as prisoners in the hands of the natives. Conditions in the country were so bad that that could easily happen without the king's special permission. Several evenings I went to bed exhausted after the toil of the day, but usually I lay awake in thought and prayer until after midnight trying to console my scared wife, from whom I tried to hide as much of both the troubling circumstances and my own worries as possible. I must say it was a blessing that she understands so little of the [Zulu] language. I always resorted to the consolation that just as I had come out here in the name of Jesus, my family and I were sent back last winter in

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<sup>36</sup> Ommund Oftebro was then the NMS superintendent.

<sup>37</sup> Meant is medical missionary Christian Oftebro.

his name and for his sake. It was not for the sake of convenience, but for the sake of our cause, that I took my family back in with me.<sup>38</sup> I understood fully what impression it would make on the king and the people had I not done so....

We bade the king and the chiefs farewell on 22 March. On 26 March we received a message for the king, for whom we had to translate a letter from Sir Bulwer. On the following day a servant sent to us by the king came with a message stating that Dr Oftebro and I were his men and had never done anything wrong; we had not even made anyone a Christian. Everyone who worked for us could quietly return to his home. Therefore we could remain. The king did not want us to leave, because we were innocent. Because of the death of a close relative, the king was prevented from seeing and speaking to us on 22 March and had therefore sent us a message. We expressed our thanks for the message and replied that we now had to leave, because our missionary conference had ordered us to do so, but that we would convey the king's words to the conference at Umpumulo and bring a reply back in four months. We wanted a man to watch the station, however, and we got the one we had last winter, a bright fellow who had taken care of it remarkably well....



*Conditions at Umpumulo remained peaceful, allowing missionary work to continue unimpeded there. Leisegang admitted that Secretary for Native Affairs Henrique Charles Shepstone had requested him to furnish confidential information about Zulu activities in that area, although it is unknown whether he actually co-operated with the British in that way. (Source: NMS Archives, box 134, folder 11)*

Umpumulo

1 August 1878

... My ministerial functions during the past half-year have included five infant baptisms, three adult baptisms, and five celebrations of the Lord's

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<sup>38</sup> Gundersen is referring to the first evacuation of Zululand in 1877 and the return to that country thereafter.

Supper with a total of ninety-one communicants. The three adults who were baptised were all girls. One of them had lived with us for several years (she is from this area) and was given the baptismal name Kata Kathrina. The second is a girl from Eshowe who came here with M. Luther's family. She was given the name Salome. The third is additional proof that missionary work in Zululand has not been in vain. In the old days she lived with the Wettergreens<sup>39</sup> at Mahlabatini when I was there. Her name was Unompepo. Her father, the much-discussed Isanusi Unjlewana, in whom the Word of God clearly showed its persuasive power, brought her there so that she would learn. And she learnt very well. Within a short time she could both read and write. But before long her mother came and dragged her away from the station by force. Nevertheless, she has not lost her impression of or desire for Christianity.

Unfortunately, it is all too much the case that the spirit of rebellion that is presently going through South Africa has reached here. Because of the subtle way in which the English govern their people, it is very easy for them to be misunderstood by the ignorant black tribes, who regard all that as a lack of strength. That the other Kaffer wars have not yet been ended, and that Sekhukhune,<sup>40</sup> who troubled the Dutch, has also dared to raise his head against the English, says the same thing to them.

The government is not unaware that something is fomenting amongst the people. On two occasions I have received requests from the Secretary for Native Affairs to report my observations to him *privatim*. Umpumulo is in an area which is completely without close supervision. The nearest magistrate is some twenty-five kilometres away. The Tugela is only about ten kilometres from here, and there is continual communication between the Zulus [in Zululand] and the Zulus who live here. Hopefully the government will take steps in time to suppress the desire to revolt. I am writing this to show that under these conditions it is difficult for us to expect our missionary work to blossom. May the Lord help us to hold together what we have gathered here.

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<sup>39</sup> Paul Peter Wettergreen (1835-1889) had served the NMS in Zululand from 1861 until 1870.

<sup>40</sup> Sekhukhune (1814-1882), the Pedi paramount chief, had waged war against the Transvaal Republic in 1876 and 1877. After the British annexation of the Transvaal, the British defeated Sekhukhune in 1879.

A few days ago I heard that Sir Theophilus Shepstone had told people in the Transvaal that the war against the Zulus should begin in August. That will be a difficult time for both colonies....



*After several missionaries in the NMS left Zululand in 1878, Schreuder visited Cetshwayo and joined the Zulu monarch in, criticising his fellow Norwegians. He himself continued to enjoy Cetshwayo's respect, at least according to his own account, whereas his counterparts in other missionary societies were now regarded as unreliable and suspicious. (Source: Missionsblad, III, no. 11 [November 1879], pp. 167-173)*

Ntumeni

14 August 1878

... In order not to arrive empty-handed, I had taken along three good blankets worth over £3 and had hoped that by having the natives who accompanied me carry them I could get them in with me to hear my conversation with the king. The court servants, however, absolutely refused to allow that, so a court servant himself carried those three blankets. When I went in to the king, where some chiefs and court servants were also present, I stated what my errand was, as I had previously told the court servants. The king, surprisingly, was visibly moved in the native way when he heard about my dear wife's death and chided me for not reporting it to him. I told him that the death had been reported immediately, but that the blame must be with his prime minister, Mnyamana, who had received the report and had stopped my messenger by saying that it was his own task to report it to the king. All the chiding was thus shifted to Mnyamana. The king said, "Had I heard about it, I would have immediately sent someone to console you on my behalf", just as all my acquaintances and all the important people around here since my arrival have done. The king expressed in very pronounced native terminology a long and apparently heartfelt statement of sympathy and regret. When he was finished with that, he began a very long-winded and detailed panegyric about how, during my long stay in the country, all had gone well between the Zulus and me and nothing had been harmed. He had grown up during my stay in the country, and he was not aware that any

complaint had ever been made about me and my conduct.... But after that fair weather and sunshine a corresponding storm had broken out. He poured out such a flooding torrent of displeasure with the Norwegian and English missionaries that I was amazed, because according to various reports from several areas during my stay here at that time I had been led to believe that after the missionaries had withdrawn from the country the king's initial fury at them had not merely quieted down but even been dissolved by his wish that at least some of them return and remain in the country. I was particularly surprised to hear about his dislike of Robertson.<sup>41</sup>...

The king's aversion to these missionaries was based on the belief that through their conduct and their relations they had harmed the country and caused a damaging uproar and confusion both here in Zululand and over in Natal. This had become apparent last year and this year through the ambiguous movements, which were only a veiled flight. True, they had returned last year, but we Zulus, said the king, knew very well that they were returning after fleeing. Because of that, we could only regard them with shunning, suspicious eyes and no longer have any confidence in them. We had earlier believed that the missionaries were our sincere friends and were interested in our welfare. Now, however, we see that we had been living with secret enemies. We now feel better and are breathing more easily because they have left the country....



*Schreuder chided the NMS personnel for evacuating Zululand in 1878. Ommund Oftebro, the NMS superintendent, continued to defend that action, however, as the only feasible course he and his colleagues had, given the uncertainty brooding over Zululand. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, XXXIII, no. 19 [October 1878], pp. 385-387)*

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Robertson became in 1859 the first Anglican missionary in Mpande's realm. In fact, Robertson had co-operated closely with Bulwer and other British colonial officials regarding Zulu movements and written negatively about Cetshwayo in the *Natal Mercury*. See Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics in Southeast Africa, 1835-1880*, p. 45.

12 August 1878

Did not the bishop [i.e. Schreuder in his conversation with Cetshwayo] know that we left in peace and in good time, as about two months passed between the time when we said good-bye to the king and the departure of the last of us from the country? We were well aware that we could have stayed a while longer. I could have remained at Eshowe indefinitely, but I did not believe that would have been proper. Since we had reason to reach the decision which we reached, I thought we should carry it out and abide by our word.

At the time we did not believe, however, that so much time would pass before the war broke out. Yet we knew that it was possible. John Dunn has asked us whether we have left our station at Mahlabatini for good. We replied that we had not given up any of the land which we received from Mpande and which was confirmed as ours upon the coronation of Cetshwayo. We would occupy the stations again as soon as either the king allowed us to evangelise in the country or conditions under another system made it possible for us to do so. If he, Dunn, wished to use the buildings as a residence now, since he was to go up to the king and remain there until present political tensions brought about either peace or war, we had nothing against it. That would preserve the station from destruction. Dunn is the king's indispensable adviser, without whom he cannot do anything. He uses all his influence to keep the king passive with regard to the English. This makes it difficult for them to do what they want to, namely to meet the Zulus in an open battle. Dunn does not want to appropriate the station; he is too clever for that. In that respect he is a rather straightforward man who would hardly stoop to that sort of villainy. It is absurd to hear the bishop defend Gundersen from the accusation that he travelled [back to Norway] with his pockets full of letters of complaint [about Cetshwayo and Zululand] by remarking that he could not do so because it was prohibited by postal law!<sup>42</sup> Is the Zulu king supposed to understand that?!...




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<sup>42</sup> Pressures affecting missionary work in Zululand in the late 1870s caused renewed friction between Schreuder and his counterparts in the NMS. For another example of this, see *Norsk Missions-Tidende*, XXXIII, no. 19 (October 1878), p. 385.

*Seeking to avoid a violent clash between Natal and Zululand, but nevertheless willing to co-operate with the British in the hope that they would somehow intimidate Cetshwayo into allowing missionary work to proceed unimpeded, Schreuder went to Pietermaritzburg in 1878 to advise recently arrived Sir Bartle Frere. It is evident that well before the end of that year Schreuder was disillusioned with Cetshwayo and put his trust in foreign military intervention, or at least the threat thereof, to further his missionary cause. (Source: Missionsblad, III, no. 2 [February 1879], pp. 13-15)*

Untunjambili

7 November 1878

... Through letters received simultaneously from Engineer Colonel Durnford,<sup>43</sup> who is an old acquaintance from the coronation [of Cetshwayo] in 1873, from Lord Littleton, Sir Bartle Frere's private secretary, and from our consul, I learnt that the high commissioner, Sir Frere, would greatly appreciate being able to have a conversation with me. As I hoped that it would be helpful for the missionary cause to be able to negotiate with such a high-ranking person, I decided to make the costly, and at this time of year difficult, journey to Pietermaritzburg, approximately 100 kilometres from here. The results far exceeded my expectations. On the third day [of the meeting] I often spend several consecutive hours conversing with the three distinguished gentlemen who had gathered there, namely Sir Bartle Frere, Sir Henry Bulwer, and Lord General Thesiger, and was made privy to the government's entire plan for Zululand (information no other outsiders had yet been given). Before you receive this letter, it will finally have been decided whether there will be peace with firm guarantees or war. In either case, the aim is a radical change in and for Zululand, and also for the interests of missions regard will be taken in various respects. If there is war, which is most probable, there will be a time of tribulation and danger for missions. If the prayers of supporters of missions were ever necessary, it is now at this critical time.

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<sup>43</sup> Anthony William Durnford (1830-1879), a British military officer who had been in Natal since 1873, was killed at the British defeat at Isandhlwana in January 1879.

.... Sir Bartle is a very serious Christian who belongs to the Church of England. He is about the most splendid man I have ever met....



*Both before and during the Anglo-Zulu War Schreuder served as a liaison between the British and Cetshwayo. Among other tasks, he took responsibility for conveying an ultimatum to the Zulu monarch in December 1878. According to Schreuder's account, Cetshwayo was not implacable, but willing to meet Frere and negotiate a solution to the tensions between his own kingdom and the British. (Source: Missionsblad, III, no. 3 [March 1879], pp. 29-35)*

Untunjambili

14 January 1879

... After I had been in Pietermaritzburg and been confidentially given such complete information by Sir Bartle Frere that I could see how it would go for the Zulu king and Zululand, I sent some people from Ntumeni up to the king with a message. He was warned that a serious storm would probably close in on him if he did not take caution and try to redress the worst complaints which had been lodged against him by the English high commissioner on behalf of Queen Victoria. I indicated the main points of these complaints to the king and added that they stemmed more or less directly from the fact that the new land law, which had been published under the auspices of the English government and been accepted by both the king and all the Zulu people on 1 September 1873, had been violated and thrown overboard. I further advised the king to send without delay a delegation of his chiefs to a meeting which I knew the high commissioner wanted to have through his emissaries with the king's deputies at the Tugela River, which is the border. On behalf of Queen Victoria, the high commissioner wanted to make the king completely familiar with the English decision and ultimatum without allowing any discussion and merely grant the king a certain amount of time to give an unconditional "yes" or "no"....

Finally my delegation returned from the king. He [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] thanked me for the warning and agreed with his prime minister's view. He gave my messenger an ox to slaughter, and as soon as it had been



slaughtered a flock of poor, starving people pounced on it like Siberian wolves. They made such terrible noise that the king, at the other end of the kraal, heard it and immediately sent some fierce servants who beat those poor, starving people with their long, strong sticks in the most merciless way. Instead of meat, they left the slaughter with mutilated limbs. This was the first time the king had shown my people whom I had sent to him the courtesy of slaughtering an animal for them.

With regard to my advice to go promptly to the meeting which the high commissioner probably wanted to have immediately, several chiefs prepared to depart immediately, as soon as the request came from the government of Natal. On the other hand my messenger, because of stupid and genuinely native hesitation, failed to do the main thing which he had been sent to do, namely to ask the king to give me a few reliable men to guard the station in case our believers went away....

The oft-mentioned meeting took place at the Tugela crossing-place near where the Norwegian missionaries had their conference in July 1877. Four men from the Ntumeni congregation attended the meeting from first to last and accompanied the king's deputies back. They thus had a good opportunity to hear how the important men and the king of Zululand would perceive and respond to that ultimatum. As soon as a messenger from Ntumeni had reported to me what effect the ultimatum would probably have on the king with regard to extraditing the four executioners from Chief Uschayo's tribe, paying 600 head of cattle as a fine, and agreeing to the other political points, I sent both oral and written messages to the king:

The bishop now says to you, king, this: What should we do now? It looks very gloomy everywhere. I do not wish to say farewell forever, as I am not scared and do not wish to leave Zululand permanently. I only want to say to you that I foresee that the believers will be scared away and will seek to avoid the storm which is already beginning to arise. But neither do they want to bid you farewell forever. They want to make their difficult position known to you. They want to return as soon as all of this is past. It does not stem from us, and we do not want to have anything to do with it. The bishop also says, give me some people to watch my station in order to prevent

scoundrels, whom you do not send but who independently do misdeeds for which you would be blamed, even though you do not authorise them to damage the missionaries' stations. As soon as I return to Ntumeni, I shall pay well the people who guard my station. The bishop also says to you with emphatic admonition: If you, king, now really want to take care of your true interests and preserve your kingdom, then subordinate yourself to everything the high commissioner demanded in his decision and ultimatum at the meeting of 11 December at the Tugela. Even though this will be a bitter pill for you to swallow at the moment, in the long run it will be easier for you and will confirm your royal dignity. Indeed, in future you will have to admit that I was right in what I have said and in how I advised you.

This written and oral message was sent on 22 December. On 31 December I received the king's reply. He found it quite reasonable that women and children temporarily leave Ntumeni. He was not opposed to the decision and ultimatum of the high commissioner, but one was not giving him time to consider and talk about the matter in peace and quiet, but instead was holding a sword above his head and saying, "Speak! Speak! Now, immediately, here!" How could he think and speak in such a threatened position? He asked me to try to get the English to cease their threatening preparations for war and give him some breathing room so that he could compose himself and express himself.

Given the threatening situation, I had to believe it was reasonable for those who did not dare to stay at Ntumeni to come to Natal as soon as possible. Through the beneficence of Sir Bartle Frere, I was able to get cereals for them until they could support themselves. On 2 January 1879 more than thirty people, large and small, arrived here from Ntumeni....

The king promised to let me have some reliable men who would be exempted from military service if a war with England began. They could remain at the station. He assumed that the English army would not harm them. He also said that the men at Ntumeni would have free, unhindered access to him, even if the armies were fighting. He immediately made that promise known amongst his people.

The king also wanted to give my messenger a new message for me. My messenger tried to refuse to accept it, saying that such a message ought to be conveyed by his own authorised people, and that the most correct thing for the king to do would be to send his own special messenger. The king objected, though, saying that his own people usually took too much time on the journey, so that when time was at a premium he could not depend on their promptness.

The main points of the message, which he wanted to be conveyed to the high commissioner, were as follows:

The king did not oppose the demands of the ultimatum, but he requested urgently to be able to confer with Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Theophilus Shepstone. The high commissioner had thus far heard only one side of the matter, and his ears had been filled with what John Dunn, missionary Robertson, and the other missionaries who had fled had said against him (the king). As a man, he [i.e. Frere] should also have his other ear open to what the king had to say. Only after hearing both sides could he make a well-grounded decision for either war or peace. The Zulu people had orders not to resist a peaceful occupation by the English troops and should only make sure that the troops did not do any harm without provocation. He did not actually say anything against the troops occupying the country in order to be in the vicinity of the negotiations, but he would regard it as a bad sign if they became entrenched; he wished to avoid war....



*From his place of refuge in the Lower Tugela district, Ommund Oftebro described the initial British invasion of Zululand. His sympathies were by then clearly with the British in the war. Oftebro, unlike Schreuder, did not believe that Cetshwayo's professed willingness to negotiate was sincere. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

15 January 1879

It is about a month since I wrote to the secretary [of the NMS], just after having been an eye- and ear-witness to the delivery of Sir Bartle Frere's ultimatum to the Zulu king. Now the deadline given in the ultimatum has expired, and we have begun a new year in exile. What will this year now

hold for us? It is good that we do not know, that we only know that everything is in the hands of a faithful father who guides it to the benefit of those who are his children in Jesus Christ. I remember well that at the beginning of last year I had serious premonitions that the year would be one of trial for our Zulu mission, and it truly became that. But the Lord has helped us through it and allowed us to begin this year with the hope that the crisis which we have long awaited with God's help will open new and better prospects for our Zulu mission this year. May it happen for the sake of Jesus!

The twenty-day deadline expired without the Zulu king doing anything to meet the demands made on him; he merely sent a message requesting more time. It was first decided to go over the border as soon as the twenty days had expired and nothing was forthcoming from the Zulu king. [The British] waited ten more days, however, before beginning to cross the border. On 11 January the deadline expired at midnight, and at 4h00 the following day they started to cross the river. They still do not have all their wagons and oxen across. Instead of a pontoon bridge, for which suitable planks were not available in time, they have built a large ferry which can take twenty horses and an entire crowd of people at once. It is pulled by lines suspended across the river. I have been at the crossing place several times and seen the commotion. The day before yesterday 200 to 300 tents stood on the Zulu side, and the last of the 400 horses and 4 000 men were across, while 100 wagons and 1 000 men were still on this side [in Natal]. The military force which is crossing here includes 5 000 men, half of whom are Kaffers. Of the latter, every tenth man is armed with a firearm; the others have shields and spears. They are led by 400 white officers. One did not have full confidence in them, so great caution is taken with them. All talk that the Zulu king was so peacefully disposed, that he would rather meet all the demands that were made on him than allow a war to develop with the English, "his friends", has now been shown to have been completely wrong opinions. Even his friend and adviser, John Dunn, finally halted his endeavours to get the king to give up. He [i.e. Dunn] fled with all his black wives, children, and people, 2 000 in number, to Natal.

On Monday I saw a herd of cattle which, it was said, the soldiers had taken from the Zulus. It was later shown, however, that they were cattle that belonged to the people at the Ntumeni station....



*In an example of interdenominational co-operation brought about by historical necessity, Stavem spent much of the Anglo-Zulu War at the American Congregationalist mission station at Umvoti. He used the opportunity to observe how his American counterparts did their work. Like other missionaries who had left Zululand on the eve of the war, Stavem feared that his station would fall victim to violence. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, XXXIV, no. 7 [April 1879], pp. 138-139)*

Umvoti

29 January 1879

... I hope that my stay at this station has given me some knowledge. Since I came to Africa nine and a half years ago, with the exception of my two years at Ntumeni I have lived alone at my station<sup>44</sup> and thus not had much opportunity to see how other missionaries do their work.

From my station at Mbonambi in Zululand I have heard that as of quite recently everything was as good as undamaged. A boy who had previously worked for me told me that. He came to Natal not long ago. I cannot possibly hope, however, that the station is still in the same condition, because the war is raging in Zululand....



*Lars Martin Titlestad interpreted the Anglo-Zulu War as an act of divine retribution because most Zulus had rejected the Gospel. Writing from Bozamo, Natal, he realised that the war could spread into that colony and imperil people there. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

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<sup>44</sup> Actually, Stavem had served at two remote stations. He founded that at Hlabisa around 1871, and in 1872 he moved to Mbonambi, where he had remained until shortly before the outbreak of the Anglo-Zulu War.

Bozamo

3 February 1879

... You will have heard that the war broke out at my previous station,<sup>45</sup> where we know so well every kraal, every hill, and every mountain where the first violent attacks took place. Many of the people to whom I tried to convey the Gospel in their own huts now cover the field of battle, while their huts either lie in ashes or have been used to repair the roads, where their once so friendly saviours have now been forced to aim their destructive weapons at them as enemies.

I often wandered through those ditches and valleys lonely and troubled because my listeners despised and ridiculed the Word of the Lord. I had a depressing idea of what would result from their contempt, and what both the brothers<sup>46</sup> and I had realised for a long time would have to happen before we could hope for better times for our work amongst them. This time has come, admittedly very saddening in one respect, because it is always sad to see those who have not accepted salvation in Christ go over the threshold of death. But this time also brings hope of a better future for missionary work amongst those who survive, after a punishment leading to humiliation has been inflicted on them. Whether we will be able to continue our work amongst them, or whether our days are numbered and we should perish before their final outburst of independence as a people, which is not improbable, we leave up to the Lord. The Lord reigns, and he does everything well. May his name be praised! We do not fear death, because Jesus is our saviour who, despite our unworthiness, will lead us through death to life in our heavenly home....

The people here are very afraid that the Zulus will come in droves and destroy them. Most of them have already fled from their homes to the "camp" at Stanger three times. It is only a few kilometres from here. Some have withdrawn to Durban. We believe that the "camps" and towns will not be much safer [than here] if the Zulus cross the border in large numbers. Since it is more difficult than usual to distinguish loose rumours from the truth, we shall stay here quietly in God's name until further notice. We hope that the

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<sup>45</sup> Titlestad had previously been at Emzinyati.

<sup>46</sup> The "brothers" were Titlestad's colleagues in the NMS.

surveillance of the border will soon be strengthened and that fears will then diminish....



*Ommund Oftebro described the disruptions in the lives of several colleagues who had left their stations during the war. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Lower Tugela

8 March 1979

... The brothers at Umpumulo were warned by the commander of the border guards, Captain Lucas, to pull back farther from the border, because at Umpumulo they would be exposed to great danger. They had just been scared by a warning that the Zulus had already crossed the Tugela, so all of them, black and white, took refuge in the forest at night. Kyllingstad<sup>47</sup> was about to return to Norway aboard the *Elieser*, which lay in the Durban harbour, ready to receive him. He sailed on the *Elieser* on 28 February. Unfortunately, he became sick on board and was still not well when they left Durban. It was not easy for him to travel. May the Lord accompany him and his family with help and blessings. At the same time when Kyllingstad left, the other families left Umpumulo. They have been staying in the vicinity of Stanger. The Steenbergs,<sup>48</sup> however, are already back at the station, as is Leisegang,<sup>49</sup> although his family has not yet returned. The Larsens<sup>50</sup> were living with the Titlestads<sup>51</sup> and had just left for Durban when the Titlestads lost their house in a fire. It was very difficult for them. They lost almost all

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<sup>47</sup> Johannes Kyllingstad, an unordained assistant, had taught at the school for Norwegian children at the Umpumulo station. He did not return to Southern Africa.

<sup>48</sup> Meant are Ole Sigbjørnsen Steenberg and his family.

<sup>49</sup> Meant is Hans Leisegang, who had returned to Umpumulo.

<sup>50</sup> Meant are Lars Larsen and his family.

<sup>51</sup> Meant are Karl Larsen Titlestad and his family.

their furnishings. Mrs Udland<sup>52</sup> has been staying with P. Nilsen,<sup>53</sup> and we have expected a visit from her, but she has not yet come....



*Schreuder spent most of the war tending his station at Untunjambili in northern Natal. During the early stages of the war he was pessimistic about resuming work in Zululand. His previous hopes that some kind of military threat or invasion there would indirectly nurture missions had been dashed. (Source: Missionsblad, III, no. 6 [June 1879], pp. 77-78)*

... Thus far God has graciously kept the ravaging hordes of Zulus from making the constantly and loudly threatened raid into Natal. Now the mighty reinforcements from England and the East Indies are beginning to arrive, so in a few weeks the English will again be able to resume emphatically their offensive operations through Zululand. The extent to which it will then be necessary to take refuge in the natural fortifications in the crevices and caves of the mountains nearby will naturally depend on the course of the war. We must be prepared for the worst, however.

The Zulu people and king are very angry at the missionaries and refuse to believe that they are not a main cause of the current national disaster. The Zulus feel that the missionaries constantly preached about keeping the peace and about mutual kindness between peoples. But now, through their behaviour and their deeds, they have proven that they too are only common people, driven and prompted by the same passions as all other people, both black and white. Their educational work is thus just hot air, etc. etc. As a result of all this, one must assume that missionary work amongst the Zulus (assuming that they will continue as a people and not be destroyed) has been ruined for a long, long time. The missionaries, even if they are allowed to resume their work with this people as a people, would have to labour under far less favourable conditions than would be the case if they were beginning in a completely new mission field where the people were not so strongly

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<sup>52</sup> Meant is the widow of Tobias Udland. Her husband, who had come to Natal in 1849 and been ordained by Schreuder, had died in 1875.

<sup>53</sup> Petter Nilsen, an ordained pastor, had arrived in Southern Africa in the service of the NMS in 1865.



predisposed against them. I have a presentiment of this also with regard to myself and our missionary endeavours, for the ameliorating words the Zulus might say about our work are little compared to those dubious impressions that cast aspersions on the mission, and unfortunately they would probably be of only a purely personal kind....



*In May 1879 Schreuder expressed his dismay at the inability of the British to bring the war to a rapid conclusion. He praised Frere, however, and defended the missionaries in general from accusations that they had convinced the British to invade Zululand. Schreuder did not deny, however, that he and his counterparts in other missionary societies had directly or indirectly encouraged the invasion and were voicing support of it. (Source: Missionsblad, IV, nos. 8-9 [August-September 1879], pp. 113-116)*

Untunjambili

28 May 1879

It is a total misunderstanding [to believe] that any advice from missionaries as such prompted Sir Frere to take the course he has taken in the negotiations with the Zulu king. He is much too independent in all matters, including his own research and observations, simply to have adopted the views of any missionary or anyone else with regard to the diplomacy he finally opted for towards the Zulus. In order to arrive at the safest and most well-founded diplomacy under the circumstances, he sought out and had long, detailed conversations with the most sensible and trustworthy Dutch farmers, colonists, and other people who he thought were able to give him some kind of factual information about one matter or another. He conducted his investigations and inquiries from the end of September until December. The main point, according to his own oral and written statements to me, in soliciting factual information from Zulu missionaries belonging to various societies, was to ascertain that since 1 September 1873 Zulus had been executed without a public hearing and without proper evidence and thus in violation of the new land law of 1 September 1873....

The pursuit of the war, which has at long last been resumed, is going disturbingly slowly and lethargically. One is beginning to fear that the entire

affair will last at least all winter because of the shortage of grass for the oxen and because of inadequate means of transportation. It is rumoured that 1 200 ox wagons are needed to move the troops, and that such a large number of wagons with the necessary teams, drivers, and leaders cannot be procured. On the whole, the English are doing things in such a laborious way that even in the best case a rapid conclusion of this troublesome Zulu campaign does not appear in sight, unless unexpected, fortunate turns of events take place....



*As the war dragged on, Ommund Oftebro also became disillusioned with the inability of the British to bring it to a rapid conclusion. He blamed British credulousness and Cetshwayo's duplicity for the length of the war. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

11 June 1879

... Every time I have written, I have hoped to be able to report something in my next letter about prospects for the end of the war and our return to Zululand, but unfortunately we have not yet come that far. After the disappointing experiences we have had, the prospects for a rapid and good end of this sorry war are far worse than we had reason to hope for when it began....

The Zulu king has again begun to send messages that speak of peace to the English camps. A couple weeks ago two men came pretending to have been sent by the king, who wanted peace because he was tired of the war. They were told that the king had to send a delegation of chiefs to Lord Chelmsford<sup>54</sup> if he wanted to negotiate. At the end of last month a royal servant, Usindwangu, together with a couple other men, came saying that the king would meet all the demands of the ultimatum if only the troops would withdraw back across the Tugela. Then he would send his chiefs and possibly find out what evil he had done, for that he did not know....

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<sup>54</sup> Lord Chelmsford, or Frederick Augustus Thesiger (1827-1905), a British general, had commanded the British troops during most of the Anglo-Zulu War but was eventually succeeded by Sir Garnet Wolseley.

One cannot be surprised that through their willingness to accept the words of the Zulu king as truth men like Bishop Colenso,<sup>55</sup> Sir Henry Bulwer, and others have accustomed him to believe that whites in general are easy to convince with talk that any Zulu would immediately reject as foolishly stupid nonsense.... There is no reason to believe anything the Zulu king says until the facts prove that he means it. I thought it probable that by sending that message, the king wanted to pull the wool over the eyes of the English once again by making them believe that he wanted peace just when he was preparing a major attack....

Our son Martin is still at Fort Chelmsford, and we often receive letters from him. As an interpreter he is naturally aware of all the negotiations with the Zulus.<sup>56</sup> Now Robertson<sup>57</sup> has also gone there, so they have a pastor at the fort, and that might be necessary, because there has not been a military chaplain. Every week about fifty sick [*i.e.* wounded] people come from there. Some of them are cared for in the hospitals here at the Tugela, while others are taken to Stanger and Durban. I often go down to the camp and meet many kinds of people. I have met many Danes and Germans there, but thus far no Norwegians....

All the missionary families are safe as far as I know. All of us who are in exile long to return to our field of labour in Zululand, even though we know that we will find our stations completely destroyed and that we will have to start anew at the beginning. I personally dread returning to bare ground and having to build again. I lack the desire and the strength for that, but nevertheless I wish to return sooner rather than later....




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<sup>55</sup> John Colenso (1814-1883), the prominent Anglican missionary and bishop of Natal, had openly supported the Zulus and criticised British policy in the Anglo-Zulu War. These actions fuelled the fires of opposition to him which had been kindled earlier by *inter alia* his liberal Biblical scholarship and advocacy of polygamy amongst the Zulus.

<sup>56</sup> Martin Oftebro accompanied Sir Garnet Wolseley and other British officers during the Anglo-Zulu War and eventually participated in the capture of Cetshwayo.

<sup>57</sup> Meant is the Anglican missionary Robert Robertson.

*Rumours of the imminent end of the war fired Ommund Oftebro's hopes that he and his colleagues would soon be able to resume their work in Zululand. He looked forward to progress in missionary work after Cetshwayo had been subdued. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

6 July 1879

... Here too we are quite exposed to the Zulus, because at the forts along the Tugela there are only a few men left, and there are a lot of sick and wounded people. As recently as yesterday the border agent sent a warning to Fort Pearson that 11 000 Zulus had crossed the river. We did not hear anything about it until it was proven to be a false alarm. We do not believe that we are in danger here, but it is now certain that the Zulus can cross the border wherever they want to. It seems, however, that they are weary of the war, as they are beginning to come in and surrender in rather large numbers. In recent days over 2 000 have surrendered to General Crealock<sup>58</sup> down by the coast, and we also hear that upcountry Zulus are laying down their weapons. As far as I know, General Chelmsford is now at Mahlabatini. We have only rumours about how he is doing there. It is believed that he has had a battle, but a Zulu who surrendered to the column here says that the Zulu army was definitely not going to attack him. We cannot confirm rumours that the Zulu army is at odds with the Zulu king, that the king has fled from Mahlabatini, etc. Sir Garnet Wolseley has arrived and tried to land by the troops up in the vicinity of Umhlatuzi, but he did not succeed. He had to return to Durban and was expected at Lower Tugela yesterday evening. This evening he will presumably be deep in Zululand. He comes with the task of bringing the Zulu war to a rapid and satisfactory conclusion, and he will surely do everything he can to carry out his task and get even more laurels than he already has. We now have reason to hope that with God's help it will not be long until the war is over. May its outcome be such that it encourages us to take up our work again in Zululand with high hopes! Everything is still

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<sup>58</sup> Major General Henry Hope Crealock had reportedly made little progress in his coastal campaign; see Morris, *The Washing of the Spears*, pp. 553-556.

uncertain, but within a short time it will be clear whether the Zulu king will be defiant to the end or will accept the English terms for peace....



*Oftebro's hopes were soon dashed, however, by the news that his chapel at Eshowe had been razed during the war. (Source: Norsk Missions-Tidende, XXXIV, no. 18 [September 1879], pp. 350-351)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

15 July 1879

... I had the hope that the Zulus had not destroyed the chapel at Eshowe, because it had an iron roof and would therefore be difficult to burn, unlike the thatched houses. A few days ago, however, I met a man who had been in the battle at Undi and had come down through the country and been at Eshowe. He told me that the chapel was ruined. The Zulus had undermined the walls so that the roof had collapsed. Everything at the station was destroyed. As I had hoped that the walls and roof of the chapel would be preserved, it was very troubling to hear about their destruction from an eye-witness. Had our chapel been spared, we would have had a house into which we could have moved, but now we have nothing. After this we will not immediately have the courage to build proper houses again, and that will cost much more than it did before. As far as compensation is concerned, the matter has been taken out of Sir Bartle's hands, so there is little prospect of receiving any compensation for the damages incurred. The English government believes it already has enough to pay for....



*Oftebro described his initial return to Eshowe in September and the difficulties Sir Garnet Wolseley's settlement of Zululand posed for re-establishing mission stations there. John Dunn, one of the chiefs appointed to rule the dissected former kingdom, seemed especially troublesome, as his unwillingness to submit to the missionaries' agenda seemed just as great a hindrance as Cetshwayo's had been before the war. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

16 September 1879

The Zulu war has now ended, thank God. At least that appears to be the case, and people are talking and writing as if that were the case. But our time of waiting and time of trial appear to be only beginning. My health is so poor that it is difficult for me to sit at a desk until late at night. As soon as Sir Garnet arrived, I heard from several people who know him that we should not expect him to give any regard to the mission, because he did not think much of Christianity. But when I remember that during the Ashanti war<sup>59</sup> he received so much help from the native Christians that the English government sent a letter of appreciation to the missionary society in Basle, and when I heard that he had written to Bishop Schreuder asking him to come to Mahlabatini and give him advice, I had reason to hope that if even if he did not do anything favourable for the mission, at least he would not do anything to hinder it directly. It is true that in the English parliament Sir Bartle Frere had been censured for including in the demands in the ultimatum he gave the Zulu king the return of the missionaries to their stations, but it was not reasonable to assume that the English government would order Zulu affairs in such a way that the people would be excluded from influence by the mission. I heard from my son, however, that Sir Garnet did not want to have anything to do with missions in his structuring of Zululand. I assumed, however, that that merely meant that he would not pay any attention to missions and never mention them. As I mentioned in earlier letters to your secretary [*i.e.* of the NMS], we missionaries were waiting to see an official proclamation to be able to return to our stations and make the necessary preparations by building huts, etc. in order to move back with our families as soon as possible.

Request came from Cato<sup>60</sup> and Robertson, the missionary who was serving as a military chaplain, to occupy our stations immediately without

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<sup>59</sup> In this episode of the protracted history of clashes between the British Empire and the Ashanti people of what is now Ghana, Wolseley had captured Kumasi, the Ashanti capital, in 1874.

<sup>60</sup> George Christopher Cato (1814-1893), a prominent businessman and politician in Durban, was the vice-consul for the Scandinavian kingdoms in that city from 1856 until 1880.

waiting for any proclamation of peace. I wrote to the brothers<sup>61</sup> and asked them to come immediately and stated that all of us could go back to our respective stations and do the best we could to prepare for a general return. Already on 4 September Stavem came here, and the next morning he, the doctor,<sup>62</sup> and I crossed the Tugela on horseback and arrived at Eshowe around midnight. I shall not describe how roughly treated we found the station and the impression it made to go about the ruins of this wonderful station which we could hardly recognise as the place where we had lived, prayed, and worked. It was now an abandoned fortress. The people were extremely happy to see us return, and they immediately began to bring us maize and cut grass for our planned construction.

After a day Brother Stavem continued on his journey to Mbonambi, while the doctor went back to Singwazi to meet Martin Luther and others from the Eshowe congregation and load the wagon with the necessary foodstuffs, tools, and goods for barter with the natives. Brother Leisegang came with the doctor on the way to Nhlazatshe, while the doctor was to go to Mfule and Mahlabatini. They had to stop here for two days before continuing the journey with the wagon. Colonel Clarke's army division came back from Mahlabatini and was to go by way of Eshowe and Ntumeni to the Tugela, cross it at Kranskop Drive, and continue to Pietermaritzburg. My son Martin visited us. He could tell us about Sir Garnet's speech to the Zulu chiefs. He also brought me a greeting from Cetshwayo, whom he had managed to capture! He had been ordered to accompany a small detachment under Major Marter<sup>63</sup> as its interpreter, and already on the second day of the hunt for the king he found out where he [i.e. Cetshwayo] was. They did that so well that by going through almost impassable forests and along steep mountain paths they surrounded the kraal and so completely surprised it that neither the king nor they who were with him had time to offer any resistance!<sup>64</sup> Poor Cetshwayo! My son followed him

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<sup>61</sup> Again, the "brothers" are the missionaries in the NMS.

<sup>62</sup> As usual, "the doctor" was Christian Oftebro.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Marter.

<sup>64</sup> For Martin Oftebro's account of the capture of Cetshwayo, see the *Sunday Tribune* (Durban), 6 June 1937 (interview).

to the general,<sup>65</sup> where another interpreter took over. He [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] held my son with both hands and asked him not to go away. The king asked about all of us and did not utter an unfriendly word about us. He was very angry at Sir Theophilus Shepstone, however, and blamed him for his misfortune. Only three hours after arriving at Mahlabatini, the king had to leave for Port Durnford and from there go by sea to the Cape. You will hear more about him another time; at present I do not have enough time [to write about Cetshwayo].

In the morning of 10 September a native came and gave me a letter from John Dunn, in which he said that as he had heard that I had arrived and intended to build, he thought it was proper to let me know that at present he did not intend to allow any missionaries to live in that part of the country of which he had been made chief. He asked me to convey this to all the other missionaries who I heard intended to return to their old stations between the Tugela and the Mhlatuze.

At about the same time we received the issue of the *Natal Mercury* which carried Sir Garnet's speech to the Zulus giving the conditions to which they, the chiefs, had subscribed. Among them it was stated that the English government would not encourage missionary work in the country, [and] that if the people wanted missionaries to live amongst them this could happen only with the consent of the chief. They [*i.e.* the missionaries] must not get more land than necessary for a house and a garden. A lot of emphasis was put on this, because whites had wanted to appropriate land which they had been given permission to occupy. This had caused complications, etc. Dunn had been given dominion over all the land from the Tugela to the Mhlatuze and from the ocean to the Mhlatuze springs. Besides him, twelve other chiefs had each been given a little kingdom. The land and people were to be governed as in the old days before Shaka,<sup>66</sup> although sorcery was to cease and be replaced by open hearings. Everyone would be allowed to marry as soon as he reached adulthood, to work where and when he wished, etc.

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<sup>65</sup> Meant is Sir Garnet Wolseley.

<sup>66</sup> Shaka (ca 1787-1827) founded the Zulu Empire, forging it together from regional chiefdoms. Otebro apparently believed that Wolseley's settlement of Zululand was a conscious attempt to restore the state of affairs which had obtained before Shaka's conquests.



We are subject to the authorities, and as a result I had to stop my work and come back there to investigate and ascertain whether the English government really wants to give the chiefs the kind of power John Dunn believes he has. Given these conditions, Leisegang did not continue his journey to Nhlazatshe, and the doctor remained at Eshowe to pay the people who had begun to cut grass and to buy some maize. He is expected to come back any day. Dahle<sup>67</sup> and Stavem have returned from their stations after making the preparations they were able to make. They too had found the people very happy to see them return. There are no fewer than nine stations in Dunn's principality: Eshowe, Ntumeni, two English and five German stations. One dares to hope that most of the native chiefs, of whom there are no fewer than twelve, want to have missionaries. You can see, however, that the missionaries are only allowed to live in the country under conditions which would appear to make that almost impossible. Because John Dunn is a white man and as such is favoured by the English government, his example will necessarily influence the other chiefs and make them afraid to have missionaries. They will think that since he as a white man does not allow them [*i.e.* missionaries] to live in his country, and since the great chief of the queen [*i.e.* Dunn] has expressed himself as he has regarding missionaries, then there must be something wrong with having them in the country, etc.

I have written to Cato about this and also to my son Martin, who is in the same regiment as Dunn, and asked him to let us know when and where we can meet Dunn and find out what he really thinks. This result of the war is so surprising that one can hardly believe that it is anything but a [bad] dream. It is as though the purpose of the war was to give the polygamist John Dunn, who, to the best of my knowledge, has sixteen black wives, the opportunity to become the leader of Zululand and actual king in place of Cetshwayo and close the country to any influence of Christianity and civilisation. This John Dunn is the actual cause of this long and sorrowful war, because he made money by supplying the Zulus with rifles and ammunition and by encouraging the king to govern in the old Zulu way. When, after providing them with weapons of war, he could not prevent them from wanting to test their strength against the English, he knew enough to go over

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<sup>67</sup> Meant is Markus Dahle (1838-1915), who had arrived in Southern Africa in 1865.

to the English and support them. His influence on the authorities has been overwhelming, and he has received everything that he wanted. I believe most people doubt that this will endure.

After I have made all the necessary investigations and ascertained what the matter actually involves, we will have to gather at a conference and then report to you our suggestions and decisions. It seems so incredible to us that we will now have to give up our Zulu mission that we cannot accept this thought until we are compelled to. How depressing it is to think that after so much work and trouble and so much waiting for better times, this disappointment should face us! May God have mercy upon us in his grace!

I have written a letter to Sir Bartle Frere asking for his advice, but I do not know whether I should post it. If he remains High Commissioner after Sir Garnet, having arranged matters in his own way, returns to England, he will surely make it possible for Zululand to be open to missions. Unfortunately, it is likely that Sir Bartle will resign, and then it depends on who replaces him. A resident shall be appointed in Zululand, but what powers he will have has not yet been said.



*When Wolseley asked Schreuder to accompany him to Cetshwayo's royal kraal and advise him on the future of Zululand, the Norwegian nurtured high hopes of being able to influence the course of events in the interests of missionary endeavours. It soon became apparent, however, that Schreuder's influence would be minimal and that great hindrances to missionary work remained. (Source: Missionsblad, III, no. 12 [December 1879], p. 176)*

Untunjambili

24 September 1879

I received your welcome letter of 10 July at Ntumeni on my return from Sir Garnet Wolseley, whom I had visited at his urgent request up amidst the previous royal kraals which have not been burnt down, near our former mission station Nodwengu. The reason for and result of his visit will be reported in more detail later. Sir Wolseley asked me in a letter of 31 July to assist him with advice and counsel in the final settlement of the Zulu people's affairs (*"I shall be very glad to have the benefit of your able advice and*

*counsel, where I am engaged in settling matters finally with the Zulu people").*

For the time being, I shall merely say that he *settled matters finally with the Zulu people* as extremely unsatisfactorily as is possible as far as the bordering colonies and missions are concerned. Oftebro<sup>68</sup> has attempted to resume his missionary work, but he has been evicted from Zululand by the infamous John Dunn, whom Sir Garnet Wolseley blindly installed as chief on the district between the Tugela and the Mhlatuze River. He, John Dunn, has also been up at the Ntumeni station and said bad things about some of the believers there. Otherwise, however, he seems to be afraid of me. God willing, I intend to go to Ntumeni in the middle of next month in order to get missionary work there going better again....



*Two months later Schreuder described in great detail his return to Zululand. He emphasised the significance of his own role in the capturing of Cetshwayo and attributed his own inability to influence the post-war settlement of Zululand to Wolseley's preference for Dunn's advice on the matter. (Source: Missionsblad, IV, no. 2 [February 1880], pp. 17-29, no. 3 [March 1880], pp. 33-45, no. 4 [April 1880], pp. 58-61, and no. 5 [May 1880], pp. 65-67)*

Ntumeni

24 November 1879

... What a sight. The hills were uprooted by camping places. Dead oxen and horses lay strewn across the fields as after a battle, and here, too, there had been a storm, which was the hostile force that had caused such devastation. The name of the place was Mtonjaneni. About five kilometres from that place we finally reached Sir Garnet's large camp in the afternoon. Even though it had been set up down in the warmer thornveld, it had been struck by the terrible weather on the night of 7-8 August with about the same result as at the camp at Kwamagwasa. The only difference was that here about 500 oxen and horses had been lost. I met the missionary Robertson there and spent the night in his wagon and camp. I also heard there that Robertson,

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<sup>68</sup> Meant is Ommund and not Christian Oftebro.

who had long followed the column, had been ordered by Sir G. W. to go back to the camp at Kwamagwasa and remain there. In that I saw a foreboding that the general's planned settlement of Zululand would be anything but favourable for missions. Robertson seemed to be equally angry regardless of how the [future of] the country was settled.

As soon as I had learnt something about Sir G. W.'s plans, I wrote to our consul, Cato, asking him to do his best to get the Norwegian missionaries to reoccupy their stations as soon as possible, even before the final decision on the future of the country had been made....

Sir G. W. had initially decided to camp at the site of the burnt royal kraal, Undi (or, as the English call it, Ulundi<sup>69</sup>). I allowed myself to call to his attention that if there were no imperative political reasons for showing that he was the conqueror and could set foot victoriously on the royal plot, the place was very unfavourable in terms of sanitation for the large army, particularly because the nearest water was contaminated by rotten corpses and dead cattle. I pointed out that the best place for the camp was the long, open hill at whose upper and lower ends there had been Norwegian mission stations and where one had access to the best water in the valley, namely that of the mountain brook called the Imbilane. The camp was moved there on Monday, 11 August....

On 11 August I ate dinner with Sir G. W. From the conversations he and his staff had, one could conclude that missions could not expect anything good from them. Among other things, Sir G. W. said, "If I were Cetshwayo, I would not have allowed missionaries to work in the country, because he could not see anything good coming from their work. Furthermore, he regarded their work as something which tended to weaken his authority amongst his subjects". I understood immediately that he was plucking the same string as Sir Bulwer in his well-known response to the missionaries' petition, and that he presumably had such an opinion from the same source, namely John Dunn....

During the conversations at dinner, the general and several of the members of his staff expressed themselves rather indelicately on the expediency of polygamy and said that, for example, Solomon had set an

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<sup>69</sup> Ulundi, now the official name, is derived from *u Ndi*, meaning "a high place".

important precedent. I stated, however, that we are Christians and not Jews, and that whereas what was done because of the hardness of hearts and overlooked under the old covenant could not be seen as a bagatelle for Christians. Sir G. W. also hinted that he did not think much of Christianity amongst the so-called "believing Kaffers", and finally he asked me rather intrusively exactly how many people in our native congregation were serious and converted Christians. I replied that compared to the conditions under which one could be and live as a serious, genuinely awakened Christian, as in the old Christian countries of Europe, our Christians were still only neophytes; nevertheless, there were still a limited number who could meet his demands. (NB: In discussing this point, I felt that I was in a delicate situation with a man who absolutely did not claim to be serious or awakened, and who was thus not personally qualified to speak or reason about the matter.)

Proceeding to another matter, he broached a subject which I had heard privately had often been discussed tactlessly and in a manner that ridiculed the missionary cause by English military men. He asked how it could be that when native girls went to the mission stations, they became whores. I took the liberty of answering with a counter-question, something like this: "From whom, Your Excellency, since you have just arrived here and thus cannot know much about the matter from your own observations, have you heard this second-hand assertion?" He said, "But I know that is the case at the Umvoti station". I said, "I too know very well that there are said to be loose, immoral women within the area of the Umvoti location, but that can no more be attributed to missions or the mission station as such than it can be attributed to the government of Natal or the English clergy that there are whores in both Durban and Pietermaritzburg. I am certain that these whores and loose men in the area of the Umvoti station do not belong to the mission congregation or have access to the Lord's Supper"....

It was already late in the evening (21h00), and although I was troubled, I was happy to be able to leave and go to my quarters and privately turn my concerns over to our heavenly father, who in his Word has encouraged us to do so with the consoling promise that he is concerned about us. It will also be easily understood that I could no longer have any desire to be invited to those courses of food if they were to be served with that kind of entertainment. On only one other occasion did I have to go through the purgatory of being invited to a similar dinner....

A little past noon on 13 August, Vijn<sup>70</sup> came back to the camp, and a cavalry detachment of a few hundred men led by Vijn was sent out to take by surprise and capture the king. They rode hard all night, but when they arrived there the next morning, about fifty kilometres away, the king had moved. The hunt for him thus began. It lasted for over fourteen days until the Zulus felt compelled to betray his place of refuge.

I thought this move by Sir G. W. was anything but good, namely that he concealed from me his negotiations with Vijn, even though that was precisely a matter about which he so urgently had requested my advice and counsel. It was a matter of him wanting the subjugation or capture of the king to be done only by the military, even though I remain certain that if he, as he had said in his letter, had allowed me to negotiate directly with the king, I could have gone personally to the king and got him to surrender. This hope, however, was completely frustrated when, at the same time when Sir G. W. availed himself of my assistance, he dispatched one messenger after the other who was supposed to try to get through to the king. But even though none of these numerous messengers got permission from the Zulus to reach the king, they came close enough so that he learnt fully what great pains the general was taking to get him. The result was that the king became so filled with fear that he even began to distrust and fear his own people, so it was hard even for them to get to see and speak with him. This was also the reason why my personal emissaries did not gain personal access to him. When I found my endeavours frustrated and opposed in this respect, I had to give up as completely hopeless all further efforts to get the king to surrender voluntarily. I also could easily notice that Sir G. W. would never have allowed me to go to the king personally and convince him to surrender....

I had noticed well enough that Sir G. W. had changed his plan and his views with regard to me since he wrote the above-mentioned letters to me. Even though he had requested me to be with him at *"the final settlement to have the benefit of your able advice and counsel"*, after I joined him he did not turn to me a single time for anything that would deserve to be called my *advice and counsel*. So that my extremely difficult journey, which involved considerable personal sacrifice to the camp at Ulundi would not be completely

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<sup>70</sup> Cornelus Vijn (1856-?), a trader who had emigrated from the Netherlands, had spent the Anglo-Zulu War amongst the Zulus in Zululand.

in vain, I had to watch for opportunities to smuggle in (so to speak) now then, sometimes directly and at other times clandestinely, such hints and suggestions as I thought were timely. I tried particularly in the most subtle way possible to influence Sir G. W. in the direction of getting him not to include missions in the *final settlement* (NB: That was the most important reason why I went to him.), because I soon realised that if the missionary cause were discussed in the settlement of the country it would more likely harm than benefit missions.

Since Sir G. W. apparently never sought any advice from me directly while we were together, I did not feel authorised to give him directly my well-founded advice about how attempts to capture the king, if they were to achieve a favourable result as soon as possible, should be made in another direction. An officer who was close to the general, however, brought to my attention the fact that it was his [i.e. Wolseley's] peculiar way of proceeding not to ask directly for advice or counsel. But if one presented something to him as it were of one's own volition, he basically accepted and possibly made use of it in an unrecognisable way. I therefore decided to talk with and lay before members of his staff how one ought to proceed in searching for the king with the prospect of a faster and more fortunate result. I took it completely for granted that in the hunt for him the king would stay in extremely difficult areas where he was wandering about and where he had his most faithful supporters....

After the hunt for the king had begun, however, other things happened at the main camp. Early on 14 August an urgent message came from the prime minister [of Zululand] requesting me to meet him about five kilometres from the camp. He was so full of fear and anxiety that his legs would not carry him farther. Together with other chiefs, he had begun very early that morning to bring that number of royal cattle (ca 650), muskets, and spears that could be collected, according to my initial advice. I assured the special messenger that the chiefs could come to the camp safely. According to the general's firm declaration no harm would be done to them. They refused to listen to such verbal assurances, however. I then said that I did not have anything against meeting Mnyamana and the chiefs if that would reassure them, but could the messenger then assure me that I would actually find them at the place stated (i.e. near the new mission station most recently occupied by missionary Gundersen)? Given that this area was so large, would they dare to move far?

The special messenger assured me that I would not be fooled; he pointed to the large numbers of cattle and people that were beginning to come into view over the green hills and near the mission station.

I then escorted the messenger to the camp to inform Sir G. W. of what had taken place and to get his opinion. He said that he had given his word and that they would have to accept his word! Therefore he would not allow anyone to go to Mnyamana and his entourage. They could come safely, and it would have to reassure them sufficiently that for their sake I would stay there at the camp and await their arrival. The messenger had to leave with this message. After a while a long, single file of a little over 200 Zulus, led by a lot of chiefs, began to move slowly forward over the hills towards the camp where they squatted in a line several men deep near the general's tent....

Even though I had been summoned to give *able advice and counsel* at the *final settlement*, it was always impossible for me to comprehend what principle of distribution Sir G. W. would follow in his partitioning of the country into small states, or what principle he would follow in the selection of the new chiefs. Upon request, I had given him several lists of the various hereditary and elected chiefs in the country. But I could never understand it; he either wanted to choose members of the still-existing royal families from the old days, or he wanted to choose on the basis of personal ability from the prominent men in the country. At first there was talk about dividing Zululand into only three states. Such a partitioning would supposedly weaken the country's power to put up united military resistance. I called to his [*i.e.* Wolseley's] attention, however, that little would be gained by dividing it into only three parts, because these states, after living in peace and harmony for a few years and freed of the constant executions and desertions, would multiply several times, so that the whites, instead of having to fight a single kingdom of ca 300 000, would be up against a population of 1 000 000. [Furthermore], however disunited these smaller Kaffer kingdoms could be amongst themselves, for many years it has been shown that they usually make common cause against the whites, temporarily setting their mutual squabbles aside in order to fight their common enemy, the whites. On the basis of experiences gained through this century with regard to the related Kaffers on the border, I took the liberty of advising him as a precautionary measure to open good military roads into and if possible through Zululand. As land



conditions were to be settled in such a way that would be similar to that in the old days amongst the Kaffers near the border, new developments and wars would soon arise, making new campaigns against the Zulus necessary. Now, while the country was indisputably under the control of the whites, it would be a relatively easy matter to build such roads. They could be begun without awakening attention. Later, however, after the country had been unconditionally returned to the natives, it would not be possible to do that without arousing an extremely great deal of attention.

To this he replied that it would be costly. Moreover, he believed these states would wage war with each other and destroy each other *like the Vulkany-cats*<sup>11</sup> (ask an Englishman what this proverb means), and thus he would be rid of them.

During my stay at the camp, it happened that important Zulus either brought or said they would bring me cattle if I assisted them in their negotiations with Sir G. W. But I neither accepted the cattle that were brought to me (they probably fell into John Dunn's claws later) nor would I accept the cattle which were promised me. I simply answered that I was there independently to be of benefit to Zulus, chiefs or others, whom I could assist by word and deed.

As I gradually understood more clearly that I could not accomplish anything that I had wanted and hoped to do with *advice and counsel*, and that the final settlement would be of a nature that I could not possibly regard as good, defensible, and durable in several respects, and as I did not want to be regarded as having participated in a *final settlement* of that sort, particularly with regard to missions, I thought it best to go home before the final settlement of the country took place. Just a few days before that final decision, I asked again in vain if another plan for the *final settlement* had been proposed. But he [i.e. Wolseley] replied that he had not yet drawn up any plan in that respect. Later, however, it became known that almost everything was set with regard to the plan, even before I spoke with him. I had hardly been treated decently, I, who had come so far and at such great sacrifice without any other compensation than the hope and the wish of being able to help with advice and counsel. I finally decided to inform Sir G. W. that because my presence could hardly serve any purpose any longer, and because

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<sup>11</sup> Wolseley had almost certainly said "Kilkenny cats"; see note 14.

I had had to leave various missionary tasks undone, and because I was expecting a sister whom I might have to fetch in Durban, I hoped that he would not have anything against my beginning the journey home. I thanked him for the use of the horse. Sir Garnet Wolseley then said, "I can assure you, bishop, that no white man has been of as great use to me as you. Among other things, just your being present here at this time has reassured the Zulus" (NB: that the English had nothing bad in mind against the Zulus). Whether Sir G. W. actually meant what his words seemed to indicate, or whether they were merely *current flattering*, I shall leave unanswered for the time being.<sup>72</sup>...

You will see from the enclosed copy of my last letter to Sir G. W. what I did on the journey from Ntumeni to Untunjambili. On his request, I negotiated with the Zulu tribes living there. During the days I spent at Ntumeni, a large number of the Zulus in the area came to hear how the English intended to handle the country and the people in it. In reply, I could only repeat the message that had been given earlier, namely that the Zulus would be able to keep their land but that the Zulu kingdom would be divided into several small states under chiefs selected from their midst. (It was not known at that time that John Dunn would be one of them.)

They [*i.e.* the Zulus at Ntumeni] seemed to be anything but pleased with that. They preferred that the country be governed by European magistrates, as in Natal. Particularly here in the Ntumeni area, the Zulus only wanted to be under me, in a political respect, as well. They were told again that that would never and could never happen....

The Zulu people here were everything I could wish. They only wanted us to resume living amongst them constantly so that their children would be able to go to school without interruption and the adults would be able to attend services on Sundays without fear. Unfortunately, I could not look forward to the probable final settlement for the country without very well-founded worry. It looked bad for the near future of missions. How different the mood of the people is after this troublesome, *anti-missionary settlement* has taken place. Everyone who is well-acquainted with the national character

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<sup>72</sup> As indicated in the entry in Wolseley's journal cited in the "Introduction" to the present chapter, the British general apparently was merely flattering Schreuder.

of the people realises that nothing else could be expected. Sir G. W.'s Zulu policy has had a dubious effect not only on the Zulus who are outside the congregation, but also on the people at the station. Lethargy, indifference, and worldly thinking have not decreased, but increased to a considerable degree....



*Ommund Oftebro retreated temporarily to Natal to plan his strategy for reoccupying Eshowe. He insisted that popular support from the Zulus was on his side, not that of John Dunn. Oftebro foresaw difficulties with that white chief but believed that in the long term the collapse of Wolseley's ill-advised settlement would resolve them. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

4 October 1879

... In a letter of 16 September to the administration [of the NMS], I reported on how conditions had unfolded. As nothing has changed, there is little point in writing about them again. Since writing, I spent another week amidst the ruins of Eshowe. People were very eager to bring and sell grass for thatching, and they were all grumbling about John Dunn, who is threatening to chase all the Eshowe neighbours away because they belong to Ganze, who has received a district on the other side of the Mhlatuze. But they do not want to leave either their homes or their chief.

When I last arrived at Eshowe, I discovered that the doctor<sup>73</sup> had met with John Dunn, who had insisted that he was going to chase us away. I therefore sent the doctor to Durban to talk with Cato and others and seek advice as to what we should do. We have to yield to power, and I have submitted a protest. Cato has sent my letter to Sir Bartle Frere and asked for his advice. He has also written to Sir Theophilus Shepstone in England, etc. As you will have seen, the *Natal Mercury* has taken up our case seriously, and the editor of the *Mercury*<sup>74</sup> has made sure that this unparalleled example of

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<sup>73</sup> Again, the doctor was Christian Oftebro.

<sup>74</sup> Sir John Robinson (1839-1903), an Englishman by birth and the first prime minister of Natal, then edited the *Natal Mercury*.

the result of an English victory over a heathen people is being made known to the English[-speaking] public. We still have Eshowe, because I have people there, but I am expecting to hear any day that they have been driven away by force. Opposition to Sir Garnet's policy in the restructuring of Zululand is so widespread and strong that if public opinion in the colony [*i.e.* Natal] is of any importance, the present arrangement will not last long....



*Ommund Oftebro's colleagues met to plan their strategy for reoccupying Zululand. Still in Natal, Oftebro described his efforts to solicit public opinion and the assistance of government officials in his struggle against the recalcitrant John Dunn. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Lower Tugela

28 October 1879

... On 16 September I reported briefly my unsuccessful attempt to occupy Eshowe, and after going up to the Eshowe site a second time for a week I wrote some lines to the secretary [of the NMS]. Since then we have had a conference, the results of which I am sending herewith. Unfortunately, I was prevented from attending this meeting, because a few days before I was to leave for it I received a letter and immediately thereafter a telegram from Durban that my son, who is with Blackwood, Garland & Co., was suffering from malaria. I was asked to come down and get him out of the city as the doctor had advised. I did not have anyone to send there in my place, because the doctor was prevented from going, and therefore I had to travel myself. Had it been possible for my son to travel by rail to Verulam, I could have met him there and brought him to Umvoti and from there gone to Umpumulo before the meeting had ended. I had to go to Durban, however, and I found my son so seriously ill that moving him was out of the question. I had to stay with him for over a week until it was possible to go home with him. We got home only on Saturday, 25 October.

It was by no means significant that I was unable to attend the meeting, however, and I am certain that the conclusions reached at it would have been the same had I been present. It has now been decided, as you will see from the report, that we will immediately occupy all the stations in Zululand that

lie outside Dunn's district, if the respective chiefs allow it. All our stations except Eshowe lie outside Dunn's territory, although I hear that the two chiefs Ganze and Umgikwa have placed their land and people under Dunn's dominion, and if that is the case we will have to deal with Dunn with regard to Mfule....

I shall now send you copies of the documents between John Dunn and me. Since protesting strongly against his threat to use force to prevent me from keeping Eshowe, I have not heard from Dunn. I intend to go up to Eshowe again soon. I now have a man staying here to guard several things which I was not able to get out with me and some maize which I bought here. Dissatisfaction with Sir Garnet's arrangement is widespread and strong in the colony, and we have the decided sympathy of all the best colonists. A letter from Sir Garnet to Bishop Schreuder, published in the *Natal Mercury* on 13 October, has awakened general displeasure with the high commissioner, because it was unworthy of a man in his position. In this letter to the bishop, he describes it as a decided and sufficiently well-known matter that all the missionaries who have worked in Zululand until now have been traders. In a venomous tone he says that most of the chiefs will be happy to have such respectable traders. Without a doubt it was John Dunn who told that to Sir Garnet, and it is certainly possible that Dunn did not know better, and thought that Thorsen,<sup>75</sup> for example, who has lived and traded at Ntumeni, was a missionary, so perhaps he [i.e. Dunn] can be excused. However, we could not remain silent after this accusation; we regarded it as our duty to refute it as well as we conscientiously could. Consul Cato did not want us to send a protest against the accusation directly to the newspaper, but rather simply to express myself in a letter to him. I did so, and he had it printed in the newspaper with his own remarks. The *Natal Mercury* has taken our case seriously and printed sharp articles against Sir Garnet's arrangement for Zululand.... Several Christian men who have friends and acquaintances with great influence in England have told me that they have written home about this sorry outcome of the Zulu war. We expect a storm of protest against Sir Garnet and John Dunn, and no-one expects the present arrangement for

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<sup>75</sup> Oftebro is probably referring to Thor Christian Thorsen (1833-1912), a mechanic who worked at the NMS stations at Ntumeni and Mahlabatini from 1860 until 1865. He served the NMS again briefly in the mid-1870s, but during and after the Anglo-Zulu War he was a colonist in Natal.

Zululand to last long. I wrote to Sir Bartle Frere and sent the letter to Cato, who forwarded it to Frere together with my letter to Cato. I received a reply via Cato, but immediately thereafter Cato received a telegram from Sir Bartle requesting him to return the letter if he had not already forwarded it to me. As this letter contained an expression of sympathy for us in our difficult situation and a regret that since the matter was entirely in Sir Garnet's hands, we could only apply to him. Cato believes that Sir Bartle had thought about the matter and that he intends to intervene on our behalf in one way or another. I am now waiting for a reply from Sir Bartle....

I have heard that Bishop Schreuder has gone to Ntumeni now, and we are all looking forward with great interest to seeing what the outcome of his struggle with John Dunn will be. We heartily wish him victory in the struggle. After protesting to Dunn, I cannot go to Eshowe in order to keep the station until conditions have changed. The protest, which was not completely to my liking, was drafted by a man in the army who is quite close to Sir Garnet. That is why I allowed myself to be persuaded to send it as it was. It is too well known that John Dunn's behaviour is not a usurpation of power which Sir Garnet has not given him, but if Dunn's support is only in Sir Garnet's verbal statements, it may be that in the end he will be disappointed in his hopes of being supported by the high commissioner. There is much that indicates that Dunn finds it best to reef his sails.

As you will see, the conference has decided that we, through a delegation, should lay our case before Sir Garnet Wolseley. As it is reported that he plans to return from Sekhukhuneland through the Transvaal to the Cape, we will not have an opportunity to meet him. I would not expect much from a meeting with that sly politician and will be glad to hear that he has gone home, because he has done only evil here....



*Early in November 1879 Ommund Oftebro met Dunn. The white chief modified his opposition to the reoccupation of the mission stations in his district but insisted that missionaries promote vocational education amongst the Zulus there, something the Norwegians were initially reluctant to do but eventually promoted with some vigour. It became an important dimension of their social ministry. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

8 November 1879

In a postscript to my letter of 28 October, I reported that just as I was about to post that letter I received one from John Dunn. I sent you a copy of it. I sent the original to Cato and did not want to go to talk with Dunn until I had heard from Cato. His reply arrived on 4 November. It stated that I should continue to insist on my right to Eshowe and not enter into any discussion of his [i.e. Dunn's] "Conditions", let alone subscribe to them. That was in accordance with my own decision. On the following day, Wednesday, 5 November, I rode over to Chief Dunn, who is presently living at a kraal about six or eight kilometres on the other side of the Tugela. I put the case before him as we missionaries understood it and explained to him both why we had acted as we had and our demand for the right to occupy our old stations. I was at Eshowe in order to make preparations for building the most necessary things so that my family and I could move back there before it became known publicly that he had been appointed a chief. He, Dunn, had not come down from Mahlabatini, so I had no reason to postpone my return to the station until I had actually done so. Just as the Zulus who had left their kraals because of the war immediately returned to them when the war was over, I too had done so. It had never occurred to us that the British government would govern a country which it had conquered in war without regard to rights and fairness and in a way that would give the native chiefs the power to prevent us from resuming our missionary work in the country. Although John Dunn was certain that he had the right and the power to do that, we missionaries had enough confidence in the justice of the English government that we could only believe that he had overstepped the limits of the authority he had been given as a chief. We also protested because of that. If he would retract his threat to prevent me by force from occupying Eshowe, I would resume my preparatory work there until the proper higher authorities had settled the matter between us. As far as his conditions were concerned, I would not in any subscribe to them; we took our orders from the missionary society which had sent us, etc.

He replied in a quite polite and quiet way that according to Sir Garnet's statements he really had such authority, but that he had never meant to exclude the missionaries from his district. When he heard that we had

returned without notifying him, he wanted to let us know that he was the chief and that we had to apply to him. He would have liked to make an exception for me but could not easily do so. It was now his wish that I and my people return to Eshowe, and he gave me his word of honour that he would do what he could so that my work could now progress. He wanted to encourage manual trades because they, he believed, had to accompany religious instruction if the latter were to be a benefit to the people. I called to his attention the fact that our actual call was to preach the Gospel, and that wherever such preaching caught on civilisation always followed it. He answered negatively my question whether he thought that civilisation without Christianity would be beneficial to the Zulus. He believed, however, that both should be pursued. I asked him to explain what he meant with his "Conditions", and there was not much to which one could object when he did so. I was nevertheless opposed to them because they were put forth by him and could be explained and used quite differently from how he had explained them [to me].

I had a conversation of two hours' length with him, and he behaved in a very friendly way during the entire conversation. I told him that since hearing that he had had a pious mother who died heart-broken and praying for him I had often remembered him in my prayers in the hope that he could still convert. It was therefore very painful to me when he behaved as he had. I told him that he was now in a very dangerous position. God had placed great power into his hands. If he had the heart and mind for it, he could do much good for the Zulu people, but he could also do much harm. I told him that it was my wish and prayer that he would have the mind and desire to do the former. He replied very seriously, "You are right' I am myself conscious of that". Finally, he told me that he was considering sending Cetshwayo's son to me to be raised.

With regard to him [i.e. Dunn], there is nothing to prevent me from going to Eshowe immediately. What has brought about this change in him? Is it the storm raised against him in the newspapers, or have higher authorities told him to give in? The latter is very probable. In any case, I believe that since he gave me his word of honour that he wants me to resume my work at Eshowe and that he would support and not hinder it, that he will keep his word. We may establish new stations in his district opposite Ntumeni in the direction of Titlestad's station, Emzinyati, and he also suggested a place down



at Mhlatuze, but he thought that the sites of several German stations were inexpedient. I am afraid that he will intervene against the reoccupation of them.

It is now up to you, if after all these trials and disappointments you want to continue, strengthen, and expand the Zulu mission. I believe it is now time to do so. You now have missionaries to send us. Since there is now hope that we can establish proper schools at the stations, there ought to be two [missionaries] at each station, and it should not be out of the question to establish new stations right now. I do not believe that the present system in Zululand will last long; it is surely only a temporary one. If the suggested confederation of all the South African colonies comes about, conditions will soon change, and we believe they will change to the better for our work. Admittedly, as it now stands the Zulus are left to their own devices, and the chiefs have really got power to deal with us missionaries, and they like that. I have now ascertained that from Sir Garnet's instructions to the British resident in Zululand,<sup>76</sup> which were published in the *Natal Mercury* on 4 November. I saw them only after I had visited Dunn. This document shows that Dunn was completely within his rights in doing what he did; it places all the responsibility on Sir Garnet's shoulders. The resident has been ordered to stay far away from the missionaries and their work, and it is clearly stated that the English government does not recognise any transfer of land by previous Zulu kings to missionaries. But will the English government acknowledge that permanently? As mentioned above, I sent Cato the original draft of Dunn's letter, of which I sent you a copy. Today I received a letter from Cato; a copy of it is enclosed. When Cetshwayo was crowned, the representative of the Natal government, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, recognised our right to the stations, so the king had to admit that those who had received stations during Mpande's reign could not be expelled unless they had committed some crime, and even in that event he [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] had first to refer the matter to the government of Natal and get its approval before any expulsion could take place. Later the same Sir Theophilus Shepstone, in his capacity as Her Majesty's "*special commissioner*", declared that we had a moral

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<sup>76</sup> The first British resident, W.D. Wheelwright, was appointed in 1879 but was succeeded within a few months by Melmoth Osborne (1834-1899), a native of the Cape who had served as Theophilus Shepstone's secretary.

right to our stations, so we could leave them temporarily and return to them as soon as possible. When the Zulu king wanted to get us out of the country, he had John Dunn write to the governor of Natal and ask him to tell us to leave the country, because we were not doing any good. Sir Bulwer replied that the missionaries could not be driven out of the country unless they had committed a crime and the government of Natal had agreed that because of criminal conduct they should be expelled. This is documented in the English *Blue Book*.<sup>77</sup> Sir Garnet, then, is now declaring that we do not have that right to our stations which the English government has repeatedly declared we do have. We have never demanded more than the right to occupy [our stations], and we still demand that right....



*Having finally received permission from Dunn to reoccupy the station at Eshowe, Oftebro sought from the British compensation for the damage inflicted on it during the war. In the meantime relations with Dunn had deteriorated, although Oftebro remained at Eshowe. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 6)*

Singwazi, Lower Tugela

15 January 1880

... On 17 November the doctor<sup>78</sup> and I again set out for Zululand. The doctor had to get the remnant of the oxen at Eshowe in order to fill the span of the wagon bound for Mahlabatini, while I borrowed both a wagon and oxen from Mr Adams.<sup>79</sup> He allowed me to keep them for three or four weeks free of charge. Rain had delayed us on the way, and the doctor was prevented from leaving Eshowe for several days. A Norwegian lieutenant travelled with him in order to experience pioneer life with him for a few weeks.

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<sup>77</sup> Meant is one of the annual volumes for the colony of Natal which contained reports of various civil servants and are thus an invaluable source for the history of Natal, including that of missionary endeavours there.

<sup>78</sup> Again, the doctor is Christian Oftebro.

<sup>79</sup> This Adams was a farmer near Eshowe.

I had to select a new site for building and finally chose a hill just east of the old site, about 250 or 300 metres from it. The believers who had returned helped to cut logs in the forest, and with the boys I had I began to set up the posts for a small house whose walls shall be of cane and plaster. It will have a parlour about four metres square, a bedroom four by three metres, a kitchen, and three small verandah rooms. Instead of building a large house or a so-called hartebeest house, as initially planned, I decided to build a fairly large house so that my family could help me in case several years should pass before a proper manse can be built. I now doubt that I will be able to build another house. On the other hand, as soon as I have done enough on this one so that we can move up there permanently, I have to think about and begin work on a [combined] school and meeting-house, on which I shall ask the believers to give all the assistance they can. As soon as their families move in, it will be necessary for the children to go to school regularly. Therefore a building is needed, and it is similarly necessary to have a shelter where the people can gather for services and devotions. The same building will have to serve both purposes.

How I now miss the strength I once had! I soon became so tired that only with difficulty could I drag myself back to my shelter under the roof of the sacristy and throw myself down on my bed without being able to eat anything, because my appetite was still bad. After a week and a half, my son Martin, who had followed his brother back to Durban, came to help me with the work. He was a good helper, and I do not know how it would have gone without him. But it went, and even though it rained so much that we could work only a few days a week we got the posts and the roof ready and began the thatching. When we returned here on the Saturday immediately before Christmas there was apparently nothing more we could do until we had door and window-sills. We can ride here from Eshowe, a distance of fifty-five kilometres, in a day.

At Christmas we were visited by two Norwegians named Jenssen and Hesselberg from Kristiania and a Swede named Hammar who had offered to come up to Eshowe and help with the construction. He [i.e. Hammar] is an educated man, a geologist and surveyor. As he is good at drawing, I hope that he will make several sketches of Eshowe. On 2 January he went to Eshowe with Martin to continue the work there, while I went to Durban to buy the doors and windows that are needed as well as boards for the sills. All this

travel would have been impossible if we were not so fortunate as to have horses. The doctor bought me a cheap, thin horse at an auction in Durban. He paid £14.14.0 for it, and it is now a fine mount. Martin has his own horse, and Hammar borrowed Stavem's.

I returned from Durban on Saturday evening on a muddy road in rain. Yesterday I was over at the Tugela to get the things that had come from Durban across the river....

On the way to Durban I received a letter from a Scottish missionary containing letters from two Presbyterian ministers in Pietermaritzburg in which they asked me to come to Pietermaritzburg and present our mission's work and the losses it had incurred, and encourage the Christians in the colony to make contributions. Under the circumstances I had no desire to do so. I had recently written to Cato to get him to submit a *claim* for compensation for Eshowe. I had received a negative answer from him but nevertheless wanted to try to convince him to do so. But no, he insisted that it was no use; I would have to get the administration [of the NMS] to apply through the Norwegian government to the English government in Downing Street.

However, at the hotel in Durban I met a man from Sir Garnet Wolseley's staff who was the secretary of the commission which had been established to evaluate and handle all *claims* for compensation. After the conversation with him I felt it was my duty to make an attempt to submit my *claim*. But how was I to approach the matter? I consulted an advocate named Shepstone,<sup>80</sup> a son of Sir Theophilus Shepstone. As a volunteer officer he himself had been an eye-witness to the destruction of the station, and he advised me emphatically to submit my *claim*. I told him that I did not want to act in a way that contradicted Cato's advice, because he [*i.e.* Cato] had shown such interest and taken great pains on our account. To that he [*i.e.* Shepstone] replied that Cato was his friend who had often shown him my letters and that he would deal with Cato. I had with me a paper with the details of our losses. I gave it to the advocate and authorised him to write on my behalf. A long time will pass before I receive an answer, because after the commission has made an

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<sup>80</sup> Meant is Theophilus Shepstone (1843-1907), the third son of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who had been a prominent volunteer in the Anglo-Zulu War.

evaluation the matter will have to be sent to the high commissioner. The secretary told me that some of the German missionaries in northern Zululand had received a little compensation. I also heard from him that Sir Garnet was going to tour Zululand after he was finished in the Transvaal, so we had to be sure to get an audience with him. He does not appear to be finished with the Dutchmen, however, who have now taken such a threatening position that one is afraid that war will break out. Pretorius<sup>81</sup> and several of the leaders of the opposition have been imprisoned, and public unrest is great. The telegraph lines have been cut, so one cannot quickly get news about what is happening up there.

During my last stay at Eshowe I was visited twice by numerous Zulus who declared that they had decided to become Christians. The daughter of the witch-doctor Umthlawana.... says that almost all the people at no fewer than four kraals have definitely told her that they want to become what she is. To the best of my knowledge, this girl is a very serious and warm Christian who has remarkable gifts to confess the hope which she has. If all our Christians were what she has been thus far, we would see great things. Several of her relatives followed her to Umpumulo, and the others said they wanted to come to me as soon as I could receive them. There is no doubt that several of them, particularly her father, will come....

On the way up to Eshowe last time I paid Chief Dunn a visit. He did not seem as friendly as the first time I visited him. I told him that if he allowed me to establish new stations in our district, I thought our society would want to do so. He gave only a vague, evasive answer. I later heard that he supposedly said that he regretted allowing me to return, because that gave the impression that he paid attention to public opinion as it was expressed in the newspapers. He was not the kind of man who cared about what was written about him. It is rather certain that the English government has let him know that it would not be possible for him to refuse to allow missions to be re-established in his realm. None of the German missionaries has been allowed to return, however because they will not subscribe to his "Conditions". When I return to Eshowe, he will come up and determine the

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<sup>81</sup> Marthinus Wessel Pretorius (1819-1901) had gained prominence as a leader of the passive resistance to the British annexation of the Transvaal. After the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881), he served briefly as the first president of the South African Republic.

borders of the station and its people. It is unpleasant to have to deal with a man like Dunn. I see that an English hack writer, whose articles have been printed in *Morgenbladet*,<sup>82</sup> is trying to exonerate Dunn of polygamy! How wildly can one write! He has recently married a bunch of new wives in the native way....



*Lars Martin Titlestad returned to Emzinyati in September 1879. He found popular support amongst the Zulus there, but their new chief, Hlubi, adamantly insisted that only Anglicans would be allowed to establish or reoccupy mission stations in his district. Denominational identity thus worked to the disadvantage of the Norwegian Lutherans. Emzinyati was consequently abandoned by the NMS. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 1)*

en route to Emzinyati

6 December 1879

The war with the Zulus is over for this time, and now each of us is trying to return to the poor people to resume the struggle against the powerful forces of darkness, which unfortunately still have complete dominion in people's hearts. May God grant that we have more success now than in the past! This is my fourth trip to my abandoned station since the end of the war. The first time I went there was on 6 September. I went on horseback to investigate conditions. On the first day I reached Umpumulo, where I spent the following Sunday. On Monday I reached Hermannsburg, where I spent the night, and on the next day I reached the German missionary Kohrs.<sup>83</sup> I left there at dawn and arrived at the Gordon Memorial, a Scottish mission station at Biggarsberg, where I spent a pleasant evening with the medical missionary Dr Dalzell and other Christian friends. On the following day I reached Rorke's Drift, or Oscarsberg, but the horses were very tired, so I stopped at a Kaffer kraal in the afternoon and spent the night there. On 12 September, a Friday,

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<sup>82</sup> *Morgenbladet* was a conservative daily newspaper in the Norwegian capital, Kristiania.

<sup>83</sup> Titlestad is referring to J.H.W. Kohrs of the Hermannsburg Mission. His station was at Etembeni.

I rode over to the station, where I found all the buildings burnt down, but the walls of our little manse were still standing unharmed. It had stood until very recently, when a large grass fire had swept across the place and set fire to the roof of the house. The trees and everything in the garden were as we had left them. The kraal which Sirayo had built adjacent to the station had been burnt by the soldiers already on 12 January, but they had spared the station. Beginning on that day all the people from that area had fled, and that was probably why they had not destroyed the station. One of our friendly neighbours had surrendered his weapons immediately after the battle at Undini and been given permission to return to the station and take care of it. But he arrived there a few days too late to save it.

I left my boy and my horse at the ruins and went in search of our neighbours on foot. Only a few families had returned and were living in caves and crevices, because they were afraid to build. I shall never forget how happy they were to see me again. They even said that they now could see that God loved them because he had sent me back. "We are afraid of the other whites", they said, "but you teachers try to do good for us and love us. Only when you are amongst us do we feel safe and dare to live as we did before. We want to send our children to you to learn and to work. Misfortune came upon us and our chief, Sirayo, because he built his kraal next to you and took your house and garden. We warned him, but he did not listen to us. Now he sees, and now we see! Just come back; come back immediately". They continued to say things like this. They found food and drink for me in the limited provisions they had at their disposal, and told me about people we knew who had fallen and about the scourges of war. I encouraged them to build and hoe as usual and not to be afraid. I spoke with them about God, who had preserved them, so they were still in the time of grace, and admonished them to use the rest of their days properly. I sang with them and then left.

Everything made a deep impression on me, and I could not recognise the people from earlier times. I am afraid that matters are so poorly settled in Zululand that difficulties and mutual entanglements will soon develop, and that they will again have a damaging influence on both the people and our missionary work....

In the evening I went back to an English acquaintance on the Natal side of the border. He had lost his house during the war and was living in a tent,

but he nevertheless gave me both food and shelter, indeed even his own bed while he slept on the ground. On 17 September I arrived back home and found my family well.

When I was as Emzinyati, I did not yet know who would become the chief in Sirayo's district. Only after arriving home did I learn that a young Basuto, Umhlubi or Hlubi, had been placed over this area by Sir Garnet. A conference was to be held at Umpumulo on 10 October, so it was not possible for me to go up and speak with Hlubi at once. The covering of the wagon was also broken, so I had to repair it, and that occupied my time. As soon as the conference was over, however, and I had delivered a report of it to the superintendent, I rode back on horseback because I had not been able to buy enough oxen to allow me to take the wagon. I left home on 27 October, and by availing myself of the light of the moon I reached Emzinyati on 31 October. I found everything as it had been the first time and more of our neighbours, of whom some had begun to cut thatch for me. The next day we began to build a hut for me, and everyone was happy and grateful that I would return. Hlubi had been there a few days before I came, but he had gone back to Natal with the magistrate, Mr Fynn. On the following day, after doing what I could, I rode over to Mr Fynn's place in the hope of reaching Hlubi there. When I arrived there on Saturday evening, however, both Mr Fynn and Hlubi had gone over the mountains on that side. Mr Fynn was expected back on Sunday. After preaching for Dr Dalzell, whom my eldest son and I had been visiting since Saturday, I went over to Mr Fynn's place again and found him home. I had a long conversation with him, and he seemed to have gained the impression from Hlubi that he wanted to take the station himself. On Saturday he had gone back to Zululand, so I had no choice but to go along and possibly meet him [i.e. Hlubi]. I took both horses and left that night, but nevertheless I arrived in Zululand too late, because Hlubi had left early the previous day. Some people said he had gone to his home in Natal; others said he was on a business trip. No-one knew where to find him....

On 13 November I arrived home again, prepared the wagon, bought six oxen, and left on 28 November with the wagon, three natives, two of our children, and the cattle we still had, because I could not get a boy to watch them while I was away. My wife had two young girls to help her, but not a boy. On 29 November we arrived at Umpumulo in rainy weather, and the following day we spent a pleasant Sunday there. On Monday we could not



travel because of bad weather, so we left only on Tuesday. Since then it has rained almost every day, but usually so late in the day that we could still travel a little every day. On 9 December we reached Rorke's Drift, or Oscarsberg, where we presently are on 11 December.

On the way here Bishop Macrory<sup>84</sup> and a few [other] English missionaries overtook us. They were also on the way to Zululand. They said they were going to have a burial service at Isandhlwana and select a site for a station there. When I arrived here, I heard that they had sent a message to Hlubi. As both the magistrate Fynn and Mr Cartwright were with them, and I knew that they would put in a good word for us to Hlubi, I too wanted to go along, but I came too late, so I had to wait until their return that evening.

Because Bishop Macrory and his missionaries knew that I was on the way here, it is probable that they tried to secure Hlubi's district for themselves before I had the opportunity to speak with him. Early yesterday I rode over to Mr Fynn and Wheelwright and spoke with them about my intention of resuming my work at Emzinyati. Knowing that I was coming, they had spoken with Hlubi about that and asked him not to hinder me. But they said he had been completely stubborn and was determined not to allow me to return, because he wanted to have only the English bishop's people. Mr Fynn had even asked him to do me a favour as a seasoned missionary at the place by allowing me to build and live my life there, and Hlubi could take the station afterwards, but Hlubi would not agree to that, either. They therefore believed that it would not serve any purpose for me to go to Hlubi.

Nevertheless, I rode over there and found him at a little kraal next to the station, which was already full of wagons, temporary huts, cattle, goats, etc. Hlubi was relatively friendly. He is a young man of twenty-odd years, and he speaks Zulu well. After chatting about a few things, I told him that I had looked for him a couple times in order to speak with him about resuming our work at the station. I said that I was happy to have met him and that I hoped he had nothing against our beginning. He said that for a long time he had heard that I wanted to come back but that he had his own missionaries and did not want others. I replied, "But this district is big, so even if you bring in a missionary there is still room for me, too". He said, "Bishop Macrory has

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<sup>84</sup> Meant is W.K. Macrorie, who in 1869 had succeeded the excommunicated John Colenso as Anglican bishop of Natal.

promised me one more, so that one can live at Isandhlwana and at Inkome". I said, "But you will need at least four missionaries in your district, so there is still enough room for our station. I could then work amongst the Zulus, while your missionaries work amongst your people". He said, "I want to have only one kind in my country, namely the bishop's [missionaries]". I said, "But we all do the same kind of work and preach about the same God, the same Saviour, and the same way to heaven. Should it not therefore be possible to work together in your district, even though we belong to different missionary societies?" He replied, "I am afraid that you will be at odds, and that I would not be able to rule the Christians if they belonged to various missionaries". I said, "You will have to govern them politically as you wish; we do not become involved in politics but only wish to teach the people about God and what belongs to his kingdom". He said, "That is good enough, but the bishop will send me as many missionaries as I need". I asked, "Do you have anything against me? Have you heard bad rumours about me?" He answered, "No. Why should I have anything against you when everyone here speaks well of you? Mr Fynn and Mr Cartwright have also spoken with me about you and said that I must let you have the station again. They have prayed a great deal for you, and they say you are a good man, but I cannot allow you to return [because] I want to deal only with the bishop's people". I said, "In case you wish to have the site of the old station for yourself, you can let us have another place that you believe it is best [for us to be]". He said, "It is not because I want to use the place myself, but, as I said, because I want to deal only with the bishop's people. This is the only reason for my refusal"....



*Ole Stavem found it relatively easy to reoccupy his station at Mbonambi, which lay far north of Dunn's domain. His primary problem was a relatively minor one of purchasing oxen for his return to north-eastern Zululand. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 6)*

Mbonambi

2 February 1880

... At the beginning of September [1879] I travelled to Mbonambi. That was just when we had heard about the capture of the Zulu king. On the

journey I found only friendliness on the part of the natives. Both the chief and the people at Mbonambi wanted me to move back to them again. Some natives promised to begin building the three Kaffer huts which we are now using for ourselves, the boys, and my horse. When I returned to Natal from that journey, I heard about the difficulties John Dunn had placed in the way of missionary work. I was not prevented by his behaviour from reoccupying my station because the place lies beyond his borders.

A long time, much longer than I wished, passed before I could move in. The reason was primarily that I did not have any oxen or a wagon. When the Zulu war took such an unfortunate turn last year that we feared the Zulus would invade Natal, I thought there was a possibility that we could lose the oxen at Umvoti, which after all is not far from the Zulu border. Then I thought it would be to the advantage of the society to sell both the oxen and the wagon while they would fetch a high price. Finally, I must add that half of the oxen were very old, and within a short time they would have been useless. Encouraged by other people, I took upon myself the responsibility of selling all of them. Later I regretted doing so. When the war ended and we had to go back [to Zululand], I had to pay the same amount for oxen and a wagon that I had received from the sale of our previous oxen. The worst thing, however, was that so many oxen had died during the Zulu war, and so many people wanted to buy new ones, that it was almost impossible to procure oxen....



*Medical missionary Christian J. Oftebro returned to Mahlabatini a few months after the war. He described his initial meeting with the new chief there and revealed how he and the chief used two kinds of rhetoric on each other to win concessions and arrive at an agreement which allowed Oftebro to stay. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 6)*

Singwazi

26 March 1880

... We arrived at Mahlabatini on 4 December [1879]. The station had not been built up much, because it was only a few years old, but what had been done was more completely destroyed than at any other station I have seen.

Buildings and trees had been levelled, so that I had to search in the high grass to find the sites of the various buildings. I had spent about a year at this station before the war, a year so full of many kinds of trouble that I will not easily forget it. I stood there again trying to do whatever could be done to gain access to this darkened people.

The newly appointed chief, Umfonaventlela, was known to me from my previous stay there as a rather insignificant person. By birth and connection he was one of the country's most important men, but that part of his greatness that he had revealed to me was his incredible pettiness on the one hand and an indescribable ability to bother me by begging for everything on the other. The chief now lived about five kilometres from the station, and the day after my arrival I sent two of my people over to him to report my arrival in accordance with Zulu custom. I informed him that I had returned to build at the old site and that in a few days I would come to greet him. My people returned with his regards and said that he was happy I had returned because he and I had always got on so well. With regard to building at the old site, however, he could not say anything until he had spoken with me. He had thought about building here himself, or at least near my place, and that we would probably bother each other if we both built there. My people were to tell me, though, that it was good that I had returned and that he looked forward to my visit. I understood from this that there would be difficulties to overcome, but that did not surprise me when I thought about the treatment the missionaries had been given by Sir Garnet.

On the following day, 6 December, I went over to the chief. He received me in a very friendly way and repeated what he had said to my people, namely that he was happy to see me there again. He asked me where I had been during the war, what battles I had participated in, etc. I replied that I was also happy to see him and to see that he, my old friend, had become so great since we last saw each other. At that time he was merely one important person there in the country, but now he was so great that I could greet him as the king and father of the country, and I hoped that he would make good use of his exalted position so that he could become even greater.

Like the rest of the Zulus, he had seen where the old Zulu greatness had led, and I therefore hoped he would be wiser than Cetshwayo had been. In reply to where I had been during the war, I had sat quietly on the other side of the Tugela waiting for the unrest to end. On several occasions I was

asked to enter the war, but I did not have the heart to fight against the people with whom I had earlier lived in peace. Like all other missionaries, I had always wished the Zulus well, and had they followed the advice which the missionaries had given them, Cetshwayo would not be a prisoner in the Cape but rather the great and mighty king of Zululand. Cetshwayo had opposed the Word of God which the missionaries had brought to him. He had begun to fight God by killing and chasing away the Zulus who believed in him, and now God had disciplined him and driven him out of the country over which he was born to rule. God had now reopened the country to his Word. Previously it had been said that people did not dare to listen to the Word of God or become believers because the king refused them to, but now this excuse is gone. The missionaries were now returning to teach the people. I had also returned to my old site to continue my work of educating the people so that they could become truly great and happy, and I hoped that he, as the father of the country, would also help me in this work, so that it could progress and we could live well together.

The chief replied that everything I had said about teaching was good and true. The old greatness was now past and the Zulus had become like white people and therefore had to learn as they did. He too wanted to learn, and as a beginning he wanted me to give him the dust glasses I was wearing in order to show that he had become white. I also had to give him a horse so that he could ride as white kings did. He also needed beautiful clothes like those I was wearing and a hat like the one I had. And when I went to the colony [of Natal], I had to bring him a plough, because he had to have his fields ploughed as white people did. He would find some young oxen and send them to me so that my people could train them, and when it was time to plough I would have to help him with my people so that he could get his fields ploughed. After all, as I had surely noticed, it could not continue in the old way; now it was necessary to do what the whites do. Another thing I had to give him was a pipe, because he had seen that the whites smoke tobacco in pretty little pipes, and consequently he had to have one of them. Otherwise he would not be completely white. All this was well and good, he said, but with regard to what I had said about building at the old site, he was not so sure. Surely he wanted to live with a man like me, a man whose greatness and goodness were known throughout the country, but in order to live together in peace people had to have space, and precisely that was lacking there. If

I were to build at the old site, there would immediately be a row, because there would not be enough room for our cattle. There was not enough land there. On the other hand, there was a fine site at which I could build on the other side of the hills, towards the Black Umfolozi, and he wanted me to go there, for then we would not be in each other's way. I replied that what I had heard from him had made me age. I had lived there while Cetshwayo ruled. I had seen thousands of cattle gathered there for long periods. I had seen all the people from the many royal kraals plant their fields, and yet there had been more than enough space. Now he, Umfonaventlela, apparently thought he should be greater than Cetshwayo had been, even though Cetshwayo had reigned over the whole country, and that he would build even more and larger kraals than Cetshwayo had had, and that he would have more cattle and people than Cetshwayo. That was a completely new thought for me [I said], and therefore I had aged, but nevertheless building at another site was out of the question. I had not come to ask him for land on which to build, but to build on land that Mpande and Cetshwayo had given us and where we had previously lived, not anywhere else. We spoke for about two hours. He asked me what I would do if he refused to allow me to build at the old site. I replied that if he refused, I would not build. I would immediately tell my people to span my oxen before the wagon, and I would go back the same way I had come. When he heard that, he became very co-operative; I should not do that, because what would become of him if I left? No, I must remain. He would send a message to the important men in the country informing them of my arrival and of what I had said, and everything should go smoothly.

I left him with that message and waited for a final decision until 3 January, when he himself with a large entourage came to report that he had received answers from his people and also from the English resident,<sup>85</sup> and all were happy to hear that I had come to build and live amongst them....



*After Schreuder returned to Ntumeni, he experienced difficulties with John Dunn's representative there, a trader named Frank Galloway. Schreuder interpreted Galloway's presence very near his station as an intentional*

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<sup>85</sup> Vide note 76.

*provocation and challenge to his authority.* (Source: *Missionsblad*, IV, no. 11 [November 1880], pp. 161-164)

Untunjambili

16 August 1880

... I had to go over to Ntumeni again, not only to officiate at a long-awaited baptism, but also to meet the English resident in Zululand, Mr Osborne,<sup>86</sup> with whom I had corresponded and who wished to speak with me....

Mr Osborne, who had spent some time near Robertson's station at Kwa Magwaza,<sup>87</sup> where he had assembled the chiefs whom the English had installed in those areas, among them John Dunn, made at great sacrifice a detour over to Ntumeni, some five kilometres distant. He had to dismount and walk up and down both sides of the steep and difficult Mhlatuze Valley. He spent part of a day and night conversing with me about important matters. Just when he was there, Frank Galloway, a Zulu trader, came and introduced himself. John Dunn had appointed him to a position of authority where, in accordance with native law, he would judge right and wrong amongst the natives in the area. When I returned after escorting Mr Osborne a long way on his journey, my people at the station informed me that Galloway had pitched his tent and apparently settled in the middle of the station's pasture. I took some of our people from the station along and went over to him. The main content of my negotiations with him, conducted in the native language in the presence of my natives, was as follows: 1) our natives had warned me that he had settled in the middle of our pasture; 2) if he could not find a better and more appropriate place in the district assigned to him, then we would have to accept that fact; 3) but if he was doing this intentionally to interfere with my *rights and privileges* (NB: These are Wolseley's own words), by the power of which I was the owner of the Ntumeni location, in agreement with the grant of Mpande and, later, the former king [i.e. Cetshwayo], Sir Theophilus Shepstone's written decree of 11 September 1873, and Sir Garnet Wolseley's open letter of 4 October 1879, then it would be necessary for me to protest

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<sup>86</sup> *Vide* note 76.

<sup>87</sup> Kwa Magwaza is ca seven kilometres south-west of Melmoth.

by applying to the British resident and our consul; 4) I did not have anything against the appointment of a regular person of authority to put an end to the present almost lawless situation in the district; 5) when Galloway had told us which small tribes belonged under his jurisdiction, we found out that he was at the extreme periphery, so we indicated where a far more appropriate and more central place would be. A day later I sent a special messenger to Mr Osborne to inform him of these negotiations. He replied that he would speak with John Dunn, who was in the area, and later send me an official answer. That has not yet arrived. When we spoke with Galloway, he excused himself by saying that it was John Dunn who had directed him to that place. Galloway later stated in a letter, however, that Dunn left the choice of place up to him....



## CHAPTER IV

### LUTHERAN CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION, 1880-1899

#### Introduction

The conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War opened a new chapter in the history of Norwegian missionary endeavours in Southern Africa. True, neither the course of the war nor Wolseley's unpopular settlement for post-war Zululand fulfilled the Norwegians' expectations. They had hoped for a great reduction of resistance to their work and expected to return to a setting in which they could resume their evangelism from a position of strength, building on the foundations so arduously laid for nearly three decades. Instead, they found most of their stations in ruins, and the decentralisation of political power in the defeated kingdom posed more, if less intense, problems for propagating the Gospel than had the sporadic persecutions of the late 1870s. It was obvious to many missionaries, however, especially the leaders of the NMS, that a new era had dawned, one rich in both challenges and, they still hoped, opportunities for an expansion of their work.

The steering committee of the NMS was able to respond positively to repeated requests for missionaries immediately after the war had ended. In 1880 it commissioned to Southern Africa four pastors, the largest number sent out in any given year since 1865. All these men - Nils Braatvedt (1847-1943), Lars Larsen Berge (1854-1934), Sven Eriksen (1854-1925), and Ole Norgaard (1855-1929) - served the NMS for at least eighteen years. Only six other Norwegian pastors went to Southern Africa in the service of the NMS before the turn of the century, three of them in 1893 and two in 1897. There was thus a high degree of stability in the clerical ranks. Complementing their ministry of Word and Sacrament, the NMS commissioned at least sixteen other people, twelve of them women, for educational, social, and health ministries in Natal and Zululand between 1880 and 1899. Several of the women left the NMS, usually to marry, after a few years of service, and some of the unordained men also served only briefly. There was therefore much less stability in the ranks of these supplementary ministries than amongst the clergymen, but the rapid growth in the number of the former underscores both the increasing

variety of Norwegian Lutheran involvement in the Zulu field and its permanence as the Norwegians became more firmly established there. H.P.S. Schreuder, by contrast, continued to plough his two corners of the field (his stations Ntumeni and Untunjambili) without long-term Norwegian colleagues until his death in 1882. Even after his sponsoring committee in Kristiania was able to send men to succeed him in the mid-1880s, the Schreuder Mission long remained small and its activities hampered by a shortage of personnel.

With the war behind them and the initial difficulties of re-entering Zululand overcome, most of the NMS men appear to have resumed their tasks in a spirit of relative optimism. None failed to perceive the physical hardships they would continue to endure, but the general psyche of the defeated Zulus seemed to offer more fertile soil for planting the Gospel than had been the case before the war. Medical missionary Christian Oftebro expressed a commonly held attitude when he generalised in August 1880 that before the conquest of Zululand "there was amongst the people quite simply no desire to learn, and it was almost impossible to hire even the most necessary servants to be able to live in the country". Since the end of the war, by contrast, "people are willing to work. At the moment I have twelve boys in my service, whereas before the war we had only two". In addition to their greater desire to be employed, Oftebro perceived moral improvement amongst the Zulus, a change which this European revealingly linked to their willingness to serve him: "On the whole the Zulus have changed much for the better during the tribulations of recent times. The previous arrogance and conceitedness of raw power have disappeared without a trace. They are now modest in their behaviour towards whites and say that they are willing to be our servants".<sup>1</sup>

Oftebro's colleagues in the NMS shared his optimism to varying degrees. Ole Stavem at remote Mbonambi could exclaim late in 1880, "What a difference between conditions under Cetshwayo and now!" He found it particularly encouraging that Zulu parents near Mbonambi were finally

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<sup>1</sup> NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 6, C. Oftebro (Eshowe) to NMS, 24 August 1880.

allowing their children to attend his evening school at the station. "That never would have happened while the Zulu king was in power".<sup>2</sup>

Somewhat less sanguine was superintendent Ommund Oftebro, whose optimism was tempered by his perception that "the Zulu people are still stubborn arch-conservatives who remain indifferent to everything they cannot eat, drink, or roll their bodies into on a chilly day or night". No less condescendingly, however, he generalised that "their previously often shameless behaviour towards the white man no longer exists. The white man is now lord; he is addressed politely, flattered, and feared".<sup>3</sup>

At the pessimistic pole of the spectrum, Schreuder found little grounds for hope at either of his stations a few months after the capitulation. At Ntumeni, he wrote metaphorically to his sponsoring committee, "a mist of laziness, indifference, and worldliness" had fallen on the inhabitants since Wolseley's settlement for Zululand had been promulgated. Much the same appeared to prevail at Untunjambili south of the Tugela; Schreuder lamented that amongst both Zulus who resided at that station and their neighbours "sluggishness, indifference, and a worldly mentality have actually increased, and to a troublesome degree, rather than decreased".<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the Schreuder Mission continued to make only very slow progress in both Natal and Zululand, but for a reason strikingly different from that implied in this pessimistic letter. Schreuder, its only theologically educated representative in Southern Africa, died suddenly in January 1882. For more than a year the mission appeared to be on the verge of disappearance because of the lack of a successor. In 1883, however, Nils Astrup (1843-1919), the scholarly pastor of the state church parish in remote Norddal, felt called to fill the void. Resigning his post in Norway, he sailed to Natal and spent much of the rest of his life

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<sup>2</sup> "Fra Zulumissionen", *Norsk Missions-Tidende*, XXXVI, no. 2 (January 1881), p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Fædrelandet* (Kristiania), 31 December 1880 (letter).

<sup>4</sup> H. Schreuder (Ntumeni) to Mission Committee, 24 November 1879, in *Missionsblad*, IV (May 1880), pp. 57, 74-75.

administering the station at Untunjambili.<sup>5</sup> Astrup's younger brother, Hans (1852-1938), who had been the pastor in the Church of Norway at Oyer, followed in his wake the following year and assumed responsibility for the station at Ntumeni. The Astrups spent most of the rest of their careers in the service of the Schreuder Mission. Nils was elevated to the missionary episcopacy in 1902, belatedly succeeding Schreuder in that official capacity.

Despite many years of arduous work by the Astrups, the Schreuder Mission grew slowly for the rest of the nineteenth century. Following a theologically conservative line and hampered by a shortage of personnel, the two brothers were long unable to realise their dreams of expanding their field. The ranks of the Schreuder Mission were bolstered, however, when Carl Otte (1817-1903), a German who had left the Hermannsburg Mission, began to serve it in the 1880s. In 1891 a third station was acquired, that at Hlabisa in north-eastern Zululand where Ole Stavem of the NMS had first evangelised around 1870, when that organisation ceded it to the Schreuder Mission as compensation for exclusive results to Umpumulo. With one exception, however, further expansion had to wait until after the turn of the century. Nevertheless, the Astrups nurtured plans of extending their mission. In 1888 Nils Astrup, who had been in Southern Africa for five years, announced his intention of making a journey through Tongaland and Swaziland in order to investigate the possibility of establishing a chain of stations there.<sup>6</sup> His enthusiasm grew during the three-month trek, but a perennial shortage of funds and personnel allowed the Schreuder Mission to establish only one new station, that at Biyela in 1891, during the 1890s.

The successive waves of violence which shook Zululand for several years during the 1880s left some of the missionaries in that factionalised kingdom wondering whether they would ever have a stable setting in which to avail themselves of the advantages which the decline of religious persecution offered. The Norwegians were not at all enthusiastic about the proposed restoration of Cetshwayo in the early 1880s. Late in 1882 the

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<sup>5</sup> *Morgenbladet* (Kristiania), 17 June 1883 (letter).

<sup>6</sup> *Morgenbladet*, 14 February 1889 (letter).

British agreed to allow the former monarch to return to Zululand under certain conditions, *inter alia* that he would rule peacefully and in only part of his former kingdom. Cetshwayo was subsequently landed at Port Durnford, near the NMS Eshowe and Empangeni stations, on 10 January 1883 and officially installed at Mtonjaneni on 29 January. His position was precarious from the outset, partly because his old rival, Zibhebhu (1841?-1904), who had been installed in one of the thirteen chiefdoms in Wolseley's settlement of 1879, was still in power. Complicating matters, many supporters of Cetshwayo resided in Zibhebhu's northerly chiefdom. Within weeks violence had erupted, and the British Resident in Zululand was powerless to quell it. Cetshwayo's forces suffered major defeats in March and July. Wounded, Cetshwayo retreated to a kraal near Eshowe and died unexpectedly in February 1884.

His passing did not end the fighting or erase hostile feelings in Zululand. Cetshwayo's son, Dinizulu (1868?-1913), desired to succeed his father and found his aspirations supported by Transvalers in the Blood River district near the north-western border of Zululand who saw in him a potential puppet monarch. Their combined forces defeated Zibhebhu in June 1884. The Afrikaners' reward for their support was the creation of the so-called "New Republic" which endured until 1887, when the South African Republic absorbed it, only to cede it to Natal after the Second Anglo-Boer War. In Dinizulu's more or less independent monarchy factional strife continued intermittently until the British intervened militarily in 1887 and declared most of it a protectorate. During the intervening years of sporadic terror, Norwegian missionaries perceived the country as a powder-keg on the verge of exploding in a re-enactment of 1879. A few missionaries were compelled to leave their stations temporarily, but they did not undertake a wholesale evacuation of Zululand when inter-Zulu warfare resumed briefly after the defeated Zibhebhu returned in 1888 and sought to wrest control of his land from Dinizulu, whom the British recognised as the nominal Zulu monarch. Two stations were destroyed in the renewed fighting and a large number of the missionaries' cattle were stolen or killed,<sup>1</sup> but perseverance in the face of adversity eventually produced results. More than 400 Zulus were baptised between 1880 and

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<sup>1</sup> *Fædrelandet*, 13 September 1888 (letter).

the declaration of the British protectorate.<sup>8</sup> The turmoil of the 1880s was not the last violent threat to the Norwegians and their stations. The Second Anglo-Boer War touched a few stations, as did the Bambata rebellion of 1906, but neither of those bloody episodes seriously impeded Norwegian missionary activity. By contrast, the decade of the 1890s was generally a time of peace, though one when epidemics, droughts, and locusts wrought havoc amongst the Zulus and caused the missionaries perennial headaches.

Educational efforts continued to advance on several fronts during the unstable 1880s, providing the corner-stones of both the indigenisation of the leadership of the Zulu Lutheran church and of stable missionary family life in the South African field. Informal schools had been part of the NMS effort to reach the Zulus from an early date. In 1881 Ole Stavem began to instruct a class of indigenous catechists at Eshowe, a programme which became dormant in 1885 but was revived eight years later in connection with a school for educating aspiring teachers at Umpumulo. It was the forerunner of the present Lutheran theological seminary at the latter station. The Schreuder Mission initiated its training programme somewhat later and ordained its first Zulu pastor in 1903. That organisation, however, did not found a theological college. In both the NMS and the Schreuder Mission, indigenous lay evangelists long outnumbered indigenous pastors.

Secular education became more systematised in the 1880s and 1890s, especially at the NMS stations, where the arrival of several teachers from Norway allowed a more rational division of labour between them and the pastors, who previously had borne nearly all responsibilities alone. A vocational school begun in the 1880s at Eshowe in harmony with wishes once expressed by the white chief John Dunn supplemented more conventional primary education. Administrative difficulties hampered this commendable venture, however, which lasted only fifteen years.

After Norwegian missionaries began to marry in considerable numbers, it became evident that educational facilities for their children were necessary. Johannes Kyllingstad of the NMS opened a school for

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<sup>8</sup> Olav Guttorm Myklebust, *Det Norske Misjonsselskaps historie. Sør-Afrika* (Stavanger: Det Norske Misjonsselskap, 1949), p. 89.

young Norwegians at Umpumulo in the mid-1870s but left the field in 1878. Nils Braatvedt, one of the several neophyte NMS missionaries who arrived from Norway in 1880, succeeded him, as did Elsebeth Kahrs (1841-1908), another new missionary who also landed in Natal that year. The reports of the pietistic Braatvedt, some of which are included in the present chapter, shed light on both this educational programme for Norwegian children and the desire to shield them from certain influences of Zulu life. By the mid-1890s enthusiasm for the school at Umpumulo had waned. The NMS thought it preferable for the Norwegian children to have most of their education in English and therefore arranged for them to attend public schools in Durban. It established a residence for these children at 150 Bellevue Road in that city.

Meanwhile a home for African girls had been founded at Eshowe, one of several facets of social ministry at that large station. At the home girls of varying ages were taught both conventional school subjects and manual trades. A succession of women from Norway served as their teachers.

Other kinds of missionary endeavour reflected even more clearly the changing pattern of race relations and social history in Southern Africa. By the 1890s both the NMS and the Schreuder Mission had undertaken fairly regular work amongst Black prisoners, especially those who were incarcerated at Eshowe. Missionaries' reports from that institutional sector of the field testify to the difficulty of reaching the imprisoned, some of whom faced the death penalty. On a much larger scale, the NMS emulated certain other missionary societies by opening a station in Durban. The flight of many indigenes from rural areas into the cities had alarmed missionaries at least as early as the 1880s, especially when they received dismaying reports about the moral decline of members of their congregations who had left their homes in search of urban employment. Ole Stavem first undertook work in Durban in 1890. He also served as pastor of St Olav Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Lutheran congregation in that city. The station expanded rapidly under the direction of Sven Eriksen, who moved from the station at Otimati to Durban in 1903 and served there until 1915.

All in all, by the end of the nineteenth century Norwegian missionary work was well entrenched in a permanent organisational

structure with stations dotting northern Natal and several parts of Zululand. Zulu congregations were maturing at many of the older sites. Few had African pastors (though indigenous lay evangelists were common), and most of the Norwegian missionaries who administered the stations maintained a paternalistic attitude and a firm bureaucratic grip on local ecclesiastical affairs. Self-help had begun to flourish, although rural poverty kept a low ceiling on the extent to which congregations could support themselves. Despite tribulations of many kinds, it was evident to the writers of these letters and reports that the precarious days prior to the annexation of Zululand were a bygone era.

### Correspondence

*After the conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War and the defeat of Cetshwayo, missionary strategy became more assertive. Reporting from the Mfule station, which had been established in 1865, Ole Sigbjørnsen Steenberg admitted that relatively few Zulus attended his services, although the number had risen significantly since his return. To reach more people, he had embarked on an ambitious programme of "home evangelisation" by visiting many of the kraals near Mfule. This was an important departure in missionary strategy, though one that did not become normative in the NMS. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 13)*

Mfule

30 June 1881

... The school for our servants has been continued with one hour of instruction every afternoon. Some boys from the nearest kraal also come irregularly. It will be difficult to start a voluntary school for the children and youth from the closest kraals, because there is not any hankering after any kind of knowledge amongst these people. It was difficult enough in Natal to get heathen children to attend school.

In my last report attendance at worship was poor. It still is, but I can only state with joy and gratitude what the Lord has done and allowed us to experience. The heathens here cannot yet see what the



point is with Christianity. To listen to the preaching of it, not to mention leaving their own traditional religion, must seem to them to be the greatest evil, despite all the time the Word has been preached here. Under such conditions it becomes more obviously a work of the Lord when the flock which gathers around the Word of God grows larger. There are often about fifty who come on Sundays, and attendance has also been quite consistent. A large number have been children - and in a kraal with many wives there are also many children. Most recently, and at Christmas, there have been more men than usual. Some of them seem to listen attentively. Attendance has more than doubled since I last wrote; that is progress which I am able to see. I have to regard that as significant; I know that it has been achieved with God's help, and I thank him for it. Our first concern is that people may hear the Word of God, and one is happy to be able to bring them to it. The second concern is that the Word may work and bear fruit. That God can turn a dead heathen into a sinner hungry for grace is like an insurmountable mountain before our human reason, but faith is certain that the Lord both wants to and can do it, so that the Word will not return empty but do what the Lord sends it to do. Even here, where for a long time there have not been any fruits visible to the human eye, the Lord is fulfilling his promise in his own time for the salvation of the flock which he is gathering unto himself, be it large or small. Confidence in the Lord has never been anything to be ashamed of.

On my wanderings in the vicinity of the station, I have visited thirty kraals, some of them several times. On my visits I have had conversations with or held short devotions for the people at the kraals and encouraged them to avail themselves of the opportunity to hear the Word of God and to attend on Sundays. I have been cordially received everywhere....



*A few months later Steenberg stated that amongst the Zulus at Mfule there was still little interest in Christianity and attendance at his services had declined, though partly because of seasonal work. Five boys at that station, however, had expressed interest in receiving instruction to prepare them for baptism. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 13)*

Mfule

8 September 1881

... I often have to complain about the difficulties which the stony ground and my own weakness pose for work here. In the Word of God it is said that "He that goes forth weeping bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy",<sup>9</sup> and how keenly have I desired the grace to be able to sow, even if in tribulation. But here at Mfule everything still seems to resemble the barren months of winter when nothing can be planted and nothing can sprout. Unfortunately, God's emissaries must also experience such dry and infertile times when great hindrances stand in the way of planting and growing in the Lord's field. That is presently the case here.

At the end of last year and the beginning of this year Sunday attendance was not so bad here on the veld, but immediately after the beginning of the year, when the famine was over and people got their new porridge, attendance from the kraals virtually ended. Part of the reason may lie in the fact that people had to protect their *amabele* [i.e. sorghum] fields from the birds until about the middle of May. But I believe the main reason is simply that when the Zulu has food he has enough heaven and does not need any more. Attendance remained meagre until the middle of May, when it improved somewhat. This month the average number who attended was sixteen, and on Pentecost it went up to thirty.

Besides my usual work at the station consisting of daily devotions and teaching, I have visited the kraals, seeking to have school for the children and singing with them. In recent times I have also gone out to a kraal every Sunday before dinner. When it was too far away, I have used a weekday for that. As far as my relationship to the people on those journeys is concerned, I still cannot complain about anything. Those present have been willing to gather around the Word of God. At times quite a few have assembled in the kraals.

As indicated earlier, there is not any trace of general attraction to Christianity amongst the people around here. Amongst our boys (we have

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<sup>9</sup> Psalms 126:2.

eight of them, as when I last wrote), God's Word has shown its effect. We have had the opportunity to observe this and hear their remarks about it. I believe that I could satisfactorily begin to give five of them baptismal instruction, because they recently expressed the desire for it. One of these aspirants came here from Mahlabatini. His home is down by our Mbonambi station, and he is currently visiting there....



*At the Empangeni station, one of the oldest in Zululand, Markus Dahle had also begun to emphasise missionary outreach in the kraals. He was hopeful about reaching more Zulus through that methods of evangelisation and by continuing to have a large number of servants at his station. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, XXXVII, no. 6 [15 March 1882], pp. 111-113)*

Empangeni  
First Sunday in  
Advent 1881

I can report more visible fruits of missionary work at this station during the past six months, thank God, than I have been able to do for a long time. Last Sunday I admitted eight people to the congregation. Two adults and four children were baptised, while one adult who had been excommunicated for a long time was readmitted to the congregation after public confession, and one adult was confirmed....

Otherwise there is not a great deal to report about missionary work at the station. We have approximately fifteen boys and girls as servants. I regularly have morning and evening devotions as well as school for them. Some have learnt how to read; others are learning the alphabet and how to spell. I am very hopeful that the Word of God, which they hear every day, and adjusting to life at the station will in time have an effect on at least some of them so that they desire to become Christians. Thus far they have not said that directly to me. And now the relatives of those who decide to settle at the station will not try so much to take them away by force or other means, as was the case in the old days. Before the war it was an exception to have a boy in one's service for a long time. Now,

however, we have had several boys who have been with us almost since we returned to Zululand. It is a shame that we are not able to have even more, because there has been and still is a shortage of food here.

In order to reach more people outside the station than the limited number who come to the services on Sundays, I have usually gone out on Saturdays. Sometimes I have been able to preach to considerable numbers of people in the kraals. Now during the summer months, when the natives are busy in their fields, I have fewer opportunities to preach to them on weekdays. I have to be content with talking to the few whom I meet and, if they do not live too far away, encouraging them to come on Sundays. By doing so I have induced some who previously never attended to come. Time has shown that they have become just as faithful church-goers as other people. This Sunday we had a full house; I had informed the people around here that there would be baptisms....



*Ole Stavem, by contrast, had attracted large numbers of Zulus to his services at Mbonambi but found kraal evangelisation less fruitful than before the war. He continued to have great faith in education as a means of reaching young Zulus with the Gospel. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 13)*

Mbonambi

12 December 1881

... these six months [i.e. the latter half of 1881] the heathens' attendance at services at the station has been very good by Zulu standards. They have come in numbers ranging from sixty to 100, so the new schoolhouse, which was completed in September, has at times been quite full....

On the other hand, it has been somewhat more difficult to gather people to hear the Word of God in the kraals than was the case shortly before the Zulu War. I have been able to preach a few times at the kraal of Chief Mkosana, who lives a few kilometres from here. I should add that this sermon had a partly unusual form. During it I had to stop and ask

some questions about what I had said in order to maintain the attention [of my audience].

Schools for the children are and will long remain one of the most important missionary endeavours in Africa. When one is confronted by the stubborn reality which we face, fine dreams of doing things in "the apostolic way" are of little use. I do not mean to say that we should not do as much itinerant evangelisation as our time and energy allow. On the contrary, all means [of evangelisation] should be used. But the school attracts the younger generation to the Saviour and gives the greatest hope.

Already in 1880 some heathens began to heed our requests to send their children to the school at the station. But preoccupation with construction work did not leave me enough time to teach them. In this heat one cannot be a mason, a carpenter, and a teacher at the same time. I was alone, and we needed a roof over our heads. My wife worked as much with these children as her time, energy, and knowledge of the Zulu language allowed. Pastor [Sven] Eriksen came down here in August [1880] and immediately began to teach these children. Several more came; others who had been here earlier but had quit returned. The number was about twenty. Admittedly, that number was not large if we compare it with numbers from Madagascar or other mission fields, but it was encouraging in Zululand. Shortly before Christmas many of these children had to leave to guard their parents' fields against birds and monkeys.

The evening school is essentially for the staff at the station or other people who have come to the missionaries because of some illness. There are also some heathens from the nearest kraals. Between thirty and forty Zulus have attended the evening school recently. Pastor Eriksen and I have taught approximately two hours every evening except on Saturdays. Most of this involves teaching them to read, and some can now read the Word of God by themselves. During the time when I was alone down here, I tried to teach them mental arithmetic a few times. Most of the time, however, they were so tired after the day's physical labour that I had to limit myself to instruction in reading. But since I finished building and Pastor Eriksen arrived, we have had arithmetic constantly. This instruction has revealed that not all Zulus are stupid. Some have surprised us with their ability, while others remind one of that stupid

boy at the side of the rural school teacher in one of Tidemand's paintings.<sup>10</sup> To some extent we have also taught them to count in English, and we must try to do more of that in future. This is, admittedly, an attack on their Zulu identity, something which we missionaries are threatening dangerously, if the journalists in Norway are correct. The problem is that Zulu numbers, such as 9 999, are so long that it is almost impossible to manipulate them when doing arithmetic....



*Karl Larsen Titlestad, who had spent almost the entire decade of the 1870s at Emzinyati, which the NMS gave up, established a station at Ekombe after the Anglo-Zulu War. In one of his first letters from there he commented on early signs of promise, despite administrative difficulties, a drought, and an epidemic. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135A, folder 13)*

Ekombe

2 July 1881

With heart-felt thanks to God, who so faithfully helps us through, I can once again send you some lines about our work during the past six months. Since my last letter to you I have moved my family here. At the beginning of January we travelled from Bozamo in a hired wagon, which accompanied us here with some of our belongings. Since our arrival here the Lord has given us health, even though we had rather cramped quarters until the end of May, when we could begin to use two rooms of our temporary house. The wet summer delayed work so much because drying went so slowly and many working-days were lost because of the persisting and often violent rain.

I cannot yet report much about actual missionary work here. No-one has yet expressed to me a desire to learn or become a Christian. It has been a joy to us, however, to see many of our neighbours gather at worship on Sundays, when the weather permitted it, and listen quietly

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<sup>10</sup> Stavem is referring to a less well-known painting by the Norwegian artist Adolph Tidemand (1814-1876).

and attentively. It is a great benefit for this place that our dear magistrate, Martin Oftebro,<sup>11</sup> seeks to give both the missionary and his work all the assistance he can. It has been very joyful to have him so close and to see him with us often on Sundays. I have regularly held morning devotions for our native servants, reading and explaining to them either a brief section of the New Testament or a Bible story. An old Zulu who had worked for us for several years and begun to receive baptismal instruction remained in the colony [of Natal], so I do not know what has happened to him.

Our neighbours are still friendly towards us and often come to ask for medicine and other things which they need. A bad pustular disease has raged especially amongst the children, perhaps as a result of the famine which struck many people in this area. I hope there will be more food in the kraals this year, although many people have complained that the harvest was poor....



*Superintendent Ommund Oftebro was clearly alarmed by the imminent restoration of Cetshwayo early in 1883 because rival Zulu factions were mobilising and threatening to end the peace in Zululand. Oftebro identified Cetshwayo's brother, Dabulamanzi, as the principal agitator. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135B, folder 11)*

Eshowe

8 January 1883

... In my last letter I mentioned that we were curious about whether the new arrangement in this country would disturb our celebration of Christmas. Rumours about the country's new arrangement reached us on Christmas Day.

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<sup>11</sup> Martin Oftebro (1858-1942) was one of the sons of NMS superintendent Ommund Oftebro. After serving as an interpreter for the British in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, he entered the colonial civil service in Natal and Zululand, serving first in the administration of the defeated Zulu kingdom.

Today John Shepstone<sup>12</sup> returned from Ntumeni to discuss with his brother<sup>13</sup> what could be done. Dabulamanzi is sending people around the country encouraging the people to demonstrate against this arrangement. He is convincing the people that John Shepstone was not sent by the government but has fled from Natal, etc., that the 450 soldiers here at Eshowe have the task of guarding Shepstone and, if he does anything wrong, to catch him! One would think the Zulus would not listen to such nonsense, especially when it comes from a scoundrel like Dabulamanzi. The problem is that all the important people who have something against [John] Dunn have made a fuss and united with Dabulamanzi to request the return of the king [*i.e.* Cetshwayo] now feel that they are in a dilemma. They do not want to leave their residences and go to the king, but at the same time they do not want to choose to serve Queen Victoria and leave Cetshwayo in the lurch. Furthermore, they want to strike back at those who have been loyal and did not participate in the rebellion, because they are afraid that such people will be of great significance under the new arrangement.

Shepstone said today that he would talk to his brother and suggest that Dabulamanzi be taken prisoner, because he did not know of any other of preventing a revolt against the new arrangement. If he was not given permission to capture Dabulamanzi, he would give up his errand and return to Natal. His brother, Sir Theophilus, would be more than happy to see Dabulamanzi captured, but he does not dare to do anything without the approval of Sir Bulwer,<sup>14</sup> and he, in turn, does not do anything without getting orders from 10 Downing Street.<sup>15</sup> Under the present British government one must regret that there is a telegraph

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<sup>12</sup> John Shepstone, a son of Theophilus Shepstone, held his father's old position as Secretary for Native Affairs until 1884.

<sup>13</sup> Oftebro is referring to John Shepstone, Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal until the following year.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Henry Bulwer was then both Governor of Natal and Special Commissioner for Zulu Affairs.

<sup>15</sup> The reference to the residence of the British prime minister is in itself correct, although it would have been more accurate to refer to the Colonial Office, to which Bulwer was directly responsible.



cable to England. Had there been none, the Transvaal would not have emerged victorious in its fight with the English<sup>16</sup> and Dabulamanzi would already have been taken prisoner. It is now clear that of the thirteen chiefs [installed in Wolseley's settlement of 1879], all but one of whom have now been deposed, only five are willing to subjugate themselves to Cetshwayo....

On Epiphany we had a service of worship and communion. It appeared that conditions would prevent us from celebrating the day in the usual manner, but I muddled through, and the Lord helped, so everything proceeded in a quiet and blessed way. Only thirty-two members of the congregation participated, however....



*Even at Umpumulo, south of the Tugela in Natal, the proposed restoration of Cetshwayo fired Zulu passions. Hans Leisegang perceived the attention of the people at and near his large station being distracted from Christianity in the direction of Zulu nationalism. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135B, folder 10)*

Umpumulo

10 January 1883

.... At the beginning of the year I hoped to be able to baptise a larger flock again, but unfortunately that did not come about. Only six adults could be brought that far. 1881 was one of the brightest years I have experienced in the mission field; a refreshing spring breeze blew through our hearts, seemingly heralding a wonderful summer. Unfortunately, 1882 was cold and depressing. I do not doubt that I bear part of the responsibility for this. All of us live at a certain time and under certain conditions. Regardless of how we strive to be independent of and undisturbed by the spirit and currents of the times we cannot be. We cannot even make ourselves immune to impressions and currents which come to us across several thousand kilometres of the ocean, much less [those which come through] the atmosphere which we have to inhale every

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<sup>16</sup> The reference is to the Transvalers' victory in the First Anglo-Boer War in 1881.

day. It is beyond dispute that since the time when the English government in Zululand began to change its policy in the direction of restoring Cetshwayo and with him the entire old heathen system which he and his traditions represent, there has been a change in the mentality of the people here. Cetshwayo is actually the centre around which both the thoughts of the people here in Natal and all national and human affairs in Zululand rotate. While he was gone they began to look forward to something new, but as soon as there were rumours of his return their thoughts naturally turned to the past. All these political thoughts must have their place and time in the human heart, of course, but it thus becomes so preoccupied that it is vulnerable to the danger of forgetting everything else.

Cetshwayo has now returned to Zululand, and everyone is eagerly waiting to see what the near future will bring. Most of the people who live near here were born in Zululand, and when it appeared that the system of killings had ended it was almost as though a Zulu fever spread amongst the believers here. Almost all of them talked about moving back to the land of their forefathers with its luxuriant pastures and relatively free institutions. During a time when great political questions are daily fare, one can expect the individual to be affected by them; he no longer looks to the future, but to the past. What the future will bring is impossible for anyone to predict. All earlier prognostications were wrong because of the constant changes in English policy. Now there has been a pause, however, and during it all is sad and cold. Of course we know that an all-conquering undercurrent is present which will break out in its time and that nothing will be able to stop it...

Attendance at services at the station and the number of hearers at the two out-stations were not lower last year than in previous years, and the people have not revealed any hostility of any kind towards us. On the contrary, they have been extremely friendly and cordial. But of course they know what their relationship to the station is. Moreover, they are not so imperceptive that they fail to see the many small benefits they get from us, such as medicines....



*Relations with governments continued to pose problems for missionary organisations after the defeat of Zululand. Several military clashes at Ekombe in south-western Zululand placed the future of that new station in jeopardy. Titlestad wrote assuringly that it was secure, however, and that he had taken measures to guarantee legal ownership of the property regardless of the outcome of the strife over Cetshwayo's return. He presumably hoped to obviate difficulties which several missionaries had encountered in the 1870s when Cetshwayo threatened not to respect their claims to ownership of their stations. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135B, folder 11)*

Ekombe

2 July 1883

The first half of this year has passed quietly here at the station, thank God, despite all the turmoil which the return of Cetshwayo has brought to the entire country. The people are quite agitated again, and around here, as everywhere else, some are staying home in fear, while others are going to the king, partly because they are dissatisfied here in the reserve and partly because they fear that he will again gain power everywhere and then take revenge on those who did not present themselves to him. It is as though dark clouds are again gathering above our heads. What never happened before in Zululand has now happened, namely that missionaries have been killed.<sup>17</sup> No-one knows what to expect if Cetshwayo gains power again.

At the beginning of February Mr Shepstone<sup>18</sup> was up here to make the people familiar with the new laws and conditions. On his journey he rested for a few hours here and asked us whether any land had been pegged out for this station. I replied that as John Dunn had not been up here since the station was founded nothing had been done in that respect. He [i.e. Shepstone] suggested that we do this now. I thanked him

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<sup>17</sup> Titlestad is probably referring to Hans Heinrich Schröder (1850-1883) of the Hermannsburg Mission.

<sup>18</sup> In all likelihood Titlestad is referring to John Shepstone, who was then Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal.

and said that I would come over to Nsingabantu some day if he so desired, and have the matter taken care of. He said that he would be happy to see me over there and would do what he could for the station. I then compiled a list of some names of the rivers, mountains, and valleys as suggestions for the borders of the station's land. He approved them and wrote a document which was deposited here after he had made and sent to the government of Natal a copy of it. Proper arrangements have thus been made for this station, provided that we are allowed to live in peace under an English government. Approximately twenty Zulu kraals of varying size are on this land, and most of their inhabitants are quite pleased with the arrangement....



*Mfule in central Zululand remained an island of peace amidst the strife. Steenberg could report modest growth in his congregation there and revealed that the time-honoured practice of conferring Biblical or Norwegian names on converts to Christianity was still in use. Neither he nor most of his colleagues questioned its defensibility during the nineteenth century. (Source: NMS Archives, box 135B, folder 11)*

Mfule

2 July 1883

... During times of change we must also sing about the Lord's goodness and help. I must now write about six months and it is also that long since the king returned to the part of Zululand where this station is located. This change of government has had little impact on this station thus far. It has always been peaceful around here, and nothing has hindered or interrupted our work. Most of the men here have gone to the king, in accordance with an old custom in Zululand, and there is little sign here of the war and destruction that are taking place in northern Zululand. It has been peaceful and quiet here, but over in the reserve it has been much more restless, especially up at Titlestad's station, where some people were not satisfied with coming under the power of the Zulu king and in general have been extremely afraid of attacks by the king's men.

During the period which this report covers, we have been able to continue our work in the usual manner. Attendance has often been poor on Sundays, but that was also the case earlier. During the past six months I have again been able to visit people outside the station. I have found the people to be friendly, as usual.

On 15 April three Zulu boys who were about sixteen years old were admitted to the congregation after a long period of instruction and preparation. As far as I could see they took that step sincerely, and since then they have lived in a way befitting Christians. They have worked for me since then, and I hope that the Word of God which has lived richly amongst us has nurtured and confirmed their Christian lives. Those who were admitted to the congregation last year were Sven, Tobias, Elijah, and Jacob. The three more recent members are Solomon, Anders, and Hans....



*Nils Astrup arrived in Natal in July 1883 and trekked with his family to Schreuder's old station at Untunjambili later that month. His first report from the field gave his impressions of culturally pluralistic Durban and conveyed a sense of the vastness of both Southern Africa and the missionary task which lay before him in continuing Schreuder's ground-breaking work. (Source: Aalesunds Blad, 11 September 1883)*

Untunjambili

27 July 1883

... We had the most beautiful weather from Cape Town to Durban, where we arrived hale and hearty on 9 July but had to wait several days for the wagons. Durban appears to be a rapidly growing city with streets which are longer and more civilised than those of Cape Town. The city is very attractively situated on a large bay. In the middle of the streets grow all the south's trees, fruits, and flowers. The vegetation is tropical on the periphery, and in the midst of these lovely virgin forests, which resemble the most magnificent gardens, lie scattered the low African houses covered with sheets of galvanised iron and with verandahs in

front of them. If death did not exist, the worldly, fallen human race would soon forget about heaven here. As it is, people still do so far too often.

I cannot describe Durban now. Just read Mr [Henry] Stanley's description of Zanzibar and transfer its rich life to Durban, for there one can find all kinds of costumes and a broad spectrum of skin colours. The most picturesque are the Coolies in their wide, colourful clothing, broad gold and silver bands on their arms and ankles, on their foreheads, in their noses and on their fingers and toes. They are dark, attractive, slender people, rather small but erect as candles, with bodies that would equal those which inspired the sculptors of Italy and Greece. They are arriving here in ever-increasing numbers.

We travelled by rail to Verulam, about thirty kilometres from Durban, past sugar cane fields and more sugar cane fields, which make up most of the landscape around Durban. The undulating hills and the many tropical trees break up the monotony. Coolie houses and Kaffir kraals alternate even here with the well-kept gardens of the many colonists. We got off at Verulam, left the railway and civilisation, and went to an ox wagon, where by chance Nathanael and Isaiah from our new congregation greeted us and attended to our needs after we had refreshed ourselves in an open camp in the field, enjoying our canned goods and bread. In the evening we found the correct wagon.

If our dear little [unintelligible name] had not bothered my wife so much, we would have had a journey by ox wagon as pleasant as any drive in the country. Each wagon had a tent of canvas and was drawn by ten oxen (five yokes and one iron chain, but no reins, steered by a small boy in a blue shirt in front of the first yoke together with an adult driver with a whip which could crack out about seven metres and land right where it was needed). We proceeded slowly and very tamely across Africa's undulating expanses with their high, dry grass. In the evening we put up a tent in which we ate and slept. My wife and children always slept in the wagon, however, which was completely enclosed with a double canvas curtain at night. We made a fire, fetched water, made coffee, and concluded with a devotion led by Mr Smith in the Zulu language. At night one uses as a mattress and blankets everything one has. We left Durban at 11h00 on Wednesday and arrived here on Sunday morning at 7h00....

*Nils Braatvedt, who had graduated from the NMS school in Stavanger in 1879, was ordained in 1880. This pietistic clergyman taught at the school for Norwegian missionary and other children at Umpumulo from 1880 until 1886. In a summary of his work there, Braatvedt emphasised his desire to protect the young Norwegians from what he regarded as the harmful influences of Zulu culture. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, XLI, no. 5 [March 1886], pp. 93-97)*

#### Umpumulo

... Some five years ago I arrived on the mission field, and until quite recently I was the teacher of the missionaries' children in Zululand and Natal at the educational institution at Umpumulo. I am certain that this institution has just as much significance for supporters of missions living in Norway as it has for us missionaries.

Both for me and my colleagues in missionary service it has often been a consolation to know that we and our little group of children are borne in the arms of prayer by the evangelising church in our dear fatherland. Because of this close relationship (despite the great distance) in which we stand to you and you to us, I believe I will be fulfilling a wish by now attempting to give a brief survey of the school's history during the five years I have been a teacher at it. In any case, I am certain that it will be of interest to relatives of the children in the fatherland.

Before I arrived here, missionary assistant J. Kyllingstad was the headmaster of the school for a short time. Few children attended, however, because accommodation was so poor. More than a year passed between his departure and my arrival. Most of the children have not had any previous education, and those few who had attended the school for a short time had in the interim forgotten most of what they had learnt, which was only to be expected.

I more or less had to start at the beginning. If it is generally true that all beginnings are difficult, this is especially true in the mission field, where conditions are new, the language is unknown, and much of what is needed to begin an institution is difficult to obtain.

The degree of comfort at the building was initially severely limited, as we lacked both school equipment and domestic utensils. The former difficulty was relieved after two years when we received a spacious accommodation, and the school has gradually been equipped with the newest and best educational materials from Norway. We had some utensils from Norway when we came to the institution, and whatever we lacked we had to buy here. Because most things are very expensive in this country, however, we have limited ourselves to the most necessary items in order to avoid spending far too much. Part of what we brought from Norway is worn out and only frugally replaced, so we unfortunately left the institution with poor equipment....

The school opened on 1 July 1880 with six pupils. The figure gradually grew, and by the end of the school year there were nineteen pupils, the largest number ever reached. Five of them did not belong to missionary families. During the entire time there have been a few children of Norwegian settlers. The average number of pupils has been sixteen. Several of the children began their education at an advanced age - twelve or thirteen years. It was a difficult task to bring them along as far as possible. The younger children had time on their side and could therefore relax more. The school has been conducted according to the principles of a common public school. For the older children, however, who had only a brief time at school, this standard was obviously too high. I believe, however, that most of them acquired that amount of knowledge which is generally acquired at a public school in Norway, with the exception of mathematics and foreign languages. Most of the children do English every year and German the last year. The boys finish school when they are sixteen years old and the girls when they reach fourteen or fifteen. No one, however, has been prevented from continuing at school beyond that age if he or she desires. As you can see from the above, German has been given step-mother treatment, although it is one of the most important languages at the schools in Norway. But with respect to the practical use one has for English here in the colony, it has to be done almost like our mother tongue.

During the time I have taught at the school fourteen children have left it, most of them only a few months below the stipulated age for completion. The latter applies to children of the settlers. With regard to



most of the children who have left the school and those who are still in it, I must say that they have been industrious and made satisfactory progress. They would have done better, however, if the school had more teachers. The varying ages of the children and their differing stages of educational development have made it necessary to divide them into several classes. But this makes it necessary to have more teachers if the school is to keep pace with the better schools in Norway. The institution has had a very capable and faithful worker in Miss E. Kahrs,<sup>19</sup> but as her work was divided between the school and physical work of many different kinds, I have had to teach all the children together in some subjects. This has naturally been disadvantageous for the children, as I have not managed to keep all of them fully occupied with work.

At the beginning of each month we have usually had a free Monday on which we have made an excursion to a forest approximately three kilometres<sup>20</sup> from here. To the greatest extent possible we have tried to make these excursions similar to those which we missionaries had several times with dear friends in Norway. Just as we ourselves are reminded of excursions to the pine, spruce, and birch forests of Norway, we have tried to give the children a similar experience. The forests here are vastly inferior to those in Norway. The forests here are a thicket of trees and vine plants, so it is difficult to walk through them. The boys' main pleasure has been to climb the trees with the help of the vines.

In addition to the monthly examinations there have been semi-annual and annual examinations, the last-named at the end of May. Then we have had the joy of having most of the children's parents, or at least their fathers, with us, because immediately after the examinations they have taken their children home, and they have spent their holidays at home. The results of the examinations have satisfied most of the children, their parents, and me personally....

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<sup>19</sup> Elsebeth Kahrs (1841-1908) had arrived in Natal in 1880 but left the service of the NMS in 1884.

<sup>20</sup> Braatvedt uses the somewhat antiquated Norwegian word *fjerding*, or quarter, to refer to a quarter of a Norwegian *mil* (11,3 kilometres), or ca 2,8 kilometres.

Every place has its particular dangers for young people. I assume that in the enlightened countries of Europe infidelity, vanity, and worldly pleasures are currently the most dangerous shoals for the young. Here they are laziness, indifference to the Word of God, and crudeness of speech and behaviour, because these vices are the most obvious amongst the natives. Which of the first and last-named [lists of] vices is worse is impossible to say. The main thing is that the teachers of our young people are faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion and keep a sharp eye on those dangers to which they themselves and their entrusted flock are exposed. The baneful spirit of the times can so easily work its way into the heart of the older and more seasoned Christian, so how much more easily into the heart of the child! It is necessary for a teacher to keep sight of this, both so that he will not become unjust in his demands on the children and so that he can protect, support, and help them to the best of his ability. Unfair demands are often made of missionaries' children, because it is believed that somehow they must be perfect. But it should be remembered that they, as other children, have hearts corrupted by sin and live in a world which is evil; indeed, the latter is true to a special degree. One should not, therefore, demand more of them than of other Christian parents' children in general.

One of our greatest worries concerning our children, as they are growing up, is their association with the natives (I mean those who are heathens). Even though we try hard to keep them away from them, it is impossible to do so completely. What a great advantage that we missionaries have an institution for our children where they can be kept busy with regular work and thereby be prevented from associating with the natives and where they get an education that will put them into a position where they can be useful citizens of society!...

Finally I must briefly describe the daily schedule we have tried to follow. The school day lasts from five to five and one-half hours for the highest class and, as a rule, thirty minutes or an hour less for the lowest. In addition to school we try to keep them occupied as much as possible with such practical work as handicrafts and gardening. But owing both to a lack of time on my part and to a lack of tools and materials it has been impossible to keep the boys occupied with handicrafts. The girls, on the other hand, always have enough to do. But

if I have not been able to give the boys as much manual work as would be desirable, I have tried as much as possible to keep them occupied with some useful task or other. Keeping the children working is of extremely great importance everywhere, especially amongst these people, amongst whom laziness and idleness have struck such deep roots. Work is degrading to the natives, so it is seen as great and glorious not to have to work. The Christian view is just the opposite! To the Christian work is an honour and a joy.

That the heathens' view of labour can be a harmful influence on our youth will be easy to understand. It is therefore extremely important to impress upon the youth by both word and example the usefulness and blessing of work. We have tried especially hard to place not only work in general but especially missionary work into a glorious light.

If the Lord is allowed to give a correct view of missions to the sons of missionaries, who are so at home in the language, mind, and general circumstances of the natives, they will be better suited to missionary service than anyone else. May God grant that my prayers, and those of others, that the Lord turns many sons of missionaries into witnesses in this heathen land, be heard! I have already seen a joyful beginning of the fulfilment of this, in that two [boys] from this mission field are presently at school in Kristiania preparing for matriculation. We hope that, God willing, they will return as missionaries, and two or perhaps three sons of missionaries are applying for admission to the mission school<sup>21</sup> at the beginning of the next course....



*Two and a half years later superintendent Ole Stavem inspected the school for Norwegian children and was generally satisfied with conditions at it. He compared its curriculum with that of schools in Norway, pointing out both similarities and differences. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, XLIII, no. 20 [October 1888], p. 391)*

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<sup>21</sup> Braatvedt is referring to the NMS training school for prospective missionaries in Stavanger, which in fact eventually educated several second-generation missionaries.

Eshowe

15 August 1888

... At Umpumulo I first visited the school for missionaries' children. They are to have a short vacation around Pentecost. Because of that I had to spend the first days of my stay at Umpumulo at this school, for the instruction was about to recess. From 11 May until 16 May I had the opportunity to become acquainted with the work of the school and to observe at close range the conditions under which it operates.

I shall not enter into an especially far-ranging description. At the school are taught the usual subjects, such as religion, Norwegian, world history, the history of literature, geography, arithmetic, writing, and drawing. [Two other] living languages are also included, namely English and German, and several of the children seem to have made good progress in them for their age. Brother Borgen<sup>22</sup> also taught some of the children Latin. Lieutenant Altern<sup>23</sup> taught the boys other subjects, namely arithmetic and geometry, about which I unfortunately do not know enough to have any opinion about the children's progress in them. As long as the lieutenant is at the school there is naturally a good opportunity for the children to have gymnastics and even do military drill. Both the boys and the girls drilled in the afternoon, executing half-turns and countermarches that were a pleasure to see. No doubt the children thought it was a lot of fun.

For me it was a real pleasure to see how the children of the missionaries are getting such a broad and fundamental education. I am confident that their working and staying at the school will keep them

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<sup>22</sup> Martinus Borgen (1834-1915) had studied at the NMS school in Stavanger and at the university in Kristiania. He served the NMS in Madagascar from 1867 until 1885, when he succeeded Braatvedt at the school for Norwegian children at Umpumulo. He remained there for six years.

<sup>23</sup> L.M. Altern (1849-1915), originally from northern Norway, had completed his studies at the Norwegian War College in 1878. After obtaining a two-year leave from the Norwegian army (to which he never returned), he arrived in Natal in 1882. The expatriate officer spent most of the rest of his life in Natal, teaching and working as a surveyor and cartographer. For basic biographical information, see L.M. Altern, "Av mit livs eventyr", *Nordmands-Forbundet*, VI (1913), pp. 402-405 and H.J.S. Astrup, "L.M. Altern", *Fram*, 1 February 1916, pp. 1-2.

away from many of the dangers and temptations to which especially children of missionaries are exposed while growing up in heathen surroundings. A school of this kind has much to struggle against. The relatively few children are of varying ages and are at varying stages of their development. It is not easy to divide these stages of their development into corresponding classes. The school made a good impression on me, however. The children appeared to be industrious, and good order and discipline prevailed at the institution. I have reason to believe that the parents appreciate this school, and it deserves to be appreciated. I want especially to mention that Mrs Borgen<sup>24</sup> is truly a good mother for the children. She is always concerned about their comfort and their spiritual and physical welfare. I found no reason not to believe that the children liked both the school and their superiors....



*After giving a summary of the conflict between Dinizulu and Zibhebhu, veteran missionary Lars Larsen, who had been in Natal and Zululand since 1849, commented on the state of his station in Nhlazatshe at the end of that civil war and on the attitudes of Boer neighbours towards missionary work. (Source: NMS Archives, box 138, folder 2)*

Nhlazatshe

3 June 1888

... During the latter half of last summer we had an unusually large amount of rain but little thunder. As a result of that the fever has been widespread amongst the natives. As usual, my wife has suffered a great deal from rheumatism. I have also had some attacks of the fever. Neither of us has been forced to remain in bed, however. Now in the winter months it is better.

We also have to thank the Lord that we have not been hindered by violent raids on the station and have thus been able to continue our work in the service of the mission, even though it has been anything but

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<sup>24</sup> Martha Borgen (née Hirsch) (1843-1918) married Martinus Borgen in 1871, a year after arriving in Madagascar as a teacher.

peaceful in this region. As usual the Word of God has been preached both publicly and privately on Sundays and holidays. School has been held somewhat regularly to teach spelling and reading. Otherwise our work has progressed about the same as during the previous six months....

We have, thank God, lived in peace with our Boer neighbours thus far. There are no fewer than ten Boer farms very close to the station's land. All the Boers have natives around them, living on their land or working for them, so they can be influenced by the Word of God. We know what most Boers think about missionary work amongst the Zulus, but I do not believe that our Boer neighbours would hinder us in any significant way if we preached the Word of God to their natives, provided that we stuck to that task and did not get involved in politics or anything else that would agitate the natives against the Boers....



*Clearly many missionaries welcomed the British annexation of Zululand, hoping that it would conclusively end the intra-Zulu strife which had torn the country asunder during the 1880s. Ole Norgaard, who had arrived in Southern Africa in 1880, also believed that British dominion would also crush Zulu nationalism and thereby remove what many missionaries still perceived as a major obstacle to the success of evangelisation. (Source: NMS Archives, box 138, folder 2)*

Empangeni

25 January 1888

... During the turmoil here in Zululand in recent years people have learnt steadily more about their lack of power. All their efforts to maintain their independence have merely served to reveal their lack of it. Their national pride - thus far one of the greatest hindrances to an acceptance of the Gospel - has been broken to a corresponding degree. Zulu dominion is no longer the greatest, and the Zulu is no longer on top. Faith in their *amadlozi* [i.e. ancestral spirits], which could not help them, has been shaken. In short, only decline lies ahead, regardless of which way they turn, except where the Gospel shines before the people. National pride and arrogance, now turned upside down, will become a precondition

for accepting the Gospel. They can get something new and better than what they have lost. We hope that the younger generation, who are less bound to the past than their parents, will to a much greater degree than hitherto has been the case seek salvation only where it can be found.

English dominion brings social changes. They come slowly but surely. The emerging civilisation places a choice before the people: submit or be destroyed. Zuluism cannot be united with it. We can already see the effects of civilised government. The concept of justice is being transformed. The old idea that the strongest person is always right is no longer valid; instead, there is equality before the law. Human life has taken on new value; a humane regard for it leads to a corresponding change in their lives and thoughts in general, a change which makes both their ears and their hearts more open to the Gospel. Perhaps this change is most evident with regard to work. The proud Zulu, who previously bore only a spear and a shield, can now often be seen with a hoe in his hands. He has to work if he is to survive. From now on it will not be enough merely to have the most essential things for his stomach. More will be required. The annual hut tax (or similar wife tax) and payment of money to have civil matters, passes, etc. handled will force the lazy Zulu to work. Laziness, the root of all evil, has already been dealt a powerful blow, and more blows will be dealt in future.

As more demands are made, however, the missionary will have more to do. The people will come first and foremost to the mission station. The "teacher" waits there to give them help and advice. Happy is the "teacher" who can give them both; he will soon see fruits of his work.

English dominion will also bring about another favourable change. The unmarried woman will henceforth have more freedom. She will not be forced to marry against her will or be removed from the station by force, etc. Of course, there will still be hindrances to her coming to the station in the first place. After all, she is cattle, and who wants to lose cattle? But once she comes, she is here to stay. A lot of girls who have been watched by hawk-like eyes up to now will come to the station in order to learn as soon as they realise that doing so will not make them subject to abuse....



*Hans Astrup arrived in Zululand in 1884 and assumed responsibility for the Schreuder Mission's station at Ntumeni. Five years later he gave a detailed sketch of a typical day there. His account is valuable especially for the light it sheds on mundane matters usually absent from missionary reports. (Source: Morgenbladet, [Kristiania], 15 August 1889)*

The burden and heat of the day begin as a rule when one awakens.... As is generally the case in Africa, we usually arise at sunrise. Previously I arose even earlier....

Since I now have a reliable black assistant who is responsible for morning devotions, I sometimes lie in bed until the bell calls our natives to worship. It would be wonderful if everyone in the congregation came to this devotion, but many live too far away. Often only those whom we have in the house come, but there are enough of them - between twenty and thirty - to make a small congregation.... As soon as the devotion is finished my wife sets the girls to work and I do the same with the boys. The girls sweep out the school (or on some days the church), the kitchen, the bedrooms, etc., cook, braid mats, and weed the garden. The boys milk the cows, herd the cattle, make or repair fences, cook for themselves, plough with oxen, sow, cultivate, or harvest maize, run errands, and do other things....

As soon as I have given the necessary orders for the day's work to the white worker or workers we sometimes have helping here, and to the blacks, I begin to instruct my pupil. But already the difficulty of accomplishing anything in peace and quiet here at the mission station becomes evident. There will be an urgent letter to write or messages to send hither and yon. Much of the transportation of necessary household articles from Eshowe, which is beginning to take on the appearance of a city and is the capital of the English part of Zululand, takes place on the heads of Kaffers. And even if one needs a button from the nearest shop, one must usually write a message if one sends a native to buy it.... Soon one of the believers knocks at the door and wishes to discuss something, or heathens who have a dispute with one of the believers, such as loose cattle in their fields. It often falls upon the missionary to adjudicate small matters of that kind.



There is a worse disturbance, however, when an entire *impi* (an armed band) of heathens come on a raid to take back a girl who wants to learn. Sometimes they drag the unfortunate person off while beating her. So far the authorities have looked the other way or even encouraged this, even in cases where the girls have been adults. The captors claim parental rights or argue in the Zulu way that Zulu girls are only "things".... Children who are taken by heathen relatives often return soon to the station, in many cases repeatedly, until their parents tire of fetching them, give up, and leave them in peace.

The many who come, generally early in the morning to get medicine or have a tooth extracted, must wait until I have finished teaching my pupil, Philemon. Imagine, I have also had to become a dentist - or should I say a tooth puller? - out here in the mission field! In the beginning I resisted this, but now I am accustomed to it, and as a rule it goes very well. Sometimes this becomes a daily occurrence, and I could have a handsome income from it if I demanded payment. But as yet I have not. Once in a while someone brings a fowl and believes he has done me a great favour. But usually my patients beg for tobacco, soap, thread, etc. because they have been kind enough to allow me to extract a tooth....

Dinner is served at 13h00. An important item on the missionary's menu is chicken, for it is very cheap here. We break the monotony occasionally by slaughtering a sheep or a cow.... Whenever possible we like to rest with a book after dinner. If the day is especially hot or busy we take a nap too. Then the boys have to go back to work. On the whole they receive longer rest periods on mission stations than on farms. At 15h00 we usually have a cup of coffee or tea. My afternoon is usually given to studies, correspondence, supervising the workers, or assisting them with planting, etc.

At sunset the bell rings for evening school. The cows come back and are milked; work is finished.... Finally at 20h00 it is time for our evening meal, usually milk and maize or ten and sandwiches....

Finally we retire at 22h00 or 23h00 after evening devotions. Sometimes we go to bed even later, but that usually leads to a throbbing headache the next day. The women are often very tired. Out here in the mission field they often must toil incessantly from morning until evening, more strenuously than they were accustomed to working in Norway. One

can also be tired in Scandinavia, of course, but seldom as exhausted as here....



*The number of conversions rose more sharply during the 1890s than in the 1880s. Braatvedt, however, found the gap separating traditional Zulu beliefs from the Gospel to be as wide as ever and perceived increasing resistance to Christianity on the part of some Zulus. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140A, folder 15)*

Ekombe

3 February 1894

The Lord's emissary goes out to call unto the Lord and to preserve those who have been called, so that they can belong to the Lord. Both tasks are difficult, indeed impossible without the gracious help and support of the Lord. When one becomes acquainted with heathenism at close range, one gets some insight (one cannot get closer to it than that) into how dark and rotten it is. Its relationship to Christianity is like the difference between the dark night and the clear day. Admittedly, one finds things that point in the direction of Christianity. For example, one hears the question, "Who created and preserves the world?" The usual answer is *Nkulunkulu* or *Nkosi uphezulu* (i.e. the king who lives up there, in the sky). One also finds a similarity between their concepts of right and wrong and God's holy Law when interpreted literally. Love, which is the fulfilment of the Law, is foreign to them. I have met people who, when I have pointed to the Law, have said, "This agrees with what we teach". This confirms what the apostle says that they show that the deeds of the Law are written in their hearts. But that which brings light, consolation, and peace to the heart, namely the Gospel, is a riddle to them. They cannot understand it and do not want to understand it either, because they do not know that they need a Saviour. They lack recognition of their sins, which is a prerequisite for believing and accepting the Gospel. On the whole the Kaffers are self-righteous to a high degree. I have seen many examples of this but shall mention only one here.

One day I was sitting in a kraal surrounded by many *amadoda* - men. The owner of the kraal, an important man, asked me to give a speech. Naturally I was willing to do so. As usual I spoke about sin and grace. I said that all people are sinners and indebted to God. Suddenly an important man blurted out, "yes, white people!"

There are many things which can depress a missionary, but nothing as much as when the message which he carries in his heart, and which he wants to impress upon the poor hearts of the heathens, is misunderstood and not appreciated. The medicine is offered to them, but so few take it, even though they so sorely need it.

If we enter a heathen kraal, we find that it is dark and barren in there. No star of hope shines across the dark grave, and they live in constant fear and mistrust of each other. There are two things they fear especially, *abathakathi* (i.e. villains or sorcerers) and death. They believe that death and all evil come from these people, and it is therefore important to get them out of the world. In former times it was important to find out who had brought misfortune and death into a kraal. That was the business of the sorcerer.

Since the country [i.e. Zululand] came under the English government, this has been strictly forbidden. One might believe that the people in general are happy about this, but that is far from the case. Many cite the abolition of this custom as the reason for their dissatisfaction with the present government. Quite recently I had a conversation with a friendly old man about conditions in the country in former times and now. I said that they were now fortunate because they could go to bed in peace and arise in peace. Previously they lived in constant fear and had to hide wherever they could in order to save their lives. He replied, "You are right. The English government does a lot of good for us, but there is one thing with which we are dissatisfied - it forbids smelling out sorcerers. We are no longer allowed to kill *abathakathi*. It is they who bring us death and misfortune". "But if you yourself were smelled out, what would say then?" I asked. "I am not an *umthakathi* (i.e. sorcerer); I am a good man", he replied. "I did not say that you were an *umthakathi*, but let us say that you were accused of being one. Would you not then say that the practice of smelling out sorcerers was something that should be abolished immediately?" [I

persisted.] But he thought that by smelling out one could always discover the guilty person.

Another day I was sitting in a Kaffer hut during a violent thunderstorm. A man took a tuft of a certain kind of grass, lay it in the opening of the door, and set fire to it so that the rain would prevent the thunder from striking. I prayed to the God who can loosen and bind the elements and told him how stupid and sinful it was to want to divert thunder by means of magic. He answered, "You can just talk, teacher, but we know that it helps". Those who believe that the heathen lives happily in his natural state is like a blind person who talks about colours. Their need is great, and it is calling out for help.

When we look at all this need and misery and see someone coming from one kraal and someone else from another asking to be taught the way to salvation and admitted to the congregation, our hearts shout with joy and in gratitude. It is our prayer that some day we will make a large catch, but we also rejoice even though it is thus far only a small one. In some places our meetings for the Word of God have been attended by more people than previously, and the desire and need to learn appear to be increasing.

At the same time, however, hostility towards the Gospel of Christ is becoming more evident. Fathers especially try to hinder their children. When we ask them why they do so, as a rule they give us the following reasons: First, when children convert, their families lose them. Second, what is the point in converting? Many converts fall away and become evil people. Third, with regard to girls, they are afraid that they will not be able to arrange marriages for them and get cattle in return. If the number of boys and girls who have converted is uneven, this is undeniably bad, for then believers are tempted to marry heathens. Girls with heathen parents are in the worst situation. Their fathers want to see them marry so they can get cattle for them, and if converts do not propose, their fathers have no qualms about giving them to heathens. Many girls, thank God, have enough moral fibre and courage to resist, but some unfortunately yield to the pressure. Two believing girls in our congregation recently fell into that trap.

You can therefore see, dear supporters of missions, that it is an arduous task to gather into the Lord's flock heathens who have gone

astray. But it is equally difficult to retain them. Both tasks are the work of the Lord, who in his grace and mercy wants to have them done by his emissaries.... At catechism classes on Sundays after the service and at special meetings I have sought to warn them about the dangers which lie in their paths and to admonish them to fight evil, so that they can be preserved in the community of the Lord.

We often complain, and not without reason, about the shortage of teachers and evangelists. But the shortage of true, living Christians, whose lives and conduct are a beacon for the [other] people, is no less great. The testimony of life is the most powerful. That one generally learns more from what one sees than from what one hears applies especially to the heathens.

Our work here has gone smoothly with preaching both at the station and elsewhere. We have also had a school both during the day and in the evening. The three evangelists have faithfully assisted me in my work....



*Relations between Norwegian missionaries and British colonial officials in Natal varied somewhat but were generally cordial. Ole Steenberg related how Under Secretary for Native Affairs R.C. Samuelson, a son of erstwhile NMS lay assistant Siver Samuelson, advised missionaries on how to bridge the cultural gap separating them from prospective converts. Steenberg also commented on various forms of Zulu resistance to the Gospel. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140A, folder 16)*

Mahlabatini

15 July 1894

... To show what our position is here and what one may dare to expect with regard to the progress of our work, allow me to repeat some comments made at a large missionary meeting which was recently held down in Pietermaritzburg and in which representatives of the missionary societies which are active here participated. One evening the participants had a festive gathering at which the Natal government's Under Secretary for Native Affairs gave a speech. It might be remarked that this man is

a Christian who is keenly interested in and has a close acquaintance with the natives. He is a son of the missionary [Siver] Samuelson, who was sent out as an assistant in the NMS. He called attention to the resistance of the colonists to enlightening and educating the natives. They cannot tolerate our raising the natives a step up from the condition in which they find themselves towards the state where white people are. That would be to take bread away from the mouths of white people. No, let the native lie where he is. He does not need to be brought any further. That is the refrain. Let the native learn how to use a plough and a spade, to cultivate the fields of the white man, to make roads and railways, and to dig gold so that the white man can live, then everything will be in order. And the missionary - what is his task? These people [*i.e.* the colonists] seldom ask whether many or few are being won to Christianity, because taking Christianity to these natives is generally regarded as a mistake. No, let the missionary teach the natives to do the tasks mentioned earlier so that the white man can benefit from them. But when a native now comes from the missionary, he is more enlightened about what is just, and he knows that amongst us [white] people rights are not merely on one side and that justice is demanded not only from those who are subjugated but also from those who subjugate. [He also knows] that with the education the native has from the missionary he can longer be treated like an involuntary tool, as one treats the raw, ignorant Kaffer. With the education the native has from the missionary, he is only regarded as a spoilt person who is of no use to the white man. Hence, complaints are raised about the missionary and him whom he educates.

Another matter on which Samuelson dwelt was how difficult it is to explain God to the natives. The native has the impression that the missionary is preaching about a person who is higher than Queen Victoria and therefore stands above the government of the country. For that reason the native chiefs often resisted the proclamation of the Gospel so strongly; they were afraid that the great Lord who is proclaimed will challenge their power. This is therefore resistance from a different quarter, namely from the natives themselves.

It is true that the heathens regard Christianity as a terrible thing which will only bring them ruin; it spells the end of their old customs and way of living. For that matter, the heathens have perceived it

correctly. If only they were sufficiently advanced to see the infinitely great advantage the Lord wants to give them in return for what they must give up, and how sorely they need this advantage, which is life itself, then there could be hope of more progress, for the ice would be broken. But I know from experience how closed the people can be right outside our own doors. There is a large, good kraal consisting of fifteen huts a quarter of an hour from our houses. It is the kraal of the famous Mkosana, who had taken the station into his possession when it was to be occupied after the latest disturbances. He is a good and friendly man who often attends our services, but almost none of his people come, in any case not the children and women. I have implored him constantly to allow his people to come on Sundays and have waited for that to happen as long as I have been here, and that will soon be three years. I just asked him again whether he allowed his people to come on Sundays. He told me that during Braatvedt's time<sup>25</sup> everyone from his kraal attended, but that had brought sickness into the kraal. Attendance at worship had therefore been abolished, and he was afraid that sickness would return if people from his kraal began to attend again. I told him that it was a misunderstanding to believe that people would become sick from hearing the Word of God. His eldest son is Mapelu, who killed the missionary Schreuder<sup>26</sup> and who ridicules both worship and Christianity. On my tours I often meet a group of children tending cattle, and we have small conversations. I tell them about Sunday and ask if they would like to come to our services. The answer is, "Would our father let us?" I reply, "Doesn't he?" They say, "No". They simply conceal the truth as long as possible. If one asks them why they have not attended, one gets the answer, "I have been so sick. My entire kraal has been full of sickness". If one asks the owner of the kraal, "Do you refuse to allow your people to come on Sunday?" the answer is, "No, not at all". "But then why do they not come on Sundays?" The answer is, "They will not obey me". Yet the general acknowledgement is that they believe in God, for they now know that God is in heaven and that it is he who watches over and

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<sup>25</sup> Nils Braatvedt had been at Mahlabatini from 1887 until 1891.

<sup>26</sup> Meant is not the Norwegian H.P.S. Schreuder, but H.H. Schröder of the Hermannsburg Mission. (*Vide* note 17.)

preserves them. But it becomes apparent that this is a comfortable faith which has given birth to itself, because they close their hearts to the living and saving faith which alone can help them. How many have allowed themselves to be deceived?

I was recently in a shop a few kilometres from here. Nqoti, one of the chiefs in the district, came in. He greeted me and sat down on the verandah. Then he began a conversation about religion, saying, "Yes, now it is preached here that we should all believe and become Christians. But that cannot happen. We cannot learn this, for we are old and just fools. But our children shall learn to be Christians and will be saved. Nothing can be done for us, for we do not have any time left". I asked him if it was his intention to be a fool ambitiously and to his eternal harm, to lose the good opportunity he now had to be saved eternally. Unfortunately, he was resolute; they would remain as they were, but their children would be different. The man is remarkable, for his vision seems to be clearer than that of many others for understanding what Christianity actually wants. Every time I visit his kraal he asks if he is going to be robbed of his wives. No, that kind of business he cannot tolerate; we cannot get him to come on Sundays. But he has always relented, and we never leave him without holding a service of worship. He is the only one who speaks out in that way. Elsewhere, wherever we go we are allowed to have a service without protest, and in some places we are thanked and appreciated.

With such opposition right at our door, one might believe that we have practically nothing to do here. Indeed, the people are hard-hearted, and we have found resistance to Christianity in varying degrees of strength, but we also have fine opportunities to preach and teach both at and away from the station. Even though people are afraid to worship, even those who live close to us, we always have good attendance, between sixty and eighty every Sunday, and attendance actually seems to be increasing. From where do all these people come despite the resistance? Here we see the hand of the Lord at work. The Lord, who has given us the Gospel, also sends people to listen to hear it proclaimed. May we in truthful and warm love learn to be indefatigable in the work of the Lord, for we have the promise that we shall harvest in his time. Yes, in his time. Everything has its time. If we want to be sober in our assessment,



we can hardly expect any grand affiliation with the Kingdom of God by these people in the near future. They are doing too well under the English government for that. It is my opinion that these people must be disciplined and suffer need before they learn to cry and grope for the Kingdom of God which is now being offered to them. The Lord had to discipline his people time after time for their disobedience and sin, and when they were in need they called out to God. It seems that a serious chastisement must be inflicted on peoples, including us Norwegians, before they learn to call seriously upon their God....

Four adults - one boy and three girls - have been admitted to the congregation during the past six months after being sufficiently examined. We do not have many catechumens, but we do our best to give them what we have so that we can get others. May the light shine ever more clearly in this darkness, and may we all get grace and strength to spread God's light to the dark masses for the enlightenment and salvation of many!

The magistrate in this district had an examination or inspection at our school this month. Twenty-one pupils were examined. All of them had received instruction here, some as servants while others were boys and girls from the kraals. Nine of them could read without difficulty, two had begun to write, and twelve were still learning the alphabet and how to spell. There are five Christian children here who are old enough to go to school. The magistrate encouraged all of them to strive forward and to obey their teacher. I called to the attention of the magistrate the fact that the Zulu government<sup>27</sup> had a good opportunity to aid the schools by encouraging the people at the places where there are schools to send their children to school. Nevertheless, one must be thankful to the government because it has begun to support financially those schools which already exist....



*Steenberg also commented at length on missionary work at his maturing station in the 1890s, attempts to evangelise Zulus at their kraals, and the hindrances which white settlers in Zululand placed before*

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<sup>27</sup> Meant is the British colonial government of Natal. Zululand had been made a British protectorate in 1887.

missionaries' efforts to propagate the Gospel. (Source: *Norsk Missionstidende*, L, nos. 7-8 [April 1895], pp. 123-126)

Mahlabatini

15 January 1895

... Our daily work consists chiefly of devotions, school for our servants, and instruction for our catechumens, something which is insisted upon in our instructions<sup>28</sup> and which clearly nourishes our work to a significant degree. This daily explaining and admonishing from the Word of God adopted for suitable presentation to boys and girls has definitely been a workshop of God; most of those who have been won for the Kingdom of God and who are still being won are won through it. It is a shame that we are not able to have many more servants now. The white race with its civilisation, which is invading our lives, makes everything much more expensive, and native servants themselves are becoming very expensive. If the colonists promoted Christianity as they should, one would have good compensation for the disadvantages they bring. Unfortunately, the colonists do everything but promote the Kingdom of God. It is said that Johannesburg has become a hell with all its pubs at which strong drinks are sold. Unfortunately, that is becoming the case here too. In our immediate vicinity, only an hour from here, we now have two such pubs. It is distressing that even our compatriots<sup>29</sup> get drunk, become violent, and have to be chased away with reprimands. The effect this has on those to whom we are to preach the Gospel can easily be imagined.

If we had the opportunity to affect only our servants every day, our work at the station would be meagre. But instead of having several servants as was the case previously, we now have a day school for children or whoever wants to attend and whomever we can get. This

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<sup>28</sup> The "instructions" were those issued by the NMS to all its missionaries.

<sup>29</sup> Steenberg is referring to Norwegian immigrants in Natal and Zululand. Most were not in Zululand but rather in or near Durban or Port Shepstone, but according to the census of 1904 there were 110 Norwegians at Eshowe and nineteen in the Nkandla Division. *Census of the Colony of Natal April 1904* (Pietermaritzburg: P. Davis & Sons, Government Printers, 1905), pp. 356-381.

school was unfortunately very small during the first half of the year; only two or three pupils attended daily. Several of the Christian children who should have come were prevented because they had to work at home. Only a few from the heathen kraals attended now and then. It did not look good. The native teacher received a salary, and we wondered whether it was worthwhile to have a school for so few. More recently, however, attendance has become somewhat better. The day school in the morning and the school for our servants in the afternoon complement each other. Those who do not have the opportunity to attend the day school can also attend the school for the servants, so we can have a total of twenty-four pupils a day, although the average is eighteen. We have to record the daily attendance now that the magistrates in Zululand inspect the school, and my notebook shows that between 31 December 1893 and 31 December 1894 fifty-five people have attended either the day school or the evening school for shorter or longer periods. Most of them are still heathens, and if they had been won for Christianity it would have been a fine harvest. With the grace of God they can all be won, however; some have already been won, and we hope to win several more....

At Christmas we baptised an adult girl and two women. They were the mothers of two Christian men who were fathers. One would think that a mother living together with her Christian son would be influenced and soon be drawn to the Lord. And indeed they are influenced when the son's family lives in a Christian way. But it has been shown that it is rather difficult to get such old people to go so far as to join the congregation. The old people believe that because they are old they cannot do anything. She hears that God wants us as his children, but the old person believes that she has done what can be done when she has given her son to God. She can do no more; she is a thing which has been used up and can never be anything except what she is. The son of the woman to whom I am referring had also tried for a long time to teach her, but he can hardly believe that she will be able to become a Christian; her prejudices are too strong for that.

Under these conditions I began special catechetical instruction for the two women a year and a half ago. Their eyes were so bad that teaching them to read was out of the question, so I had to read to them. As the instruction progressed, they gained more understanding of the

Lord's intentions for us and more desire to be united with the Lord, and when the time came for them to be admitted to the congregation they approached this great occasion with thanksgiving and joy. The day when they were baptised was a glorious day for them, and it showed that an old woman's face can light up. I had the definite impression that these baptisms were the work of the Lord. May we have many more joyful experiences of that kind! The husband of one of these women recently came here. He is older than she and is very old. Another old woman has come and settled here, even though she does not have any relatives here. We must now attempt to win these two old people for the Lord in the hope that he, in his grace and power, will let this be successful.

As mentioned earlier, attendance at church has improved this year. We therefore have the opportunity every Sunday and holiday to reach a large number of souls with the message of salvation and admonish them to let themselves be saved, because by nature they are lost sinners.

We do not have schoolhouses out in the country, but we preach every day out in the kraals. The number who assemble in the kraals varies - ten, twenty, or thirty. Preaching out in the kraals has an effect on attendance at worship on Sundays. Where we have not preached during the week, people stay home and sleep. Then we have to go out and ask them what they are doing which prevents them from coming on Sundays. They say this or that prevented them from coming. They make just as many promises about coming as excuses for their negligence. Unfortunately they are like the Pharisees; they say it but do not mean it....



*Martinius Borgen, who had previously served the NMS in Madagascar, was transferred to Natal in 1885. He initially taught at the Norwegian school at Umpumulo, but from 1891 until 1899 he directed work at the Nhlazatshe station. A smallpox epidemic, Zulu immorality, and financial self-help within the indigenous Zulu Lutheran church were principal concerns in 1895. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, L, no. 9 [May 1895], pp. 164-167)*

Nhlazatshe

28 January 1895

For a long time I have thought about sending a report from Nhlazatshe, but at the same time I have waited in order to be able to report something more definite and decisive about the smallpox which we have had to struggle with here. When the first case occurred in our immediate vicinity, I sent an express letter to the *landdrost* in Vryheid. He registered the letter and immediately sent Dr Tren to investigate the matter. Although the doctor was initially in doubt, it later became clear to him - after a second visit - that he was in fact dealing with smallpox. As a result precautionary measures were taken. A European was sent to vaccinate the people. (I also vaccinated some, namely ourselves.) This man imposed a quarantine and stationed native policemen to keep watch on the border. At the same time he constantly rode around supervising these policemen and enforcing the law. During this period of activity he used our house as his standing headquarters. We regarded him as a good friend who faithfully sought to fight against the evil and deadly bacterial powers.

Only one old heathen woman has died here at Nhlazatshe, while several have died at both Dlebe and Idaka. Our household and all our servants, thank God, have been protected from infection, which is no small matter because we know that smallpox is one of the deadliest diseases in the world.

It is obvious that the epidemic has hindered our missionary work. Neither Simon nor I have been able to travel about amongst the people. Yet the epidemic has raged much less severely than I had expected. Hence the school has been able to continue as before without interruption, although the number of pupils has been somewhat lower than usual. It is disturbing that during such epidemics so very little can be done for the sick. We were able to send them some medicine, but nothing more. One is completely cut off from them because the government takes the matter into its own hands. Now the illness is over for this time, but it could easily return soon, because of the natives' great and inexcusable lack of caution. If they want to go anywhere during the epidemic, they choose to go in the deep of the night, and by doing so they defy all the rules

imposed by the Europeans. In precisely this way this gruesome illness here in South Africa has often gone suddenly from one place to another and caused a great deal of misery.

Now a little about something else of a more cheerful kind. Last year we had the joy of adding twelve individuals to the congregation here at Nhlazatshe, eight adults and four children. Of the adults, six are girls and two are boys. Three of the children are boys while the fourth is a little girl.

All the adults are young people. With one exception they have been servants here at Nhlazatshe. They have therefore all been under constant Christian influence for a long time and thus also have a fairly good knowledge of Christianity. On the whole one must say that our poor Kaffers, despite the laziness of their type, do not in any way lack the knowledge that is necessary for salvation. If only they would use it properly to go the way which they know so well. But every honest person knows that it is one thing to know the way and another to take it. If I know the Kaffers, they seem to stagger like a drunk between the fifth and sixth commandments.<sup>30</sup> It is either wrath, violence, or evil which plagues them, or they give in to sensuality in one form or another. Perhaps this applies to a large portion of the human race. If that is the case, then our poor Kaffers are in rather good company. My opinion of the matter is simply that it would be very easy for us missionaries and Europeans amongst the heathens and heathen Christians out here to fix our gaze on the natives and their great misery; it is easy to forget that we are basically two sides of the same coin - all of us are children of Adam, sinners, and miserable. In this regard I remember what one of our well-known ministers in Norway said on the occasion of a very brutal murder: This is very humiliating for all of us, for it shows human nature as such in its deep misery.

I know nothing in particular about our young friends whom I mentioned. I have neither seen nor heard anything about them since they were baptised, but I am hoping for the best. I have heard missionaries

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<sup>30</sup> Borgen naturally employs the Lutheran enumeration of the Decalogue, inherited from Roman Catholic tradition. The fifth and sixth commandments, accordingly, are those forbidding murder and adultery, respectively.

here say that it is quite risky to baptise young boys and girls before they are married. Perhaps that would be best, but I cannot believe it is right to postpone baptising young people until they are married. No, it is better to let it all stand in the name of the Lord and place all responsibility on the consciences of the young people - that is my opinion. May the Lord in his grace help them all! They all need people to pray for them, not least at these times when gold fields are becoming so common here in South Africa, even in the vicinity of Nhlazatshe. After baptising these twelve, I see that I have baptised thirty individuals during these three years we have been at Nhlazatshe. When we arrived here I found that there were seventy-six baptised people. Now we have 106 members in the congregation, which shows that our work has progressed in recent times.

Recently there was an ugly incident here at the station. An Englishman had married a lowly Kaffer girl. He had to leave, and he convinced us to take both her and their little son into our house. The child began to like us a great deal, especially our youngest daughter. His mother could not tolerate that and tried to poison her with vegetables. Fortunately I was home during the incident. By God's gracious care she escaped with here life. The poison was meant for Nina alone, but she, not suspecting, shared the vegetables with her sister Louise, who in turn gave some to the child. One of our servant girls also got some. All became very sick. Worst were our small girls, for they had eaten most of the small portion. After I informed the *landdrost* in Vryheid about this several times, he took the matter seriously. I only managed to have her arrested, however. The case could not be proven, the judge said, for no-one had seen her pour poison into the food. He was right with regard to that, but on the other hand I was right when I said that none of our daughters would have been stupid enough to eat it. Naturally the mother did not return here, but the child is still here. Amazingly enough, his father asked that he be named Luther. He is now two years old and a bright little chap.

At the communion services last year forty-one individuals received the sacrament of the altar.

On the third Sunday of Advent we had our first collection in the church here at Nhlazatshe. We made it a festival of thanks to the Lord

for having survived the smallpox epidemic. The people could understand that well. They came happy and elated with their shillings, their pence, their maize, and their *amabele*. They placed the money on the altar, the maize into a tub, and the *amabele* into a sack. My wife later bought both the maize and the *amabele* at the usual price in this area. On that first Sunday we collected 18s and 4d. More came in later, so that in all we received £1 and 18 shillings on those two Sundays. We had told the congregation that we ought to support Paul and his brothers at Dinizulu's kraals. Dinizulu has sent word from St Helena to his mother and his people that he wants all of Usutu to take the book [i.e. the Bible]. It appears that the people over in his kraals are willing to do so. Under these conditions they have requested help from Nhlazatshe. We have tried to extend it to them to the best of our ability. Fortunately I had enough books and wall charts so that I could send a lot of them. That should be a princely gift, so to speak. At the same time my wife was able to give them some clothes from our house, etc., so our friend Paul could go to them with a large package. Recently his brother Japheth was here. They had heard about our collection in the church for them, and like a magnet it had attracted them. He received both money and other things. He also received new reading charts. Paul does not get a salary there. He is thinking about building two large meeting-houses.

Now that smallpox no longer hinders me, I shall go there to see how they are getting on....

Here at the main station we have too little space for the people who attend services. Without a doubt many more would come, but they have often found that we do not have space for them. They do not like to stand outdoors in the heat of the sun. I thought it was my duty to mention this in spite of the Society's present economic status. Even though the natives here at Nhlazatshe will gladly donate their labour in order to get a larger and better meeting-house, it is clear that the Society must give us money for lumber, iron, and glass....



*Petter Gottfred Nilsen (1836-1906) founded the station at Otimati in 1886. He described how self-help by his Zulu congregation there contributed heavily to the construction of its chapel. This represented an*



*important advance in the indigenisation of the mission that eventually led to Zulu leadership of the resulting churches. Natural disasters, however, took a large physical toll. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, L, no. 15 [August 1895], pp. 294-295)*

Otimati

27 February 1895

... In these financially constricted times I do not dare to ask the Society to increase our appropriation. The idea of self-help should also be implemented in our congregations, and I thought this was a good opportunity to make a beginning in that direction. I took the matter to the congregation, and the idea was discussed at several meetings. The result was that they took upon themselves the task of making and laying the bricks needed for such a building. They immediately began the job. The season was already so advanced that progress had to be made as fast as possible. A large, old anthill near the station gave excellent material for the bricks. About 30 000 good bricks were made from it, and there is still much left, so at least that many more can be made - proof of what colossal buildings the African termite is capable of erecting! A white man, a Norwegian named Sandanger from Durban who is a steadfast and able worker, was hired to construct the building for us. He can take all the credit for the task. The building is furnished as a church, but it is also used daily as a school. Both the congregation and we are very satisfied with our little school and meeting-house, and we hope that it will contribute mightily to the advancement of the Kingdom of God amongst the people around Otimati....

On 27 November 1894 towards evening we had a hurricane-like storm here. It struck us suddenly and without warning. Violent storms of that sort are not uncommon here at Otimati. As a rule they come from the west or the north-west, but this one came from the east. We had not experienced anything like it before. The storm was accompanied by thunder, lightning, and hail. As proof of how great the quantity of water which came down on us was, I can point out that the soil along our maize field was washed away for nearly 100 metres, two metres deep and more than a metre wide, even though rain hardly lasted for more than twenty

minutes. The worst was that it tore the roof off the boys' residence, and almost the entire carriage-house and the roof of the manse were blown away. The last-named was the saddest, for it made us almost homeless. A great loss was thereby inflicted on both the Society and me personally. This was the third time in the course of a year the roof was blown off the boys' residence and the second time the carriage-house was destroyed. It was a considerable loss for those who suffered it. We had a strange feeling as we stood there and the roof suddenly flew off our heads! No-one was injured, thank God. The rain streamed in from every direction, and it became very unpleasant, as all our clothes were drenched and soiled by the mixture of dust and water. Yes, a truly uncomfortable and sad time for us ensued. Fortunately the verandah on the side of the house facing away from the storm remained standing. We took refuge there temporarily. On the following day I had a great deal to do. A temporary roof had to be fashioned from the pieces of wood that remained. The iron plates were also heavily damaged. I found some of them crumpled, as though they were made of paper, and quite useless. With the help of the Christians I put together a roof after two days of hard work; it is weak, but it will have to do until Sandanger can get at the house and repair all its defects. My family and I were all very happy and thanked the Lord that evening because he had given us a roof over our heads while the storm and rain raged outdoors. Unfortunately, while working on it I stepped wrong and fell down. My entire right side from the knee to under the arm were hit. It was very painful, and in connection with this I have exerted myself too much, so I have not been the same since then. On St Stephen's Day I had to stay in bed and let one of the Christians take the service....



*Sven Eriksen, who had initially arrived in Southern Africa in 1880 and spent most of his first two decades in the mission field at the Mbonambi station, was in Norway on furlough from 1892 until 1894, when he returned to Mbonambi. He described his return to that station and the welcome he received there. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140B, folder 1)*

Mbonambi

15 April 1895

... On the whole the voyage went well. True, we had a bad beginning on the *Norham Castle*; on the first evening, 25 August, we collided with a small craft from Arendal<sup>31</sup> and sank it. There were some serious moments after the collision until all the men from the sinking boat were brought safely on board the *Norham Castle*. That incident left its mark on the voyage. One could not forget it, and in almost every sermon the bishop of Cape Town gave on board he came back to that serious hour at the beginning of the voyage.

We took a little over a month between Stavanger and Durban. Brothers Titlestad<sup>32</sup> and Rødseth<sup>33</sup> met their brides there [i.e. in Durban]; they had come with us. We also met our superintendent<sup>34</sup> and several other Norwegian friends from the city at the quay. It was certainly good to set foot on African soil and have the long voyage behind us. In Durban we attended the wedding of Rødseth and Ragnhild Hærem. From Durban we continued upcountry in an ox wagon. That did not exactly go as fast as we had become accustomed to in Norway, but it was pleasant to be independent again and do as one wished. Our first resting place was Eshowe, where we celebrated the Titlestads' wedding. We missed dear old Oftebro<sup>35</sup> at Eshowe. He was always so kind. We had bade him farewell just before we left for Norway and had hoped that he could welcome us when we returned. But the faithful old servant of the

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<sup>31</sup> Arendal was a relatively important port on the coast of southern Norway in the county of Aust-Agder.

<sup>32</sup> Lars Martin Titlestad (1867-1941) married Margrethe Thompson at Eshowe on 4 October 1894.

<sup>33</sup> Peder Aage Rødseth (1869-1945) married Ragnhild Hærem in Durban on 22 September 1894.

<sup>34</sup> Ole Stavem was the superintendent of the NMS Zulu mission from 1887 until 1902 and from 1907 until 1912. In 1895 he was serving in Durban, where he also ministered to the Scandinavian congregation at St Olav Lutheran Church.

<sup>35</sup> Ommund Oftebro had died at Eshowe on 2 March 1893.

Lord had been called home to his Saviour; only a grave showed where his earthly remains were hidden until the dawn of resurrection.

We also travelled to Empangeni and spent Sunday there. At both Eshowe and Empangeni we were cordially received by brothers and sisters. It was touching to see them again. We felt that these were our own people to whom we were bound with ties that were more than worldly. From Empangeni the journey to our home took only two days, and we longed with desire to reach it. Brother Norgaard, who had overseen the station at Mbonambi at the same time as his own at Empangeni, accompanied us. When we approached our home a large portion of the male population came to greet us. When they approached the wagon and we could see their dear, familiar faces, we had to laugh and cry from joy. They stood there and looked at us with their hands in front of their mouths. Some exclaimed, "Is it really you?" or "Are we dreaming?" We then drove the wagon farther over the sandy plains, and our converts walked around it, talking and asking questions and laughing. Thus we came home in a procession. The women and their children soon came to greet us. Brother Norgaard had recently been at the station; he had decorated it and made everything orderly, so it looked very cosy and clean when we arrived. The floors, however, had suffered from the termites during our absence. It has cost money and a lot of work to have them repaired.

We had returned from our journey to Norway. Everything seemed so natural and homely that our absence was almost like a dream. Only now do we realise how blessed we were on the journey. During that half-year we did not have a trace of fever. I cannot remember ever being so well at Mbonambi as I am now. We also brought renewed courage and desire back from Norway to apply to our work again. We have felt and seen that in Norway there are many dear supporters of missions who passionately desire the conversion of the Zulus, so it was with increased desire that we returned to bring the word of life to them.

There had been some changes in the congregation, not all of them for the better. One dear old man, Jonah, had gone home in faith to his Saviour. We miss him a great deal. But what caused us more pain was that some girls had fallen from the faith and reverted to heathen ways. Very few of them had returned [to Christianity], so on the whole missionary

work had stagnated here, or even regressed, as far as visible fruits are concerned. But we are certain that the Word of God, which has been preached by both Brother Norgaard and our native preachers in the congregation and out amongst the heathens, will not return empty.<sup>36</sup> Since our return several young boys have begun baptismal instruction, but unfortunately I am not very confident that all of them are serious about it. We shall work with them and pray for them that the Lord may turn their young hearts to him....



*Peter Aage Rødseth (1869-1945) established a station at Patane near Mtubatuba in north-eastern Zululand in 1894. He found great resistance to the Gospel in that remote place, however, and the station was closed in 1898. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, L, no.16 [August 1895], pp. 306-307)*

Patane

25 March 1895

I came here with a certain apprehensiveness. Establishing a new station did not seem to fit the poor financial state of the Society. I was therefore afraid of being recalled, but I soon concluded that if I did not cowardly turn my back to the enemy and flee, supporters of missions and the steering committee [of the NMS] would not beat a retreat. Am I wrong?

How has it been for me here? It has surpassed my expectations. I have to thank God for that. Our expectations were not great, and I hope that supporters of missions will not demand to hear of great progress. In general the people are indifferent as long as my preaching bears no fruit, but they become bitter every time my "seductive potions" prompt someone to leave "the spirits" and serve the living God. On Quinquagesima Sunday we had the great joy of baptising the first heathen here. He was a young

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<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 55:11: "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it".

man who received the name George. He had heard about God in Natal, and together with another person had just been waiting for a missionary to come here so that he would have an opportunity to learn. He has been industrious, serious, and praiseworthy in his conduct, so I could baptise him with confidence. One cannot make too great demands of these beginners; that could lead to disappointments. But there is one thing that always encourages me, namely the childlike and heart-felt way in which they speak to God. Is it perhaps hypocrisy? Hardly. No-one watches to see whether they have evening devotions, but even if they are quite tired they never go to bed without singing a hymn and praying together to God. That is perhaps more than many Christians in Norway do. George's fiancée is being instructed for baptism together with another girl and three boys. This winter we hope to be able to baptise her and have the wedding at the same time. According to heathen customs they have been married for a long time, because he has paid for her. They shall build a house and stay here, and we are looking forward to having Christian neighbours. The foundation of a small congregation has been laid, and God, who began this work, will build on it a spiritual church in the dark.

The place we are at is desolate. We can see only one small heathen kraal, although there are several more behind the surrounding hills. With God's help we hope gradually to see many Christian houses built around here. Farther up by Umfolozi there is a large, unhealthy desert inhabited only by wild animals. But on the other side of the river, in Pukunyoni, there are many people. It is difficult to reach them in summer, however. There is enough ground here for sowing the Gospel, but there is not much love....



*Rødseth's wife, Ragnhild (1872-1917), a member of the ecclesiastically and socially prominent Hærem family of Stavanger whom he had married in Durban in September 1894, described the slow rate of progress at Patane and the extremes of temperature, to which she was not accustomed. Her letter illustrates the continuing difficulty of propagating the Gospel in previously unevangelised areas. (Source: Missionslæsning for Kvindeforeninger, XII, no. 6 [June 1865], pp. 43-44)*

Patane

31 March 1895

It is Sunday evening, and how cold it is outdoors! It is raining and the wind is blowing. It is much better in our little lounge, even though we can feel a bit of the wind, which finds its way through several openings in the wall. You think it is nothing, just a little fresh air, and you are Norwegians, accustomed to stiff gales and a shower that can singe your eyes and the tips of your noses. But if you visited us some evening, you would not believe it. At least you would not believe me, as I sit here so pitifully bundled up in a blanket. It is the sudden transition from warmth to cold that makes us feel the cold much more than in Norway. We do not have a tile oven in a corner in which we can take refuge. Both the buildings and the clothing are made for warm weather.

But now a little about how we are getting on here at Patane. As you know, this is a new station, not yet a year old. When I came here in October, not a single girl had come to the station to become a Christian, only one boy. But now there are two girls and several boys - praise the Lord! These girls have been here for only a short time, and even though I have often been angry at them because they have not worked as I wanted them to, I now believe we are getting on fine together. They want to know the Lord Jesus, to work, and to please me. What more can be expected of them? After all, they have just emerged from the rawest heathenism.

You will understand that I cannot have a large sewing school or a women's society, but only teach these two girls to sew and see that they hold their fabric and their needle properly. Nevertheless, it is wonderful and gracious from the Lord that I am allowed to this work. One of the girls, Makonzo, is especially dear and affectionate. She can cast such endearing glances at me that they go straight to my heart. I cannot love them enough, but it is good to know that dear Jesus loves them more than any person can or will. They love to sing, and now they know several hymns which they hum constantly, such as "Jesus, to taste sweet

union with you".<sup>37</sup> May they actually long for and desire sweet union with Jesus!

When Makonzo ran away from home and came here, a crowd of heathens came and wanted to drive her home. Her old father was particularly furious. We managed to hide her, however, and in the end they had to leave. There are many attractive young Zulu girls in the Umtetwa district who would be wonderful people if they were filled with God's spirit. But now they look so wild and proud. No-one is more lethargic than they about coming to church, and no-one looks so immoral. But for Christ nothing is impossible. If we could pray for them in faith and love, we would see glorious things....



*Steenberg could report in 1895 that observance of Sunday had made an impact on the economic rhythm of Zululand, one arguably greater than its religious influence. During the harvest season, however, the Zulus' preoccupation with agriculture hampered efforts to evangelise them at their kraals. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, L, no. 22 [November 1895], pp. 439-441)*

Mahlabatini

15 July 1895

... One might think that here in Zululand Sunday would be an opportunity to cast out the net of God's Word. Let us see how Sunday is regarded in Zululand. Missionary work has been done here for a long time, and the country is now under a Christian government. As Christianity and civilisation have gradually entered the lives of the heathens, the view has become widespread that Sunday is a day of rest and in a sense is a day of the Lord. A large number of the heathens neither plough nor [otherwise] toil in their fields on that day. It is that which they regard as real work. To do small chores on Sunday, such as

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<sup>37</sup> This traditional Maundy Thursday hymn, "Jesus din søde Forening at smage", was no. 310 in M.B Landstad's *Kirkesalmebog*, the popular and standard hymnal of the Church of Norway until the mid-1980s.



braiding mats, thatching houses, or brewing beer, is not regarded as working. They believe they should not be criticised for doing so. We have many shops in the country. Some do not do business on Sundays; others do so as intensely on Sunday as on Monday. Government offices are closed on Sundays, but the bureaucrats seem to choose Sunday as their day for travel. If one tells them that it is not right to use Sundays for travel if it can be avoided, they reply with the proverb, "The better the day, the better the deed". That is how people regard Sunday here. One could apply another proverb, "There is rotten wood in all forests". Zululand is no exception to this general truth. On the whole people here have nothing against resting on Sunday from the toil of work if one does not lose anything by doing so.... The Zulu has nothing against leaving his work on Sunday, but to gather around the Word of God on that day, that is too strict a commandment for the Zulu, even if he lives next to a mission station. But however hard and sluggish the hearts of the Zulus may be, the Lord guides them like a brook, and by the grace of him to whom our work belongs, we have had rich and constant Sunday attendance here at the station during the past half-year.

The six other days of the week are used for school and for taking the Word of God out into the country. The Zulus think it is too much when we visit them on some unspecified day and admonish them to seek the Lord. They think it is Sunday every day and they ask, "What day is it today? Is it Sunday today?" "No", we reply, "it is some other day; the work of the Lord cannot rest. He sees that you are in need, and he sends his emissaries out every day in order to help you". But to gather people around the Word of God day after day is no easy matter. Often one finds one kraal after another without any people at them. This is because of the season. Six months ago we were in the middle of the summer. People had almost finished ploughing and planting, and that which had been sowed first was already maturing. If ploughing and sowing made for a busy time, then it becomes much more hectic when the first crop is mature. Much of it is *amabele*, a small, brown grain which the birds would devour completely if it were not watched. Therefore both young and old, men and women, have to stay in the fields for about three months to protect the new crop from the birds. The fields are divided into sectors, and one or two people are assigned to watch each sector. In the centre

of it they build a scaffold or a mound of turf to stand on while they watch for birds. In other places they build a little hut where they prepare food and are protected from the sun and the rain. That is how it is at that time everywhere in the country. The fields are full of guards who chase the birds away from the crops. One group visits another in order to be sociable and happy, and they enjoy being out in the green fields in the blossoming of summer. It is a delightful, light time which reminds one of the Feast of Tabernacles<sup>38</sup> in Israel. This is why one can find uninhabited kraals, and one thus has a great degree of what belongs to the concept "out of season". Sometimes one is fortunate enough to meet a group of people together in a field, and there can be a devotion, or "Sunday", as people call it. This time of guarding the fields poses great difficulties for our preaching, and the day school also suffers because of it, for the boys and girls who attend it and who live near here, most of them with Christians, must also go out and guard the fields instead of coming to school. The harvest will follow this time of guarding, and we expect better conditions for our work after the crop has been harvested. The work in the fields will then be over, and the people will stay home more.

The half-year which includes the end of the African summer and the beginning of the African winter is also the least healthy time of the year, and both people and cattle are stricken by sickness and death. There has been a good deal of that in our area, and we have also been struck. Some of our cattle fall victim to it, and a boy died of fever. An old man who became very sick and was baptised at home, but he recovered and is still alive. The boy who died could have been baptised but was not. Death came before we suspected how near it was.

Heeding [Martinius] Borgen's advice, we had six weeks of bathing at some warm springs farther upcountry, and all the Borgens have also bathed there. My wife was away for two months; I was home during all that time and have not even attended our missionary conference. Unfortunately, my wife was still the same cripple when she returned as

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<sup>38</sup> *Sukkot*, called the "Feast of Tabernacles" in Leviticus 23:37 and the "feast of the harvest" in Exodus 23:16, is celebrated beginning five days after the Day of Atonement and marks the conclusion of the harvest season.

when she left. There was no substantial benefit from the bathing. We do not know what will happen to her or what the Lord wants to do, but we know that he wants the best, and we are satisfied with that....



*The 1890s included several years of drought in Zululand. Steenberg continued his efforts to preach in the kraals despite often disappointing results. In keeping with a long-standing tradition amongst Norwegian and other missionaries, he regarded polygamy as a major hindrance to the acceptance of the Gospel. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, LI, no. 5 [March 1896], pp. 90-93)*

Mahlabatini

8 January 1896

... In previous years we have always had rain in August, September, and October, but this year the first rain fell at the beginning of November. The people were then able to hack and plough a little, but after a few days there was only sunshine again, and the soil became as hard as a stone. We did not have another good rain until the beginning of December. The fields had become completely dry; nothing would grow in them. I just made a journey up to Mfule at the driest time, just before the rain came, and along the road there was nothing for the oxen to eat before the Mtonjaneni highlands south of Umfolozi. Since then, however, it has rained repeatedly, and the fields are now green and pretty. Yet with regard to food the situation is not good. Usually the crops are mature enough at this time of year that the people can begin to eat them, but this year they are only planting now. Perhaps I am writing something which you will find insignificant, but I am only giving an accurate picture of the conditions under which we are living, and they have been anything but insignificant for us. They have been very serious.

We are only a small family now, and only Anna is at home in order to care for her sick mother. We have therefore been able to do more to help the natives. In addition to some boys, we have taken in five girls who need a place where they can be raised and prepare for admission to the congregation. Unfortunately, the food we bought for them is now

gone, and the price of grain is so high that it is impossible for us to buy more. This is not the first time that has happened, but it is always so difficult that one cannot understand how one can muddle through. But the Lord has helped us in many such cases.

Amazingly enough, attendance at our school is better than ever, despite the drought - over thirty pupils every month and approximately twenty daily. Attendance at Sunday school has also been steady and good, and, remarkably enough, no-one from the masses has been sent here to our worship services to pray for rain. They have either lost faith in it or whatever the reason may be. When I associate with the people and walk around amongst them they always ask me to pray for rain.

Out in the country the native teacher Absalon and I have walked about and invited people into the Kingdom of God as usual. During the course of the year we had 365 meetings in the kraals. I usually go out twice a week and Absalon four times. So many of my horses have died here that I am no longer able to keep one. I therefore have to go on foot to the nearest kraals. Sometimes I have used a wagon to travel to more distant places, but I send Absalon to the kraals farthest away. There are not any hindrances to our work.

Here is an example of how I go out to the kraals. I come to a little brook and find a woman hoeing there. It is dry and even the ground is crying out for rain. The woman says, "Where are you going today?" I reply, "I am going to your kraal to have a meeting and preach the Word of God". The woman says, "No-one is home; everyone is out hoeing". I respond, "I must nevertheless go there and try to find some people to preach to". The woman says, "Could you not have a meeting here and pray for rain?" I reply, "It would be fine to have a meeting here, but I cannot have a meeting here because you are here alone". But there were some other women near enough that she could call to them. They called in turn to others, so we gathered ten woman and girls for a meeting at the brook. I had to proclaim that God's punishment was upon them because they did not convert to God. Conversion was the first thing God demanded of them, and he had promised that those who did so would be rewarded. These women seemed to have a fairly strong desire to hear the Word of God preached. Perhaps it was only self-interest, i.e. their wish

to have rain, that made them so willing. Indeed, they wanted to get rain, but I do not believe it was only that which influenced them.

If they were not attached to polygamy, I believe more men and women would soon become Christians. If polygamy were abolished, this, which is still the highest ideal of the people, a large stumbling-block to becoming Christian would be removed. It is this tie which binds both young and old. The old people are now in it and cannot come out of it, and the young people, who are under the influence of the old, must also enter it.

On St Stephen's Day we baptised eight adults - one man, three boys, and four girls. The man is the old one whom I mentioned earlier. His baptism at home was confirmed by the congregation. The seven young people had all received preparatory instruction for a year or two. They were all hopeful young people. Most of them live in Mahlabatini, but some have come here all the way from northern Zululand in the vicinity of Vryheid. Their homes and relatives are all heathens. They must return to them, as they were only allowed to stay with the Christians here while they were being taught. They must now be subjected to many dangers and temptations and can only be preserved by clinging fast to the strong and faithful God, as I have told them so seriously.

My wife is still the same cripple now that she was a year ago. Her condition appears to be the same; no better, no worse. Her illness is said to be a mild form of apoplexy. She sits up all day, and during the day we take her on walks, leading her between us. She hears what is said, and the little she says is coherent. She has lost some of her rationality, but that which she still has is normal.<sup>39</sup>



*Physical woes also hampered Steenberg's ministry. He described how locusts compounded the tribulation which drought had already wrought. The consequent disruption of the economy of Zululand bedevilled missionary work there and prompted the migration of many Zulus to the Witwatersrand and other urban areas in search of employment. This*

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<sup>39</sup> Steenberg's wife, Birgitte Marie Abrahamsen, died at Mfule on 7 August 1898. She was sixty-four years old at the time of her death.

*economic and demographic development set the stage for urban missionary work, which the NMS had launched in Durban and its Swedish counterpart, the Church of Sweden Mission, would undertake in Johannesburg in 1902. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140B, folder 8)*

Mahlabatini

15 August 1896

Last year the Lord spoke to us with power by sending drought upon our crops, and this year he has spoken even more powerfully by sending complete devastation to everything that was sprouting in our fields. He has thereby showed us that his words to the first pair of human beings were true when he said of the earth, "Cursed is the ground because of you".<sup>40</sup> The words of the Lord have again been proven to be true. And can we, if we want to be true to the truth in love, report anything other than what he has said and done to us? This year the Zulus, and we with them, have experienced, as it is expressed in their language, that the soil is stabbing (*umhlabathi*, from the verb *hlaba*, to stab) us and bringing us terrible pain, tribulation, and destruction. The tribulation which these people have borne is great. How they have been able to persevere without being overcome defies understanding.

On 15 January of this year the locusts came to Mahlabatini and destroyed all the new plants in the fields, both those that had just begun to grow and those that had got small, smooth shoots, so 15 January is a sad day of memory, a depressing day of misfortune. We could not get rid of the locusts. They remained here month after month until at the beginning of winter the fields were bare except for thorns and thistles. While the locusts were thick in the fields, the people, hungry and starving, screamed and leaped up month after month to chase the locusts out of their fields. They finally had to give up, because it was in vain. When imported maize from America came up to Zululand, it was expensive. And with what could they buy it? They had only their cattle, and for a cow, depending on its size, they could buy only one or two sacks [of

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<sup>40</sup> Steenberg is quoting Genesis 3:17.

maize]. If they were to buy all the maize they needed, they realised that they would soon have to part with all their cattle, their only source of survival, for the cows give a lot of milk in summer and in any case provided them with something for their subsistence.

A revolution therefore began, a radical process of dissolution amongst the people. Many went to Natal and Johannesburg in order to find work and earn some money for the subsistence of their families. Some scattered to all parts of the country, some to beg, others to stay temporarily with relatives and acquaintances. Consequently, some kraals, even those of our Christians, were empty, and in most there were only a few people. They were always moving to places where a little food was to be had. At higher elevations the situation was always a little better. There they could always get some food, even good food, while the need became great in all the lower areas of the country. One can understand the consequences all this had for our work.

Concerning ourselves under these circumstances, it is a difficult topic to discuss, because it is so painful. We immediately had to reduce the number of natives staying with us to a minimum in order to avoid starving with them. Our home also became a deserted place where I wandered about as if partly confused. We too were out of food, because on 15 January the locusts had destroyed all our small fields to the roots. They had sprouted and were growing well, but all was lost in a day. On the following days I ran about to hear how things stood, and everyone said he could see death before him. Maize could be bought from traders, but with our means we could not possibly consider buying it at the price asked. Just then we received our quarterly payment, and we had to send our wagon all the way to Durban in order to get grain at a price we could afford. Throughout the year we had to muddle through in that way. I can say that if it has been dry and difficult on earth and difficult to get anything for our subsistence, the good Lord has given us all the more blessing. Our petitions to him in our need have been graciously answered, even though they have been made with little and weak faith. He has helped us in a wonderful way, completely incomprehensible to us, so there has been abundance in both the pot and the kettle, as in the days of Elijah. Such is his blessing that right up to the present we have been able to eat to our satisfaction with thankful hearts and have not

suffered any need. This is simply a wonderful work of the Lord and no exaggeration. If we were to estimate what food for ten people - three whites, three native boys, two evangelists, and two native girls - would cost at present, our means would not last for much of the year. The same has been the case with all the people....

As many people, both heathens and Christians, had to go out in search of work, and those who remained at home were like terrified sheep, attendance at both worship and the school were reduced. Yet attendance at worship has been unexpectedly good considering the circumstances. I cannot say what the school would have been had there been food in the country. In any case the school has been as well attended this year as last, even though our house has contributed fewer pupils to it. Had there been food, more would have had the opportunity to attend the school.

Out in the kraals we have done visitation as usual. Attendance in the kraals has usually been between five and ten, only occasionally up to twenty or thirty. The usual greeting we get when we arrive is, "What are you doing here? Can you not see that there are no people here? We have died of starvation". Humiliated as the people now are, they very often admit that it would be best to receive salvation from God, but I cannot yet perceive a greater hunger for salvation now than previously. Fears about hunger and death preoccupy them.

I could report many other things; sickness amongst us and those around us; our struggle against it and all our other struggles; and how the Lord has graciously led us through everything. When the day ends, one is happy that all its tribulation is over, and when one has to write a report one says, "There are no more prominent matters on which to dwell". My wife's broken-down condition, which is still the same, no better and no worse, does not make my position or work any easier. Quite the contrary, as anyone who is acquainted with illness knows from experience. But one also knows that the knowledge and education which one acquires at the sickbed are more valuable than money and that the reward one gets from the sick is many times greater than the cost of struggling with him....





*Bertha Dahle (1834-1910), wife of NMS missionary Markus Dahle (1838-1915), described her efforts to teach the Zulu women at her husband's station, Esinyamboti, founded in 1886, to spin and weave cotton. This was a significant development in the NMS' social ministry which foreshadowed the further unfolding of educational work during the twentieth century. (Source: Missionslæsning for Kvindeforeninger, XIII, no. 6 [June 1896], pp. 42-43)*

### Esinyamboti

... Before I finish writing this letter, I want to mention briefly that we have a school here at Esinyamboti. I know that in Norway there are a lot of supporters in Nydalen whom I have promised to tell about the school. On the basis of what I have seen thus far, I can say that it is functioning well. The Zulu girls are rather awkward, and it can take a lot of time before they learn to spin and weave. During their first attempts they can get both their feet and the thread off the spinning-wheel, and when they notice that it has broken they become quite light-headed, but then they learn to pay attention. Some of the girls are very interested in learning to weave, and they think it is humorous to see that a lot of what grows in their own country can be used for clothing. In the Tugela Valley, not far from the station, there is a lot of wild cotton. It is rather short, but we can make yarn and weave it. The natives who live down in the valley gather the cotton and bring it to us up here, and we buy it from them. They seem to be interested in this work. It often happens that natives who walk past come in and ask to see the mats we have "woven with the machine". They call the loom "the machine". The worst thing is that we have too little space if we are to have several spinning-wheels. In addition to two rooms, we have to use the verandah. The unfortunate thing about this is that it is difficult to maintain the necessary supervision of everyone at once. I have high hopes that the Christians will learn to weave and spin and do other crafts, and use their time for those things instead of wasting it all winter by not doing anything, and thereby accomplish something for themselves. I was strengthened in this hope last October when a hymnal committee was formed here. They saw what we had woven and expressed their joy that a beginning had been

made in this direction. They believed the trades school will have a future.



*Lars Larsen Berge was one of the young pastors who arrived in Natal shortly after the conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War. At the large station at Umpumulo, he reported continuing progress in "self-help" but found the flight of many men from his congregation into the cities vexing, as did several of his colleagues. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, XII, no. 6 [March 1897], pp. 110-111)*

Umpumulo

11 January 1897

... Conditions in the congregation have been neither particularly good nor bad. Attendance at worship has been a little lower than last year, probably because so many of the men have been away earning money. At one of the out-stations some members had to be excommunicated because of *amadlozi* worship and for other reasons. Unfortunately, we had one very sad case. An attractive young man named Caleb, who got married a year ago, went up to Johannesburg in search of work. A few months ago we received word that Caleb had killed another native - a heathen from here - in a fight. Caleb got away from the police, however, and we do not know where he is.

Also this year part of the congregation has continued to lay bricks for the new chapel. I believe that despite inflation 30 000 bricks have been made. Those who have not contributed their labour to this are supposed to give a corresponding sum of money, but it will probably be more difficult to collect those sums.

The number of children at school has dwindled somewhat, as twenty-three were confirmed on the first Sunday after Easter and some people who are not baptised but have grown up have stopped going to school and now receive baptismal instruction instead. With regard to teaching personnel at the school, a more qualified teacher has been hired. She is a girl from the Wesleyan station at Edendale. She received her education at the well-known station Lovedale in the Cape Colony. She has

also visited England. With our available personnel it was difficult to continue to get a grant from the government, so with the permission of our superintendent<sup>41</sup> I accepted an offer from the school inspector to have a well-qualified teacher. He furnished one, and at the same time he increased the government grant by £10, so it is now £50 annually. As she has been at the school for only three months, it is not easy to say much about results. She has understood the necessity of demanding respect, however, and put promptness and regularity into her work. She is also gifted at handicrafts and has therefore completely taken over that part of the school.

At the close of school last year some prizes were awarded. The best pupil received ten shillings and the second best five shillings. The one who came to school on the most days received a little prize, as did the best pupil in handicrafts, etc. In all ten pupils got shares of the thirty shillings which with the superintendent's permission were distributed. I took the initiative in distributing that sum amongst so many pupils, and I was glad to see that my opinion of the matter was the many pupils was the same as that of the steering committee [of the NMS].

Finally, a bit about so-called "self-help". In addition to the work with laying bricks, we have collected some money as voluntary contributions to the building fund. During the course of the year we collected 84,95 Norwegian crowns.<sup>42</sup> As several people were not prepared for the collection on Christmas Day, and some others had just come down from Johannesburg, I announced the collection again on Epiphany, as we were to have a communion service on that day. 34,42 crowns were collected, making a total of 119,37 crowns since the previous Epiphany. That is not a large sum, of course, but in addition to the bricklaying, and considering that times are hard, one should rejoice even if the sums were not large....




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<sup>41</sup> Ole Stavem was still serving as superintendent of the NMS Zulu mission. (*Vide note 34.*)

<sup>42</sup> Presumably the congregation had collected approximately £4.15.0.

*At Nhlazatshe, temporarily in the South African Republic, Martinus Borgen could report in 1897 that the woes which had been inflicted on that country the previous year had not directly affected his station. Nevertheless, the migration of men from Nhlazatshe to urban centres caused headaches. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140B, folder 10)*

Nhlazatshe

23 March 1897

... 1896 is now over, but its effects are not. No, the years 1838, 1879, and 1881 are not easily forgotten in South Africa, not least in the Transvaal, and 1896 will long be remembered as a remarkable year which will probably never be forgotten. Dr Jameson's treacherous raid with all its after-effects, fear, unrest, and confusion, epidemics of almost every kind amongst people and animals, a poor harvest which led to poverty, want, hunger, and starvation for many - all these are things which time will not erase from our memories.

Yet none of this tribulation has reached us here at Nhlazatshe, absolutely none of it. May the Lord be praised forever for his grace and beneficence! None of us has suffered any need. Admittedly, many of our natives here at the station have suffered need; that cannot be denied. No-one in this area has starved to death, however, but elsewhere in the Transvaal that has happened to both blacks and whites. How people have been able to stay alive I do not know. They have sold their cattle, but a sack of maize for a cow or half a sack for a calf is rather steep. If there are many people in a house but few cattle, they ask for roots and grass. There has been a constant search for food here. People were constantly asking for passes to travel hither and yon for food. In many cases they did not return for a long time. Some lacked the strength to walk as usual; some exploited the crumbs of other people as long as something could be had. At such times it is good that the natives can eat anything. We all remember one incident from Schreuder's time. During a famine he received as an especially large gift from a chief a goat. He left the preparation of it to a native. To Schreuder's great horror and embarrassment, he boiled the whole animal, including its flesh and intestines, in a kettle. The Zulu thought that was permissible; after all,

everything was only grass. This delicacy is still prepared and eaten in Africa today.

Under these circumstances many men, indeed even young women, go to the cities to work for the Europeans. Many have also gone from here. We saw them leave, one group after another. The thought of all the temptations in the cities, especially for the young Zulu girls, made us afraid to let them go, but we admonished them and recommended that they stay in the hands of the Lord. With only a few exceptions it has gone well for them, as far as we know. We never saw again one of those who left, namely Stephen. He left us with the best promises, and we had a lot of hope for him, because we clearly saw a great change for the better in his conduct. But he was lost in the wild life of Johannesburg and became sick. He recovered, though, and his friends were able to bring him home. Unlike the others, he did not come and greet us. We thought that was a shame, and I was considering going to his home when I heard that he was still a bit sick. Then, before anyone knew that his life was in danger, he suddenly died....

I have baptised four children during the past year, but I have not been able to baptise any adults. Almost all the young people had gone out to work, amongst them several of my baptismal candidates, and those whom I still had at home I could not hasten to baptise.

As is well known, locusts ravaged South Africa last year. Everyone in the kraals took pains to act if he wanted to save any of his crops. This frustrating, agonising work and all the wandering around in search of food has naturally had a restricting influence, particularly on school work, and the school, which we were able to show the superintendent when he visited us last year, did not bear an encouraging stamp.

Only in July did the situation begin to change. The crops were harvested, the locusts had subsided, and tempers became more balanced. It was once again practical to ring the bell to call people to their quiet tasks at the mission station. If only we were equipped to do our educational work in a defensible way. I myself have so many things to attend to. The Boer laws always cause me a lot of work, so I do not have enough time and energy left for the school. Simon is becoming increasingly old-fashioned. For a while we were very worried. We saw the children coming, but it could not be what it should have been.

In September, however, we got Miss Constance Schram<sup>43</sup> to come and help us. Now the school has a different quality. She gets on with the natives, and we now have fifty registered pupils. When thirty-eight to forty-four attend, it shows that the school has the power to attract them. Naturally the subjects taught are the conventional ones. As some of the older boys now also come, we are considering having a separate class with some English for them. When they work in the cities, it will be a relief both for them and their employers if they can understand some English.

Miss Schram has begun to have some games for the children when they are given free time at school. This is great fun. For a long time I have wondered how I could give the baptised people some kind of suitable entertainment. Now this wish has been partly fulfilled....

Miss Schram has not been able to promise to stay here for more than one year. We hope, however, that the Lord who has helped us thus far will continue to help us. We absolutely need a European teacher here, particularly for the girls who attend the school. If we retain Nhlazatshe, we must do something to keep it thriving and growing.

Let me conclude by remarking that the government has not yet taken any steps in the direction of hindering missionary work at the station. It could not, therefore, be sold for that reason now. Besides, real property is not worth much in the Transvaal at present. The times are much too disquieting and critical for that. It has never been our opinion that we should sell Nhlazatshe, a station which is wonderful in so many respects....



*Drought, locusts, and epidemics soon threatened to make Nhlazatshe less "wonderful" than Borgen had described it. He nevertheless found it possible to attend the NMS annual missionary conference for the first time in four years. (Source: NMS Archives, box 140B, folder 10)*

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<sup>43</sup> Little is known about Constance Schram. She was one of several Norwegians with that German surname in Southern Africa, most of whom appear to have resided in Natal and Zululand in the 1890s.

Nhlazatshe

8 June 1897

... To begin with secular matters, everyone who knows anything about conditions in South Africa and follows developments here knows that there have been a lot of bitter pills to swallow in recent times. The locusts are still very bad and destructive in many places, so many people have been without food and have died of starvation and misery. Similarly, continuing drought and impure air in certain places have given rise to an endemic fever and led hundreds into eternity, some of them whites. Two missionaries, and the two sons of one of them, have succumbed to it, so it must be very lethal....

Three of our closest neighbours here at the station, namely old Simon, Zacharias, and Mathlanyane, recently had tuberculosis in their cattle and suffered great losses which caused grief and worry. It was only to be expected that the rather close proximity of these friends led to tuberculosis in our own cattle. About half of them died. That has to be the result for whomever it strikes, even if one is prepared for it, because tuberculosis is so widespread in these countries. Anthrax is also approaching at great speed. If it comes and sweeps away the cattle we still have, one would be impoverished and embarrassed, particularly if one did not have the money to buy new livestock. In this respect we have had a difficult time.

For several months we have been digging graves, sometimes every day, into which we threw the dead cattle so that the epidemic would not spread. By doing so I tried to give the natives and the Boers a good example. The natives neither burn nor bury cattle that have died of disease. No, they are too greedy for meat to do that. They eat everything. The worst thing is that they do not collect and burn the bones, but simply throw them in all directions. The healthy cattle then often find those bones in the pasture. They chew them and are thereby infected. As a result they die.

In the light of all this, it can easily be seen that with regard to sanitation it can be very dangerous for a missionary to be surrounded by natives. It is his calling, however, so he must accept it. There would

be no sense in having a missionary keep his distance from the natives. On the contrary, he must try to get as close to their lives as possible.

Also, this year it was possible for me to attend our missionary conference. Last year I thought it might be impossible because of the anthrax laws here in the Transvaal. For three years I had been prevented from attending. Would I be kept away for a fourth year? That seemed wrong to me. If one entered Zululand or Natal with oxen from the Transvaal, they would be summarily shot and one would be fined £50. There was only one way for me to travel, namely by rail via Dundee and Durban. I did so and reached my destination.

But it was not enough that this year I could not enter Zululand with oxen from here because of anthrax in this country. No, because of the tuberculosis in our cattle I could not even drive an ox wagon beyond the bounds of our station. That is how the law reads. I did not dare to ride that great distance in the heat of the sun....



*In Zululand, meanwhile, disasters continued to strike throughout most of the 1890s. Steenberg interpreted them as signs of God's wrath but did not believe many Zulus were learning from them and becoming Christians. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, LIII, no. 7 [April 1898], pp. 125-127)*

Mahlabatini

31 December 1897

... During the entire last six months the terrible epidemic called the *rinderpest* has raged in this country, and wherever it has gone it has swept away the cattle just as one sweep away dust with a broom. People who had hundreds of cattle do not have a single one left. Hundreds of men have been employed inoculating cattle, and a lot [of the cattle] have thereby been saved. It is said that it will take fifteen or twenty years before the country again has as many cattle as it once had.

When I look at these disasters the Lord has inflicted on the people, first the long period of war and unrest, then the locust plague, and now *rinderpest*, it seems to me that through them the Lord is preaching



seriously both to the missionaries and the people who are being hit hardest. The disasters are the wrath of God showered upon them. He smites them in his wrath because of their sin. But if they recognise that the punishment is well deserved and ask the angry God whom they have infuriated for mercy and salvation, the same God will forget his wrath, turn to them in grace and love, and save them from both sin and death for Christ's sake. There are good topics for sermons in this, with which one can explain to these poor people who are bound by darkness what the Lord's purpose is by striking them with punishment and discipline. We often do not know how to talk to these dull people, but now the Lord's mighty hand is being revealed, and we can point to it. Before our eyes he is meting out the punishment which he discusses in his Word.

How do the Zulus see themselves in relation to these punishments, particularly the last one? Alas, the Lord has struck these people with blindness. "Seeing, they do not see, and hearing, they do not hear".<sup>41</sup> When they speak, they speak like someone who is nearly asleep. They say, "After the sickness has swept away all the cattle in the country, it will strike the people and sweep them away too, as it has done with the cattle". There may be much truth in that, but the Zulus are speaking about matters in which they do not believe. They are only playing with this punishment, without asking what the Lord's intention or goal is. They feel the punishment as a blow, but they refuse to learn from it and thereby allow it to be a blessing. They have no difficulty staying alive, because they have food this year, but they cannot get milk and meat as usual, and in reality they have been deprived of many of life's comforts. And it is not merely comfort which they have lost. In essence they have lost all their property, because they have lost all their cattle. Cattle and wives are the pride and wealth of the Zulu people. Cattle acquire wives, and wives, in turn, acquire cattle. But now the crown has fallen from their heads; they have been seriously robbed and humiliated and have come down to a lower level. But they must learn to humble themselves before their God and come to him in the poverty of their spirits so that they might become eternally rich. As it stands now, they are merely surprised a bit and ask in their immorality, "How will it be in future?"

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<sup>41</sup> Matthew 13:13.

This district up here is very quiet and has hardly come into contact with civilisation. There are no white people here, only a small shop here and there. A deathly silence prevails, because all the traffic on the wagon road has stopped. There are simply no oxen in the country at the moment. There is also a deathly silence here in this rural area. Down at Mfule there is more life and activity, for the station lies amongst white people and not far from the town of Melmoth, where there are a lot of white people. One is more in the stream of civilisation there. That has both its evils and its good points, but it always causes a few ripples in turgid water.

These various statements are an indication of the conditions under which we must work. It is difficult and depressing when there is so little movement in the masses of the people. But the Lord has given us grace and strength to do our work indefatigably with hope against hope. The fruits are the same from year to year. We would just like to seem them increased.

We have gained a colleague in that one of the pupils who completed school and who lives nearby has been employed here. He has now been here for half a year. He has shown himself to be firmly anchored in his Christianity, something which must always be the principal criterion for the teacher of a congregation. He is also intelligent and easy to get on with. The instructor at the school has had a beneficial and formative influence on him, but he has not yet had any instruction or experience in teaching at a school. That is his weak point. The school has been changed so that we have a day school and an evening school, something that is common at our stations. He has taken over both of them. He has school from 9h00 until 13h00 and then the usual evening school. Naturally we wanted the day school to be well attended, but thus far attendance has been poor. The evening school, however, has attracted from twenty to thirty pupils. He teaches the day school by himself. He and Isaiah, another teacher, who works out in the kraals during the day, teach the evening school together. Even though the new teacher would be better suited to proclaiming the Gospel than to teaching, he has been a real asset to the school. He has won the confidence and love of the pupils, and I dare to hope that it was to the advantage of the school that he took it over....



*When progress in effecting conversions at Umpumulo slowed late in the nineteenth century, Lars Larsen Berge blamed the continuing practice of lobolo. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, LIII, no. 11 [June 1898], pp. 205-207)*

Umpumulo

3 January 1898

... In outward, political respects it has been quiet here, and we have been able to do our work without being disturbed. We have sought, if in great weakness, to aim our weapons at the old bulwark of barbarism on one side while seeking to build the Kingdom of God on the other. It is going slowly. In human eyes the old bulwark seems to stand there unshakable. The lethargy and sluggishness of the people, their stiff-necked clinging to the old barbarism with its ways and customs - it appears that all our bullets ricochet off this bulwark, as though it were defying all our assaults. It is true that many external forms of barbarism have yielded to English legislation, such as sorcery and the shedding of innocent blood which results from it, but it continues underground and occasionally surfaces, even amongst those who have converted to Christianity.

The most difficult bulwark to storm, however, is and will remain the sensuousness of the people and the wedding practices which are related to it, namely polygamy and *lobolo*. There has been a lot of commotion in our congregation concerning this *lobolo*. Through the magistrates the government has begun to register all children born during the past ten years to couples who are married in a Christian way and according to English law, which, of course, excludes *lobolo*. Even though the law was made known to them when they were married, they have believed until now that the matter would not be taken so seriously that when the time came they would not be able to accept cattle for their daughters. Now the government is registering all children born to couples who were married according to "Christian law", as it is called, and letting it be known that it is doing so in order to see that no-one who was married according to

this law would have permission to *lobolisa* [i.e. practise *lobolo*]. [The government] also announced that all births would henceforth have to be reported within a month. A fine of one guinea will be imposed for violation of this law. This caused quite a stir here. There was no way out for the people. They will have to come to terms with the situation into which they have put themselves. But here it has become apparent how tenaciously even those who have converted to Christianity cling to their heathen ways. It has influenced several of the heathens to keep their children out of school because if they become Christians they will not follow the custom of their forebears with regard to this [i.e. *lobolo*]. Perhaps the young people themselves are staying away and prefer to remain heathens rather than to give up this custom. The fact of the matter is that at this station those who presently request baptismal instruction are almost exclusively old women. What mines will be needed to clear away this bulwark is not easy to know. But we can be sure that it, too, will fall in time. The Word of God will destroy it! Besides, the Lord has other means at his disposal for executing the plans of his kingdom. Perhaps the raging cattle epidemic, which has robbed the country of most of its cattle, which had previously been the wealth, pride, and main idol of the Zulus, is a mine laid to destroy this bulwark. Yet it looks gloomy. Instead of making the Zulus confess their sins and be humble, it seems to be having the opposite effect, as the blame for this misfortune is being attributed to the whites. It is impossible to foresee or to predict what the future will bring, but do not be surprised if the disasters which are being inflicted on these regions lead to a national rebellion against the whites....



*The pietistic Nils Braatvedt, who usually commented disparagingly on the Zulus' moral standards, surprisingly found little to complain about at Ungoye in 1898. He did, however, find fault with the materialism of Zulus who had found employment in the cities. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende. LIII, nos. 8-9 [April - May 1898], pp. 170-171)*

... With the exception of a few people who have fallen from the faith, the conduct of the believers has been satisfactory. One of the most difficult things for them has been to abstain from drinking beer. Kaffer beer is a healthy and nutritious drink when it is not consumed excessively. But moderation is difficult to observe. We insist that the believers not arrange or attend beer parties. Unfortunately, this commandment is violated much too often. Beer-drinking has been absolutely terrible amongst the heathens during the past year. After a couple years of hunger they believe it is both their right and their duty to make up for lost time during years of abundance. They have filled themselves not only with beer, but also with meat in recent times. When people heard that a cattle epidemic was approaching they took it seriously by slaughtering their cattle because, as they put it, "it is better to get the meat into our stomachs than to bury it".

Even though the natives are gluttons, particularly with regard to meat, they were not able to reduce the size of their herds much before the epidemic came and eliminated their cattle. For a couple months they have been very busy burying the carcasses. In some places it has been overwhelming, so they lie rotting on the ground. At many kraals all the cattle have died. In other places some have survived the epidemic, but they look like skeletons. It therefore looks like a desert here now. To a great degree the people themselves are responsible for their large losses, because they did not vaccinate their cattle. It has been shown that where people did vaccinate them a good many were saved. We fear that there will be a hue and cry when the cattle, which are the wealth, honour, and pride of the Zulus, are taken from them. It is remarkable, though, how calmly they take it. "We do not cry like children", a man told me, "but our hearts cry". One believer told me that many were happy that the distinction between rich and poor had been essentially abolished, and equality had taken its place.

What significance will this have for our mission? This is an important question. Now, while the plague has raged, it has hindered our work, in so far as all the men have been busy burying the dead animals and therefore have not had time to come to our meetings out in the

country. On the other hand, attendance at worship has been tolerably good. I hope that our schools will not suffer any losses. When we have encouraged fathers to send their children to school, they usually protest that they do not have any time for that because they have to watch the cattle. But now they cannot use that excuse.

Amongst the young people, especially those who have worked in Natal, the desire to learn appears to be awakening. We only wish and pray that it is the desire to learn the way of salvation which drives them to learn.

As far as the trappings of civilisation, such as clothing, are concerned, there has been much progress amongst the young Christians here.

Many of those who work in the cities buy many luxuries for themselves and other people. Those who live at the station usually remain within proper bounds with regard to clothing. When they go out on their own, however, it is not always easy to control them. But one cannot expect the Zulus more than any other people not to be too fond of finery. It has been my experience that the Christians who have been raised at the mission station usually restrain themselves the most. It is therefore important that the missionary take in as many as possible. Unfortunately it is becoming more difficult than previously to keep as many servants because wages are rising. We try to convince them that Christian edification and education are worth more than gold and silver, but it is difficult for them to understand that.

Several things, however, indicate that to a great degree the resistance to our work has been broken. Belief in the *amadlozi* is waning. Zululand is under foreign hegemony, and the plagues of recent years, locusts and the cattle epidemic, have been heavy blows for the proud Zulus. May they now bow down to the Lord, who so seriously disciplines and calls them.

But the worst resistance to the Lord is not to be found outside the person; this holds true for Zulus as well as white people. No, the worst resistance lies hidden in the heart. By what name should we call it? I do not hesitate to call it self-righteousness. Can heathens who live in obvious sin be infected with self-righteousness? Yes, and not merely infected but permeated by it. One must not believe, however, that the

Zulus are terribly wild and cruel people. In their conduct they are neat and attractive, and they know how to get on with both whites and blacks. It is often pleasing to see the attractive and dignified tempo at which they move. It puts many whites to shame, and the Zulus know it. On the other hand, they do not know that they are sinners before God....



*At Ungoye, Braatvedt maintained a paternalistic and at times condescending attitude towards the Zulus. In certain respects, however, he saw progress in their development and towards the ultimate victory of the Gospel in Zululand. (Source: Missionslæsning for Kvindeforeninger. XV, no. 7 [July 1898], pp. 49-51)*

Ungoye

9 February 1898

... Most of the Christian mothers and girls have been raised and educated at the mission station. The girls come from the heathen kraals in their national costumes. The wife of the missionary has to hurry to get some clothes on them. Then she has to teach them to work, to keep themselves clean and orderly, and to behave decently and politely. Believe me, that takes time. Both time and patience are required.

It can happen that a Christian woman and a girl come and ask my wife to cut out and sew a dress for them. After all, she is their mother and must therefore help them. No, a missionary's wife does not have much free time, that is certain. But her greatest desire and joy are to be able to help them as much as possible. When the believers live Christian lives, everything goes smoothly. But when misconduct enters their lives, the joy and openness disappear, and the burden becomes heavy.

The natives are like children and must be treated as though they were children. They can be surly and disagreeable, but they can also be kind and pleasant. They like to talk and appreciate it immensely when one takes the time to speak with them and shows interest in their daily activities. From that we try to lead the conversation to the one thing that is essential. In that way we can start pleasant conversations. Happy is he who has the gift of the gab! My best times are spent sitting and talking

with one or more of the Christians about how something in the Word of God should be understood and put into practice, and the experiences they have had in doing so. Those are truly refreshing times, but there are so few of them!

Four natives, two of whom are regular teachers, proclaim the Word of God to their people. Two of them can preach very well, so it has often been edifying to hear them.

But how do the Christians behave? Here, as everywhere else, there is both light and darkness. The bright side is most evident in the beginning, before one has become familiar with the people. I shall never forget the impression made on me the first time I attended a native service. The Christians were attractively dressed, sat quietly in the church, listened attentively, and sang hymns using our well-known melodies. I thought that Christianity and heathenism stood in as sharp contrast to each other as light and darkness.

But gradually, as I became more familiar with the Christians, the contrasts seemed less distinct. One cannot expect that in the transition to Christianity all heathenism will be swept from the heart, even if it is not externally obvious. Unfortunately, many take along as their legacy from heathenism many thoughts, concepts, and customs which they have done their best to cast aside. I want to point out, however, that even in heathenism there are things that should not be thrown out, but which we should try to discover and use as well as possible. Just think of the respect the young people show the elderly in both word and deed, and how relatives help one another when necessary. A man can have several of his relatives staying with him for a long time, and they avail themselves of the things in the house just as if they were their own property, and the man does not demand any compensation.

When the natives have a dispute with each other, it can be violent. They can fight furiously, but afterwards all is forgotten and they can be the best of friends. They regard it as a shame to hold a grudge. There are many exceptions; I have merely mentioned a few of the national characteristics. One hears complaints, however, and possibly with justification, that the young people do not show the same courtesy and respect as was once the case.



It is heartening to see that many of the Christians, particularly the young ones, are starting to establish pleasant homes. They are building attractive houses, usually of straw, with several rooms and are planting fruit trees and other kinds of trees outside their houses. Most of them have made so much progress that they can build their houses with a little help from the missionaries. The furnishings are very simple, but also in that respect they have recently made significant progress. They are getting beds, tables, stools, and perhaps simple chairs to sit on.

As a rule the man of the house leads prayers in the morning and evening, and in several houses part of the Word of God is read in the morning and evening. Even though we always have morning and evening devotions for the servants at the station, the boys and girls usually have separate prayers in the morning and evening....



*Rødseth found his tasks much more demanding after moving from Patane to the well-established station at Eshowe. In his first report from the latter, he emphasised sexual immorality, caused in part by the encroachment of European civilisation, as a major source of dismay at what seemed to be a flourishing station. (Source: Norsk Missionstidende, LIV, no.13 [July 1899], pp. 255-257)*

Eshowe

18 May 1899

Almost a year has passed since I arrived up here, so it is time to submit a brief report. As a young boy it was my greatest wish to go to Eshowe.<sup>45</sup> That wish was fulfilled before I went back to Norway to study at the missionary training school. Since that time my desire to come here

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<sup>45</sup> Rødseth had been born in Norway but in 1882 had emigrated to Marburg near Port Shepstone with ca 230 other Norwegians in the largest Norwegian colonisation venture ever attempted in Africa. Growing up there, he apparently heard about Eshowe frequently, partly because on at least one occasion NMS missionaries from Eshowe came to Marburg to adjudicate disputes in the settlement's Norwegian church.

has not been so great, because it is one thing to visit but quite another to take over the work and the responsibility at a large station.

The difference is great between that little place at Patane, where the doors were so closed and one felt quite superfluous, and here, where one's hands are full. Most of the work is in the congregation and consists of preaching, baptismal and confirmation instruction, visiting the sick, etc. The primary school requires supervision, even if one does not have to teach so much.

A great deal of discouraging work is caused by the many sins and debaucheries within the congregation. The sin is chiefly one thing - sexual immorality. Drinking parties are the cause of much evil, and they are a great evil in themselves. They are held mainly in the autumn and winter. People then have food but little to do. We have tried to oppose these beer parties by lambasting them from the pulpit and even more through frequent visits to the kraals.

Despite all the time-consuming work in the congregation, we do not dare to neglect the heathens who live around us. Most of this work, however, is done by the evangelists. Two of them are salaried; another contributes his services. They have edification meetings out in the kraals and teach individuals who feel affected by the Word. Even though most of the people seem indifferent, faith undermines the spirits more and more. More and more are learning to pray in times of need and, in their last hour, are asking the missionary to come. That has happened many times during the past year.

We have started new work this year at the transport camp, or "mule camp", as we would call it in everyday Norwegian. It is near the station, but as the natives who work there are busy from morning until evening we can preach the Word of God to them only on Sundays, and even then only at a certain time. They are drivers, grooms, and herdsmen, so they do not have all Sunday free. Of the approximately fifty who are employed there, only half can attend our meetings. They are very thankful, however, and several of them attend the evening school at the station.

The army camp, of which the "mule camp" is one part, does not have a good reputation. It attracts our schoolboys, who learn a lot of evil there, and we must often seek the help of the secular authorities to

prevent any contact between the residents of the camp and those of the station. A law can only restrain an evil; it cannot convert anyone. We have therefore thought that we could accomplish more by going in and sowing the seed of the Word amongst them. We shall therefore expand our work in other parts of the camp, if possible, including amongst the white soldiers. Thus far I have had only one meeting on a Sunday morning for the latter, but I shall continue to do so at a later time if God gives me the strength.

We have also had meetings in the prison. As a rule approximately thirty prisoners attend. One does not often find Christians there, but there are a few now and then who have begun to learn or have been in contact with the mission. There, too, opportunities to preach are limited to Sundays and to Saturday afternoons, and since several denominations are working there one must be careful to avoid working at cross-purposes.

Eshowe is beginning to become a town. In addition to the Anglican church, which has a bishop and two priests, one of whom works chiefly amongst the English and the other amongst the Zulus, the Lutheran church is represented by two [missionary] societies, and the Wesleyans, who have long sent a missionary here once a month and are now thinking about building a chapel. It can only be wished that both the black and white populations may appreciate the work that is being done for their good. But now, as at the time of Jesus, many do not know what serves their peace. Yet we must give thanks for those who do. Some wake up and ask for salvation. No fewer than forty adult heathens were added to the congregation last year. About fifty are registered for baptismal instruction, and forty of them come every day in order to be led in truth to salvation, so we hope that this year souls will be led out of the darkness into God's wonderful light. We must not give up, but work industriously. God's cause must win. The Kingdom of God must also come here....

I must express my joy that the steering committee [of the NMS] has approved the suggestion of our missionary conference that we engage

Miss Aagaard<sup>46</sup> here as a Bible lady. One is needed at a place like this, and I believe she will be able to accomplish a great deal of good amongst the female population at the station. Many of them are subjected to temptations and need support and counsel. Others are often hindered by sickness or age from coming to God's house and therefore need to have words of consolation and awakening brought to them. There are countless small instances in which a woman can give spiritual and physical assistance. She must also lend support to the primary school....

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<sup>46</sup> Therese Victoria Aagaard (1860-1939), educated as a teacher in Norway, worked at the Mbonambi station from 1896 until 1899. In 1899 the NMS gave her a position as a teacher at Eshowe, where she remained for several years. Eventually she entered the service of the Church of Sweden Mission.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FREE EAST AFRICA MISSION, 1889-1899

#### Introduction

For several years at the end of the nineteenth century and during much of the twentieth there stood alongside such well-established organisations as the NMS and the Church of Sweden Mission a small number of other Scandinavian evangelistic bodies that propagated the Gospel in Southern Africa. The first of these, known as the Free East Africa Mission, was a so-called "faith mission", to employ temporarily a grossly inadequately term which wrongly implies that missions of other types were not based on faith. The late eminent South African missiologist David J. Bosch provided a convenient characterisation of this kind of evangelistic organisation, quoted in Chapter I of the present study.

In the history of Norwegian Christianity the decade of the 1880s is generally characterised as one of theological turmoil and increasing denominational pluralism, a time when the non-Lutheran communions that had first come to Norway in the 1850s experienced considerable expansion and become firmly attached to the national religious landscape. The 1880s also witnessed the birth of the first non-Lutheran foreign missionary society in Norway, the Free East Africa Mission (*Den frie Østafrikanske Mission*), which formally came into being in 1889. Despite its name, the FEAM was established for the purpose of evangelising indigenous peoples in Southern Africa, and during the ten years of its existence its activities were limited exclusively to Natal. As indicated in the Preface, scant research has been done on the FEAM, and the little that has been published about it in English is neither reliable nor particularly revealing. Before being absorbed by a young, nonconformist denomination in Norway in 1899, however, the FEAM had added another design to the fabric of Southern African missions history, one which under different sponsorship endured until 1960.

The origins of the FEAM are intimately linked to those of the Norwegian Mission Covenant, the denomination which eventually absorbed it, and from its inception it reflected characteristics of both that denomination and the revivalistic currents which had led to its

establishment in 1884. No-one played a more influential role in the creation of the Norwegian Mission Covenant than the Swedish-American evangelist Fredrik Franson (1852-1908), who returned to Scandinavia in 1881 and, after a year and a half in Sweden, spent most of 1883 and part of 1884 as an itinerant preacher in Norway.<sup>1</sup> His evangelism revived several small, scattered congregations which had existed since a revival of the 1850s, one which prompted some Norwegians to leave the Church of Norway. Some of these local bodies, together with others which had been gathered by Franson and Norwegians who had co-operated with him, united to form the Norwegian Mission Covenant in July 1884. This new denomination was probably the most loosely structured in Norway. Many of its members retained membership in the established church of that country, and there was no binding creedal formulation. As a result, in spite of its diminutive size the Norwegian Mission Covenant was broad in terms of both doctrine and practice, encompassing in its ranks advocates of both believers' and infant baptism, to cite but one example of the denomination's latitude. Yet certain emphases were apparent. Two prominent ones were a revivalistic strain and belief in the imminent return of Christ, the latter emphasis reflecting renewed millenarian interest in Norway during the 1880s.<sup>2</sup> Initially lacking theologically educated pastors for its scattered congregations, the Norwegian Mission Covenant relied heavily on lay leadership and short-term Bible courses for training evangelists. The denomination had a periodical, initially titled *Morgenrøden* (i.e. The Dawn), which was succeeded by *Missionæren* (i.e. The Missionary), a private magazine launched in 1889 in connection with the establishment of the FEAM, for which it is the most valuable historical source. Not until 1899, however, did the Norwegian Mission Covenant have its own foreign missions programme.

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<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive study of Franson is Edvard Paul Torjesen, "A Study of Fredrik Franson" (unpublished Doctor of Philosophy thesis, International College, 1984).

<sup>2</sup> For a synopsis of eschatological currents in Norway during the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, see Frederick Hale, "British and American Millenarianism in Norway during the Breakthrough of Modernity", *Fides et Historia*, XIX, no. 1 (February 1987), pp. 35-50.

Nevertheless, interest in missionary endeavours was apparently present in the Norwegian Mission Covenant from its inception. At least two factors can be cited for this. First, Fredrik Franson, who not only inspired the founding of the denomination but also conducted occasional Bible courses in Norway for the training of evangelists, emphasised global outreach as part of his decidedly millenarian theology and personal evangelism. Secondly, a prominent associate of Franson was Paul Peter Wettergreen (1835-1889), who had served the NMS in Zululand from 1861 until 1870 but had left the Church of Norway in 1877 to help establish the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church. He served as the pastor of that new denomination's parish in Arendal, a relatively important port in southern Norway, from 1877 until 1888, when he withdrew his membership and was rebaptised.

Shortly thereafter Wettergreen played a key role in founding the FEAM. He had attended one of Franson's courses for itinerant evangelists held in Norway in mid-1888. On 1 January 1889 Wettergreen delivered a speech in Larvik, another southern Norwegian coastal town, calling for the formation of a "free Norwegian mission in East Africa".<sup>3</sup> During the first half of 1889 Wettergreen and two of his sons, Jacob and Olaf, travelled extensively in Scandinavia to raise funds for the endeavour and stimulate interest in it. Though baptised as Lutherans, the younger Wettergreens no longer belonged to any Lutheran denomination. One had recently returned from a spell in the United States of America, where he had been in contact with what later became Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. The two appear to have been influenced by the nondenominational emphasis of the renowned American evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), who had also left his mark on Franson. The young Wettergreens thus fitted well the confessionless status of the Norwegian Mission Covenant, although at times they were less willing to co-operate with Norwegian Lutherans

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<sup>3</sup> "Den østafrikanske, frie norske Mission", *Missionæren*, I, no. 3 (1 February 1889), p. 18. It is difficult to ascertain precisely when Wettergreen first laid plans to form the FEAM. In any case, on 19 December 1888 he wrote to the newspaper *Missionæren* urging readers not only to "think about" the "East Africa Free Mission" but also to send financial contributions to a merchant in Kristiansand who apparently had volunteered to serve as treasurer of the budding organisation. See Paul Wettergreen (Larvik) to *Missionæren*, 19 December 1888, in *Missionæren*, I, no. 1 (2 January 1889), p. 2.

in Natal than some members of the Covenant in Norway were to work with members of the established church there.

A seven-man steering committee was elected in 1889 to co-ordinate the activities of the FEAM and raise funds to sponsor its missionaries. The denominational affiliations of some members of the committee are not known, but in any case they included the Norwegian Mission Covenant, the Salvation Army (which had entered Norway in 1887), and the Church of Norway. Johan Plesner, a fairly prominent layman in the Norwegian Mission Covenant who later joined the Salvation Army, served as the first chairman.<sup>4</sup>

The first group of missionaries in the FEAM sailed from Kristiania on 4 July 1889.<sup>5</sup> They were a pan-Scandinavian lot, including the Wettergreen brothers and their wives (one of whom was a Swede), three unmarried Norwegian women named Olava Solberg, Martha Sanne, and Georgine Ansteensen, and an unmarried Swedish woman named Emilie Häggberg, and a young Danish bachelor, Sofus Nielsen.<sup>6</sup> They arrived in Durban on 15 August, not knowing that the Wettergreens' father had died of a stroke while they were on the Atlantic.<sup>7</sup>

A series of setbacks began to erode this corps of missionaries almost immediately. Olaf Wettergreen's Swedish bride of two months, Hanna, disappeared mysteriously within a few days of their landing in Durban. Fishermen found her body washed up on an island the following morning.<sup>8</sup> Murder was initially suspected, but an autopsy revealed that the twenty-one-year-old woman had an ovarian tumour. This and reports that Mrs Wettergreen had been "in low spirits" led the physician who

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<sup>4</sup> "Den fri, Østafrikanske Mission", *Missionæren*, I, no. 22 (15 November 1889), p. 175.

<sup>5</sup> "Afrikamissionærernes sidste Dage i Kristiania", *Missionæren*, I, no. 14 (15 July 1889), p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> "Den frie, Østafrikanske Mission", *Missionæren*, I, no. 17 (1 September 1889), p. 137.

<sup>7</sup> "Det første Offer paa Missionsmarken af de til Zulu under 4de Juli d. A. afreiste 9 Missionærer", *Missionæren*, no. 19 (1 October 1889), p. 149.

<sup>8</sup> "Det første Offer paa Missionsmarken", pp. 149-150.



performed the autopsy to believe that she had committed suicide.<sup>9</sup> Further depressing the mood of the surviving missionaries, Jacob Wettergreen died of dysentery on 10 December 1889. His widow, Martha, left Natal shortly thereafter. Two of the other women, Georgine Ansteensen and Emilie Häggberg, also left the FEAM within a few years to marry missionaries of their respective nationalities. Olava Solberg died after marrying an Englishman, William Dawson, who began to work for the FEAM. In 1895 Olaf Wettergreen was expelled from the FEAM for doctrinal reasons to be discussed later. The adventurous young Dane Sofus Nielsen left for Matabeleland, in what became Rhodesia and ultimately Zimbabwe. Of the nine men and women who sailed to Durban in 1889, only Martha Sanne was still in the FEAM seven years later, although a small number of reinforcements had arrived from Norway and Denmark to assist her.<sup>10</sup> Lacking the stability which the NMS had amongst its ordained pastors in Natal and Zululand, though exceeding the high rate of turnover of that society's unordained personnel, the FEAM was severely hampered in its efforts to propagate the Gospel during years when the NMS was enjoying accelerating success in Southern Africa.

Nevertheless, the FEAM began relatively strongly, despite the deaths of Hanna and Jacob Wettergreen in 1889. Olaf Wettergreen, the only male survivor who had previously been in Southern Africa (although Olava Solberg had been there briefly with the Schreuder Mission) - and that during his childhood in the 1860s - became the *de facto* superintendent. Before the death of his brother, the two male Wettergreens spent approximately a week at the Church of Sweden Mission's station, Oscarsberg, at Rorke's Drift. There they worked briefly with its administrator, Otto Witt, who later left both that station and the Church of Sweden Mission. Before the end of September the Wettergreens had purchased on behalf of the FEAM a 300-acre farm near Stanger. The price was £160. Their reasons for choosing to do much of their missionary work there included the relatively large Zulu population of the area, the absence of other missionaries there, its proximity to Zululand, and its

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<sup>9</sup> Natal Mercury (Durban), 28 August 1889.

<sup>10</sup> "Til 'Missionærens' Læsere", *Missionæren*, VIII, no. 44 (29 September 1896), pp. 4-5.

accessibility from Durban, where the Wettergreens hoped to evangelise urban Zulus and conduct a revivalistic ministry amongst resident Scandinavians and sea-farers.<sup>11</sup> The farm, which had a ramshackle house and a few simple out-buildings, was soon transformed into a mission called Ekutandaneni, meaning "brotherly love" in Zulu. This station remained the focal point of the FEAM's endeavours even after a second one, Umhlali, was acquired at Ocean View between Verulam and Stanger.

Progress in effecting conversions remained disappointingly slow. Olaf Wettergreen appears to have been discouraged almost from the outset. After delivering what was probably his first sermon to a Zulu audience, preached in Norwegian which Otto Witt rendered into Zulu, the young Norwegian wrote dejectedly that "the Kaffers are strange people. Many seemed so satisfied with themselves and their present situation that they did not aspire to anything better".<sup>12</sup> Wettergreen's acquisition of the Zulu language during the next few years did not remove all the barriers to successful evangelisation. In 1891 he wrote that he and Witt had received mixed receptions when they had attempted to take the Gospel to various kraals.<sup>13</sup> A little more than a year later Martha Sanne reported that Wettergreen had just returned from another evangelisation tour despondent and had said that "one might just as well preach to stones as to the Kaffers".<sup>14</sup>

The steering committee of the FEAM continued to rely heavily on Wettergreen's leadership and initiative until he began to espouse affinity with the beliefs of the Christadelphians, with whom he had come into contact soon after being stationed in Durban in 1893. That sect, founded in the United States by an English immigrant named John Thomas (1805-1871), rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the existence of Satan, and the eternal punishment of the

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<sup>11</sup> "Den fri, Østafrikanske Mission", I, no. 22 (15 November 1889), p. 175.

<sup>12</sup> Olaf Wettergreen (Durban) to Free East Africa Mission, October 1889, in *Missionæren*, I, no. 23 (1 December 1889), p. 180.

<sup>13</sup> Olaf Wettergreen (Emaulie) to Free East Africa Mission, 8 March 1891, in *Missionæren*, III, no. 12 (9 May 1891), pp. 90-91.

<sup>14</sup> Martha Sanne (Ekutandaneni) to Free East Africa Mission, June 1892, in *Missionæren*, IV, no. 34 (25 August 1892), p. 270.

unregenerate. All these points in the *non credo* of the Christadelphians placed that group at odds with Protestantism and indeed also conflicted with various non-Protestant Christian traditions. Theological heterodoxy of that degree was clearly unacceptable to the FEAM, despite its latitude on certain doctrinal matters. Wettergreen's resignation was consequently demanded and received early in 1895. He remained chiefly in Durban, where he affiliated with the Christadelphians and was engaged in various commercial ventures.<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime the fundamental relationship between the FEAM missionaries and their committee in Kristiania had been shaken, partly because of Otto Witt's influence. That independent-minded Swede had served the Church of Sweden Mission in Natal, chiefly at Rorke's Drift, since 1876, but by 1890 he had become convinced of the necessity of returning to what he believed were apostolic principles of evangelisation and ecclesiastical polity. Witt criticised *inter alia* bureaucratic structures in the church as unnecessary, salaries, and the employment of women as missionaries. In February 1890 he resigned from the Church of Sweden Mission and joined the FEAM.<sup>16</sup> The leadership of the FEAM initially thought it an unmixed blessing to have a man of Witt's experience and apparent reverence for Scriptural warrant to help extend their efforts in Natal. By January 1891, however, he had convinced the other five missionaries that their ties with the committee were unbiblical. The six missionaries consequently sent a collective letter to the committee announcing that all connections with it had been severed. They emphasised, however, their willingness to receive financial support from private individuals or small associations.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the missionaries continued to write frequently to *Missionæren*, in which their letters were printed *in extenso*.

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<sup>15</sup> Martha Sanne (Umhlali) to Free East Africa Mission, 20 September 1896, in *Missionæren*, VIII, no. 44 (29 October 1896), p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Otto Witt (Oscarsberg) to Free East Africa Mission, February 1890, in *Missionæren*, II, no. 8 (20 April 1892), p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> Olaf Wettergreen, Otto Witt, *et al.* (Ekutandaneni) to Free East Africa Mission, 15 January 1891, in *Missionæren*, III, no. 6 (20 March 1891), p. 47.

This autonomous arrangement did not long endure. In March 1892 Wettergreen wrote that while he and his colleagues had advocated the dissolution of the steering committee a year earlier, they now saw clearly the need for such a body in Kristiania, though not one which would determine the actions of the men and women in the field. This *volte-face* appears to have been pecuniarily motivated. Wettergreen candidly admitted that a shortage of funds was hampering the progress of the mission and that reliance on financial gifts from individual donors had caused problems, including misunderstandings with the postmaster in Stanger. He therefore urged the re-establishment of a committee and conveyed the decision of several of the other FEAM missionaries to open a school at Ekutandaneni, something which Witt had previously opposed as inimical to the "wild people of nature" whom they were seeking to evangelise.<sup>18</sup>

A central committee was in fact established in Kristiania within a few months, although the FEAM missionaries in Natal had to struggle financially for several more years. The drought of the mid-1890s, locusts, and epidemics which their Lutheran counterparts in the NMS were reporting so frequently had at least as limiting an effect on these free-church Scandinavians. A few other missionaries from Norway and Denmark bolstered their ranks in the mid-1890s. Their arrival allowed the FEAM to undertake work at a second station, Umhlali, near Ocean View in 1893.

Compounding the physical hardships which natural factors were causing in Natal, the amount of financial support from economically depressed Scandinavia generally declined after reaching a zenith of 11 072 Norwegian crowns in 1892. In 1897 contributions sank to 2 217,42 crowns. This figure rose to over 3 414 the following year, but it seemed evident to the central committee in Kristiania that additional support was sorely needed. In 1899 the committee therefore requested the Norwegian Mission Covenant to take over the FEAM, a move which appeared to be a logical solution in the light of both the origins of the FEAM and links

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<sup>18</sup> Olaf Wettergreen (Ekutandaneni) to *Missionæren*, 2 March 1892, in *Missionæren*, IV, no. 19 (12 May 1892), pp. 149-150; Otto Witt (Ekutandaneni) to *Missionæren*, 1 June 1890, in *Missionæren*, II, no. 15 (6 August 1890), p. 117.

between the central committee and that denomination.<sup>19</sup> At its annual convention, held in Skien<sup>20</sup> in July 1899, the Norwegian Mission Covenant approved the proposed arrangement and urged the auxiliaries which had supported the FEAM to remain in contact with the denomination, which also voted that year to undertake missionary work in China. The FEAM thereby ceased to exist, although the Norwegian Mission Covenant remained active in Natal on a small scale until 1960. During the twentieth century the Covenant co-operated from time to time with the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America, an organisation which also traced its origins in part to the ministry of the Franson and which had begun to send missionaries to Natal in 1892.

### Correspondence

*Initial optimism quickly turned to horror when Olaf Wettergreen's wife, Hanna, disappeared and was found dead shortly after the nine FEAM missionaries arrived in Durban in August 1889. Jacob Wettergreen described the incident. (Source: Jacob and Olaf Wettergreen [Durban] to FEAM, 21 August 1889, in *Missionæren*, I, no. 19 [1 October 1889], pp. 149-150)*

Durban

21 August 1889

... As the Lord has been present with his spirit at our meetings and blessed us wonderfully with the salvation of souls, we decided to continued to have them every evening. Hanna (Olaf's wife) and my wife stayed home from the meeting on Monday evening, 19 August, because they were tired. While they were home alone, a Kaffer came and knocked

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<sup>19</sup> M. Hansen, "Et tiaars Arbeide", *Missionæren*, XI, no. 24 (15 June 1899), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> "De herlige Midtsommerdages Samvær i Skien", *Missionæren*, XI, no. 32 (10 August 1899), p. 4. The name "Free East Africa Mission" continued to be used for a short time after the Norwegian Mission Covenant had absorbed it.

on the door. Hanna opened it, but she could not understand anything he said. The Kaffer left. Yesterday afternoon, however, we saw a Kaffer, probably the same one, according to the description Hanna had given, who had been at the door, loitering near the house. Olaf thought that was strange and stood at the window in order to show the Kaffer that there were men present. It was nearly 19h00, so we decided to go to the meeting. Olaf, who was very busy writing, asked the ladies to get ready so that we would not have to wait. Hanna replied that she was not ready. Apparently she went out the door, waiting for us to come very soon. About five minutes later Sofus,<sup>21</sup> Martha,<sup>22</sup> and Olaf went to the door and called to Hanna, who they thought was in the kitchen, but she did not reply. They assumed that she had gone to the chapel,<sup>23</sup> which is nearby. To our great surprise and horror, however, we did not find Hanna there. We again searched the house carefully, but it was in vain. We all understood that she was in danger, either by being lost or by having fallen into the hands of a Kaffer. The latter seemed more probable.

The matter was immediately reported to the authorities, who instantly sent out the entire police force accompanied by all our Scandinavian friends who had gathered in the chapel. In all about 200 people searched the city and the vicinity. This search lasted all night, but our dear Hanna was not to be found.

The following morning between 8h00 and 9h00 we received the saddening news that the corpse of our dear Hanna had been found by some fishermen, driven ashore on an island. It had been brought to the hospital. The police had continued intensive investigations the entire time. Two Kaffers have already been arrested as suspects. Facts that came in later made it necessary to take the case through the normal judicial procedures. We cannot give any more information at present,

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<sup>21</sup> Sofus Nielsen, the Danish member of the group.

<sup>22</sup> Martha Wettergreen, Jacob Wettergreen's wife.

<sup>23</sup> Meant is the "Scandinavian Chapel" in West Street, which was the house of worship of Norwegians and other Scandinavians who did not belong to the St Olaf Lutheran Church in Durban. The two congregations were often at odds during their early years. The Scandinavian Chapel ceased to exist early in the twentieth century.

unfortunately, because the hearings have not yet begun, and letters must be sent by 7h30 if they are to be on the next mail boat. Because of the heat, the funeral was held already today, Wednesday, 21 August. Pastor Vahlen, who just arrived as a passenger on the *Paulus*, officiated at the chapel and preached on Romans 11:33. Our beloved Pastor [Otto] With [sic] spoke at the cemetery, using the text "I am the way, the truth, and the life".<sup>24</sup> There was a high degree of participation by the Scandinavians....



*Despite the death of Hanna Wettergreen, the group pressed ahead with plans to establish a mission. Olaf Wettergreen accompanied the Swedish missionary Otto Witt to Oscarsberg, the station at Rorke's Drift, to learn more about rural evangelism, which would remain their chief emphasis, despite some ministry to urbanised Zulu labourers and Scandinavian immigrants in Durban. The group then purchased a farm near Stanger and laid plans for developing a station on it. This letter also casts light on the FEAM's early co-operation with Lutheran missionaries, which, however, did not long endure, and on Olaf Wettergreen's attitudes towards the Zulus. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen [Durban] to Missionæren, October 1889, in Missionæren, I, no. 23 [1 December 1889], pp. 181-182)*

Durban

October 1889

On Monday, 26 August, we left Durban with Pastor Witt in order to spend a few days at his station, Oscarsberg. We made the first part of the journey by rail. It has to be regarded as wonderful that there are railways in Natal, and for that reason one should probably refrain from criticising them. Let me nevertheless say that I have never shaken more....

There was a meeting [at Oscarsberg] every afternoon all week. Many stood to pray our intercessory prayer with us. In the evening Witt's study was full of worried people who asked, "What must I do to be

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<sup>24</sup> John 14:6.

saved?" During the meetings I could not always understand the words, but I could feel the mighty spirit which was present. I had a strange feeling when, using Witt as an interpreter, I first preached to these poor souls about God's love and told them that he was willing to save all of them. The Kaffers are strange people. Many seemed indifferent, so satisfied with themselves and their present situation that they did not aspire to anything better. Therefore only the work of God's spirit can convict them of their sin. For that reason you can imagine our joy when fifteen people stood up at the morning service and testified that they had found Jesus as their Saviour. Pray for them, that they will remain in the truth and be a means for the salvation of many souls.

This was our first little missionary journey. Naturally we could not converse with the people. You are probably wondering, as we did when Witt first asked us to go along with him, what we could do. Pitifully little, to tell the truth, but may God bless that little bit. We got some simple words written down, such as "Come to church this afternoon", and received a copy of the New Testament and song-book in the natives' language. At the various kraals we extended our invitation, read the third chapter of John, and sang a couple songs....

On Tuesday, 24 September, Brother Nilsen<sup>25</sup> drove with us to the farm which for a month and a half we had prayed daily that God would reveal to us his will as to whether we should buy it. We did not want to live too close to other stations and thus work on a field that is already taken. On the way, therefore, Brother Nilsen asked several people whom we met whether any missionary came to them and told them about Jesus. Everyone answered negatively. Brother Nilsen, who has lived about twenty-five kilometres from there for fifteen years, told us that for a long time he had asked God to send someone to work amongst the masses of people who live down in the Tugela Valley. Strangely enough, as soon as we arrived here we received a letter from a Brother Høidalsvik,<sup>26</sup> who

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<sup>25</sup> Almost certainly meant is Petter Gottfred Nilsen (1836-1906), who served the NMS at Otimati from 1886 until 1902.

<sup>26</sup> The Høidalsvik family had been part of the Norwegian expedition which had sought without success to colonise the Aldabra islands in 1879. Many of the unsuccessful pioneers who had abandoned that venture after their ship, the *Debora*, reached Madagascar, settled in Natal.



has lived in the vicinity for three years and who has also long wished that someone would come and take up the work here, informing us that the farm was for sale. After walking around it for a while to inspect it, we all fell to our knees under a tree and fervently asked the Lord to let us buy it without difficulty if it was his will that we settle here; if not, he should place large hindrances in the way.

The Lord has now allowed us to get the farm on quite reasonable terms, and we hope to go up there soon and start to work. First, we have to stay a bit longer in Durban. Let me conclude with something about this city.

There are a lot of free Christians here who are seriously interested in the revival of the children of God in Christ's love and in the salvation of souls. Until we leave we will have meetings for the Scandinavians every evening and occasionally on the ships. There are a lot of Norwegian ships here now, and more are awaited. No-one is working amongst them [i.e. the sea-farers]. We long to go up to the Kaffers, however, and wish to learn their language so that we will be able to pray to Jesus with those poor people....



*Most of the FEAM missionaries were soon entrenched at Ekutandaneni. Thirteen months after Wettergreen had written to the steering committee about the possible purchase of the farm on which that station was built, Martha Sanne described a service in the simple chapel there and commented on some of the people who attended it. (Source: Martha Sanne [Ekutandaneni] to Missionæren, III, no. 3 [6 February 1891], pp. 19-20)*

Ekutandaneni

24 November 1890

Come along, dear friends, and visit us today in the little chapel at Ekutandaneni. But be prepared for a hot day. It will cost you many drops of sweat to sit in there. As you know from my previous description of it, the little chapel is extremely simple. The walls and floor are made of earth and the roof of iron, but it now has some furnishings, namely a large

table and some benches. The latter were the cause of great joy, because as long as our listeners had to sit on the ground they (especially the men) constantly came and complained that it was so bad and inappropriate for us to have them sit on the floor. Here and there they even became sick from it. We could hardly keep from smiling at those complaints, because they have sat on the ground all their lives. But now this problem has been solved to the satisfaction of everyone. The large table has been designated a school table, but it is also useful in other ways. On Sundays we [i.e. the missionaries] sit at it, and it is equipped with Zulu Bibles and hymnals. Our little organ stands in the corner near the table. Sofus [Nielsen] is actually our organist, but I serve as such in his absence.

In front of us we see an assembly of faces in varying shades of darkness, from light brown down to the deepest brown colour. The gathering numbers between forty and fifty. Olaf [Wettergreen] speaks. He reads to them from the Creation story and relates his remarks to it. In the beginning he felt so poor and unsuited, but God also revealed his steadfastness in him, both by giving him thoughts and words and by arousing the attention of the people so they kept their eyes fixed on him all the time.

Look, an old, thin woman is sitting there. She is almost only skin and bone. Her brown skin is deeply wrinkled, but her eyes are very bright; they radiate interest. The woman is the mother of [our Zulu employee] Umhawana. She is at our meetings every Sunday, and we really believe that she has been led from darkness into light, that she is living in communion with the living God. In front of her sits a girl in a pink calico dress and a bright red towel around her waist. Her woolly hair is tied in long braids which hang down the sides. She has a strange, uncomfortable expression on her face. Presumably she has come in order to shine in her pretty costume, which in both her eyes and those of the other people is incomparably beautiful.

Beside her sits a pretty, young wife with an inordinately long, erect hair style, which has been dressed with great care. It takes all day to create such a hair style. The job is done by a friend. The person being handled must lie on her stomach almost the entire time. The hair is kneaded with fat and impregnated with a strong red colour. This young

woman is our closest neighbour. She has been strongly influenced, but we do not dare to say anything more about her.

On the first bench sit a row of young girls decorated with beads and other things of that sort. They have also braided thick wreaths of foliage, which they have hung around their heads, necks, and arms. These wreaths seem to offer comfortable protection against the burning sun. For that reason one of the girls has placed a leaf over each eye and one over her nose. That looks quite comical, but we have become so accustomed to these various costumes that practically none of them surprises us any longer.

Most of the people gathered here wear their national costumes. Only a few have real clothing, most of which they got from us. Look, there sits a woman in Emilie [Häggberg's] blue-trimmed dress with a handkerchief to decorate her head. This handkerchief, also a gift from Emilie, she holds in high esteem. She wears it on her head one Sunday, around her waist a second, tossed over her shoulder a third, and on her little boy a fourth. The children, moreover, are almost completely naked. A chain of beads around their necks is all they own. Over in a corner two small boys sit on my large, black chest. I look at them now and then. One is called "Mnandi", which means good and is usually used to indicate a good taste, but when he was working for us a few days ago he was so bad and angry that Olaf said to him in jest that it would be more appropriate for him to be called "Mubi", which means bad. I believe Olaf's way of handling the matter embarrassed him [*i.e.* the boy]. But today he is again "Mnandi", and all is going well. Seated as he is today in the corner, he is attentiveness incarnate. His face seems to consist of almost only mouth and eyes. A slender, little chap is seated at his side. The most distinguishing thing about him is an inordinately large tuft of feathers on his forehead.

But, when it is so hot and in addition there is a strong, unpleasant odour of sweat and lard, you can imagine that it is not easy to hold out. The young girls agree with that. Now and then they leave briefly, even though we ask them to remain seated until the end of the sermon. If we white people can endure it, we believe the blacks should also be able to do so. An exception is made for the little boys who take care of the livestock, because they have to go out and tend to the cattle.

Olaf is not the only one who speaks. If God prompts any of us others to say something, we do so, and a couple of converted kaffers sometimes also give a testimony. Once in a while our dear friend Jakobe, who is an outstanding preacher in terms of both language and content, pays us a visit....



*Less than a year and a half after arriving in Natal, the surviving missionaries in the FEAM formally cut their ties with the steering committee in Kristiania. They gave a brief explanation of their Biblical reasons for doing so but underscored their willingness to receive continued financial support from Scandinavia. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen et al. [Ekutandaneni] to FEAM, 15 January 1891, in *Missionæren*, III, no. 6 [20 March 1891], p. 47)*

Ekutandaneni

15 January 1891

We thank and praise our Father, who has guided our ways together out here in the dark, heathen world to proclaim the word of Jesus Christ, the saviour of sinners and who has prompted you, brothers and sisters, to support us with material gifts, so that you may also have part of the fruits of the work amongst the Zulus.

We are not unaware of the fact that our richly loving Father up there has given us more and more friends in our native lands, and that the gifts which have come from you both publicly and privately have truly been abundant. They have made us say, with the apostle, that "in any and all circumstances I have learnt the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and want".<sup>27</sup> The ways of the Lord have truly been wonderful for us, and when we now at the beginning of the new year have gathered together to discuss our mutual affairs, circumstances have led us to examine even more carefully the Word of God with respect to one particular matter. The result of this investigation is that through the Word the Spirit has shown us that we have honoured an incorrect

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<sup>27</sup> Philippians 4:12.

principle and by doing so have become recognised as an organised mission. Christ himself wants to be our head and direct our work, so that we rely on him and are responsible to him alone. And he who is the living and uniting bond between all of God's children, he who connects one limb to another with no other joint than the head - Christ, he has told us that in future we should be directly connected to individual persons or small groups of people. In that way we, his modest, unworthy witnesses, will be more in the shadow of the cross of Jesus, hidden from everyone except him, and will witness to this people that the night is almost over and dawn is near. We have the great satisfaction of knowing that God's work through us is being done according to the letter of his own Word without regard to what is regarded as advantageous or practical.

We therefore feel compelled by the Holy Spirit to sever all ties with the committee in Kristiania which has been formed under the name "the Steering Committee for the Free East Africa Mission". In future we shall stand in a direct relationship with you, brothers and sisters, as many of you who, through the acquaintance and guidance of the spirit are called to seek the fruits of the Lord through us here in the heathen world.

If you wish to support us either privately or in small associations, the easiest way to do so would be through a bank, although sums under £10 can advantageously be sent as postal money orders. [Otto] Witt's address is: Durban, Natal, while that of the other brothers and sisters is: Ekutandaneni, Stanger, Natal. We wish to make it clear to you that like the first church we own everything collectively, so none of us regards any gifts as his or her private property. Without exception, all gifts will be applied to our common needs.

We hereby admonish you, brothers and sisters, to write to us directly. We will respond by reporting to you about our work and our activities....



*After the Anglo-Zulu War and the subsequent annexation of Zululand, it became more common for missionaries to take the Gospel directly to the kraals in both Natal and Zululand. As shown in Chapter IV, such "home evangelisation" was often used by NMS missionaries during the 1880s and 1890s. Wettergreen and Witt sought to bring the Gospel to*

scattered kraals near the Tugela River but found their efforts thwarted by the hostility of some Zulus. At others they were received hospitably. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen [Emaulie] to *Missionæren*, 8 March 1891, in *Missionæren*, III, no. 12 [9 May 1891], pp. 90-91)

As I reported earlier, Brother Witt and I left Ekutandaneni on 21 February. Our experiences have been varied during these fourteen days. I shall try to give our friends in all brevity a description of our wanderings....

After an hour's walk from Ekutandaneni we were proclaiming the message of salvation in a kraal where our special testimony was "The Lord is coming; the crucified and risen Saviour will soon be revealed in the clouds with power and great glory". The questions are then usually "When is the king coming?" "What does he look like?" "Is he an *umhlungu* (white man)?" We reply that we do not know but that he says in his Word that he is coming soon and that he looks like the sun and is therefore far above both whites and blacks. That satisfied them.

We did not know the way, and we hardly would have dared to go where we did had we known the way. It was almost unbelievable how we managed to go up and come down those steep hills with the donkey. It went well, though, and we soon discovered that Betty was the most desirable and practical animal for us.

We set our course for the Tugela, planning to follow it up to Untunjambili. We made a detour from the river, however, because we had asked that our mail be sent to Mapumulo, where we wanted to greet Rev. Holbrook, an American missionary who will perhaps return home for rest. We had five meetings there. Brother Witt preached to many blacks, many of whom were Christians. We found it to be a spirit-filled station, where life was more important than form. We are certain that the days we spent there were a blessing for both them and us. On Monday morning we again began our wandering. It was a burning day, but after being in three or four kraals where we gave our precious testimony about Jesus, we experienced a holy peace and joy in our task of itinerant evangelisation.

One evening while the sun was setting, we entered a kraal tired and hungry. We asked for shelter and gave our testimony about the coming of the king. The people accepted neither us nor our message,

however; indeed, they turned us away almost in anger. Even though the large forest lay before us, they did not show us the way. As a result, we got lost, and it was completely dark when we arrived at the next kraal, where we were cordially received. We were grateful to get shelter in an old hut together with a man, three women, two small children, a boy, and, not to be forgotten, a calf. The children had whooping cough and entertained us almost all night with their alternating crying and coughing. The next morning we had a very good breakfast consisting of a chicken. No doubt it was God himself who provided for us, because with the exception of a little *amosi* (sour milk and a little tinned meat) we did not get a real meal until 14h00 the next day.

We got completely lost. The bushes and brushwood we went through show that where there is a will there is a way. If Betty had not had such a strong will, we never would have made it through. She went on boldly on branches that formed a net of thorns. About 18h00 we reached the Tugela exhausted, but we were far from any kraal. We saw some cows grazing and agreed to unsaddle our tired Betty. While I found a place to rest, Witt was to detain the cattle, as perhaps people would come to get them. The idea was good enough, but the cows were not willing to submit to this foreign hegemony. One after the other slipped into the brushwood, so our hopes of getting shelter for the night disappeared. We thought about continuing, but we discovered that Betty was limping. Just before the sun set we gathered a lot of dry wood. There was a great deal of it there. We lit a large fire under a leafy tree. Darkness fell, but the fire under the tree spread both warmth and cosiness. Jesus was near us, and trusting in his protection we lay down for the night. Admittedly, it was a bit uncomfortable to think that we were lying only about six or seven metres from the home of the crocodiles. When we woke up in the morning, the sun was shining comfortably down on us between the branches of the tree. Our breakfast consisted of only a cup of cocoa. We continued in the hope of soon finding kraals, but we did not reach this one until 14h00.

Since leaving Mapumulo we have not had a boy, and we have found that we do not need one. Here in Zululand we have experienced what it is to be denied shelter, which is one of our most severe trials, because it is very uncomfortable to have to go out in the dark on an unknown road. But the Lord is with us and helps us.

Today we have settled down at a kraal where we arrived yesterday and were very cordially received. The head of the kraal sent a message to the people in the area to gather them for a meeting today. In spite of rain many attended, and we were happy to pack ourselves into a hut. It was a blessed meeting for my soul, and I am certain that seeds were planted for eternity.

Monday morning. The weather is clearing, so I hope we can leave here today. Time passes slowly when one is confined to a Zulu hut all day. We usually have company, indeed more than we want when we are trying to collect our thoughts for writing a letter....



*At times the initially enthusiastic Wettergreen made disparaging remarks about the Zulus and gave hints that he had almost given up hope in the ultimate success of the mission. Efforts to involve indigenous labour in the construction of the chapel at Ekutandaneni brought frustration. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen [Durban] to Missionæren, 12 October 1891, in Missionæren, III, no 40 [19 November 1891], p. 316)*

Durban

12 October 1891

My pen has been idle for a long time, but for a long time I have felt that I ought to write. I shall try to obey my inner voice, even though I have nothing of interest to discuss. It has been an extraordinarily busy time at Ekutandaneni. It has taken a lot of work to make 70 000 bricks. Making bricks is a great art, and as we did not have any experience in it the results are not perfect. We have come far enough, though, so that the task of building can begin soon.

The natives are often a hard test of our patience. Their sluggishness in working often forces us to do more ourselves than we ought to. We all agree that we want to do as much as possible ourselves and not be more dependent on the natives than is necessary. Do not get the impression that we are constantly quarrelling with them. I am happy to be able to write that all things considered we are good friends of all our neighbours....



It was a real joy to be able to welcome Mrs Nielsen.<sup>28</sup> It was almost in fear that I did so, because I was aware of all the work that awaited her. Our house is small and plain, whereas we are many and constitute a rather large household. Mrs Nielsen took over the house immediately after her arrival at Ekutandaneni. This gave our women the opportunity to devote themselves to missionary work without interruption....



*Wettergreen's increasing despondency became obvious to his colleagues. Martha Sanne, his indefatigable fellow missionary, also expressed a waning of hope after nearly three years in Natal. (Source: Martha Sanne [Ekutandaneni] to Missionæren, June 1892, in Missionæren, IV, no. 34 [25 August 1892], p. 270)*

Ekutandaneni

June 1892

"When one member suffers, the others suffer too", not so? We are suffering out here, because the people are so slow to accept the Word of the Lord which we preach to them again and again. Sometimes it becomes so depressing that our work looks impossible, and discouragement sneaks in unnoticed.

Today, Sunday, Olaf was out in the kraals preaching to the people whom he met. He returned thirsty and hungry, and when we asked him how it had gone he replied in a low voice, "One might just as well preach to the stones as to the Kaffers".

The rest of us had held a meeting here at the station. Several people came near the end of the meeting. Before they left, we admonished them again and again to accept Jesus, to become his disciples, and to become children of God. But all remained silent. Umhawana was present. He had just returned from Durban, where he had worked for a few months. After the meeting I had a serious private conversation with him. I reminded him of the first time he was with us, approximately two years

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<sup>28</sup> Petra Nielsen, the mother of Sofus Nielsen, had just arrived from Denmark to begin a period of service with the FEAM.

ago. Then he was bright and happy; he loved Jesus and was full of joy. But then he began to associate with his old friends, drink beer with them, participate in their entertainment, go to beer parties, etc. Little by little he fell back into his old life. He admitted that everything I had said was true. He remembered well that his heart had been tender and good, ready to do the will of God. Worry was painted on my face. Umhawana himself looked worried, and he answered in a soft friendly voice. He explained to me that he had two hearts. One was good and wanted to do God's will, but the other was evil and loved this world. He did not want to deceive me; he wanted to tell me the truth, [which was] that the evil heart was now governing him. "Come back to Jesus", [I said]. "No, I cannot, but I want to go home and lie down. I want to be quiet and serious. I want to think". "If you choose God, you must return for the afternoon service", I said. "If I choose God, I shall return", was his answer.

I went indoors and asked Georgine [Ansteensen] if we should pray together for Umhawana. She wanted to do so. We prayed and held up to God his promise, namely that if two or three people agree to pray for something, it shall happen. Umhawana did not come to the afternoon service, but we do not conclude from that that our prayers were not heard....

My soul is worried as I write these lines, and this is not the first time that I or we have been worried and have wept. May God grant that the time will soon come when with joyful hearts we can thank God for the salvation of the Kaffers.



*The question of polity remained vexing, owing partly to financial exigencies. Within a year after cutting their ties with the steering committee of the FEAM, Wettergreen and some of his colleagues began to question the wisdom of that move. Early in 1892 they therefore changed their position and informed supporters in Norway that they would prefer to have some kind of committee in Kristiania, presumably to serve as an agency for collecting funds for their maintenance. They also indicated that they no longer agreed with Otto Witt's intransigent opposition to schools for the Zulus. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen [Ekutandaneni] to*

*Missionæren*, 27 March 1892, in *Missionæren*, IV, no. 19 [12 May 1892], pp. 149-150)

Ekutandaneni

2 March 1892

We realise that to many of our dear friends back home we out here are a question mark. The friends here have therefore given me the task of writing a clarification of our standpoint. It is my intention to answer some of the questions which I believe many would like to have clarified.

Is there anyone who uses the name "the Free East Africa Mission", and does it actually exist? We out here are not aware of any dissolution of it. A little more than a year ago we agreed to dissolve the steering committee which then existed, but by doing so we out here did not dissolve or did we reject the name "the Free East Africa Mission"....

To get to the heart of the matter, the judgement of us may be what it will, but we see clearly that we need a *central committee* for our mission, and that it should have its seat in Kristiania. This committee shall never become a governing force of missionary work out here, but it must become part of "the Free East Africa Mission" back home. We out here cannot determine how [that should be], but we are heartily thankful to God for giving us a friend and brother in Norway, namely Brother M[athias] Hansen.<sup>29</sup> We now give him to God so that God can use him to do everything that can be done to organise a central committee in Kristiania for "the Free East Africa Mission".

I shall now report briefly on our work here and say one last time that we have always been compelled to proceed slowly because of a lack of money. Thank God, we have had enough to stay alive, but, friends, we do not wish to be here merely to live, but also to work.

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<sup>29</sup> Mathias Hansen, a relatively prominent member of the Norwegian Mission Covenant, had served on the steering committee of the FEAM in Kristiania before Wettergreen, Witt, and the others in Natal had severed their ties with it. Hansen's interest in the FEAM remained strong. It seems plausible that he had maintained contact with the FEAM missionaries after the committee was dissolved.

We believe it is correct to teach children and that precisely in that way sisters can be used in our work out here. At the conference mentioned earlier it was decided to begin a school on the following conditions:

1. Assistance from the government must never be agreed to.
2. Instruction must be given only in reading, arithmetic, writing, singing, and handicrafts.
3. All instruction must be in the Zulu language.
4. From first to last emphasis must be placed on imparting the Gospel, not merely historically but as a matter of the heart.
5. The administration of the school shall be left to its teachers.
6. The brothers [*i.e.* the men in the FEAM] shall only assist on request and not be employed as teachers.

The school has now been turned over to Sisters Sanne and Ansteensen.

You have heard that Brother S[ofus] Nielsen is in Durban. I hope that he will write soon to *Missionæren* about his stay there.

As soon as we have completed the practical work, we hope to get on with the task of evangelisation with much greater strength. Everyone shall have the freedom to work in the way that seems best. Those who are at Ekutandaneni all agree that we must be thankful to God for leading us to such a densely populated area, which we ought to divide into districts and in them undertake well-ordered, systematic work. May God then lead and direct everything so that the practical work will soon be finished, more brothers come out as evangelists, and that sisters who are needed for our educational work come. When we speak about evangelisation, it is with the prayer and the hope that there will be results, which will be the formation of congregations. We believe in Biblically organised congregations. We practise only believers' baptism, and that only after the natives give personal testimonies.

None of us has anything against women working, but conditions make it impossible for a woman to be an evangelist. She will be used gladly whenever and wherever possible. In this regard I cannot neglect to say that a brother and a sister united in the Lord in work for Jesus

can be a great blessing. That is perhaps the best way in which a woman can work....



*From time to time the missionaries of the FEAM wrote letters to Evangelisten, the periodical of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America, whose headquarters were in Chicago. Olaf Wettergreen used that forum for telling Scandinavian-Americans about his ministry in Durban, where he was stationed after he had little success in effecting conversions at Ekutandaneni. He made clear his continuing emphasis on conversion experiences and his commitment to religious freedom for Scandinavians who had departed from their Lutheran heritage. (Source: Olaf Wettergreen [Durban] to Evangelisten, 13 January 1893, in Evangelisten, IV, no. 10 [9 March 1893], p. 4)*

Durban

13 January 1893

It has been a long time since I wrote to *Evangelisten*, since I thought about writing to you about conditions in Durban....

It was decided that, God willing, I would spend a year here. Even though I shall work chiefly amongst the Kaffers, I shall also help the free-church Scandinavians in their work for the salvation of souls. I can therefore discuss the conditions of both.

Let us look at the Scandinavians first. I shall not say to what extent there was a Scandinavian house of God [here] previously. In any case, it appears that some believe that a church in which everything is done in the genuine Lutheran, Norwegian, state-church way has an exclusive right to be called a house of God. We allow ourselves to believe, however, that God was present here in Durban before the Lutheran (in the Norwegian, formalistic, state-church sense) church was built. But enough of that.

For a long time there has been [Christian] work amongst the Scandinavians here in Durban. Several years ago a "congregation of Scandinavian believers" was formed. It is actually more an association than a congregation, founded on the freest possible principles. One bond

is present, however, namely that no-one is admitted without being able to give a personal testimony about conversion from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God. Otherwise there is complete freedom of conscience amongst them. In order to frighten people away from the chapel (the Scandinavian meeting-house), the Lutherans declare loudly that the people there are Baptists. As far as that matter is concerned, all who belong to the congregation have been baptised. Those who believe that their infant baptism is a [real] baptism have been baptised in that way, but a minority who do not believe that infant baptism is baptism have been baptised as believers.

These brothers and sisters are united in their work for the salvation of souls. They have four meetings at the chapel and two at the pier [every week]. God has often blessed us in the little chapel. We have often had the joy of seeing a lost son or daughter say, and act accordingly, "I want to be resurrected and go to my father". So remember, dear brothers and sisters, a small flock of your countrymen are working and breathing for Jesus here in Durban. They need your prayers in order to work more eagerly and more filled with the Spirit, not only amongst themselves and the sea-farers, but also amongst the many heathens around here.

There are Kaffers here in Durban. They do not reside here permanently. They come down for varying lengths of time in order to earn money. I attend six Kaffer meetings every week. They are held in various places where the Kaffers stay. We can often gather almost 100 at these meetings. It is a blessing to be able to go and preach the word about Jesus. If one has experienced glorious salvation in one's own soul, one wants to see everyone else enjoy the same glory. We are often able to experience the wonderful presence of the Lord at our meetings. We are doing well, but there is sorrow amidst the joy because of the Kaffers. Even though they listen with visible interest, we have not had many conversions amongst them. It is therefore important that we do not grow tired, but continue to preach in season and out of season....



*Nils Schaug, a young Norwegian, travelled to Natal in the service of the FEAM in 1894. Two years later the new chapel at Ekutandaneni was*

completed, but the series of natural disasters which struck Natal and Zululand in the mid-1890s hampered missionary endeavours there, as elsewhere. (Source: Nils Schaug [Ekutandaneni] to M. Hansen, 11 September 1896, in *Missionæren*, VIII, no. 44 [29 October 1896], p. 4)

Ekutandaneni

11 September 1896

Thank you for the letter and the document from the committee. The latter was completely satisfactory.<sup>30</sup>

Yes, we have now finished the chapel. It is very pretty, at least as pretty as most of the rural chapels in Norway. If necessary it can accommodate 150 people. It is nearly ten metres long and five metres wide. The only thing that is lacking is a concrete floor, but we can lay one later. It is good [for the earth] to be hard before we lay concrete; otherwise it [*i.e.* the concrete] will crack later.

Last Sunday we had a very cosy meeting. The chapel was clean and attractive, as were the hearers. Most of them were nicely dressed, and they listened quietly and attentively. We spoke especially to those who say they are believers. It appears that several really wish to belong to the Lord, and both their lives and appearance have changed.

One day I wrote a letter for a woman to her brother, who is a believer. Among other things, she wrote: "I can now tell you that I love Jesus, and Nonkoma says that she does too". That other person is a girl from the same kraal, and when she said that a smile appeared on her face. I am glad that God can powerfully save the lost, including the Kaffers.

Thank you for your dear letter. We all thought it was nice. We are all doing well here. Admittedly, we do not have butter these days because the cow does not give enough milk, but that does not matter.

Money has been tight recently, and it is more expensive to live now than it was previously because we have to buy all our maize, and it costs

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<sup>30</sup> The editor of *Missionæren* explained in a footnote that the document concerned the transfer of ownership of Ekutandaneni from Olaf Wettergreen, who held the deed but was no longer in the FEAM, to Petra Nielsen, the Danish housekeeper at Ekutandaneni.

twice as much as in previous years. We have always had potatoes, but now they are gone. We also had milk all last year, but if we want to have it now the price is 3d. per bottle, and we can rarely find it even at that price.

Yet we are doing well when we think of those who are fighting in Matabeleland<sup>31</sup> and are vulnerable to dying of starvation. An ounce of bread costs 1s. 9d., and the government has forbidden all shops in the country from selling flour for less than £12 per sack. You can understand from these figures the need which reigns here. It appears that all Africa is threatened by famine, because a cattle epidemic which has killed all the cattle in Matabeleland is threatening to come here. One farmer up there who had 1 500 head of cattle now has no more than seventy; all [the others] died in the epidemic.

Now it is time to go to bed, so I must end our greeting. But first I ought to mention that the country is swarming with locusts which eat up everything that is planted. Some days they come in such swarms that they darken the sun. Then they leave for perhaps a few weeks. It is worst, however, where they lay eggs. They often lie there for many days and eat up everything green. After a month the young locusts come out of the eggs by the millions, and they eat many times as much as the large locusts. The plague has truly descended on us. But let us humble ourselves before him who knows us and who alone can help....



*Seven years after the first group of nine FEAM missionaries had landed in Natal, Martha Sanne gave a summary of what had happened to them. The young Dane, Sofus Nielsen, had probably suffered the most, and most of the others had left to join other missionary societies or pursue other goals. The FEAM was being maintained on meagre contributions, but it continued to function for another three years. (Source: Martha Sanne [Umhlali] to Missionæren, VIII, no. 44 [29 October 1896], pp. 4-5)*

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<sup>31</sup> British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes, aided by Leander Starr Jameson, had expanded his influence north of the Limpopo River in the early 1890s. By 1893 the Matabele had been subdued. They revolted against Rhodes' Chartered Company in 1896 but were defeated after some initial success.



Umhlali

30 September 1896

... Two of the friends who came out with me [in 1889] were Georgine Ansteensen and Emilie Häggberg. Those two sisters are still doing work amongst the Kaffers. Georgine is married to the missionary Olsen Feyling. They live far up in Zululand in the vicinity of St Lucia Bay, a very lonely and dark place which is also a dangerous malarial area. During the winter they travel about in a little cart and evangelise in the low land, while in the summer they stay at higher altitudes. They do not see much fruit from their labours, but they are working in faith and hope that the fruits will come in due course....

Emilie Häggberg is married to the missionary Emanuelson.<sup>32</sup> They work amongst the Kaffers in Pietermaritzburg, go around to the worst places, and have meetings in bars, warehouses, etc. During the dry season they usually go out into the country and work in that way.

Olaf Wettergreen is living in Durban, where he is working to support himself. He belongs to a denomination called the *Christadelphians* or the *Brethren of Christ*.

Sofus Nielsen is probably the one who has had to fight through the greatest difficulties, but he is very introverted and does not talk much about himself. But I know that he has had to go through a great deal. He has experienced hunger, illness, poverty, and loneliness.

During the past few years he has been in Matabeleland. Now during the winter he, the only white, is living with another tribe. In a letter to his mother some time ago, he said there was great hunger and foodstuffs were so expensive and in such short supply that people would have to stop eating. As far as we know, his life must be in constant danger, and his mother is very worried about him.

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<sup>32</sup> Meant is Oscar Emanuelson of the Swedish Holiness Union, which had recently undertaken missionary work in Natal.

Mrs Nielsen, known as Mutter,<sup>33</sup> came out to the mission as the matron at Ekutandaneni. She still has that position. Since I left Ekutandaneni she has also had the school.

Mrs Martha Wettergreen went back to Norway after the death of her husband. The others who came with us have all died out here....



*Martha Sanne described how the Zulus tried to cut their losses when yet another cattle epidemic struck. Clearly their methods of slaughtering cattle and preparing meat did not meet her Norwegian standard of hygiene. Regardless of whatever modest attempts the FEAM missionaries had made to contextualise the Gospel amongst the Zulus, they were not prepared to adapt entirely to indigenous African ways. (Source: Martha Sanne [Umhlali] to Missionæren, December 1897, in Missionæren, X, no. 5 [3 February 1898], pp. 7-8)*

Umhlali

December 1897

The air is sultry and full of electricity. Zig-zag lightning, which is common in Africa, is striking in all directions. Large, dark clouds hang over us, the thunder is rolling, and one flash of lightning follows another, but there is not a drop of rain. Both outdoors and indoors it is so stuffy that one almost cannot breathe. There is no wind, no breeze; not a leaf is moving. It is as though all of nature were dumb and terror-stricken. I am not usually nervous when there is thunder, but I am now. The sweat is dripping from us, and I am almost soaked, even though I have just changed clothes from head to toe. It is not comfortable for a Scandinavian. The ground is terribly dry, and the leaves of the trees are drooping. All of nature is crying out for refreshment. For a few weeks it has seemed to be on the verge of raining day after day, but it has

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<sup>33</sup> Mutter, of course, is the German word for mother. Nothing in the FEAM correspondence or in *Missionæren* indicates why that sobriquet was applied to Mrs Nielsen.

simply glided past, and the sun has sent down its beams in full force. At this time of year we normally have rain almost every day.

The cattle epidemic is raging terribly. A month ago we saw herds of cattle grazing in the pastures around here; now only two or three are left in some places. My nearest neighbour lost eighty head of cattle within a few days. It takes a lot of work to bury the sick animals, but they must be buried, because the disease is so communicable.

The poor Kaffers have slaughtered and eaten meat as fast as their strength has allowed. They thought it was better to have something rather than nothing. It would not surprise me if illness broke out amongst them, because in this climate it is not good to eat so much meat. But it has to be eaten, because it cannot be salted and preserved. Imagine how much work it takes to eat a cow in one or two days. I did not wish to take part in that work; it would have been my death. The Kaffers eat the meat, even though it smells bad and is almost rotten. They say it is ripe.

White people find it quite repulsive to see the Kaffers cook and eat meat. They do not prepare it in a hygienic or appealing way. The intestines and other organs are a pure delicacy to them. They do not wash the intestines. They merely squeeze out the contents with their fingers, put the intestines on sticks, grill them on the embers, and serve them in a dirty way. The head is cooked with the hide and hair on it. It disappears quickly between their strong, shining white teeth. The bones, of course, are not eaten. After a day of butchering, all the residents of a kraal (including the cats and the dogs) are lethargic and lazy. They lie down in the shade or the sunshine, depending on the weather, and do not want to do anything. If one wants them to do something, they are very sullen and stubborn. These days they can satisfy their desires by eating meat, but it will be a long time before they get anything again. Wild buck, sheep, and goats also succumb to the plague. Add to that the drought and the locusts, and in a worldly sense it looks gloomy in Africa.

When the ox wagon traffic stops, it is difficult for people upcountry to get food. The price of foodstuffs is climbing sharply. I heard today that transportation alone of a sack of flour from Durban to Eshowe costs £6. Where will people get that kind of money in these hard times? One

cannot buy food from the Kaffers; they hardly have enough for themselves.

God's hand is resting heavily on Africa. But people will not bow to him; they will not humble themselves before God....



*Martha Sanne continued to labour at Umhlali, despite a lack of rapid success at that second FEAM station. In 1898 she made it clear in a private letter to a supporter that her attitude towards the Zulus was still at least partly condescending. (Source: Martha Sanne [Umhlali] to P.L. Dieseth, 16 November 1898, in *Missionæren*, XI, no. 5 [2 February 1899], p. 5)*

Umhlali

16 November 1898

Thanks for your postcard dated 4 October. It is encouraging to see that despite the lack of many people's confidence and others' lack of interest, there are still some who remember us. That is absolutely amazing and comes from the Lord. We can truly say that our help comes from the Lord who created heaven and earth and what is on it.

I see in *Missionæren* that there were various things about our stations to awaken interest and prevent us from being completely forgotten. Our united, dear greetings to the little circle of friends who faithfully support us. Africa is a difficult field. The hard, heavy, lazy spirit also seems to be descending on the white population. The Word of God has nevertheless made progress, if not to the same degree as in China. That country is so overpopulated that whereas we can speak to 100 people, missionaries in China have perhaps 1 000 hearers. But the work is the same, and it is God's will that the Gospel enters in all ways to all peoples. We have had good meetings and a lot of work here at Umhlali.

The Methodists are beginning to establish government schools, and the Kaffers like that, because they are based on knowledge and learning the English language. But knowledge only makes people proud, and considering the low and poorly developed level on which the Kaffers stand it seems to do them more harm than good. They become so foolishly

proud that almost no-one will give them work; people prefer the raw Kaffers. The Kaffers are not mature enough for rapid development.

If God wishes, I shall go up to Ekutandaneni at Christmas. There shall be a missionary conference for all the free Scandinavian missionaries.<sup>34</sup> Pray to God that his spirit may bless everything to the glory of the Lord and to the progress and growth of the mission. It will be refreshing for us to gather together.

The air is terribly stifling and depressing, and today there is constant thunder. I feel very tired. Give my heartiest regards and convey my gratitude for everything good in the past year to all our friends. In Christ I extend my most cordial greetings to you and your wife.

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<sup>34</sup> In addition to the FEAM, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America and the Swedish Holiness Mission were then active in Natal.

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