

**REV J L R RAMMALA: A CASE STUDY OF AN AFRICAN MISSIONARY**

by

**MNYALAZA TOBIAS MASUKU**

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of

**MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

in the subject

**MISSIONOLOGY**

at the

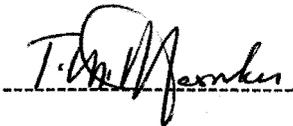
**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**NOVEMBER 1998**

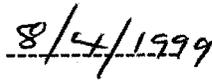
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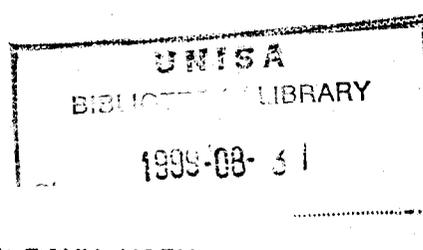
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### **Centre for Science Development: Acknowledgement**

The financial assistance of the Centre for Science Development (HSRC, South Africa) towards this research is acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the Centre for Science Development.



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A great number of people assisted me directly and indirectly towards the completion of this project and my sincere thanks and gratitude go to them. The list is long but I cannot resist mentioning the following:

### **In the URCSA**

My thanks go to all the personnel members of our church Synodical Headquarters at Kagiso, Krugersdorp for allowing me to disturb them during their working hours, in my search for information. They include members of the 'Kerkkantoor Kommissie' Revs. Madipatla E. Hlaka, Morris Makgale and administrator "Aussie" Ellen (Tsholofelo L. Mogale) and other members of E.M. Mataboge Self-Help Project who assisted me with their photocopy machine.

I also thank my Church Council of the URCSA Delmas and the congregation as a whole, for their understanding and kindness, to listen to my "unprepared and boring sermons" as a result of the attention I gave to this project. I thank members of our presbytery of Boksburg (East Rand) for their support in different ways. I thank in particular the chairperson of this presbytery Rev. M.D. Madimabe, for his personal support and interest in this project.

I thank the family of Rev. Rammala at Selection Park, Springs, for their kindness, hospitality and "many things". From their previous residence at Geluksdal, Brakpan, to their new home in Springs, I have been like their son who could come at any time and turn the tables upside down (in their house) in my search for information. My special thanks go to his wife Thabile for all she prepared for us during my visits.

### **At Unisa**

They all know who I am referring to. The list is very long and I cannot mention them all, except the women; They are Ms Khumo Makgeledise, Ms Liza Niedermier, Me Annalet van Schalkwyk, Ms Pauline Mashitsho, Dr. Madge Karecki, Mev. Mariki Wellemse and Natalie Therion (Subject Librarian). The only male that could be mentioned among these women is

of Prof. J.N.J. (Klippias) Kritzinger for his extraordinary wisdom in guiding me throughout this project while he had a tight schedule, as head of the department (Missiology) and dean elect of the faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (1999).

### **'Outside' Unisa**

I extend my sincere thanks also to Rev. Zuze Banda, moderator of Hervormde Kerk in Suid Afrika (HKSA), Prof. Tinyiko Maluleke of the University of Natal/Pietermaritzburg, Mrs. R. Miller (Delmas), Vussy Magqaza (Delmas) and many others all over South Africa and abroad.

### **The extended and nuclear family**

To my wife Nkele and two sons Jabulani and Bongani 'who are going to inherit my ministry', there are no adequate words to express my gratitude and appreciation for their overwhelming support and patience. My mother Lydia and my parents-in-law 'Masa' (Thabana Motshegwa) and 'Mamasa' (Kefilwe Taolo-Motshegwa) are all thanked for their love. My sister Leah and others from all sides of the family spectrum are thanked.

### **To the Heavenly father**

"Oh God, you know very well what I should thank you for before I open my mouth, thank Jesus, halelluya, Amen".

## **SUMMARY**

This dissertation examines the missionary activities of Rev. J.L.R. Rammala of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) which was formally called the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). Rev. Rammala worked among the Bushmen (San) of Botswana as a missionary from 1973 to 1980. The study examines how the DRCA as a product of Western missions, developed its own understanding of mission when judged through the mission activities of Rev. Rammala in Botswana as a case study. This understanding of mission is judged against the background of the survey of the debate on Third World missions, and the DRCA's involvement in intercultural mission.

## **KEY TERMS**

African missionaries, Botswana, Bushmen, "Daughter (Younger) Churches", Ghanzi, Moratorium, NGK, NGKA, Rammala J.L.R. (Rev.), Stofberg Theological School, Theologies of liberation, Third World missions.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AICs	African Initiated Churches
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
ART	Article
ATRs	African Traditional Religions
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BK	Belydende Kring
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCA	Dutch Reformed Church in Africa
DRMC	Dutch Reformed Mission Church
DCs	Daughter Churches
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
KBB	Black Ministers' Fraternal
LMS	London Missionary Society
NGK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk
NGKA	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika
NGSK	Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
RCA	Reformed Church in Africa
SACC	South African Council of Churches
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
N-TVL	Northern Transvaal
S-TVL	Southern Transvaal
UNISA	University of South Africa
URCSA	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa
VOC	Dutch East India Company
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCRP	World Conference on Religion and Peace

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study focuses on the work of an African missionary who laboured among the Bushmen (San) of Botswana from 1973 to 1980. The missionary in question is Rev. J.L.R. Rammala, a minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), which was formerly called the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). This church, like many others, is an African church that arose out of Western missionary activities, specifically those of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC).

Like many other churches that have been born out of Western missionary activities, the DRCA has been vocal against the apartheid missionary policies of her "mother" church. The question is how this church, as a product of Western missions, developed its own understanding and practice of mission when judged through the mission work done by Rev. Rammala in Botswana as a case study. Furthermore, one needs to explore that understanding of mission against the background of the survey of the debate on Third World missions and the involvement of the DRCA in intercultural mission. The former will include factors which will touch the missionary approaches of the 'sending churches', responses of Third World churches to Western missions and the responses of 'sending churches' to Third World critics. The section on intercultural mission will include influential factors in the DRCA's practice of mission. Under this heading, I shall concentrate on strategic, political and theological factors which had an influence on the DRCA's practice of mission. Apart from this, but under the same heading, I shall also look at priority areas of the DRCA mission and other African missionaries of this church.

## 1.2 THE RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The call in 1971 for a "'moratorium' on missions and missionaries from the West for a period of five years" (Bosch 1980:5), implied that mission was in crisis. It confirmed the observation of Walter Bühlmann (1980:9) that:

*the missions in Africa have for many years been in the crossfire of criticism. In an earlier age they were much admired, but nowadays they are attacked and accused, by radical Christians, by cold atheists and by black nationalists.*

The fact that the moratorium call came from the Third World, especially Africa, meant that something had to be done about it from Africa. This situation implied that the study of mission work done by African missionaries and churches would form part of the solution.

Volumes have been written on Western missionaries and other missionaries living in other parts of the world. Apart from this, very little has been written on the so-called Third World missionaries and their churches, especially of African origin. This problem has also been noted by Crafford (1991:vii) who wrote:

*The story of the black pioneers of the South African missionary history has never been properly told. Most often the white missionaries received all the attention, whereas the black co-workers were relegated to the shadowy background. Their names and their surnames were often not even known and they are likely to be referred to as "old David", or the "Black helpers".*

Though I acknowledge that there are writings on Third World missionaries and churches, even if they cannot match those written about Western missionaries, very little has been done in writing about individual Third World missionaries, especially of African background, and their churches.

This study is important for various reasons. Firstly, it could serve as an important source of information for the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). Through this study, this church may be able to see its contribution in mission as a Christian church and acknowledge its failures and successes in this connection. Secondly, it will serve as a document for historians, missiologists, anthropologists, researchers and other academics. Thirdly, it is an affirmation of a black missionary and a black church in a country (SA) where they were earlier denied opportunities and proper recognition.

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHODS AND SOURCES**

In pursuit of the above objectives, the following methods have been used.

#### **1.3.1 Sources**

In my selection of sources for this study, attention has been given, firstly to those that covered the debate on Third World missions. To achieve this goal, books written on this subject including other sources such as journals, dissertations, theses and other theological publications, have been used. Secondly, I have also consulted sources that embrace the history of the DRCA and its missionary activities. For this reason, I looked, in addition to the sources mentioned above, at the DRCA Southern Transvaal synodical archives, official church publications, etc. Thirdly, I have also consulted sources with background information on Botswana and the missionary activities of Rev. Rammala and that of other missionaries who worked before the aforementioned in that country. For this reason, apart from the above sources, I have read newspapers, letters (of correspondence between the Botswana DRCA missionaries and the DRCA at home), reports, minutes, circular letters, surveys, etc.

### 1.3.2 Analytical tool used

In order to capture important areas of this study, especially an analysis of Rev. Rammala's sermons before going to Botswana to work in that country, I have applied a "grid" used to introduce different models of Christian mission in the first year missiology study guide of the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Saayman 1992). These models are kerygmatic<sup>1</sup>, sacramental<sup>2</sup>, voluntarist, pentecostal, African Indigenous and liberationist (Kritzinger 1995:380; Saayman 1992). This grid is divided into *methods* and *motives* for mission and it looks as follows:

#### a) Methods

1. Agents of mission
2. Word (preaching)
3. Healing ministry
4. Teaching
5. Worship
6. Interaction with authorities
7. Context
8. Development

#### b) Motives

1. Use of the Bible
2. Scope of salvation
3. Culture

---

1 The term kerygma is a Greek word that refers to preaching. In this sense, this model centres around the preaching of the Word or proclamation.

2 This model emphasises the centrality of the sacraments. Orthodox churches are good examples of this, their focus is on the celebration of the sacrament of the eucharist as a tool for mission praxis.

4. Cooperation
5. Planting
6. Young churches

Apart from the fact that this analytical tool has been successfully used by the department of Missiology at Unisa in the first year introductory course, to analyse the different theological models (Saayman 1992:16-308), it has also been used by Banda (1996:27-162) in his analysis of the emergence of mission in the Nederduitse Hervormde Kerk van Afrika (NHKA), although with some modifications. Banda (1996:7) however, limits this grid of questions under *method* to:

- \* Agents of mission (i.e. missionaries, clergy, laity, evangelists, women, their training, organised bodies and societies);
- \* Social Ministries (healing, teaching, schools, literacy, development project, etc.);
- \* Interaction with authorities;
- \* Indigenisation (adaptation, contextualisation, effect on worship, etc.).

Under *motives and goals*;

- \* Key Biblical passage(s) and missiological ideas (advanced to resist or promote missions);
- \* The view of civilization and indigenous culture;
- \* Attitude towards other churches or mission societies (cooperation, competition or conflict);
- \* Church and state relations (cooperation, protection, conflict, legislations on mission and land allocation);
- \* View of church planting and the mission of the "younger" church.

Kritzinger (1995:378ff.) also investigated the possibility of using this grid in studying the

missions of all religions. He (Kritzinger 1995:380-381) noted weaknesses in some elements of the general design of this grid in the study of religious communities. Though he recognizes that the design has strong points, he warned that "some elements in this design clearly need to be changed before they can be used for studying the missions of all religions" (:380). Among the weaknesses that he mentioned, one was that "the grid has too many subdivisions, thus making it too complex to be a good heuristic tool" (:381).

The analysis of mission by using *motives* and *goals* has also been used by Verkuyl (1978:163 & 176). He divided his motives into pure and impure, while under goals he among others discussed goals of saving individual souls, ecclesiocentric goals, etc.

Despite all shortcomings that have been noted in the usage of this grid for other research projects, this analytical tool has two advantages for the purpose of this study. Firstly, it enabled me to analyse the early ministry of Rev. Rammala before his Botswana mission. In this instance, I have been able to analyse some of the sermons he preached to various congregations prior to his mission work in Botswana. Secondly, I was able to investigate his theology of mission as well as his work in Botswana.

Concerning the first of these advantages, I have been able to discern from his sermons how he approached the different questions asked under *methods* and *motives* above. For instance, from his sermons, I was in a position to discern under the former, the value he attached to the ministry of the Word, healing, his approach to authority, etc. Under the latter, his motives on the usage of the Bible, view on the scope of salvation, culture, cooperation with other denominations, etc, were researched.

This analytical tool has also been helpful in the analysis of his theology and work in Botswana. As a result of this, I was in a position to reveal his agents of mission, understanding of his ministry of the Word, healing, teaching, worship, interaction with Botswana authorities, the development projects he initiated, etc. I was also able to find out

how he cooperated with other mission bodies in Botswana, etc. The fact "that the grid has too many subdivisions" (Kritzinger 1995:381) was not a disadvantage in my analysis of the work of Rev. Rammala. This was because the eight subdivisions under the *methods*, as well as the six *motives* were useful to me in a number of ways. For instance, the subdivision on agents of mission enabled me to see the type of people Rev. Rammala regarded as agents of mission. This was seen from the sermons he preached before his mission in Botswana. On the other hand, in Botswana it enabled me to see different people he used as agents of mission. Under *motives*, on key Biblical passages, it enabled me to see scriptural texts which he used for mission.

### **1.3.3 Interviews**

I have approached a number of key people for the purpose of conducting interviews. This included Rev. Rammala, his colleague in Nigel (Rev.M.P.Moshapalo), his childhood contemporary in Greylingstad and some members of the congregation of Brakpan, who called him back from Botswana (1980) and selected members of the Brakpan community.

### **1.3.4 Terminology and concepts**

Certain terms, names and concepts, especially those which are surrounded by controversies or disputes, are used in this study. In addition, there are other terms which are only known within the circles of the Dutch Reformed Church family. For this reason, it is important to explain them and express my views on some of them, as well as my reasons for their usage in this study.

#### **a) Bushmen**

Different names are used in reference to these people. Some researchers such as Dunn (1931) call them *Bushmen*. Some like Kent (1995:297) use this term on an equal note with

*San*. On the other hand, while Wiseman recognizes the dispute around the usage of the name *Bushmen*, he understands that there are other "more favourable" names such as *San*, *Sarwa* and *Basarwa* (1992:xxi). Due to the fact that most authors refer to them merely as *Bushmen*, and that a lot of productions have been produced under this title, I shall use this name primarily to avoid confusion and for the sake of convenience throughout this study.

b) Batswana

It is unfair to separate the Bushmen from the entire population of Botswana, but for the reference purposes, I shall separate their names (i.e, Bushmen and Batswana). A major population group apart from the Bushmen are the Batswana. But other researchers such as Wiseman (1992:xxi) and Swaney (1992:251) merely refer to them as Tswanas. Other scholars such as Stevens (1975:12-13) use both names i.e Tswanas and Batswana equally. Others such as Dunn (1931:35) go to the extreme and refer to them as "Kaffirs". This indicates that there is a problem or confusion especially among researchers of Western extraction on the subject of the name of these people of Botswana. However, Stevens (1975:viii) came to our rescue when he set the record straight as follows:

*In Setswana, Ba is the plural of the noun class of people. A Motswana is a single citizen, the Batswana are the people. Bo is the place prefix. The terminal eng is the ordinary locative. Se is the language prefix. Thus Setswana is the Tswana language.*

The description of Stevens appears to be most appropriate. For this reason, I shall apply the names following his description throughout this study.

c) The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA)

The name of this church has both an Afrikaans and English versions. In English it is called

Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA). At some areas especially in the Free State (FS) it is called *Kereke ya Fora* in Sesotho. But the Afrikaans version of the name of this church is the one mostly used, even in the context of English publications (cf. Rammala 1990:124-128 and others). This Afrikaans version appears in almost all official documents of this church such as synodical reports and other writings. It would be for this reason, that I am going to employ the Afrikaans version of this name throughout this study and its abbreviated form NGKA will feature predominantly.

d) Bapedi

Some researchers like Mönnig (1967) use the noun-stem *Pedi* to refer to the people of the Northern Province who speak the language called *Sepedi* or Northern Sotho (N.Sotho). Delius (1983) also used this term in his writings. While he acknowledged that this term presents a problem, he indicated that:

*it has been used variously to indicate virtually all the Sotho-speaking peoples of the northern and eastern Transvaal, restricted to the Maroteng paramountcy and groups which seceded from it, and used to refer to the population living within the area of hegemony of the Maroteng (Delius 1983:ix).*

Mönnig (1967:viii) is aware of the class prefixes that go along with this noun-stem. For instance, "*Mopedi* is a Pedi person and *Bapedi* the Pedi people, *Sepedi* is the Pedi language, and *Bopedi* the Pedi country".

For further clarification in this study, I am going to use this noun stem with relevant prefixes as mentioned by Mönnig above. The same procedure has been followed by Maluleke (1995:12ff.) in his description of the encounter between the missionaries and the Bapedi.

e) Third World

This term, though widely used in theological circles, originated from international world political debates (Hayes 1992:69). For instance, the end of the Second World War resulted in two blocks, one represented by the West (First World) and the other one by the East (Second World). These blocks were represented by two different ideological and economic systems, the West being capitalist and the East being socialist. There were countries in the south such as Southern Asia, Africa and Latin America which did not belong to either of the above divisions as they had problems with their economic and ideological systems. These countries became known as a "Third World" providing an alternative to the ideological and economic divisions of the northern countries (Kritzinger 1989:X). Sometimes they were referred to as "Two-Thirds World" countries because they comprised of Two Thirds of the entire world population (Kritzinger 1989:xiii). The Bandung (Indonesia) conference of 1955 that comprised leaders from these countries, marked the inauguration of the Third World concept (Kritzinger 1989:xi; Hayes 1992:70).

Third World countries are, among other factors, characterized by poverty in economic terms. Referring to the economic differences between the upmarket suburb of Sandton and the poor declining suburb of Hillbrow in Johannesburg, Phylisa Oppelt (1997:15) identified the latter with Third World due to its poor outlook compared to the former. Northern countries, the West in particular, were marked by economic wealth and for this reason wanted to determine the political and economic agenda of the Third World countries, even after decolonialization. Theologians from the northern countries argued from the position of power and thought that their theology was universally acceptable (Hayes 1992:70). This resulted in criticism from Third World theological quarters.

The components of the Third World such as Latin America, Africa, Asia and Oceania constitute approximately two-thirds of the inhabited land mass of the earth and the greater percentage of the world's population. The name 'Two-Thirds World' is therefore regarded

by some to be more acceptable than 'Third World' (Pate 1991:27). The phrase 'Third World' is not without controversy over it. Questions are asked if there actually is a Third World. Mugambi (1995:1-17) rejects this term and bases his reasons on the fact that the Berlin wall doesn't exist anymore and that the cold war is over between the Eastern and Western blocks. Peter Berger (in Frostin 1988:4) regards the term Third World as 'ideological rhetoric'. He says that the phrase is synonymous with less modernized societies and emphasizes that: "strictly speaking, the Third World as a potential, economic and social entity does not exist". In contrast to this view, EATWOT (1988:4) uses this phrase as could be seen in their comment below:

*...since the countries of the Third World have had similar experiences of which account should be taken in the task of theologising.*

This indicates that the Third World constitutes a common experience, that of commonality around the 'bitter fruit of oppression' (Frostin 1988:4).

As has been seen above, the name *Third World* however, became controversial in recent years and the debate was divided between some scholars who rejected it completely and those who preferred names such as *Two-Thirds World*. Despite this fact, many scholars still use the former constantly, as it can be seen in many publications. It is for this reason that the name will be referred to as *Third World* throughout this study.

f) "Mission", "Missions" and "Missionary"

Terms such as 'mission', 'missions' and 'missionary' need to be defined and correctly interpreted as they may be confused with one another.

The Triune God is the subject of mission. For this reason, "God is a missionary God" (Bosch 1980:239). The "missions" of the churches are part of God's mission. Though God is the author or subject of mission, *Missio Dei*, in the words of Bosch (1980:10), "mission

is a permanent aspect of the life of the church as long as the church is, in some way or another, standing in relationship to the world". If God is the subject of mission, this means that "mission" does not in the final analysis depend on human actions or initiatives.

However, a better definition of these terms was made by Wan (1998:1) who said that "'Mission' is the Great Commission of making disciples of all nations (Mt.28:19-20) whereas 'missions' are ways and means of accomplishing the 'mission' which has been divinely entrusted by the Triune God to the Church and Christians. 'Missionary' (noun) is a personal being carrying out the 'mission'.

These terms are used in this study in accordance with the above definition.

g) Daughter churches

"Daughter churches" (DCs) is a phrase that was common in various church circles including the family of the DRCs. In this context, it refers to the racially separated churches that were born as a result of DRC missions. Mokgoebo (1983:1) defined it as follows:

*The term daughter or younger churches, or black churches refers to churches which came into being as a result of the mission work of the DRC; the latter is often referred to as 'mother' or 'older' because of the guardianship or trusteeship which it holds over daughter churches...*

The "daughter churches" referred to, have been designated as follows; Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (for Africans), Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) (for Africans of mixed ancestry) and Reformed Church in Africa (for Indian South Africans). The former two, united in 1994 to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

The term "daughter churches" is important in this study because it was influential in the

DRC family. For this reason, I intend to use it in this study.

#### 1.4 PERSONAL STANCE

*The personal position and stance of a researcher is an important aspect of any research methodology. ...Neutrality is impossible in any human endeavour (Kritzinger 1988:19).*

In the light of this statement, it is important to indicate my personal stance at the very beginning of this study. I embark on this project as a Minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, which as I pointed out previously (1.2.), was formerly called NGKA before its unification with the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) in 1994. I compiled this study as a Minister who has been in the service of this church for a period of ten years.

During this period, I was exposed to different aspects in the life of this church including the missionary side of it. I served in various commissions on Mission and Evangelism in both presbytery (circuit) and synodical levels. Apart from this, I also interacted with local mission bodies of the DRC on a daily basis. I also participated in joint missionary ventures with local DRC congregations which were led by their ministers or "dominees"<sup>3</sup>. My DRC colleagues at our discussions during tea times, kept on reminding me, though jokingly: "Your church is not used to mission work and you just rely on the people who have been converted by our efforts, You do not go out to look for other sheep yourself". My approach and methodology in this study will obviously be influenced by such utterances, and my attempts to respond to them.

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<sup>3</sup> This title refers to Ministers of Religion in churches of reformed tradition, with Afrikaans language background (cf. Masuku 1998c:403).

I also compile this study as a person who has been trained at a theological seminary that was influenced by the DRC from curriculum to almost everything. I write as a student, who, during my training at the seminary, has never been taught by a black lecturer, but merely by white male lecturers of Afrikaans cultural and language background, a situation which has been lamented by Crafford (1973:42) as follows:

*In ons teologiese opleiding sal ons spoedig werk moet maak van hoër en nagraadse opleiding dat swart dosente 'n aandeel sal kan neem in die opleiding van Bantoeleraars.*

I come from a background where Mission Studies or Missiology have never been regarded as an important aspect in our curriculum.

As explained above, this situation led me to conclude that Christian mission was understood by "powers that be", to be unimportant for blacks. In Church History syllabus,<sup>4</sup> of NGKA theological students as well as the limited scope of Mission Studies (often called Science of Mission), a few big names of individual white contributors to mission in Africa were mentioned such as Robert Moffat (in Hildebrandt 1981:176), David Livingstone (in Hildebrandt 1981:111), etc. But very little was heard of individual African missionaries. It makes one envious to note that by 1914, the Berlin Missionary Society (BMS) had 57 missionaries in Tanzania and the Moravian mission had 28 missionaries in the same country without any African missionaries noted in those statistics (Hildebrandt 1981:181-182). Few African names such as Yohana Mbila, Yohana Owenga, Shadrack Milwa, Molonket ole Sempele are mentioned among early missionaries (early 1900s), but this is just in passing, with no indepth study such as in the case of their white counterparts (Hildebrandt

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<sup>4</sup> Here I am referring to the syllabus that was taught as recently as during the late 1980s while I was a student. The book of Hildebrandt (1981) was prescribed for NGKA students and is a case in point here. As I indicated above, it mentions the work of Moffat (:176), Livingstone (:111), etc.

1981:186).

I embark on this study with understanding that African missionaries and churches made an indispensable contributions in the missionary endeavour in Africa without proper recognition and affirmation. I am convinced that some missionary approaches were responsible for sidelining and crippling African churches and missions. My stance therefore, towards Western missionary approaches in the Third World, and Africa in particular, is critical. My point is that, despite those inadequate approaches, churches were established and African missionaries emerged who made their mark in missionary activities.

It is on those grounds, that this study will focus on the life and missionary activities of an African missionary of the NGKA named Rev. J.L.R. Rammala, who worked in Botswana among the 'Bushmen' from 1973 to 1980.

To establish a scholarly framework within which to do this study, I view the debate on Third World missions, examine the missionary activities of the NGKA, before I attend to the missionary activities of the particular African missionary in question.

## **1.5 OVERVIEW OF FOLLOWING CHAPTERS**

The chapter structure of this study was based on the following five questions:

- a) What is the nature of Third World debate on Western mission?

The mission of the NGKA, as a Third World church, can only be understood against the background of broader Third World developments. Chapter two explores the theological debate among Third World theologians as well as missiologists and historians of Western origin who developed a self-critical approach to Western missions. This is done by looking at factors such as Western missionary approach to Third World countries and the responses of Third World countries to this. The form that Rev. Rammala's mission took was

influenced by this debate. Therefore Rev. Rammala's mission can only be understood in this light.

b) Why did the NGKA begin with intercultural mission?

Chapter 3 explores this question by looking at the factors that influenced this church's general view of mission and particularly of its mission to the Bushmen in Botswana. Other missionaries of this church are also discussed, in order to deepen our understanding of Rev. Rammala's missionary activities.

c) Which are the factors that resulted in Rev. Rammala becoming a missionary?

Chapter 4 looks at some of the key factors that shaped Rev. Rammala's ministry such as his early life, theological studies, political climate during his student days, his ministry experience, etc.

d) How did the NGKA, through Rev. Rammala, do mission work among the Bushmen?

Chapter 5 consists of a detailed analysis of Rev. Rammala's work in Botswana, based on written reports and in-depth interviews with him. In this process, his theology of mission is also examined.

e) Did Rev. Rammala's missionary efforts bring new direction to NGKA mission?

Chapter 6 examines the contribution that Rev. Rammala's missionary efforts made to the understanding and practice of mission in the NGKA. This is done by interpreting and evaluating the information that emerged from previous chapters of this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### SURVEY OF THE DEBATE ON THIRD WORLD MISSIONS

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Most European countries regarded themselves as more powerful than other countries of the world. This was confirmed by the so-called "expansion of Europe" during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries when Europeans journeyed to other parts of the world. The reasons for this expansion were economic, intellectual, technological, political and religious (du Bruyn & Cuthbertson 1989:153). This was accompanied by a sense of superiority over other countries, especially the Third World (Soltau 1969:49). It was therefore far-fetched to believe that those countries that were objects of the activities of the West might be independent and claim their rights as sovereign states and as people on the same level as other nations of the world.

Right from the centuries mentioned above, the West had the monopoly on religious matters especially missionary activities. Third World people did not appreciate some of their approaches such as condemning a few of their religious and cultural practices. Third World theologians felt that the time has come for them to determine their destiny in terms of religion, politics and other things. This time culminated in the call for a moratorium in 1971 by John Gatu (Bosch 1980:5).

The political, especially missionary consciousness of Third World people, in the light of Western claims to superiority on a number of things, marked the beginning of the debate between these two camps. This means that Third World people started to condemn some religious interpretations of the Westerners and stood up to claim their positions in the realm of activities of Christianity. A war of words started between the Third World Christians and Westerners on the correct interpretation and approaches to mission.

In light of the above, in this chapter, I shall survey this debate on Third World mission. I shall do this by introducing this debate and thereafter I shall look at the approaches that were applied by the Western missionaries which might have led to this debate and how the Third World theologians responded to it.

Since the theme of my research is an African missionary, I will concentrate on African religious dynamics, though the general picture of Third World as a whole cannot be ignored.

## **2.2 THE DEBATE**

The wrangle between the First and Third World Christians on the interpretation of mission and how it should be applied has been known. This marked the origin of the debate between these worlds. Western missionary contribution to the Third World countries cannot be ignored. Missionary agencies from most parts of the so called First World approached the Third World from different directions. Many missionaries mixed their activities with 'impure motives' that had attachments of colonialism, cultural and economic interests, etc. This tendency was correctly outlined by Verkuyl (1978:164-173) when he discusses the dichotomy of pure and impure missionary motives. However, one cannot dispute the fact that in the process, there were truly dedicated missionaries who made enormous sacrifices for the propagation of the Gospel.

The whole missionary debate was propelled by the inability of some missionaries to achieve a balance in their lives between faith and praxis. Christians from Third World countries were disturbed by the fact that missionaries in question failed to live what they preached. Though one could appreciate their contribution in the area of Western civilization in Third World countries, this in certain instances was carried along with selfish interests.

Saayman (1992:1-2) gave a glimpse on the accusations that were made against

missionaries. Among the allegations, he indicated that mission was seen in colonial terms and that it was an important tool in the subjugation of the African people in economic and political terms. He has also shown that they frustrated African unity by their denominational character. They were paternalistic, scorned African culture and religion and taught Westerners to regard Africans as inferior.

Since the 1950s, some Third World Christians began standing up against such missionary characters and approaches. They wanted to speak for themselves and redefine Christianity in their own terms and context. As a result, calls such as 'missionary go home' and moratorium were echoed:

*this call manifests the desire on the part of Africans to give a place to indigenous leadership, to be self-reliant and abolish the colonial leadership which persists in the missionary enterprise. The call reflects a desire for liberation from oppressive paternalism of some Western missionaries. In a sense the call for a moratorium poses for Africans the vision of a new order of relationship free from the injustices and incongruities of foreign institutions and domination (Uka 1989:19).*

This situation resulted in the emergence of Third World missionary societies and individual missionaries as well as black and African theologies and theologians. One can identify this situation with the awakening of a new consciousness in the Third World countries. This was the situation which Mbiti (1971:1) had in mind when he said that the age of foreign missionaries is over and Africans should take initiative in missionary activities.

In surveying the debate, I shall explore approaches that were adopted by the "sending" churches especially those that received criticism from Third World Christians. I shall also look at the response of the Third World churches to Western mission. It would be understood that the nature of the general response that was adopted was the birth of self consciousness on the part of the Third World churches. These churches started to discover

who they were while the development of contextual theologies, theologians and missionaries mushroomed.

Since my study is about an African missionary, I will concentrate on African religious dynamics, though the general picture of Third World as a whole cannot be ignored.

### **2.3 SENDING CHURCHES AND THEIR MISSIONARY APPROACHES**

The analysis of the missionary approaches of "sending" churches is important for our understanding of the nature of reaction by the Third World Churches. It is therefore important at this stage to identify what Third World theologians regarded to be theologically incorrect about Western missions on the basis of their context and scriptural interpretations. It is from such efforts that the activities of the "sending" churches or missionaries could be judged by Third World theologians. The debate at this point will not be limited to the Third World Theologians, but also to other missiologists and historians of Western extraction who developed a self-critical approach to Western missions.

#### **2.3.1 Indigenous cultures**

Culture is one of the most important aspects on which attitudes of Western missionaries were judged in the Third World countries. I am therefore going to approach this section by dividing the cultural onslaught into two sub-sections viz. Western arrogance over indigenous cultures, and Christ in Western culture.

##### *2.3.1.1 Western arrogance over indigenous culture*

The sense of superiority that was dominant among Westerners led them to believe that they were above other people in many respects including cultural matters. For instance, Schleiermacher (in Verkuyl 1978:171) believed that missionaries should only go to those

areas where Western culture is infiltrating and seek to transmit and transfer to those people the 'deeper values' of this culture. He believed that mission work was a cultural programme which went along with cultural transfer. Another theological thinker who supported this school of thought was Ernst Troeltsch (in Verkuyl 1978:171), a philosopher of religion who wrote that missionaries have to work among primitive societies whose religions will not be able to "withstand the tide of world civilization".

From these kinds of attitudes, there are few reasons to doubt the arrogance of most Western missionaries. Their arrogance was summarized in the prayer of the Asian Christian convert who said:

*Oh God, break their pride and palaces (Clark 1971:40)*

Attitudes such as ignorance and ethnic pride led missionaries to look down on other cultures and regard theirs as the norm. Like the Judaisers of the early church, they insisted upon their converts to take their (missionaries) cultural ways (de Gruchy 1986:19). Most of the practices of the indigenous people were deemed "archaic, barbaric and backward". Consequently converts had to part with important items of their lives like indigenous names, etc, (cf. Wakatama 1976:15). For some missionaries, indigenous names were synonymous with heathendom while Western names were equivalent to Christianity. Wakatama noted that the trend went further to even embrace traditional African dress. For that reason, conversion meant rejection of African dress and adoption of Western clothes like tie, pants or shirts.

### 2.3.1.2 *Christ in Western culture*

The outcry against Western missionaries, was that they dressed Christ in their own culture before taking Him to other nations. For that reason, Third World nations were given a Gospel which was mixed with Western culture. The close relationship between Christianity

and culture could further be seen from the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 9:19-22. He views human culture primarily as a vehicle to be used by him and his people for Christian purposes, rather than as an enemy to be fought against (Kraft 1979:103). Kraft (1979:103ff.) in addressing God's attitude towards culture touches different models viz; The God-Against-Culture Position, Two God-in-Culture positions, Five God-Advance-Culture Position and, God-Above-but-Through-Culture Position. Kraft indicates that God is responsible for the presence of culture for He created human beings who are cultural in nature.

Some Western missionaries seemed to have been influenced by their culture in their approaches. For instance, the practice of monogamy is a predominantly European custom and polygamy was not a uniquely African practice as it has generally been assumed. It has been practised elsewhere by certain groups and individuals for instance the Merovingian Frankish kings were polygamists as well as the Muslims though they were allowed a maximum of four wives. In addition Charlemagne was one among the greatest polygamists (Helander 1958:8)<sup>5</sup>.

Adding to this debate, Jomo Kenyatta (1956:271; Helander 1958:9) wrote in his book *'Facing Mount Kenya'* that the missionary orders to dissolve polygamous marriages as a rule were obeyed, but that they gave evasive or no answers to the question why this was necessary and why holy men in the Bible were allowed to have many wives. This, he said was the reason why a large group of Native Christians left missionary controlled churches and formed independent churches. Some tribes that practise polygamy like the Gikuyu in Kenya give different reasons for this practice. For instance, in their custom, every woman should be protected by a man and this practice, it is believed, helps in combating prostitution (Kenyatta 1956:174).

The practice of mixture of the Gospel and their culture by Western missionaries left

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5      Though this material is rather old, the information it carries on polygamy is still relevant today.

ordinary people confused because they could hardly separate between these two. Setiloane (1989:51) was one among the African theologians who lamented the fact of this mixture. He indicated that the problem arose from the fact that the route of the Gospel to Africa was via Europe or the West.

Wakatama (1976:13ff.) has also much to say about the question of a "dressed up" Gospel. He held that missionaries were not without fault in this regard. The 1971 meeting of anthropologists in Barbados marked a watershed in the reaction against the cultural onslaught by Western missionaries. They charged Western missionaries for destroying indigenous cultures one being that of Latin American Indians. They took part in the exploitation of the native population. He charged that missionaries failed to adapt or translate the Gospel to various cultures. They failed to do what Schreier (1985:6-9) called translation and adaptation models. The former sees the task of local theology being the one calling for a two-way procedure. The first step here is to free the Christian message from its previous cultural accretions while the second step is to translate it into a new situation. He sees the image of kernel and husk being the one that can translate this message clearly. In this case, the basic Christian revelation is the kernel and the previous cultural settings in which it has been incarnated constitute a husk. Adaptation models realized weaknesses and difficulties of the translation models and work on a fundamental encounter between Christianity and culture.

Another dimension in this area of ignorance on the side of most missionaries in relation to African culture was seen in their condemnation of traditional rites of passage as well as social ceremonies. This was done without first studying them to see whether they really contradicted a Christian lifestyle. This condemnation also affected traditional music and dancing. Indigenous converts were to sing imported hymns from Europe or the West in general. To summarize this, Claassen (1995:15) indicates that African believers questioned the condemnation by missionaries of many aspects of African culture including ancestor cult, circumcision and polygamy.

### 2.3.2 Indigenous religions

The superiority attitude of Western missionaries led them to regard other religions as inferior, barbaric and unnecessary. Most of those missionaries couldn't even think of how useful those religions could be at certain stages in facilitating the understanding of the Christian faith among indigenous people (Masuku 1996:444). This was evidence of the fact that they looked down on traditional religions. Christian Baeta (in Bediako 1995:63) 'took a view that the traditional religion, its rituals and its remedies, were geared towards answering the questions and queries and solving the problems which were thrown up by African life, problems arising from a sense of enfeeblement and vulnerability, both physical and spiritual in connection with ideas held regarding the role of spiritual agencies in human life'.

Bediako (1995:60-61) generally advances that Christianity is not a foreign religion to Africans. It is a religion that can be translatable culturally.

This kind of thinking was so serious that Berman (1975:5)<sup>6</sup> wrote to stress the same point which bore elements of superiority. He indicated that Christian missionaries believed that African traditional beliefs which were referred to as 'pagan practices' were *ipso facto* inferior to Christianity. These beliefs from Western missionaries that were coupled with lack of contact with other world religions gave them confidence that they will succeed in Africa. The missionaries' conviction for success was propelled by their belief that the Christian religion was the only, and the true one apart from their inborn belief of superiority over non Western countries and people.

Sanneh (1989:70) gave some guidelines on the relationship between Christianity and indigenous religion as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> Berman may not be a well known or recognised authority on the history of the church or education in Africa but his facts are relevant as they reveal elements of superiority.

*Christianity sought indigenous coefficients, and, finding them, flourished by them, so that both borrower and borrowed were transformed in a common direction. This stands in stark contrast to the view that Christianity profited from cultural decay and political confusion. This is not to deny that cultural fatigue and political exhaustion might allow the religion to play a renovative function, in which case the central resources of the religion have to be translated into indigenous terms.*

On the other hand, Maluleke (1998:122) indicates how African Traditional Religions (ATRs) have been sidelined in most religious debates. He indicated how even the South African Chapter of World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) failed to give attention to the ATRs. Maluleke continues to blame Christian theologians for the continued silencing and exclusion of ATRs from current religious discourse in a number of ways.

### **2.3.3 Racism and social division**

Most missionaries failed to escape the sin of racism. My understanding of racism corresponds with that of Frostin (1988:108ff.) who attaches two different types of interpretation to it viz; an *attitudinal* and *structural*.

#### **2.3.3.1 Attitudinal racism**

Attitudinal analysis interprets racism as an ethical problem that takes place at the level of prejudice and deliberate discriminatory behaviour. Frostin (1988) indicates that one variety of this option is to describe racial segregation as a cultural problem, e.g. an expression of backwardness, which is then seen as the root cause of specific features of racist attitudes.

One common evidence of racism was seen in their choice of the site for building mission

stations. They would erect a mission station at the separate spot away from the other villagers. It is also reported that mission stations were traditionally built on top of a hill in isolation from other villagers (Bühlmann 1980:66). This shows that missionaries were not only separated from their converts by the standard of their lifestyles but also by their geographical arrangements.

Mission stations didn't only separate missionaries from the other people but also their converts from fellow country people. This means that those who were converted usually settled in or around the mission stations. By so doing, they separated themselves from many social and cultural responsibilities. For instance, they withdrew themselves from the authority of the chiefs and looked down on their 'unconverted' fellow country people. In this manner, they created a situation of a dichotomy of the converted and the unconverted and a friction emerged between these two groups. For example the unconverted would refer to the converted as the *amajakani*, meaning the converted (cf. Masuku 1996:446 & Maluleke 1996:24).

Brigalia Bam (in Herzel:1981) reflects on her experience with the Women's Department of the World Council of Churches (WCC). She recalls of a camp that they had in 1959 at Kitwe, Zambia. She says that during that time, Rev. Colin Morris who had just integrated his church in the then Northern Rhodesia, invited them to visit his congregation. He warned them though, that people may walk-out if they find out that they are a mixed group. That church experienced walk outs over the months since they had put up a sign to say that people of all races were welcomed. There are also members who had resigned.

### 2.3.3.2 *Structural racism*

On the structural dimension, the church has been seen as a racist institution and as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution. The church is therefore seen by black theologians as racist as the rest of the society (Kritzinger 1988:117).

The Dutch Reformed Church (and other Afrikaans speaking churches) which are known for massive missionary programmes of all churches in South Africa (Strassberger 1974:20), adopted a position of racial division in her missionary agenda. The aforementioned twisted the Bible message to suit its racial beliefs. The church identified itself with Israel and the majority of the membership of this church was made up of Afrikaners (Strassberger 1974:21). Most of the Afrikaner preachers literally applied the Old Testament to their situation. In support for racism, they held that God warned the Israelites not to mingle with heathen nations and in that way whites should not mingle with blacks. They believed that God led them to the southern tip of Africa with a goal of bringing Christian civilization and to supervise it (van der Watt 1987:75; Maimela 1987:25ff.). The church allowed her ministers to join the secret and racial organisation called the Afrikaner Broederbond (Strassberger 1974:21). Motlhabi (1986:47) was referring to it when he said that black people also "needed to be liberated from religious enslavement to 'heretical' churches which fashioned the Christian teaching according to their human inclinations and socio-political interests". Addressing the same subject of racism as a system of domination, Boesak (1984:110) added that "the Reformed tradition had been so effectively and ruthlessly used to justify black oppression and white racism in South Africa".

The Dutch Reformed Church divided their converts in racial terms i.e. Dutch Reformed Mission Church for the so-called coloured, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa for Africans and the Reformed Church in Africa for Indian South Africans. The churches were called 'daughter' churches (DCs) by the Dutch Reformed Church which was called 'mother' church (cf. 1.3.4.g). The Dutch Reformed Church synod of 1857 with its decision of separating the services between Whites and Blacks laid a clear foundation of the divisions mentioned above (Muller 1990:212).

Kritzinger (1988:118, also see Motlhabi 1986:47, Boesak 1984:109) warned that it was not only the DRC which adopted racist policies but all other South African churches. He however recognized that the DRC was "the most conspicuously racist in structural terms". He further indicated that most black theologians were from the so-called multiracial

churches.

Economic and technological strength of the countries of the "sending" churches contributed strongly to the sense of pride and arrogance of some missionaries (Wilson 1967:2ff). Such conditions nurtured elements of racism in the attitude of some missionaries. It was from such grounds that some Western missionaries were able to destroy most parts of the African culture.

In the light of the above, it became apparent that racist attitudes played a formidable role in missionaries of Western extraction. This situation also widened the gap between them and their converts.

#### **2.3.4 Lack of missionary qualifications**

Most of problems experienced in the "mission field" resulted from lack of missionary qualifications. In the missionary world, the most important qualifications for missionaries are spiritual, academic and attitudinal (Wakatama 1976:83). Many missionary problems that have been experienced over the years resulted from the fact that there are many missionaries in the field without these qualifications.

This situation leads one to ask as to why were unqualified missionaries found in the missionary service. The situation of attracting even unqualified missionaries is the reason that led Wakatama (1976:83) to conclude that there are many missionaries in the field who had to be recalled back home for lack of these qualifications.

It is not easy to ascertain these qualifications as it is difficult to see the inside of a person. We as human beings are only exposed to the outside of the human beings. How can we get out of this? Wakatama's (1976:84) advice out of this situation is one of the most appropriate. He advises that Biblical precedents are important as a measurement for the

spiritual level of people. He refers us to Acts 13:2 where he indicated that the Holy Spirit spoke to the church at Antioch saying "set apart for me Barnabas and Paul". He believes that in that way missionaries were called out by the Holy Spirit that acted through the local church.

Wakatama (1976:84) reported bad incidents of people joining the missionary field. He has shown that many missionary candidates responded to missionary periodicals and bulletins without any church connections. They went out for mission work outside without first having been engaged in Christian activities at home like teaching Sunday School, catechumen, preaching, etc.

The need for educational qualifications for missionaries is also important in the way of facilitating the missionary understanding of the cultures and situations of the nationals they are ministering to. Ethnocentrism is promoted by lack of sufficient educational standards. Wakatama (1976:87) in contrast to Peter Wagner writes:

*...I have observed that the broader a person's educational background is, the more apt he or she is to accept and see values in other cultures. I therefore feel that we have reached the time when, except for special cases, a liberal arts degree and or theological training at the same level should be the minimum requirements for going overseas as a missionary.*

Contrary to the above view, Wagner reasons that missionaries who have the same educational qualification as that of the nationals can exercise excellent communication.

The point supporting the view of Wakatama is that of Theodore Williams (1991:23ff.) who has indicated that missionary training does make a difference in the effectiveness of the missionary. He further said that in the beginning of their Indian missions they were eager to send out their missionaries among the unreached people right away without training.

Through practical experiences, they found that missionaries needed training not only in Biblical understanding, but also in the understanding of the people among whom they were working. Soltau (1969:13ff.) is among those who saw the need for missionaries to learn the languages of the nationals as well as their customs, culture and religion.

Likewise, the attitudinal qualification had to be correct. For this reason, the general attitude of the missionary is expected to befit that of a true servant of God. A servant attitude is generally anticipated from the missionaries.

### **2.3.5 Incompetency**

The failure of certain missionaries in Third World countries resulted from the fact that they were generally incompetent in their own countries. A clear picture of low ranking officials who went out for possible opportunities overseas could be seen from the VOC employees who settled at the Cape during the 17th century. Those people who included lay preachers like Willem Barentsz Wyland and Pieter van der Stael (Muller 1990:34) were people of no importance in their own countries. It may be insulting to describe them as "rejects" in their own countries but Geyl's (1964,:181) description brings them close to this definition when he writes that the Dutch East Indian Company was:

*a good refuge for all libertines, bankrupts, failed students, cashiers, brokers, bailiffs, secret agents, and such like rakes.*

Most of these people joined overseas crews to try their fortunes. These VOC employees though they were not missionaries, provide us with a picture of a possibility of low ranking officials in a situation where people go out to work in a foreign country. But the company was responsible for sending out ministers to the Cape and they offered them housing, salaries and rations like other VOC employees (Strassberger 1974:3). Failure of most missionaries to get jobs in their home countries result from lack of education or proper

qualifications.

Good educational background enabled many missionaries to do their work properly. It was on those grounds that Wakatama (1976:86-87), speaking at Urbana '73, stressed:

*the need for missionaries to acquire higher educational qualifications in order to be more effective in their work.*

Protestants also stressed the necessity of adequate education for their ministers (Saayman 1992:25). This shows that proper education enables missionaries to have patience, sensitivity and understanding towards the people to whom they intend to minister. The example is Livingstone (in Hildebrandt 1981:111) who taught himself Latin and extensively read scientific studies. He ultimately found himself in the lecture hall at the University of Glasgow where he was furthering his education. Livingstone had a great desire to become a medical missionary to China. It cannot be doubted that the educational background of Livingstone as explained, might have led to his attitude that was defined in terms of the fact that he knew no fear, was generally hopeful, had an indomitable will power, was skilful in dealing with people, was a keen and accurate observer, had at heart the interest of Africans, and was humble (Hildebrandt 1981:112). Livingstone's abilities were made possible by his will-power or zeal to learn. Regardless of whether conditions allowed him or not, he took initiatives in educating himself.

The incompetency of untrained missionaries was also noted by Third World countries when they started to send missionaries out (Taylor 1991:24) especially from India. Firstly they were eager to send out missionaries among unreached people right away but practical applications proved failure which has shown itself in their incompetence as a result of lack of training. It was on that ground that Taylor advised that:

*missionaries needed training not only in biblical understanding but also in the*

*understanding of people among whom they were working.*

Competent missionaries in their home countries usually make good missionaries even beyond their borders. By this I don't only mean competency in biblical understanding but also in different disciplines. Therefore missionaries who are nothing in their homelands cannot be something outside their borders. In most cases they apply approaches that call forth negative responses from the recipients of the Gospel they are bringing.

### **2.3.6 Scriptural distortions**

One-sided interpretation of scripture to suit their own ends was common in the "sending" churches. This also affected their attitude in the "mission field"<sup>7</sup>.

In Africa especially South Africa a look at the attitudes of the so called Afrikaans and English speaking churches would give us a picture of how the scriptures were interpreted. Both these groups of churches have their origin in the Western countries. The Western link of English churches is well described by the Gruchy (1986:86):

*the English-speaking churches all came to South Africa during the upsurge of British imperialism, and they took sides by and large with the British government in the ensuing struggle for power in South Africa. The missionaries who were most critical of the social situation in the 19th century belonged to these churches, and were often regarded as bitter enemies of the Afrikaners.*

This statement is very important in showing that though these so-called English churches

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<sup>7</sup> "Mission field" is a very controversial term since it suggests that there are other areas of the world that are 'Christian' and those which are not. The Mexico City IMC conference of 1963 coined the phrase, 'Mission in Six Continents' to counter this perception. I am using it to refer to any situation where mission work is done.

were outspoken for their rejection of racism and subjugation of indigenous communities, they were not totally immune to this situation. Nosipho Majeke (in Cochrane 1987:13) was referring to a situation which embraced practices found in the tradition of both the English and Afrikaans churches when she indicated that "the missionaries had acted as agents of divide and rule policies, that they had been political advisors to the colonizers".

On the other hand, the traditional Afrikaans churches have for many years been known for their support of 'apartheid'. The attitude of both English and Afrikaans speaking churches bore tremendous influence in their interpretation of scriptures. Some of these churches' interpretation of scriptures in support of apartheid especially the Dutch Reformed Church,<sup>8</sup> resulted in their theology and practice being declared heretical by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) at Ottawa (Boesak 1988:117; Ngcokovane 1989:162).

To start with, the Afrikaans speaking churches especially the Dutch Reformed Church's interpretation of scripture has shocked many people locally and abroad. This was predominantly seen in their justification of the ideology of apartheid. For instance, Prof. E.P. Groenewald (in de Saintonge 1989:39-40) of the faculty of the Theology at Pretoria University reasoned that God chose Israel as the special people to prove that he wanted apartheid (separateness). He has shown that God didn't want racial mixture. He quoted the following texts to support his story:

Deuteronomy 32:8 "The most high assigned nations their lands; he determines where people should live". Acts 17:26 "from one man he created all races of mankind and made them live through out the whole earth. He himself fixed beforehand the exact times and limits of the places where they would live". The story of the Tower of Babel from Genesis 11 was also used to support the apartheid agenda. They further identified themselves with Israel and regarded themselves as a chosen people.

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<sup>8</sup> The Dutch Reformed Church is the largest of the traditional Afrikaans speaking churches.

Loubser (1987:ixff) was referring to a similar situation when he wrote of the 'apartheid Bible'. He discussed the scriptural justification of apartheid with his finger pointing at the Dutch Reformed Church. He defines the apartheid Bible as:

*the totality of biblical texts and presuppositions by means of which people inside and outside the official churches legitimized the policy of apartheid or are still continuing to do so.*

The apartheid Bible therefore consists of those Biblical verses such as Genesis 1:28 (cultural commission), Acts 2 (disciples speaking in many tongues), Revelation 7:9, etc, that have been interpreted as supporting segregation (Loubser 1987:X).

Such misinterpretation of scriptures bring confusion in the minds of the would-be-converts and anger in those who became converts as a result of the missionary efforts of their (Afrikaners) ancestors. This irony is well described by Boesak (1988:90) when he exposes the ambiguity of being black and reformed: "The God of the Reformed Tradition was the God of slavery, fear, persecution, and death. Yet for those black Christians this was the God to whom they had to turn for comfort, for justice, for peace"

The English speaking churches did not have a clear agenda for scriptural support of evil deeds. Though they opposed any apartheid legislation, they were not immune to injustices. Although blacks were seen in senior positions, there were complaints of racism. Blacks felt that leaders spoke without proper actions. The South African Nationalist government called this kind of attitude a hypocrisy (de Gruchy:1986:94). The fact that the majority of early black theologians came from the multi-racial churches (Kritzinger 1988:118) is one of the indicatives that there were abnormalities in them in terms of race relations and perspectives on scriptural interpretation and understanding.

### 2.3.7 Mission stations

The question of mission stations is one of the approaches that were adopted by Western missionaries in their overseas countries. Though I touched on this issue when I was discussing racism before, it is important to look at it from another aspect at this point. The situation of a mission station is well outlined by missiologists as follows:

*a group of missionaries settled somewhere on a mission station, from which they make trips to the local people and return to their base afterwards (Kritzinger et al 1984:169; Kgatla 1988:134)*

This situation did not only keep missionaries physically away from the locals, but also hindered their understanding of those people's way of life.

Mission stations were seen as a mark to indicate that missionary activities took place at certain stages in a particular area. They were the first things to be built by missionaries on arrival in a particular country. Those mission stations were seen by people from different perspectives and to which were attached many interpretations. Both good and bad interpretations were attached to the image of a mission station.

Those in the pro-mission station camp perceived those structures like Sales (1972), as the agency of civilization. Wakatama (1976:31) sees mission stations as inseparable from schools and medical clinics. The influence of mission stations on education cannot be doubted. The zeal for education from certain missionaries could be seen in the type of descriptions that were represented in the books that Vanderkemp ordered for the Library of Bethelsdorp mission station:

*"Theological and Ecclesiastical works, Geographical travels, (especially among Asia and Africa), Description of Arts and manufactures, Grammar and*

*Dictionaries (for instructions in the Latin, Greek, and Oriental languages) Classical authors, Greek and Latin. We want especially a good general map of the world, particular maps, a celestial planisphere, and a pair of gloves, we will however not despise any writings on other branches as natural History, Chemistry, Anatomy, Surgery, midwifery, philosophy etc. The least acceptable would be Medical and Poetical books (in Sales 1972:105).*

This description shows a wall of difference between missionaries, their mission stations and the world around them. This order, though it suggests a high quality of education, leaves people with questions unanswered, when one questions how relevant could Greek, Latin and Oriental languages be to the indigenous communities at that early stage of development.

Many institutions of lower and higher learning emerged as a result of efforts from missionaries. Mission stations could therefore be regarded as a melting pot for both good and bad.

Close relationship between the locals and Bethelsdorp became a factor for complaint with the Cape government during the 19th century. Missionaries questioned recruitment of the Cape Regiment, conditions of service, etc, (Sales 1972:120).

The bad side of Mission Stations amongst others, was the fact that they were built separately from villagers, and this created an atmosphere of misunderstanding and misinterpretations. It is obvious that critics of the Western missionary order who were Westerners themselves like for instance, Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson (Verkuyl 1978:187) could not opt for building mission stations, but if given a chance, would encourage the spread of independent village churches and neighbourhood congregations.

Mission stations divided the local communities into "heathen" and Christian camps, into the converted and the "pagans" (Stubbs 1978:70). Apart from this psychological division

there was a physical division in a sense that the Christian converts moved out to reside in the mission stations. Those indigenous communities were not only Christianised, but were Westernized in culture. Maluleke (1996:24) described them correctly when he indicated that the converted Africans became an African Middle and intellectual class.

### **2.3.8 Imperialism and colonialism**

One other problem with Western missionary approaches was their association with imperialist characteristics. Imperialism is a situation where one state uses another to achieve its own objective, the most common of which was political. Imperialism has the element of power. Thornton (1965:2) recognizes that at its heart there is the image of dominance, power asserted, and power is neither used nor witnessed without emotion. According to Saayman (1991:25), colonialism on the other hand was meant mainly to increase the wealth of the capitalistic 'mother countries'.

It is difficult to put a line of difference between imperialism and colonialism in the activities of the missionaries. This was the reason that led Verkuyl (1978:168) to conclude that for centuries imperialism came in the form of colonialism. This was also confirmed by Hans Kohn (1962:44) who stressed that for years imperialism and colonialism have been used interchangeably though it is understood that not all 'imperial' relationships are 'colonial'.

The connection between missions and colonialism was observable from as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. During that period Popes Nicholas V and Alexander VI (in Verkuyl 1978:168) gave instructions, first to Spain and later to Portugal to extend their political influence first to Asia, Africa and America and not forget to be zealous in extending the domain of the Roman Catholic Church. The entanglement between mission and colonialism has also been noted by Saayman (1991:24) who said that "it can even be argued that the missionaries bear greater responsibility for the consequences (of

entanglement) than the colonists".

This trend of entanglement between mission and imperialism declined gradually after some of the Third World countries had gained independence. Once more it could not be concluded that all missionaries who served during that period easily accepted the instructions for imperialism in Third World countries. One example is Bartholome de las Casas (in Verkuyl 1978:169) who went against the wishes of the Spanish imperialists by defending the rights of the Indians. Saayman (1991:27) also mentions exceptions of missionaries in this regard such as Van der Kemp and Philip who dedicated their efforts to establish equality among people of diverse population groups.

While Christians in Third World countries appreciated such missionaries, they had a problem with those who continued to promote imperialistic attitudes. They complained that missionaries requested them to close their eyes and prayed and thereafter, they found themselves having been given the Bible and the land had been taken away from them (Mofokeng 1988:34).

The situation as explained above confirms what Jacqueline William (1990:25) noted as follows:

*The Gospel that first came to our shores with Dutch and British colonialism was a Gospel that justified and legitimized colonialism, imperialism and European superiority. Despite their barbaric methods and attitudes the colonisers firmly believed that what they were bringing to this part of the world was civilization and the basis of this civilization was the message of Jesus Christ.*

These imperialistic attitudes by Western missionaries created a rift between them and the local people.

### 2.3.9 Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson

The responses of Venn and Anderson to the situation of the nineteenth century shed light on the nature of the attitudes of some missionaries then. Venn and Anderson worked during the nineteenth century and the responses of the Third World Christians during the late twentieth century was propelled by the questionable missionary activities of the period mentioned above.

Venn and Anderson had a reason when they introduced the theory called *the three selves formula*<sup>9</sup>. They wanted to correct a situation in the 'mission field' which was, in their view, incorrect. A brief explanation of Venn's formulae is important for the understanding of our subject and a wrong situation that existed.

Venn (Verkuyl 1978:185) was concerned about the fact of keeping the Third World churches too dependent and not allowing them to be what they are. Venn questioned the paternalistic attitude of Western missionaries. He realized that they posed as "supervisors" or "paymasters" to the people of the Third World. He was concerned with the fact that the "young churches" can be immobilized by excessive reliance on "mother churches". Verkuyl (1978:185) puts this well by directly quoting the words of Venn as follows:

*"Regarding the ultimate object of a Mission, viewed under its ecclesiastical result to the settlement of a Native church under Native pastors upon a self-supporting system, it should be borne in mind that the progress of a mission depends upon the training up and the location on native pastors, and that, as it has been happily expressed, the "euthanasia of a mission" taken place when a missionary, surrounded by-well trained native congregations under native pastors, is able to resign all pastoral work into their hands, and gradually relax his superintendence over the Pastors themselves till*

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9 This is a formula that deals with the three characteristics of an "autonomous" church.

*it insensibly ceases, and so the mission passes into a settled Christian community. Then the missionary and all missionary agencies should be transferred to the "regions beyond"*

In putting his theory into practice, Venn wanted to make sure that the locals took over the reigns of leadership in a particular area. He appointed them to positions on various councils, appointed native bishops, transferring schools administrative authority to the locals, trained the indigenous clergy, etc.

Venn didn't have in mind that this principle should be done step by step with a long-term goal in mind. An abstract application might have led to confusion and harm to the younger churches.

The congregationalist Anderson did not differ from Venn as he also emphasized the necessity for self-reliance and independence of young churches. In his own words, Anderson (Verkuyl 1978:186) outlined his missionary position as follows:

*"missions are instituted for the spread of a scriptural, self-propagating Christianity. This is their only reason but it includes four elements:*

- 1. Converting of lost human being,*
- 2. Organizing them into churches,*
- 3. Providing the churches with competent native ministers, and*
- 4. Conducting the churches to the stage of independence and of self-propagation".*

Then Anderson taught that this can be achieved by oral proclamations, education, and literature. Missionaries, he believed, had to view their work primarily being the gathering and developing of local congregations, each having its own presbytery to engage in pastoral care. Anderson encouraged the spread of independent village churches and neighbourhood congregations. To equip congregations to discharge tasks, he put heavy

emphasis on 'lay training'. These theories were called 'three self formula'.

The theories of both Venn and Anderson when viewed at face value, accommodate most of the views and wishes of the Third World people. They create more scope for independence and self reliance for younger churches. No one can doubt their influence on some parts of the Third World in the area of encouraging the birth of Independent Churches. The good example of this is from the Nigerian church historian Ajayi (Verkuyl 1978:188) who described Venn as a great statesman whose visions not only stimulated the growth and independence of church in most of Africa but whose emphasis on self-reliance and independence greatly aided developing the young national state found in that area.

The influence of this formula cannot be doubted in the development and directing young churches to stand up on their own. But the withdrawal of Western aid or material support should be applied in phases to enable the younger churches to pick up. As Venn (in Verkuyl 1978:186) said, abrupt withdrawal of material services will cause more harm than good to the developing churches.

## **2.4 THIRD WORLD CHURCHES AND THEIR RESPONSE TO WESTERN MISSIONS**

### **2.4.1 Strategic Responses**

#### *2.4.1.1 Resistance and rejection*

The unacceptable approaches applied by Western missionaries to the Third World, stirred a feeling of resistance and rejection of white missionary initiatives. Elements of domination that characterized most white missionaries led Christians in Third World countries to do something about such situations. Third World Christians in response felt that they had to stand up and fight for a Christian indigenous church. They felt that silence on their side

could create an open platform for the white domination in church affairs to continue. They felt forced to stand up and identify themselves as true human beings who could take full responsibility of religious matters affecting them.

The situation of rejection was correctly described by Mbiti (1971:1) who has shown that the time for foreign mission is over. Mbiti should not be understood as meaning that all intercultural witnesses should be suspended. He urged that Christians of Africa had to take responsibility for their church including the missionary office. Mbiti however recognizes the positive contribution made by the Western missionaries in the Third World countries especially in the area of services and Western civilization.

The general reaction towards some Western missionary approaches took the character of a renaissance, rebirth or reawakening. Third World Christians wanted to do things themselves and redirect the religious course towards their contexts. A clear fact about this was from the research done by Dr. David Barrett of 7000 church groupings in Africa which revealed the longing of many Africans Christians to be themselves (in Clark 1971:40).

Taking the situation of Africa, Oduyoye (1986:31-32) reveals that generally a negative attitude already existed within the hearts of Africans towards foreign missionaries. She says that even if missionaries were black, they become strangers to the local language, customs and culture just as is the case with Western missionaries. This shows therefore that the slightest mistake by the foreign missionaries would be viewed by the locals in a serious light based on that element of prejudice.

#### 2.4.1.2 *Black Consciousness*

The unfortunate situation in the 'mission field' also promoted a sense of self consciousness on the part of most Third World Christians. The spirit of consciousness took different forms among which was Black Consciousness. The name of Steve Biko is synonymous

with Black Consciousness in South Africa. Black Consciousness arose from a specific situation for which missionaries were partly responsible. Steve Biko was born and bred within this specific oppressive situation. His mind was moulded and influenced by this situation which was highly political. The particular situation I am referring to necessitated the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) which was responding to that particular South African oppressive situation.

Biko's (1989:212) attitude to missionaries is clear as can be seen from some of his writings:

*more than anyone else, the missionaries knew that not all they did was essential to the spread of the message. But the basic intention went further than merely spreading the Word. Their arrogance and their monopoly on truth, beauty and moral judgment taught them to despise native customs and traditions and to seek to infuse their own values into these societies.*

From the above statement it became apparent that missionaries loaded the Christian message with other things to satisfy their own ends. At this stage Biko was quite aware of the impure motives that characterized certain missionaries. Some of the impure motives included political, commercial or imperial. Biko also noted the arrogant behaviour of certain missionaries. They claimed monopoly on truth, beauty and moral judgement. All these attitudes formed a package that made them ignore and look down upon African customs and traditions. This situation opened the way for them to infuse their own views into other societies.

Biko (1989:211) accused the missionaries of confusing the people with their new religion. God was painted as a demanding one. To be accepted into the new religion people were forced to discard their clothes and customs. He regarded the Christian religion as cold and

cruel and that it caused frequent strife between the converted and the 'pagans'. He blamed leaders of Christian religion for teaching the converts to ridicule and despise adherents of indigenous religions. This led to the understanding that acceptance of Christian religion meant rejection or demise of African cultural values.

Biko (1989:212) regarded Black Theology as an important aspect of Black Consciousness, and praised it for giving direction to black Christians, who were in a mire of confusion, which he regarded as the aftermath of the missionary approach. On the same note, he also blamed the educational system which included the content of the syllabi for having been associated with the arrival of missionaries. Children were taught to despise their home upbringing and to question the values and customs of their societies. He held that children who were taught by whites (missionaries) despised their culture which was deemed 'barbaric'. He has shown that Black Consciousness seeks to fight the logic of placing the missionaries at the forefront of colonisation process. He went on to say that blacks were at the mercy of the whites in most things including promotions, progress at school, etc. African leaders and achievements in history were badly depicted while the opposite was made towards whites.

Biko in the same note reminded black people of the prophetic cry of the black students: *black man, you are on your own*. He indicated that it was only when black people knew that they were the ones to shape their own destiny if they want to rescue themselves from this situation.

From the above description of what Black Consciousness is (Baartman 1989:223; Mofokeng 1983:12-13; Price 1992:12), it is clear that it represents the spirit of self awareness on the side of the black people who suffered oppression and humiliation from white people. But the best description is from Biko (in Stubbs 1978:63) who puts it as follows:

*Black Consciousness is in essence the realisation by the black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression, the blackness of their skin and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude. It seeks to demonstrate the lie that black is an aberration from the normal which is white. It is a manifestation of a new realisation that by seeking to run away from themselves and to emulate the white man blacks are insulting the intelligence of whoever created them black. Black Consciousness therefore, takes cognisance of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating black people black. It seeks to infuse the black community with a new found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion and their outlook to life.*

This definition suggests that Biko in his upbringing was surrounded by a situation in which black people were humiliated, tortured and denied human opportunities, treated like unwanted animals and subjected to inferior positions merely because of their dark colour. One other thing around him was the division among the oppressed that was propelled by the oppressor.

Biko lived in a country labelled to be Christian and he was concerned to see the opposite of what was expected from the demands of the Christian religion being practised to the extreme. During his upbringing he was exposed to the people of the mentality of right-wing groups which continues even today to kill innocent people by bombs (e.g. Worcester, Rustenburg etc.) whose racial hatred is obvious, who ironically<sup>10</sup> associate with the Christian faith and who regard their struggle as a holy war against anti-Christ (Sunday Times 5 Jan.1997:2). Biko was also quite aware that the first prime minister of the apartheid regime in 1948 was a trained church minister (Ngcokovane 1989:56). Once

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<sup>10</sup> Right-wing groups in South Africa, while they openly associate themselves with the Christian faith especially of Calvinist theological tradition, they continue to commit senseless killings, acts that are contrary to the spirit of this religion.

more, Biko was exposed to people who thought like Dr. Willie Snyman, deputy leader of the Conservative Party in South Africa and elder of the Gereformeerde Kerk (Dopper Church) who is unapologetic in saying that his church in every synod since 1955 has taken decisions that supported apartheid (Sunday Times 12 Jan. 1997:4). He was also exposed to the fact that missionaries described black people as thieves, lazy, sex-hungry, etc. (Stubbs 1978:71).

In the light of the above information, the contribution of most white missionaries by their insensitive approaches could not be doubted in having influenced Biko to the Black Consciousness philosophy. Black Consciousness was a response to apartheid (Stubbs 1978:3) that was championed by some white Christians who are known for their enormous contribution to missionary activities.

One other area of Third World response to missionary efforts was seen in their affirmation of blackness and rejection of whiteness. Third World people were missionised by white missionaries most of whom in their missionary activities suggested approval of whiteness over against blackness. The colour 'black' was associated with misfortunes and as a result, it was rejected by most Europeans for among others, such superstitious beliefs.

Affirmation of 'blackness' and rejection of 'whiteness', the latter being a symbol of oppression was promoted. Blacks wanted to define themselves and reject "negative references to them such as 'non-whites and non-Europeans' (Motlhabi 1985:112)." These negative terms were seen as 'a creation of whites' (Kritzinger 1988:38) and were replaced by a self-defined one, 'black' which referred to their commonality in terms of oppression, discrimination, etc. Their blackness became a symbol of unity, strength, consolation and encouragement in a situation of white domination, oppression and rejection. Third World people did no longer feel ashamed to publicly proclaim their blackness and rejection of the notion of associating everything 'black' with misfortunes. They took 'pride' in their self-affirmation of blackness (Kritzinger 1988:40; Price 1992:12). Put in the words of Boesak (1988:4):

*We refuse any longer to be defined and limited by whites. With glowing pride in our Blackness we oppose this 'colonialising' of our humanity.*

The above situation indicates a twist from a belief which associates and equates whiteness with good (Biko 1988:117). As it would be seen in this study (cf. 3.5.2.3), feelings of Black Consciousness were influential in many initiatives taken by the Third World churches. This situation enabled most Third World Churches to take pride in themselves and in doing things their own way.

#### 2.4.1.3 *'Missionary go home'*

Calls such as "missionary go home" and moratorium formed part of the reaction by Third World people against Western missionary attitudes. Uka (1989:15) indicates that the call was originally made in the early 1970s by Africa, Asia and Latin American church leaders. The call was made by particularly All African Conference of Churches at its meeting in Lusaka. This call must be understood in the context of the world missionary situation and the world capitalist system.

The call for 'missionary go home' was propelled by a dominant role played by Western missionaries in the "younger churches". Leaders within these churches felt that they do not have enough scope for self-expansion on matters of Africanizing Christianity. Pederson (1980) entitled his book *'Missionary go home?'* in which he recorded stories and testimonies of people from "mission fields" who tell of their experiences with missionaries and their work among them. The fact that Pederson formulated the title of his book in a question form, indicates that those interviewees were divided on their attitudes towards missionaries. But the fact that there was a call for missionaries to go home is a matter indicating that there were practices by some Western missionaries which were not acceptable to Third world Christians.

Wakatama (1976:9) identified what he calls four main groups behind the call for moratorium. The first group held that missionary work was detrimental to the survival of the Indian cultures in Latin America and that it also aided in the economic and human exploitation of the indigenous communities. The second group is from Christians who were happy at the success of missions in Third World countries. They looked at places like Africa where there is estimation of 100 million professing Christians. They held that for this reason, missionaries should give Africans a chance because in most cases they can govern, support and propagate by themselves. The third group was championed by John Gatu<sup>11</sup>, who held that the continued presence of foreign missionary hinders the growth of the church in Africa. He suggested a moratorium on foreign missionaries and on funds to Africa for at least five years for Africans to have enough space to take charge of their churches' affairs. This he did at the 1973 CWME conference on 'Salvation Today' in Bangkok. In 1974 at All Africa Conference of Churches in Lusaka, Gatu's proposals were adopted. The fourth group advocated a selective moratorium. They held that only those with particular social, cultural and spiritual qualifications should go to Third World countries to meet specific needs in the area of training the locals. Calls for 'missionary go home' became popular.

This call came as a response of Third World Christians to Western missionary approaches. It is a culmination of frustrations on Third World Christians over centuries of Western domination on them. This domination affected different aspects of their lives including religion.

#### 2.4.1.4 *Ecumenical initiatives*

As another form of response by Third World Christians was that ecumenical forums were encouraged. The importance of ecumenical forums was in the fact that they brought

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<sup>11</sup> Rev. John Gatu was a prominent East African church leader in the 1970s and 1980s in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa.

together Christians from various denominations to address issues of common theological concern. A classic definition of the objectives of ecumenism could be seen from Uka (1989:209):

*to foster unity and cooperation among Christian churches throughout the inhabited world. By extension they also press for greater understanding and cooperation between Christians and persons of other religions.*

But ecumenical drive has not always been the initiatives of all people who feel oppressed. There are situations where ecumenical discussions are championed by Europeans with very little participation of Africans. Mugambi (1982:11) refers to this situation in Eastern Africa and found it to be a problem.

Ecumenism in countries that suffered oppression becomes meaningful in a sense of empowerment and unity against what is regarded as a common enemy or threat. Like the 'Third World experience', ecumenism in such countries is 'constituted by a common experience, the experience of a commonality i.e. the bitter fruit of oppression (Frostin 1988:4).

The example of this could be seen from a South African situation. For instance, the South African Council of Churches (SACC) played an important role in ecumenical matters as a result of the violation of human rights in the name of apartheid. Ministers from different denominations especially black theologians were invited to read papers at SACC annual national conferences (Kritzinger 1988:72). Randall (in Kritzinger 1988:73) indicates that the Christian Institute (CI) is another ecumenical organ in South Africa. This body was formed in 1963 as an ecumenical and inter-racial organisation of concerned Christian individuals. This body consisted primarily of white Christians who wanted to change their fellow whites though it later (i.e. during late 1960s) adopted a black agenda and became more critical of the South African context.

#### 2.4.1.5 *Self-reliance*

*Blackman you are on your own* (Biko 1989:212).

This statement by Steve Biko summarizes the whole feeling of most African people. It indicates the fact that another response by Third World Christians was the development of the feeling of self-reliance in the wake of domination in every sphere of their lives. A feeling of dependency on white missionaries on a number of things started to vanish from most of them. They wanted to rely on themselves on matters of church governance, support and propagating.

Black people were to take responsibility for their own future. As a result, projects of self-help and self upliftment in which black people were to take initiatives were developed with Black Community Programme (BCP) as an example (Kritzinger 1988:46).

#### 2.4.2 **Theological Responses**

The oppressive nature of the theology of Westerners led to the birth of various forms of theologies which may collectively be called 'Theology of Liberation' in contrast to the 'liberation Theology.' Mosala (1988:3) gives a clear definition of these terminologies (Liberation Theology and Theology of Liberation) that distinguish them in both generic and specific usages. He indicates that Liberation Theology refers to the Latin American form of the Theology of Liberation. This is associated with names such as Gutierrez, Assmann, Bonino, etc. On the other hand, the term Theology of Liberation is generic and denotes a movement of Third World people involved in a struggle to break the chains of cultural-religious imperialism that help to perpetuate their political and economic exploitation.

But Frostin (1988:11) uses the phrase 'Liberation Theology' in a generic sense. He says that this phrase in reference to the problem of understanding between the First and Third World

theologians:

*...will be used to denote theologies where the underprivileged are the chief interlocutors; in these theologies reflection on God is expounded in response to the experience of the poor in the struggle for liberation.*

Frostin in the same breath also noted that some students use this phrase in a more specific sense to denote Latin American varieties only (excluding theologies of Asia, Africa, or feminist origin) while others use the title in a wider sense than here including First world liberal theology under this heading.

I am going to use Liberation Theology in a generic sense to embrace theologies such as liberation Theology of Latin America, Black Theology, African Theology and Feminist Theology. Much has already been published about this subject but in this section, I am going to give few points about the origin and objectives of these kind of theologies.

#### *2.4.2.1 Liberation Theology*

This theology originated in Latin America during 1968 and it was triggered by a paper read by Gustavo Gutierrez; 'Towards a Theology of Liberation' though themes about this subject were already in circulation in the above named area for about 100 years. It was in fact during that year that this term was coined, just before the Medellin conference of Latin American bishops (Bosch 1991:434).

Because of the oppressive conditions in Third World countries, Liberation Theology became an important asset for those countries including South Africa. Liberation Theology is the theology that tries to be sensitive to a specific historical context. Maimela (1987:75) described its origin correctly when he stated that it arose out of a particular historical experience which conditioned the Christian message.

In Liberation Theology, it is believed that theology consciously forces one to reflect on the concrete oppressed and suffering situation to answer the questions of poor majority. Liberation Theologians read the Bible from the vantage point of the poor in order to answer the question from the oppressed people about theology. Liberation Theology marks a radical departure from a theology that serves the interest of the dominant class of the oppressors i.e the rich and powerful.

Though in all such theologies, theology is done in the light of the Word of God, the difference is on methodology. How does one go about doing theology? In Liberation Theology, methodology is done in the context of how theory and praxis relate in theology. Hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation that mediates God's word to theological reflection is important. Hermeneutics is a science of establishing rules that interpret the Word, making it understandable to the people in a particular context.

Segundo (1976:8) discussing the 'hermeneutic circle' shows that unlike a traditional academic theologian, a liberation theologian is forced at every step to combine the disciplines that open up the past with those that help to open the present. The connection between the past and present in dealing with theology serve as the main characteristic of Liberation Theology. Segundo (1976:8) has developed a special approach that tries to relate past and present as I have already mentioned above called 'hermeneutic circle'. In defining this approach, Segundo writes:

"It is the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. 'Hermeneutics' means having to do with interpretation". And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the Word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then go back and reinterpret the Word of God again and so on. Segundo borrowed this term 'hermeneutic circle' from Bultmann who took it from

Heidegger<sup>12</sup> and brought it into theology.

In the light of the above analysis, it became apparent that the concrete situation of the oppressed as well as the connection between the past and present are important. The questions posed by the poor majority are important especially when they want to know the role of God in their oppressed conditions. In this way theory and praxis are important phenomena that had to be closely connected. Boff (1987:210) refers to both *perichoresis* and *chorismos* between theory and praxis. Though there is an acknowledged relationship between these two phenomena, elements of difference(chorismos) could not be ignored.

The traditional theologians' ignorance of the concrete situation of the poor as well as questions they are asking about God caused the birth of Liberation Theology. The traditional theology was deemed to be abstract and insensitive to the plight of the oppressed.

#### 2.4.2.2 *Black Theology*

Black Theology is a resistant theology that became prominent among the oppressed in South Africa and the USA. It also draws its origin from the USA in the Black Power movement. It responded to the crisis in the aftermath of Civil Rights Movement of Martin Luther King and Malcom X 's Black Power movement. This theology emerged in South Africa during 1970 through the circulation of a paper by Basil Moore entitled; 'Towards a Black Theology'.

A Black theologian Simon Maimela (1987:64-65) also identified this phenomenon of Black Theology with Black Power. He seems to put these two phenomena in the same kraal on

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12 Martin Heidegger is a German philosopher who started talking about hermeneutic process as circular (in the 1930s-40s). Rudolf Bultmann then took it from Heidegger and brought it into theology.

the ground that they complement each other. From the way Maimela puts it, White Power led to the birth of Black Power as a reactionary force and the latter in turn influenced the need for the birth of Black Theology. To me, White Power is synonymous with White Theology. By this I mean that White Power created oppressive structures towards black people and this white power was blessed by White Theology. To counteract this unfortunate situation, black people came with Black Theology and Black Power as the answer to the White Power structure. Black Theology went on to reject White Theology's Bible interpretation (Motlhabi 1986:47).

Another black theologian Boesak, (1988:4) indicated that whites have claimed the Gospel for themselves and God was understood as standing on their side. Other people especially blacks were considered subhuman and were subjected to all kinds of humiliation. In Black Theology, black Christians try to answer questions and discharge obligations that confronts them in the Bible. In the description of Motlhabi (1985:111), Black Consciousness has a complementary relationship to Black Theology. Motlhabi describes Black Consciousness as the form of reawakening, a renaissance. It became a reawakening of black people in South Africa to their value as human beings and their dignity as God's children and creatures. Black people thus affirmed that their conditions were not intended by God but was a deliberate human creation. It was on that ground that another Black theologian Takatso Mofokeng (1983:13) considers Black Consciousness as the birth of the new black subject which bears the character of negation. There is a total rejection of the present situation and the value system of the whites.

The relationship between Black Theology and Black Consciousness was understandably defined by Boesak (1981:1) as follows:

*Black Consciousness is an integral part of Black Power but Black Power is also a clear critique of and a force for fundamental change in system and patterns in society which oppress or which give rise to the oppression of black people.*

Most if not all Black theologians regard the relationship between Black Theology and Black Consciousness as inseparable. For that matter Goba (1986:57) ties them close together by calling Black Theology, the child of Black Consciousness. In other words Black Consciousness created a clear platform for the formation of Black Theology. It created a conducive platform that triggered more theological questions in the mind of the oppressed poor majority.

In the light of the above, both Black and Liberation Theologies have been formulated as an instrument by which black Christians state; "enough is enough" to the abstract and oppressive White Theology. They formulated it because they have realized that they are not welcomed in a White Theology, and that this very theology rejects and humiliates them.

#### 2.4.2.3 *African Theology*

Western theologies were not only experienced as oppressive by African Christians but also as irrelevant to many of their felt needs. The inadequacy of Western theology in Third World countries such as Africa, led Africans to reject it as a foreign theology and formulated their own. For that reason, proponents of such a theology emerged to rescue local situation from the onslaught of a foreign and abstract theology. The logic was to replace the Western theology with African Theology.

Elements of African Theology not in the form by which it is found today, have long been known before the arrival of white missionaries. The oppressive situation in South Africa and especially the dominant role played by traditional Western theology in Third World countries, Africa included, revived the feelings of developing this theology. African Theology preaches that the concept of God has long been known in the African mind. It confirms the fact that African religiosity paved the way for Christianity's acceptability in Africa. Therefore when Christianity came to Africa, it didn't find the Africans empty handed in matters of faith.

A prominent African theologian Gabriel Setiloane (1986:29) was correct when he said that Western missionaries in bringing the Gospel did not find a *tabula rasa* in Africa. He indicated that the concept of God (*modimo*-divinity) dominated the African mind that he/she kept honouring it even after having accepted Christianity. This means that even after having accepted Christianity they continued to conceive God as *modimo* in their African terms.

Setiloane holds that the Gospel preached by missionaries was shaped and moulded by their own views and attitude of life and called this, Western civilization. He reasons that the Christianity brought to Africa was not pure<sup>13</sup> as it was tainted with Western culture and civilization. This has also been noted by Taylor (in Chipenda 1981:67) who stated:

*Christ has been presented as the answer to the questions white man would ask, the solution to the needs that Western man would feel.*

Acceptance of Christianity by Africans doesn't mean that they cease to be Africans. He indicated that though Africans accepted the Christian religion or God, they maintain their African concept of God. He said that there is an emergence of African thinking among the Africans which rejects Western understanding and insights while claiming to be Christians.

African Theology demonstrates that all theology is done in a particular situation. The Western context of doing theology dominated even other contexts. They forget that Christ had to be incarnated in every situation. This means that it was taught anywhere as a standard theology. The Western doing of things in different areas of life like cultural, social and political, became an international norm. This means that Christ was presented to different countries worn in a Western gown. In order to be able to retrieve the genuine Christ, the theory of demythologizing was applied. The unwrapping of one myth meant

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13 It is understood though that Christianity or religions in general cannot be separated from culture.

wrapping with another.

Setiloane (1986:32) holds that African Traditional Religion accepts the Bible including its teachings. On the question of God, it holds that the very God who revealed himself to the Hebrew as Yahweh was the very one who revealed himself as *Modimo* to Africans and this was seen in their stories and myths. Some of the myths and stories seem to have more sense than the recorded Old Testament ones of Adam and Eve. African Theology recognizes, apart from Hebrew experience, other regional experiences like Asia or American Indians. On God and Jesus Christ, African theology sees them together with that of missionaries as the same one and the only God known in African terms as *Modimo*. This underpins the reason why Christianity easily assimilated in Africa.

The concept of God among Africans as further stated by Setiloane (in Appiah-Kubi 1981:63) is higher than the Western concept. African Christians Christianised the Western concept and raised it to their level of understanding *Modimo*, which he believes is stronger. In this way he adds that Africans contributed to Christianity, a view that is higher, 'deeper and all pervasive'.

Bishop Tshibangu (1981:73ff.) however, warned African theologians of their obligations. Among them he indicated that they must be fully aware of the fact that their Catholic work calls for real spiritual commitment, and that they must also be fully aware of the intellectual demands imposed by the work of theology. Other obligations include awareness on their own commitment and that of ecclesial involvement.

#### 2.4.2.4 *Feminist/womanist Theology*

Western missionary approaches are also partly responsible for the birth of Feminist Theology. Most of Western missionaries were from male dominated cultures, a situation that influenced their missionary approaches in the Third World. That is why Bonita Bennett

(1986:170) mentions that all women including those of the ruling class are oppressed as women in a sense that their worth is linked to their roles as girlfriends, wives or mothers. Most of the churches that they established were influenced by their worldview. This means that their male dominated character in church life was seen even in the churches that they established. For instance Rose Zoe-Obianga (1981:145) refers to the male dominated churches in Africa which accuse assertive women as revolutionaries, dangerous subversives. She further says that their commitment as women is seen as provocative, which often causes them to be abused or scorned to a discouraging degree.

Next to Feminist Theology, a Womanist Theology was also developed in the US by black women who felt that certain aspects of this theology doesn't fully address their situation as black people. Thetele (1981:154) commenting about the activities of Women's Association of African Independent Churches (WAAIC) reasons that they are an expression of a people who have not accepted the dictates of their oppressors as "God given." Though they were submerged in the "culture of silence" they as members of these movements became aware that cultural invasion is an instrument of domination.

The above situation suggests that Feminist Theology was dominated by white women who never experienced the pains of oppression that black women had gone through. It was on this ground that thought "both black and white women suffer from a denial of independence and dignity, but no white woman knows the augmented tension of racial oppression. And so black women have an added burden of the effect of oppression and exploitation." (Jordaan 1982:43).

It became apparent for black women that the Western missionaries with their traditional male dominated culture influenced the existing oppressive attitude of black men on women. For instance, black women (including white women) were forbidden from exposing their heads or hairs during church services and occupy influential church positions. Black men in their Black Theology movements did not accommodate them. Apart from racist

oppression, black women also suffered sexist oppression by both black males and white people of both sexes. Bernadette Mosala (1986:129) puts it as follows;

*Black Theology which seeks to be the tool of liberation for black people has been eloquent by its silence on the oppression of black women. In its opposition to oppressive structures of the church, Black Theology doesn't include among such structures patriarchy. The lesson is very clear for black women: the liberation for black women is the responsibility of black women. Neither the church, nor black male theologians, nor white women can be expected to be sensitive to the human needs of black women.*

It was on those grounds that they stood up to fight for their rights as complete human beings for having been ignored even by their fellow black males. From the above quotation, it becomes apparent that they do not have confidence in the liberation struggle waged by their white counterparts. They believe that they are the only ones who can wage an effective war that can liberate them.

#### 2.4.2.5 *The emergence of African Initiated Churches*

The approaches of Western missionaries triggered many responses from Christians in the receiving countries i.e. the Third World. Among those responses were the birth of the African Initiated Churches (AICs). Constance Thetele (1981:150) explains the situation well when she says that African Independent movement comprises black men and women who got tired of being regarded as objects by their white missionary leaders. They seceded from the churches led by whites, whom they had come to recognise as racists who had invaded their culture, destroyed their historical traditions, perverted their institutions, and made them landless vagrants in their own country.

The issue of white domination and cultural onslaught in all spheres of African church life

seem to be at the centre of reasons behind the exodus from Western oriented churches. Already some years back Turner, Oosthuisen and Hastings, among others, each worked out causal factors (Daneel 1987:70-73). Their arguments are well known by now and are well summarized by Claassen (1995:15):

*African believers questioned the condemnation by missionaries of the ancestor cult, circumcision and polygamy. European scepticism with respect to spirit-possession alienated black church members who found Biblical evidence for their view of world and life. Their accommodation of African life made AICs very attractive. Lack of opportunities for African leadership and Western denominationalism were some of the causes. The emergence of the AICs represented a reaction to conquest, a reaction to European domination in politics, economics and social church life. Africans sought to create their own institutions free of white control.*

In the light of the above statement by Claassen, the following five points became apparent. In the first place the missionaries attacked the cultural life of Africans that included ancestral cult, circumcision and polygamy. I have already pointed out (cf. 2.3.1) that cultural practices of Africans were regarded as heathen by missionaries. Ignorance as I said earlier, might have partly been included in their attitudes and subsequent practices because they failed to conduct a thorough study of them before condemnation. Had the missionaries given themselves enough time to study some of the African cultural practices, they would have discovered valuable elements in them. The undesirable approaches that missionaries adopted in this regard created tension between themselves and the locals.

In the second place, missionaries did not understand African spirituality in that they viewed it with scepticism. Africans were confused by this practice because they found Biblical evidence for their way of life and world view. In the third place, lack of opportunities including those of leadership in Western oriented churches was one of the many causes.

Western missionaries wanted to dominate the entire African way of life including the religious one in churches. In the fourth place the birth of AICs represented a reaction against European domination in all spheres of life, and fifthly, AICs accommodated most of African practices which missionaries undermined.

Another missiologist who attempted to work on the causative factors for these churches was West (1975:1; Masuku 1996:445/6). He held that these churches were not regarded as Christian but as "bridges back to paganism". However, they attracted large numbers of Africans. This became clear from evidence to the fact that they were able to answer most of the black religious questions than were the Western oriented mainline churches. For this reason, Hendriks (1995:25) noted that they are the fastest growing churches especially in South Africa. He indicates that membership to the Independent Churches is at 44,6% and is growing more than the declining 55,4% of mainline churches. Hendriks further indicates that the 44,6% membership of the Independent churches, about 36% of which are AICs.

One can at times be surprised as to why these churches are growing in such large numbers. Can we still blame the missionaries for such a high growth rate? These churches are today multiplying in numbers as a result of division within themselves.

Another point that demonstrates the influence of missionaries to the birth of AICs could be seen in Ngubane (1986:71) who indicated that their break meant (more than anything else) their spiritual freedom from mission control and support. He further showed that the theological roots of the AICs is the desire for such a freedom. He also indicated that the Zion churches Africanised Christianity rather than allowing African Traditional Religions to be christianised.

Ngubane (1986:71) further noted that there is a relationship between Black Theology and AICs. His argument in this regard was that Black Theology represents a horizontal dimension of black life while the faith of AICs holds a vertical dimension.

The reason behind the success of the AICs in winning the hearts of many people is that they are down to earth and contextual. Once more, apart from addressing theological issues, they also address concepts such as Africanness, past present and future. The other evidence is that the AICs are able to address religious questions of most black people as can be seen from their swelling membership.

The general oppression that was directed to these churches by both state authorities and especially Western oriented churches, led the AICs to seek solutions. The type of solution that was seen has been the formation of the AICs and the suspicion towards any church institution that was white linked. Even today the tension between those churches and the Western oriented churches still exists. A lot of work still needs to be done to bridge the gap between other churches and the AICs.

#### 2.4.2.6 *The emergence of Third World missionaries*

The unacceptable approaches that were applied by Western missionaries in the Third World countries led, as we have seen to different responses from the people in the affected countries. The situation led to Third World people standing up for religious affairs affecting them. This led to the situation that saw many people from the Third World countries joining theological institutions for training in church leadership, etc. The feeling to do mission work by themselves with a view to correct, or better the situation that was created by Western missionaries grew tremendously. For these reasons, men and women from the traditionally receiving countries participated with a great zeal in missionary services.

Some Third World missionaries were not easily welcomed by their fellow country people as could be expected. This could be seen from the fact that transition to freedom has in most cases been marked by frustrations and hardships as a result of reluctance from some of the victims of the situation themselves. This kind of practice was also seen from the time

of the freedom of the Israelites from Egypt where some of them on the way thought of returning back to slavery. But in most instances, the complicity of the oppressive forces is not ruled out in confusions such as these. For instance, Clark (1971:36) puts it well when he indicates that there are usually external pressures and apart from this there are two interrelated problems that are faced by Third World churches viz;

*domestic dissension due to assumption of responsibility for their own affairs and repercussions from the influences of Western missionaries and fraternal workers*

This situation shows that transitional stage is never too easy. In a transitional stage where there is group involvement, it is natural that problems do exist. There would be those who will be frustrated by the situation and opt for destruction. Apart from that there may also be interferences from the concerned missionaries who may need to cause divisions. On the other hand, within the freed community of Third World there are those who may not easily accept the indigenous minister or missionary. Some Third World missionaries end up being unwelcome by their own people. A good example of this may be seen on Philip Quaque (in Oduyoye 1986:32) who is regarded to be the first of any non-European origin since the Reformation to receive Anglican orders.

The spirit of determination has usually been strong on the side of Third World churches, their ministers and missionaries to get their church structures on the right side. For this reason missionaries/ministers emerged from the Third World countries. Missionary contributions by Third World churches has started quite early but as Saayman (1991:35) noted, their contribution was not recognized by the white people because it was transmitted orally and in an African language. Missionary contributions behind the scene may be seen from king Sekhukhune (in Saayman 1991:35) who blamed one of his subjects for the fact that his people believed in the Christian God. Saayman in the same breath mentioned black pioneers in missionary contribution namely Ntsikana (c.1780-c.1821), Tiyo Soga (1829-1871) and Nehemiah Tile (died 1891).

As to the general statistics of non-Western missionaries, surveys indicated that by the end of 1988 there were 35 924 non-Western missionaries in 118 countries among 2 450 people groups, a difference of 22 686 compared to 13 238 of 1980. This number represents about 30% of the total Protestant missionaries in the world (Pate 1991:27).

When we focus on the missionary totals for each Two-Thirds World country, Asia is a leader in mission sending with an estimated 17 299 missionaries, while Africa has a total of 14 989 missionaries. The estimation for Latin America is 3 026 while that of Oceania is 610 missionaries (Pate 1991:29).

The difference in growth between 1980-1988 indicates an annual growth of 13.39%, i.e 248% per decade in Third World countries while in Western missionary movement there was an annual growth rate of 4,0% or 48% per decade. This obviously shows that the Third World has faster growth than the Western countries in missionary activities (Pate 1991:33).

Pate (1991:31-32) continues to show that the largest sending countries in Third World are India with 3 328 missionaries in 1980 and 8 905 in 1988. Nigeria is the second largest sending with a decadal growth rate of 255,5%. Zaire overtook Burma as the third largest sending country in 1988. Another point to be noted is that Kenya and Korea have replaced S.A and Indonesia in the top ten for 1988. There are in both years, five countries from Africa, four from Asia and one Brazil representing Latin America.

The amazing growth rate in Third World missionary activities by people from those countries is giving a glance of promise for the future. It shows that the process of mission in reverse i.e towards Western countries is a strong possibility, more especially since the latter is growing more secular. We still need to wrestle with the answer on how to do mission work to people who are described as arrogant and monopolize on truth, beauty and moral judgement, which taught them to despise native customs and traditions and seek to infuse their own new values into these societies (Biko 1989:212).

This phenomenon of the emergence of Third World missionaries also manifested itself in SA. For instance, Cronjè (1982:62) mentioned Rev. P.D. Tembe who worked as a missionary in the then Northern Transvaal at Makhuva district (Cronjè 1982:62). As it would be seen in this study (cf.3.7. and 4ff), this project focuses on a missionary who emerged from the Third World situation.

## **2.5 SENDING CHURCHES AND THEIR RESPONSE TO THIRD WORLD CRITICS**

### **2.5.1 'Western' education**

Despite all the negative accusations against missionaries, their contribution in bringing 'Western' education to the Third World is enormous. Bosch (1992:29) indicated that missionaries of the kerygmatic model's interest in education was not only for their own benefit "but also in the education of their converts". He further acknowledged the role played by Protestant missionaries in educating Africa. He said that "there was a time when ninety per cent of all schools for Africans were *mission* schools" (1992:29) which was placed at 96,4 percent by Lord Hailey (in Bühlmann 1980:79). As a result, various institutions were established including what is today called Fort Hare University, which produced prominent black leaders and intellectuals (Bosch 1992:29-30). This has also been confirmed by Saayman (1991:29) who said that:

*the immense importance of the role played by Christian mission schools in Africa is self-evident. One measure of their influence is the number of African political leaders educated in mission schools. When African heads of state or cabinet ministers in the 1960s and 1970s met, their meetings often resembled meetings of a 'Mission School's Old Boys' Club'.*

The link between missions and education was well described by Fritz Raaflaub (in

Bühlmann 1980:79) as follows: "in the work of the missions in Africa, school and church went hand in hand like twin sisters as if things had to be that way. Missionaries almost everywhere began to instruct the young without lengthy reflection as to whether they ought to do so". The link between these two went well into the twentieth century (Saayman 1991:29).

Mochudi in Botswana became a centre of educational activities for the Dutch Reformed Church mission during the nineteenth century (Botswana NG Kerk Sending: 7-8). On the other hand, "the Livingstonia Mission established schools and translated the scriptures" (Hildebrandt:1981). Muller (1993:210) indicated that, "up to 1894 non-White education was the responsibility of the many overseas missionary societies and, although the government gave financial aid, the societies kept their hold on non-White education throughout the nineteenth century". Malan (1993:304) noted that; "a more telling side to missionary influence, certainly in any assessment of the rise of the new black elite, was that missionaries encouraged black education".

### **2.5.2 'Western' medicine.**

*For decades almost all missionaries doubled as nurses and doctors. At that time colonial authorities were not equipped to organise a comprehensive health service, but missionaries who were here, there and everywhere, saw the sufferings of the people and had to do something* (Sr. Joan Delaney in Bühlmann 1980:87).

These words of Sr. Joan Delaney, summaries the whole situation of Western missionary contribution and commitment in medical technology to Third World countries. In this way Western missionaries contributed in introducing the benefits of Western medicines to the Third World countries. Medical terms such as 'doctors' and 'hospitals' were among those associated with social services of Christian missions (Cook 1958:11). Writing on the task of a missionary almost forty years ago, Cook (1958 171-172) advised that a missionary had

to be a handyperson and even gave examples of builder or medicine person. Bosch (1992:28) also indicated how hospitals and clinics were constructed by missionaries especially of the kerygmatic model. He further indicated that "in earlier generations it was customary for anyone destined for overseas mission work to take at least a rudimentary course in medicine".

### **2.5.3 Gender issues**

Western missionaries helped in improving the positions of women in Third World countries. Referring to Africa, Bosch (1992:2) confirmed the responsibility of missionaries in the improvement of social status on African women.

Sr Marie-Andre who regarded herself as a spokesperson for African women with a view to help them with their rights, described the oppressive nature of the traditional African society on women. She indicated that this tradition was not concerned about the status and dignity of African women.

As a result of the efforts of missionaries she proudly said that:

*Nowadays African women play a quite considerable role in modern society; there are trained female nurses, teachers, social workers; the women of Africa are represented on local authorities, in Parliament, in international organizations and at international conferences (in Bühlmann 1980:90-91).*

In the light of this, the importance of women in Third World countries was highlighted. For this reason, women started to enjoy human rights that they never enjoyed before the coming of missionaries.

#### **2.5.4 Historical records**

Western missionaries were responsible for most historical records in the Third World countries. "Most of the research and data collection on African religion and culture was undertaken by missionaries" (Bosch 1992:2).

The contributions of missionaries in the area of linguistic and the difficult process underwent by missionaries thereof was described by Cook (1958:200) as follows:

*First, he must patiently try to dig the spoken language out of the people, carefully recording all that he learns. He uses some system of phonetics in transcribing the sounds of the words he hears. After he has gathered a certain amount of information he uses those data to try to work out an alphabet for the language, a letter for each meaningful sound, and not more than one letter per sound.*

According to Hugo Huber (in Bühlmann 1980:96-97), the earliest contributions on which later research was able to build, are mainly the missionary efforts. Huber gave credit to Catholic and Protestant missionaries for having produced books on linguistic, ethnology and culture. Missionaries were also among the earliest philologists and have recorded almost everything they came across and made this available to science and posterity. Writing about Livingstone, Hildebrandt (1981:112) said that "he was a keen and accurate observer and kept voluminous day by day records of what he saw".

#### **2.5.5 Protection against oppressive forces**

Missionaries played an important role in the protection of Africans against oppressive structures and even attacks against wars. Bosch (1992:2) indicated that "when Black people were abused by colonial administrations, missionaries were often the first to protest". Certain missionaries such as David Livingstone were reported to have "had at

heart the interest of the Africans" (Hildebrandt 1981:112).

An example of the assistance of missionaries to African people was seen in Botswana when Livingstone, John Mackenzie and William Willoughby advised and helped the Batswana chiefs to send a formal petition to Britain asking for protection against the Transvaal Boers in 1876 (Wiseman 1992:xv). The fact that missionaries, especially of the London Missionary Society (LMS) went to Botswana by invitation of the Botswana chief, indicated their importance (Hildebrandt 1981:85). Hildebrandt (1981:86-88) further indicated the role played "by missionaries in protecting the rights of "Hottentots" and Africans in Southern Africa" during the nineteenth century. He indicated that missionaries were responsible for the disappearance of slave trade (1981:115 & 120; Bühlmann 1980:105).

Certain missionaries of the Paris Missionary Society came to the assistance of Moshoeshoe's subordinate chiefs against President Brand over border issues and attacks by other Black chiefs (Muller 1993: 175, 242).

#### **2.5.6 Development projects**

Missionaries also embarked on developmental activities. The Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council (1928) was regarded as the first large protestant meeting to show interest in this regard. Concepts such as 'comprehensive approach' were loudly heard at this meeting. Word and deed were seen to belong together and as important for the credibility of mission. From 1960 the key concept became development and developmental projects were set up in poor countries of the Third World (Bosch 1992:42-43).

On the other hand Clifford (in Bühlmann 1980:105) described David Livingstone as a person whose contribution was observable in the area of trade relations, developmental projects, such as agriculture, construction of roads through the primeval forests, paved the

way towards turning the world's attention to Africa, etc.

The contributions of missionaries in the development of people was summarized by S.F. Malan (1993:304) as follows:

*The missionaries played a vital role in the development of the black elite class because, in addition to their Christian teachings, they spread European cultural values on blacks.*

These responses of Western missionaries to Third World critics, indicated their importance in a number of ways. They have shown that despite their bad picture (cf. 2.3), there are tangible benefits that were brought by them to Third World countries.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE NGKA BEGINS WITH INTERCULTURAL MISSION

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I explored how the missionary approaches of the sending churches from the West led to responses from some Third World Christians. That information provides the background against which I shall look at the mission activities of one specific Third World church, namely the NGKA. I do this because the mission of Rev. Rammala in Botswana, the main theme of this dissertation, arose in the midst of this church. In order to understand the life and missionary activities of Rev. Rammala in Botswana, it is important to have a proper knowledge of his church, as well as its development of missionary thinking over the years. In this chapter, I therefore discuss the missionary life of this African church and investigate factors that might have led it to embark on such an action.

The church in question is called the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) or Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA)<sup>14</sup>. She is one of the "daughter churches" (DCs) of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK), a sister to the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) and the Reformed Church in Africa (RCA). For the sake of proper identification, I am going to use a common Afrikaans abbreviated name of this church i.e. NGKA (cf 1.3.4.c).

This church embarked on intercultural mission. It attended to people who had different cultures from that of their general South African membership. For instance, as it would be

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14 This church was united with the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) in 1994 to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

seen in this chapter, it crossed national boundaries to take the Gospel to the Mozambicans in and outside South Africa. Apart from the Mozambicans, they also paid special attention to the Malawian migrant workers on South African mines. One of the main highlights of this church's involvement in intercultural mission, was when it took the Gospel to the Bushmen of Botswana through Rev. Rammala, as it would be seen in chapter 4.

### **3.2 THE NEDERDUITSE GEREFORMEERDE KERK IN AFRIKA (NGKA)**

Rev. Rammala's missionary work in Botswana cannot be fully understood without the background knowledge of his church. The NGKA which produced Rev. Rammala, was born as a result of the missionary activities of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK) or Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). There are different stages that marked the birth and early developments of this church. Before 1932, the church existed as isolated congregations, and were joined together into a denomination on 2 March 1932 with its own synod, and was called N.G. Sending Kerk van Suid-Afrika (NGSKSA). On 10 April 1937 the name was changed to NG Sendingkerk van Transvaal. At the 1932 synod, it was reported that the total membership of this church stood at 17 943 in 43 congregations (NGKA in TVL. 1982:4-8)<sup>15</sup>.

Missionary developments by the NGK in the Cape Province led to the establishment of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Bantoekekerk in Suid Afrika (Dutch Reformed Bantu Church in South Africa) on 7 November 1951, at its first synod in East London. In 1963 churches in various provinces united to form Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika (NGKA), and on 17 April 1964 Dr. F.E. Geldenhuys declared the NGSK of TVL. as an autonomous synod (NGKA in TVL. 1982:8). A new Church Order was compiled and other synods' were written in such a way that they comply with that of the General Synod. Two regional

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<sup>15</sup> This was a publication compiled by the Synodical church offices of the South and Northern TVL. synods of the NGKA for its 50th. anniversary in 1982.

synods were subsequently established, viz; Phororo (northern districts of the Cape province) on 15 March 1966 at Mafikeng as a regional synod of the NGKA, and the regional synod of Transkei of the NGKA on 29 August 1978 at Decoligny (Cronjè 1982:51).

Until its unification in 1994 with the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC)<sup>16</sup>, this church had five synods namely: Phororo (in the Northern Cape), Natal (in Kwazulu Natal), Free State, Northern and Southern Transvaal.

### 3.3 THE NGKA AND MISSION WORK

It took quite a long time before the NGKA embarked on mission work in a traditional understanding of it, i.e of going out across the boundaries of one's own country<sup>17</sup>, as was done with Rev. Rammala. From 1793 onwards, this church assisted the NG Kerk in most of its mission work and development projects, especially among African communities (Cronjè 1982:60 & 62). A similar view was stressed by Kgatla (1988:51) when referring to the network of mission stations, outposts and schools established by the DRC, that they (missionaries) could not staff them all without the assistance of the blacks.

The only synods of the NGKA that embarked on mission as described above were those of Southern and Northern Transvaal. Among others they were actively engaged in the following; evangelism by means of a trained team of workers conducting campaigns at the request of congregations, youth work by Rev. J.M. Hofmeyr as organizing secretary since

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16 This was another one of the churches that came into being as a result of the mission work of the NGK and it was meant for Africans of mixed descent (coloureds). It was also based on the NGK's apartheid mission policy (Kgatla 1988:101).

17 This type of mission understanding could practically be seen in the life of missionaries like William Carey who in 1793 left England for India (Hildebrandt 1981:80).

1967<sup>18</sup>, mission work that was started by regional synod of Northern Transvaal at Makhuva in 1971 and synod of Southern Transvaal among the bushmen at Kanagas, Botswana in 1973 (Cronjè 1982:62).

It became apparent that the province of the Transvaal (as it was known then) with the two NGKA synods which it accommodated, played a pioneering role on missionary initiatives. In the following sections of this chapter, I look at the missionary policy of the NGKA as well as factors that influenced it to undertake missionary activities.

### 3.4 NGKA'S MISSION POLICY

The missionary policy of this church is important in our understanding of Rev. Rammala's missionary activities and approaches in Botswana. The missionary policy of the NGKA is outlined in Article 46 (Church Order, S-Tvl NGKA 1980):

*Die Kerk is geroep om die Evangelie in woord en daad te bring aan diegene wat in die duisternis lewe ten einde hulle tot die wonderbare lig van Christus te bring.*

*Hierdie werksaamheid is allereers die roeping van elke lidmaat en die plaaslike kerkraad.*

*Indien omstandighede dit vereis, sal dit gesamentlik onderneem word deur die Kerk in breëre verband asook in samewerking met kerke in Nereduitse Gereformeerde Kerkverband.*

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18 Joint undertakings in mission with DRC work was done among others in Mozambique (Cronjè 1982:62). In addition, hospitals and other institutions were started by the DRC in full cooperation with the NGKA locally and abroad (Cronjè 1982:60).

The same mission statement has been adopted by the DR. Church in Botswana<sup>19</sup> (Church Order, DRC in Botswana, Art.42).

This statement suggests the centrality of a missionary dimension in the life of a church which identifies herself with the body of Christ in this world. It becomes apparent from this statement that a church which ignores mission, misses an important mark. For this reason, the NGKA understands Christianity as a responsibility to others, a responsibility which affects the entire church, from top structures to ordinary members.

### **3.5 INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN THE NGKA'S PRACTICE OF MISSION**

#### **3.5.1 Strategic Factors**

##### *3.5.1.1 The Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)*

Rev. Rammala's missionary work in Botswana cannot be understood without the knowledge of the degree of influence that the DRC had among others, on the missionary life of the NGKA. The NGK has been very influential in the general life of the NGKA in a number of ways including mission. In some cases, the NGKA was seen as acting like a missionary agency of the NGK within the African communities. For instance, the case of Evangelist James Jolobe who was ordained in Cape Town on 28 October 1900 as the first black minister to be ordained by the DRC, was used as their agent to the Black labour in the Western Province, for they (NGK) couldn't understand African languages (Cronjè 1982:45).

The establishment of Theological schools by NGK (e.g. De Coligny in 1946) which were meant to train African ministers and evangelists, was an indication to further their

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<sup>19</sup> See Article 42 on Mission of the DRC Order in Botswana which was adopted at Mochudi on 20 November 1979.

missionary activities through the graduates. This school became one of Stofberg Theological schools in 1960. The first evangelists to complete training during 1946 and 1947 were John Mkondwana, William Hadi, Wallace Mnomiya and Gilbert Magwaca while the first ministers to complete in 1961 were L. Buso and R. Thoso (Cronjè 1982:48). These spiritual leaders were, among others, to expand the missionary agenda of the NGK in their respective communities.

The fact that the DRC cannot perform mission work without the assistance of Africans especially among African communities was also stressed by Kgatla (1988:51) who said that they could not handle all their missionary institutions without the assistance from blacks. In some sectors of the black community, ministers of the NGKA were seen as part and parcel of the DRC in terms of the political injustices that the latter was associated with. For instance, the establishment of the 'Belydende Kring' in 1975 was a response by a group of black ministers and evangelists of NGKA and DRMC. This resulted from a rejection by delegates at a Black Renaissance Convention because of their association with the DRC (Kritzinger 1988:69).

Another point that shows a one way influence between these two churches, is the easy way in which ministers of DRC could become members of the NGKA (Church Order, S-Tvl NGKA, Art.60)<sup>20</sup>. The article indicates, that after ordination in a particular congregation of NGKA, a DRC minister automatically becomes a full member of that congregation. On the other hand, an NGKA minister cannot do the same in the DRC. During the original stages of this church, as stated by the constitution adopted by its first synod in 1932, blacks were not allowed to lead a synod as chairpersons (moderators). It was a position that was exclusively meant for whites (Artcl.4 1932 Constitution). For instance, during the period 1932-1964, the leadership of this black church was in white hands, viz; Revs. P.H.A. Fouche (1932-1937), L.H.M. Jandrell (1940-1947), T.C.

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20 Article from the Church Order of the Southern Transvaal synod of the NGKA as revised in 1980.

Esterhuyzen (1947-1949), C.L. Brink (1952-1956) and C.J.J. Van Rensburg (1956-1964). It was only in 1968 that the Synod of Southern Transvaal first elected a black moderator, by the name of S.G.S. Ntoane. The Northern Transvaal synod had a black leader only in 1973, by the name of Rev. E.M. Phatudi. He served as acting moderator but was succeeded by Dr. H.J. Moller in 1976 (to 1981) after his term of office (NGKA in TVL. 1982:10).

Another angle of DRC influence on NGKA mission, was its understanding of the 'three selves' especially that of 'self propagation'. This resulted from the fact that the NGKA saw fellow Africans as their primary missionary responsibility. There are no indications of any missionary activities directed to other population groups. Synodical missionary reports of this church as early as 1968 referring to the mission work among the Mozambicans, bore subheadings entitled; "Die bearbeiding van die Portugese Bantoe<sup>21</sup>..." (Agenda, 1968 S-Tvl NGKA Synod:94) to indicate their selection for missionary recipients. Christianised Africans of the NGKA witnessed Christ to fellow Africans. For this reason mission work was started in Makhuva<sup>22</sup> and a letter was sent to congregations to alert them about that project. Up until September 1965 the work in that area was done by Evangelist Chauke. On 30 July 1966 Rev. L.M. Mashego was ordained as a first missionary of the NGKA at Makhuva (Agenda 1968 S-Tvl Synod:92). Extensive missionary work was also directed at the Africans of North Western Botswana called the Bushmen from 1971 and Rev. Rammala as the first missionary, played an important role (Cronjè 1982:62; NGKA in Tvl.1982:21).

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21 This is the language of the NGK that was transferred by its missionaries to the NGKA with a view that 'they will be better witnesses among their own people'.

22 Makhuva is the area in the Northern Province near Giyani towards the border of Mozambique within the boundaries of the former Gazankulu homeland. It was first an outpost of the NGKA congregation of Nkensani but later became an independent congregation (NGKA 50 Years 1982: 19-20).

The NGKA presbytery of Saulspoor supported Rev. Casselegio's mission work to the Africans of Botswana and that of Zeerust supported the work of an evangelist in the same country. On the other hand, the presbyteries of Randfontein and Johannesburg contributed to the salary of Rev. P. Motau who did mission work among Africans in the mining compounds<sup>23</sup>. The missionary activities of this church, as it would be seen in the preceding sections of this study, clearly strengthen this perception that it concentrated only on 'own people'.

### 3.5.1.2 *The Malawians and 'Shangaans'*<sup>24</sup>

Apart from the role played by DRC as has been seen, the Malawian migrant workers in South Africa also attracted missionary attention of the NGKA. During the Southern Transvaal synod of 1972, this interest was disclosed in the report of the Synodical Mission Commission. The Mission Commission made a special study how to bring the Gospel to the Malawians residing within the boundaries of the southern Transvaal synod. The synod realized that the work among the Malawians is so complicated that it needed the attention of all regional synods (Agenda, S-Tvl NGKA Synod 1972:125).

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23 See Report on Mission and Evangelism prepared for the 1968 synod of the NGKA of Potchefstroom.

24 The most acceptable term for this population group is Tsonga. The source of my usage for the term 'Shangaan' in this study is the fact that it was employed in the synodical reports of the NGKA. Apart from the sensitive nature of this name, there are however, other people who use it liberally, for instance, Mrs. Felicia Mabuza-Suttle (in Felicia Talk Show, SABC TV Channel 1, 27/10/1998), Thandeka Msiza (in Drum Magazine, No.321, 29 Oct.1998:6). President J. Chissano of Mozambique used this name during the official opening of the Maputo corridor when he sang: "akuna muzulu, akuna muchangani..." (in SABC 20h00 TV News, Channel 3, 6/6/1998). On the other hand, Maluleke (1995:3) uses this name in brackets next to Vhatsonga. Maluleke however indicates that "the names given to these people have ranged from the Magwamba, Knobnoses, Thonga, to Tsonga-Shangaan in our times". Some authors such as Patrick Harries, used the phrase 'East coast immigrants' in his reference to the Vhatsonga people (in Maluleke 1995:3).

This case was therefore referred to the general synod for further consideration, and was accepted.

The "Shangaans" (Tsonga) was another population group that was the recipient of NGKA mission. The motive behind this was based on their close relationship with the "Shangaans" of the neighbouring Mozambique. It was hope that the christianisation of the South African "Shangaans" will make them carriers of the Gospel when they visit their relatives in Mozambique (Agenda, 1968 S-Tvl Synod:92).

However, the NGKA presbytery of Kranspoort did mission work among the "Shangaans" of Mozambique in the vicinity of Pafuri. The NGKA presbytery of Barberton, on the other hand, decided in principle to get a missionary for the "Shangaans" of the then Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) as soon as funds were made available. The NGKA presbytery of Carolina also had an interest in placing a missionary at the border of Swaziland and Mozambique with an objective of christianising the "Shangaans".

### **3.5.2 Political Factors**

#### *3.5.2.1 The decade of the 1970s*

Apart from strategic factors, political trends also played an indirect role in terms of general consciousness of the people. For instance, the 1970s marked the era of political dramas in South Africa, which might in one way or the other, have influenced the agenda of churches' life. This doesn't mean that the system of oppression was only opposed during this decade or in 1948, with the coming to power of the Nationalist Party government, but throughout the history of South Africa (Mothlhabi 1984:15). The uniqueness of the 1970s, is the fact that it follows the decade of the 1960s, which marked the silencing of the resistant forces, by the arrests of prominent political leaders, such as President Mandela and others. The 1970s was a decade during which the oppressed

broke the silence of the 1960s, to speak out against the injustices they suffered. The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and its aftermath, led to disillusionment among Blacks in such a way that they resorted to underground activities. There was a relative lull in the country which extended to the beginning of the 1970s (Motlhabi 1984:27).

There were different reactions and activities even in church life, to mark the uniqueness of the political landscape in South Africa during this decade. For instance, in the Catholic church, Black priests towards the end of the 1960s, approached their authorities for failing to apply what they preached, and for being ambiguous in their political positions. During the 1970s, the church closed her only black seminary twice, for it was alleged to have been turned into a revolutionary centre. On the same score, two black lecturers were castigated for participating in a political demonstration in Johannesburg (Motlhabi 1984:22). It was also during this decade, May 1976 that Bishop Desmond Tutu sent an open letter to Prime Minister John Vorster appealing for an end to the homelands system and other reforms. His passport was also confiscated by the government, due to his call for an international boycott of South African coal during the early 1980s (Tutu 1989:102).

The uniqueness of this decade in political awakening, saw the banning of most black political organizations, including the Christian Institute, which was established in August 1963 (Motlhabi 1984:24). The significance of this period in political consciousness, is well described in this assessment of the 1976 Soweto events:

*it made it abundantly clear to the world and the racist regime that our people have reached a stage where they are no longer prepared to behave like sheep led to the slaughter house, they are no longer prepared to let other people decide their fate...(Gorodnov 1983:188).*

The political landscape of this decade more than ever before, saw the NGKA taking

decisions in missionary programmes since her birth in 1932, in the former Transvaal. The fact that major missionary decisions of the NGKA coincided with this dramatic decade, is indicative of the influence it had on different aspects of life. The synod of the NGKA Southern Transvaal, took seriously the decisions regarding mission taken at the 1968 (Potchefstroom) synod. It was only during this decade, that the synod took such a radical missionary decision that read:

*"Die sinode spreek hom in beginsel uit om so spoedig moontlik 'n eie sendingveld te begin in die binne of die buiteland en dra dit op aan sy worde gekose Kommissie vir sending en evangelisasie om hieroor te besin en verslag uit te bring"* (Agenda, 1972 S-TVL Synod:35).

The NGKA synod of 1972 took this decision seriously in such a way that they concluded to send a missionary to Botswana. This synod was motivated by the fact that during 1970 twenty ministers of this church undertook a study tour to these areas. The result of such a tour was a strong motivation during the 1972 synod, for missionary work that should be done in Botswana (Agenda, 1972 S-Tvl Synod:113).

### 3.5.2.2 *The context and location of the NGKA Transvaal synods*

*Synods such as the Southern Transvaal in 1976 objected even to being regarded as a 'mission church' or mission object of the DRC, being rather equally worth (ewewaardig) and independent (selfstandig) (Mokgoebo 1983:43).*

As the role of the decade of the 1970s had been explored, the context and geographical location of the synods, of both Southern and Northern Transvaal, might have had an influence on the life of the church, including its missionary initiatives. The former Transvaal province, especially the southern part of it, has been regarded as the economic capital of the entire country. Gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand in 1886 and

Crown Mines was the largest mine in the Johannesburg area (Mandela 1994:59). This situation attracted many people who flocked in search of fortunes. In this way, this province was able to attract people with various skills, wisdom and levels of faith, who ultimately benefitted it in a number of ways.

This province has been the centre of major political highlights in the history of this country. For instance, it houses Soweto which could be regarded as a symbol of most political activities and a force for resistance in South Africa. A better description of the impact of Soweto on the events of the mid-1970s is as follows:

*an indelible mark has been made on the revolutionary and political consciousness of our people by the Soweto events. They raised the people's preparedness and willingness to sacrifice to a higher level, enhancing enormously the striking power of the liberation movement* (Gorodnov 1983:188).

The context of this province enabled the NGKA within its boundaries, to play a dominant and leading role in the entire church life. For instance, this church was established in this province on 02 March 1932, when the first synod was constituted (NGKA in Tvl.1982:4). The synods of the Southern and Northern Transvaal were the first synods of this church, after the division that was made on 27 April 1964. The name of this church was proposed by two Transvalers, Dr. S.S. Tema and Rev. S.G.S. Ntoane (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:8).

In addition, it was the Transvaal synods of the NGKA which first started with intercultural mission. On 02 June 1966 the Mission Commission of the Northern Transvaal Synod of the NGKA decided to do mission work in Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The synods of Northern and Southern Transvaal initiated a joint venture in doing mission work at Makhuva near Giyani, with the conviction that converts would

take the Gospel to their relatives in Mozambique (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:19). The synod of Southern Transvaal started earnestly with mission since 1967, with the appointment of a full time mission secretary (NGKA in Tvl.1982:20).

All these activities of the NGKA in the Transvaal as described, indicate that its context and geographical location were instrumental in the way she responded to mission, compared to the situation in other provinces. Having looked at this, I now turn to the influence which the Black Consciousness philosophy might have had in the life of the NGKA, especially its missionary aspect.

### 3.5.2.3 *Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)*

Ministers and members of the NGKA did not escape the influence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the early 1970s which might have had a role in their decision to undertake mission in Botswana. As Black Consciousness (BC) cannot be widely separated from Black Theology, the influence of the former in the NGKA could be seen in their rejection and criticism of white missionaries. As Crafford (1973:41) observed:

*Uit die kringe van Swart Teologie word die blanke sendelinge skerp aangeval en veral die 19e eeuse sendelinge. ... Na gelang die gedagtes van Swart Teologie deurwerk sal die blanke sendelinge se posisie in die NGKA steeds moeiliker word.*

The fact that ministers of the NGKA as early as 1958 organised themselves into a separate extra-church body called Black Ministers' Fraternal (Mokgoebo 1983:42), indicates the depth of this feeling many years before the 1970s. On the other hand, the fact that the Belydende Kring (BK) (cf. 3.5.3.3.) worked hand in hand with the Christian Institute of South Africa (CI), further exposed ministers of this church to BC philosophy.

This is because "the CI coincided with and merged with the struggle of identity from the circles of Black Consciousness, Black experience and Black Theological existence" (Mokgoebo 1983:118).

The BC philosophy has correctly been described by Boesak (1977:1) as:

*the awakening of black people that their humanity is constituted by their blackness. It means that black people are no longer ashamed that they are black that they have a black history and a black culture distinct from the history and culture of white people. It means that blacks are determined to be judged no longer by, and to adhere no longer to white values. It is an attitude, a way of life.*

BCM was inclusive of all Black political groups and it urged common solidarity in the struggle against oppression and white racism. Members of the NGKA were supportive of the political groups that became part of BCM. This has also been noted by de Gruchy (1979:152), who wrote:

*The churches especially those associated with the SACC, could not avoid being affected by this black renaissance. Eventually even the DRC, and especially its black 'daughter' churches, did not escape its impact. In the first place, many of the black students and their leaders, like the homeland leaders, were members of these churches. Some were even seminarians. In the second place, the awakening of black consciousness and the struggle for political rights were rooted in Christian convictions.*

The fact that the timing of their strong missionary programmes coincided with that of the emergence of BCM, is indicative of the political reawakening described, of doing things for themselves, thus marking a departure from dependency. The impact of "Black man

you are on your own" (de Gruchy 1979:150) became relevant.

Some vocal ministers of the NGKA associated themselves with the Black Consciousness (BC) philosophy through Black Theology. For instance, ministers of this church such as Elijah Tema, were instrumental in the formation of the Black Renaissance Convention (BRC) at Hammanskraal during December 1974 (Kritzinger 1988:62). There were also indications that a reasonable number of ministers of this church attended that occasion, because there was a stage when they were excluded from the proceedings, due to their association with the Dutch Reformed Churches (Kritzinger 1988:69). Welile Mazamisa's writings indicate the influence of Black Consciousness and Black Theology. For instance this could be observed in one of his many articles such as, 'Re-reading the Bible in the Black church: Towards a hermeneutic of orality and literacy' (1995:1-26).

Ministers of this church participated in Black Theology and Black Consciousness debates. For instance Takatso Mofokeng<sup>25</sup> understands Black Consciousness in terms of a new Black subject, with a character of negation at its first manifestation. He further indicates that the victims of oppression and exploitation start to dissociate themselves from the whites and their value systems as their referential poles, as well as to end a reflexive and parasitical existence, wherein they reacted according to the stimuli of the masters (Mofokeng 1983:13). In his writings he was influenced by elements of Black Consciousness. For instance, this has been evident in his doctoral dissertation, when he indicated that he was motivated by the question of;

*how can faith in Jesus Christ empower black people who are involved in the struggle for their liberation (1983:X)?*

The situation as described above indicates that feelings of independence, self-reliance and

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25 Prof. Takatso Mofokeng is a Black Theologian and supporter of Black Consciousness philosophy. He wrote extensively on this subject.

generally, of doing things their own way as an autonomous church which were evident in Black Consciousness philosophy, influenced their missionary initiatives, as could be seen in their statement:

*Die sinode spreek hom in beginsel uit om so spoedig moontlik 'n eie sendingveld te begin in die binne- of buiteland (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl. sinode:113).*

Although ministers of this church, as mentioned above, were not directly linked to missionary activities of this church as missionaries themselves, they had an indirect influence in that direction. Missionary debates like other debates, from congregational to synodical levels of the NGKA, were partly influenced by supportive ministers of this philosophy. They were however vocal and active in synodical meetings and commissions which ultimately took decisions to send out missionaries. Once more, though those who emerged as missionaries of this church were not open adherents of the BC philosophy, their office as missionaries was moulded by the debates which included BC sympathisers.

Crafford (1973:46) was therefore correct in concluding that:

*Die NGKA kan nie bekostig om geheel en al afwysend te staan teenoor die swart bewuswording waarvan Swart Teologie 'n uitvloeisel is nie. Die ideale wat daarin leef, kom uit die hart van die swartman. Daarom sal die invloed van die beweging in die toekoms nie minder word nie maar groter. Indien die Bantoekeerk hom daarvan distansieer, is die gevaar groot dat hy sy eie mense kan verloor.*

In this way, feelings of BC were partly influential in the life of the NGKA. If the above description is correct, it means therefore that they were also instrumental in the initiatives that were taken by this church.

### 3.5.3 Theological Factors

#### 3.5.3.1 *Scriptural demands*

Rev. Rammala's theology of mission cannot be understood without the theological factors that influenced his church's missionary life. Apart from political factors, theological reasons also played a direct role in the missionary consciousness of the NGKA. This was seen from the fact that fulfilment of biblical demands has been a missionary motive for the NGKA. For instance, the report on prison ministry delivered at the meeting of the Synodical Evangelisation Commission on 1 March 1968, indicated several scriptural portions as the basis for their activities. The following scriptural texts are quoted; Isaiah 61:1, "He has sent me.....to proclaim liberty to the captives..." Other important Biblical evidences are Mat.26 and 27. Further additional texts also included Mat.25:36 and 43 (I was in prison and you never paid me a visit) as well as Acts 16:25, Paul sings in prison (Agenda,1968 S-Tvl. Synod:39).

The Church Order indicates that the function of the church officials of the local congregation is to make people aware of their responsibilities (Ephesians 4:11) and witness about Jesus Christ in the world (Acts 1:), (Church Order, S-Tvl. NGKA, Art. 60, Bepl. 75.1).

As in the case with the NGK (Kgatla 1988:59), the 'Great Commission' (Mat. 28:18-20) also played an important role in the missionary influence of the NGKA. The mission policy of this church as described, indicated the centrality of this mandate. This missionary motive is also seen in the themes of conferences that were organised by the mission commission of this church. For instance the theme of the conference organised by the mission commission at Orkney on 26 and 27 February 1980 was; '*Die Groot Gebod en die Groot opdrag.*' The importance of this was seen in the large attendance of no less than 105 NGKA ministers (Agenda, 1980 S-Tvl NGKA Synod:84).

### 3.5.3.2 *Influential individual Christians*

Apart from scriptural factors, certain individual Christians contributed in the missionary development of the NGKA. Rev. Willie Cilliers was one of those ministers who played an important role in the missionary life of this church. In a number of instances, he served in the same synodical mission commissions with Rev. Rammala. He was ordained as second secretary of the Commission for Evangelism on 2 February 1968 and he worked predominantly with the synod of Southern Transvaal (Agenda, 1968 S-Tvl Synod:27). During this synod, it was also recommended that Rev. Cilliers (to be joined by Rev. I.M. van der Merwe for N-TVL. synod) should on behalf of the General Synod, investigate possibilities for industrial mission and a request was made to all congregations for cooperation and to provide them with the necessary information.

During the General Synod of 1972 Rev. Willie Cilliers emerged as an active member of the Commission of Mission and Evangelism<sup>26</sup>. He was a member who served a longer period than others such as Revs. W.J. du Plessis, R.T.J. Lombard, H.J. Phiri, J.M. Molefe, S.P.E. Buti, M.T. Mabuza, W. Xaba and M.J.D. Jacobson who were all members of the commission prior to the second 1968 General Synod<sup>27</sup>. Rev. W. Cilliers also played a prominent role in the Botswana mission activities as a secretary of the liaison committee of the NG Churches in Botswana.

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26 During the 1972 general synod it appeared that the Commission for Evangelism delivered a joint report with that of Mission. Rev. Willie Cilliers also played a prominent role in this joint commission.

27 See report of the Synodical Commission for Evangelism in the agenda of the second synod of the NGKA S-TVL. of Potchestroom, 13 May 1968.

### 3.5.3.3 *Belydende Kring (BK)*

Feelings among members of this church that led to the establishment of the Belydende Kring (BK) in 1975 at Bloemfontein by 60 ministers including those of the former Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) may have influenced her life and missionary course in particular. This could be seen from its aims which include:

- a) *To proclaim the Kingship of Jesus Christ over all areas in church and state, and to witness for his Kingly rule.*
- b) *To achieve organic church unity and to express it practically in all areas of life.*
- c) *To take seriously the prophetic task of the church with regard to the oppressive structures and laws in our land and to take seriously the priestly task of the church with respect to the victims and fear-possessed oppressors who suffer as a result of unchristian policy and practice in the land.*
- d) *To promote evangelical liberation from unrighteousness, dehumanisation and lovelessness in church and state, and to work for true reconciliation among all people.*
- e) *To support ecumenical movements that promote the kingship of Christ on all levels of life (Kritzinger 1988:69-70).*

These aims of the BK are grounded on missionary convictions, directed at all people, including oppressive state authorities and perpetrators of injustices. They espoused a holistic approach which touched all areas of life, including victims of unrighteousness, dehumanisation and lovelessness. The message of organic church unity in all areas of life, as well as the support for ecumenical movements, was emphasized.

Some of these BK aims (such as *c* & *d*) are apparent in the missionary approach of the NGKA to the Botswana Bushmen:

*Vanwee die onherbergesame gebied, die armoede, hongersnood en siekte van die Boesmanbevolking, sowel as die volslae heidendom en die ongeletterdheid, sal die arbeid bomenslike eise stel aan die sendeling. Alleen die ware geloof en die vaste oortuiging van sy roeping, sal hom van moedeloosheid en vereensaming bewaar. Juis dit sal ook die grote eis aan die Kerk stel wat hom stuur, om hom met hulle gebede en liefde en gawes te dra (Agenda, 1968 S-Tvl NGKA synod:116)).*

Though members of the BK were not directly involved with the Botswana and Makhuvu missions, they were vocal at synodical meetings and committees, that ultimately sent out missionaries such as Rev. Rammala. For instance, in 1968 before BK could be established, Rev. S.G.S. Ntoane, who later became a strong BK member was the first elected black moderator of the NGKA (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:10). Other prominent BK members who occupied senior church offices were Rev. S.P.E. Buti (twice a moderator, S-TVL Synod), Dr. E. Tema (once a deputy moderator, S-TVL Synod). Rev. S.P.E. Buti also played a direct missionary role by his service in synodical missionary committees. For instance, he was a member of the Commission for Evangelism in 1968 (Agenda, 1968 S-Tvl NGKA Synod:27), a chairperson of the Commission for Mission and Evangelism of the Johannesburg presbytery in 1970 in which Rev. Rammala was a member (Agenda, 1970 NGKA Presbytery of Johannesburg) and of a synodical commission in 1980 (Agenda, 1980 S-Tvl NGKA Synod:71). In 1972 during the regional synod of S-TVL, he was directly involved as a member of the synodical Commission for Mission and Evangelism that made final arrangements and approval for sending a missionary (Rev. Rammala) to the Botswana Bushmen the following year (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:142).

## 3.6 PRIORITY AREAS OF THE NGKA MISSION

### 3.6.1 Makhuva

Rev. Rammala's missionary activities cannot be fully understood, without our knowledge of the NGKA's priority areas of mission. One of such areas is Makhuva. This area is in the Northern Province near Giyani, which is also not far from Mozambique. It covers an area of about 900 square kilometres (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:117). It was a former outpost of the congregation of Nkhensani but later became an independent congregation (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:20). Indications of early missionary initiatives by the NGKA in this area could be seen before 1965, in the labour of evangelist Chauke. The dominant language group at Makhuva was Tsonga. The NGKA mission work was reinforced on 30 July 1966 with the induction of Rev. L.M. Mashego as the first missionary of the NGKA in that area. At the time of the 1968 synod, there were already 34 members, 38 catechumens and 4 Sunday Schools with 333 children of the NGKA (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:92). Rev. L.M. Mashego was followed by Proponent<sup>28</sup> Mojapelo who was ordained on 21 November 1970 (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:117) and the latter was followed by evangelist P.D. Tembe as missionary in 1971 (Cronjè 1982:62). During 1982 evangelist M.B. Ritshuri was responsible for that area, with the help of a full time lay preacher.

During 1972, Makhuva had 13,500 adults who scattered over 13 residential areas which were 3 to 5 miles apart. There were two Higher Primary and 10 Lower Primary schools in that area. Other churches that were in operation in the same area, were Tsonga Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, Apostolic Faith Mission and a few African Initiated Churches (AICs). The NGKA had 40 members mostly women (as men were working

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28 Proponent is a title used in the Dutch Reformed Churches for a theological candidate who has completed his/her theological studies but who has not yet been ordained as a minister of a congregation.

elsewhere), 63 catechumens and 477 Sunday School children (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:118).

The Makhuva mission was initially financed by the entire NGKA but since 1978 financial responsibilities were carried by the synod Northern Transvaal alone. There were also personal monthly contributions by ministers and evangelists of this church in this regional synod. The close relationship between the residents of Makhuva and Mozambique, is one of the main factors behind the choice of this area as a missionary point for the NGKA (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:19).

### **3.6.2 Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique)**

Mozambique was another area, apart from Makhuvu, of missionary interest of the NGKA. Already during the second NGKA general synod of 1968, missionary interest in the Mozambicans was strong. Missionary activities were initiated to Mozambican migrant workers in the South African mines. Rev. P. Motau was requested to act as contact person, to compile a list of addresses and names of the Mozambican migrant workers and liaise with the Mission Commission (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:95). All these efforts were made with a purpose of a follow up in future. It was hoped that large statistics of converts, would convince the Mozambican authorities to permit them to do mission work in that country, since protestant missionaries were barred from operating there.

For this reason, at that stage, mission work in Mozambique was done by a 'remote control' i.e. by using the influence of members who were already converts. The NGKA focused attention on the Mozambicans working in South Africa. For instance, the NGKA presbytery of Kranspoort did mission work among the Mozambicans working in the district of Pafuri. Once more, NGKA congregations and presbyteries were encouraged to concentrate on Mozambican migrant workers in the mine hostels within their

boundaries (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:94). However, Rev. P.M. Tembe a former missionary at Makhuva was sent to Mozambique to continue the work there. He was instrumental in the establishment of a congregation in Maputo which was later joined with five other congregations along the Malawian border to form a new church called **INGREJA REFORMADA EM MOZAMBIQUE** (The Reformed Church in Mozambique) in 1977 (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:20). During this period, the church already had 3000 members (Agenda, 1980 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:81). Cronjè (1982:62) acknowledges that Mozambican mission work was a joint undertaking between the DRC and NGKA.

Regular visits were undertaken to Mozambique by church authorities to inspect the progress of their efforts. For instance, members of the Joint Mission Commission, the NGKA represented by the late Revs. E.T.S. Buti and M.C. Dippenaar as well as Rev. P. Mamabolo, accompanied by Dr. J.M. Cronjè and Rev. E.C.D. Bruwer paid a visit to Maputo during April 1978. Rev. Tembe together with Christian Council in Mozambique (CCM) acted as their host (Agenda 1980 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:81).

During 1968, Mozambique was reported have had 6,5 million citizens of which only 13% were christianised. From this number, 10% were members of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). About half a million of these people belonged to the Islamic faith while the rest 'do not belong to any faith'<sup>29</sup> (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:97). Judging from the above numbers it became apparent that there was a need for mission work to the Mozambicans.

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29 Though the report stated that they do not belong to any faith, its compilers should be understood in the context of being children of their own times. This is because today we accept that Africans had their traditional religions long before the appearance of Christianity.

### **3.6.3 Northern Swaziland**

Another area that attracted NGKA mission apart from Makhuva and Mozambique was Northern Swaziland. According to the synodical report<sup>1</sup>, the most attractive area was the point at the border of Swaziland and Mozambique. The Presbytery of Carolina investigated possibilities of starting their own mission work there. It was realized that there was already one member, a convert at the border near Nomahasha. It was hoped that Mozambican workers at the border would ultimately be used for a follow up work to other members in Mozambique (Agenda, 1968 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:100).

It was apparent that mission work in that area was a joint undertaking with the DRC, because Cronjè (1982:62) indicated that this church also started with such a work, to the extent that mission stations were founded at Phemba, Manzini and Nhlangano. Though no prominent missionary was sent to Swaziland by the NGKA, this area enjoyed particular attention in terms of missionary enterprise.

### **3.6.4 Botswana**

Mission work in Botswana by the NGKA was started in 1973 with Rev. Rammala as the first missionary. Concentration was on the Bushmen in the area called Kanagas, which lies in North Western Botswana, and this was the work which was started by the regional synod of Southern Transvaal (Cronjè 1982:62; NGKA in Tvl. 1982:21).

The synod of 1972 that constituted at Klerksdorp unanimously decided that mission work should be undertaken among the Bushmen of Botswana. It seems this was a follow up of an earlier decision that was taken during the 1968 synod of Potchefstroom (Minutes 1968 S-Tvl NGKA Synod:35). Many events took place between the 1968 synod and that of 1972, to support the NGKA's zeal for mission in Botswana among the

Bushmen. The example of this was that investigative tour of twenty ministers in 1970<sup>30</sup>. Among others they also visited the Bushmen mission station of the DRC in Namibia at Tsumkwe. At this station, their attention was drawn to the fact that there was a lack of attention to the spiritual needs of the Botswana Bushmen. The executive committee of the commission for Mission and Evangelism also undertook a fact-finding tour to North West Botswana during July 1971, and the following areas were visited; Ghanzi, Sehitwa, Oangwa next to the border between Botswana and Namibia and they also went Northwards towards Shahawe (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:113-114).

It was noted that the Ghanzi district had the largest number of Bushmen working on farms and that their language differed from that spoken in north western part of Botswana. It was also noted that the Reformed Church (Gereformeerde Kerk) has already started with mission work among the Bushmen of D'Kar. Mrs. H. Venter was working at Kanagas district as a teacher at the local school. It was also noted that at Ghanzi there was a school that stood empty, due to shortage of teachers (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:114-115). Because of these factors, the Synodical Commission recommended that mission work should be undertaken for the Botswana Bushmen.

The NGKA delegation to the proposed mission field, enjoyed support from all groups they met during their tour and they were assured of their cooperation, in case they would intend to start a mission project. This, among others, gave them enough reasons to start mission work among the Bushmen with the ordination of Rev. Rammala as a missionary in North western Botswana on 28 April 1973.

In chapter 4, this mission project would be explored and analysed in greater details, as I shall be looking at this church's missionary activities through the life of Rev. Rammala in Botswana.

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30 Rev. Rammala was part of this delegation.

### 3.7 OTHER AFRICAN MISSIONARIES OF THE NGKA

#### 3.7.1 Rev. L. M. Mashego

Rev. Rammala's missionary work may be better understood in the context of other missionaries, who like him, were products of the NGKA. These missionaries are in their chronological order and the first one is Rev. L.M. Mashego. Rev. Lukas Mariseng Mashego's (DRC Directory 1986:251) name is closely associated with missionary activities at Makhuva. It was on 30 July 1966 when he was ordained as a missionary at Makhuva. The date of his ordination, suggests that he was the first African missionary of the NGKA in that area. The work in Makhuva has been under the supervision of Rev. E.C.D. Bruwer. Rev. L.M. Mashego won prominence because he was the first African minister to be ordained for missionary responsibilities in that area.

Rev. L. Mashego reported twice a year to the Mission Commission about his mission work in that area. The end of Rev. Mashego's official missionary chapter came when he accepted a call to work as a minister in Swaziland during 1970 (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:117). It appears that, from Swaziland he came to the congregation of Nelspruit where he is still serving to date (DRC Directory 1996:272).

#### 3.7.2 Rev. M. P. Mojapelo

Another NGKA missionary besides Rev. L.M. Mashego was Rev. P.M. Mojapelo. Rev. Patrick Maseulmane Mojapelo's (Jaarboek NGK 1996:273) missionary identity was seen when he was ordained as a missionary to Makhuva after Rev. L.M. Mashego's acceptance of a call to Swaziland. Rev. Mojapelo was a trained minister of the NGKA but he was still a *proponent* when he was ordained on 21 November 1970, as a missionary to the said area (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:117).

Though there was tremendous progress made by former missionaries in this area, conditions at Makhuva were still difficult for smooth missionary work during his time. The transport system was very bad and outposts were far from each other. Most of the people were illiterate and men worked away from their families, while their income was low as well.

In the light of this situation, the synod decided that more workers would be needed for the work in Makhuva. As a result, R1 000 was put aside and a watertank donation for the missionary (Mojapelo) residence was made available (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod: 118).

Rev. P.M. Mojapelo's missionary activities were short-lived and ended when he accepted a call to the congregation of Hlatjane<sup>31</sup> towards the end of 1970. From the congregation of Hlatjane he accepted a call to that of Burger<sup>32</sup> in 1976 until he took study leave in 1993 (Jaarboek NGK 1996:273).

### **3.7.3 Rev. P.M. Tembe**

After Rev. P.M. Mojapelo, Rev. P.M. Tembe became NGKA missionary in Makhuva. He also took the Word of God to the Mozambican migrants in South African mining compounds, before being sent to Mozambique, to make a follow-up on the mission work he did among the Tsonga-speaking people at Makhuva. On 27 March 1971 he was ordained as the missionary of the NGKA in Mozambique (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:119). In Mozambique he started to work in the Limpopo Valley, near Vila Trigo de Morais, which lies in the district of Gaza in Southern Mozambique. Though he was

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31 Hlatjane is an NGKA congregation at Bochum in the Northern Province and it was founded in 1967.

32 Burger is also a name of the NGKA congregation at Burgersfort in the Mpumalanga Province and it was founded in 1926. DRC Maandagshoek Mission station falls within the boundaries of this congregation.

a Mozambican citizen, he initially worked in South Africa as explained and was sent back by the NGKA to work there as a missionary (Cronjè 1982:161).

He was instrumental in the establishment of the first reformed church in Mozambique called IGREJA REFORMADA EM MOZAMBIQUE (The Reformed Church in Mozambique). The new church was constituted in 1977 and by then had six congregations with one in Maputo and the others near the border of Malawi (NGKA in Tvl.1982:20). Another area of Rev. P.M. Tembe's missionary success in Mozambique was seen in the congregation of 100 communicant members he established in April 1978 (Cronjè 1982:161). There is an obvious difference when one compares these achievements with the earlier situation during 1972 synod, when there were only 11 communicant members and 49 catechumens with three outposts (Agenda, 1972 NGKA S-Tvl Synod:119). In 1981 Rev. L. Muhlenga who received his theological training at Rikatla near Maputo, was ordained and posted in Gaza, the area in which Rev. P.M. Tembe was initially working.

There appeared also to have been signs of accomplishment in the missionary tracts of Rev. P.M. Tembe in Makhuva (South Africa). For instance, buildings were constructed and a number of outposts were opened. The salary of Rev. P.M. Tembe came from the financial contribution made by the NGKA, donations as well as personal monthly contributions by ministers and evangelists of this church (NGKA in Tvl. 1982:19).

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

It became apparent in this study that the NGKA produced missionaries of its own. In the following chapter (4), I shall look at the missionary work of the NGKA in Botswana among the Bushmen, through the activities of Rev. Rammala, who is also a product of it.

There are however four points that differentiate Rev. Rammala from the other African missionaries already mentioned above, things that qualify him to deserve a special attention in this study. Firstly, he was the longest serving African missionary of this church to date, secondly he was the only African missionary who went out to the most distance area from his home country, thirdly, he went to people with a different culture from his own, and fourthly the work he did is still being continued by other missionaries and has not declined since his departure. As it shall be noticed in this study, Rev. Rammala's missionary work is important since it marks an important missionary chapter in the life of the NGKA.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MAKING OF A MISSIONARY.

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

As we have just been introduced to the missionary attitude of the NGKA in the previous chapter, it is important at this stage to look at factors that developed Rev. Rammala into a missionary. In pursuit of this objective, I am going to look at areas of his life such as; his early life, parental background, childhood and youth, a soldier, Stofberg Theological School, Lecturers (1957-1975), curriculum, his fellow Stofberg Theological Students (1957-1975), Political climate during his student days, and his early ministry (which includes an analysis of his sermons and his involvement in church structures).

#### 4.2 EARLY LIFE

##### 4.2.1 Parental background

Rev. Lucius Ramothhale Rammala was born in the N-TVL (presently called Northern Province). His parents were strong adherents to the Christian religion. His father Lekgogo Sesepe and mother Mmanoko Rea Motimele had strong roots in one of the villages surrounding Pietersburg called Ga-Molepo, named after their chief (Odendaal 1978:4). He is one of a family of seven children i.e. four brothers and three sisters. The African nature of the names of Rev. Rammala's parents suggests that they were born before the active missionary era commenced in the Ga-Molepo area since they did not have 'Christian names'<sup>33</sup>. Though the first settlement of missionaries within the Bapedi

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<sup>33</sup> In the corporate African culture (in this case, the Bapedi), names were frequently chosen from events occurring on the day or times of the child's birth. For instance, a child may be called Mapula (rain), Tlala

domain dates back as early as 1861 with the building of the Khalatlou mission station by the first missionaries (Alexander Merensky and Albert Nachtigal), this does not mean that people were immediately and automatically converted. The presence of missionaries and mission stations ensured that they were exposed to Christianity while grappling with their survival within the colonial society (Delius 1983:108 & 110).

As times went on, the village of Ga-Molepo did not escape the strong presence of the pietistic Berlin Missionary Society (Kgatla 1988:20) and the 'spiritual awakening' trend of the DRC (Odendaal 1978:4; Kgatla 1988:43) that affected most parts of the N-TVL region during the late nineteenth century. Though these missionaries witnessed to the Northern Transvalers under two denominational flags, their approach to African culture was more or less the same. They emphasized the difference between the saved and the not saved as well as the importance of respecting authority<sup>34</sup> (Kgatla 1988:20). Rev. Rammala (1996b:1) described the attitude of the missionaries then as being very strict. He reported how they prohibited many cultural practices of which 'lobola' was one. As a result, his father didn't pay lobola when he got married.

One of the missionaries who made an impact on the life of Rev. Rammala's parents was Stefanus Hofmeyr<sup>35</sup>. He was active at the Ga-Molepo village. The acceptance of the

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(famine), Tsie (locust) etc. Outstanding physical features on the part of the child also influenced the naming process. For instance, Ratsebe (ear) may be referring to a child born with large ears. Children were at times named after famous people or visitors like Sputnik or Korea (Mönnig 1967:103). It became apparent that names were in vernacular as has been seen above. It is possible to conclude from the above description that the so called 'Christian names' were a 'late comer' that was influenced by contact with missionaries and other Europeans.

34 By the authority during the nineteenth century they were referring to the Boer Republic of the Transvaal. For instance, in 1862 while Sekhukhune was preparing to attack Malebo he was warned by the missionary Merensky to first obtain permission from the 'boers' (Kgatla 1988:21).

35 Stefanus Hofmeyr was a DRC missionary in the Northern Transvaal during the late nineteenth century and had been working as a missionary long before the arrival of missionaries of other denominations such as Berlin Missionary Society and Swiss Mission in that region (Odendaal

Gospel by the community of Ga-Molepo, particularly the royal family, can be seen from the register of the first congregation that was established on 17 September 1887. It contained 12 people with the surname of Molepo out of a membership of 35 (Odendaal 1978:5). The fact that Frederick Molepo was an evangelist in the same area, further indicated the attitude of the royal house to the Christian message (Odendaal 1978:4). Though Rev. Rammala's parents did not form part of the first members of the congregation at Ga-Molepo, the Christian atmosphere in that area subsequently influenced the Rammala family to become Christians.

Missionary activities in the area, influenced the parents of Rev. Rammala in such a way that his father ended up going to a theological training institute to be trained first as an evangelist and later, as a minister. His father spent seventeen years in theological training (Rammala 1996b). His first congregation, in 1931, was Rosendal, from where he moved to various congregations with Rev. Rammala (as a child) being part of that 'ministerial nomadism'.

Rev. Rammala's background suggests a firm religious environment with a strong role model in his father who might have determined the subsequent course of his life. The pietistic Gospel that was received by his parents leads one to conclude that it had influence on their son. None of his six brothers and sisters ever thought of playing an active role in the life of the church, except for his brother James who was an elder at the NGKA congregation Moroka, Soweto (Rammala 1996b).

#### **4.2.2 Childhood and youth**

Rev. Rammala was born on 03 December 1922 while his father was being trained as a minister at the Stofberg Gedenkskool of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). He

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1978:1). He was also instrumental in the 'spiritual revivals' that took place at Goedgedacht during the last part of the nineteenth century (Kgatla 1988:43).

survived the typhoid epidemic of 1931 which killed many people and cattle alike (Rammala 1996b:2).

When he was a child his parents served as excellent role models for him. There were other people, like his primary school teacher Mr. Tshutshutshu, who influenced his moral life by advising him not to smoke or take any alcohol. Like his parents had done, Mr. Tshutshutshu advised him to concentrate on education. Rev. Rammala also attended Sunday school and other Christian organizations as a youth. He attended catechumen class while at Kilnerton and was confirmed as a full member of the NGKA. He assisted many times as a Sunday School teacher and also joined the preachers' class that was under the auspices of the Methodist Church.

Educationally, Rev. Rammala started school in January 1930 and attended numerous primary schools in areas where his father served as a minister. Having passed Standard Five in 1938, he did Standard 6 at Berlin Lutheran Mission School in Heidelberg. He thereafter trained as a school teacher at Kilnerton Training Institution.

#### **4.2.3 Conversion and military service**

Rev. Rammala volunteered for the service with the Union Defence Force towards the end of 1942. He was attached to the South African Red Cross as a treasure bearer. In 1944 he went to the Middle East where he served in hospitals as a nursing orderly (1996b).

Rev. Rammala's dramatic conversion experience occurred during his military service. He was in a regiment that was *en route* to the Middle East. He reported (1996b) that on a certain day the regiment was informed that the "torpedoes" (enemies) were on their way. This situation forced it to change direction and retreat. The attempt to flee the

"torpedoes"<sup>36</sup> took seven days. It was during this seven day voyage that Rev. Rammala was converted. His repentance resulted from the fear that should something adverse happen, he should know that he was in the care of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Rammala served in the military service until 1946 after the war. On his return, he was reappointed to his teaching service in Nigel. His calling to the ministry (in 1957) came while he was a teacher at Nigel. After the completion of his studies as a minister of religion at the end of 1960, he returned to the area where he had once served as a school teacher (1996b).

Rev. Rammala, even while he was a teacher, was surrounded by religious people. The superintendent of public schools at Nigel was Rev. Dr. Kriel (1996b). As a school teacher, he continued with his activities as a Sunday School teacher.

Rev. Rammala joined the theological school as a student minister in 1957. Before this, he had a long internal struggle between that of serving the Lord in his profession as a teacher and that of serving him as a full-time pastor

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36 It is impossible to avoid torpedoes for seven days because they are fired by a ship or submarine and are powerful and dangerous to can sink the ship when they hit it. Rev. Rammala should have probably meant sea mines.

### 4.3 STOFBERG THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL<sup>37</sup>

#### 4.3.1 Lecturers (1957-1975)

The first lecturers at Stofberg Theological School to shape the theological life of Rev. Rammala were Revs. H.M. Hofmeyr (rector), W.M. Brits (Practical Theological subjects), A.S. van Niekerk (New Testament subjects) and Dr. J.A. van Wyk (Dogmatical courses). Other lecturers who joined the personnel during the period mentioned above were Prof. H.P. Wolmarans (Old Testament), Rev. de Vos (Practical Theological subject), Rev. J.D. Herholdt (New Testament), Rev. J.R. du Plessis, Rev. D.J. Booysen (Old Testament), Dr. P. Bolink (Church History and Missiology), Rev. P.P.A. Kotze (New Testament), Dr.F.S.Malan (New Testament), DR.G.J.Meiring (Church History and Missiology) and Dr. G. van der Merwe (Church History and Missiology) (Van Niekerk & v.d. Merwe 1977:4ff).

As can be observed from the above information, the academic staff was white, Afrikaner male dominated. For the whole of the period under review, there was no appointment of any person from the black community. This imbalanced position was justified by the

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<sup>37</sup> Stofberg-Gedenkskool was founded in 1908 near Vereeniging under the control of the DRC. In 1959 the school closed down near Vereeniging, and split up; one part going to Witsieshoek and one part coming to Turfloop. A Stofberg Theological school also opened at Dingaanstad and one at Decoligny" (Van Niekerk 1989:77). The objective with this school was among others, to train ministers of the DRCA. In 1958 when this school celebrated the 50th year of existence, it was reported that the whole church has only 44 black ministers and 400 evangelists (Van Niekerk 1989:76). In 1960 the Turfloop division started with 29 student ministers and 64 students evangelists and 26 in the catechumen class, a total of 119 students. The school was called Stofberg Theological Seminary in honour of Rev. P.B.J. Stofberg who was a DRC missionary at Mochudi in Botswana for having advocated for the building of a theological school (Cronjè 1982:72; van Niekerk & v.d.Merwe 1977:4). Cooperation was initiated among all Reformed churches of Afrikaans tradition for a joint training of black students at the Theological faculty of the University of the North. At the ultimate end, the N.G. Church and the Ned. Herv. Church cooperated in this regard but the Gereformeerde Church (Dopper) declined (van Niekerk & v.d.Merwe 1977:4).

reasoning that there were no qualified candidates from the black communities and that the NGKA would be unable to finance such a position (van Niekerk & van der Merwe 1977:5-6). Considerations concerning the appointment of black lecturers were only initiated as recently as 1989 (Lesedi 1989:3).

One of the lecturers who made a strong impression on Rev. Rammala was Prof. J.A. van Wyk (Rammala 1996). For this reason, his curriculum vitae becomes important in our understanding of factors that shaped Rev. Rammala's theological and missiological directions. Dr. J.A. van Wyk studied at the University of Pretoria and was licensed as a DRC minister in 1945. He worked temporarily at the Volksrust congregation before going to Basel to further his studies. In 1950 he obtained his doctoral degree under Karl Barth. The title of his thesis was *Die Möglichkeit der Theologie by Friedrich Gogarten*. On his return to South Africa, he became a student chaplain in Johannesburg. In 1952 he was appointed as a lecturer at Stofberg-Gedenkskool. When the school was divided into four he went to Turfloop (van Niekerk & v.d.Merwe 1977:1).

Prof. J.A. van Wyk participated in most church structures. In 1977 he celebrated his 25th anniversary as a lecturer of African ministers and evangelists of the NGKA. His relation with the church is described as follows:

*Die Kerk was vir hom altyd belangrik en hoewel hy meermale die geleentheid gehad het, wou hy nooit 'n pos wat buite kerklike verband was, aanvaar nie. Sy hele arbeid en belangstelling was aan die Kerk gebind (Stofberg Teologiese Studies, Turfloop 1977:1).*

Dr. van Wyk's missiological position is clarified by referring to his publications. For instance, in his work entitled *Die Apostolaat van die Kerk* (1958) he wrote:

*Die apostolaat van die Kerk is die uitsending van die Kerk deur Christus in die*

*wereld in. Hierdie uitsending het groot betekenis nie alleen vir die aktiewe sendingwerk van die Kerk self nie, maar ook vir die interne lewe van die Kerk, vir die vorm van die Kerk, die ampte, die sakramente, die prediking. Alles neem aan daardie sending deel (:5).*

Dr. Van Wyk was to a certain extent influenced by A.A. van Ruler and Kraemer. As a result of this he regards the church as being part of a huge world religious movement. In the light of this, every part of the church, including offices, liturgy and church order, has a special missionary meaning. The type of mission he holds, is explained as being more than the conversion of nonbelievers but also means christianisation of culture, witness to the state, etc (van Wyk 1958:7).

As this publication was made during the student days of Rev. Rammala, it is apparent that the author might have shared his missiological convictions with Rev. Rammala as one of his students.

#### **4.3.2 The Stofberg Curriculum (from Vereeniging to Turfloop)**

A discussion of the theological curriculum of the NGKA exposes us to the type of theological 'food' that was prepared for ministers of this church including Rev. Rammala. Apart from this, it also helps us to ascertain some missiological aspects of the curriculum itself.

The need for a better theological education for Africans by the DRC was felt as early as during the times of the old Stofberg-Gedenkskool. Already in 1951 at the staff meeting held on 8 March, the need for a Diploma in Theology for ministers, as well as possibilities for further education was discussed. It was accepted in principle that the academic standard for blacks should if possible not be inferior to that of their white counterparts in the DRC (van Wyk 1977:30). It seems that the DRC viewed education

and training of Blacks as a very important necessity though they believed that this was in the final instance, the responsibility of the state (Kgatla 1988:95ff.).

The curriculum for DRC theological schools among black communities has never been consistent, especially during the early years of the existence of the schools. This situation was greatly affected by the struggle for a university training and recognition of qualifications. As early as 1951, the situation at Stofberg-Gedenkskool indicated this trend. Negotiations were initiated with tertiary institutions such as the then College Ya Bana Ba Afrika<sup>38</sup> as well as Unisa. Before this period, courses at Stofberg-Gedenkskool were grouped into diaconological and missiological (Odendaal 1980:242). Already in 1945, the ministry course extended over a period of four years. The first year was preparatory, while the last three were for direct theological training.

The Turfloop branch of Stofberg Theological school offered courses in three divisions i.e. for minister, evangelists and catechists. The school opened with four lecturers viz; Revs. H.M. Hofmeyr (rector), W.M. Brits, A.S. van Niekerk and Dr. J.A. van Wyk. It soon became apparent that the workload was too heavy for the existing number of personnel and it became necessary to employ additional ones. The courses were divided into five groups and the four lecturers shared the work of training the catechists and the evangelists. The following courses were offered: Old Testament, New Testament, Practical Theology, Church History (grouped with Science of Mission) and Dogmatics. Lecturers at the Turfloop branch of the theological school were not offering courses

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38 College Ya Bana ba Afrika was a small institution for higher education meant for Africans, situated in a black township in Pretoria. This institution was organised by church people and some educationists. Authorities at the Stofberg-Gedenkskool thought that this institution would serve as a possible solution to the problem of university education and the recognition of qualifications. Negotiations in this direction started as early as 1951 when a small commission made up of Rev. A.S. van Niekerk and Dr. J.A. van Wyk was constituted to investigate the matter. During 1952 the commission accompanied by Rev. A.A. Odendaal undertook a journey to Pretoria with a memorandum of five and half pages to present before the authorities of College Ya Bana Ba Afrika (van Wyk 1977:30-31).

according to their fields of specialisation. This trend changed with their closer relationship with the University of the North (van Niekerk & v.d.Merwe 1977:5-6)<sup>39</sup>.

The situation of Turfloop branch of Stofberg-Gedenkskool which was housed next to the University, brought with it some changes to the curriculum. For instance, Sociology was added as a first year course for student ministers. As the University offered courses in Greek and Hebrew, student ministers had an opportunity to study them, and attended courses at the University campus (van Niekerk & v.d.Merwe 1977:5-6).

Up until 1975 the admission requirements for ministers' courses was one of the following; Matric or Senior Certificate; Junior Certificate plus three years evangelist training; and Junior Certificate plus a Teacher's Diploma. Until 1971 the duration of a minister's course was four years, but in 1972 it was extended to five years. From 1976, only Matric which satisfied the admission requirements of the University became the requirement for ministers' training. Thereafter students could also obtain theological degrees such as B.Th. & B.D. from the University. Those with Greek 2 Hebrew 2 and Special Latin or basic German or Greek 3 or Hebrew 3 could be admitted to the B.D. course and were thus prepared for a six year training programme (Malan 1977:15).

The above situation introduced us to the curriculum that prepared Rev. Rammala and other ministers of his church. He was exposed to diaconological and missiological disciplines as well as other theological subjects. Judging from the admission requirements to the course of ministry that was effective until 1975, Rev. Rammala was admitted on the basis of his Junior certificate and Teachers' Diploma qualifications.

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39 Even as early as 1952 Stofberg-Gedenkskool, which provided the basis for the other four branches of theological training in 1959, appointed lecturers in the same way. Specialisation in a specific field was not considered when a lecturer was appointed (Odendaal 1980:242).

### 4.3.3 Stofberg Theological Students

Because Rev. Rammala completed his studies at the Stofberg Theological school of Turfloop, it is important to look at the developments concerning students over the years at this school. The contributions by Rev. Rammala's educational peer group (a class of the 1960s) inform us that he was from a class of able students who made tremendous inroads into the life of their church. When the theological school of Stofberg was instituted at Turfloop in 1960, it had 23 student ministers including Rev. Rammala from Stofberg-Gedenkskool. The first student ministers to complete their studies and to be licensed in Turfloop at the end of 1960 were Revs. J.R. Diphoko and Rev. Rammala.

In 1961 two other student ministers completed their studies viz; Revs. E.T. Marokana and E.S. Ramaipadi. Rev. Marokana is the first Turfloop student to have obtained a B.A. degree from Unisa. His first two congregations were Standerton and Brakpan respectively. The following year saw the licensing of ten more student ministers, most of whom furthered their studies thereafter. For instance, Rev. L.R.L. Ntoane enrolled for a B.A. degree in 1965. In 1973, he went to study at the Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen, the Netherlands. Rev. E.M. Mataboge of Dobsonville spent a year in Europe to further his studies where he concentrated on the church and industrial mission. Rev. M.S. Pitikoe of Tladi has also been abroad for further studies where he obtained a doctoral degree. Rev. E.M. Tema went overseas for study purposes where he obtained an M.A. (Theology) degree in the U.S.A in 1976 (Malan 1977:15-16).

Over a period of 17 years (1960-1976) 107 students completed their studies for the NGKA ministry at Turfloop. These ministers served their church in different fields for instance; in the Northern Transvaal synod, 43 worked in the congregations of this synod, 3 in the congregations of Botswana, 1 as missionary in Botswana, 1 in a congregation in Swaziland, 1 as missionary in Mozambique and 1 as youth minister of the synod. The synod of the Southern Transvaal had 43 ministers working in the congregations, 1 as

chaplain in the Baragwanath hospital, 1 as chaplain at Leeukop rehabilitation centre and 1 as missionary among the Basarwa in Botswana. Other synods revealed the following statistics in the distribution of ministers; 2 in the regional synod of Phororo, 2 in the regional synod of the Orange Free State<sup>40</sup>, 1 in the regional synod of Nataf<sup>41</sup>, 1 in the regional synod of the Cape, 2 were studying overseas, 4 had passed away and two had abandoned the service (Malan 1977:16-18).

Additional talents accorded to some of the students of this generation included the following: Revs. O.M. Malete and M.P. Moloji served as church music adjudicators and choir conductors for a long time. Rev. M.P. Mabotja served as chairperson of the organisation for ministers and evangelists (KBB) in the Transvaal. Rev. L.K. Mabusela was the first student chaplain at Turfloop and worked under the synods of southern and northern Transvaal. Rev. T.A. Mofokeng who obtained a B.A. degree from Unisa, was a correspondent to a Pretoria daily newspaper, the 'Hoofstad' (Malan 1977:18).

Judging from the contributions of this generation of able students, it became apparent that this generation was able to produce able missionaries like Rev. Rammala. It is clear from the enormous contributions of his peers that Rev. Rammala belonged to a hard working generation of students who became proud pillars of their church.

#### **4.3.4 Political climate during student days of Rev. Rammala**

The political climate in South Africa during the student days (1957-1960) of Rev. Rammala carries with it dramatic incidents which might in one way or the other, have

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40 The synod was named after the province which is presently referred to as the Free State according to the new provincial arrangements of a democratic South Africa.

41 This synod has been named after the province which is today known as called Kwa Zulu-Natal.

influenced his life.

When Rev. Rammala enrolled at Stofberg-Gedenkskool in 1957, the leader of South Africa was Mr. J.G. Strijdom, who succeeded Prime Minister D.F. Malan in 1954, the latter was the founder member of the Afrikaner Broederbond (de Saintonge 1989:48). Mr. Strijdom's policy could be attributed to the fact that he wanted to "force as rigorous a separation as possible between blacks and whites in every sphere or segment of life" (Ngcokovane 1989:112). Strijdom was elected with a purpose by the NP because his policy as has been seen above, meant that his commitment to white domination was unquestionable. The NP knew that by electing him, they were electing a person "who was committed to the *Herrenvolk*<sup>42</sup> idea, one which believed that the whites must stand their ground and must remain *Baas* in South Africa" (Ngcokovane 1989:113).

These efforts of keeping South Africa a 'white man's country' has never been received without resistance by the oppressed communities. For instance the 1950's, especially the mid-1950s, can be described as a period during which there were tremendous waves of protest which affected every section of the South African population, except those who were directly under the influence of the NP (Ngcokovane 1989:114). The uniqueness of this decay in terms of suppression was also observed by de Gruchy (1986:59) who states that "by the mid-50s, apartheid legislation was being introduced and implemented at full speed as Act after Act was introduced, and Bill after Bill was adopted".

Another South African leader who ruled during the student days of Rev. Rammala was Dr. H.F. Verwoerd who took over from Mr. J.G. Strijdom in 1958 and ended with his

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42 The concept of a *Herrenvolk* was adopted from the Germans by the Afrikaners. The Afrikaners did not use this term, but the idea of a superior race was well known amongst them. The Nazis believed that they were a chosen people ordained by God for a special purpose. 'They were a *Herrenrasse*, the master race. Hitler appealed to the Germans to carry out the mission appointed for them by the Creator of the Universe' (de Saintonge 1989:48).

assassination in 1966. Dramatic incidents of resistance who shook the country took place during the reign of Dr. H.F. Verwoerd. For instance, the PAC was founded in April 1959 (Motlhabi 1985:75). During the year that followed (1960), Africans led by the PAC, protested against the pass laws by organizing a march in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960. This protest resulted in the police shooting at protestors, killing 69 and injuring 186. As a result of this incident, a state of emergency was declared and leaders of the ANC and PAC that included Albert Luthuli, Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe were arrested and their organizations banned (de Gruchy 1986:62-63).

The above mentioned events took place during the final year (1960) of Rev. Rammala's studies at Stofberg Theological school of Turfloop. The Sharpeville massacre (1960) happened less than 100 kms from the ruins of Stofberg-Gedenkskool before it was moved to Turfloop in 1959. There is little doubt that this massacre affected every person locally as well as abroad. This was well observed by de Gruchy (1986:62) who wrote that; "the whole country was rudely awakened by Sharpeville".

The violent character of South African state authorities at the time, seem to have bypassed Rev. Rammala's class without much effect. Rev. Rammala occupied student leadership positions, but the students never seemed to show any protest against the political events that overwhelmed the country in which their school stood. Du Plessis (in Kgatla 1988:52) noted that the type of food they ate challenged immediate attention to political events because their daily diet was "pap" whereas meat was served once in a while. The attitude of obedience could also be attributed to parental influence mentioned earlier which followed pietistic Gospel of the Berlin Missionary Society which also emphasized respect for state authority (Kgatla 1988:20). Another fact that needs to be considered is that some students were married, with family responsibilities, and some were above the normal tertiary school age, for instance, there were those "who were over fifty years of age" (Kgatla 1988:52).

## **4.4 REV. RAMMALA'S EARLY MINISTRY**

### **4.4.1 Nigel**

Rev. Rammala's first congregation was in Nigel. He served there until the end of 1965 (Malan 1977:15). Nigel was not a foreign place to him because after qualifying as a school teacher in 1941, he taught at Nigel lower primary school commencing on 06 January 1942 (1996a). It appears that while he was a teacher in Nigel, he was exposed to religious people because a superintendent of public schools in the area was Rev.,Dr. Kriel. While working in Nigel as a school teacher, Rev. Rammala worked closely with Rev.,Dr.Kriel on religious activities assisting him as a Sunday school teacher (1996b).

Professionally, the congregation of Nigel knew Rev. Rammala as both a school teacher and a minister of religion. Before becoming a minister, he served there as a teacher for 14 years, reaffirming that he was one of them.

### **4.4.2 Germiston**

In January 1966 Rev. Rammala accepted a call to serve the congregation of Germiston where he was praised by Rev. F.S. Malan as a 'true pastor' (1977:15). While a minister in Germiston, in 1966 he and Rev. E.M. Tema undertook a study tour through England and the Netherlands during which they visited mission centres and studied youth work projects (Malan 1977:16).

While in Germiston he came into close contact with Rev. W. Cilliers as well as former parliament minister, Dr. Piet Koornhof, both of whom had some influence on his life.

As for Rev. W. Cilliers, they served together in various missionary commissions of the NGKA. For instance, they both served in the Synodical Commission for Mission and Evangelism of the Southern Transvaal synod (Agenda, 1972:142). During the synod of 1968,

while Rev. W. Cilliers was a member of the Synodical Evangelisation Commission, Rev. Rammala was a member of the Joint Mission Commission. They also worked hand in hand with the commission for Mission and Evangelism of the presbytery of Johannesburg in 1970 (Presbytery Report, 1970).

Rev. W. Cilliers was appointed on 2 February 1967 as the secretary for the Synodical Evangelisation Commission (Agenda, S-Tvl. synod 1968:27). From then onwards, he became involved in Mission and Evangelism commissions of the synod of S-TVL. Rev. W. Cilliers was also a church elder at the Germiston congregation where Rev. Rammala was a minister. This partnership created, not only a platform for personal friendship between the two, but also a mutual influence on missionary matters. For instance, Rev. W. Cilliers' visits to the family of Rev. Rammala were regular before the latter became a missionary in Botswana in 1973 (Rammala family visitors' record book).

#### **4.4.3 Involvement in church structures**

Before undertaking missionary work in Botswana, Rev. Rammala served his church in various ways which prepared him for his work as a missionary. For instance, he served in the synodical Joint Mission Commission of the Northern and S-TVL Synods as a representative of the S-TVL Synod (Agenda, S-Tvl Synod 1968:91). His interest in mission was also seen when he conducted research in the congregations of the Witwatersrand, Vereeniging and Evander to investigate the extent of their participation in mission work to the Mozambican immigrant mine workers in these areas (Agenda, S-Tvl. synod 1968:98).

He also served on the commission for the representatives of the local governing body of Stofberg Theological School at Turfloop (Agenda, S-Tvl. Synod 1968:156).

In the presbytery of Johannesburg, Rev. Rammala was the secretary of the governing body of the Christian Youth Movement (Agenda, S-Tvl. Synod 1972:80) and was also active in the missionary duties of the presbytery (Presbytery Report 1970). He also served as a member of

the Synodical Commission for Mission and Evangelism in the synod of S-TVL (Agenda, S-Tvl.Synod 1972:142). Other sources reveal that he was in fact chairperson of this commission (NGKA 50 Years 1982:21). In addition, he was among the twenty ministers and evangelists who undertook a study tour to Namibia and Botswana during July 1970 to investigate possibilities for mission work there (Agenda, S-Tvl.Synod 1972:113). Rev. Rammala together with Rev. E.T. Marokana, were the first black members of the Examination Commission of Stofberg Theological School at Turfloop (Malan 1977:16).

The above positions that he occupied within the ranks of his church prepared him for his role as a missionary in Botswana. He served more on mission related commissions than on other commissions of the NGKA. The fact that he did not elect himself into those positions but was elected by democratic means, indicates the fact that other members of this church noticed his missionary potential and interest. The research he conducted among congregations of the Witwatersrand, etc, on their missionary involvement, provides clear evidence of his commitment to missionary work.

#### **4.4.4 Some selected pre-Botswana sermons**

A look at some of Rev. Rammala's sermons exposes us to their missionary nature even before he became a missionary among the Bushmen of Botswana. Three of his sermons have therefore been selected. The selection was motivated by three factors viz; that they were preached at different occasions for instance, one at a funeral and one at a normal Sunday church service while another one was preached in the presence of visitors from the Netherlands. Secondly, these sermons were preached in three different languages, i.e one in Afrikaans, the second one in Zulu and the third one in Sesotho. Thirdly, these sermons contain a stronger missionary element than other sermons of his. The three sermons were based on the following Scriptural texts: John 2:1-11, Isaiah 61:1-11, Genesis 5:21-27).

#### 4.4.5 Missiological analysis of Rev. Rammala's pre-Botswana sermons

The sermons will be analysed with the assistance of the adopted analytic grid (Saayman 1992; cf. 1.2.3.) in terms of *methods* and *motives* explained earlier.

##### 4.4.5.1 *Methods*

###### a) Agents of mission

Rev. Rammala's sermons suggest that all believers are agents of God's mission. In the application of his sermon on John 2:1-11, the inclusive word '*ons*' (we) appears frequently. This, according to his context of audience refers to fellow Christians (in which he included himself) as agents of mission<sup>43</sup>. While the Hollanders are being appreciated for having brought the Gospel message to the "donker Afrika", we also learn that God blesses everyone who carries out this mandate further (Append.1).

In the funeral sermon taken from Genesis 5:21-27, Rev. Rammala continues to emphasise the inclusive nature of the agents of mission by applying the word '*le rona*' (we) when coming to the execution of the Christian mission in the application part of his sermon. At certain instances, he is more specific by pointing at parents as transmitters of the Christian Gospel to their children just as Enoch did. Individual Christians are also charged with the Christian task. For instance, Enoch "testified about God to the world that was going astray, and became a bright light". The deceased, Mr. Hosea Matlala was successful as a Christian example by walking with Jesus throughout his life (Append.3).

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43 By "inclusive" I refer to a situation in which Rev. Rammala uses inclusive terms such as *we*, *rona*, or *ons*. These words are inclusive in a sense that they also include him in what he is saying. In other words, while he is a preacher, he also identifies himself as being part of the congregation to which he is preaching.

The inclusive nature of the agents still feature in his sermon on Isaiah 61:1-11. For instance, the term; '*nathi*' (even us/we) features prominently. He then closes his sermon with an individual task; "Are *you* prepared to convey to others this Good News?" (Append.2).

It is not surprising therefore that the inclusive terms dominated the sermons of Rev. Rammala. This could further be seen from the fact that they can still summarily be indicated as follows; from the sermon on John 2:1-11 the inclusive term, '*ons*' (we) appears 43 times and in the English text from the extracts on the sermons from Isaiah 61:1-11 terms such as '*we*', '*us*' (*nathi/le rona*) collectively appear ten times while from the extract on Genesis 5:21-27 these terms appear sixteen times.

This inclusive nature on the question of agents for mission appears to be one of the characteristics of most preachers. For instance, Boesak (1979:22-30) also employs the above forms of inclusive terms twelve times in his sermon taken from John 18:37, 19:14-15) entitled 'Jesus and Pilate'. On the other hand, veteran preacher Papineau<sup>44</sup> (1992:75-78) employs these terms 43 times as opposed to the twenty three times of exclusive terms such as '*I*', '*me*', and '*my*' on his sermon taken from Genesis 22:1-18 and entitled 'Voice of God'.

#### b) Word (Preaching)

Rev. Rammala's sermons suggest that he saw preaching as part of a missionary task. For instance, he stressed the point of witness by every Christian; "moet ons as getuies van die Here Jesus Christus getuig sonder rus" (append. 1). He also attached mission to education

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44 Andre Papineau is a member of the Salvatoran community and assistant professor of pastoral studies at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Franklin, Wisconsin. He has been teaching homiletics there since 1979. He has advanced degrees in drama and theology and he gives presentations, lectures and workshops on preaching and story-telling for teachers, clergy and the general public across the country (Papineau 1992: cover page). He is not from a reformed tradition like Rev. Rammala, but his wealth of experience in the field of preaching is important. Additional sermon examples of a reformed traditional background could be seen in Masuku (1998d:1-21).

(Western education), medicine etc. Rev. Rammala also indicated cultural differences on mission between Europe and Africa; "die Afrikaan kan nie iets volgens Westersemaniere volg nie". He regards Europe as a mission sending country and Africa as a recipient or a mission field to which he refers as "donker Afrika" or part of what he refers to as "heidene lande" (Append.1).

Mission is God's command and God sent Jesus to the world to save it. As a result of this he writes; "Die Here seen ons na ons sy bevel uitgedra het". This command is' "om ons beker van geloof te gaan volmaak tot dit oorvloei" (Append.1).

In another sermon, Rev. Rammala also indicates the point of sending by saying that; "Jesus sends us as well to carry this Good News to other people" (Append.2). He further asks; "Are you prepared to carry this Good News to other people that Jesus Christ as the liberator has arrived?" The emphasis on making people *see their sins* also features in his sermon (Append.2).

Rev. Rammala's presentation of the Word indicates that it should be communicated as intelligibly as possible. The fact that he wrote these three sermons in three different languages, indicates the importance of learning the languages of 'objects' which is one of the hallmarks of the kerygmatic model and missionaries.

Most popular terms in his sermons are God, Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ, Lord Jesus Christ, Evangelism and Holy Spirit. Statistically, from the extract sermons above, the term *God* appears 19 times, *Jesus* and *Christ* separately, each 13 times, *Jesus Christ* combined 12, *Lord Jesus Christ* combined 10, *evangelion* 7 and *Holy Spirit* 4 times. Other terms that feature prominently are *Satan*, *heathens*, and *witnesses*.

If Rev. Rammala's sermons revolve around the name 'God', it means therefore that they were theocentric. The Christocentric character assumes the second position because the names

Jesus and Christ, each separately obtained equal numbers. If Rev. Rammala's sermons revolved around the name 'God' in the light of his sermon extracted and quoted in this study, it means that he followed the same approach as Henry (1894:31-46) who preached almost a century ago. On his sermon which was entitled 'Waiting for Christ' the name 'God' is counted seven times as opposed to Jesus which only appears four times. One would expect that the sermon that is directly based on the theme around Christ could be dominated by His name.

c) Healing ministry

Like in kerygmatic model (cf. 1.3.2), healing ministry seems to be in the background and is overshadowed by the centrality of the Word. Rev. Rammala seems to shift the healing responsibility to the medical and health services. He appreciates the Europeans for having brought along, medical services and institutions to what he calls the "donker Afrika" (Append.1)

Despite the appreciation of the Western contribution to medical technology in Africa, Africans were already experts in this field as they were already imparting knowledge on different types of vocations including medicine (Kudadjie 1996:180).

More particularly, Rev. Rammala's ancestors, the Bapedi people, had knowledge of treatment of diseases such as those related to blood disorders, infertility in women, snake bites and scorpion-stings, stomach-aches, etc, long before the arrival of the Europeans (Mönnig 1967:89-90). However, from the background of Rev. Rammala's sermons on Western medication, healing ministry appears to be an aid to mission as had been seen from his appreciation to Europeans for having brought this "light" to Africa (Append.1).

d) Teaching

Rev. Rammala's sermons suggest the importance he attaches to education. In one of his

sermons (John 2:1-11), he thanks the Westerners for having brought education to Africa through the missionaries (Append.1).

His participation in school committees (Moshapalo 1996) suggests the value he attaches to education. His concern with education should also be understood within the context in which he found himself as a school teacher before becoming a minister. Another factor in this regard was his parents and teacher's influence as seen in 4.2.2 above.

It is difficult to arrive at conclusions about Rev. Rammala's attitude towards the contribution of Africans to education. This is based on the understanding that before the arrival of Europeans on continent, Africans had knowledge of learning and of teaching others and of imparting knowledge and skills in most career directions. As a result they acquired skills such as farming, fishing, etc, (Kudadjie 1996:180).

e) Worship

The sermons do not contain information on the role of Christian worship in the outreach of a congregation.

f) Interaction with authorities

Rev. Rammala's attitude to state authorities is not revealed clearly in his three sermons, since they are directed at black NGKA members who were not politically empowered during the 1960s.

g) Contextualisation

Rev. Rammala's sermons were to a certain extent contextual. This can also be seen from his selection of the Biblical texts that correspond with the situation and conditions of the people.

For instance, his funeral text on Genesis 5: 21-27 with a text verse on Genesis 5:24, is relevant for the funeral of a person like the deceased who was being compared with Enoch, a person who walked with the Lord and was taken away by God. From this sermon one can gather a message of condolence from the fact that the deceased had walked in fellowship with the Lord and for this reason people should not weep for him since God has prepared his place (Append.3).

The other two sermons were preached in a context where there was lack of missionary initiatives by Christians and they were encouraged to act as missionaries. The scriptural texts of these sermons (Isaiah 61:1-11 & John 2:1-11) are relevant for this purpose (Append.1 & 2).

The issue of taking the context into account in a sermon has been recognized by other preachers outside the reformed and protestant tradition. For instance; Papineau (1992:132) when preaching during a Good Friday service took his text from Mt. 26:14-27:66. This was a relevant text for the occasion.

On the other hand, if Maimela (1987:123) is correct in saying that:

*the situation has become so problematic in places such as South Africa, that it has become necessary and urgent for the church to take stock of itself and to re-think what its role, its power and divinely instituted office of preaching are in response to the state that arrogates to itself the role to care for its citizens in body and soul and consequently telling the church what and what not to preach.*

Then in a sense, Rev. Rammala's three sermons analyse the context in a rather narrow way, not addressing the larger economic, social and political context, but only the personal and family contexts of the members sitting in front of him.

Lamenting the irrelevant nature of some South African sermons in the face of injustices, Boesak (1979:8) warns:

*Relevant preaching cannot be the kind of preaching that has become the tradition in South Africa: a pietistic, pie-in-the-sky-when-you-die theology that passes for 'Gospel truth'. This kind of preaching turns Christians into 'displaced persons' because it continually transports them into the hereafter and has absolutely no answers for the here and now.*

Not only Rev. Rammala, but a large number of people and church leaders adopted an "apolitical" stance in SA during the apartheid era. For instance, the English churches in SA were at one stage blamed for lacking relevance in the face of the sufferings and dehumanizing conditions of the black majority (Ngcokovane 1984:6-7).

#### h) Development

Rev. Rammala valued the notion of development. His sermons indicate that he appreciated Western civilization. For instance, he praised Western missionaries for introducing Western education and civilization to Africa (cf. Append.1).

The reason for Rev. Rammala's praise for Western culture and civilization instead of his African culture in the area of civilization may be drawn from several factors including the following; firstly, he might not have had access to the information that "before the Europeans arrived in Africa, Africans had been learning and training and imparting knowledge and skills in all kinds of vocations, farming, fishing, herbal medicine, priesthood etc." (Kudadjie 1996:180). Secondly, he might be sympathizing with those who denigrate the African culture by showing the way in which it lags behind the Western culture (Maluleke 1996:20) or thirdly, he might be referring to the section of Western culture that introduced new cultural items which the African culture did not have such as "the Western type of formal schooling

i.e classroom education" (Kudadjie 1996:180).

#### 4.4.5.2 *Motives*

As I have been examining the understanding of missionary methods revealed in these three sermons of Rev. Rammala, I now turn to his motives. I understand methods to mean action and motives to mean reflection (Kritzinger 1995:380). For this reason, I am going to analyse the way Rev. Rammala reflected on certain missiological issues.

##### a) Use of the Bible

John 2:1-11 as well as Isaiah 61:1-11 appear to be amongst the most important biblical texts used for mission. His text verse from the former is 2:7 while from the latter is 61:1. Additional texts are quoted in the process for instance, in the case of his sermon on John 2 above he quoted Mt.28:19 and Gal.1:9. In the case of Isaiah 61:1-11 he quoted Mt.3:16. In his sermons, God's missionary command is noticeable as are the blessings that one gets in obeying it (Append.1).

The funeral text on Genesis 5:21-27 with a text verse on Gen.5:24 has missionary characteristics. In his application on this text one notes that people should follow the example of Enoch who testified about God in the world that was going astray. The deceased was praised for having done the same thing in the Germiston area.

##### b) Scope of Salvation

The issue on the scope of salvation is not addressed at all in his three sermons. There is no solution to the question as to whether someone who does not believe in Christ or who has not yet heard of Christ can be saved.

### c) Culture

It is apparent from his sermons that Rev. Rammala valued Western culture through its civilization. Sometimes in his sermons he indicates the differences between the Western and African cultures on a number of things. For instance, from his sermon on John 2:1-11 he wrote;

*Die mense van Afrika, die Afrikaan kan nie iets volgens Westerse maniere volg nie, maar maak iets vol tot dat oorvloei (Append.1).*

It could therefore be concluded from this that Rev. Rammala also promoted in his sermons, the Western culture. This was not done at the expense of African, especially his Bapedi, culture. For instance, in the area of medicine, the Bapedi medicine people have been regarded as people with a reasonable knowledge of anatomy and of some diseases. It has been noted that by dissecting the anatomy of animals which they slaughtered regularly, they learnt the various organs and structures of human body reasonably well. They also possessed knowledge on inoculating against small-pox (Mönnig 1967:92).

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

Judging from the contents of this chapter, it is apparent that Rev. Rammala was influenced by various factors into becoming a missionary. The religious nature of his parents, led him to a situation where he couldn't resist the way followed by some children of religious leaders, that of following their parents's callings to the ministry<sup>45</sup>.

Before he went to Botswana, missionary characteristics were already evident in his character through his ministry in the congregations he served, especially his sermons, mission related

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45 It is a common practice that at least one son from a minister's family also joins the ministry, thus following in his father's/mother's footsteps. There are very few women in the ministry of the URCSA to date.

journeys abroad, etc. (cf. 4.4.1-4.4.3.). Now that I have traced the making of Rev. Rammala as a missionary, let us focus on his actual mission work in Botswana among the Bushmen/Basarwa.

## CHAPTER 5

### REV. RAMMALA AS A MISSIONARY IN BOTSWANA

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter we looked at factors that developed Rev. Rammala into a missionary. These factors also helped us to ascertain some of his pre-Botswana missionary elements. It is now appropriate to look at his work in that country. His work in Botswana cannot be fully understood without a background knowledge of the context and history of that country. This will facilitate our understanding of his theology of mission and work in Botswana.

#### 5.2 BOTSWANA: CONTEXT AND HISTORY

##### 5.2.1 The country

Botswana is a country the same size as France and it measures 220, 000 square miles (569 800 square kms). It is locked between four countries i.e. South Africa (south & east), Namibia (west & north), Zimbabwe (north-east) and Zambia (at the confluence of the Zambezi & Chobe rivers in the extreme north) (Stevens 1975:11). This country which has an annual rainfall of about 500mm, is said to be at the heart of southern Africa (Botswanasending [s.a.] :1).

The country is extremely flat, with a mean altitude of 3 300 feet above sea level. A large part of the land is accounted for by the Kalahari desert and its fringes, which is said to occupy 82% of the country's geographical space (Cox 1995:285). The desert consists of sand dunes in the extreme southwest, but for the most part it is covered with dense thorn bush and grass, broken only by some extensive salt pans. In the far northwest is the Okavango delta which occupies around 6 500 square miles of lushly vegetated swampland. Tsetse fly in this area makes it inaccessible to human and cattle populations. As the country has poor rainfall, most of the

water is obtained from boreholes, though this source is also difficult to tap because of the thickness of the sand (Wiseman 1992:xiv).

Botswana has 9 districts, viz: Central District (which covers towns such as Francistown, Selebi-Phikwe, Serowe, etc.), North East district (which includes Masunga, etc.), North West district (which includes Maun and Kasane, etc.), Ganzi district (Ganzi), Kgalagadi district (which includes Tshabong, etc.), Kweneng district (which includes Molepolole, etc.), Kgatleng district (which includes Mochudi etc.), South East district (which includes Gaborone, Ramotswa, etc.) and Southern district (which includes Kanye, Lobatse, etc.) (Botswana Govt. 1990:ii) (see map).

The context of the district of Ganzi (before Rev. Rammala), which was the centre for Rev. Rammala's missionary activities, deserves special attention. As early as 1966 (Young 1966:28) "the place called Ganzi was regarded as a small isolated township with a bleak future. During this period, there were few stores, a hotel and a church and a well-built high school that stood empty. The school was boycotted by whites mostly Afrikaners who sent their children to exclusive white schools in either SA or Namibia (which was then called South West Africa) because it was decreed to be racially integrated."

The white community that occupied Ganzi district consisted mostly of Afrikaners from SA. They were promised this land by Cecil Rhodes but after the Jameson Raid<sup>46</sup> this promise ceased

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<sup>46</sup> The Jameson Raid that was planned for December 1895 was an attempt by the Rhodesian police under the leadership of Leander Starr Jameson to occupy Johannesburg in concert with an Uitlander insurrection. It was hoped that Pretoria's arsenal would be captured and followed by the establishment of a provisional government which would make it possible for the British High Commissioner to force Kruger to make large concessions to the Uitlanders. It was found out later that Rhodes had moral and financial complicity in the raid and that the British Government and High Commissioner at the Cape had a fore knowledge about the raid. Some Afrikaners such as Hofmeyr viewed that raid as an attack on all Afrikanerdom. Though the raiders had not been successful, their attempted raid united the Afrikaners more than ever before (Muller 1990:192-193).

to bear fruits. Because these Afrikaners were already in Ganzi by 1898, the Imperial Government continued to apportion them farms after realizing that they were harmless and that they had travelled a long way from the SA. Thirty seven farms were allotted and much of the land is still controlled by the original settlers and their descendants (Young 1966:28).

Problems experienced at Ganzi were the frustration caused by its remoteness from the main centres of trade and communication, crops cannot grow well because the soil is poor and the average annual rainfall is no more than 10 inches (25cm). Commodities were expensive as they had to be transported by trucks along the desert roads or imported from other countries like Namibia or SA (Young 1966:29).

The trend of development in this area was so slow that as recently as 1985 the roads could be described as "not paved but sandy with lots of potholes. The vehicles give only 4km per liter" (Seitlheko Survey 1985:2).

The area at which Rev. Rammala worked, Ganzi, was well described by him (Bushmen Mission Report 1979:1) as follows;

*Die sendeling doen sy werk om die evangelie te versprei deur die Basarwa-mense te besoek in die gebied tussen Mammono, die grenshek tussen Suidwes Afrika en Botswana aan die Ooste en Noord-ooste van Ganzi 'n afstand van omtrend 282 km tot by Kuke-hek, die grensdraadhek tussen Ganzi distrik en Ngamiland distrik.*

In the Ganzi district, Rev. Rammala's mission was organised from two areas, viz. Xanagas and Kuke. Xanagas is some 176 km south-west of Ganzi while Kuke is a border gate some 111 km north-west of the town of Ganzi. At the north of Kuke, the nearest town is Maun which is 207 km from Ganzi (Bushmen Mission Report 1979:3).

## 5.2.2 The people

Botswana is a multi-racial society with a population of 1.2 million people in 1989. There is in addition, an expatriate population of 11 000 and 42 069 Batswana working outside the country, mainly in South African mines. More than 80% of the population lives within 100km of the railway network along the eastern part of the country. The population density on average, including desert and forest areas, is less than one person per sq km (Botswana Govt. 1990:4-7).

The bulk of the Botswana population belongs to one of the eight tribes viz; Bamangwato, Bakwena, Bangweketse, Batawana, Bakgatla, Bamalete, Barolong, and Batlokwa<sup>1</sup>. Besides the above mentioned, other groups such as; Kalanga, Kgalagadi, Herero, Mbukushu, Subiya, Yesi and Ndebele, also form part of Botswana population. The first group is what is sometimes referred to as 'Bushmen'<sup>2</sup> (Wiseman 1992:xxi; Cox 1995:279). The whites arrived in Botswana during the last part of the 1800s (Armstrong 1996:4).

The Bushmen population was estimated at 29 000 in 1974 and they belonged to the following groups; Naroh, Auen, Kung and Herkum. About 10 000 were nomads in the Kgalagadi district (Stevens 1975:12-13). Kent (1995:297) identified a certain community called Kutse which was established during the 1970s when several families were told to leave the Kutse Game Reserve. This community comprised the Bushmen (who spoke G/wi, G/ana and Kua) and the Bakgalagadi. The community was originally established in Central Kalahari Game Reserves. As this area is not a true desert, because its vast spaces are covered by thorn bushes, grassland and strange trees, they are able to survive (Cox 1995:285). The Bushmen are the original inhabitants of Botswana, and have lived there for more than 30, 000 years, followed by the

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1 The tribes have been listed in the order of size.

2 The name of these people has been a matter of considerable ideological and academic dispute over the years. Other names have been suggested such as 'san', 'sarwa', 'basarwa' (Wiseman 1992:xxi). The name 'bushmen' or 'san' means person (Cox 1995:285) and 'basarwa' means 'people of the bush' (Swaney 1992:261). In this study I use 'Bushmen' since I regard it as the most appropriate term to use (cf. 1.3.4.).

Khoi-khoi (Hottentots). They continue to occupy the remote regions of Kalahari Desert (Swaney 1992:250; Botswana Sending:1). The Botswana government does not recognise the Bushmen as the original inhabitants of Botswana and it claims that all people are indigenous (Armstrong 1996:4).

The Bushmen of Kalahari, like many others, have not been exposed to most of the modern waves of technological development. They continue to lead a nomadic life in the desert and survive as hunter-gatherers. This can be seen from the fact that as recently as in 1959, some of them in the Kalahari, especially in the Ganzi district had not had any contact with Westerners or other Black people of Africa (Young 1966:33). They have distinct languages which share dental and palatal clicks. Their clicks are of three types viz; the palatal click, the lateral click and the dental click (Swaney 1992:261).

The early encounter of the Bushmen with other people is said to have been a peaceful one in that they traded and even intermarried with them. The question however remains as to why they ignored opportunities for learning agriculture and herding and chose to remain nomads. The Bushmen, as a mobile society, followed water, game and edible plants. They had no possessions, animals or crops and they carried with them everything they needed for their daily existence. About 60% of the Bushmen live in Botswana and 35% in Namibia. There is however a desire among some of the Botswana Bushmen to join the Botswana mainstream society (Swaney 1992:261-262).

The people under whom Rev. Rammala worked were described by him as follows (Bushman Mission Report 1979:1);

*Die mense onder wie die sendeling werk is die Basarwa-mense. Daar is vyf taalgroepe onder hulle nl. Naroh, Qhung, Qho, Gwinikhwe en Qcanakwe. Die grootste taalgroep in die Ganzi-distrik so wel as op Xanagas is Naroh-mense. Die Basarwa-mense in die Ganzi-distrik onder wie die Kerk werk, woon op plase, beesposte, in die bos en 'n paar*

*gesinne bly op Ghanzi-kamp.*

The Bushmen have been treated as second-class citizens in every respect. Their general relationship with the Setswana speaking people has not been good. The main area of conflict with the Batswana during the 1900s was Ghanzi. The Batswana attitude towards the Bushmen is explained by Armstrong (1996:4) that:

*They wore the Bushmen down, picking on their leaders and stealing their women.*

The Bushmen were also tortured by wildlife officials. The most common form of torture included; "the use of a rubber ring placed tightly round the testicles and a plastic bag placed over the face of the person. Such treatment usually took place in the bush where there are no witnesses" (Armstrong 1996:5). These people are, according to Cox (1995:285), despised by the Batswana people and out of 55 000 of them, "3 000 are still living in small bands, wandering in the heart of the Kalahari desert".

In the mid-1970s the Botswana government introduced a Settlement Programme for the Bushmen, which offered them subsistence plots and houses on sites where they were provided with basic facilities, running water, clinics, schools and income generating projects (Armstrong 1996:5).

Though the Bushmen originally enjoyed a good relationship with the white Afrikaner farmers who acted as their "protection against 'belligerent blacks'", exploitation by these farmers turned this relationship into a 'love-hate' one. At times they were merely paid in food rations, alcohol and provided with a little pocket money (Armstrong 1996:4).

The nature of the relationship between the Bushmen and other people especially the Batswana, might have obviously posed a challenge to Rev. Rammala's mission work. This was made possible by the fact that though he was not a Motswana, he had the identical physical

appearance.

### 5.2.3 Religion

Before the arrival of the missionaries in Botswana in the early 1800s (Swaney 1992:266), the religious outlook in Botswana was distinct from the religion brought by missionaries. The Batswana people believed in a God they called 'Modimo', the creator of everything. Because this God was considered to be far removed from people, he was approached through the spirit of the ancestors (Botswana Sending:1). This view is supported by Swaney (1992:265) who contended that early tribal religions were primarily 'ancestor worshipping' cults. Religious rites included 'bogwera' and 'bojale' (male and female initiation ceremonies) and the 'gofetlha pula' or rainmaking rites.

The above religious definitions represent what Setiloane calls the "missionary misunderstanding of the traditional concept of MODIMO" (1976:106). The treatment of 'badimo' as the plural of MODIMO by missionaries such as Moffat (Setiloane 1976:106), fails to carry the idea of a person to the mind of the Batswana. As a result, Casalis (in Setiloane 1976:106) noted that the "Barolong render a kind of worship to deranged persons". Setiloane (1976:106) warns that "in any normal sense of the word, can the attitude to 'badimo' be described as 'worship'? He adds: "the fact is that there was much more to MODIMO than the missionaries dreamt of, rather than the much less which they came to think" (1976:78).

The Bushmen on the other hand, have a folklore which is "rich with supernatural explanations of natural events that pervades all cultures. Their traditional religious beliefs are quite simple and not all burdened with dogma or ritual. Their two supernatural beings represent good and evil, order and entropy. N!odima, the good, is the omnipotent creator who seems to have little time to meddle in the affairs of mortals. His opponent, Gcawama, is a mischievous trickster who spends his time trying to create disorder of the perfect natural organisation laid down by N!odima. Gcawana unfortunately seems to take a bothersome amount of interest in the lives

of humans" (Swaney 1992:265). The Bushmen religion is highly complex and rooted deeply in their lives as a community.

There is a difference from Bushmen tribe to tribe on matters of belief in supernatural beings. There is however a belief in a beneficent deity and in malevolent power. Young (1966:43) describes their religion as follows:

*Beneath the world there is an underground world peopled by fierce beasts and men, and by the ghosts of the dead. Evil is thrown down from the sky in the form of invisible wooden splinters which are absorbed by the women, and extracted from them at ritual dances where the evil is first absorbed by the men, who go into a deep trance, and then expelled from them by further dancing and message. These dances are performed as often as twice a week in the summer, and have markedly therapeutic effect on the band.*

The Batswana and the Bushmen could not be separated from other Africans in terms of their wealth of religious experience. Like all people, they had their own religion before the arrival of the missionaries with their Christian religion. Their religious nature, made it easy for them to understand the God introduced to them by the missionaries. Though the missionaries undermined their concept of God, African theologians such as Setiloane (as we have seen above), believed that the concept of God brought by the missionaries was narrower than that of Africans.

#### **5.2.4 Missionary activities in Botswana before Rev. Rammala**

Missionary activities in Botswana started almost 170 years before the arrival of Rev. Rammala. The dawn of the missionary era in that country showed itself from the early nineteenth century with the arrival of the LMS on invitation by a chief of a tribe of the then Bechuanaland. A missionary, Robert Moffat was transferred to Botswana in 1820 after his marriage to Mary

Smith. He established a mission station at Kuruman in 1817 and stayed there for many years (Hildebrandt 1981:85; Swaney 1992:252). Moffat's missionary contribution in Botswana was enormous. It was also the country in which he started his work. Among his other achievements was that he christianised the Hottentot chief Africaner and that he translated the Bible into the Setswana language (Livingstone 1977:341). He was also responsible for the first transliteration of the Setswana language into the Roman alphabet (Swaney 1992:252).

The work of the LMS in Botswana was disturbed by the Boers of the then Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek (ZAR) who did not approve of them being next to their republic. They then raided their mission stations and destroyed their buildings. The work of the LMS in Botswana was faced by a unique situation where their work was not opposed by the African people but by the neighbouring white settlers of the Transvaal (Hildebrandt 1981:120).

In 1815 the Methodists (Wesleyan Methodist Society) sent missionaries to Botswana who established three mission stations there. Later, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society as well as the Dutch Reformed Church also joined the missionary scene in Botswana. Before 1914 there was no settled mission station of the Roman Catholic Church (Hildebrandt 1981:174).

The Boers' hatred for Botswana, was not only directed at the missionaries, but also at the Batswana. On the other hand, the Batswana's enemies were not only the Boers, but they were also threatened by Shaka. The missionaries played a valuable role in protecting them. Missionary figures such as John MacKenzie (a personal friend of the Christian Ngwato chief, Khama 111 of Shoshong), Price and later Lloyd and William Willoughby played significant roles. They organised a meeting between the Batswana chiefs and Khama 111 with the British authorities for protection against the invaders (Stevens 1975:15; Wiseman 1992:xv; Swaney 1992:253).

The DRC was already engaged in mission work among the Bakgatla ba-ga-Kgafela, a Setswana speaking community at Saulspoort under chief Kgamanyane in 1864. Later, chief Kgamanyane

moved on and settled in Botswana and the DRC followed him. Through Rev. and Mrs. Pieter Brink they established their first mission station at Mochudi in 1877.

History was made in 1906 when the first African was ordained for the foreign mission of the DRC at Mochudi. His name was Thomas Phiri. The conversion of Linchwe 1, the son of Kgamanyane had positive results as the DRC became the state church among the Bakgatla. The work of the DRC was concentrated in the Kgatleng area which had a population of 35 000. Apart from Mochudi, the second congregation called Sikwane was established. Other DRC congregations in succession included Mochudi West, Mochudi East and Gaborone. Most of the churches that were established became part of the NGKA (Botswana Sending:5-6).

The fruits for all the missionary efforts collectively, of missionaries from various denominations, can be seen in Swaney (1992:266) who wrote:

*Christianity is currently the prevailing belief system in Botswana, with the largest number of Christians belonging to the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. The Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist churches, also have significant membership in the country.*

In addition to the situation as explained above, it was found that in 1976, out of the Botswana population that was estimated at 768 300, 62% belonged to the Christian faith. It was also noted that 445 600 (58%) were protestants, 30 700 (4%) were Roman Catholics and the rest 38% belonged to the Traditional Religions (Hildebrandt 1981:258).

When one looks at the missionary efforts and the above statistics in Botswana, it becomes apparent that the Bushmen were excluded. This situation leaves one with many unanswered questions. For instance, can their exclusion be the result of the fact that they were, as mentioned earlier, treated as second-class citizens in every respect (Swaney 1992:261)? Or was it due to the fact that they settled in hot, uninhabited desert and semi-desert areas, and were

a rather small population compared with the size of their territory (Hildebrandt 1981:173)? Or did the other missionary societies share the experiences and convictions of the LMS at the Cape that the Bushmen did not respond well to the Gospel message (Hildebrandt 1981:82)? Or was it that “they were extremely and repulsively dirty” in such a way that on a hot day the odour of their persons was more offensive (Dunn 1931:37)? Or was it that they posed an administrative problem (Young 1966:32)?

These are some of the questions that may lead one to understand why the NGKA selected them as their missionary responsibility in Botswana.

However, during the year of Rev. Rammala's arrival in Botswana, churches that were already doing mission among the Bushmen were the DRC of Gobabis (for Bushmen in Botswana West up to 1973), Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Gereformeerde Church (which worked for the Bushmen of Gobabis area in D'Kar) (Bushmen Mission report, NGKA S-Tvl 1974).

### **5.3 REV. RAMMALA'S THEOLOGY OF MISSION AND WORK IN BOTSWANA**

I am going to look at Rev. Rammala's theology of mission and work in Botswana by applying the same analytic grid as in 4.4.5 above, but with the addition of the item on 'Young Churches' under the motives (goals) of mission.

#### **5.3.1 Methods**

##### **a) Agents of mission**

For Rev. Rammala, agents of mission are converts, ministers and local congregations as well as church organizations on mission and evangelisation such as commissions etc. For him Jesus' command indicates that every Christian should be an agent of mission. However, ministers

should play a leading role through the example of their lives, etc, to show other Christians how to witness. If they (ministers) fail, God will demand the lives of those misled from them (Rammala 1998).

For Rev. Rammala, women should be given equal treatment as men in terms of missionary responsibilities. The fact that they are admitted to the Holy Communion table means that they should be allowed in all missionary duties. He further believes that women can even do much better than men in most cases on church matters. He holds that women can also do mission work like men. He also contends that cases of pregnancy should not serve as a hindrance for women in executing missionary work (Rammala 1998).

The exemplary life of a convert is important. For instance, Rev. Rammala (1998) recalls an incident of a Bushmen in Botswana who in giving reasons for a polygamous marriage, cited as an example the situation of his boss who had two wives. He indicated how this boss through such example had misled that person. For this reason, Rev. Rammala holds that personal approach on missionary matters is much more important than a mass approach. In this regard, the importance of family visitation is emphasized.

Bushmen converts were used by Rev. Rammala as agents of mission. They conducted church services, Sunday Schools, etc. Though they were all important, an elder at Xanagas Mr. Chrisjan is regarded as one of the prime examples of dedicated people in the service of the Lord. Usage was also made of Maria Xhari and Ganxhai Simon to conduct family prayer meetings with the Bushmen children in their own Naro language (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:4). Bushmen children were also used as agents especially during family visits, to go with the missionary from settlement to settlement to spread the Gospel. During such visits, they also assisted with songs. Sometimes the work of the missionaries was made difficult by the nomadic lifestyle of the Bushmen, especially when it came to family visits. For instance, if they had to carry out follow up family visits, they couldn't trace some families who would have moved to other unknown areas (Bushmen Mission Report, NGKA 19974:3).

Rev. Rammala's understanding of agents of mission has never changed from the concept he held before his Botswana mission (cf. 4.4.5.1.a). He regarded all believers regardless of gender and age as agents of mission. This point has been proved by his employment of converts who included males and females, including children, as agents of mission.

b) Word (preaching)

Rev. Rammala (1998) contends that the Word of God should play an important role in the life of the church, especially during the worship service and it should be presented intelligibly. Even the preparation of the sermon should be viewed in a serious light. For instance, one had to go into one's study and start by praying, asking for God's guidance. Commentaries should be used in the preparation of sermons. A preacher should be guided by the text in everything that is being said during the process of preaching and the exegesis of a text is of utmost importance.

Ninety percent of a sermon content should be words of comfort and diakonia. Preaching that is dominated by words of comfort challenges the preacher to study the context of the people he/she is preaching to, in order to respond relevantly to its dynamics. A sermon should touch contextual matters such as unemployment, poverty, hunger, etc, (Rammala 1998).

Knowledge of languages is important in the transmission of the Word of God. It is important that converts should hear the Word of God in their own language. Rev. Rammala indicated this himself by learning different languages as can be seen above (4.4.4.).

Rev. Rammala (1998) further reasons that Bible translation is of utmost importance and this should be updated continuously as languages do change. He warned that languages have different dialects. There should be a dialogue between the Bible translators and the languages of the people as they change according to circumstances. He contends that there should be no limitations when coming to Bible translation for every language even 'tsotsi taal' as long as it is spoken, needs attention in this regard.

In Botswana, Rev. Rammala's mission was not directly involved with Bible translation, but admired efforts taken by the Gereformeerde Kerk in this direction where the book of Mark was translated into the Makaukau Bushmen language. However, the dialect of Makaukau that was spoken at Ganzi, made it difficult for the inhabitants to understand and to appreciate the translation. For instance, Mr. Mannie Lewis (an elder of NGK) was not impressed by the translation for the reasons mentioned. This situation is further complicated by the fact that there is no *lingua franca* among the Bushmen and if one had to learn one, it needed to be one widely spoken. Young (1966:33) advises that the G/wi tribe is numerous in such a way that to learn their language is advisable. Rev. Rammala attempted to learn the Naroh language the one that was mostly spoken at Xanagas in the Ganzi district. There were however four other languages spoken in the Ganzi district as previously mentioned namely; Qhung, Qho, Qcwickhwe and Gcanakwe (Bushmen Mission Report, 1979:1). Bushmen languages may be difficult for outsiders and have been described as "musical click languages which outsiders find so hard to master" (Armstrong 1996:5).

Rev. Rammala (1998) further reasons that a sermon should be presented intelligibly and that for this reason, sermon preparation should start as early as Monday if one is to preach on the following Sunday. The quality of Rev. Rammala's sermons as seen in this study (4.4.4.) and the fact that he wrote down almost every word of his sermon indicates his seriousness in preparing sermons.

Preaching the Word, seem to have played an important role in the preachings of Rev. Rammala. His approach to it, especially the attention he gave to the preparation of his sermons, is proof of this. The emphasis on fully written sermons has advantages, but its disadvantages include that it may be an inhibiting factor in the 'oral performance' that is required for an effective sermon.

c) Healing ministry

Rev. Rammala (1998) holds that healing activities during the church service should not occupy more space than a sermon. He however warns that, the church's contribution in prayer should strongly be in the form of spiritual support to the existing medical structures. He also says that though we should directly pray for the patients, we should put more emphasis on praying for the doctors and other medical personnel.

Rev. Rammala (1998) continues to state that the church should support the erection of hospitals because body and soul have to be treated equally. He further contends that we should wish for a situation where hospitals are placed under church authority. He says that though during his missionary days there was no missionary hospital that was erected directly by him, there were however hospitals that were built and controlled by churches. For instance, the hospital at Mochudi as well as the one at Maun<sup>49</sup> were under the Evangelical Lutheran Church. He further believes that Christians should have unlimited access to the hospital when they visit them with a religious agenda.

Rev. Rammala's kerygmatic nature and background generally pushed healing activities aside. His worship services were dominated by the proclamation of the Gospel (Bushmen Mission Report 1981:2). He acknowledged the need for medical service among the bushmen people but he did not introduce a special prayer session for the sick in his worship service. Instead, he enlisted medical service equally with other needs for the Bushmen that required donations and he expressed it as follows:

*Die nood vir kos, klere en mediese dienste is nog baie groot onder die Basarwamense. Daar is nog baie gevalle van die behoefde mense in hierdie gebied (Bushmen Mission Report, NGKA 1978:3).*

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49 Maun was regarded as the administrative centre from as early as 1966 when it was the administrative desk of Ngamiland district (Young 1966:24).

On the other hand, the Independent Churches that developed in that area, emphasized the healing aspect of ministry. In the survey made over the years of Rev. Rammala's mission, this situation is described by Rev. Seitlheko as follows:

*They emphasise the healing aspect so much that they ignore the other theological aspects. Some of them are man centred rather than Christ centered. Therefore, many that had joined the church were bodily weak and sick, as a result they ended up in these healing churches. Almost every village has two or three of these Independent Churches (Survey Report 1985:1).*

Rev. Rammala seems to support strong control of medical institutions by the church. For him this is part of Christian mission because body and soul cannot be separated. Full control of hospitals is important as it can grant the church unlimited access to render religious activities. If Rev. Rammala encouraged the building of hospitals by the church, then he subscribed to the sacramentalist view of mission (cf. 1.3.2.).

#### d) Teaching

Rev. Rammala (1998) held that education should be one of the highest priorities for mission. Christians should have influence in schools and their curricula. It would have been appreciated if churches had their own schools. The curricula of those Christian schools would include science and other technological disciplines, apart from religious subjects such as Biblical Studies. As for the personnel for scientific disciplines, teachers could be drawn from across the religious spectrum but Christian teachers would be in the majority.

As early as 1974, within a period of a year of his arrival in Botswana, he organised literacy classes for the Bushmen. His wife and Ms. Verena Venter also assisted as teachers (Bushman Mission Report, NGKA 1974:3). The main motive for such efforts in education was to teach people to read the Bible and to prepare them for other challenges in life. Adult education was

for him equally important in mission. For instance, in Botswana, Mr. Xukuri was taught to read and write during the time of Rev. Rammala and ended up being a councillor. He was from Kuke in Ganzi district where he was working for Mr. John Kempf<sup>50</sup> as a farm worker.

Rev. Rammala (1998) says that though they never built schools themselves, they supported existing educational structures within the boundaries of their work as much as they could. For instance, their settlement was near New Xanagas boarding primary school where Mrs. Verena Venter (an NGK member) was the head. They fully cooperated with her and offered their assistance on every front. Some 120 km northeast of Xanagas at Kuke (in the Ganzi district) there was another a school which enjoyed their support. When Ms. Verena Venter was later transferred (c.a.1978) to the Kuke primary school she also enjoyed their cooperation. Rev. Rammala organised a religious programme in the hostel of this school as follows; "every evening he conducted a devotion and this involved bible readings and explanation, songs, and prayer" (Bushmen Mission Report, NGKA 1974:3).

They supported Maria Xhari (A young Bushmen woman) educationally and she ended assisting as teacher at the primary school. At Kuke, adult education was also offered. At this school, the Bushmen children were introduced to Setswana literature because official material in their language was not yet available (NGKA Botswana, Circular Ltr. no. 2, 1978:4).

There were outstanding people who were taught by Rev. Rammala and his colleagues such as Christina and Twobob both who bore the surname of Hendricks (that was taken from the first name of their father) and Jan Gcetshehu Xari who worked for the Dept. of Bushmen

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50 Mr. John Kempf was one of the farm owners at Kuke in the Ganzi district, probably one of the descendants of the Afrikaners who were granted farms in that district by the Imperial government in the then Bechuanaland, in 1895, as a result of a promise made to them by Cecil Rhodes (Young 1966:28). He and other farmers such as Corrie Bekker and Boelie Vorster were more cooperative with Rev. J.L.R. Rammala on mission work to their farm workers than other farmers in the same district (NGKA Botswana Mission, Circular ltr.no.2, 1974:4).

Development Cooperation and was living at Serowe during the times of Rev. Rammala. Another young woman by the name of Soutie Teye qualified as a Social Worker and worked for the Bushmen. She subsequently studied at the University of Botswana and had been overseas. She was also employed by the Bushmen Development Cooperation at Ganzi. Maria Xari who trained as a Family Welfare Officer worked at the Bushmen settlement area. The name of Veronica Dade is also worth mentioning as one of the people who were assisted by Rev. Rammala's mission educationally (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 8, 1980:2).

If Rev. Rammala, as a missionary from a developing country, can take the responsibility of education among the Bushmen so seriously upon himself, then Verkuyl (1978:212) is justified in saying that:

*education ranks as the oldest form of diakonia in the modern history of missions. It goes without saying, of course, that no longer are Western missionary agencies, primarily responsible for this work; agencies and organizations within the developing nations themselves have taken it over.*

Factors that led Rev. Rammala to his commitments on education can be traced to his upbringing. He had parents and a school teacher who gave him constructive advice in this direction (cf. 4.2.2). For this reason he continued to spread his dream for Western education among the Bushmen. The long list of Bushman names who received qualifications as a result of his missionary efforts, bear witness to this effect. The promotion of Western education was made despite the fact that Africans, long before the arrival of missionaries, "were imparting knowledge and skills in most career directions" (Kudadjie 1996:180; cf. 4.4.5.1.d).

#### e) Worship

Rev. Rammala (1998) understood that preaching should play an important part during worship services more than any other functions such as prayers, healing activities, etc. The minister

though, should not be the main protagonist during the service but there should be reciprocity i.e. feedback from the congregation as in the liturgies of Anglican or Roman Catholic Churches.

He further maintained that the eucharist plays a special role during the church service. It reminds us of our Christian responsibilities as Jesus said when it was instituted that we should do that in his remembrance. Rev. Rammala had no problem as to how often the eucharist should be celebrated. Qualification for the participants in the Holy Communion should have been all who understood the meaning of it in their lives and he preferred those over the age of 16.

In Botswana they catechised their converts who were of that age. Catechism period extended over three years because those people were not learned. They distributed cassettes among the candidates so that they could learn at home at their own pace and were tested thereafter. These cassettes were in Setswana as the Bushmen language was not yet written (Rammala, 1998). Catechumens were requested to buy Setswana Bibles and the official catechism class book because they were not yet available in their vernacular (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:1).

Rev. Rammala (1998) held that church members should play an important part during the worship service. He maintained that they should be offered opportunities to help with Sunday collections, prayers, and that church elders should help the minister with the reading of baptismal and holy communion formulae, but the actual act of these sacraments should be conducted by the ordained minister.

The lack of church buildings affected the nature of worship services in Botswana. The work of the missionaries in this regard consisted mainly of visiting the people on the farms and in settlements in different areas. On those visits they proclaimed the Gospel to smaller and bigger groups of people at the places where they lived. These services were normally held under the

trees (Bushmen Mission Report 1981:2).

Regular but formal church services were held at a few places. Those services were held on Sundays at Xanagas and Kuke as well as on the farms of Mr. John Kempf (Bushmen Mission Report 1981:2).

Like in most church services of kerygmatic background, the missionary posed as the protagonist in such a way that if he was absent with other commitments, they rather invited an elder like Mr. Jansen of the Evangelical Lutheran Church or Ms. Verena Venter to conduct the service. The church services were dominated by a sermon which was interpreted into the Naro language. At Xanagas Boarding school, Sunday school was conducted on Mondays because during the weekends children were visiting their parents (Mission Report, NGKA 1974:3).

The use of cassettes may be seen as leading to the destruction of the Bushmen culture of communication. It appears, however, that this was not forced on them, but was used as the only viable means of communication available at that time. Worship, in Rev. Rammala's mind, was very important in terms of mission and empowerment in that connection. For instance, during worship services, he delegated certain duties to other members thus preparing them for 'self propagation'. Moreover his worship services had further ecumenical elements because members of other churches were also allowed to conduct it. The element of nonsexism was also observable because Ms Verena Venter was also permitted to conduct worship services.

#### f) Interaction with authorities

Rev. Rammala (1998) contended that it is a good move to correct the wrongs of the state authorities like religious leaders such as Bishop Desmond Tutu did during the apartheid era. As in the case of SA, during the apartheid years, churches were supposed to unite against unjust laws.

During his time in Botswana, Rev. Rammala's mission had a good relationship with the

Botswana government and the latter did not obstruct his work in any way. It was not easy for Rev. Rammala and his team to observe the injustices of the government for it was supportive of improving the lives of the Bushmen in that country. The then leader of that country, Sir Seretse Khama, was also personally supportive of their work. Botswana government officials had a sound relationship with Rev. Rammala and appreciated his work among the Bushmen. Their good relationship could be confirmed by the regular visits that the government officials paid to Rev. Rammala where they at times enjoyed meals together. The comments on Rev. Rammala's work by the then deputy President Quite Masire (who later became president) disclose the Botswana government's attitude towards his mission work:

*Please continue with the good work (Rammala family visitors book).*

Even at Rev. Rammala's welcoming function in Botswana on 13 May 1973, a government representative was present in the person of the District Commissioner Mr. S.K. Sikwane (Mission Report, NGKA 1974:1).

The Botswana government's good relation with missionaries dates back to the colonial era. In the first place, as mentioned earlier, missionaries were invited to Botswana by the Batswana chiefs. This was seen in the case of the LMS whose missionary contributions in that country were enormous compared to other missionary societies (Hildebrandt 1981:85; Swaney 1992:252). Apart from that, missionaries played an important role in the protection of the people of Botswana from attacks by the Boers of the Transvaal as well as the threat posed by Shaka (Steven 1975:15); Wiseman 1992:xi) and Swaney 1992:253). It is from these sources that one can conclude that Rev. Rammala's good relations with the authorities of Botswana, were cultivated many years before his arrival by the previous missionaries in that country.

What Rev. Rammala (1998) observed was that the Batswana competed with the Bushmen for the available resources and efforts by the government to empower them (Bushman). When the government contended that the Bushmen were the poorest of the poor and that they needed

immediate assistance, the Batswana claimed to be equally poor. Even the school hostel that the government built for the Bushmen was constructed on the pretext that it was for the poor, not solely for the Bushmen. The government made land available at New Xanagas and Kuke for Bushmen settlement.

The government's efforts to improve the lot of the Bushmen was seen in the following areas of life: free schooling, transport, medication (while for the Batswana, free schooling only went up to six years) and efforts to provide them with clothing. Destitute Bushmen were offered food free of charge from any shop in the country and the government footed the bill (Rammala 1998).

Despite all these attempts, there were people who noted problems in the efforts to improve the life of the Bushmen. For instance, Young (1966:32-33) as recently as 1966 noted that there were difficulties regarding their administration because:

*their extremely nomadic way of life is hardly susceptible to government administration on conventional lines. Moreover, government servants do not in the normal course of events speak the bushmen's difficult languages with their clicking consonants.*

In the light of the above, it could be summarily concluded that Rev. Rammala enjoyed a good relation with the government authorities in Botswana. His friendly interaction with the authorities had positive results in the sense that it benefitted him to do his mission without government interference.

#### g) Contextualisation

For Rev. Rammala (1998), context is very important in any missionary activity. The Word of God should address the context within which it is preached. When coming to culture, we should not discard all cultural practices of the indigenous people, but missionaries should

uphold those practices which do not contradict the Word of God. He gives the example of the Moravians who had problems with the circumcision practices of the Hlubis in the former Transkei. The latter realized their attitude and dismissed them from their area. Ultimately, this traditional practice was accommodated in their church life in such a way that when they had to go to those institutions, official announcements were made in the churches as well as names of prospective teachers.

He further said that Evangelist Masemola who worked in Nigel challenged opponents of the practice of circumcision to point out elements that contradicted the scriptures in this practice. Rev. Rammala did not see any reason for its condemnation. He reasoned that these days, the practice should be reviewed on account of health. He advised that even traditional African beer need not be condemned.

As for the Bushmen cultures, Rev. Rammala (1998) saw no reason for condemnation. He says that they didn't practise circumcision and their nomadic character made it impossible to notice any contradictory elements in their culture. He said that they didn't have any feasts as some stable communities do. The only feast that he knew, was that for a girl when she was initiated to womanhood after having experienced her first menstrual period. The church didn't have problems with this practice. He said that in all the five groups they worked with, there was no polygamy<sup>51</sup>.

Though one has to be careful when condemning cultural practices, as Rev. Rammala warned, other aspects attract attention. Take for instance the age of marriage which is 16 for boys and eight or nine for girls (Young 1966:42). In some countries this may be regarded as an offence of child abuse especially with regard to the girls.

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51 Though Rev. Rammala did not directly come across polygamists among the bushmen he worked with during the period that covered almost a decade, Young observed some in the Kalahari desert (1966:42).

It is apparent that Rev. Rammala may have had few difficulties in coming to terms with the 'love bow'<sup>52</sup> objects and rituals found among the Bushmen. These were used in ritual dances in which men dance around women until they observed the one that they would like to make love to, and then they would shoot one of the little arrows into her backside (Young 1966:30). This doesn't seem to contradict the Gospel as it is their cultural way of making love advances.

The context of poverty among the Bushmen challenged Rev. Rammala so much that he based the success of his mission on addressing the situation (Bushmen Mission Report 1979:1). For this reason he often carried mealie-meal, sugar, used clothes and water to the Bushmen as he brought the Gospel to them (Bushmen Mission Report 1979:2).

In executing his religious duties Rev. Rammala continued to follow the NGKA agenda i.e. for the catechumen classes' programmes, liturgy, hymn books, etc. Rev. Rammala seems to have followed the NGKA procedures as much as possible. His successor Rev. Joshua Seitlheko (Survey Report 1985:2) complained of the uncontextual nature of the liturgy as follows:

*The liturgy that is being used does not comply with the context in which the people find themselves. It does not give the congregants the freedom of participation in the worship, and in that way you find that people don't get educated in the spiritual side. The African philosophy is to do things together. Then if the togetherness is the case, you will find that they enjoy singing together and in the rhythmic manner. The tune of the Hosanna Hymn Book does not allow movement, yet Africans are for movement with the music. Although recommending these things, this does not mean that we have anything concrete by now but we say let the liturgy take its own course to develop.*

There was also a problem with the NGKA tradition of the age limit (below 6 years) on infant

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52 'Love bows' are tiny models which are about 10 inches across, and are equipped with a quiverful of miniature arrows seven or eight inches in length (Young 1966:30).

baptism which did not correspond with the context of the missionaries. The problem was outlined by Rev. Seitlheko (Survey Report 1985:2):

*There are children of the new members that are over seven years of age that their parents would like them be baptised, but the Church Order does not allow the mission to baptise them. We know that the Order (church) does give permission to some exceptional cases. Therefore we would like to request that permission. This permission will ease the confusion among the families that have accepted the Lord together with their children.*

Another area of complaint was on the requirements for admission of new members in that their illiterate context did not allow them to force candidates to read the prescribed Christian literature that was in a language that they did not understand very well. The missionary recommended that the church should allow them to be confirmed after the minister working with them had assessed their understanding of the Christian faith (Survey Report 1985:2).

It is apparent that Rev. Rammala did not have problem with most aspects of Bushmen culture. Their age of marriage which suggests that they marry at the age of immaturity, is something that could have been questioned by the church. This goes hand in hand with the 'love bow' objects and rituals that suggests free sexual encounters which has potential for STDs or AIDS infection. The 'hand-out' approach which was also done by Rev. Rammala to the Bushmen can lead to dependence and perpetual poverty.

#### h) Development

Rev. Rammala supports development programmes (1998). For this reason, he was in conflict with the anthropologists regarding the position of the Bushmen in Botswana. The latter advised him to leave the Bushmen alone and not to interfere with their lives. The anthropologists advised that the bushmen should not be developed, but be left as natural and dirty as they were.

Rev. Rammala saw the need for them to be developed because they are poor and vulnerable. For this reason, he found it necessary that they should have proper housing, schooling and medication.

In order to aid in their development, the missionaries collected used clothes from some South African churches for them (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:3) and the Mennonites also assisted with funds for boreholes and with the personnel. American donors helped with blankets and also seconded their personnel for a fixed period. These blankets were later to serve as coffins for the Bushmen during funerals (Rammala 1998).

Apart from the above, Rev. Rammala also introduced agricultural schemes at Xanagas, though he encountered problems with the drilling machine (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:3). When these drilling machines were broken, they had to wait for parts from Johannesburg. They however continued with the boreholes project and at the close of Rev. Rammala's mission, five boreholes had been attempted. In some cases, it was difficult to reach water in most of the holes. The boreholes efforts enabled the Bushmen to learn gardening methods and to have permanent settlements next to the water sources. At one stage, they were reported to have had a good beans harvest (NGKA Botswana Circular ltr. no. 8, 1980:5).

Apart from the boreholes project, Rev. Rammala also identified the following problems among the Bushmen which needed immediate attention; illiteracy, hunger and illnesses (Bushmen Mission Report 1974:2). The fact that Rev. Rammala introduced Western clothing to the Botswana Bushmen should not be viewed as a violation of their culture in this connection because they were believed to be almost naked people and he had shown sympathy towards them. The Bushmen attitude towards dressing is well defined by Dunn (1931:36) as follows:

*The Bushmen people in their wild state wore no clothes, and were depicted by their artists in a nude state. According to the pictures in Stormberg, the Bushmen even in that severe mountain climate wore little or no clothes.*

In most cases Rev. Rammala's objective for requesting clothes was driven more by sympathy because of the cold weather rather than by other factors. His requests for clothes mostly corresponded with the winters which he referred to as "most cruel of the winters" (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:2). The fact that he introduced them to South African food such as mealie-meal, powdered soup and sugar should not mislead the reader into believing that he South Africanised them in this regard. This was based on the fact that he recognized that their diet was made up of veld food such as berries, roots, scrubs, nuts, etc. He applied for donations under severe conditions when food was scarce because of drought (NGKA Botswana, Circular ltr. no. 2, 1978:2). He saw this as the only possible option under the circumstances.

Rev. Rammala also organised sewing class projects among the Bushmen women. Mrs. Sarah Rammala gave instruction in these classes and they applied for donations for sewing machines from South Africa and the Botswana Christian Council and were successful (Bushman Mission Report, NGKA 1974:3).

The direction of Rev. Rammala's development drive appears to be Western orientated. He developed the Bushmen towards materials that were introduced to him by the Western missionaries. Of course this may be a temptation to most black South Africans who are exposed to people from different traditions and cultures and whose own culture was destroyed by apartheid and other missionaries. Rev. Rammala's upbringing was influenced by the western culture. For instance, his birth took place in a Western environment of Stofberg-Gedenskool, far from the traditional huts (cf. 4.3.). He was exposed to the lecturers of his father who were custodians of Western culture and outlook. The fact that he has the western name of Lucius further indicates this trend.

### 5.3.2 Motives

#### a) The use of Bible

Though Rev. Rammala (1998) regarded the entire Bible as a missionary document, his most important texts for mission included Mat. 28:18-20, John 3:16, Rom. 10:13-15.

In Botswana, during closing functions for Sunday Schools Rev. Rammala made it possible that, "each child had the privilege of saying out of memory, a verse in the Bible which had impressed them most during the course of the year" (Botswana Mission Circular ltr. no. 4, 1979:1).

In most of his circular letters sent to supporters of their mission, Rev. Rammala quoted scriptural texts in the introductions. Most of those texts were of a missionary nature and had a message of hope and encouragement to missionaries. At one instance he responded to critics who opposed mission work to the Bushmen as a waste of money by using a scriptural text. For instance, he cited Mat. 26:8 which reads: "The disciples saw this and became angry, 'why all this waste?' they asked.

He said that those were the examples of some of the questions that they as missionaries were asked by what he referred to as "less understanding people who will say to us we are wasting the money of the church by trying to evangelise the less privileged Bushmen people" (Botswana Mission Circular ltr. no. 5, 1979:1). In response to critics he usually quoted scripture; 1 Cor. 15:58, 'so then my dear brothers, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever without value'" (Botswana Mission, Circular ltr. no. 5, 1979:1).

Other scriptural texts considered by Rev. Rammala as key mission texts included Acts 1:8, "but you will be filled with power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth".

It appears that the Bible played an important part in the missionary life of Rev. Rammala. He also instilled this in the minds of the people to whom he did mission. For instance, as we have seen, children were made to memorize Biblical verses. At certain stages, he used the Bible in his defence against those who leveled criticism against his mission. The centrality of scripture in his life was also shown in the circular letters he issued where he made some scriptural quotations.

b) The scope of Salvation

Rev. Rammala (1998) viewed soul and body as being important for salvation. He contended that if someone sinned, it was not only the soul, but the flesh as well that was tainted. He further said that though these two were both important, the salvation of the soul is more important. However, attention should also be given to the material needs of the people such as the conditions of oppression, poverty, etc. A confusion between these two trends can be seen in other instances where he seemed to value them both equally (cf. 5.3.1.c.).

Rev. Rammala's bias on the salvation of the soul over the totality of life emphasizes the influence of the Christian tradition (model) he received from his parents who were influenced by the (pietistic) Berlin missionaries. They made a distinction between the saved and the unsaved. The moral guidance of his parents as well as primary school teacher helped him to avoid alcohol which is one of the characteristics of the pietists who stress salvation of eternal souls (cf. 4.2.1). Another indication of his emphasis on the salvation of eternal soul was the way in which he understood his own conversion. This was because he defined it in terms of salvation of his soul in case the "torpedoes" killed them (cf. 4.2.3.).

c) Culture

Rev. Rammala (1998) contends that people should not change all aspects of their cultural practice, but only those which contradict Christian ethics. He doesn't see difficulties if the

cultural practice is not in conflict with Christianity. Missionaries should not view their culture as the best and be tempted to recommend it to their converts. He, as a Mopedi, did not enforce his culture on the Bushmen.

Rev. Rammala (Rammala 1998) supports the idea of a separate settlement for the converts, like in mission stations. His fear is that at the early stage of their conversion, they can be easily overwhelmed by the unconverted and resort back to sinful life if they cannot be separated residentially.

Though he saw this idea as suitable for new converts, he never practised it in Botswana as the government formed inclusive settlements for the Bushmen. Their converts were left to live within the same structures and neighborhoods as the people they sinned with.

There are very few indications that Rev. Rammala wanted to impose his Sepedi culture on the Bushmen. It is true as has been noted (5.3.1.h.), that he introduced the 'pap' diet, farming methods through gardening projects, dressing, etc., but as said earlier, these were done based more on diaconal consideration than on enforcing his culture (Botswana Mission Circular ltr, no.5, 1979:2; Botswana Mission Circular ltr. no. 2 1978:2; Botswana Mission Circular ltr. no. 7 1979:2).

#### d) Cooperation

Rev. Rammala (1998) regards cooperation among Christian churches as being very important. One of the reasons for the need of ecumenism was that different churches with different names confused ordinary people. Churches that were involved with mission in the same area were the Gereformeerde and the Evangelical Lutheran. The Gereformeerde under Rev. Braam Le Roux operated in De Kar while the Evangelical Lutheran Church operated in the Hukuntse district. They also had a big clinic at Sehitwa which is situated in the southern part of Maun.

Efforts for cooperation and total unity for mission bodies and churches in that region was a desired phenomenon. The seeds of such a move germinated in his period, but were only realised after his departure under the efforts of young missionaries such as Revs. Seitlheko and Gawie Joubert when the NGKA and the Gereformeerde Church were united in that missionary area.

Another factor that influenced the cooperation of Rev. Rammala with other denominations could be traced to his upbringing where he was exposed to the Methodist and Lutheran churches (cf. 4.2.2). This had tremendous influence on him in Botswana for he cooperated with the Evangelical Lutheran church in their hospital projects at Mochudi and Maun (cf. 5.3.1.c.). Once more, at some instances, if he had commitments and he could not conduct a church service, he requested an elder from the Lutheran church or Ms. Verena Venter from the DRC to assist (cf. 5.3.1.e.).

Rev. Rammala had cooperated excellently with other mission bodies in Botswana. This is demonstrated in a number of ways. For instance, he allowed members of other churches to conduct worship services and worked peacefully with leaders and members of other churches.

#### e) Church planting

Rev. Rammala (1998) holds that church planting is a necessity, but warned that this should not be applied immediately to new converts. He advised that they should remain in the mission church until they are strong enough to stand on their own and administer their affairs. This also means that young churches may choose their own names as they deem it fit.

During his time, Rev. Rammala initiated five outposts i.e. New Xanagas, Hannahai West (about 30kms from New Xanagas), Hannahai East (about 90kms from new Xanagas), Kuke (about 120kms from New Xanagas where membership was mainly children) and one on Mr. John Kempf's farm (Rammala 1998).

It appears that church planting was part of Rev. Rammala's mission. It was noted how five outpost were made during his time. It is possible that more outposts could have been initiated had it not been for distance (from where he resided) and the bad roads. It is possible that five outposts were what he can afford under the difficult conditions, as explained.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter introduced us to the missionary activities of Rev. Rammala in Botswana. We have seen the difficult conditions under which missionaries were working in that country due to the desert conditions and the problems experienced with technological developments in terms of communication, roads, etc (cf.5.2). The people of Botswana and their religions were introduced in this chapter. The chapter also introduced us to the methods and motives of Rev. Rammala's theology of mission in Botswana among the Bushmen communities. It also became apparent that the sour relationship that existed between Bushmen and other people especially the Batswana did not pose a threat to Rev. Rammala's mission among them (cf. 5.2.2).

## CHAPTER 6

### A WAY FORWARD

#### 6.1 BY WAY OF ORIENTATION

The friction between Western churches and Third World Christians has been an old one as has been observed in this study, especially concerning the call for a moratorium (cf. 2.2). It is also apparent that few churches from the Third World have supported this call. Despite this, the voice of individual theologians from the Third World has been clear in its call for 'missionary go home'. This call is a culmination of anti-Western mission sentiment that started to show itself within some circles of the Third World. The call for the moratorium evolved as a result of what Bosch (1980:5) calls "the dominance of the 'Christian West'".

Church leaders and Christians from churches that were developed as a consequence of Western mission opposed Western domination in all aspects of their church practices. Sentiments against Western missions resulted in a number of trends. Some of these were the emergence of AICs, theologies of liberation and a need to do things independently. Most Third World churches and their leaders started to carry out Christ's command by themselves. Most churches therefore, began to realise that responsibilities, such as mission "are essential to the nature of the church and not option" (Banda 1996:178). Third World Christians realised that "mission is not only the duty of a White church or older church, but also of the Black and younger churches" (Banda 1996:178).

The mission of the NGKA to Botswana coincided with the call for a 'moratorium'. Anti-Western sentiments (e.g DRC) were evident though they were not recorded in synodical minutes. There were individuals and groups within the NGKA who strongly opposed the mission policies of the DRC. As has been noted, bodies within the DRC family such as Belydende Kring, strongly spoke out against the DRC and its approaches to Christian mission

although they were fighting to maintain church unity (cf. 3.5.3.3). There were strong feelings against DRC missionaries in the NGKA as calls were made for them and their families to join the latter as full members.

By analyzing the argument, there is little doubt that the NGKA with a view to the DRC, also shared in the belief "that the white Mission Churches are apostate, and that they have, under the guise of religion, been agents of Western imperialism" (Vilakazi 1986:1).

## **6.2 THE NGKA, A BLACK OR WHITE CHURCH?**

Having looked at some of the orientation background to this study, I am now going to explain the power behind the existence of the NGKA. The reason being that the influence that the DRC had on this church, in terms of finances, has at times made it difficult for outsiders to distinguish between the two churches. Though this church falls within the broad and ecumenical description of a 'black church' that includes "black Christians in all existing Christian churches who share the same black context of deprivation and oppression" (Kritzinger J.N.J. 1988:183), I will approach this question by looking at it (NGKA) vis-a-vis the DRC and the paradigm shift in its relation with the latter.

### **6.2.1 NGKA and DRC**

The relationship between the DRC and its "daughter" churches particularly the NGKA leave much to be desired. The influence of the DRC on these "daughter" churches is enormous in a number of ways. For instance, the colonial nature of the name of this church as the NGKA indicates this trend. The fact that Afrikaans has enjoyed the status of being the official language of this church further indicates the depth of the influence that the DRC has had on it. This influence has been to the benefit of the Afrikaners in most respects. As had been observed by Kgatla (1988:170), "the interests of the Afrikaners in the social, political and economic arena are maintained, even if this means suffering to the blacks".

The DRC has controlled the general scope of life for the NGKA which has included the boundaries of jurisdiction and the calling of its ministers. For instance;

*it was stipulated in the constitution of the DRCA, OFS that this church would not do ministry outside or beyond the boundaries set by the DRC, N.J. Smith points out that this was apparently because missionaries preferred that the DRCA also be under the full control of the DRC, to the extent that the contracting and calling of a pastor to serve in the DRCA congregations was the responsibility of the DRC consistory, with the Mission Commission also having veto power (Mokgoebo 1983:40).*

Apart from the above, another control area of the DRC over the affairs of the NGKA was seen in the Mission Commissions (Sending Kommissies) which were established in 1888 with the objective among others, to supervise and control "younger churches" which included the NGKA. At certain stages, church council members of the NGKA were elected by the Synodical Mission Commission of the DRC. Furthermore, as has been seen in this study, senior positions such as those of moderators, chairpersons and secretaries in the NGKA were reserved for the white people in the 1945 tentative constitution of the DRC. There was also a system of senior and assistant pastorate in which whites served as supervisors of blacks in this regard (Mokgoebo 1983:41).

In so doing, the NGKA, being a black church, was controlled by the white DR Church in almost all aspects of its life. "Since the constitution and the establishment of the NGKA as a separate church for black people, it has existed subservient to the DRC through various synods, mission agencies and committees exercising supervision and control (Mokgoebo 1983:42). This domination by the DRC of the NGKA made it difficult for the former to make its voice heard as a church. It placed this church in an ambivalent position for its entire life.

As has been seen in this study, the control of the DRC over its "daughter" churches included the area of theological education (cf. 4.3). At a certain stage in their theological reflection,

these "daughter" churches were influenced by the DRC theology at institutional and structural levels. "Much of the daughter churches' theological training of personnel and provision of facilities and teaching pursued uncritical acceptance of the policy of separate development which was supposedly beneficial to the daughter churches, and was furthermore, still controlled by the DRC. There is consequently an ambiguity and an ambivalence in the manner in which the daughter churches reflect, work and live" (Mokgoebo 1983:72).

As can be seen from this study, it is difficult for the oppressed people from other communities, and even some members of the NGKA, to differentiate between the DRC and the NGKA. In the eyes of these people, the DRC can be seen to include its "daughter" churches in such a way that even its controversial political statements can be interpreted as being representative of all who associate with it.

No doubt these "daughter" churches were ultimately dependent on their mother church (DRC) a situation that has been described by Mokgoebo (1983:55) as follows:

*The daughter churches have been created and established as crippled churches that could only walk by the use of crutches provided by the DRC. A dependency syndrome was fostered and nourished in the daughter churches through financial dependence.*

This arrangement by the DRC frustrated its "daughter" churches and prevented them from seeing the true meaning of mission which is grounded upon "God's *agape* (love) and His *charis* (mercy-love)" (Bosch 1980:240). This state of affairs did not live to eternity as there were actions of resistance from the black churches as will be elucidated in the following sections.

### **6.2.2 A turning point in NGKA's relation with the DRC**

The missionary policy of the DRC did not go unchallenged by the "daughter" churches. It

appeared that the 1970s, as has been noted earlier, marked a turning point in the relationship between the "daughter" churches of the DRC, which also included the NGKA (cf. 3.5.2.1.). For instance, Mokgoebo (1983:35) remarked the following concerning the DRMC, the oldest of the daughter churches:

*The advent of the 1970s finds the DRMC projecting a new image. The church has not only started critically evaluating its history, but also is taking seriously its experience in the South African context.*

It was also during the 1970s that another daughter church, the RCA which was established by the DRC in 1968 dropped the name 'Indian' from its name. The motive was to make it more inclusive of other communities (Mokgoebo 1983:46-47). This move was an indirect violation of the DRC's mission policy of creating racially separate churches.

The NGKA also made a strong mark in its relation with the DRC during the 1970s. This attitude coincided with the general trends of that decade in international theological agendas, especially in the Third World. As has been observed by Jesse Mugambi (1998:143):

*Throughout the 1970s, leading Latin American Theologians were very articulate in shifting international campaigns for social transformation from developmentalism to liberationism.*

The NGKA during the 1970s took a more liberationist position in its relation with the DRC. In the words of Mokgoebo (1983:43), this church turned "over a new leaf so that with the decade of the 1970s, the DRCA has come into serious conflict with the DRC on the policy of separation of peoples on the basis of colour both in church and secular society". The NGKA should have realised that the DRC contributed to what Bosch (1980:239) was referring to when he said that: "mission had forfeited its essential nature and become little more than an expression of the prevailing spirit of the age or a convenient mechanism to serve

group interests".

As has been noted in this study, the 1970s marked a turning point in the life of the NGKA. This church started to see things differently as it wanted to be relevant as a church within the South African context. The NGKA wanted to prove the point that "mission has its origin neither in the official church nor in special groups within the church. It has its origin in God. God is a missionary God who crossed frontiers within the world. In creation God was already the God of mission, with his Word and Spirit as 'Missionaries' (Gen.1:2-3), (Bosch 1980:239)".

One could ask as to why it took the NGKA so long to search for its identity. It has been highlighted in this study how the general political landscape of South Africa changed during the decade of the 1970s (3.5.2.1.). Another factor was that the NGKA like other "daughter" churches, was dominated by the missionaries during the early years so that the black voice was not heard at all. During the 1970s the number of black ministers in these churches outnumbered that of white missionaries. It was also during this decade that blacks were increasingly occupying senior positions that had earlier been reserved for whites in their church (NGKA). Elements of BC that reigned during that decade could not be overlooked as had been noted in this study. Though the NGKA has been faithful to the DRC, it was made to turn against it because of its oppressive, unfaithful and hypocritical character.

The timing of this turning point which included the zeal for the NGKA to be on its own, apart from the DRC, suggested that the missionary task it initiated in Botswana was its own. Although some DRC congregations financially supported the NGKA mission to the 'Bushmen', the project was championed by the latter. The situation as explained above made this mission to be undoubtedly a NGKA project. In the words of Rev. Sam Buti<sup>53</sup>; "die NGKA

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53 Rev. Sam Buti was a moderator of the general synod of the NGKA. He uttered these words during the General synod meeting of this church held at Potchestroom in 1968. During this synodical session he was not yet a moderator but a chairperson of a Mission Commission (Cilliers

is nie net 'n objek van die NGK nie, maar 'n kerk in sy eie reg wat ook onder mandaat van die Here van die kerk staan om die Evangelie aan alle mense te gaan verkondig" (in Cilliers 1990:1).

This African church also wanted to make its mark as a true church of Christ. As Banda (1996:178) states;

*mission is not only the duty of a White church or an older church, but also of the Black and the younger church. Therefore a Black church may not allow itself to be relegated to either a 'mission church' or a 'mission field'".*

The NGKA wanted to identify itself with what is believed to be a true church which puts mission at the centre of its existence. As J.J. Kritzinger (1971:39) puts it; "die ganse sin van die bestaan van die Kerk is die *Missio Dei*". If this is true, then the NGKA wanted to make *missio dei*, part of its existence.

### **6.3 REV. RAMMALA, A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF HIS CHURCH**

I discussed the way in which the NGKA began to find its own identity and initiatives during the 1970s with its critique of unjust political structures and intercultural witness across geographical boundaries. Having done that, it is time to investigate personal contributions and initiatives made by Rev. Rammala to this mission project.

If we were to categorize Rev. Rammala between what Mugambi (1998:145ff.) calls salvationists and liberationists, he would occupy a position between these two positions but slightly closer to the former. Rev. Rammala has been a deeply spiritual person though he made a tremendous contributions to development projects during his missionary activities. He also

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1990:1).

attempted to listen to Mugambe's (1998:146) call for an integration of the salvationist and liberationist theological approaches. He contributes pages to an article writing on the spiritual life of the NGKA (1990). Here he reminds members of the NGKA that the origin of this church was rooted "in the 19th century mission which was dominated by Pietism. Pietism, as we know, taught and stressed the fact that only the soul of a human being is important. Things have changed and circumstances changed with the times, so there is a need to look at the spiritual life of the NGKA in perspective. Missionary personnel did not only look after the soul of the people to whom they brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but they also looked after their health, education and daily needs" (Rammala 1990:125). He went on to lament the fact that the prayer meetings that the NGKA used to have during the week, such as Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays afternoons have died off (Rammala 1990:125). At a certain instances, Rammala (1990:126-27) warns against those who, in their preaching, emphasize the liberation struggle at the expense of the Gospel. He asked "do we offer our congregations bread or stones in our sermons" (1990:127).

The situation as explained above, will help in seeing the nature of his missionary initiatives in Botswana. In this sense, it is interesting to determine whether Rev. Rammala ever embarked on some initiatives apart from parameters that were prescribed by the doctrinal and structural traditions of the NGKA.

There are notable personal contributions made by Rev. Rammala to the mission of his church in Botswana. Some of these include the fact that he also used children as agents of mission. As has been noted (cf. 5.3.1.a), he made Bushmen children part of his family visitation programmes as he moved from settlement to settlement. The use of children in mission is important for various reasons. Included are firstly, the fact that it will have a strong impact in their lives as they grow up, and it can be an excellent investment for future mission. Secondly, children can easily transfer the Gospel message to their parents. Thirdly, it can assist in the introduction of the benefits of permanent settlement to their parents. The importance of children in mission could also be seen in the actions of Jesus when He emphasised that the

Kingdom of God also belongs to them and that they should be allowed to come to Him (Mat. 19:13-15).

Rev. Rammala also initiated and participated actively in community development projects. The literacy classes he organised are but some of the many projects that indicate his commitment to the concept of the totality of life (cf. 5.3.1.d). Based on the context of the educational level of the Bushmen, he extended the duration of catechumen class from one year to three years (cf. 5.3.1.e). Despite the material poverty, in that there were no church buildings at earlier stages, Rev. Rammala organised worship services under the trees (cf. 5.3.1.e).

On the other hand he was very careful not to move too far away from the tradition of his church in some instances. Though he wished that the holy communion be celebrated as often as possible (cf. 5.3.1.e), this never happened. The fact that his successor complained that certain practices of his church were impractical indicated his respect for his church law. For instance, it has been mentioned (cf. 5.3.1.g) how Rev. Seitlheko complained about the age limit set by the NGKA on child baptism. He appealed to his church to relax the law in order to accommodate children older than six in baptism.

Rev. Seitlheko also complained about the tradition of prescribing reading materials for the catechumens saying that it was impractical within the context of high illiteracy.

Although Rev. Rammala saw the need for medical attention to the Bushmen (cf. 5.3.1.c), he could not introduce a healing session in his liturgy. This was indicative of the fact that he wanted to be as faithful as possible to his church tradition where healing ministry was overshadowed by preaching.

#### **6.4 REV. RAMMALA, A MISSIONARY OF A POOR NGKA**

The financial situation of this church has been described in the study. In addition, S.D.

Maluleke (1998:12), in assessing the financial situation of the NGKA, pointed out the poverty gap between rural and urban URCSA congregations and the causes thereof. He indicated that almost 90% of rural congregations comprise women and children, most of whom are unemployed. He further said that they and the urban churches are not being equally subsidised by the white churches. Despite this poor financial situation, Rev. Rammala was determined to work under all sorts of conditions to make his missionary story a success. He was aware of the need to build hospitals for the Bushmen, but a lack of resources prevented him from doing anything about it. He, however, supported hospital projects that were under the auspices of other denominations such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Maun and Mochudi (cf. 5.3.1.c).

On the educational front, Rev. Rammala wanted to build schools for the Bushmen children but could not because of financial constraints. He however supported every effort towards providing education. For instance, the New Xanagas boarding school enjoyed his support and cooperation.

Rev. Rammala couldn't erect church buildings as he wished due to the problems in question. His courageous nature however, enabled him to organise church services under the trees (cf. 5.3.1.e). There are however, no indications that he ever creatively dealt with the situation of poverty with which he was confronted in terms of eradicating that poverty.

## **6.5 REV. RAMMALA AND GENDER ISSUES**

Having observed the difficult conditions under which Rev. Rammala worked as a result of the poverty of his church, it is also necessary to analyse his approach to gender issues.

The NGKA during the time of Rev. Rammala's mission (i.e the 1970s) was insensitive to gender issues. The general atmosphere in South Africa which surrounded Rev. Rammala was generally patriarchal as was epitomized by the apartheid parliament that comprised mainly of

men except Mrs. Helen Suzman, a member of an opposition party. A change in this situation emerged with the dawn of democracy in 1994. From then on, the presence of women was a common practice in parliament and they were employed in senior government positions.

Churches were late-comers to the issue of female empowerment. It is true that "to its shame, the church has simply not responded to the campaign of solidarity with women with the same enthusiasm as the new government has done" (Challenge 1998:21).

The NGKA during the early 1970s was completely male dominated. All positions of influence were reserved for men. As is seen in 5.3.1.a, Rev. Rammala did not see any difference between men and women in terms of executing God's missionary responsibilities. It was mentioned in this study that he even believed that women could do better than men (cf. 5.3.1.a).

It was also noted how he freely used women as agents of mission in Botswana. Ms Maria Xhari, as explained in 5.3.1.a, became a leading figure in conducting family services. She was educationally prepared by the church and ended up being an assistant teacher at a primary school. Other women who were educationally empowered by Rev. Rammala's mission were Christina Hendricks, Soutie Teye, Veronica Dade to mention but a few as has been noted in this study (see 5.3.1.d). The role played by Rev. Rammala's first wife, Sara, and his present wife Mathilda were enormous in his mission (see 5.3.1.h). The contribution made by Ms Verena Venter has also been outstanding (cf. 5.3.1.d).

Rev. Rammala seems to have introduced women's issues to the then conservative NGKA when things were still tough. The roles that he gave to women in his missionary programmes indicated the value he attached to them. Apart from this, he played an important role in the empowerment of women judging by the number of women he encouraged to go to school and who ultimately occupied senior positions in Botswana government and society. Judging from S.D. Maluleke's (1998) analysis of rural congregations, if "almost 90% of its membership are

women and children" then the former should play a leading role in the church.

## **6.6 NGKA MISSION IN BOTSWANA AFTER REV. RAMMALA: FUTURE GUIDELINES**

### **6.6.1 Rev. Joshua Seitlheko and other missionaries**

In light of all the issues discussed above, it is important to evaluate the mission of Rev. Rammala immediately after he left Ghanzi. More than 70 people were won for the Lord at the end of his mission. Rev. Seitlheko (Report to S-TVL CVV 1987:1) was precise in indicating that the number had risen to 78. We however cannot form a clear picture of a post-Rammala mission without looking at the experiences of Rev. Seitlheko, the long serving missionary who succeeded him. After Rev. Rammala's departure apart from Rev. Seitlheko, the following missionaries served in the NGKA mission in Western Botswana. Rev. Johan Smuts was ordained with Rev. Seitlheko and served until 1984. He was succeeded by Rev. Andries Selamolela who also stayed for a short period. In 1988 Rev. Gawie Joubert filled his position. At the time of writing of this work, Revs. Seitlheko and Joubert are the serving missionaries of the church in Western Botswana (Cilliers 1990:3).

According to the survey report compiled by Rev. Seitlheko in 1985, it was noted that the settlement project created a lot of mission work as the Bushmen were concentrated in one accessible area. There were a number of difficulties that affected their work:

- a) The level of illiteracy was high.
- b) Some farmers were not cooperative and were ill-treating their workers.
- c) Other population groups such as the Kgalagadi and Hereros increased in numbers in villages around the Ghanzi district. These groups belonged to the AICs which posed problems for these missionaries.
- d) The roads were still as bad as they were during Rev. Rammala's time. This had a

detrimental effect on the mission vehicles.

- e) The number of outposts increased.
- f) The traveling allowance was noted to be inadequate.
- g) Lack of church buildings caused frustration and,
- i) The liturgy was uncontextual.

Recommendations included the following:

- a) Rental of houses to generate revenue for the mission.
- b) The need for church buildings.
- c) Concentration on evangelism in populated areas.
- d) Use of audio-visual aids.
- e) The need for evangelical campaigns to add new spice to preaching.
- f) Amendments to the admission of new members and baptism for infants.
- g) The need for a contextual liturgy.
- h) Increased travelling allowance (Survey Report 1985).

In the light of this report, it is apparent that these missionaries still found the situation in need of attention after Rev. Rammala's departure. They appear to have been more radical than their predecessor in effecting changes and since it was difficult to work under the conditions which he did not question. They also challenged the more traditional practices of the NGKA more consistently than Rev. Rammala had done.

### **6.6.2 Future Guidelines**

Having looked at the contribution of the NGKA missionaries in Botswana after Rev. Rammala, some guidelines for future involvement will be suggested.

God is the subject of mission which has been the case since the Old Testament period. Every witness has its origin in God and this qualifies Him as the author of mission. The Old Testament indicates this by exposing what God rather than human beings did (Bosch 1980:75). This concept is further expanded by J.J. Kritzinger (1971:39) who phrases it as follows:

*Van die Ou Testament af was Hy wat met sy uitverkore volk gewerk het om hulle te vorm tot sy instrument. Daarna stuur Hy die Seun om objektief in die verlossingswerk te kom verrig; dan die missio van die Gees om hierdie werk subjektief tot verlossingswerk te maak; en deur Hom stuur Hy Sy Kerk uit.*

The above quote indicates that God is at the centre of mission and He is in fact a missionary God. If God sends His church out for mission, then this means that every church is expected to carry out this mandate. From these factors, it is clear that if mission belongs to God, churches as carriers of it are expected to guard against the distortion of this responsibility for 'impure motives' (Verkuyl 1978:168). Bosch (1980:239) laments how the motive, foundation and aim of mission have been distorted. Maybe, the other cause of this situation is that "every religious community is at least potentially or incipiently missionary, in the sense that it is concerned about its public image and credibility, "what people will think of us?" (Kritzinger 1995:368). Churches lack the divine sense of vocation that can move the world and impact on the programmes of change.

The missionary mandate has been distorted for reasons such as, political, financial, imperial, economic and racist factors. The NGKA, being a poor church, appeared to have guarded itself against most of these evils during its mission in Western Botswana. From this concept of *missio dei*, two conclusions can be reached, firstly that mission is God's property which He has entrusted to the church. The church should therefore guard against all distortions of this

responsibility. Secondly, every church has a missionary responsibility, no matter the conditions in which it finds itself.

The NGKA (today called URCSA), should continue with intercultural mission. Attention should not only be directed at the Bushmen in Botswana but to all people on our doorsteps in South Africa. In this case, a 'mission in reverse' should also be considered. By this I mean that the URCSA as a church that originated from the Third World, should in the concept of *missio dei*, take the Gospel back to the people of Western origin. The concept of 'mission in reverse' is what has also been emphasised by Mulemfo (1997:101) who called it 'mission in return' or 'mission to the North' when referring to the 'two-way relationship' between the Church of Sweden and those to whom they have been doing mission work in other parts of the world. If the church in Sweden can experience "spiritual crisis or poverty" (Mulemfo 1997:103), it is possible that the DRC and other churches of Western abstraction (cf. 2.3) may experience the same. Holistic mission which takes prophetic issue seriously should therefore be followed.

#### 6.6.2.2 *Financial independence*

The need for financial independence is important for any church. It has been noted that for the 'three selves formula' of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson (Verkuyl 1978:52-53), it is financial independence that gave rise to problems in most *younger churches*<sup>54</sup>. Though these churches succeeded admirably in self-propagation and self government, self support remained a problem.

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54 T.S. Maluleke (1995:4) defines the concept of 'younger churches' as a synonym for 'black churches'. He further differentiates between the 'older and younger churches' and continues to define it as implying 'white and black churches'. Kgatla (1988:109) also used the phrase 'young churches'. Though he didn't specifically define its meaning. The implication was that he was referring to the black churches since he used the term to refer to churches in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South India during the mid-nineteenth century (cf.1.3.4g).

As can be seen from this study, the NGKA is a victim of circumstance but despite this fact, it found a means of carrying out its responsibility for the *missio Dei* that it was entrusted with as a church. The zeal of the NGKA to undertake God's mission despite its financial constraints is indicative of the fact that nothing can withstand a church with a missionary vision from executing its missionary duty. Despite this fact, the execution of *missio Dei* doesn't imply that one needs to explore across the borders of one's country but has to start at home.

A church without financial independence and strength, runs the risk of being dictated to by its financial sponsors. The URCSA should guard itself against this weakness and strive for financial autonomy. If there are congregations which do not want to accept their own financial responsibilities, who still cling to the DRC for sponsorship (Maluleke S.D 1998:15), chances for independence are limited. For this reason, such congregations will be like babies for years (Maluleke, S.D. 1998:22).

#### 6.6.2.3 *Clear ecumenical vision*

A clear ecumenical vision is important for every denomination, more especially as a guide for their missionaries' relation with other partners. The ecumenical position of the NGKA during Rev. Rammala's missionary period appears to have been stereotypical, when judged by the 1980 Church Order of the Southern Transvaal Synod (Article 59). The relation with other churches is limited to churches of Reformed and Protestant Christian confessions:

*\*Die ekumeniese bande te handhaaf met alle kerke van Gereformeerde belydenis, buite Ned. Geref. Kerkverband;*

*\*Sover dit moontlik en prakties is, kontak te soek met ander kerke van algemeen Protestants-Christelike belydenis in ooreenstemming met die roeping van die kerk om in gehoorsaamheid aan die Heilige Skrif daarna te strewen om die eenheid van die gelowiges te bevorder en te bestendig.*

The limited ecumenical approach of the NGKA restricted this church to cooperate only with churches of Reformed and general Protestant confession. It is apparent that English speaking churches and others such as the AICs were not even in the picture. The latter were even regarded as the objects of the NGKA mission. This is apparent in the question of church presbytery report forms which reads:

*Wat doen die kerkraad en gemeente om lede van onafhanklike kerke met die Evangelie te dien? (Question 3, Form K C, VGK, S-TVL Synod).*

Though Rev. Rammala seemed to experience no problem in his relation with the AICs, his successor Rev. Seithleko, as had been noted in this study, did question their theological interpretation (cf. 5.3.1.c). Judging from the above incidents, mission bodies need to widen their ecumenical structures to cooperate with other churches.

#### *6.6.2.4 Flexibility on traditional church structures*

Problems experienced by NGKA missionaries may lead one to conclude that some conservative church traditions bind the hands of missionaries and limit their activities, since they need to ask for approval for initiatives they may have. At times the missionaries find themselves facing contexts which differ from those they know and for this reason they need to change certain traditional procedures to address their new contexts.

The experiences of the NGKA mission interpreted through the eyes of the complaints of Rev. Rammala's successor, reveal this situation as had been noted in this study. It is noted how problematic were practices such as the age limits on baptismal admission and the frustration about the need to extend the duration of catechetical instruction class inter alia (cf. 5.3.1g).

In the light of this, missionaries can function better if they are given enough space for their initiatives on the bases of the new contexts which they face in their work. Rev. Rammala,

unlike his successors tried to keep himself within the parameters of the NGKA tradition.

#### 6.6.2.5 *Sensitivity on gender issues*

The fact that women occupy more of a centre stage in church matters and structures (Masuku 1998a:3; Masuku 1998b:1ff) indicates that mission bodies and churches need to re-evaluate their programmes in a very serious light. During the times of Rev. Rammala's missionary activities in Western Botswana, the attitude of the NGKA was biased in favour of men, especially in positions of power:

*Alleen belydende manlike lidmate van die gemeente, wat bekendstaan as persone wat onberispelik is in leer en wandel ooreenkomstig die eise van die Skrif mag as ouderlinge of diakens verkies word (Art.13, 2: 1980, S-Tvl.)*

Rev. Rammala, as is noted in this study, appeared to have promoted gender equality. This is clear from his understanding that the agents of mission could be women who were employed without being discriminated against. Rammala also promoted a number of women by facilitating their access to education and employment prospects (cf. 5.3.1.a & d).

Every congregation that is involved in mission is obliged to take gender issues seriously. Mission bodies have mostly been dominated by men and the NGKA through Rev. Rammala indicated the importance of women in mission. This meant that Rev. Rammala went a step further than his church tradition by empowering women on equal note with men. It is not only the NGKA which is lacking in this respect but other churches as well. For instance, the ordination of women is a contentious issue in most churches (Challenge 1998:20). In the light of this, the NGKA and other churches, need to empower women in terms of mission responsibilities by sending them to theological training and opening the doors of responsibilities for them in the churches.

## 6.7 CONCLUSION

An overview of this study and the sources consulted, make it abundantly clear that no thorough study of the NGKA has ever been undertaken before, let alone a study of its mission work. For this reason, the main sources of information came from reports, anniversary documents, articles, minutes, churches laws, etc. It saddening that a church with such a long and illustrious history could up to now not have a monograph dedicated to it. This situation creates scope for further research.

Apart from the missionary dimension of this church as has been seen through the activities of Rev. Rammala, there are other aspects which could still be researched. Areas such as the role of women in the church are interesting and important since they (women) have been regarded as pillars concerning finances. There are outstanding women who stood behind male ministers and their successes but in the end, acknowledgement was accorded to men.

Research into the activities of a male missionary can trigger many questions in the light of what was said above. Rev. Rammala was selected on the grounds that he was the only outstanding missionary of NGKA who undertook mission work in a country other than his own. He literally crossed borders to take the Gospel to people of a different culture and worldview from his own. By this I don't mean that this literal crossing over of frontiers in the praxis of mission is still completely relevant today. This is because I believe in the concept of "mission in six continents" and that of "die missionêre gemeente" (Krizinger J.J 1971:42). Holistic mission is also part of this process and in this case, prophetic witness which touches on issues such as politics, gender issues, economics, etc, is important. I would therefore encourage other researchers to explore other areas such as the contributions made by women in the mission life of this church.

## APPENDIX 1

**Scriptural text: John 2:1-11<sup>55</sup>**

**Text verse: John 2:7**

*"En Jesus sê vir hulle, "maak die waterkanne vol water". En hulle het hulle tot bo toe volgemaak".*

### **Inleiding**

Gemeente van ons Here Jesus Christus, ons teksvers vanmore is volgens die evangelie van Johannes 2:7, met hierdie woorde: En Jesus sê vir hulle; "maak die waterkanne vol water, en hulle het hul bo toe volgemaak".

Ons het in hierdie skrifgedeelte waaruit ons net nou gelees het gehoor hoedat ons Heiland die Here Jesus Christus na 'n bruilof uitgenooi is, en omdat Jesus Christus die bruilof as 'n heilige instelling van God beskou het ook die bruilof bygewoon het. Ons lees dat ook die moeder van Jesus Christus, Maria was daar so wel as sy dissipels.

Ja, ons kan verwag dat daar veel mense by die bruiloffees maar was maar en ongelukkig is daar mislukking. Die wyn het opgeraak en die gasheer weet nie wat om te doen nie. Die moeder van Jesus het van dit gehoor en gaan toe na Jesus haar seun en sê aan hom; "hulle het geen wyn nie", Jesus sê vir haar; "vrou wat het ek met u te doen? my tyd het nog nie gekom nie". M.a.w. sê Jesus Christus, Moeder u gaan my nie sê wanneer om 'n wonderwerk wou te doen nie. Dit is nog nie tyd nie. Sy moeder sê vir die bedienaars; "net wat Hy vir julle sê moet julle doen".

Ons verstan dat daar klipwaterkanne daar was en Jesus sê vir hulle; "maak die waterkanne vol water". En hulle het hul toe volgemaak.

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55 The sermon was preached in Afrikaans in October 1969 at the congregation of Germiston during a Sunday church service.

Hierdie woorde gemeente van die Here Jesus Christus, bring ons tot ons tema: Die verandering van die water na wyn deur Christus. Ons teksvers sê; "hulle het hulle tot bo toe volgemaak". Toe Christus aan die dienaars sê; maak die waterkanne vol met water het die bedienaars hom nie vrae gevra nie en hulle het in die geloof gehandel.

As ons die ongelowige mense was, sou ons aan Christus gesê het; maar ons het nie water nodig nie, ons het wyn nodig. Ja, die diensknegte het geloof gehad Christus en toe die klipwater kanne vol water gegooi tot hulle oorgeloop het.

Die mense van Afrika, die Afrikaan kan nie iets volgens Westerse maniere volgooi nie, maar maak iets vol tot dat oorvloei. Die Here Jesus Christus het die geleentheid gehad om sy eerste wonderwerk te doen. Hy het die water verander na wyn.

### ***Stilwyse manier van Jesus Christus.***

Watter les leer ons van die diensknegte? Ons teksvers sê: *Hulle het die klipwaterkanne tot bo toe volgemaak.*

Gemeente van ons Here Jesus Christus, as ons aan Christus glo as die seun van God dan moet ons geloof ware geloof wees sonder twyfel. As ons vir die Here werk dan moet ons as getuies van die Here Jesus Christus getuig sonder rus. Ons moet ons beker as getuies volmaak tot hulle oorloop.

Die manier waarop die bedienaars die klipwaterkanne volgemaak tot hulle oorgeloop het is 'n les vir ons dat wanneer ons bid dan moet ons bid tot dat ons bekere van gebed oorvloei

### ***Europa en Nederland***

God dank dat die mense in Europa veral in ons moederland Nederland ook die gebod van Christus gehoor het ook die Macedoniesese roepstem gehoor het 300 jaar terug en vir ons die evangelie na donker Afrika gebring het. Die mense in Europa het ons sendelinge na Afrika gestuur, vir ons mediese inrigtings kom oprig, opvoeding en beskawing vir ons na donker Afrika gebring. Ons, ook gemeente van die Here Jesus, die Here Jesus sê vir van more: Gooi

jou beker van berou oor jou sondes vol, gooi dit vol tot dat dit oorvloei.

God dank dat die Hollanders die bevel van die Here Jesus gehoor het en dit uitgedra het, toe Christus gesê het (Mat.28:19): "*Gaan dan heen, maak dissipels van al die nasies, en .....*"

### **Die Here Jesus seën ons na ons sy bevel uitgedra het.**

Na die bedienaars gedoen het volgens Jesus Christus se instruksies, het Jesus se eerste wonderwerk gedoen, water na wyn verander. Jesus as een van die gaste besef dat die gaste in die nood is.

### **Stil wyse waarop Christus gehandel het.**

Ons sou verwag dat Jesus Christus al die mense by die bruilof fees sou tot aandag geroep het so dat hulle sou seën wanneer hy sy eerste wonder doen. Soos Farao sou ons verwag dat Christus die waarseers van die land sou roep maar, in sy stilwys doen Christus sy eerste wonderwerk.

Jesus deur hierdie wonderwerk het sy heerlijkheid openbaar. Jesus Christus het openbaar dat Hy deur God die Vader na die aarde toe gestuur om die wereld te verlos en nie om water in wyn te verander nie. Christus het gekom om die wereld met God te versoen. Verder ook om die natuur en die lewe te heilig na dit deur die sonde onheilig is.

### **Mense wording**

Daarom het die Here Jesus Christus mens geword om die mensdom uit die sondige wereld te verlos. Ja omdat die dienaars dit gedoen het wat Jesus hulle beveel het, het hy hulle geseën. Aan die blindgebore man sê Jesus: 'Gaan was jouself in die bad van Siloam, en hy het gegaan en hom gewas, en toe hy kom sien hy.

### **Toepassing**

Aan ons ook gee Christus Jesus aan ons bevele om ons bekere van geloof te gaan vol maak

tot dit oorfloei. Laat ons ook as Christene die bevele van Christus uitvoer. Ons bekers van gebed volgooi tot hulle oorfloei. Ons bekers van bekering volgooi tot hulle oorloop en dan sal Christus ons seën.

Mag die Christene in Europa ook in Nederlands ook die bevele van Jesus Christus uitvoer om die evangelie te dra na die heidenlande (Gal.v1:9).

**Amen**

## APPENDIX 2

Scripture reading: Isaia 61:1-11<sup>56</sup>

Text verse: 61:1

*"UMoya weNkosi uJehova uphezu kwami, ngokuba uJehova ungingcobile ukuba ngishumayele izindaba ezinhle kwabathotshisiweyo"*

### Exposition

1. Abaprofeti babegcotywa uMoya oNgcwele ngasonke isikhathi. Ubatshela abafanele ukukusho, nabafanele ukukwenza.
2. uJesu Krestu wa ba nomoya ongcwele ngasonke isikhathi. Lapho uJesu engena emsebenzini umoya ongcwele wahlela phezu kwakhe njengejuba (Mathew 3:16).
3. Nathi ke uJesu usithembisa umoya o ngcwele. Umoya ongcwele uzosihola, usiphe amandla wokuhamba kulonyaka omusha. Umoya oyingcwele usikhulula komubi nase mandleni ka Satane, ukuze sisebenzele uJesu nje ngomkhululi.

### Application

1. Nathi ke makristu lapho singena onyakeni omusha, uNkulunkulu noNkulunkulu ndodana besithembisa umkhululi uMoya oIngcwele.
2. Nathi uJesu uya sithuma, usithuma ngamazwi athi; yamukelani uMoya oIngcwele. Nathi uJesu uyasithuma ukusela abanye izindaba ezimnandi, IVANGELI.
3. Uzimisele yini ukuyisela abanye ivangeli, izindaba ezimnandi zokuthi uJesu umkhululi

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<sup>56</sup> This sermon was preached during January 1970, two years before Rev. J.L. Rammala went to Botswana.

usefikile yini na? Ukuze nabanye babone ububi bezono zabo, kodwa esiphambanweni bamukele uJesu umkhululi wabo yini na?

**Scripture reading: Isaiah 61: 1-11**

**Text verse: Isaia 61:1**

*The sovereign Lord has filled me with His Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me to bring Good News to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to announce release to captives and freedom to those in prison (Good News Bible).*

### **Exposition**

1. The prophets were anointed by the spirit all the times. He told them what they should say and do.
2. Jesus Christ was also filled with the Holy Spirit always. When Jesus started with his work, the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a form of a dove (Matt.3:16).
3. Even to us, Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will lead us, and give us strength to move during that new year. The Holy Spirit will liberate us from the evil even from the power of satan in order to serve Jesus as the liberator.

### **Application**

1. Even we as Christians as we enter the new year, God and God the son promised us the liberator, the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus sends us as well to carry these words that say; accept the Holy Spirit. Jesus sends us as well to carry this Good News (of evangelisation) to other people.
3. Are you prepared to carry this Good News (Evangelion) to other people that Jesus Christ as the liberator has arrived? So that the others may see their sins and on the cross and receive

Jesus, their liberator?

## APPENDIX 3

**Scripture reading: Genesis 5: 21-27<sup>57</sup>**

**Text verse: Genesis 5: 24**

*"Henoke a tsamaea le Molimo; 'me a ba sieo, hobane Molimo oa na oa mo nka".*

### Exposition

1. Mona re bala le ho utlwa ka ha bophelo ba bohlokwa ba monna wa Modimo Henoko.
2. Henoko ona a phela pele ho morwallo wa metsi. O bile ntata bara le baradi.
3. Mme temana ya rona e re bolella ka moo bophelo ba hae bo neng bo le ka teng, bophelo boneng bo tletse mehlala ya bokresete.
4. Taba e totobetsang ke hore bophelo ba Henoko e bile ho tsamaya le Modimo jwaleka Enoko kapa Abrahamana kapa jwaleka Paulos a re ruta, ke hore re kgahlise Modimo, mme e be Modimo o re lokolla ditlamong tsa sebe, o re lokolla ditlamong tsa lefatshe, ore lokisetsa bophelo bo sa feleng.
5. Henoko o ile a tsamaya le Modimo mme Modimo wa mo nkela ho ona. Le rona etshwanetse e be takatso ya rona, ho kgahlisa Modimo le ho tsamaya le Modimo.
6. Ho tsamaya le Modimo ke se lebeletsweng ho rona bophelong bona.
7. Mohla re hlahang pela setulo sa kahlolo sa Morena Modimo ha reno botswa hore o ile wa tuma ha kaakang, kapa wa etsa dintho dife tse kgolo lefatsheng, tjhe. Ho tla shejwa hore

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57 This sermon was preached at the funeral of Mr. Hosea Matlala during 1970.

otsamaile jwang lefatsheng. Na o ile wa tsamaya le Modimo kapa jwang?

8. Ka bomadimabe ba bangata ba rona ha e ya ba bophelo ba hotsamaya le Modimo empa ba ithetse ka ho tshepa hore ba tla ya lehodimong.

### **Application**

1. Ho Hosea Matlala re ka re bophelo ba hae e bile ho tsamaya le Modimo. Ka mohau wa Modimo ka Jesu Kreste, o amohetse Jesu krete, obile mokreste.

2. O ratile bana ba hahe bokreste jwale ka Henoko. O tlisitse ba bangata ho Morena Jesu ka ba ka la mehlala le dipolelo tsa hae.

3. Henoko o ile a paka ka Modimo ho lefatse le neng le ya timelong, a ba kganya e kganyang. Hosea Matlala hara lefatshe la Germiston le yang timelong a paka Jesu Kreste.

4. Thuto ekgolo ke hore re dumela ho modimo ka Jesus Kreste, re tsamaye le Modimo re tle renkelwe hae le rona? Ya e song ho butle Modimo ho na jwale ke nako. Inehle ho Jesus Kreste.

**Scripture reading: Genesis 5: 21-27**

**Text verse: 5: 24**

*"He (Enoch) spent his life in fellowship with God, and then he disappeared, because God took him away".*

### **Exegesis**

1. Here we read and learnt about the life of a very important person of God, Enoch.

2. Enock lived before the Great Flood. He was the father of sons and daughters.
3. This verse informs us about the way his life was, the life filled with Christian examples.
4. The obvious thing is that the life of Enoch was to walk in the company of God like, Abraham or like the way Paul teaches us, that we should please God, so that it may be God who liberate us from the chains of sin, the chains of the world, who prepares us eternal life.
5. Enoch walked with God and God took him to where He was. Even ourselves let it be our wish to please God and to walk in his company.
6. To walk with God is what is expected from us in this life.
7. The day we will be appearing before the seat of judgement of God, we would not be asked how famous have we been, or of the great things I did on earth, no! Judgement will be of your movements on earth. Have you been walking with God or how?
8. Unfortunately, for most of us it has not been the life of walking with God and they deceive themselves by saying they will get into the kingdom of heaven.

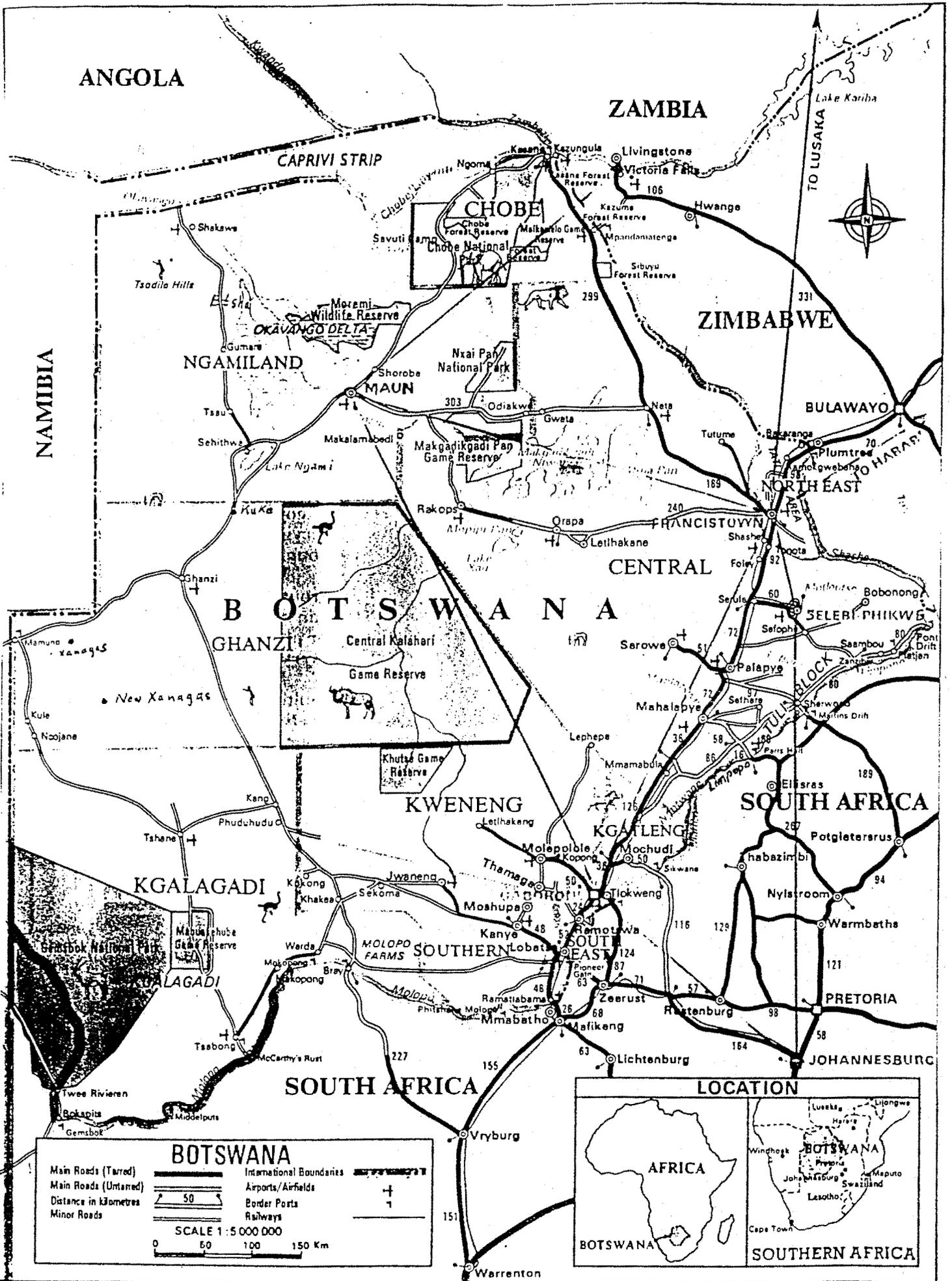
### **Application**

1. From Hosea Matlala we can conclude that his life was to walk with the Lord. Due to the grace of God through Jesus Christ, he accepted Jesus Christ, he was a Christian.
2. He taught his children Christianity like Enoch. He brought many people to the Lord Jesus Christ because of his exemplary life and speeches.
3. Enoch testified about God in the world that was going astray, he became a bright light. Hosea Matlala testified about Jesus Christ in the world of Germiston that was going astray.

4. The biggest question is that are we walking with God through Jesus Christ, are we walking with God to be taken to him too? Those who have not turned to God, now is the time. Offer yourself to Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX 4

MAP OF BOTSWANA



APPENDIX 5

AKTE VAN BEVESTIGING VAN LERAARS



# AKTE VAN BEVESTIGING VAN LERAARS

Aangesien aan die Actuaris vertoon is die Akte van Toelating tot die Predikdiens van-  
weë die NED. GERE.F. Kerk, gedateer te op PIETERSBURG.  
aan die Weleerwaarde Heer JONAS L. R. RAMMALA; aangesien die  
Formulier volgens Vorm 5 onderteken is, gedateer 11 MAART 1961, dus ook  
die Wette van die Ned. Herv. of Geref. Kerk van Suid-Afrika; aangesien dit gebyk het dat  
Sy Weleerwaarde die beroep van die gemeente aangeneem het en deur die konsulent van die  
Gemeente, die Leraar E. M. PHATUDI, berig gegee is dat die bevestiging  
met oplegging van die hande, deur die Weleerwaarde Heer E. M. PHATUDI,  
L. S. RAMMALA, J. R. LIPHOKO, N. P. M. PRINSLOO, P. D. MNISI,  
P. M. MAHLATSI, S. M. NTHETHE, J. G. GROVE & J. H. D. LINDE  
in die Gemeente NIGEL geskied het op 11 MAART 1961,  
SUIKERBOSRAND  
so word deur die ondergetekende in naam en vanweë die Sinode van die Ned. Geref. Sending-  
kerk van Transvaal aan die Welcerw. Heer J. L. R. RAMMALA hierdie Akte  
van Bevestiging uitgereik. Die Sinode verlang van die bevestigde Leraar dat hy al die dele van sy  
Evangellewerk, die prediking, die katekisasie, die bediening van die Doop en van die Nagmaal,  
en wat verder daarby behoort, ooreenkomstig die Heilige Woord van God en die verordening  
van die Ned. Herv. of Geref. Kerk van Suid-Afrika, sal verrig; dat hy dit sal doen op 'n wyse  
wat 'n getroue herder en leraar wat ook sig deur woord en wandel, betaam, sodat die salige uit-  
werkinge van die Evangelie onder die seën van die Heer bevorder mag word.

Die Sinode verlang dat die Gemeente aan wie hy as Herder en Leraar gegee is, hom die  
eer, liefde en vertroue sal betoon wat hy terwille van sy werk verdien.

Vir sowel Leraar as Gemeente word daartoe die uitgebreide wense en gebede ontboesem.

Gegee te FLORIDA op 8 SEPT 1961

ACTUARIUS SYNODI:

J. M. de B.

APPENDIX 6

REV. RAMMALA VISITORS' RECORD BOOK

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	
26-10-77	Jay + Linda Laaring	P.O. Box 33 Gaborone	114 N. 9th Akron, PA. 1950
26-10-77	Willie Kallens	12 Signal Ave Doramin Gaborone	Blinkwater, #141 Kusewef Gaborone Bay.
26-10-77	M. Masire	P.O. Box 70 Gaborone	Please write near the zoo look
26-10-77	J.C. Maganin	P.O. Box 13 Ghanzi	accomplish the U.P.
26-10-77	J.L.T. MONTSHO	P.O. Box 26 Ghanzi	LOVE <sup>OF PEACE</sup> IS VICTORIOUS
5-11-77	b.b. Mahube	Box 83 Ghanzi	Good to see both of you. May God bless your work
4-2-78	Roy Bielecher	MCC., Akron Pa, USA. Box 33 c/o MCC	Thank you so much for a delightful visit!
16-5-78	Cathy Everingham	Gaborone, Botswana	Very very happy with the visit. may God bless you hardly to see you back. Congratulations means how long it has been
6-5-78	E. B. B. B.	Box 3830 Maseru	
3-6-78	Alice Connolly c/o	Box 29, LOBATSE	
4-6-78	Steve Bakerston	RQ Box 13 Ghanzi	631 Emerald London, Ont. Canada very happy to see you again
21-7-78	Norma J. Johnson	P.O. Box 37 Tsabong USA	Cassellon, N. Dak. It was very nice to meet you.
10-7-78	A. J. de Boer	Meppelweg 795 Den Haag, Holland	
8-7-78	O. O. PITSO	GANTSI DISTRICT Council P.O. Box 4, GANTSI	Pleasure meeting you.
28-7-1978	J. K. MONTSHO	Ghanzi District Council P.O. Box 4, Ghanzi	Good luck in your undertaking
28-7-1978	J.C. Maganin	P.O. Box 13, Ghanzi	Pleasure meeting new visitors

APPENDIX 7



REV. J.L.R. RAMMALA

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