

CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS: THE STORY OF BOPHUTHATSWANA AND ITS
INDEPENDENCE FROM 1977 TO 1994

by

MOKHELE JOHANNES SINGLETON MADISE

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PROMOTER: PROF W A SAAYMAN

JOINT PROMOTER: PROF D M BALIA

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Declaration

I declare that: CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS: THE STORY OF BOPHUTHATSWANA AND ITS INDEPENDENCE FROM 1977 TO 1994 is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

MJS Madise

Date

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Preface

I was born on 12 November 1967 with my twin brother in the Free State, in a village with a historical significance called Thaba-Nchu. My parents are both Christians who came from the Methodist Church, which is the denomination I belong to. My Primary and Secondary educational background dates back to 1974 to 1986, when I started in Taung Village Primary School (1974-1979) in Taung in the North West Province (then Northern Cape and later Bophuthatswana). From there I proceeded to an intermediate school which was known as Thate Molathwa Middle School (1980-1983) and completed my secondary education at Batlhaping High School from 1984 to 1986.

In 1987, I began tertiary education when I first started at the Federal Theological Seminary (FEDSEM) in Pietermaritzburg and completed my studies with them in 1989. I graduated with my Diploma in Theology in 1990. At FEDSEM I was influenced by scholars like Dr Simon Gqubule, Dr Khoza Mgojo, the late Dr Cecil Ngcokovane and Professor Lizo Jafta to pursue my studies beyond the seminary and the diploma level. There were two factors which made them influence me in this way, due to the fact that I was very young at that time and that I had shown commitment to my studies, as well as wanting me to grow intellectually in the field of theology. I took up the challenge and went to the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg where I registered for the Bachelor of Theology degree in 1991, completed it in 1993 and graduated in 1994.

Unlike many theologians I did not enter the ordained ministry and as a result I was not employed in the church. As a result I had to look for a job and I was employed in a platinum mine (Western Platinum Mine (Pty) Ltd) in Rustenburg from 1995 to 1997 where I worked as a labourer on the surface and later as a Human Resources Officer. I registered for the Master of Theology in the same year with the University of South Africa (UNISA). In March 1997 I left the mining industry to work in a steel industry in Rustenburg as a Personnel Manager. The company was liquidated at the end of the year and I had to stay unemployed for a year again until I was offered a post as an Academic Assistant in the Department of Church History by the Faculty of Theology at the Unisa on a contract that was to last for a

year in 1999.

In the same year I managed to attend an international conference where I read a paper which was my first publication. In the same year two of the lecturers at UNISA were leaving and there was a need to employ two more lecturers as there was going to be only one left. Due to my commitment to the department at that time I was asked to apply for the post and thereby stand a chance to face the Selection Committee. I was interviewed for the Junior Lecturer's post which I was ultimately granted after competing with other equally competent and aspiring young academics from other universities, including those who had studied with Unisa. In the year 2000, I graduated with a Master of Theology degree and continued to work as a junior lecturer; I have published a number of articles in accredited journals. I later became a lecturer with the same university, where I registered for the Doctor of Theology degree in 2003. To this day I am still committed to the University of South Africa.

Abbreviations

| | |
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| AD | Anno Domini |
| AGRICOR | Agricultural Corporation |
| AICs | African Initiated Churches |
| ANC | African National Congress |
| BDP | Bophuthatswana Democratic Party |
| BNP | Bophuthatswana National Party |
| BNDC | Bophuthatswana National Development Corporation |
| BOMIFRA | Bophuthatswana Ministers Fraternity |
| BOP | Bophuthatswana |
| BopTV | Bophuthatswana Television |
| CE | Common Era |
| CODESA | Convention for a Democratic South Africa |
| DRC | Dutch Reformed Church |
| FRELIMO | Frente de Libercao de Mocambique |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| JRC | Justice and Reconciliation Commission |
| LMS | London Missionary Society |
| NGK | Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk |
| NP | National Party |
| PPP | People's Progressive Party |
| TEC | Transitional Executive Council |
| TNP | Tswana National Party |
| SA | South Africa |
| SACC | South African Council of Churches |
| SAMA | South African Medical Association |
| SATSWA | South African Tswana Forum |
| UCCSA | United Congregational Church of Southern Africa |
| UCDP | United Christian Democratic Party |
| UDF | United Democratic Party |

UNIBO

University of Bophuthatswana

WAC

Winterveld Action Committee

WCC

World Council of Churches

ABSTRACT

The thesis is about the relationship between State and Church, taking note of alternative relations which existed over the ages. The government of Bophuthatswana declared their state to be Christian. The main emphasis was that the Batswana were religious people who were deeply Christian and thus the state was to become Christian as well. This was not separated from the issue of land which also was seen as a gift from God for them. Winterveld was used as a case study to show how the state was justifying its own actions to discriminate against non-Batswana from obtaining citizenship and denying them access to land. The transition period showed that the church stood on the other side of the fence when it supported changes that were sweeping South Africa and calling for the end of states such as Bophuthatswana. This saw the new secular state of South Africa coming into existence.

Key Terms

Bantustans, Batswana, Bophuthatswana, Christianity, Church, Independence, President, South Africa, State, Territory.

Summary

The 'Independence' of Bophuthatswana basically reflected the stamp of its creator, South Africa, and similar relations existed between state and church than in SA. The churches that were close to the government were not mission churches or churches affiliated to the South African Council of Churches (SACC). What this implied was that from the beginning the relationship between state and church in Bophuthatswana was focussed on Independent Churches and individual ministers from other churches. The non recognition of the SACC by Bophuthatswana led to the formation of Bophuthatswana Ministerial Fraternity (BOMIFRA). The latter movement was very close to the government of Bophuthatswana and even had some of its members serving in the cabinet. Some individual ministers were members of BOMIFRA and ministers of their churches at the same time. Those who belonged to the SACC affiliated churches would either leave the church to pursue politics in Bophuthatswana or join another church. Bophuthatswana did not recognise the ecumenical body of South Africa and it was no secret that the SACC was also not recognising that Bantustan.

Ministers from SACC aligned churches opened their church doors to movements that were believed to be politically unacceptable. Bophuthatswana also declared itself a Christian state though its constitution stated that all religions were recognised. The recognition of the other religions was something that was not visible. In most of the state celebrations and functions Christianity enjoyed a slot in the programme. These celebrations included those of the 'Independence day' of Bophuthatswana. As a result Bophuthatswana was more of Christian state than a secular state. Some ministers served both the church and the state at the same time. Christians and ministers from the mission churches who opposed the 'Independence' of Bophuthatswana mobilised themselves and the people demonstrating their rejection of the Bantustan. It became a revelation on 8 February 1988 with the attempted coup when South African Defence Force came to its rescue, and the fall of Bophuthatswana in 1994 when the Afrikaner Weerstandbeweging (AWB) attempted to save it again. Finally Bophuthatswana was no more and the new South Africa was born.