

MALLA MOE AND THE FOUNDING OF A NONDENOMINATIONAL MISSION IN SWAZILAND, 1893-1902

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Abstract

This article examines the early years of the career of Malla Moe (1863-1953), a Norwegian who served in the Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America (SAMNA) and played a key role in the opening of its field in Swaziland during the 1890s. Thematically, emphasis is placed on this lay missionary's decision to join the SAMNA's initial band of personnel who were commissioned to Southern Africa, her itinerant evangelism, her evolving attitudes towards the Swazi people and early delegation of responsibility to Swazi colleagues, and the impact of the Second Anglo-Boer War on her ministry. It is demonstrated that Moe, together with a small number of Scandinavian and English fellow missionaries (the majority of whom were women and unordained), responded creatively to the challenges of a hitherto largely unevangelised field and developed close ties with the Swazi, Afrikaans and other people in Swaziland.

1 INTRODUCTION

The history of nineteenth-century foreign missionary endeavours in Swaziland is a weakly developed field of scholarly enquiry that has developed on an uneven front. As research on this topic unfolds, missiologists, historians and other scholars will presumably shed more light on the diversity of denominational efforts, theological motivations, attitudes towards the indigenous Swazi people, etc. The role of women in the evangelisation of Swaziland might thereby come increasingly into the limelight. Indeed, their role was considerable. In the present article it is the intention of the author to take initial steps towards redressing the largely neglected history of a key woman who played a leading role both before and after 1900, the Norwegian Malla Moe (1863-1953) of the SAMNA. To date, almost nothing of a scholarly nature has been published about this missionary and little about the agency she served. She was the subject of a popular biography published in 1956, but that sanitised work by Maria Nilsen and Paul H Sheetz lacked analytical perspective and overlooked historiographically and missiologically pivotal elements of Moe's endeavours.ⁱ When one turns to the wider frames of Scandinavian free church missions in Swaziland and Zululand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one again finds almost nothing in the published literature – in stark contrast to the fairly extensive work that has long been done on the history of the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Church of Sweden Mission.ⁱⁱ This article is thus also intended as an initial step

towards filling one of the many lacunae in the history of the early evangelisation of Swaziland. Its chronological scope will encompass the first decade of Moe's career in Southern Africa, i.e. from 1892 until 1902. Thematically, the focus will be on her entry into the SAMNA, the decision of the nondenominational band of missionaries (with a majority of female members) of which she was a member to undertake work in Swaziland, her early perception and descriptions of the Swazi people, her itinerant mode of evangelisation and co-operation with indigenous colleagues, and the impact of the Second Anglo-Boer War on her ministry.

There is a relatively low ceiling on what can be known about Malla Moe, chiefly because the sources are sparse. The archives of The Evangelical Alliance Mission (the successor of the SAMNA) contain a small amount of material directly related to Moe and her colleagues during the period under consideration. Furthermore, her diary is preserved in the archives of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College. Supplementing these manuscripts are highly useful letters Moe wrote in Norwegian to the nondenominational Scandinavian-American Christian periodical *Evangelisten*, which served as a mouthpiece for the SAMNA and also published correspondence from several of her fellow missionaries in the SAMNA.

The importance of female missionaries in the saga of Scandinavian missions in Southern Africa has frequently been noted, not least in Karin Sarja's doctoral thesis of 2002 about the Swedish aspects of this topic.ⁱⁱⁱ Most of what has been written, however, has understandably focussed on their work in Zululand, colonial Natal and the Union of South Africa. Swaziland thus remains nearly a blank page. Furthermore, such Lutheran bodies as the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Church of Sweden Mission, which began their evangelisation of the Zulus in the 1840s and the 1870s respectively, have garnered the lion's share of scholarly attention while various Scandinavian (or Scandinavian-American) free church or nondenominational endeavours have received little attention. The groundbreaking work on Swedish women in the region has not been matched by a corresponding analysis on their Norwegian counterparts, which was nearly as great – especially during the nineteenth century. The importance of female missionaries from Norway is also historiographically significant in an international context, because it underscores how some of them served in leadership capacities long before 1961 when Ingrid Bjerkås (1901-1980) became the first woman to be ordained to the pastoral ministry in the state Lutheran church of their homeland. However, the significance of Moe's story also relates to the early evangelisation of Swaziland, not least because of the light it casts on such matters as missionary attitudes towards the Swazi people and European settlers and the ways in which Christianity was presented to the former.

2 FREDRIK FRANSON AND THE SAMNA

The SAMNA was a nondenominational undertaking that was launched by a globetrotting Swedish-American evangelist, Fredrik Franson (1852-1908). Born in Sweden, he emigrated to the United States of America in 1869 and, though not formally educated in theology, ministered to other Scandinavian

immigrants in Chicago under the auspices of the Chicago Avenue Church whose minister was the increasingly renowned American evangelist Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899). During this initial phase of his ministry, Franson (as had Moody) came under the influence of the futurist millenarianism which was popularised on both sides of the Atlantic by the Anglo-Irish evangelist John Nelson Darby (1800-1892). This eschatological school emphasised that none of the biblical prophetic events pertaining to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ had yet occurred but that His return, initially in the “secret rapture”, could be expected “at any time”. In the early 1880s Franson took his millenarian message to Sweden and Norway, where he helped to establish nonconformist evangelistic organisations which evolved into denominations; and later in that decade he did likewise elsewhere in Europe. Yet Franson regarded himself as nondenominational and accordingly his evangelism entailed training large numbers of lay men and women, regardless of denominational affiliation, to continue his campaigns.^{iv}

During his European ministry, Franson became aware of the call which the Yorkshireman James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905), who had founded the nonsectarian China Inland Mission in 1865, had issued for vastly enhanced evangelisation of the Chinese. Believing that he and other immigrants from the Nordic countries could contribute to this, Franson established the SAMNA in Chicago in 1890. The organisation would eventually lose much of its Scandinavian ethnic character and in the twentieth century become The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM). It commissioned its first band of 35 men and women for missionary service in China the following year.

3 MOE’S BACKGROUND IN NORWAY AND THE USA

Practically from the outset, however, the SAMNA declined to limit its vision to China. Already in 1892 it began to send missionaries to Southern Africa. Given the ethnic background of the SAMNA and the continuing ties of most of its early personnel to Scandinavia, this choice of field was hardly surprising. The Norwegian Missionary Society had been there since the 1840s and the Church of Sweden Mission since the late 1870s. Mella Moe was among the pioneering group of four Swedes and four Norwegians. She had been born on a farm in what is now the county of Sogn og Fjordane on the west coast of Norway and was baptised Petra Malena Moe. During the 1870s and 1880s, several revival preachers who represented the lay movement in the established Lutheran church (and took their name from the founder of the movement, Hans Nielsen Hauge [1771-1824]) visited the area and reportedly influenced Moe’s spiritual development. One of them was Christoffer O. Brøhaug (1841-1908), who was also her pastor after she and her younger sister Dorothea immigrated to Chicago in 1884. In that city Moe soon found employment as a maid and joined Brøhaug’s Trinity Lutheran Church, a relatively large congregation affiliated with Hauge’s Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, one of the most revivalistic of the five Norwegian-American Lutheran denominations which then existed. In 1891, Moe’s last full year in Chicago, Trinity Lutheran Church had 675 members and held no fewer than 180 services.^v However, she also worshipped at Moody’s Chicago Avenue Church and heard the revivalistic Congregationalist Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928), who would become its pastor in 1894, preach there. Moe remained at

least a nominal Lutheran,^{vi} but her spirituality was evidently attuned to revival campaigns well before she joined the SAMNA. Her involvement in it dates to January 1891 when she attended Franson's course for prospective evangelists in Chicago. Moe also participated in his course there early in 1892, when he asked her to volunteer for missionary service in the field he envisaged the SAMNA would open in Angola. She reportedly hesitated, suggesting that she first acquire more education locally at the new school which later became Moody Bible Institute. When Franson insisted that Moe prepare to leave for Africa without further preparation, she relented and entered the SAMNA.^{vii}

4 ESTABLISHING THE SWAZILAND FIELD

It was not the original intention of the small SAMNA band to establish a missionary presence in Swaziland. A son of the Methodist bishop William Taylor had convinced Franson to establish a station at Caconda in the highlands of the Portuguese colony of Angola. However, in March 1892 Franson decided against this, citing the poor state of communications in Angola and the presence of a Roman Catholic mission at Caconda as his reasons.^{viii} Otto Witt (1848-1923) a Swedish pastor who had launched the Church of Sweden Mission's work among the Zulus in 1878 but eventually left that body and served briefly in the inappropriately named and recently established Free East African Mission (FEAM), a nondenominational Scandinavian agency that operated exclusively in Durban and elsewhere in Natal^{ix} – suggested to Franson while on a trip to the United States that instead of Angola the SAMNA should send its missionaries to Matabeleland and evangelise the Basutu tribes there.^x The eight men and women consequently sailed via London to Durban and spent a week there before proceeding to the FEAM station at Ekutandaneni, where they acquired knowledge of the Zulu language.^{xi}

From there, one of the SAMNA missionaries (Andrew Haugerud) and a young Dane (Sofus Nielsen of the FEAM) trekked to Matabeleland in search of an appropriate site. They discovered that numerous other agencies had already undertaken evangelism there but were told that very little missionary work had been undertaken in Swaziland. That land-locked monarchy was undergoing a period of political instability which had arisen in part from foreign encroachments. In brief, the discovery in 1879 that parts of north-western Swaziland were auriferous prompted white settlers from Natal, the South African Republic and elsewhere to enter the country in search of economic gain. The Swazi government granted concessions to railway builders and other entrepreneurs without providing an effective means of regulating their activities. In 1886 it named Theophilus Shepstone (1843-1907) its "Resident Adviser and Agent". However, when his efforts failed to resolve major conflicts of interest, President Paul Kruger (1825-1904) of the South African Republic proposed (and the British accepted) a joint commission to investigate domestic affairs in Swaziland. Kruger was particularly interested in preserving stability there to forestall the imposition of British hegemony and because his country needed an outlet to the Indian Ocean, something which unhindered accessibility to all parts of Swaziland brought a large step closer to realisation. In 1889 the young Swazi king Mbandzeni (1857-1889) died. The heir to his

throne was a youth named Bhunu (ca 1875-1899) who was officially called Ngwane V.

Probably unaware of the instability in Swaziland, Haugerud and Nielsen thought the country could provide a site for their projected station. The Berlin Mission Society had sent African evangelists there in 1887, and the Cape General Mission established its first field in Swaziland in 1890.^{xii} Apart from these predecessors, the SAMNA found Swaziland virtually unevangelised. Late in 1892, Haugerud and Nielsen crossed the border south of Barberton and continued east to a trading store which a man named Fisher owned at Balegane near the Komati River. Before succumbing to malaria in January 1893, Haugerud succeeded in securing governmental permission to select a site for a station in any of three areas.^{xiii}

Before the SAMNA could undertake work in Swaziland, however, its ranks were further depleted. Two of the Swedish missionaries, Paul Gullander and Augusta Hultberg, wed at Ekutandaneni in 1892 and became the parents of twin boys the following May. However, Augusta died a few days after giving birth, and Gullander resigned, believing that it would not be possible to care for infants in Swaziland. Not long thereafter, the financial support for Carl Poulsen ceased, compelling him to leave the SAMNA and become a Wesleyan missionary. The four Norwegian women who comprised the remnant of SAMNA personnel in Southern Africa and who began its work in Swaziland did not enter that new field entirely without male support. An Englishman named William E Dawson, who had been assisting the FEAM at Ekutandaneni after the death of his wife Olava Solberg, escorted them on their journey from that station to the site Haugerud had selected. Dawson remained in Swaziland and married Moe's colleague Emma Homme in April 1894.^{xiv} Five months later, Franson appointed him superintendent of the SAMNA's Southern African field.^{xv}

Dawson, Moe and the other three women lost little time before establishing their mission at Bulunga near Bremersdorp (now Manzini). They initially encountered intangible hindrances, one of which was the indigenes' fear of them. At a kraal with an estimated population of between 200 and 400 people near Bulunga, Moe reported that they had asked some of the inhabitants whether they appreciated their coming; the response was negative. These Swazi neighbours feared, Moe wrote, that "we had come to take their food and to cheat them. This is what they are accustomed to from white people". The missionaries soon learned, however, that European encroachments were only one general source of fear and suspicion. Dawson tried to convince the local residents that he and his colleagues meant them no harm and invited them to visit the station and to send their children to the school which they planned to open. His invitation drew a flatly negative reply from the people, who declared that Ngwane would kill them if they had anything to do with missionaries. Not a single person attended the SAMNA's first service in Swaziland, which was held under a large fig tree at the site which the missionaries had selected for their station.^{xvi}

5 ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE SWAZIS

The missionaries' perceptions of and attitudes towards the indigenes whom they sought to evangelise were crucial to the shaping of the nascent mission. As this author has demonstrated elsewhere, nineteenth-century Norwegian missionaries' attitudes towards African peoples (especially the Zulus) varied from condescension to qualified respect.^{xvii} Moe's own reactions to the Swazis were inconsistent. Shortly after arriving at Intsemba, for example, she reflected a widespread European attitude when she asserted in a letter to the magazine of the SAMNA that "it does not take much to surpass what a Kaffer can do in the area of labour".^{xviii} Like many other missionaries of her era, Moe commented disparagingly on the Swazis' immoderate consumption of alcohol. In December 1893 she was attacked in a kraal near Bulunga by an inebriated male Swazi who afterwards apologised to her for his misconduct. Despite this shaking introduction to that particular kraal, Moe soon wrote that she was enjoying herself there – at least as far as temporal matters were concerned.^{xix} Spiritually, however, it remained an oppressive place. The owner of the kraal, she reported, treated her like one of his own children, and all 57 inhabitants were "very friendly" to Moe. On the other hand, cordiality seemed to come at a price. She wrote: "If anyone shows them [i.e. the Swazis] love, they expect gifts to follow. If none are forthcoming, they do not hesitate to state their wishes. They regard a sewing needle, a box of toothpicks, or a handful of salt as a very valuable gift, so one can hardly claim that they are especially demanding."^{xx}

Since it seems that Moe never wrote detailed analysis of or even recorded her basic impressions of pre-Christian Swazi spirituality, it is impossible to know whether she made a significant effort to understand that dimension of the people whom she sought to evangelise. In any case, imparting basic Christian doctrines to the Swazis proved problematical. "They deny that there is a resurrection, and they regard it as insane to believe that anyone can go to heaven", she wrote in January 1894 after her early evangelisation had borne no visible fruit.^{xxi}

At no time during the initial phase of her ministry in Swaziland did Moe seem to underestimate the difficulty of basic evangelism. On several occasions, people with whom she had become especially friendly while staying at their kraals expressed confused interest in the religion she taught but refused to commit themselves to it. To cite but one example: In February 1894 a Swazi woman asked Moe to take her along to heaven. When the Norwegian missionary informed her that she would have to pray to Jesus to accept her, the woman echoed the common refrain that fear of royal reprisals prevented her from doing so.^{xxii} The resurrection, moreover, remained a stumbling-block. Moe related how she had attempted in May 1894 to console five widows of a deceased man and two other women by proclaiming that the dead would eventually rise. Some of the grieving women replied that she was deceiving them. When she showed them biblical texts to prove that the doctrine of the resurrection was a divinely revealed truth and not something she had concocted, they reportedly conceded that she was telling the truth. "I do not dare to claim that they really believe", Moe wrote dejectedly.^{xxiii}

6 ITINERANT EVANGELISM

Between the latter part of 1893 to 1896 the SAMNA increased their personnel in Swaziland and extended their programme of evangelisation from the initial station at Bulunga to several other places in that country. Malla Moe, who while in Chicago had felt woefully unprepared for missionary work, led the diversification of the endeavours by becoming a quasi-itinerant evangelist. She believed she could reach the Swazis, many of whom expressed fear of royal reprisals if they came to Bulunga, more effectively by going directly to their kraals. Moe soon discovered that not everyone accepted her. At the first kraal where she requested hospitality, she was turned away because the inhabitants feared Ngwani and his lieutenants.^{xxiv} Shortly thereafter Moe gained access to a kraal near Bulunga by assuring its owner (whom she described as a "truly fine" man) that she had come there to improve her ability to speak the Swazi tongue and to tell the people about her king. The intrepid young Norwegian (who had earlier expressed apprehensiveness about being in Swaziland) stayed at this polygamous kraal for at least a fortnight. By then Moe had begun to use material inducements to attract audiences, a practice which characterised her ministry for decades. She wrote in her diary while at that kraal: "The people like sugar, and I personally do not believe it is harmful. Yes, they ask me whether I intend to go to other kraals to live so that others can also get sugar."^{xxv}

By that time, approximately seven months after she had left the relative security and isolation of the new station at Bulunga to wander from kraal to kraal, Moe had concluded that itinerant evangelism was her calling. However, like most other missionaries of her time, she carried a perceptible amount of occasionally encumbering cultural baggage through the bush. One of her persistent prejudices involved the linkage of clothing and faith. Many of her counterparts in various missionary societies had stressed the adoption of European-style houses as a sign of conversion. Moe went further. Seated in a hut which naked Swazis inhabited as the rain poured down in 1894, she wrote that she "felt the deepest sympathy for them and wanted to give them all clothing had it been in my power."^{xxvi} There is no evidence that this celibate missionary was in a position to clothe any Swazis during her early years of itinerancy, but in 1897 (after she became established at a station) Moe sewed two sets of clothing for each member of the family of a Swazi evangelist who assisted her.^{xxvii} A year and a half later Moe wrote again about encouraging signs at her station. Among the brightest of these portents was the attire of the younger generation of Swazis: "The boys have shirts and trousers for everyday use and jerseys and trousers for Sundays. The girls all have bright dresses and aprons. This is the first sign that they will become believers."^{xxviii} This recurrent theme in Moe's letters and reports indicates a strong concern, if not necessarily a preoccupation, with certain trappings of her own culture and, arguably, a lack of tolerant appreciation for the ways of the indigenes. Moe and her colleagues in the SAMNA also sought to transmit to the Swazis other secular aspects of their own culture, most notably through their educational work, as did many other missionaries. In fairness to the SAMNA, however, it should be emphasised that what is loosely termed "cultural imperialism" does not appear to have been nearly as visible in their work as it was in the endeavours of many other missionary societies. There was extremely little co-operation between the personnel of the SAMNA, on the one hand, and political or military authorities on the other. Moreover, apart from the above-

mentioned insistence on clothing, there is no evidence that the SAMNA ever sought to engender amongst the Swazis loyalty to any foreign power or a sense that any particular European language or culture – or indeed European culture in general – was categorically superior and thus worthy of emulation, although Moe and some of her colleagues did teach the children English. In Moe's case, there appears to have been a lack of exclusive attachment to any one Western society. She clearly had certain prejudices when she struck out on her relatively independent programme of itinerant evangelism, but she seems to have subordinated them to her desire that the Swazis accept the Gospel.

7 ENGAGING SWAZI EVANGELISTS

The SAMNA always regarded themselves as a theologically conservative agency which prioritised a kerygmatic model of missionary endeavour. Health and educational ministries remained secondary in their work. Furthermore, there were no ordained women in their Southern African fields. This conservative profile, however, did not prevent Moe and her SAMNA colleagues from making extensive use of indigenous Africans as colleagues, as did many other missionary agencies which entered that region during the nineteenth century. Moe was also a pioneer in this interracial co-operation, which proved highly significant for the diversification of the mission and its future in Swaziland. In 1895 Moe met a young Swazi, John Gamede, who soon after became the SAMNA's first indigenous evangelist in Swaziland. He had converted to Christianity at a station that belonged to the Cape General Mission and had spent approximately a year working at Bailey's station, where Moe was introduced to him. At that time, he was preparing to return to his home some 20 kilometres from Intsembe, south of the Usutu River. Malla Moe brought him to Intsembe on his way there. The two, together with one of Moe's female Scandinavian colleagues (Lizzie Jørgensen), then continued to Gamede's home where they succeeded in gaining permission from the district chief to build a house and a school. Moe began to work there in October 1895. This proved to be only a temporary station and did not end the itinerant phase of her evangelism. Indeed, her co-operation with Gamede, which would last for decades, allowed her to add a new and more effective dimension to her ministry.^{xxix}

The relatively rapid growth of the Swazi congregations served by SAMNA personnel was almost certainly due in large measure to the presence of indigenous lay evangelists at both stations. Moe had John Gamede from the outset, and late in 1899 she wrote that five of the other 10 young male converts at Bethel were "evangelists" (although it seems highly doubtful that they assisted her on a full-time basis or received noteworthy remuneration for their evangelistic labours). By 1899, two evangelists were attached to the main station at Intsembe, while two others had in effect replaced the departed Norwegian missionary Bernt K Moe (who is not known to have been related to Malla Moe) at the nearby out-station.^{xxx} This was another example of the partial replacement of European male leadership by African personnel who worked shoulder-to-shoulder with European women like Malla Moe.

8 ENDURING THE SECOND ANGLO-BOER WAR

The South African War of 1899 to 1902 was traumatic not only for the region in general but also for many of the missionary agencies that operated there. Disruptions of various kinds were common. Most of the SAMNA personnel in Swaziland elected to evacuate to the British colony of Natal until the end of hostilities. The intrepid Moe, however, spent nearly the entire war in Swaziland. Initially she was somewhat favourably disposed towards the Afrikaners there. At the beginning of October 1899, she wrote from Bethel that large numbers of white people were travelling past her station on their way out of what were expected to be war zones. An Afrikaans-speaking magistrate in a group of dejected people who had stopped at Bethel and joined Moe in prayer had given her £1 for her missionary work.^{xxx} Whatever sympathy she may have had for Boer commandos diminished within the next few weeks when they confiscated the cattle and horses at her station and an English neighbour's farm, plundered his store, and requisitioned without compensation "everything that was loose" in her house, including much of her food.^{xxxii} However, she had several Afrikaans-speaking friends and acquaintances (including a farmer named Kloppers who lived near Piet Retief). In mid-November she received a letter from him inviting her to stay with his family if she decided to evacuate Swaziland.^{xxxiii} Moe would later avail herself of this invitation, though only for a brief period.

The ransacking of the farm on which Bethel was located did not cause her to lose all sympathy for the Afrikaners (or "the Dutch", as she called them). Indeed, as late as April 1900 Moe wrote that the Afrikaners (whom she called "the Dutch") near Bethel had done her and her congregation "a great deal of good". She admitted to being lonely, probably in part because she received mail only from the USA and the South African Republic and not from Natal, where Dawson and her other European colleagues had taken refuge.^{xxxiv}

The plucky Norwegian almost succeeded in continuing her mission in Swaziland during most of the war. With the exception of a few months in 1900, she stayed at or near the Bethel station from before the outbreak of hostilities until going to the USA on furlough after their cessation. Although Moe endured hardship during the approximately two and a half years of the war, her labours and those of her evangelists allowed that sector of the SAMNA's Southern African field to flourish while some of the stations that had been evacuated fell into disrepair.

Notwithstanding Moe's lack of contact with her evacuated superintendent, she pressed ahead with her work without interruption until well into 1900. Most of her evangelists also remained at their posts, despite sporadic opposition which had little (if anything) to do with the war. To cite only one lucid example of this: Msolwe, the father of her evangelist and a man whom Moe described as "a petty king and bitter opponent of Christianity", sent a party of his soldiers to undress a congregation of converts while they were worshipping. The assailants then burnt the garments of their victims on the spot. Incidents of this kind unquestionably worried Moe, but they also bolstered her resolve to remain in Swaziland. As she put it in a letter to the leadership of the SAMNA in Chicago: "The believers are assembled here; if I were to leave, they would not have the courage to be here alone ..."^{xxxv}

To Moe's dismay, she could not determine indefinitely where she would serve. In May 1900, some seven months after the outbreak of the war, Afrikaans commandos demanded that she leave Swaziland. Moe protested to no avail, arguing that she had just burnt her eyes in a kitchen accident and that she was ill. The fact that her chief evangelist, John Gamede, was sick made her departure even more difficult. Accompanied by two Swazis from her congregation, she travelled to Excelsior near Piet Retief, where an Afrikaans family she had befriended (the Kloppers) had a farm.^{xxxvi} She remained there for approximately seven weeks before being allowed to return to Swaziland in mid-July, where she spent the remainder of the war. After the Treaty of Vereeniging ended the war, this seemingly indefatigable pioneer missionary who had spent nearly a decade evangelising the Swazis was finally able to get her delayed furlough. She left Swaziland with the knowledge that its spiritual landscape was significantly different than it had been when she and her colleagues first arrived.

9 CONCLUSION

Malla Moe later returned to resume her ministry, which lasted for another four decades. The image of this courageous Norwegian lady and her donkey cart became iconic in the SAMNA. In some respects, she was unique; however, it was not the fact that she went beyond the stereotypical role of a female missionary that made her so. When one examines the history of Scandinavian women who served in Lutheran, other denominational and nondenominational missionary agencies in Southern Africa during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one finds numerous other women who laboured on the rim of Christendom. In some instances they had few or no male colleagues from their commissioning agencies nearby. Quite typically, however, they co-operated with African evangelists and pastors. There is no evidence that Moe challenged the male leadership of the SAMNA, especially that of its Southern African superintendent, William Dawson. Moreover, there is no reason to believe that she sought ordination. In her birthright Norwegian Lutheran tradition, this was unheard of during the period under consideration, and Moe clearly regarded herself as essentially an evangelist (for whom ordination, rather than missionary commissioning, was irrelevant) rather than a parish pastor. In some respects her status did not vary greatly from, for example, that of many women in the Norwegian Missionary Society or the Church of Sweden who served in Zululand and Natal; although it was more typical for them to be in health and educational ministries and to collaborate at stations with ordained Scandinavian pastors. Moe's historical significance lies partly in the fact that she, like a small number of other women in the SAMNA, shouldered an arguably even greater burden of responsibility and work more independently (and in Moe's case frequently as an itinerant) in Swaziland during a very early stage in the evangelisation of that country.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Maria Nilsen and Paul H Sheetz, *Malla Moe* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956).
- 2 See, however, the relevant chapters of Frederick Hale, "Scandinavian Free Church Missions in Southern Africa, 1889-1960" (DTh thesis, University of South Africa, 1988).
- 3 Karin Sarja, *"Ännu en syster till Afrika": trettiosex kvinnliga missionärer i Natal och Zululand 1876-1902* (Uppsala: Svenska Institutet för Missionsforskning, 2002).
- 4 For Franson's intercontinental propagation of the Gospel, see Edvard P Torjesen, *Fredrik Franson: A model for worldwide evangelism* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1983). His theology and other matters are analysed in greater detail in Edvard Paul Torjesen, "A study of Fredrik Franson: The development of his ecclesiology, missiology, and worldwide evangelism" (PhD thesis, International College, 1984).

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- 5 *Beretning om "Hauges norsk ev. luth. Synodes" 47de Aarsmøde* (Red Wing: Hauges Synodes Forlag, 1892), 54.
- 6 On her Norwegian passport issued in 1920, Moe is declared to be "*de religion lutherienne*"; although how Lutheran she was theologically is debatable. See Passport of Malla Moe, Billy Graham Center Archives, collection 280, box 1, folder 1.
- 7 Maria Nielsen and Paul H Sheetz, *Malla Moe* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1956), 11-26.
- 8 F Franson (Philadelphia) to *Chicago-Bladet*, 4 April 1892, in *Chicago-Bladet* XVI(15), 12 April 1892, 1.
- 9 For Witt, see Frederick Hale, "The missionary career and spiritual odyssey of Otto Witt" (PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991). For the FEAM, see Frederick Hale, "Launching Scandinavian Urban Evangelisation in Southern Africa: The Free East Africa Mission in Durban, 1889-1899," *Svensk Missionstidskrift*, LXXXVI(2), 1998, 227-250.
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- 19 Malla Moe (Intsembe Mission Station) to *Evangelisten*, 8 September 1893, 7.
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- 30 Malla Moe (Bethel Mission Station) to Gustaf Anderson, undated, in *Missionæren*, XI(52), 28 December 1899, 4.
- 31 Malla Moe (Bethel Mission Station) to *Evangelisten*, 2 October 1899, in *Evangelisten* X(50), 13 December 1899, 3.
- 32 "Diary of Malla Moe, 1893-1900", 20-30 October 1899.
- 33 "Diary of Malla Moe, 1893-1900", 14 November 1899.
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- 35 Malla Moe (Bethel Mission Station) to CT Dyrness, 3 April 1900, 5-6.
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