

SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION POLICY

IN SOUTH AFRICA

1898 - 1923

by

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I declare that "Scottish Presbyterian Church Mission Policy in South Africa, 1898-1923" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated by means of complete references.

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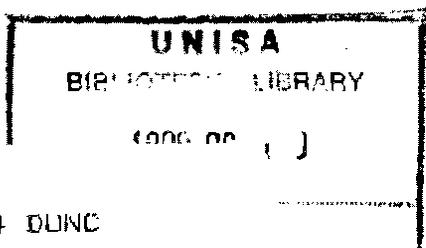
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SUMMARY

This dissertation offers an analysis of Scottish Presbyterian Church mission policy during the period, 1898 - 1923. The study contains an examination of historiographical methodology, the historical background both in Scotland and South Africa along with the multi-faceted dimensions within the South African context of the time. The Mzimba Secession provides an appropriate historical starting point which led to a serious disruption of the Mission. The role of the major participants, black ministers and elders and missionaries, is assessed as a struggle between them and the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland, following the union of two churches in 1900, took place involving the various policy options. This eventually led to the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

KEY TERMS: Mzimba Secession; African Initiated Churches; Mission History; Historiography; 'Disruption'; Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa; James Stewart; Ethiopianism; Pambani J Mzimba; United Free Church of Scotland; Free Church of Scotland; United Presbyterian Church of Scotland; Foreign Mission Committee; Mission Councils; Presbyterian Church of South Africa.

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Sandra and my friend, Ian Duncan, kindly proof read the text of this dissertation for me.

'A sun of disaster has risen in the West,
Glaring down on people and populated places.
Poetically speaking, I mean the catastrophe
 of the Christians,
The Christian calamity has come upon us
Like a dust cloud.
At the start of the affair they came
Peacefully,
With sweet talk.
"We've come to trade!!" they said.
"To reform the beliefs of the people,
To halt oppression here below, and theft,
To clean up and overthrow corruption",
Not all of us grasped their motives,
So now we've become their inferiors,

They deluded us with little gifts
And fed us tasty foods ...
But recently they've changed their tune.

An Arab poem from Ghana, written in 1900
 (source unknown)

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
APO	African Political Organisation
BPCSA	Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa
CE	Christian Express
CoS	Church of Scotland
GAMS	Glasgow African Missionary Society
GMCSA	General Missionary Conference of South Africa
GMS	Glasgow Missionary Society
EPCSA	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Africa
FCoS	Free Church of Scotland
FedSem	Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa
FMC	Foreign Mission Committee
ICU	Industrial & Commercial Workers' Union
JTSA	Journal of Theology for Southern Africa
LMS	London Missionary Society
NLS	National Library of Scotland
PCA	Presbyterian Church of Africa
PCSA	Presbyterian Church of South Africa
RPCSA	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
SAO	South African Outlook
SANAC	South African Native Affairs Commission
SANC	South African Native Congress
SANNC	South African Native National Congress
SP	Stewart Papers
UFH	University of Fort Hare
UCT	University of Cape Town
UPCoS	United Presbyterian Church of Scotland

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The Aim of the Study

This study is an attempt to discover the aims and objectives of Scottish Presbyterian church mission policy in South Africa (1898-1923). An endeavour will be made to uncover the extent to which blacks were consulted about proposed action or policy and to what extent, if at all, they participated in the formulation of that policy. Alongside this, an examination of the role of missionaries in the development of policy will be considered. An analysis of the context in which the events occurred will be made to try to determine the extent to which the development of mission policy was a result of dialogue with the context or a response to it, or even whether it occurred independently of it.

1.2. Setting the Scene

My own interest in this field began with my appointment as a missionary of the Church of Scotland in 1977 and my subsequent appointment as Missionary-in-Charge of Lovedale Institution which post I took up in 1978 on my ordination as a minister of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa (BPCSA)[1]. My first encounter with the work at Lovedale came through reading RHW Shepherd's [2] book 'Lovedale: South Africa 1824-1955'. In reading this, I became aware that I stood in a grand tradition of what has come to be known as imperialistic missionaries and I relished my position.

I write as one who in the late 1970s and early 1980s was responsible for implementing mission policy formulated in

1. Renamed the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA) on 1st January 1979.
2. Fifth and last Missionary Principal of Lovedale Institution (1942-1955).

Scotland in consultation with the partner church in South Africa, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, where despite an ideological shift having taken place in sending church (CoS) philosophy from trusteeship to 'partnership' (Lyon 1978) there were still overtones of paternalism and this was in relation to a church which was over 50 years old! The 1960s call for moratorium (Neill 1976) did not significantly affect Scottish mission policy in South Africa, though the number of missionaries fell rapidly as the result of the government taking control of work which had been previously been the responsibility of educational and medical mission. In some ways mission policy had not moved on from the idea of devolving power and responsibility to blacks though missionaries had largely withdrawn from South Africa because there were still substantial valuable properties to be sold or transferred and consequently power was to be exercised through the Mission Council.

During my time at Lovedale I shared Shepherd's view that the Mzimba Secession was a blight on the Scottish mission and that Mzimba was a 'cheeky mission kaffir' (Ross 1986:35; cf. De Kock 1996:120). I shared with Dr James Stewart [3] the view of Mzimba's church at the top of the rise above Lovedale and its 'defiance' of the Mission. I held this view until 1985, when the late Rev Dr Cecil M Ngcokovane joined us on the staff of Albert Luthuli College of the Federal Theological Seminary of Southern Africa (FedSem). Ngcokovane presented several papers [4] at the weekly African Studies seminar in which he sought to redeem the memory of the Rev PJ Mzimba and the reputation of his church, the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA) which grew out of the secession. I began to revise my opinion of the Mzimba Secession and I became more convinced that there was more to mission history than I had previously believed.

3. Second Missionary Principal of Lovedale Institution (1870-1905).

4. At the time of writing these papers have not been traced.

While at FedSem, I was exposed, as never before, to a large group of critical and often bitter students who grew up when 'black consciousness' (Biko 1978) was at its height and who experienced the trauma of the 1976 Soweto reaction to the Nationalist government's interference in education as in all other areas of black peoples' lives, its aftermath and long term consequences. It was there that I was first exposed to Black Theology as a liberation theology that sought to take seriously the integrity of black theological reflection on the totality of life as experienced by black people.

Over the next few years my thinking was constantly challenged by my former student at FedSem, Rev Dr Tinyiko S Maluleke, as he himself challenged accepted assumptions about the writing of mission history especially in relation to his own church the Tsonga Presbyterian Church of South Africa [5], and considered the hitherto unexamined role of black participants' writings in the Tsonga language (1995).

This discussion may help us to assess the impact of the respective participants in this particular aspect of mission history in addition to that of the contemporary situation in South Africa. My own interest began to focus on the impact of the Mzimba Secession (1898) on Scottish church mission policy in South Africa and how that policy led to the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church (1923).

1.3. The Phase of Mission History under Review.

The period 1898-1923 represents a significant phase in mission development in South Africa. It was a time of great social, political and economic changes. This was the era of the South African War (1899-1902), the establishment of the Union of South Africa (1910), the formation of the South African Native

5. Renamed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of South Africa in 1982

National Congress (1912) [6], the Land Act (1913) and the First World War (1914-1918). In addition, this was a time of rapid economic and industrial development and of worker resistance which had a substantial impact on the lives of black South Africans. It was also a time of growth in the African Initiated Church (AIC) movement as a response to increasing control and regulation in the secular domain as well as in contemporary church and religious life which was dominated by the historic mission churches.

One such reaction was related to Scottish presbyterian church mission policy which had its origin in the Disruption of 1843 [7], and the year 1898 witnessed the 'disruption' of the Scottish mission in the events of the Mzimba Secession. Twenty five years later, in 1923, the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa came into being. This period is the focus of this study. While the history of the Mzimba movement has been well documented (eg. Du Plessis 1911; Shepherd 1940,1971; Brock 1974; Burchell 1977, 1979; Cuthbertson 1991) as well as the birth of the Bantu Presbyterian Church (eg. Sikutshwa 1946; Shepherd 1940,1971; Burchell 1977; van der Spuy 1971), little attention has been given to the formulation of the mission policies of the churches involved. It is to this task that the present study is directed as an aspect of mission history.

1.4. Towards a Definition of Mission History

Mission history is the study of missions in their historical contexts. These missions cannot be separated from the wider contexts in which they exist for they are affected by them and exercise an influence on them too. Mission cannot operate from a standpoint of isolation from the world for it would no

6. Renamed the African National Congress in 1923.

7. Although the 'voluntarist' missionary movement began its Scottish expression in the work of the Glasgow Missionary Society in 1796.

longer have anything to offer the world if it did not interact with it. This would be contrary to the incarnational nature of mission as God's action in human history which aims at the transformation of society and individuals within it. It is trinitarian, therefore, as God is its subject, Jesus is the one who brought the reality of God to the world and the Holy Spirit is its energising force throughout history. It is, therefore, a legitimate pursuit to study mission in its historical perspective in relationship to the wider context in which it evolves, ie. in relation to a complex social, political, economic, cultural and theological reality.

1.5. Mission History in a Broader Context.

Because mission history is contextual, it cannot claim for itself an independent existence. Hobsbawm (in Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:55) claims that 'the web of history cannot be unravelled into separate threads without destroying it'. So the question of a relationship with church history or missiology (Maluleke 1989:8) is irrelevant unless both are conceived as a part of world history. Human beings may not be of the world but they are in it and, however much we may try, we cannot abstract ourselves from it and the history of missions demonstrates this well. Even if we adopt a lifestyle akin to monasticism we still depend on relationships and the environment for our survival. Mission history is, then, an aspect of general human history and is integral to it.

Therefore, there can be no authentic division between church history and world history. Saayman (1995:185 cf. I Schapera in J & J Comaroff 1991:xiv; Walls 1996:xv) argues that both history and religion are vital for a clear understanding of both past and present in South Africa. We do well to remember in this respect that missionaries brought a totally contextualised European worldview to South Africa. They did not merely seek to supplant African traditional religion but brought that as part of a wider ideologically based

perspective on life and all its implications - social, political, economic and cultural. Hence the value of contextual theologies which seek to reflect on and, possibly, change the status quo in specific situations. This helps us avoid the temptation to generalise local experience into predetermined patterns which restrict our vision. In this regard intercultural communication is important as it attempts to take account of the situation of the other involved in the encounter (Saayman:185). This was not always a high priority in the past!

In dealing with Christian mission history we are also dealing with the eschatological dimension - the not-yetness of the course of mission history and the hopeful expectation and striving for a transformed future ie. the Kingdom of God. According to Saayman (1991:16) it 'protects Christian socio-political involvement from being "mere" romantic idealism or revolutionary fervour'. It does not undermine history but places it in the realm of God's salvation history as part of the process of the consummation of the already inaugurated Kingdom of God.

Mission history is the attempt to show how efforts to transform the world have fared in the past, how we might assess our efforts in this regard in the present for the sake of the future salvation of the universe. The emergence of contextual theologies has presented us with an opportunity to examine the concepts of mission, history and context in a complementary relationship as social mission history (Saayman 1995:184).

1.6. The Context of Mission

Saayman (1995:188), in quoting Kritzinger (1988:6), offers a comprehensive definition of mission in relation to context:

'Mission is ... the attempt to embody God's liberating

presence [incarnation] in every human situation. It never takes place in a vacuum, but is always concerned with specific people in specific situations, and searches to discover the meaning of the Good News in each context'.

This affirms the view of 'the centrality of mission to the whole Christian existence' (:188). It is participatory because it is God's mission; 'Mission work is not [only?] human work' (Maluleke 1989:104). But, more than that, it indicates that the context is less than it ought to be, ie. it is in need of change in light of the Gospel, and that there is motivation for that change to occur in order that human life might be radically transformed as part of the process of the development or growth of the Kingdom.

The incarnation of Jesus is important here because it took place in the context of refugee poverty and was acted out in the role of the outcast and rejected. Here is a point of contact with many situations of poverty and oppression throughout history where liberation and true humanity have been denied in various areas of living - social, political, economic, religious and cultural, where the clamant need has been for enabling rather than paternalism, however benevolent. Even in the worst periods of oppression, eg. the colonial period, blacks in South Africa did not simply accept the 'colonisation of consciousness' but experienced a 'consciousness of colonisation' and responded to it rather than just adapting to it by various subtle forms of response and resistance (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; cf. Maluleke 1995). So, at least in some cases, we are not simply dealing with passive recipients of mission Christianity but those who consciously, and subconsciously, responded to it.

Contextualisation enables people to create their own mission history as they interpret the incarnation of Christ and its implications in a new way which leads them to liberation from the strictures of the colonial gospel. Its reciprocal nature is demonstrated in the way that both the senders and the

recipients are changed. Referring to the impact of encounter with the Tswana, the Comaroffs (1991:310) say of the Nonconformist evangelists, 'they were themselves deeply affected by the encounter. Not only were they haunted by the image of the "native" they had conjured up; but in their effort to hold their converts they soon began to imitate some of the very "heathen superstitions" that they had so loudly condemned'.

The ultimate value of contextualisation for us is that it is in the very particularity of its interpretation in specific situations that the gospel achieves a universal application, or as Jean Comaroff (1985:13) has demonstrated on a more practical level with regard to the rise of local movements, eg. Zionist Christianity among the Tshidi: 'they are specific responses to a structural predicament to many Third World peoples'. There was a time when this was determined by the mindset and presuppositions of those who wrote mission history, ie. missionaries themselves or, at least, white people. However, there has been a recent call for this situation to be redressed (Maluleke 1989, 1995) as can be seen when we consider problems of historiography.

1.7 The Problem of Historiography.

The basic problem we face with earlier approaches to historiography is that they conform to the criticism of having been written by one group of people about other groups. It is a truism that 'the history of theology and the church, too, was predominantly written by the victors at the expense of the losers - along dogmatic or political lines' (Kung 1994:153 cf. Groome 1980:19 n.39; Ntantala 1992:116). This summarises the traditional Western concept of history which concentrates on particular people and processes founded in the 'distinction between "reality", the material occurrence of events, and "representation", the terms in which the story is told and acted on' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:34). We shall,

therefore, attempt to distinguish the characteristics of earlier and more recent approaches to historiography.

1.7.1. The "Old" Historiography

Mission histories are criticised for failing to take adequate account of contemporary social forces. They are predominantly positive in their assessment of missions which are lauded as harbingers of Western values and a positive view of colonialism (du Plessis 1911:264-5). For du Plessis (:26), Christianity and civilisation were so integrated that they were confused: 'Civilisation when divorced from vital [ie. Christian cf. :261] religion, is utterly powerless to lift the heathen out of the state of depredation into which he has sunk'.

Du Plessis (:viii) considered his work to be the 'first attempt to place the establishment and growth of Christian Missions in South Africa in their true historical setting'. This is rather astonishing in that he offers little critical reflection on the social, economic and political situation in which mission history occurs; further it is his assertion that:

'Contemporary mission history and Cape history find a point of meeting in the year of grace 1910. Mission history and Cape history have always been associated in the closest possible way. In South Africa... they form... two streams which unite and commingle' (:vii-viii).

While the intention is praiseworthy, the History which follows hardly does justice to the expressed aim. In fact, mission history is presented as history which is different from general history which often only provides a backdrop to Christian happenings. This is common to many similar works of the twentieth century (cf. Cochrane 1987:4-6). Mostert (1992:42) claims that such works are influenced by the work of Theal whose work was 'flawed by raw and vigorously explicit colonial prejudices'.

Maluleke (1989:13) argues strongly that none of these approaches takes the experience of blacks seriously and are, therefore, seriously flawed. This leads us to the problem of documentary or other evidence since these works constitute the major sources which have emanated from white church historical documents and which have determined the history which we have available to us. Much of this comes from the hands of missionaries themselves and were influenced by various factors such as the needs and wishes of the missionary societies and the hagiographical style of much of the writing which may be a response to publicity and fund raising demands in the sending countries and societies. However, 'in order to paint saintly portraits of missionaries, the indigenous peoples, namely, the objects of missionary activities, had to be painted in devilish colours'.

Unfortunately, these studies were not set in the wider context of what was happening in society at the time and they reflect a 'culture bound' situation. Such literature considers the culture and society of the people studied as having been static prior to the arrival of the missionaries. Maluleke (1995:235) challenges this assumption: 'Dynamic African culture beckons us, offering itself as a source of theology, even as it is "concealed everywhere"'. The missionaries reflect a dominant western imperialist cultural background. And so we can agree with the Comaroffs' (1991:83 cf. Maluleke 1995:190, 1996:23) assertion, 'Mission biography, more often than not, was mission ideology personified' ie. the history of priest-heroes.

While Verkuyl (in Maluleke 1989:17) reflects a more positive approach in referring to the contribution of blacks to every aspect of the missionary enterprise, for the most part these contributors remain nameless persons who lived in the shade of the main missionary protagonists (cf. Maluleke 1995:22). It is also important to note that while missionaries project their views as being objective, we must remember that all theological and historical thought is formed as the result of our own

context, subjective experience and ideological perspective and the missionaries were no exception.

In this respect, the missionaries are often covered by a let out clause which suggests that because they were time conditioned souls they were not altogether responsible for the results of their actions but were themselves at the mercy of uncontrollable 'forces'. They were 'in an advantaged position in an expanding political economy increasingly characterised by a capitalist hegemony' (Cochrane 1987:37) [8]. Both Saayman (1991) and Cochrane (:37) seem to deny any deliberate intent on the part of the missionaries and attribute only noble motives to them. However, in terms of the objectives of their mission, they cannot avoid total responsibility for the consequences of their involvement. They were in the field as agents of change and some, to a degree, did achieve significantly eg. Philip and Colenso. Saayman (1994:12) points to the greater culpability since they aimed at "colonising the mind" through education and of the missionaries compared with the colonists and settlers by transferring vernacular languages into written form.

This concurs with Maluleke's (1995:190) view that mission Christianity is 'the story of the missionaries and their activities'. It is 'the blend of Christianity that Swiss missionaries sought to establish amongst the Vatsonga (Shangaan) peoples (:3), 'something which benevolent white people do to "backward" black people' (Kritzinger 1995:1 in Maluleke 1995:4). This has resulted in 'a serious historiographical imbalance, (subtle) ideological distortion and a missiological disempowerment of the Vatsonga', ie. blacks (:190). He criticises the avoidance of socio-economic factors in the writings of the foremost scholars of Tsonga culture [9], citing issues such as migrant labour, social change, industrialisation, politics, colonialism, negotiation and

8. This corresponds to Fierro's second level of ideological [un]awareness; see below section 1.8.

9. ie. HA & HP Junod.

trading (:193). He concludes that this is a frequent problem in mission historiography and quotes P Harries (1983, 1994) who has demonstrated how 'these multi-faceted incursions into the lives of the Vatsonga were not the monopoly of missionary activities. Other "agents of change", notably industrialisation and increasing White political domination were concurrently at work' (:201). Maluleke critiques 'the narrow "salvation history" in missionary literature' (:21) in relation to the origins of Christian mission which emphasises the specific role of white missionaries, in this case Creux and Berthold, and virtually ignores other participants, eg. women and blacks and the Paris Evangelical Society. The prejudice is quite clear:

'Mission history ... tends to present a narrow "golden thread" of these events that are regarded as "salvific", thereby excluding large chunks of happenings and information considered to be outside the salvific realm. In reality, the latter is seldom excluded in totality. Rather, functional reference is periodically made in order to clarify and emphasise aspects of the "salvific" story. In this way, indigenous contribution is underplayed even as it is acknowledged' (:22)

Quoting from the situation in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa, the former Swiss Mission [10], Maluleke notes that after 112 years of written Xitsonga there exist few black assessments of mission work, little is available in written form that is critical of missionaries, possibly because publishing was under their control; after all they were considered to be the experts. Maluleke (1995:28) comments:

'In this prevailing situation the vernacular writer's ability to confront and evaluate important socio-political, religious and even moral issues in his/her writings was seriously curtailed'.

The same could be said of the work of Lovedale Press of the

10. Tsonga Presbyterian Church renamed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa in 1982.

Scottish Mission which has a longer and more distinguished history [11].

But, more than this, the missionaries' role had repercussions beyond the sphere of the narrowly religious. In reducing the language to written form the missionaries, either consciously or unconsciously, contributed to the development of ethnic homogeneity, social cohesion and linguistic uniformity and all of this was to have political, social, economic and theological implications. The common factor in each case appears to have been the presence of missionaries.

It is now generally agreed that mission history must be subject, as never before, to critical interpretation as an alternative to the hagiographical style which dominated the scene for a considerable period. Cochrane (1987:39,40) claims that there is a need for 'solid social criticism radically opposed to the church', otherwise 'the church is most likely to reflect rather than illuminate its historical context'. The focus of more recent historiographical study has been the objects rather than the subjects of mission ie. black people themselves.

1.7.2. The "New" Historiography

An emerging concept in mission history is the importance of the history of the oppressed as a corrective to that of 'Conquerors or Servants of God?' [12]. 'We require a proper comprehension of the changes in history in the broad sweep beyond matters of private conflict, personal idiosyncrasies or individual decisions' (Cochrane 1987:38). Cochrane (:40) believes that this is difficult 'in the very nature of oppression' [13] and because we need to examine the processes by which society is changed. He therefore advocates a radical critical approach

11. Beginning with Rev John Bennie arriving in South Africa in 1824 bringing a printing press with him.

12. Subtitle of an address on 'Missionaries' by M Wilson 1976.

13. Perhaps because of the dearth of written and other sources.

to historiography which expresses commitment rather than neutrality. This is a view that is consistent with those of black theologians. In such a historiography there is a great need for a dynamic approach to political-economic theory. The dominance of capitalism is not to be assumed as the deterministic result of colonialism. Rather, it

'emerged because of specific struggles connected to colonial conquest and capital penetration in the region, itself driven in particular directions through confrontation with the traditional societies it encountered, their use of opportunities, and their resistance to total incorporation over long periods of time. Moreover, it is now clearer just how diamond and gold discoveries affected industrialisation, labour policies and legislative decisions in general, and how capital itself was restructured in the process. Finally, at every point one observes the fruitfulness of analysing events in respect of class relations and the modes of production and reproduction which underlie them' (Cochrane 1987:44).

From another perspective, Mostert (1992) argues that a new brand of historiography which challenged the basis of western historiography emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. This constituted a call for an African historiography and F. Baudel, who became its spokesperson, attempted to elucidate the social and economic forces which 'submerged history... virtually unsuspected either by its observers or its participants... those underlying currents, often noiseless, whose direction can only be discerned by watching them over long periods of time' (in Mostert 1992:44).

The matter of race became an important factor in studies following the Second World War. The Leakeys:

'made the quest for origins a quest to understand the fundamental nature of humanness: the common bonds of all humanity, what early humans were, the way they lived, the dominant instincts they possessed, whether of aggression, as several popular works in the 1960s suggested, or of collaboration and social harmony' (Mostert 1992:45).

This approach completely undermines the classical approach to historiography as it seeks to establish origins a considerable time pre-1652 [14]. However, it faced a serious problem in that there was

'no easy recourse to forgotten corners of documentation,... no archival resources to offer fresh insight and information.... The African history that was sought was all "submerged", and the forces and influences that affected its peoples through distant ages entirely "noiseless"' (Mostert 1992:47).

This field of study now draws upon the insights of numerous disciplines and presents history as a 'field encompassing field' (Harvey 1966:55). Cochrane (1987:219-220 following G Ebling 1978:78) asserts that:

'in church history [and the same can be said of mission history] the high role of non-theological factors in shaping doctrine and practice is unavoidably clear.... Thus the very fact of the human nature of the Christian community drives it towards taking sociological and other data seriously, for theological reasons'.

The same is true of missiology as an eclectic discipline:

'Although basically theological in nature, missiology, as we understand it today, is unable to deal with its theological concerns without the aid of other disciplines, both theological and secular. Missiology is multidisciplinary in character and holistic in approach' (Luzbetak 1988:14).

Mostert's (:48) reference to 'Civilisation and the material development of urban human societies' in the so-called "prehistoric" period confirms that civilisation existed in Africa prior to the advent of Western civilisation there. For the Tswana, it was "social facts" that created a particular human world and this was their "history" (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:34). Kalu (1988:19 in Maluleke 1995:47) confirms this: 'The story begins among African communities which had viable structures for existence. It delineates the permeation of Christian influences, values and structures and the varieties

14. In 1652, Van Riebeeck established a settlement at the Cape on behalf of the Dutch East India Company.

of the reactions however ambiguous, of the communities to the Christian change agent'.

The study of mission history, with reference to the study of Christianity in Africa, particularly South Africa, also requires a new approach to mission historiography, 'a more honest, and more critical review of the theoretical and socio-theological assumptions out of which the South African church as it is today, in its fragmented state, has been formed' (Maluleke 1989:103). It requires that we take serious account of black experience, ie. that we examine history from the "underside" of the poor and the marginalised, which is the ongoing experience of ordinary people. We also need to re-evaluate the formative missionary assumptions that laid the basis for South African Christianity.

For the Comaroffs (1991:11), the study of Christianity in Africa 'is part and parcel of the historical anthropology of colonialism and consciousness, culture and power; of an anthropology concerned at once with the coloniser and the colonised, the structure and the agency'. However, it is not only because we have little information concerning blacks that a new historiographical approach is necessary. The missionaries' own writings 'do not yield a sufficient analytic account of the complex social forces of which they themselves are products'.

'The profound forces that motivated them, and the varied vehicles of their awareness, emerge not so much from the content of those stories as from their poetics; that is, from their unselfconscious play on signs and symbols, their structures and silences, their implicit references' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:35,36).

In dealing with the lack of written sources, the Comaroffs (1991:35) uncovered a corpus of 'unconventional evidence' which includes praise poems, initiation songs, expressed by 'their bodies and their homes, in their puns, jokes and irreverencies'. They also uncover 'a discernible Tswana commentary on these events [encounters with imperial

colonialism], spoken less in the narrative voice than in the symbolism of gesture, action and reaction and in the expressive manipulation of language' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1988:6 in Maluleke 1995:23). So they advocate an inclusive approach to historiographical research.

Maluleke (1995:44,45) reaches similar conclusions regarding the role of black people in mission and expresses the need to remove prejudice from the use of local sources and elevate them to the same level as already accepted resources in addition to taking secular history and cultural situations seriously. In challenging some of Kalu's assumptions about blacks' attempts at historical writing, he claims that:

'a lack of conscious and overt reflection on historiography does not necessarily mean an absence of historiographical awareness and bias.... Most of these works are pregnant with interpretation. But their issues of significance are not always what I or Kalu would perceive to be issues of significance. Kalu's well-meaning caution can very easily "dismiss" valuable primary texts written by indigenous people in the vernacular (:45,46).

This brings us to Maluleke's particular contribution to a new approach to historiography. Concerned about the onesidedness of the "old" approach to historiography in which the writings of the missionaries predominate, he proposes a 'side-ways' shift towards the use of vernacular literature as a legitimate primary resource for missiological study in order to develop an indigenous commentary on mission Christianity. In adopting this approach, he goes somewhat beyond the important work of the Comaroffs. Reacting against the dominance of Western literary sources compared with the poverty of local commentaries, he says, 'The emergence of empirical research, particularly in missiology, with an emphasis on oral sources has been a welcome deviation from the tyranny of books and archives.' (:37) and constitutes 'a fundamental and radical break with the hegemony of Western missionary sources' (:226).

The purpose of this is to 'intensify the trading and negotiating processes between missionary Christianity and local culture' (:6). This critique serves an apologetic purpose in response to 'missionary Christianity' which the 'Western missionaries have brought to plant in the Third World in general' (:1 n.3).

Using these sources, according to Maluleke (;235) , provides us with another genre of data - 'the "silences" [which] are as important as the utterances. According to Mosala (1994:147),

The relevant question is how to interpret the eloquence with which the poor are silent and the absence through which they are present in the pages of the Bible. It is in struggling with these silences and absences that a new and creative reappropriation of the liberation of the gospel takes place'.

The response of the objects of mission, ie. black people, necessitates our listening 'to the silences as well as the pronouncements' (Maluleke 1995:42). The Comaroffs (1991:37) refer to the "subtexts" that the black members of the petit bourgeoisie employ in reaction to the missionaries which can be appropriated through accounts of '"irrational" behaviour, his mockery or his resistance'. This sometimes 'silent sullen resistance' (1991:xii) is in accord with the African response of silence as a sign of dissent.

To a degree, what has gone before suggests our dependence on a 'revisionist' approach to historiography which in its most recent development tends to focus on the functional linkages between capital and racial discrimination, to reconceptualise, re-theorise, re-analyse South African society and history in terms of class, capitalism and exploitation; to develop a class analysis of South Africa, and of the racial system in particular (Southey 1989:7). 'Revisionism' involves a variety of approaches and methodologies in order to formulate a history of peoples and communities. It is about the 'interaction and evolution of class and non-class factors in South African common consciousness' (:8) focussing on the colonial period and

embracing issues such as ideology, consciousness and culture. In the field of mission history, revisionism has been critical of Christian mission (Hofmeyer & Pillay 1994:Foreword).

Maluleke (1995:25) claims that his approach is both subversive and ideological because it critiques the traditional missionary approach. Its data are not just complementary to the writings of missionaries but are, in themselves, a primary source and critique. He argues for a subversive approach to mission history as a counterbalance to the ideological approach which only uses missionary sources which use he does not reject because: 'Missionary discourse is also a form of response, interpretation and negotiation. It should, therefore, neither be regarded with total awe nor avoided like the plague'.

However, 'until we give ideological issues the serious attention they deserve, we will continue to distort and cloud the issues even as we endeavour to "correct" and create a "balance".... The choice of vernacular sources achieves the two purposes of (a) increasing the variety of sources and approaches to missiology and (b) effecting the ideological choice of elevating an indigenous voice over and above "foreign" voices' (:228). This is important in that the missionaries were '"ideological captives" of the imperialist cause but also "important agents of Western capitalism"' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:8). This emphasis is important because recent historiographical study has tended to concentrate on politico-economic impact to the detriment of culture, symbolism and ideology (Maluleke 1995:8).

1.8. The Role of Ideology.

Costas (1982:121) derives his definition of ideology from the conviction that Christianity cannot exist independently of political involvement. For him, political ideology involves 'a vision of the future, a coherent interpretation of reality, and a programmatic line of action conducive to the reorganisation

of society'. Ideology performs a positive function because it offers faith a 'historical rationality' (:122) that requires flexibility in thought and action. This understanding of history has both positive and negative aspects and so a critical consciousness is vital in order to avoid support of the civil order becoming idolatry. Costas (:76) quotes Jenson in this regard: 'evangelical religion becomes in truth the comfort of the oppressors and the opiate of the oppressed', though we also have to take seriously Bredekamp and Ross' (1995:2) view that from the 1830s in South Africa 'Christianity has provided many of its African adherents with the strength to confront the many injustices they have suffered'. Such a growing awareness enables the church to call the social order into question rather than support it uncritically.

Without this consciousness, the Tswana, for example, entered

'a process by which the "savages" of colonialism are ushered, by earnest Protestant evangelists, into the revelation of their own misery, are promised salvation by self discovery, and civilisation, and are drawn into a conversation with the culture of modern capitalism - only to find themselves enmeshed... in its order of signs and values, interests and passions, wants and needs' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:xii).

Cochrane (1987:168ff.) draws on Fierro's (1977) three broad uses of the term 'ideology' in order to highlight the exact nature of the church's responses to political-economic developments. Fierro's first level in which ideology is a consciously held 'system of representation' involves adopting a 'critical distance' from the dominant ideology which prevails. The second level is unconscious and is conditioned by the material, socio-economic base of society (Fierro 1977:244). Bourdieu's (1977:94 in Comaroff & Comaroff 1985:5) comment is apposite here: 'Ideology is most effective when it is interred in habit and is "beyond the grasp of consciousness"'. The third involves a conscious attempt to legitimate a specific dominant class and is not amenable to self critical change.

An example of ideology serving the labour needs of the South African situation is offered in terms of agriculture and industry by the practice of removing people from their traditional lifestyles in order to be educated for the place they were to have in society. This was done on the basis that Christianity was the point from which civilisation develops. This led to a move from integration to segregation on the pretext that blacks should be shielded from the worst excesses of white society, eg. alcohol abuse. This leaves us wondering why they were thus removed from all that was "good" in white society, ie.

'the social values of bourgeois ideology could be internalised as human qualities. Hence discipline, generosity, respect, loyalty and ownership, to name but a few, became the virtues of individual personality embodied in self-control, self-denial, self-esteem, self-sacrifice, and self-possession', the basic tenets of classic liberalism' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:62)?

In general, 'church views were most commonly shaped by a position of dominance or at least dependency on the dominant', ie. a bourgeois capitalist ideology. Comaroff (1985:10) agrees 'For the ideological forms of nineteenth century Protestantism were derivative of British industrial capitalism, projecting its values of individualism, spiritual democracy, and rational self improvement through labour'.

The church's implicit support of the bourgeois ideology was determined by its Pietistic theology and appeal to the conscience of the individual, ie. for conversion, whereas the concern of the state of society is a matter for the politician. The defence and propagation of the faith and its relation to the dominant ideology comes from a particular view of mission and evangelism, ie. 'the Gospel separated from the historical and material context of the people addressed. It produced as a result an uncritical self-justifying enthusiasm' (Cochrane 1987:156). Sadly, the churches were unable to explain their commitment to the dominant structures despite resistance from the very blacks they claimed to support.

This was the result of a number of factors - their close ties to white society, imperial church relations, eg. with the Anglican communion, cultural supremacy with its European roots, internal church structures which were still dominated from Europe and a basic aversion to reflecting on and acting as the result of conditions and conflicts in black society. Protestant Evangelicalism, born in the Victorian era, reigned supreme and promoted the values of responsibility and restraint, personal piety and family religion and had little common ground with blacks' option for resistance.

During the 1920s, requests to tackle the socio-economic problems went largely unheeded so much so that it could be said of the Christian Council that 'the transformation of individual men and women continued to be central to the gospel preached in South Africa, but the transformation of the world which so deeply shaped these men and women remained at best an addendum to the task of the churches' (Cochrane 1987:160). It is a sad indictment of church ideology that it could be said of it, 'the Church showed its colours firmly nailed to the mast of capitalism and bourgeois ideology'(ibid.). Missionaries looked on themselves as 'the conscience of the settlers and the protectors of the "natives"' (de Gruchy 1979:13). The church's ultimate cop out was that the future was God's problem. It is instructive to note, however, that the oppressed also operate from an ideological base which aims at overturning the prevailing relationships of domination and subservience as can be seen in the response of, for example, those who formed African Initiated Churches (AICs) [15].

Thus far, we can see that despite a positive definition of ideology having been offered (cf. Saayman 1991:8-9), the church operated predominantly at levels two and three of Fierro's broad uses of the term. By and large, it became and remained captivated by the ideology of its sending bodies and cultures ie. western European. There is a deep issue of faith here

15. See Chapter 4.

which is ideologically based and is related to the reality of the context. We agree with Villa-Vicencio (1982:79) that:

'Ideology critique... involves theological commitment... self-critique and a continuing socio-political analysis of society.... [for] an enabling and motivating theology of liberation which is drawn by an eschatological lure will render it dissatisfied with any tentative political solution or utopia this side of the Kingdom of God. In this sense, theology is to be an ongoing theology of liberation, renewal and change'.

1.9. The Present Study.

As has been stated, this study is necessary because little work has been done on the development of Scottish Presbyterian church mission policy relative to the context in which and the people amongst whom it was worked out in South Africa. Following the Mzimba Secession of 1898, but not seemingly directly as the result of it, developments and changes occurred in mission policy which led in 1923 to the formation of the BPCSA. An attempt will be made to determine the extent to which policy development was affected by the secular and ecclesiastical situation in South Africa and the extent to which it was imposed regardless of contextual issues, and the involvement of the people most affected by the implementation of the policy, the blacks.

This study is concerned with Scottish church policy because at the end of the nineteenth century two reformed presbyterian church missions were operating in South Africa, those of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. More will be said of this below.

The problems related to historiography already dealt with are relevant here because of the problem of sources. It is proposed to study the archives and records of the churches involved along with secondary evidence to be found in relevant literature relating to the general, church and mission history of the period under review. An attempt will be made to uncover

and interpret 'local', ie. black, sources, where they are available, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the situation in which mission policy evolved so that 'unconventional evidence' and 'subtexts' (Comaroffs), the 'silences' (Maluleke and Mosala) may be placed alongside the ideological stance of the western missionaries as relevant evidence.

The study aims to be more than a simple retelling of the chronological events of the period as it seeks to understand the motivation of those involved in promoting mission policy within the wider context. It will attempt to take account of insights from Black Theology which places black people, as far as the evidence will allow, at centre stage as interlocutors. The perspective is that of a "reformed" Presbyterian Scottish former overseas missionary steeped in western theology and committed to the cause of black liberation, seeking to interpret the course of the development of a policy perceived by Scottish churches as contributing to the advance of the Kingdom amongst black South Africans in particular.

1.10. The Study in Outline.

Chapter Two will examine the origin of the mission to South Africa in Scotland and its development throughout the nineteenth century in South Africa.

Chapter Three will examine important dimensions of the South African context during the period of the study as the wider context in which developments took place.

Chapter Four will consider the events leading to the Mzimba Secession, the secession itself and its consequences for the mission and mission policy.

Chapter Five will study the changes in mission policy during the period involving the origin and growth of the concept of an 'autonomous' church.

Chapter Six will examine the consummation of the idea and the formation of the BPCSA.

Chapter Seven will survey the evidence and assess the respective contributions of those who determined and carried out the policy and its effects on mission in South Africa.

We now turn to consider the background of our study. the historical context in which it is set.

CHAPTER 2 THE BACKGROUND

2.1. The Origin of the Mission in Scotland.

2.1.1. The Reformation.

The Preface to the Scots Confession (1560) states clearly: 'And this Gospel must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then the end shall come'. The Confession closes with the prayer, 'Let all the nations come to Thy true knowledge' (Hewat 1960:1). Clearly, it was the intention of the nascent reformed Scottish church that mission to the world was a priority. However, for more than two centuries, this did not materialise. The severe shortage of ministers may have been responsible, in part, for this state of affairs as well as the internal political situation in Scotland.

While Ross (1986:33) acknowledges the insignificant missionary impulse and indifference on the part of the established church from the sixteenth century Reformation up to the late eighteenth century, he claims that mission has always been integral to the life of Christianity 'despite its high and low points'. Let us now consider the course of events that led to mission work becoming a reality

2.1.2. Prelude to Action.

In 1796, a proposal was presented to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to begin overseas missionary work. Despite strong support, the proposal was defeated on the resolution:

'To spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel amongst barbarous and heathen nations seems to be highly preposterous, in so far as philosophy and learning must in the nature of things take the precedence: and that, while there remains at home a single individual without the means of religious knowledge, to

propagate it abroad would be improper and absurd' (Du Plessis 1911:182).

And this in spite of an earlier decision to encourage the collection of funds for work amongst American Indians. Du Plessis (:182) attributes the formation of voluntary missionary societies to this disinterest on the part of the church. However, Hewat (1960:2) points to the poverty of the Scottish nation rather than disinterest as the reason for lack of action in this regard.

This is supported by the further decision of the General Assembly to pray that God's promise be fulfilled 'in giving His Son the heathen for His inheritance' though it was deemed 'highly inexpedient' at that time to accord such ventures financial support. It further agreed that it would 'embrace with zeal and thankfulness any future opportunity of contributing by their exertions to the propagation of the Gospel of Christ which Providence may hereafter open' (:6). Those who were motivated to inaugurate a world mission approach therefore, had to find a way to do this outside the formal structures of the church. Hence, the growth of voluntary societies.

2.1.3. The Voluntary Societies.

Bosch (1991:327) argues that voluntarism, which influenced the development of missionary societies was the result of 'the spirit of enterprise and initiative spawned by the Enlightenment'. Their underlying ideology was that of 'social and political egalitarianism' (:328). Voluntary missionary societies developed in Europe and in the USA. They were essentially laypersons' organisations (Ross 1986:38), interdenominational (at least at the beginning) and were 'humanitarian societies' (Hewat 1960:8). 'This Protestant form of organisation - free, open, responsible, embracing all classes, both sexes, all ages, the masses of the people - is peculiar to modern times, and almost to our age' (Beaver RP

[ed.] 1967:65 in Walls 1996:242). Women played a vital role in these societies and found a place here 'far earlier than they could decently appear in most other walks of life (Walls 1988:151 in Bosch 1991:328) to the extent that they were appointed as missionaries on their own merit. Pre-eminent among these in the United Kingdom was the London Missionary Society (LMS) formed in 1795. Hewat (1960:8), notwithstanding what is said above, claims that it was because of the inability of people to stimulate the churches' interest in foreign mission that these societies emerged as a purely voluntary activity. Yet, Walls claims that missionary societies developed because of the organisational and operational inability of the churches. They had no 'machinery... to do the tasks' (Walls 1996:246-7). In this way they may be considered subversive (:249). And so missionary agencies frequently took the form of voluntary societies (:260).

Following the General Assembly's decision of 1796, the Scottish Missionary Society and the Glasgow Missionary Society were formed and took up the cause of foreign missions. It was committed Christian women and men who supported these societies and they came, in large part, from the lower middle and skilled working classes which also provided many missionaries (Ross 1986:38). Women not only had a role but a place in the leadership of such societies (Walls 1996:250,253). They had been influenced by the mid-eighteenth century Evangelical Revival (Hofmeyer & Pillay 1994:42) which had stimulated an increased awareness of sin and a 'joyful realisation of forgiveness' through God's grace in Christ (Burleigh 1960:309) and had given a fresh lease of life to the churches as social and political concerns became matters for Christian concern and action. Sadly, Burleigh does not even accord the missionary societies a clear mention in his *Church History of Scotland* despite their significant achievements.

Ross (1986:33) also argues that the growth of the modern missionary movement 'coincided with the economic and political emergence of Britain as a dominant power in the world' which

led to the idea of 'the simple identification of Christian missions as the cultural and spiritual arm of European Imperialism'.

The GMS held to an 'evangelical conservative theology that in the racial relationships of South Africa were regarded as "liberal"', ie. evangelicals who held a '"liberal" view of missions' (van der Spuy 1971:3 referring to a report drawn up by the GMS, dated 1st March 1796). Van der Spuy (:4) believes that this approach stimulated the hope of developing the potential of human nature through education and evangelism (keystones of Scottish mission) in opposition to 'a pessimistic view that regards human nature as unchangeable'. GMS liberalism is described as an openness to fresh ideas and an abhorrence of bigotry; it is related to liberalism in the political sphere in Scotland. Walls (1996:242) asserts that:

'such associations could only arise in countries which had an open, responsible form of government, where Protestantism had prepared the way for civil liberty which arose from seizing the opportunities offered by a particular phase of western political, economic and social development'.

In time, ie. 1824, as the result of the tireless efforts of the protagonists of overseas missions, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland gave its blessing to the cause of foreign missions. However, the internal ecclesiastical situation in Scotland was about to face problems which would have far reaching consequences for the church both at home and abroad.

2.1.4. The 'Disruption'.

The 'Disruption' occurred in Scotland in 1843 after a period of ten years conflict over a dispute between those who adhered to the Establishment principle, ie. 'the Church by law established' (Burleigh 1960:266) and those who supported the Voluntary principle. The dispute concerned the relationship of the church to the state.

Arising out of the 1829 government proposal for a Bill for the relief of Roman Catholics Rev Andrew Marshall, Secession minister in Kirkintilloch, preached against ecclesiastical establishments as unscriptural and in support of the church and its mission being financed 'solely by the liberality of its faithful people' (Burleigh 1960:325). Marshall attacked all forms of establishment as being contrary to the authentic mission of the church. This practice of the dissenting churches became the Voluntary principle which promoted the idea of a secular state.

The two issues which brought the matter to a head were Patronage and the 'Claim of Right'. The former concerned the right of a landowner to impose a minister of his choice on a congregation and parish whose land he owned while the latter asserted the spiritual independence of the church. In 1843, the government refused to repeal the Patronage Act and to acquiesce in the demands of the Claim of Right. Those who could not accept the privileges of establishment any longer left the Established Church of Scotland and formed the Free Church of Scotland (FCoS).

Rev Dr Thomas Chalmers, leader of the Free Church body, claimed that the Free Church did not aim at Voluntarism. He claimed it was a national church: 'We are advocates for a national recognition and national support of religion - and we are not voluntaries'. He aimed to produce an alter ego of the Established Church 'relying on the resources which their faithful people would supply' (:354). Saayman (1996:32) has rightly said that the Free Church had 'a rigidly conservative and Calvinist interpretation of theology, and also harboured a tendency towards regarding itself as a national church'. Hofmeyer and Pillay (1994:73) argue that the 'Disruption' 'ultimately led to the split in missionary work and the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church'. However, it would also be true to say that it sowed the seeds of the Mzimba Secession. This newly formed Free Church of Scotland espoused the cause of foreign mission as the result of the influence of its voluntarist members and supporters.

2.1.5. Later Developments.

Since 1843, the Free Church has supported foreign missions. At that time, almost all missionaries belonged to the Free Church; they were probably theologically conservative according to Saayman (1996:32), being evangelicals. In 1845, the GMS transferred its work to the Free Church's Foreign Missions Committee (FMC).

In 1847, the United Secession Church and the Relief Church came together to form the voluntary anti-establishment United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UPCoS). It was co-operation between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church in favour of disestablishment as well as in other areas of church life including missions that led in 1900 to their union as the United Free Church of Scotland. The clock turned full circle when the United Free Church united with the established Church of Scotland to form the Church of Scotland in 1929.

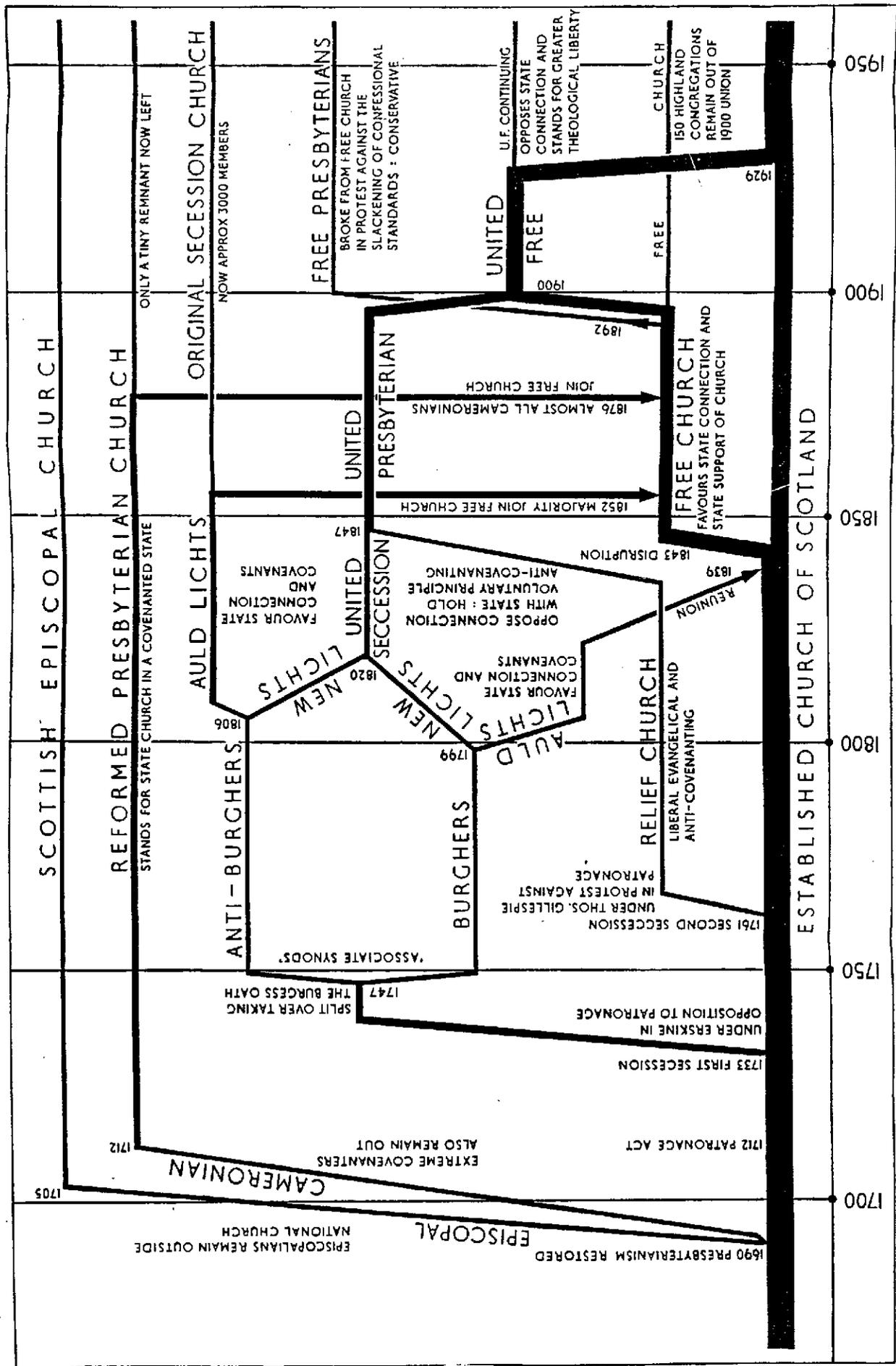
2.2. The Beginnings of the Scottish Presbyterian Church Mission in South Africa.

2.2.1. The Beginning of British Mission Work in South Africa.

In 1799, the LMS sent a group of missionaries, including Dr Johannes van der Kemp, to South Africa. Part of the group embarked on a mission to the Bushpeople while others pursued a mission to the Bechuana, the Griqua-Hottentot and the Namaqua peoples. Van der Kemp moved towards the Eastern Cape and settled for a brief time with Chief Ngqika. Trouble with the authorities and settlers led to him abandoning this work in 1800. He returned to Cape Colony and worked at Graaff Reinet before continuing his work amongst the Hottentot people at Bethelsdorp Mission.

Political problems between Britain and Holland and the cession of Cape to Holland in 1803 led to the appointment of van der

DIVISIONS
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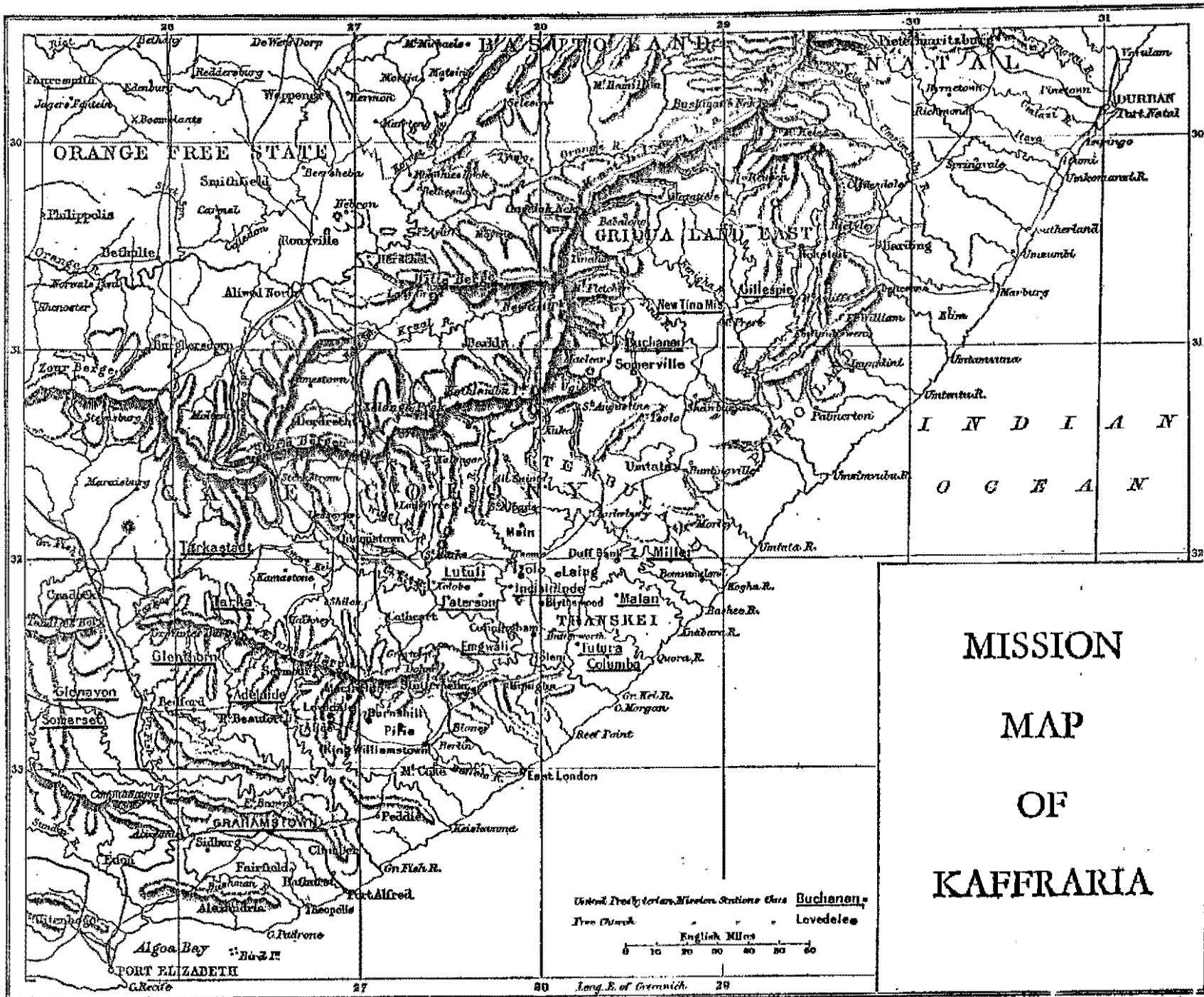
Kemp as Superintendent of the LMS' affairs in South Africa. However, he died before hearing of the appointment and James Read, a colleague, was appointed in his place. He was succeeded by Rev George Thom who was, in turn, followed by Dr John Philip in 1819.

In 1816, the LMS sent Rev Joseph Williams to work in the Eastern Cape near Fort Beaufort and in 1820 Rev. John Brownlee settled at Tyumie Mission. Brownlee was joined by Rev WR Thomson and Mr J Bennie from the GMS in 1821. These were the precursors of the Scottish Presbyterian church mission in South Africa which was about to begin.

2.2.2. Scottish Presbyterian Church Mission is Established.

The ordination of the Rev John Ross in 1823 by the Presbytery of Hamilton and his setting apart for missionary work came on the eve of the Church of Scotland officially recognising the necessity of overseas mission (1824). He joined the work in the Eastern Cape. Lovedale Mission was also founded in 1824 to be followed in the early 1830s by Burnshill, Pirie and Balfour Missions. The latter work was short lived, however. These were missions of the Free Church of Scotland, the GMS having transferred its work to the Free Church in 1845 following the 'Disruption'. According to Cheyne (1993:12), the 'Disruption' had a positive effect on missions with the development of 'missionary endeavour on a scale and of a quality hardly surpassed by any other communion in the English-speaking world'. Certainly, the Free Church mission emphasised educational work and evangelism, while the United Presbyterian Church came to promote evangelism and church building.

In 1837, the GMS had split over the voluntary principle. The continuing GMS allied its work with the established Church of Scotland and later the Free Church; the offshoot Glasgow African Missionary Society (GAMS) worked with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland which was formed in 1847. The GAMS was responsible for the work at Tyumie and Igqibira and



later at Mgwali and Tutura. However, until 1842, both societies' missionaries had worked together in the same presbytery .

When the FC and UPC united in 1900, there were 28 congregations of the Scottish mission in South Africa with 14,402 members (Hewat 1060:184). Work was taking place in the Eastern Cape in the Ciskei and Transkei established by both churches, and in Natal under two missions established by the FCoS, the Mission Council and the Presbytery of Natal. Mission work in the Transvaal began in 1986 with a meeting between Rev William Mpamba and 'a leadership corps of those sons of the area who had exposure in working in the diamond fields of Kimberley exposed to the gospel through [the] Native Congregational Church of Rev Gwayi Tyamzashe, a Lovedale trained minister' (Manaka 1996:1).

2.2.3. The Institutions.

Fundamental to the missionary work of the missionaries, was educational work. The foremost FCoS institution was Lovedale, opened in 1841. The original intention was to train teachers and evangelists but, in time, the work of the mission diversified as trades' training was introduced, especially in the area of printing and publishing at Lovedale Press. To this was added agricultural and medical mission, theological education for the ordained ministry, a Bible School for the laity and the establishment of a 'native' University of Fort Hare.

A simliar institution, but on a smaller scale, was opened in 1877 in the Transkei; it was called Blythswood. The UPCoS had opened Mgwali Girls's School in 1857. In 1868, the FCoS began work at Toleni and called it Cunningham Mission. Other work was initiated at Buchanan Mission in East Griqualand and at Pietermaritzburg, Mpolweni, Msinga (Gordon Memorial Mission) and Kalabasi. Most of these missions concentrated on agricultural mission and evangelism.

2.2.4. What About Black Participation?

We noted the efforts made at Lovedale in connection with the training of evangelists who were also interpreters for the missionaries. Yet, they remain nameless despite the vast amount of work they carried out among their own people and their achievement on behalf of the mission. This is demonstrated in the growth of missions, members and congregations up to the end of the nineteenth century. The only credit is given to those exceptional people who either were the first blacks to achieve something such as the first black nurse to qualify, Cecilia Makiwane (Wilson 1976:4), the first black minister trained abroad, Rev Tiyo Soga (Williams 1978) or those who attained a certain notoriety like Rev PM Mzimba, of whom more later (Shepherd 1971:59,60). Until recently, the work of Rev W Mpamba in establishing Work in the Transvaal at Donhill was little known [1]. Manaka (1996:1,2,3,6,9,10) has redeemed this situation in the case of the Transvaal giving us the names of Mokele Rophele, Daniel Moqaba Mamabolo, Timothy and Saul Mamabolo, Jacob Mabija, Timotheus Mamabolo, Lucas Makoale and Revs Yakeni Mbali, Candlish Koti, Arthur Ntuli, Titus Finca and BM Molaba.

Wilson (1976:8) is also one who does acknowledge by name some of those great black missionaries who made significant contributions to the spread of the Gospel among their own people: Jan Tshatshu, Ntsikana, Tiyo Soga, John Knox Bokwe, Elijah Makiwane, Mpambani Mzimba. She also notes that in 1876, thirteen black missionaries offered for foreign service in Malawi, including a William Koyi. Their ability to communicate in their own languages made them especially useful until, and even beyond, the point where the missionaries could speak in the vernacular.

That the missionaries were the focus of mission activity cannot be contradicted in the light of the above. All accounts focus

1. This is because the Reformed Presbyterian Church celebrated the centenary of this event in 1996.

on their activities based on their assumptions and prejudices. The fact that little account is taken of socio-economic factors points to the complicity of the missionaries in the prevailing imperialistic climate of the time. So they conform to the canons of the 'Old' historiography in their negative attitude towards blacks, their cultures and civilisations. In the educational sphere, the 'Christianity must precede civilisation' (du Plessis 1911:365) slogan misrepresents the situation where black civilisation is devalued to the degree that it is dismissed because ideologically civilisation is equated with Western civilisation.

This is in accord with Dr James Stewart of Lovedale's ambition, echoed by his successor, James Henderson, 'to bring the native people into line with the European occupants of the same land' (du Plessis 1911:364). The purpose of mission was, therefore, conformity.

Even Wilson (1976:6) falls into this trap as she identifies sophistication with 'wide-scale relationships, a literature, some centralised form of government, and such military power as goes with economic development and centralised authority' compared with 'an isolated people, with limited technology and no writing'.

All this would indicate that mission was perceived as a two way process between the sending churches in Scotland and the missionaries in the field, little account, if any, being taken of the needs and desires of blacks apart from what was perceived on their behalf by the missionaries. Scant attention was taken of black experience and there seem to be no available contemporary black assessments of this area of mission work and its implications.

2.2.5. An Assessment.

From this brief overview, we have noted a number of points which indicate the poor profile accorded to blacks in this area of mission history.

Nonetheless, the contribution of the educational establishments especially cannot be denied. Yet, du Plessis (1911:365) has posed the question of the educational work eclipsing the evangelical purpose. This might be true if evangelism is seen as separate and distinct from education in the unfolding mission and certainly Christian teaching and the expectation of conversion was not absent at places like Lovedale. Saayman (1996:33) points out that the dual purpose at Lovedale was to 'civilise and christianise' and notes with Stewart's appointment as Principal in 1870 that it 'became more strictly Christian rather than secular in the education it offered' (Burchell 1979:15-18). It might be claimed that the education offered prepared young minds for a future that might not match their expectations given the developing political and economic situation.

We have to acknowledge the efforts and sacrifices made by those missionaries who felt called to serve overseas often at great cost to themselves and their families. However, we may never know the extent to which black missionaries and Christians also suffered for having made the leap of faith, a leap that often led to estrangement from families, friends, lifestyles and cultures.

While this chapter has presented the historical background to the period of our study, there was a contemporary context in which it occurred. This context was multi-dimensional and it is to a review of it that we now turn.

CHAPTER 3 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In this chapter, a brief consideration will be given to some of the important dimensions of mission history - theological, ecumenical, cultural, social, political and economic. However, to maintain these distinctions rigidly is rather simplistic as, eg. politico-economic issues are often so intertwined that it is difficult to distinguish them:

'Identifying the boundaries between religion and family life, between religion and politics and even between religion and economics, has always been very difficult and, in this context, of South African history, virtually impossible (Bredenkamp & Ross [Ed.] 1995:1 cf. Saayman 1991; Villa-Vicencio 1988; Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; Cochrane 1987).

3.1. The Theological Dimension

A considerable amount of the ideology implicit in the missionaries' work and witness derives from the conflicts they experienced with regard to their allegiance to the colonial powers and settlers to whom they were often indebted for assistance in the promotion of their work and meeting the needs of the indigenous peoples. Yet, 'they never doubted the superiority of English cultural values over those of the African people whom they sought to proselytise' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:18). They were, therefore, thoroughly constrained by their Western value system.

Nineteenth century missionaries were products of the Victorian Age and its attendant theology. From the late eighteenth century, the Protestant idea that salvation could result from offering one's personal gifts for the relief of wretchedness was an impetus for mission work. But, for the objects of mission the emphasis was on conversion and increasing the number of Christians rather than on the amelioration of their social circumstances, issues of equality and protecting blacks' rights.

The nineteenth century Protestant revival occurred in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment with its liberalising tendencies. Van der Spuy (1971:9) contends that theological liberalism was strong in South Africa towards the end of the nineteenth century though there were differences between 'liberal' and 'conservative' theologians especially in the Cape. In general, this resulted in opposition to racial segregation. Liberals were less concerned than conservatives in opposing state interference in church affairs. The development of Evangelical Philanthropy associated with the names of John Philip and Robert Moffat found its theological roots in the Pietism [1] of J Spener and LN von Zinzendorf.

This approach came from the missionaries' perception of their role in rescuing blacks from their "fallen" state. They were considered to be in need of redemption from eternal damnation and this would result from exposure to the Gospel. There was a certain attraction in Christianity, 'as a religion of sacrifice, blood, saints, spirits, purification, and redemption; it had much in common with pre-colonial African beliefs. The African world, evoking a pre-industrial and patriarchal society, clearly resonated with African ideas' (Beinart 1994:103). Conversion was the route to literacy and education. Its universal creed and links aligned with its individualistic ethical alternative (for urban dwellers?) to rural communalism and its Bible as a source of spiritual and social redemption drew many to it.

However, the impact of the doctrine imparted by the missionaries was that it destroyed 'the entire edifice of customary practice. Once the divine light of the truth had fallen on it, savage innocence became original sin, and its ways to be loudly condemned as the path to death and damnation'

1. Pietism expressed personal piety and a personal relationship of inner communion with God and was therefore, individualistic and concerned with salvation of the soul. It focussed on Christology and the Holy Spirit was vital in mission. It fostered a kind of escapism by eschewing socio-political activity (Maluleke 1989:55-64).

(Broadbent 1865:193 in Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:238). This refers to the assault on black culture and practices, eg. polygamy, brideprice, initiation, rainmaking and ancestor veneration. However, Maluleke (1995:215) suggests that there was a manipulative motive behind such teaching: 'The image of a hanging Jesus whose body is covered in blood as a ransom for one's personal sins may have been a common theme in the teachings of the missionaries'. He makes this reference with regard to Xisomisana's dream. In cleaning Jesus' body, 'The more water I applied, the more blood gushed out of his body' (Thuketana 1969:219 in Maluleke 1995:215). For Maluleke (:215), 'The projection of a vulnerable, dying and bleeding Jesus is a powerful guilt-inducing device' which was an important motive for conversion and spiritual life. According to van Buthselaar (1984:194 in Maluleke 1995:216), teaching on the subjects of death, original sin, hellfire and the Last Judgment were common to nineteenth century individualistic pietistic theology.

Major theological problems were in the making for blacks, however. For instance it was commonly held that 'the wrath of the ancestors' [2] was experienced in this life. This was in direct conflict with the missionaries' teaching that eternal damnation was focussed in the next life. For blacks, this was ludicrous! But, the missionaries were frustrated by 'such disregard for Revealed Truth and Immortality of the Soul' (Mostert 1992:596) as they obviously witnessed. Their emphasis was on personal salvation as the result of conversion from heathen beliefs and habits. Yet, this salvation was of the other worldly kind with little sign and hope of an improved lifestyle in this life other than that which came from imbibing Western culture from the missionaries and other agents of colonialism:

'Colonial expansion is ... cast as an altruistic crusade, bringing hope of salvation to those otherwise irrevocably lost.... Salvation is thus presented as an exclusive club, admission to which is European controlled.... We see an ideology that

2. 'Iingqumbo Yeminyanya', title of a book by AC Jordan. 1940. Lovedale: Lovedale Press.

serves the interests of the dominant party, spread by an institution that the dominant party supports, and this is... the hallmark of the religion of the status quo' (Lincoln 1985:271 in Villa-Vicencio. 1988:55).

The superior stand and paternalistic position of the missionaries caused them to be unable to distinguish between the message of the Gospel and the implications of imperialism. Villa-Vicencio (1988:60) asks, was it 'a romantic and naive understanding of evangelism as the immediate answer to all socio-economic and political problems which prevented the missionaries from grasping the full reality of the biblical doctrine of salvation, making them the functionaries of British colonialism?'.

The consequences for blacks were devastating for traditional social life was destroyed, the curbing of the chiefs' power resulted in the loss of land and power, and blacks were denied the benefits of the capitalist system. They came to identify the gospel with: 'hard work, urbanisation, exploitative labour, the lure of elusive material prosperity, and the loss of cultural identity and political power' (:48). On the other hand, the missionaries were unable to distinguish between the gospel and the superiority of the way of life they brought to the blacks.

The failure of missionaries to comprehend African religion led to a devaluation of the faith of blacks. Missionaries like Broadbent and Moffat (in Villa-Vicencio 1988:55; cf. Burchell 1979:194) simplistically assumed black people had no knowledge of spiritual matters and no concept of God! What they failed to realise was that the entire lifestyle of blacks was infused with a deep spirituality and a firm belief in a supreme being.

The unfortunate result of missionary work was that it resulted in 'The imposition of Western religion and culture [and] caused black converts to be torn out of their traditional social structure and left them to hover between two religions and two social systems' (:59-60). However, there was resistance to

such a dualistic view of life as Maluleke (Shilubana & Ntsanwisi 1958:88 in Maluleke 1995:218) demonstrates in his references to Chief Muhlaba of the Vatsonga: 'I am [like] a Morula Tree (Nkanyi), the Morula Tree on the borderline' . It was only as a response to the missionaries, ie. representatives of mission Christianity, who saw life in dualistic terms, that Muhlaba used this metaphor for he rejected the individualistic way of life they projected.

The early years of the twentieth century are marked by a clear adherence to the conservative theology of the nineteenth century. This can be seen in the South African General Missionary Conference of 1904 whose doctrinal stance was based on the Bible as the inspired word of God, the power of angels and devils, the physical resurrection of the body and included the fundamental doctrines of the Incarnation and the Trinity. This is confirmed by Bishop Hutton's response to a letter published in 'The Anglican' in 1904. Hutton expressed the view that the church should be confined to the 'private sphere' of life and should be concerned to promote personal salvation through personal convictions, the internal spiritual life and a personal morality (Villa-Vicencio 1988:86).

This general trend was still apparent towards the end of the 1920s with the development of an 'apolitical spirituality' and the view that the church should restrict its activities to religious affairs (Cochrane 1987:144).

3.2. The Ecumenical Dimension

The ecumenical movement in South Africa had its roots in the eighteenth century with the formation of the South African Missionary Society in 1799. Article I of its Constitution, declares that: 'The object of this society shall be to promote by all means which lie within its power, the extension of Christ's Kingdom' (du Plessis 1911:93). From its beginnings ecumenical progress was not to be circumscribed by

theological/spiritual/religious means but was to proceed 'by all means within its power'. Subsequent history shows how seriously this was taken as colonialism and commerce, ie. politics and economics, were to be co-opted to serve the cause of missionary expansion and vice versa. The fifth article of the same constitution enjoins 'every Christian, to render all submission to the temporal power'.

This may be related to the influence of Pietism which discovered 'a newfound unity of Christians which transcended denominational differences' (Bosch 1991:457). In their early days, both the London Missionary Society and the American Board of Missions were not tied to denominational concerns. However, this situation changed by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century and a period of antagonistic rivalry ensued:

'Each society was fighting, so to speak, for its own land. Concentrated action there was none. There was no well recognised plan of campaign, and no organised attempt on the part of the combined societies to capture the strongholds of the enemy' (du Plessis 1911:260).

And so fighting one another became the modus vivendi rather than dealing with the true purpose of mission and these were described by du Plessis as (:404) 'serious evils'. The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh's (1910) Commission I noted that there were sufficient personnel to staff missions but that they were unevenly distributed in terms of needs. There was too much duplication which led to confusion and a lack of discipline among the blacks.

Yet, du Plessis comments favourably on the ecumenical co-operation through the General Missionary Conferences [3]

3. Dr James Stewart was the Chairperson of the first Conference, Rev John Lennox was Secretary of the Conferences held in 1904, 1906, 1909, and 1912, and Dr James Henderson was a member of its Executive for some years. All three worked at Lovedale Institution.

beginning in 1904. This was a 'voluntary' organisation which aimed to consolidate past achievements and prepare for future initiatives where there was the 'formulation of general missionary principles', the discussion of mutual problems and the 'creation of a feeling of unity' (:405 cf. Villa-Vicencio 1988:137). Co-operation was developed through prayer, study and action among churches and missionary institutions where the heads met regularly to discuss common concerns eg. Healdtown, St. Matthews, Lovedale (Shepherd 1971:82). This process had actually begun during the latter part of the nineteenth century with the development of 'comity agreements', ie. there grew up a degree of denominational acceptance as mission areas were divided up geographically (Bosch 1991:458). This produced better stewardship of resources and gave a hint of the concept of the oneness of the church. What other unity existed was restricted to common methods of carrying out the mission, ie. through mission stations, churches, hospitals, schools, agriculture and industries, eg. Scottish Mission, Swiss Mission, Moravian Mission.

Initially, the Conferences' agenda were dominated by 'religious' issues. At its 1912 meeting, it evaded the issues occasioned by the economic and social struggles of the immediately preceding years. However, on the outbreak of war in 1914, The GMCSEA made representations to the government concerning the internment of German missionaries and achieved a reasonably acceptable settlement.

In addition, we may note the growth of nondenominational organisations such as the International Student Movement and the International Missionary Movement, culminating in the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910. Until this time, unity was conceived narrowly as the process by which agreement was achieved at the expense of wider issues. The new thrust was concerned with world issues.

Edinburgh led in turn to the formation of the International Missionary Council (1921) and the Faith and Order and the Life

and Work movements which together united to form the World Council of Churches in 1948.

3.3. The Cultural Dimension

The cultural domain was an area that was ripe for the eruption of conflict when the culture of the European met the culture of the black person. This was the result of the clash which resulted between the two for control of peoples' minds. The European missionaries arrived with a great sense of their own superiority, not least in the cultural realm. This was derived from developments emanating from the Enlightenment with its advances in technology and science. This caused Europeans to feel superior in these areas as well as in religion and, as Bosch (1991:291) says, there was: 'no attempt to distinguish between religious and cultural supremacy'.

Protestant missions were based on the idea that the best culture was Western European in which the Gospel was a critical factor with its emphasis on leadership in the fields of medicine, education and agriculture. Almost universally, lifestyle and language were denigrated. These were the foundations of culture which is : 'the patterned way of life produced by a people through which its members have guidelines for valuing, believing and acting. Culture is embodied and expressed in a system of symbols, of which the basic and most pervasive is language' (Groome 1980:110).

In general, it might be said that the missionaries found the social code of blacks reprehensible and incomprehensible. They experienced difficulty with the concept of ubuntu (humanness which aimed to preserve and give stability to the social unit) and its implications in terms of its basic understanding of restoration of balance of society, even in the case of murder. This was integrally related to economic structures as was the paying of bride-price (lobola). 'And yet its practical working must be for good, for the Kafirs are the opposite of

bloodthirsty; as the shedding of blood, except in times of war, is a rare occurrence among them' writes a British colonial official, JC Warner in 1856 (Mostert 1992:197-198). This conflicted with the punitive approach of Western legal codes which missionaries inculcated.

However, the most dangerous implication of missionary teaching was that it undermined the traditional role of the divine office of the chief in tribal society (Ashley 1978:4 later published in JTSA 1980 no.32). The social structure of the tribe depended on the chief's authority for his role was economic, spiritual, social and administrative; it was dynamic rather than static. Complex external relations existed between chiefdoms and missionaries became deeply involved in these as they exercised economic influence through the system of exchange, barter and gifts. As colonial and missionary penetration developed the chiefs began to lose their power as they were deprived of their land. This was critical as much of their authority depended on being able to grant land rights.

The mission stations certainly played a vital role in the 'conversion' process with regard to culture, for they were 'important centres for the transformation of traditional land relationships' and, according to Trapido (1977:21-23 in Cochrane 1987:25), were a part of the altering relationships of production. The impetus to conform to Christian values was a factor in promoting blacks onto the labour market. In addition, mission stations were regarded as 'an invasion of the sovereignty of the chiefs' (Peires 1981:76 in Cochrane 1987:28) as the result of their close connections with colonial authorities, drawing their followers away from their tribes and relying on colonial force when the need arose. To this extent, missionaries assisted the exploitation of the tensions, weaknesses and splits in black society insofar as they had an understanding of tribal culture, economy and politics.

The conversion of the Gqunukhwebe Chief Kama and his subsequent rejection of tribal customs, including polygamy, offers 'an example of anguished conflict between the traditional and the

new. The strain he put on his followers was severe. They dreaded his conversion for what it would impose upon their loyalty to him as chief...' (Mostert 1992:598).

However, in general, chiefs elected to remain between the two worlds of traditional culture and missionary/colonial culture cf. the morula tree metaphor adopted by Maluleke (1995:220) to describe the position adopted by Chief Muhlaba with regard to these two "universes". Maluleke (1995:220) also claims that this process affected the Tsonga people as a whole as the missionaries changed them by means of church and school and as they came to owe allegiance to both worldviews.

Neither were the Tswana willing to convert despite their susceptibility to European habits. They were prepared to accept new ways so long as they could maintain their own traditions in face of the encroachment of Western values and practices on their cultures: 'they set about recasting the image of the evangelist into their own language of cultural relativism' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:245). It is noteworthy that there were more conversions among the junior members of royal households than among the chiefs themselves. They accommodated themselves to the resources offered by missionaries as the result of the democratic emphasis of the Gospel and as the result of the potency of the new ideology as well as for the social benefits they conveyed (:240). But, even despite conversion, 'professions of new belief belied the fact that older modes of thought and action were never fully laid aside' (:247). This may have been due to the nature of patriarchal society where age, gender and rank determined the resilience of 'patterns of marriage and bridewealth' (Beinart 1994:18).

'When colonisation sets in it devours the indigenous culture and leaves behind a bastardised culture that may thrive at the pace and rate allowed it by the dominant culture. But nevertheless we also have to realise that the basic tenets of our culture have succeeded to a great extent to withstand the process of bastardisation' (Sir Seretse Khama quoted in Grundlingh 1984:24 in le Cordeur 1985:5).

This was to pose a serious problem for Xhosa misisters who:

'had very limited opportunities to advance views and positions that differed from their missionary mentors on any issue upon which the latter had categorical views. Moreover, they were expected to support and enforce the missionary position. This left them in a very uncomfortable dilemma when rank and file Xhosa Christians were unwilling to abandon the[ir] customs (Mills in Bredekamp & Ross 1995:153).

With specific regard to American Board Mission policy, but by no means restricted to it, 'African clergy were in no position to take an independent stand on these [cultural] issues. In the first place, one of the criteria for selection was opposition to traditional customs' (:161). However, a missionary like James Stewart could see some value in the retention of some cultural expressions, eg. lobola, as can be seen in his testimony before the 1883 Commission on African laws and customs (Burchell 1979:196; Stanford, SAO, Sept. 1, 1930:191).

So, missionaries came to the conclusion that their work could best proceed once local culture had been destroyed and Western civilisation implanted. This process may not always have been consciously articulated but it was held, even if subconsciously. It was given clear expression in the pages of the 'Christian Express':

'No sooner does civilisation appear, than conflict ensues. The old gives way to the new only after a determined and lengthened resistance on its part'. This was based on the assumption that 'Christianity is indeed the universal religion' (CE xxvii:297. May 1895).

Claasen (1995:15) attributes secessions to missionaries' condemnation of ancestor veneration, polygamy and circumcision. This resulted in part, at least, from the church's arrogation to itself of the traditional role of the family, fostering the concept of individualism and thereby contributing to the ideology of capitalism (consciously or unconsciously). The resultant disintegration certainly facilitated conversions, especially in Xhosaland where 'the majority of early Christians appear to have been among the misfits and refugees' (Cochrane 1987:33). This view is supported by Mostert (1992:1256), who

asserts that in 1878, in the aftermath of successive wars, 'The Xhosa view of themselves... was bleak'. This was expressed in alcoholism, deterioration in family life and traditional customs, including lobola, and this was universal except among Christians whose outlook was presumably more optimistic despite their having been divorced from cultural influences. This is confirmed by Cochrane (1987:57,157) who claims that exposure to the worst aspects of civilisation, eg. drunkenness and immorality, should lead to segregation and a return to traditional lifestyle in the eyes of settlers, and churches to an extent. However, the degree to which this was possible is dubious.

Not all missionaries adopted a superior attitude towards traditional culture. Colenso held the view that those who practised polygamy should not be prevented from becoming members of the church. Colenso's view of traditional culture was positive in that he questioned the accepted superiority of Western culture: 'Colenso argued that the savage was noble and that the missionary ought to attempt to build upon the element of nobility in African religion' (Hinchliffe 1968:65-66). Not surprisingly, he was opposed by the majority of missionaries and others.

Mission activity certainly increased along with colonial expansion and many Africans responded by identifying with the new ruling state powers as the missions became 'par excellence the vehicle for capitalist values in much of the continent' (Freund 1984:157). In addition, missionaries often controlled educational institutions and demanded conversion as a prerequisite for admission making committed Christian faith a part of cultural expression: 'Becoming a Christian was more than a political choice; it was also a cultural one' (:157).

This change is interesting to note as Bosch (1991:296-297) says, 'for the Puritans [and Africans] culture was subsumed under religion'. Yet, 'under the sway of the Enlightenment, culture really had become the dominant reality and religion one of its expressions'. The question which remains is do we

evangelise or civilise as the priority? Bosch (ibid.) argues that it is irrelevant as all those who were carrying the gospel subscribed to the superiority of Western values.

3.4. The Social Dimension

The social dimension in mission history is related to the cultural which is constituted by 'guidelines for valuing, believing and acting. Culture is embodied and expressed in a system of symbols', so society 'is the institutionalised order and organised arrangements people give to their way of being together. It expresses, as it also promotes, the patterned life of their culture' (Groome 1980:110).

The Comaroffs (1991:43) believe that the history of the Cape from the time of the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 until 1910 had complicated social consequences. The missionaries came to a land marked by conflicts and tensions. The settler population consisted of a variety of classes – administrators and military (the aristocracy), settlers who were mainly farmers (the middle class), Boers (Dutch, French, German subsistence farmers) and missionaries. This constituted a disparate social mix and along with the freeing of slaves and the "liberal" policies of the British towards the blacks, encouraged by the missionaries, the Boers' separatist ideology, material security and traditional lifestyle became so threatened that they embarked on the 'Great Trek' in the 1830s marking a conflict and its "resolution" within the white community.

In the context of encroaching colonialism, the 'mediating position [adopted by the missionaries] between colonisers and colonised was inherently contradictory, invariably difficult' (:46). Their role in the colonising process linked them to blacks being dispossessed of their land, having to face a new concept of work and a novel form of government:

'Wherever the missionary places his standard among a savage tribe, their prejudices against a colonial government give way; their dependence upon the colony is increased... confidence is restored; intercourse with the colony is established; industry, trade and agriculture spring up; and every good genuine convert becomes the friend and ally of the colonial government' (Philip cited in Bundy 1979:39 in Cochrane 1987:36-37).

While Philip's view is somewhat romanticised, blacks were co-opted into the realm of market relations. And it is clear that missionary involvement was instrumental in softening up the resistance of blacks according to Philip (:37). Yet, Philip found himself in the position where he was 'as trapped in the ideology of capitalism as many a colonial administrator', and missionaries were 'by the most exceptional means, extending British influence and the British Empire' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:44) by aiming to 'teach them [ie. blacks] industrious habits and create a demand for British manufactures' (Philip 1828: vol 1:ix-x, vol 2:127 in Villa-Vicencio 1988;44). When it is realised how implicated missionaries became in the socio-political affairs of their time it is difficult to agree with Cochrane's (1987:37) assessment that they 'did not represent the self-conscious missionary ambition' because they were people of their own particular time and were closely linked to the ideology of British colonialism despite his assertion that they aided and abetted the system 'they helped create' (:38). That does not even constitute a sin of omission! It is difficult to understand how some of those who actually became paid servants of the colonial government did not experience some degree of tension between their responsibilities to the state and to blacks. He refers to M Wilson's hagiographical paper on the contribution made by missionaries but, at least, Wilson (1976:6) admits that she is a 'prejudiced observer'. At least, Cochrane poses the important question why so little of the Biblical message of the Gospel was offered to blacks other than that which supported their own ideological perspective unless the answer lies in the question itself.

We now turn to examine two specific aspects of the social dimension in which missionaries were involved - education and the land issue.

3.4.1. Education

In terms of education and socio-economic affairs, the church's work is seen predominantly in "educating" blacks on the dignity of labour. We note the dispute which arose at Lovedale Institution between William Govan (Principal) and James Stewart who challenged the principle of inculcating a classical European education in blacks - a number of whom accepted the opportunity, eg. Tiyo Soga. Stewart believed that this was too much to expect and (when he became Principal in 1870) developed trades training. Perhaps Stewart was partly motivated by the desire to offer some kind of useful education to a larger number of blacks though it is to be noted that the majority of blacks still had no access to education at that time. Lovedale and similar institutions thus provided skilled workers for the labour market. However, despite praiseworthy achievements especially in the period after 1870, Sol Plaatje (in Cochrane 1987:157-7) could comment on mission stations being divorced from the realities of working people. Cochrane (:84) asserts:

'the Church's role in the education of the indigenous population was a double-edged sword: it provided access to a world of global dimensions, but it also ensured that by and large they would fit into the appropriate niche determined by and for the dominating class of settler colonialists'

and ponders whether or not the Church had any awareness of this? However, the Comaroffs (1991:63) adopt a rather romantic attitude in this matter when they refer to the spread of literacy among the Tswana, which would 'set them on the path of self improvement and salvation, revelation and refinement, civilisation and, finally, conversion' though they do admit to the possibility of this being the result of technological and economic factors.

Prior to 1920, education for black and white was similar. This was derived from a policy of non-interference on the part of the Cape Education Department, for example. However, a Select Committee was appointed in 1908 to investigate Native and Coloured education and in 1919 A Native Education Commission was established to work out a policy for black education. This commission included four blacks along with Principal Henderson of Lovedale. It produced 'at last a syllabus specifically adapted to the circumstances and needs of African children' (Shepherd 1971:79). Lovedale supported this move and consequently the introduction of segregation in education. Little financial support was offered for the new curriculum, further evidence of differentials in schooling.

3.4.2. Politics and Land

Related to the above, the missionary work ethic had consequences for the destruction of black social customs, subsistence farming and the loss of land and political power by the African chiefs as part of the drive for economic expansion and the creation of a pool of labour (Cochrane 1987:21 cf. Maluleke 1989:16; Villa-Vicencio 1988:48).

The land issue is important here for land was intimately linked to cattle which was closely connected with wealth. It was an integral part of the social structure, agriculture, hunting and political power. The loss of land was tantamount to the loss of political identity and social cohesion. The struggle for land was heavily weighted in favour of the settlers with their superior arms and differential understanding of ownership and law relating to title: 'This asymmetrical contest pulled or drove many Africans out of their pastoralist-cultivator economy into various forms of labour, it radically altered the foundations of their society...' (Cochrane 1987:21,32; Beinart 1994:20).

The missionaries' involvement was clear as they accepted land in return for the promise of education for blacks. But, they were also involved at a deeper level as they co-operated with

the colonial powers in various ways which led to the loss of land. The missionary Robert Niven objected to the large amount of land taken from the blacks and given to Europeans because it would, 'I fear, end in the Caffres becoming a nation of degraded servants on their own soil' (Mostert 1992:949).

In the face of this, it becomes apparent that black society was not a static entity for Moshoeshoe became aware of the need for social, technological and economic transformation if any meaningful resistance was to be offered to the incursions of settlers and colonialists. Often this transformation was inspired by the benefits of Christianity.

3.5. The Political Dimension

Missionaries were normally involved in early "developments" in the colonisation of new areas. As settlers and industrialists wanted land and labour, so missionaries wanted souls. And in this situation, missionaries formed a direct connection between blacks and the colonial political economy (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:42). The relationship of missionaries to political matters can be seen clearly in those who actually became paid agents of the colonial government. Rev. John Brownlee was sent to Kaffraria in the joint role of missionary and government agent, though he later resigned the latter position being unhappy about accepting a salary as a government missionary (Mostert 1992:593). But even those who were not paid 'had to be the government's agent and, ... gathering that sort of intelligence was the *raison d'être* for sanctioning the move' [ie. allowing James Read to set up a mission among the Xhosa] (1991:429). The Boers spread rumours concerning Joseph Williams in the regard: 'A disinterested party could have found plenty of corroboration in the fact that Williams found himself "constantly perplexed" by letters from Grahamstown wanting him to trace runaway slaves, stolen cattle and guns. Jacob Cuyler finally demanded a weekly letter of intelligence from the mission' (:438).

But missionaries were also used by chiefs for their own political ends as in the case of Ndlambe east of the Great Fish River, where 'Acquisition of the mission station had become of great importance to all those associated with Ndlambe and Nxele, who both saw establishment of the mission at their own Great Places as a much desired triumph over Ngqika' (:433).

In sum, it can be said that 'Political pragmatism and Protestant ideology, far from countermanding each other, frequently made common cause' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991:256) in the sense of "using" and/or "abusing" each other. The missionaries had no identifiable political doctrine or power. In the case of the Nonconformists, they were actually discouraged in this regard by their sending societies, ie. the LMS. Lacking power they sought involvement with the government.

This situation continued into the twentieth century, a time when many blacks had been forced off their land and into the urban areas to provide a permanent pool of labour for the growing industrialist economy. But, by this time, it was actual churches which represented the focus of mission rather than mission societies.

The period under study is marked by a number of momentous events which created a climate of protest and resistance. These include:

1899-1902	The South African War
1905	Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission
1910	Formation of the Union of South Africa
1912	Foundation of the South African Native National Congress (later ANC)
1913	Natives Land Act passed

3.5.1. The South African War

The South African War may be said to have had its roots in the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, allowing the possibility of the Transvaal being able to dominate South Africa economically and politically. Lord Milner, British High Commissioner, 'regarded the Transvaal with its rich gold fields as a threat to British supremacy in South Africa' (van Zyl in Muller [ed.] 1969:325) which might potentially lead to a non-British union.

In 1898, Paul Kruger was re-elected President of the Transvaal with a substantial majority. The Transvaal had been linked to the Free State politically in 1897. From Milner's point of view the Transvaal had to be neutralised either by internal reform or by war. The issue of the franchise for Uitlanders, who were discriminated against by Afrikaners, was used as an excuse for war though the essential issue was the independence of the Transvaal; it was a struggle between Afrikaner nationalism and British imperialism which had been growing throughout the 1890s. The war was both civil and imperialist and its result led to consideration being given to the 'Native Question'.

Prior to the war the English speaking and the Afrikaners had both sought to enlist the support of blacks. There was a limited franchise in the Cape, but not in the Transvaal. The constitutional and economic advantages Xhosa-speaking peoples enjoyed enabled them to provide African political leadership in a way that others could not.

During the war, blacks were involved as participants in the armed forces of both sides and as ancillary workers; they suffered terribly from both its effects and its results, eg. black miners were removed from the Transvaal and the gold mines were shut down. By 1901, more use was being made of blacks and the mines were reopened.

In general, missionaries opposed the Transvaal Boers and held the view that the war was being waged in support of blacks who were deprived of the opportunity to participate in government and judicial affairs, as well as to maintain British superiority. Writing to Presbyterian missionaries in the Cape, George Smith of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, commented on the 'utter righteousness of our action' (Cuthbertson 1982:72). The Free Church missionaries believed the oppression of blacks was a reason for going to war. They were the 'protectors of certain African interests' (de Gruchy 1979:13). Yet, 'Imperialism pressed too heavily on British missionary ideology for it to espouse an anti-war position' (Cuthbertson 1987:103). This was certainly the view of Dr Stewart of Lovedale, a view which was supported by many educated blacks. He was not in favour of an unlimited franchise for blacks, nor was he a supporter of equality of blacks with whites; this suggests that he departed from the liberal vision of racial equality. It is also interesting to note his silence regarding British atrocities during the war.

From the 1870s, Free Church laity had aligned themselves with the British Liberal Party, 'a branch of nonconformity in politics' (Cuthbertson 1982 :79). The view of missionaries is summed up in an Editorial in the 'Christian Express: 'The misfortune is that war is the chosen arbitrament by which political equality is to be legally gained as the right of every civilised man in Africa' (xxix:354. Dec. 1899).

Notwithstanding all of this, Maylam (1986:137,138) suggests that blacks experienced certain advantages as the result of war; they benefitted economically as the result of an increased demand for grain and livestock and politically insofar as the Pedi in the north secured freedom from Transvaal during the years of conflict.

3.5.2. The Union of South Africa

The South African War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902. The proposed union of the four states

depended on the franchise being limited to whites despite a belief that the Treaty would lead to the enfranchisement of blacks. Such a step was to be delayed until responsible government was established in the Free State and Transvaal. This occurred in 1906 and 1907 but with the franchise limited to whites which was to be expected because, since the 1870s, when Lord Carnarvon attempted to place the subject of confederation on the agenda as one approach to the Native Question, it was clear that black enfranchisement and the possibility of having to surrender the Cape system of government were live issues. Legislation in 1887 and 1892 with their property and literacy qualifications had limited the franchise amongst blacks in the Cape in spite of its liberal attitudes [4]. Carnarvon had thought that confederation would strengthen white control over blacks and preserve the status of settlers and colonialists. He wanted to entrench 'white supremacy and an adequate supply of free wage labour' (Cope 1989:505). There were economic advantages in a single policy for racial and labour problems and although native policy was ostensibly based on philanthropic motives, little material improvement emerged subsequently. Following the Peace of Vereeniging, Britain was perceived by blacks as having capitulated to the racism of the Boers by restricting the franchise to whites (Beinart 1994:74).

The need for national post-war reconstruction was clear. Compared with the Free State and Transvaal, the effects of the war in the Cape were not devastating despite material losses sustained. However, the 'Post war depression hit the Cape particularly hard and there was very slow moral and material rehabilitation' (PL Scholtz in Muller 1969:194). In order to make progress, it was proposed that national conventions be held to resolve the question of union in order that the

4. Nineteenth century Cape Liberalism believed in the power of individual progress, espoused gradual political change and was based in Victorian morality as the basis of action. Education was the key to progress and it was held that ideas rather than material forces change society.

legislative and constitutional foundations for twentieth century South Africa be established. Subsequently, meetings were held in 1908 and 1909. No blacks were present at the 1908 pre-union meeting despite the predominance of the black franchise issue. Economic factors were dominant considering the mineral wealth of the Transvaal. Protest took the form of a South African Native Convention held in 1909 and meetings sponsored by the Cape Coloured Association and the African Political Organisation. Union took place in 1910.

Lovedale's attitude was determined by its desire to ensure justice for all which led to opposition to white domination and the 'colour bar' clause and a call for government to be truly representative.

The formation of the Union of South Africa did not alter the process of colonial expansion, rather the United Kingdom 'transferred ... its prerogatives as a colonial power to the white settler minority' (van den Berghe 1967:73 in Cochrane 1987:19). Consequent on this was the move to relegate blacks to the sidelines as a result of the adoption of an ideology of separation which derived from the concept of 'Manifest Destiny' with its concern for the underprivileged as being inferior. Beinart (1994:4) is correct in asserting that the Union created a single state but not a single nation: 'Economic change and new forms of government overlaid but did not fully subsume what went before'.

This colonial mentality persisted well into the twentieth century having 'introduced a new set of social relations into South Africa (racism), but also a new economic system (capitalism). The rise of a class of landless, extremely poor Africans, can be attributed directly to colonialist economics' (Saayman 1991:103). The land issue remained a problem, cf. the Land Act of 1913.

3.5.3. Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there had been slow economic growth in the Cape. This had resulted from the push of labour to the mines. This caused the mining industry to dominate the Cape economy from the 1870s and was characterised by:

'increased production, population growth, impoverishment, migrations, increased revenues from imports and exports, greater national incomes, depression, railway development, a customs union, improved markets, the growth of finance and banking and the development of a typically capitalist point of view. After 1870, the old economic order was completely ousted by capitalism, industrialism and mining' (PL Scholtz in Muller 1969:208).

The 'Native Problem' revolved around problems relating to differing understandings of land ownership and led to conflict with the authority of the chiefs' traditional role in this respect. The Glen Gray Act (1894) had introduced individual property rights in an attempt to reconcile expectations of blacks and whites regarding communal and individual property. It failed, however, to achieve the franchise for the majority of blacks, but it was necessary because 'The African reserves and tenanted farming lands of the eastern half of the country were the most densely populated parts of rural South Africa in the early twentieth century' (Beinart 1994:15). Arising out of the Act, Lovedale supported the provision of councils with tax raising powers though it was critical of the granting of powers to legislate by proclamation and its denial of the granting of individual title to land along with natural succession rights, thus producing vociferous black opposition (Shepherd 1971:61-62). The main agents of change at this time were 'Markets, empire, industry, capital, railways and political union in 1910' (:10).

During the period of this study, there were no unified political or economic systems among the blacks and therefore no corporate responses to the incursions of the colonialists. In

the Eastern Cape the Xhosa had been conquered and partly incorporated by the early 1870s and by the end of the century all the black race groups came under British or settler domination. What resistance occurred was marginal, eg. in Zululand and the coastal Transkei and Northern Transvaal.

The South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) or Lagden Commission (1903-1905) was established in an attempt to resolve the 'Native Question'. It arose out of the need for labour and resulted in segregationist policies, defined the source of cheap labour and enshrined the ideology of separateness and alienation (Cochrane 1987:59).

The Commission provided the basis for control of labour supply in a situation where there was a desire among industrialists for rapid expansion of the economy; 'it delineated the source of cheap mass labour (Africans), and contained a credible ideology based on cultural strangeness and estrangement' (Cochrane 1987:60):

'If this meant deliberately depressing wages, or preventing the growth of labour's bargaining power, or playing off white against black workers, or keeping land for Africans in short supply to force men on to the farms, or down the mines, the power balance arrived at in the South African Act made it possible to do these things' (Davenport 1977:152 in Cochrane 1987:61).

This was of little concern to the church as was exemplified in Shepherd's (1971:72) analysis of the situation which was characterised for him by a need for education and civilisation and the necessity of religious belief which was synonymous with Christian faith and morality. This is astonishing in its naivety!

Lagden favoured restriction of the franchise and saw the black elite as a threat. He claimed that races living in close proximity led to tension, necessitated segregation and declared that: 'our best safeguard against rebellion and seditious agitation in the danger zones of Africa...is to be found in the spread of Christianity. As Christianity extends it ensures our

government the faithful adherence of a strong section of orderly, well disposed people.' (SAO, 'The Mission Field', December 1909:364).

3.5.4. Foundation of the South African Native National Congress

The Foundation of the South African Native National Congress (later to become the African National Congress) in 1912 by a number of regional groups coming together was the consequence of a period of failure on the part of middle-class, educated and Christian blacks who had 'retained a liberal belief in multi-racial civilisation and citizenship in South Africa' (Beinart 1994:89) to achieve their aspirations. They wanted 'to create a more assertive African national identity' (:87). It was also part of a process of protest and resistance (which will be dealt with in greater detail later). They had failed utterly in their attempt to achieve a national franchise for blacks in the preparations for and consummation of Union in 1910. They also failed to gain any meaningful concessions from the work of the Lagden Commission. Their disappointment and frustration led to the development of direct political action as in the Bloemfontein women's protest in 1913.

Though 'it presented a moderate but nevertheless significant threat to settler domination' (Cochrane 1987:117), the SANNC faced difficulties in advancing its cause due to the widespread illiteracy and the relatively low circulation of newspapers. Initially, there was a lack of clarity concerning their attitude and strategy for achieving a non-racial society. Their middle class base was more quiescent than the black workers' organisations (at least at this stage and this may be attributed to the Christian influence which tended towards a certain conservatism (Maylam 1986:109)). The churches gave little consideration or thought to the aims of the SANNC.

In its early years, the SANNC had to steer a path between liberalism, rural traditionalism and urban radicalism in a time of increasing segregation. This was, in part, due to its

policies being determined regionally. In the industrial heart of the Transvaal workers' issues were predominant; in the Eastern Cape traditional issues of the franchise and land were the concern, while Western Cape concerns centred around Garveyite ideas. An independent Congress in the Cape was concerned with rural peasant organisation (Beinart 1994:99-100).

3.5.5. Natives Land Act

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the government was pressurised by white farmers, who needed to keep labourers on the land yet feared their overrunning their property, to legislate in their favour. The basic provisions of this Act prevented blacks from buying land in areas zoned for white ownership, qualified farm tenancy and linked tenancy to a commitment to provide labour. The reserves were not altered but demands were made for additional land to be made available to compensate for land expropriated. Little action was taken in this regard prior to the 1936 Land Act for it was opposed by whites who were anxious to keep blacks on the farms: 'Segregation on the land was not about keeping blacks off white-owned farms, but about regulating the conditions under which they remained on them' (Beinart 1994:55).

The Act resulted in mass homelessness, dispossession of traditional land with all its cultural and social associations. With nowhere provided for them to go many blacks moved on to already overcrowded locations and suffered the deprivations of absolute poverty and its consequences:

'there exists a vast and depressing body of evidence as to the nature and extent of underdevelopment in the reserves.... infant mortality, malnutrition disease and debility; of social dislocation expressed in divorce, illegitimacy, prostitution and crime; of the erosion, dessication and falling fertility of the soil; and of the ubiquity of indebtedness and material insufficiency, of the meanest kind' (Bundy 1979:221 in Cochrane 1987:47)

Church reaction was disappointing to say the least. It was tempered by its position of privilege and its dependence on those in power. Lovedale strongly criticised the Act and its unjust consequences. Yet, they also opposed the sending of a SANNC delegation to the United Kingdom believing that South African problems should be attended to locally (Shepherd 1971:82). However, it was reasonable for the SANNC to assume the Britain would not disown its responsibility so few years after the Union.

The SANNC had objected to the Act on the grounds that it prohibited the buying of additional land by blacks and gave whites the right to remove them from land which they previously held. It is significant to note that they did not object to the existence of reserves, communal land tenure and a measure of segregation on the land. They also wanted to entrench the right to buy or rent land elsewhere.

3.6. The Economic Dimension

Nowhere does the link between dimensions of mission history become more complex than in the relation between politics and economics as can be seen from the previous section.

From the earliest settlement at the Cape, the economic motive was at work. The commercial motive was always present and du Plessis (1911:262) casts traders in the guise of adventurers who ignored the principles of law, religion and society. They gained influence over blacks by supplying them with arms, ammunition and alcohol and so du Plessis concludes that 'civilisation minus Christianity ... is an unmitigated curse' (:262). Commerce exists for its own purposes and not for the advancement of blacks.

Again, the land issue arises as an economic concern. The loss of land in the nineteenth century normally resulted from conflict between blacks and whites. But by the end of the century and certainly at the beginning of the twentieth century, the land issue could not be separated from the labour issue. The dispossession of blacks' land isolated them from their traditional lifestyles and made them dependent on the colonial economic system. This provided a fluid source of labour for the growing industrial market and settler agriculture. Many were drawn to mission stations in an effort to be liberated from the power of the chiefs. The Glen Gray Act (1894) operated on the assumption that women would work the land allocated on the basis of individual tenure while men formed a mobile labour force. This kind of thinking was in line with that of the missionaries who lauded individual effort and the resultant benefits. The imposition of taxes and their collection, in which missionaries participated (Villa-Vicencio 1988:52), also served to increase the labour supply.

Black migration on a substantial scale began with the Mfecane/Difaqane of the nineteenth century. But, 'By 1910, the

mines had created a low wage system of oscillating migration which subjected blacks to quasi-servitude, as unskilled workers in a rigidly hierarchical racial division of labour' (Yudelman & Jeeves 1986:103). An example comes from the Eastern Cape, a "traditionally important" supplier. By this time voluntary workers had become an important source of labour and formed the largest proportion of mine labourers. Until 1920, mine recruiting was highly competitive and agents 'invaded the black rural areas to entice workers to sign up'. This was the result of black rural producers being less dependent on income from migrant labour as agriculture was still a profitable productive activity (:104).

The Land Act of 1913, assisted the alienation of blacks from the land in the process of labour migration. Blacks became a source of cheap labour in the mines who led two lives: 'in one life they were family men, loved and respected as sons, husbands and fathers. In the other, they lost their dignity and even their humanity.... Work lost its old meaning. As migrant workers they worked for strangers - they worked for a wage' (Callinicos 1980:28). The Act also laid the 'foundation stone of the entire apartheid System' (Villa-Vicencio 1988:68).

The migratory labour system offered benefits to workers who could return home having satisfied their aim of earning cash and to capitalists who had available to them a supply of cheap labour at minimal expense. The people's strong attachment to the land and the draw away from it led to resistance, both passive and expressed. It was the result of crises in the material life of Africans and was related to class and other social divisions within African societies'.

Missionaries participated in the system to the extent that they promoted colonialist and capitalist values - family values, individualistic tendencies and a capitalist work ethic: 'Few, if any missionaries challenged the political and economic imperatives of colonial domination, as opposed to specific policies, and they usually accepted the racist aspect of it fairly easily' (Freund 1984:157).

As South Africa became an industrial nation, and the South African War (1899-1902) was a significant event in shaping the development of capital in the South African economy, it was necessary to provide a supply of cheap labour for the growing capitalist economy. Side by side with this was the need to service large farms which were needed to provide sufficient food for the urban areas. The time had arrived when subsistence farming no longer met even the needs of the farmers themselves because they no longer had sufficient land to farm as the result of conquest and the encroachment of white settlers. The available reserves were too small to sustain the population and the Land Act of 1913 exacerbated the situation. Added to this, there was growing pressure for men to become wage earners and, therefore, migrant workers:

'The reserves were places for those who had no jobs. They were places of waiting for work. They were places of labour supply for the mines and factories. And so, as the mines and factories got richer from the system of migrant labour, so the reserves became poorer. The reserves were no longer the farming lands which fed all the people. The reserves became reserves of labour, or "dumping grounds"' (Callinicos 1980:31).

Consequently, the economy of the reserves suffered as increased numbers of blacks flocked to the urban areas seeking work. In 1923, Prime Minister Smuts' government passed the Native Areas Act which 'institutionalised the establishment of "native locations" based on strict segregation in South African cities' (Freund 1984:183). Subsequently, segregation developed into 'a fundamental tool of white domination' (:183). During the 1920s, the situation deteriorated as colonisation and exploitation produced worsening circumstances in housing, crops, livestock, wealth, disease, unemployment, lack of land and taxation. It is noteworthy that church concern amounted to nil at such a time.

3.7. Protest and Resistance

The existence of protest and resistance against political and economic domination in the South African context has been referred to briefly above. We turn now to examine this phenomenon in greater detail.

The beginning of protest in our period of study is linked to the emergence of a black elite who received their education at mission establishments, yet who were progressively restricted in their activities to their own areas. It is also connected to worker reaction to conditions in the industrial arena and to the impact of settler occupation and control which led to conflict in the early years of the twentieth century which led to the subordination of black farm tenants for labour rather than for produce or rent purposes.

In general, blacks were disappointed by the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging. They had hoped that their reward for participation in the war would be access to the franchise. This led to the birth of a number of radical and independent organisations. In 1902, the South African Native Congress (SANNC) and the African Political Organisation (APO) were established along with Iliso Lomzi, a network of groups involved in tax protests and passive resistance. They were followed in 1903 by the formation of the Transvaal Native Congress. In the following years, blacks promoted a number of delegations to the United Kingdom to protest against the terms of the proposed Union in addition to organising petitions and mass meetings.

It is disputed whether or not this was a response of black nationalism though it is argued that the churches were, at least in part, responsible for the growth of nationalism as the result of the part they played in the curbing of ethnic and tribal allegiances (Maylam 1986:110). However, Beinart (1994:92) argues that this was 'not the predominant response to colonisation at the time'. This was 'more diverse, less

predictable, and less united than has been supposed' and he accounts for this in the variety of social origins of the protagonists. He claims 'colonisation was piecemeal and responses to it localised citing the colonial allies in the Eastern Cape among the Mfengu. However, its long term effects were not piecemeal. For Beinart (:92), 'Political thinking and action grew out of real and self-conscious rural communities', the home of the majority of the population and is evidenced in competition for employment and land.

This was a response to threats of taxes, land management controls and cattle control and caused blacks to mobilise by means of petition and even riot. But, for the most part protest included delay, silent boycotts, use of consultation, refusal to co-operate, the refusal to give necessary information, crippling animals, destruction of boundary fences and mobility. But these forms of protest were neither universal nor well organised. In urban areas it took the form of desertion, absenteeism, theft and sabotage and this in spite of organisation among black workers.

3.7.1. The Bambata Rebellion

By the 1890s, the process of conquest and annexation was complete. In Natal in 1903, a commission was set up to propose areas to be set apart for whites for sugar farming. This put pressure on blacks who were already suffering as the result of the post-war depression. A poll tax was imposed on those who were not eligible to pay the Hut Tax. This coincided with the return from exile of Dinizulu, the Zulu king and a symbol of resistance, which led to a revival of nationalist sentiments. Bambata, a deposed chief, led the protest although other chiefs had also refused to co-operate. The context for the rebellion was the devastating rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s and the drought in 1903. Shula Marks (1970) has described the revolt as a 'reluctant rebellion' against the Natal authorities with their growing demands for land, labour and money which aimed at the restoration of the pre-tax situation. The revolt was suppressed ruthlessly.

Other issues similar to Bambata occurred. In the Eastern Cape, an attempt to impose a system of councils based on the 1894 Glen Gray Act became an issue because these led to 'early political alliances... between dissident Christians, chiefs and people' (Beinart 1994:96). Then, the introduction of cattle dipping to prevent disease and its spread struck at the very basis of rural life with its 'Different perceptions of disease and how it should be treated' (:96). Protests in East Griqualand (1914-17) were about the degree of state control and financial penalties imposed for retaining traditional practices. These incidents worsened existing political tensions.

3.7.2. The Bullhoek Massacre

Bonner (in Dubow 1986:225) has argued that 'the period 1918-1920 represents the most intense radicalisation of black political leadership in South Africa prior to the Second World War and Dubow (:225) refers to a 'hardening political environment ' This was characterised by the 1918 sanitary workers' strike, clashes with Bondelswarts in South West Africa, resistance to the Pass Laws (1919) and the Bullhoek Massacre, leading Secretary for Native Affairs Barrett to speak of the 'inevitable development of race consciousness [which] has begun' (:225).

This particular event occurred in the Queenstown district of the Eastern Cape as the result of allegedly illegal land possession and refusal to pay taxes on the part of Enoch Mgijima's Church of the Israelites formed in 1912. The conflict which ensued led to the massacre of the community which had been formed in 1919 in 1921, leaving around 200 dead.

3.7.3. Popular Protests in the Early 1920s.

Compared with the rural areas, more general trends of protest were apparent in urban areas. The period 1907-1922 was a time of great industrial unrest. There were worker strikes involving miners and railway workers, and subsequently gold

miners in 1913 and 1914. In 1918, East Rand mineworkers boycotted mine shops, while Johannesburg municipal sanitary workers requested a wage increase. The subsequent repression of the 'bucket boys' led to renewed protest. In 1919, the SANNC campaigned to gather and destroy passes. And in 1920, the black mine workers organised themselves and struck. This resulted in white mine owners relaxing the colour bar restriction. The Witwatersrand strike occurred in 1922 and was a revolt against the government related to economic depression in the period 1920-1923. This strike of white workers led to 180,000 black labourers being put out of work and led to a status quo agreement which terminated the arrangement whereby more blacks could be employed.

Concurrent with these protests, there was a growth of black consciousness ideas which had been imported from Marcus Garvey's Back to Africa organisation in the USA. The voice of educated blacks was heard most clearly in testimonies given before commissions [5], press statements and black labour

Radical opinion in the 1920s was best articulated by the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa (ICU) which attempted to bring rural traditional and national politics together. It successfully organised the 1920 black and coloured workers strike in Port Elizabeth.

Women, inspired by activities on the Rand, were also beginning to organise themselves as can be seen in the boycott of trading stores in the Herschel district. The Amafelandawonye was a religious and political organisation which aimed at achieving self rule. In rural areas, resistance originated in tenants' attempts to retain some status. Agricultural developments resulted in alterations to types of tenancy eg. share cropping and this made the population increasingly mobile: 'Tenants'

5 eg. 'Testimony of Rev ET Mpela and Six Others of the Native Vigilance Association of the Orange River Colony', to the SANNC, September 1904, cited in Karis & Carter (1972:35-36) in Cochrane (1987:164 n.1).

survival depended on their capacity to mobilise and control their own family's labour for more intensive agriculture' says Beinart (1994:52) who notes the increasingly important role of women in this regard. From the early twentieth century, there were demands for stricter tenancy regulation and these were supported by white churchmen and politicians. The youth were becoming increasingly resistant to authority and were moving to the urban areas.

In sum, we would agree with Beinart (1994:108) who claims that blacks did not passively accept the effects of colonisation, segregation and oppression but were 'involved in a wide range of inventive political responses and innovative forms of action'. Yet, we have to acknowledge that there were limits to the amount of co-ordinated political response as, in the 1920s, the main theatre of political resistance was in the rural areas.

This has shown that there was a definite spirit of resistance afoot throughout South Africa during the period of our study. It was in this context of social, political and economic transformation that this occurred. However, resistance was not restricted to the secular sphere; it flowed into ecclesiastical life and was closely linked to it as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 THE MZIMBA SECESSION

Concurrent with the rising tide of protest and resistance in the secular sphere, a movement was coming to birth which grew rapidly in ecclesiastical life, giving expression to feelings of resentment which could not easily be expressed otherwise. This was the African Initiated Church (AIC) movement. While this movement originated as a negative response, it had positive features which account for its rapid growth and sustained existence.

4.1. African Initiated Churches

African Initiated Churches were:

'an attempt at the establishment of a Black Church... as a symbol of African religious boldness and novel theological creativity, a step towards the construction of an authentic Black religion for Africa of the twentieth century.... Churches that have emerged as a protest phenomenon...[which] have swum on the current of a renaissance or a radical affirmation of African humanity and Black self-hood....[which are] a symbolic enactment of liberation' (Lamola 1988:5-6).

This is a very positive assessment which Beinart (1994:25) would challenge claiming that they were not innovative in the spiritual domain. Hinchliffe (1968:90) agrees in saying that Ethiopian churches were "orthodox" in teaching.

However, 'Africans accepted Christianity... as a new perspective to be added to a stock of historically accumulated perspectives'. Blacks were attached to their traditional and cultural values, and did not always pursue their new faith within the bounds of mission orthodoxy. They lived on two 'unreconciled levels':

'They subscribed to a statement of faith, but "below the system of conscious beliefs are deeply embedded traditions and customs implying quite a different interpretation of the universe and the world of Spirit from the Christian interpretation (Oosthuizen

1973:77 cited in Ngubane 1986 in Mosala & Tlhagale [ed.] 1986:76).

This contributed to 'the process of original and genuine contextualisation of their faith and theology' (Ngubane in Mosala & Tlhagale [ed.] 1986:87). Whether successful or not, 'Independent Churches have,... attempted to make a creative synthesis of traditional and Christian beliefs.... they represent radical indigenisation and Africanisation of Christianity' (:80).

Seen in negative terms, AICs are a protest against 'the experience of religious manipulation, deculturalization and racial subjugation' and in more positive light as 'a part of the broad and long term process of national politico-economic emancipation (Lamola 1988:6; Claasen 1995:15). AICs were a 'catalyst for this political surge' (Cuthbertson 1987:84), of black nationalism which spread through mission stations towards the end of the nineteenth century. Ngubane (ibid.) attributes the rise of AICs to 'socio-political factors, the Land Act of 1913 and leadership struggles in mission churches' among other reasons (cf. Claasen 1995:33; Sundkler 1961:33).

Lamola (1988) indicates that with the ending of tribally based and organised resistance at the beginning of the twentieth century, the stage was set for a new strategy founded on an intellectual warfare which was more nationally based. It is interesting to note that this system of structures originated in the Christian church which was one sphere where a degree of free expression and development was allowed and even encouraged, and which had moulded an 'educated class of Africans... conscientised with the obligation presented by the gospel, that dehumanising structures in the Black community had to be attacked and dismantled' (Lamola 1988:7). Hofmeyer and Pillay (1994:161) give the example of the influence of institutions like Lovedale whose elite products saw the South African War as an opportunity to fight against missionary superiority: 'it was precisely because Protestant missions like Lovedale had allowed a measure of African participation in

church matters that Ethiopianism was able to advance under capable leadership'. For them: 'Rejection of colonial Christianity... seemed to coincide with African political disenchantment with British rule' (:161). This judgment does not appear to take account of the reality that these two were intricately related to one another as we have seen. It was a clear religious response to domination and conquest. This elite consisted of the black landed gentry in the rural areas whose land was derived from the traditional system of land tenure, and the "new elite" (Ntantala 1992:viii), ie. those who had received a 'liberal' education in missionary institutions and were, for the most part professionals. It is interesting to note here that this black elite have been described as 'a deceived group alienated from the African masses' (in De Kock 1995:114). This is somewhat unfair as these were people who were involved with their own people at many levels of society, though possibly holding different aspirations from them.

This compares with the growth of black political organisations in the closing years of the nineteenth and opening years of the twentieth centuries eg. Imbubo yamaAfrica, Funamelungelo Society (later to become the Natal Native Congress) and the SANNC. The church was, therefore, the 'midwife of Black Nationalism' (Lamola 1988:7).

As blacks read and interpreted the Bible they discovered a:

'contradiction between what the missionary church was teaching them and what the Spirit was revealing from the Scriptures... [a] contradiction between the ecclesiastical model which was emerging in the Biblical writings, where the church emerges as an institution of the mission of human liberation, and the missionary presentation of the church as a transplantation from Europe to Africa,.... a contradiction between their attraction to the Christian message of human fellowship and their experience of racial discrimination both in society and in church' (:7).

No wonder blacks came to reject mission Christianity with its negative white influences and established their own churches freed of all alien influences! Mission and evangelism in the

mission churches had 'separated the gospel from the historical and material context of the people addressed' (Cochrane 1987:156).

Though many in number, what unified the AICs was the 'compound of the religious, social and political aspirations which the independent movement represented: ... it is the reply of the Native to the unfriendly, almost hostile attitude of the colonist' (Rev FB Bridgman, American Board Mission, 1903 cited in D Welsh [1971:252] in Cochrane 1987:89). Many blacks would take exception to Bridgman's 'almost' hostile assessment of the antagonistic attitudes of the colonists.

AICs came to birth in the context of growing industrialisation as blacks from all race groups met in the workplace, talking and interacting and developing a 'National Spirit' which was susceptible to being transferred into the ecclesiastical realm as a protest against this form of colonialism. They had clear political undertones and were an expression of opposition to colonialism. Sundkler (1961:13,33) claims that 'Ethiopian-type' churches 'originated as a result of secession from white churches on political and racial grounds'. PJ Mzimba, JM Dwane and other leading figures were all involved in politics, as was Edward Tsewu [1] (of whom more later), which sometimes took on a millennial character as did Enoch Mgijima's Israelites at Bullhoek (Maylam 1986:162). Some took up the political rallying call 'Equal political rights for every man south of the Zambezi' and converted it into equal ecclesiastical rights for every Christian man south of the Zambezi' (CE xxi:354, Dec. 1899). Tribal politics also played a role as 'an important factor in the spread of secessionist churches was the lead given, from whatever motive, by several influential headmen' (Brock 1974:339) as in the Tembu National Church secession.

In its adaptation of or resistance to the mission churches, the AIC movement caused a reaction of antagonism among whites who

1. Secretary of Iliso Lomzi LoNtenga (Transvaal Native Landowners' Association (Claasen 1995:32)).

blamed blacks for political hostility. It did indeed encourage political independence and this was feared by the churches which criticised the possibility of 'conflict with the only Empire which has declared for the freedom and just treatment of the subject races of the world' (W Smith-Foggit, "The Methodist Churchman": Oct. 16, 1906, in Cochrane 1987:91). This freedom and justice was, it can be assumed, only possible within the control of and under the guidance of whites and only so long as it conformed to their values. AICs were certainly a threat to mission work as it was perceived by whites. The General Missionary Conference of South Africa (GMCSA), meeting in 1904, displayed a paternalistic view of AICs as being in need of guidance not repression. This was the view of a predominantly white group. Cochrane (1987:92) describes the responses of the churches as being determined by 'ambiguous, contradictory characteristics and ideologically limited tolerances which resulted from being tied to the political economy of dominant capitalism.

'Both missionaries and Africans were victims of social and political change outwith their control but missionaries showed themselves unable to identify with the African aspirations they had engendered and also unable to liberate themselves from the prejudices and mores of their race and class' (Brock 1974:Abstract).

As AICs grew rapidly in the early years of the twentieth century, they began to be taken more seriously than at first. Beinart (1994:103) argues that Christianity was a unifying force for radical and black consciousness thinking in the 1920s and that its influence extended beyond mission communities. Though they suffered many splits they offered a clear pattern and gave women a place to develop. In 1922, the Native Affairs Commission of South Africa (NACSA) issued questionnaires to the leaders of sixty six AICs as part of an investigation into independent or 'separatist' churches. Note had been taken of the substantial numbers who had been drawn away from mission churches and there was a fear that AICs symbolised a growing African nationalism which had precipitated, among other things, the Bullhoek Massacre of Israelite Zionists. Criticism only receded with the absolute assurance that an AIC was non-

political or under domination by a mission church (Cochrane 1987:92). The South African Native Congress (SANCO) meeting as an Executive in 1903 assured the British Colonial Secretary that AICs were no challenge to its authority because :

'the black races are too conscious of their dependence upon the white missionaries and of their obligations towards the British race, and the benefits to be derived from their presence in the general control and guidance of the civil and religious affairs of the country to harbour foolish notions of political ascendancy (Karis & Carter 1973, vol.1:18 in Worden 1994:81; cf. Claassen 1995:29).

In terms of organisation, the structures of mission churches were alien to blacks. Their bureaucratic approach, denominationalism and principle of voluntary association [2] fostered disunity and exclusivism amongst blacks (Cochrane 1987:35) with their social and political repercussions. Their mission based education and greater financial strength truncated the growth of AICs.

Maluleke (1996:23) notes that most assessments of AICs are 'ultimately scathing'. He attributes this to the fact that they were written by whites anxious to protect their own missionary territory:

'it was not so much the AICs which were being studied, but it was "our mission" as negatively mirrored in the separatist movement. It was the White missionary establishment talking about itself, to itself and mainly for its own sake; in the face of one of the most serious ecclesiastical and theological challenges to everything the establishment stood for'.

He laments the omission of evidence from 'ordinary members of the separatist churches' in the Native Affairs Commission (1903-1905).

In sum, it can be said that the AIC movement accommodated Christian beliefs to the realities of black peoples' lives;

2. Much beloved of Free Church missionaries especially with their pride in an individualistic and bourgeois ethic.

they related Christianity with black history and identity and were, therefore, 'Ethiopian'; and they wished an organisation of churches to be under the control of blacks. Despite all that militated against their progress and growth, AICs made a powerful political statement about the capacity of Africans to manage for themselves and claim, in a slogan of the time, "Africa for the Africans" (Beinart 1994:25). We do well to remember that this specific African Christian tradition did, in its mission, foster the spread of Christianity and in an area where the mission churches had less success - among the illiterate rural population.

4.2. Ethiopianism

The roots of Ethiopianism may be traced to the early years of the nineteenth century with the struggle of the anti-colonialist Nxele and the development of African indigenous theology by Ntsikana. Both developed a religious synthesis of African traditional religion and Christianity which 'demonstrate the turbulence in the symbolic world occasioned by the coming of the Europeans....' (De Kock 1996:56). Nxele operated by resistance and Ntsikana by adapting the beliefs of mission Christianity. And so a politically significant movement was born (Cochrane 1987:90) into the context of a self awareness of oppression. It was a source of challenge to whites' western dominated understanding of the gospel.

While an early secession from the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society occurred in 1872 in Lesotho, in a situation of political instability, it displayed three features of later secessions: 'the resentment of white control, the possible political implications, and the resistance to disciplinary regulations' (Hinchliffe 1968:90).

The actual beginning of Ethiopianism in South Africa is attributed to Rev Nehemiah Tile who left the Wesleyan Missionary Society and formed the Tembu National Church in 1882. This was the first AIC in South Africa. Tile was followed by Rev Kanyane Napo who left the Anglican Church and

formed the African Church in 1888 and then by Rev Mangena Mokone and Rev James Dwane who left the Methodist Church and in the period 1892-1896 founded the Ethiopian Church based on the text of Psalm 68:31: 'Ethiopia shall lift up her hands to God'. It was consciously non-tribalistic and was based on 'a philosophy of African self-consciousness and unity' (Lamola 1988:9). Unlike earlier secessions which were 'national' in a tribal sense, the Ethiopian Church was 'national' in a racial sense.

Rev JC Xaba stated the positive aim of Ethiopianism: 'to promote Christianity and unity in the whole continent of Africa' (CE August 1897 in Wilson & Perrot 1972:155). Its aim was, therefore, not divisive but incorporative with regard to all blacks. This could not take place within the denominationalistic mission churches. The Anglican Church of the Province displayed more insight with regard to the incorporation of the Order of Ethiopia:

'our church would have failed in her duty if she proved incapable of welcoming, and of comprehending such elements of native thought and devotion as have thus been working out their own development'.

This is the church which was composed of:

'a large crowd of natives who had been rejected by other churches as incompetent, or who had seceded from other missions, or who had entered into the ministry in a state utterly incompetent so far as education, training and moral insight were concerned'

These were regarded as churches which will be filled with the American 'negro spirit...[which] is decidedly anti-white. It aims to bring about a cleavage between white and black' (Pastoral Letter of CPSA, CE October 1900, in Wilson & Perrot 1972:157-158) as if such a division was not already apparent in society. And now blacks are to be blamed for causing it!

A major criticism of the Ethiopian churches was that they missionised areas where the mission societies had already worked and drew members away from them. So long as this did

not happen their aims were considered to be legitimate. But when they began to proselytise they were accused of having 'no connection with any of the well known Missionary societies, which have done the whole work of planting Christianity among the natives of this country' (CE April 1897, Editorial, in Wilson & Perrot 1972:153). Ethiopian churches have intruded on the territory of 'those societies which have done the REAL [emphasis mine] missionary work of this country' (J Stewart in CE vol. xxvii April 1, 1897 no.324). Stewart accused the secessionists of 'not doing mission work among the natives (Walls 1996:293). To a large extent neither did the missionaries for much of the work was done by black evangelists, eg. at Burnshill and Pirie missions, it was black converts who acted as teachers and catechists (Hofmeyer & Pillay 1994:72). The mission churches clearly saw their work in terms of exclusivity and the Ethiopian movement as an intrusion.

Ethiopianism altered the means of black political protest and challenged 'those who believed in evolutionary change through constitutional means' as they 'were impatient with white control and pessimistic about protest for evolutionary change' (Odendaal 1984:23). It was based on the idea that blacks had a right to self determination through 'self-pride, self-reliance and service to humanity' (Lamola 1988:9), rejection of the accommodation approach favoured by JT Jabavu's 'Imvo Zabantsundu' and the recognition of a need for economic power. So it was not just a spiritual or ecclesiastical movement as is confirmed by Alexander Roberts of Lovedale's deprecatory assessment at the General Missionary Conference (1904): 'First, it is a race movement; second, it is political; third, it is a church' (Kuzwayo 1979:17 in Lamola 1988:9). However, the Lovedale based 'Christian Express' adopted a reasonably positive attitude to Ethiopianism, suggesting that the AIC movement provided 'meaningful material benefits within a highly exploitative economic environment' (Cochrane 1987:92) although after it began to be affected by it, it changed its tune as we can see in the lack of perception, bordering on propaganda, displayed in the false assessment: 'The virtual, if

not actual, collapse of the Ethiopian Church' (CE vol.xxix September 1. 1899 no.349), a view not borne out by the facts or subsequent history. Cuthbertson (1991:64) is correct in seeing Lovedale's 'encounter with Ethiopianism as a formative stage in the rapid politicisation of an African elite'. Lovedale had to bear the result of educating blacks even if it seemed its education was thrown back in its face.

Ethiopianism's political credentials are attested by its rejection of 'the liberal assumptions of a common non-racial society' (Odendaal 1984:xi), and Rev JL Dube's newspaper 'Ilanga lase Natal' as well as in Chief M Majozi's 'Ipepa lo Hlanga' which was considered 'a seditious propaganda organ for the Ethiopian movement' (Lamola 1988:9).

The 'native problem' was THE issue of the day and Ethiopianism was part of it being the sole national religio-political body. The Native Affairs Commission (1903-1905) met 'under the cloud of Ethiopianism' and resulted in 'a consequent obligation to give some recognition to the increasing number of educated, civilised Africans' (Brock 1974:335) but with little concern for the remainder who constituted the vast majority of the people. It had enabled several regional organisations to form the SANNC (1912), despite the fact that it had suffered from internal dissension and breakaways, eg. by Revs S Brander and J Dwane. By the 1920s, numerous groups had broken away from mainstream missionary churches. Lamola (1988:11) argues that the years 1910-30 witnessed a 'new convergence of black political opinion' stemming from black alienation arising out of the Treaty of Union (1910) which 'sealed their inferior political position'. And this fell within 'the classical period of Ethiopianism', ie. 1882-1928 (Bridgman in Brock 1974:409).

It is clear that Ethiopians saw a convergence of the political and the religious motives and methods. However,

'in conceiving the reason for the founding of the Black Church as being primarily missiological even to the extent of visualising the principle of the ecumenical dimension of Christian mission, they were

the formulators of the concept of Pan-Africanism. They preached that the church in colonial South Africa and the entire African population should be so developed, freed and equipped that it can go out and serve other people, - "Africa for Humanity" (:12).

4.3. The Tsewu Secession

In 1890, Rev PJ Mzimba was sent to Johannesburg to evaluate the work in the FCoS congregation which was mainly composed of young men from the Eastern Province. This led to Rev Edward Tsewu being called as minister to the Johannesburg congregation in 1891 (Tsewu to Smith 31 January 1891. NLS 7797). The Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) of the Free Church of Scotland (FCoS) refused to take responsibility for this congregation and the Transvaal Presbytery did not want to be involved in this placement, and denied Tsewu a seat in presbytery as well as financial support. So the Presbytery of Kaffraria retained responsibility though it was almost impossible to exercise control from such a great distance.

An inter-tribal dispute in the congregation resulted in the amaZulu withdrawing leaving a majority of amaXhosa. This was followed by a dispute concerning a church building which Tsewu had erected. By this time, Tsewu had become involved in the Ethiopian movement and Mzimba was sent again to oversee the congregation while an investigation into the congregation's affairs ensued. A congregation of four hundred members, by this time reduced to one hundred, led Mzimba to the conclusion: 'They have joined the Independent or Ethiopian churches' (Mzimba to Stewart, 12/8/1896. UCT SP 30A[i] in Brock 1974:360). The investigation, and subsequent trial in his absence, led to Tsewu's deposition from the office of the ministry. In response, Tsewu established the Independent Native Church Open for Reunion and, thereby, led the first secession from the FCoS. This constituted a prelude to the Mzimba Secession but in itself had little its long term effect.

At this time, Mzimba favoured following the procedures of the church and thus gained experience of the situation and

circumstances of blacks in the Transvaal who enjoyed less legal protection than in the Cape. Mzimba concluded that 'uniting the native has increased the Ethiopian Church' (Mzimba to Stewart, 1/9/1896. UCT SP 30A:[i] in Brock 1974:362). However, Brock's (1974:362) critique of the situation was, in a retrospective sense, prophetic: 'in the immediate past, as has been seen, the record of the mission in opposing discriminatory legislation had been fair, but they [ie. the missionaries] could not make a positive stance for equality within their own ecclesiastical domain'. Subsequent events were to prove how little they learned from the incident.

The sad situation arising out of Tsewu's discipline was exacerbated by his replacement with a white missionary as requested by the Presbytery of Kaffraria, supported by the Synod of Kaffraria [3], to the FMC. This decision of the Synod of Kaffraria in 1899 exacerbated the situation. Mzimba and Rev E Makiwane, raised the race issue by commenting on the Presbytery's, ie. white missionaries, view that 'The Free Church Native Congregation at Johannesburg is fit only for a white missionary' (15/4/1898-16/4/1898, Minutes of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, 14/4/1894-27/1/1900, Lennox Papers, UFH). Rev J Don, Clerk to the Presbytery of Kaffraria, in a letter to Lindsay, Secretary of the FMC of the FCoS, emphasised the inequality of whites and blacks, 'We cannot afford to act upon the assumption that the native is equal to the European' (24/1/1898, NLS:7798). Sundkler (1961:17) picks up this point:

'the problem arises when the more repressive view tacitly or openly becomes dominating in churches which in principle are egalitarian or liberal but which, by "practical necessity" ie. consideration for the race-conscious White membership of a particular church, have to conform to a general segregation policy within the church'.

This led Mzimba to conclude that black ministers would always be allocated subsidiary roles and never attain full equality

3. We follow the convention of the Scottish missionaries who used one 'f' in the spelling of the Synod of Kaffraria and two in the Presbytery of Kaffraria (Burchell 1977:40 n.13).

with their white counterparts and that there was little hope of the development of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating church. This became one of the main causes of the Mzimba Secession. In addition, the Tsewu Secession demonstrated that 'it was possible to disagree with the Presbyterian church authorities' (Millard 1995:215) and survive.

However, it is important to note that there were other localised secessions from the Free Church Mission in Qumbu, Port Elizabeth and Mafeking, all predating Mzimba's secession, perhaps demonstrating the potential of the Ethiopian movement as a national political movement. It was in this context that the Mzimba Secession occurred.

4.4. The Mzimba Secession

4.4.1. The Causes

As can be seen from preceding sections, The Mzimba Secession did not occur in a vacuum although one might get this impression from Shepherd (1940, 1971). In a summary of James Stewart's sermon to the General Assembly of the FCoS (1900), it is reported that it was Stewart's view of secessions that 'The causes which produced these were as numerous as those which divided men in other relations. These causes were educational, traditional, social, political' (CE vol.xxx, July 2, 1900 no. 360).

Brock (1964:364) attributes it to distrust and suspicion surrounding contemporary happenings. In ecclesiastical life, the FMC of the FCoS supported union with the UPCoS and preferred that option 'instead of joining with the Colonial presbyteries to form themselves into an independent body' (Don to Lindsay, Jan. 1899. NLS 7798). She is correct in her assessment that 'discussions over Union brought

dissatisfaction to the surface and Mzimba's movement subsequently offered an alternative to those who had become aware of their need of such an alternative' (:364). Millard (1995:215) refers to the 'racial conflict' which attended the Act of Union which brought the PCSA into being in 1897. But, more than that, it was asserted that the denominationalism which missionaries brought to South Africa encouraged a separatist spirit (Jacottet 1907:382 in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972; CE vol. liv, March 1 1924:56).

Political unrest was the result of a growing tension in the Cape (see chapter III) over the erosion of blacks' rights. This, among other things, was heightened by the bitter political fight during the 1898 Cape elections and the South African War (1899-1902) which Guthbertson (1991:57,61) claims acted as a catalyst for the growth of Ethiopianism in the Eastern Cape, through which James Stewart and David Stormont of Lovedale lost the confidence of their black presbyterian members. The War was an opportunity for black leadership to develop in the absence of white missionary leadership. The church had also politicised blacks through education.

Secession came to be seen as a 'particular assertion of black independence [and] a protest against the European political world which they had learned to distrust' (Brock 1974:367). Saunders (in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972:17) commented: 'Of all the varied reactions to the pressures of white rule perhaps the most significant for the future was the emergence of a new national consciousness' citing the formation of the South African Aborigines' Association as an example. Given their lack of political power it is not surprising that 'in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, African assertion in South Africa was to show itself more strongly in the religious than in the political field and to find expression in the independent church'. Jabavu and politicians committed to co-operation, opposed secession, thereby increasing racial tensions.

In the area of tribal politics, local chiefs and headmen saw an opportunity to exploit the new movement for their own purposes, eg. the land issue. Together they feared the future appointment of headmen by the government on the basis of merit rather than heredity (Brock 1974:369).

On the social level, the mission failed, according to Jacottet (CE, July 1907, in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972:378-379) because: 'Christianity can only gain a strong and secure hold upon any nation or race by becoming assimilated... with the national and racial spirit and by forming ultimately an organic part of its soul'. He supported this view by citing examples from Church History. European Christianity, however, is perceived as being more alien than the examples that Jacottet offers: 'it must needs become thoroughly African and present itself to the Africans in such a form that it will be able to understand it and accept it as something of their own' (ibid.). He further averred: 'Let us take what is good in the programme of Ethiopianism, and be truer to it than the Ethiopians themselves' (Sundkler 1961:31). He held the view that this was important for the mission church which must become an indigenous entity and separate itself from mission Christianity. All of this is the result of whites' attitudes towards blacks which can be combatted by the development of blacks to their full potential. Brownlee J Ross (CE, April 1908, in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972:385) challenged Jacottet's assumption basing his opinion on the latter's inherent view of differences between black and white. Ross claimed the difference is 'essentially one of language and environment'. This does not seem to be different from Jacottet's view that the imposition of English served to 'denationalise the Native church at large' (:380) taking account that language and environment constitute the cultural world of both black and white.

Racism was certainly an issue in the Secession. Stewart (CE xxvii Nov. 1897 1:329) acknowledged this. His remark 'Whites must rule' raised the race issue. This may be linked to his unwillingness to adhere to Scottish mission policy concerning

the ordination of blacks 'In an agitated moment he seems to have claimed that the main cause of Ethiopianism was to be found in the interfering European mission boards in the matter of the ordination of Africans (Sundkler 1961:39). Stewart experienced the threat of a too rapid application of Venn and Anderson's 'three-self' principle. DA Hunter, Editor of the 'Christian Express', writing after Stewart's death, claimed that secessions had even occurred in Native churches though he gave no examples; he may have been referring to the secessions which occurred at Qumbu, Mafeking and Port Elizabeth. To this he added 'racial misunderstanding and personal ambition' which came from the 'contact of Christianity and civilisation with Native life' which led to bitterness, harsh and cruel treatment, conflict and tension in mission stations, the relaxation of church discipline with regard to ministers and members and a vitiated creed. For Hunter, secession was the result of an inability to recognise and harness the new power their education had awakened in blacks. Stewart's opinion had been that

'the promoting motive apparently is not so much zeal for the spread of Christ's kingdom among the heathen and glory of God - as dissatisfaction and restlessness and a desire to be free from control' (CE xxviii May 2, 1898:335).

Millard (1995:212) contends that: 'the racial attitudes prevailing at the time of the first General Assembly [of the PCSA] were influential in the establishment of a separate Bantu Presbyterian Church'.

Speaking in a tribute to the deceased Rev PJ Mzimba in August 1911, the Rev E Makiwane, claimed that the main causes of secession were a growing disillusionment with Europeans of the 'money gentleman' class who favoured repressing blacks; the rejection by uneducated ministers of the subordinate positions assigned to them, though it was in tandem with the spirit of the era; and the necessity that Mzimba, the first black minister of the FCoS, should be the one to set up; a 'Native Presbyterian Church'. Makiwane (in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972:179-180) claims that he came to this conclusion as the

result of Mzimba's success in the Lovedale congregation and in the FCoS. He believed that this, however, either introduced or intensified tension between black and white. For him, the formation of the Presbyterian Church of Africa (PCA) was 'a protest against the treatment of Natives which regards the Native merely for his commercial value'.

For Cuthbertson (1991:58), it was Lovedale's 'imposed ideology and its doctrinaire free church manner of implementation that sparked the division between the African and European clergy. Stormont of Lovedale was clear about the relation of the political and religious in the mind of educated blacks and that Ethiopianism resulted from racial tensions combined with reaction to missionary attitudes. Ethiopianism was 'a political counter-culture aimed at redressing the loss of African independence to colonial regimes' leading to political discontent (:59).

All of the above were causes of the 'disruption' brought about by the Mzimba Secession. All that was required was a precipitant and a strong personality to initiate and carry it through.

Millard (1995:2) supports this view in more general terms with reference to secessions:

Reasons for schism are generally accepted by writers on the Ethiopian churches.... [which] may be present in a black mission church for a long time before the moment arrives when the potential independent church leader or community decides that it is no longer possible to accept the status quo the immediate reasons.... are dependent on the individual context of the leader or group of people who establish the new independent church'.

In the case of the Free Church mission there was such a protagonist waiting in the wings.

4.4.2. Rev. Pambani J Mzimba

Pambani Mzimba was born in 1850 at Ngqakayi in the eastern Cape. He trained as a printer at Lovedale and completed his course in 1871 receiving a special mention in his report regarding:

"the general moral influence... his manner has exerted on others, and... the manner in which he has endeavoured to promote the interests of the Institution by spontaneous and ready activity and uniformly unselfish conduct" (Shepherd 1971:59),

ie. he promoted missionary values and interests. It is interesting to note that this accolade was more concerned with Mzimba's success in promoting missionary ideals rather than with any personal academic achievement.

In 1872, Mzimba began theological education at Lovedale and was ordained in 1875 on completing the required course of studies. He was inducted to the charge of Lovedale Native congregation. So Mzimba became the first black FCoS minister trained in South Africa. He remained in the Lovedale congregation for twenty two years 'with a fair measure of success' (:59) - which appears to be a backhanded compliment! It is worth remembering that so highly did his presbytery regard his ministerial skills that it used him as a troubleshooter in the development work in Johannesburg as well as in subsequent problems there.

Brock (1974:344-345) summarises Mzimba's achievements well, though a little romantically:

'With regard to education, Mzimba represented success and achievement': yet, he was critical of it;
 'With regard to ecclesiastical matters, Mzimba enjoyed the equality accorded to any minister in the Presbyterian structure': yet he was also one of the victims of unenthusiastic implementation of policy;
 'With regard to politics, Mzimba responded as a member of the educated elite to the call to adopt the responsibilities of British citizenship within the established order': yet, he challenged accomodationist policies in favour of promoting a more African approach;
 'At a personal level, within the mission he was closer to the Ross faction': ie. he criticised

Stewart;

'He enjoyed the benefits of acceptance by white society and actively sought to be included in it.... Yet his ties with traditional African society were strong': ie. he was Mfengu.

Again, we can assume that it was as the result of Mzimba having achieved some measure of recognition that he was selected to represent the FCoS mission in South Africa at the FCoS jubilee celebrations in 1893, the fiftieth anniversary of the 'Disruption' or secession from the established Church of Scotland. Though it would be stretching the evidence too far to suggest that he gained ideas about secession in any direct manner from his trip to Scotland there may well have been indirect connections as can be seen from Stormont's view that: 'When the natives did not know better, they kept silent about it, but he [Mzimba] has been to Scotland and has discovered the dishonesty of the white missionaries' (MS7514, Cory Library in Brock 1974:358).

4.4.3. The South African 'Disruption'

All secessions are 'disruptions' of the accepted order to a lesser or greater degree. It is difficult to agree with Shepherd's (1940:245) assessment that: 'Time has shown that in itself the happening was of little but local interest, that its influence even after more than forty years ... is confined to a small area and that its only real significance has been as part of a phase of Bantu life'. Brock (1974:310) claims that 'it was too "denominational" to cause real concern to any power structure other than that of the missionaries' but it 'undoubtedly had wider political implications and can be seen as a protest against European domination and class legislation' (1974:310). Shepherd (1940; 1971) failed to take account of the wider ecclesiastical and national political context in which it occurred. While he writes of the wider context, he uses it simply as a means of placing isolated events chronologically in mission history. He portrays secessionists

as ingrates, describing Rev Nehemiah Tile as a colleague of 'one of the most sympathetic of missionary superintendents' (1971:59). But what was the nature of this sympathy? He claims Tile was 'impatient of European control, and' took 'advantage of his position'. What position was this, for Tile was under the authority of a superintendent?

According to Brock (1974:354), 'money and property were the precipitating factors in the quarrel between the Free Church mission and Mzimba'. This was in relation to raising money for a building fund for which Mzimba had sought and was granted authorisation while in Scotland (Mzimba to Smith 29/5/1893, NLS 7798). Shepherd (1971:59) tells us Mzimba was given substantial amounts 'he claimed he had the power to allocate to such objects as he saw desirable'. This was what the missionaries had always done. The 'disruption' occurred in response to Presbytery of Kaffraria demands that he hand over the money raised. Mzimba resigned his charge on 6th April 1898 and seceded in May of the same year with two thirds of the Lovedale congregation initially. In November 1898, he stated his intention of forming a new church and published its constitution in December of that year, based on the idea that:

'You have done well in leaving, and, try to stand alone; all we missionaries have come to train you for that, we have come to leave you by yourselves and unrelying on the white man. If it be so then, what may cause fear to the native Christian in standing alone' words Mzimba put in the mouths of missionaries ('To the Christian Public of the Free Church', Stormont Papers, MS 7492, Cory Library).

The discriminating restrictions placed on Mzimba on the use of donations received in Scotland caused a great deal of misunderstanding and led to the 'suspicion and mistrust with which Africans regarded the motives of European missionaries' (Brock 1974:358) and provoked Mzimba to take unilateral action. This was possible, in part, due to the fact that in the Presbytery of Kaffraria missionaries dominated in a way that was not possible, for example, in the Transkei where blacks were more independent. Since 1870, the Mfengu, of whom Mzimba

was one, had been encouraged to be less dependent and more responsible in local and church affairs (Shepherd 1971:61).

Ngcokovane's (interview with Rev JV Mdlalose, General Secretary, RPCSA, Umtata, 26/3/1997) idea that the so-called 'secession' was, in fact, one natural expression of independent development of an indigenous church rather than an actual secession like the formation of the PCSA in 1897 or the BPCSA in 1923 is a little disingenuous considering the precipitating factors surrounding the 'disruption' and the fact that Mzimba never expressed such a view himself, ie. that his actions were pro-active rather than reactive.

Following the breach with the FCoS mission, in which 'the concomitant bitterness permanently alienated the contestants' (Brock 1974:354), Mzimba retained the title deeds of buildings and other property, money, records and documents and this led to two cases in the Supreme Court of the Cape Colony which were settled in favour of the missionaries.

The Presbytery of Kaffraria refused to accept Mzimba's resignation at the time because he and his followers still held documents and property. An Editorial in the 'Christian Express' [4] stressed how much had been done for Mzimba though this says more about the motivation of the missionaries in promoting Mzimba than about the man himself who stood accused of destroying the work of existing congregations rather than developing new areas of work. And Mzimba was further accused of racism by attempting 'to organise a church upon a colour basis'. It is held against him that he promised in his ordination vows, inter alia, to

'maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution might arise, and that he would follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Church' (CE vol. xxix. Feb.2, 1899 no. 344:17-18).

4. Rev W Stuart of Burnshill was Editor at this time.

While on the surface this latter charge is damning, it is important to note that, until this time, Mzimba had been a loyal member of the FCoS mission. Had he been a secessionist at heart, he might have supported Tsewu. Yet, he remained true to the discipline of his church during that episode. It is also interesting to note that Mzimba remained orthodox in his Presbyterianism as the 'doctrine, worship, discipline and government' of the PCA are still today substantially the same as the FCoS mission. Brock (1974:378) has commented that innovative theology as an intellectual exercise was not part of Mzimba's movement for he was 'pointedly orthodox'.

In the first instance, the FMC kept out of the dispute possibly hoping to act in a mediatorial role but a pastoral letter from the FMC of the FCoS on 30/11/1898 is essentially paternalistic and possibly manipulative also:

'you are our children. A mother weeps when her children are hungry. She cannot sleep when they are lost in the forest. She goes to seek them and calls to them' (CE vol. xxix. Feb. 2, 1899 no. 344:18).

It is one thing for a young church to call another 'mother'; it is quite another for that established church to refer to another as 'children'. This is an overt display of power and superiority. It displays no positive vision of mission for the future of the new church or of the spread of the Gospel emanating from its work. The above comments are vindicated when seen alongside the minute of the FMC of the FCoS of 1899 which:

'place on record their deep sympathy with their missionaries in South Africa in the trying position in which they have been placed by the proceedings of the Rev PJ Mzimba, and their confidence that they have been patient and forbearing in circumstances of great difficulty; the Committee thank them for the care they have taken to secure funds and property which belong to the Church and the Mission, and approve of all the legal proceedings taken for the end' (CE vol. xxix Sept. 1, 1899, no.349:131).

The security of funds and property seem to have been more important than the care and cure of souls. In part, their

response may have been influenced by the receipt by Rev Robert Young, Secretary of the FMC, of a list of objections to the 'disruption' from Rev E Makiwane, Mzimba's former colleague at Macfarlane mission, who had been put under pressure by large numbers seceding from his congregation and by attacks made on his family and property. Makiwane claimed that the effects of secession were the destruction of work built up over many years, the bypassing of church courts, the increased enmity between black and white and amongst blacks, and the secularisation of the church as it passes under the control of local tribal appointees.

As far as Lovedale itself was concerned, it was reported by Dr D Stormont, Interim Moderator, in 1900 that the Lovedale Native Church was in dire financial straits and the property was in a poor state of repair; yet, he also reported on the strong support from officebearers. A year later, Stormont could report on a reorganised Kirk Session and a congregation which ended the year 'with the happiest results' (Reports to the General Assembly, FCoS, 1900,1901).

The FMC went beyond its remit by recommending that Mzimba be declared no longer a minister or member of the FCoS, for this would have to be dealt with by the Presbytery: 'Mr Mzimba's conduct in practising divisive courses and in disturbing congregations is highly censurable, that he should be declared no longer a member or minister of the Free Church of Scotland' (CE vol.xxix, Sept. 1 1899, no. 349:131). All of these responses made it clear whose side the FMC was supporting and made their earlier hope of performing a reconciling role unrealistic.

They believed that the secessionists would return to the fold when they couldn't legitimately secure the property they held. But this optimism came to an end with the Supreme Court actions, the arrival of the American Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa, the South African War, the bitter political antagonism during the 1898 Cape elections, the problem with the 'Wee Frees' of the Free Church of Scotland after the union in

1900 and intransigent missionary attitudes. In some of these instances the FMC could have played a more constructive role. Yet, some of the circumstances were beyond their control and were being played out in a wider scenario.

Both of the cases referred to the Supreme Court ruled against Mzimba with regard to the retention of buildings, monies, documents and other assets of Lovedale Native Congregation Deacons' Court. In the first case, Mzimba had failed to prove that the building funds he held were derived wholly from black sources but came from 'both seceders and non-seceders' (CE Supplement March 1899:52). This judgment was repeated in the second case. However, there was no effective way of enforcing the judgments.

Press reaction to the 'disruption' of the FCoS mission was virtually unanimous in its opposition to Mzimba. The 'Christian Express' had been relatively neutral in its attitude towards the AIC movement: 'there is every desire to recognise the good elements they contain' (CE vol. xxx Jan 1, 1900 no.360:1) without being specific about what these good effects were. However, its tone changed markedly when the effects of the movement invaded Lovedale and began to affect it directly.

The 'Daily Despatch' concurs with the judgment of 'Imvo Zabantsundu' on the Mzimba Secession that 'baleful, yea, baleful aspect was its tendency to make uitlanders of and ostracise the white people who have made this their country by adoption' (CE vol. xxx, October 1 1900, no.361:151). This only serves to beg the question who ostracised who in their own country or which came first, the chicken or the egg?

A report in the 'Cape Argus' commented:

'The verdict... will... do much to assist missionaries and others in checking a mischievous social and religious movement amongst the semi-educated aborigines of the frontiers'. It was dismissive of 'reasons which need not now be gone into.... The movement of which it has formed part is in many respects the most important native development that has ever taken place since

civilisation was first introduced into the frontiers of South Africa.... Religion and politics are inextricably mixed up in all history.... No perspicacity is required to perceive the consequences of such a movement' which was partly the result of 'swollen head' and 'wounded vanity,... a craving for independence combined with a hatred of European control' (CE vol. xxix, Mar 7 1899, no. 345:34-35).

While this clearly shows some insight, it displays a reluctance to delve deeply into the actual causes and consequences of the 'disruption'. It is insulting to refer to secessionists like Mzimba as 'semi-educated aborigines' while it may well be referring to the majority who seceded, though on what evidence did it reach such a conclusion? To suggest, probably with reference to Mzimba himself, that he suffered from a 'swollen head' indicates that he thought himself better than he was or ought to be and that his vanity was hurt suggests that he was not used to not getting his own way. Was either the case on the basis of the evidence available? The fact that these excerpts were quoted in the 'Christian Express' suggests that there was an ideological motive at work in minds of the editors.

However, they also raise the issue of the extent to which politics was a motivating factor in the Mzimba 'disruption'. First, it should be noted that it is uncertain what links Mzimba had with the Ethiopian movement. He certainly knew about it because he came into contact with it and its consequences during the Tsewu disruption in Johannesburg. Ethiopianism's growing presence in South Africa was pervasive at the time. Then, many of his views concerning a developing 'black consciousness' were consistent with similar ideas held by Ethiopians. Yet, he certainly denied any direct involvement with Ethiopianism. When he appeared before the SANAC in 1903 he claimed that his movement was not connected to Ethiopianism as it was not political. Mzimba tried to distance himself from politics despite one of his ordinands, Rev Moses Mbele, participating in the Bambata Rebellion in which other members of the PCA were involved (Marks 1970). Perhaps here we

have a situation where church members were more politically involved than in the Cape.

As we have noted, it is impossible to separate politics from what may be defined as narrowly religious and vice versa because Ethiopianism was clearly more than just a political movement though it clearly had political aspects. Worden (1994:54-55) views AICs as a 'sign of social dislocation and rejection of the colonial presence in the reserves', identified with African Christian origins and which alarmed the government when linked to millenarian tendencies, eg. the Bullhoek Massacre. This resulted from the:

'impoverishment of the reserve economy, inflation and increased taxation.... Garveyite ideas combined with rural Ethiopianism' produced a "rural Africanism" (Beinart & Bundy 1987:341) which brought together both traditional rural leaders and ideologies and the support of those who had received missionary education but were marginalised by the growing segregation of the period'.

Therefore, African resistance in a variety of forms characterised the rural areas for decades following colonial conquest. In the urban areas, eg. resistance was activated by the Rand Strike. This was the catalyst for the development of separationist ideology which was derived from the need for cheap labour and was 'also a reaction to the heightened conflicts in the 1920s marked by worker militancy, rural resistance, millenarianism and the dramatic growth of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU)'. While Mzimba may have been naive in this matter it is more likely that in eschewing a political label, he was striving after respectability which was not, certainly in missionaries' eyes, consistent with political involvement. His desire to align himself with the continuing Free Church of Scotland after the 1900 union may be the crucial factor here for as Brock (1974:428) suggests, Mzimba's weakness was that he could not separate himself from his 'doctrinal inheritance', and 'political possibilities were always present in such protest' (:427).

Missionary attitudes to the 'disruption' were not static, according to Brock (1974:421). After an initial period of shock, bitterness and recrimination, missionaries displayed more 'charitable understanding'. The 'Christian Express dealt with the matter frequently and in depth. Revs. WJB Moir of Blythwood, D Erskine of Somerville and DD Stormont, who became an acknowledged expert on Ethiopianism, showed more positive responses. Even Dr J Stewart of Lovedale, despite deep hurt and personal affront concerning the Mzimba Secession, expressed himself more positively when writing about the Ethiopian movement in general:

'The origin of the movement is somewhat complex. The agitation for independence on the one hand and the advance of native rights on the other, have had something to do with it; while some blame must attach to the failure of the Church to exemplify in practice the unity of the races in Christ Jesus' (Free Church Record, June 1901:267 in Brock: 423).

This compares with his earlier very negative statement:

'It is apparently too much an effort at mere independence, possibly resistance into organisation, or there is some other cause of dissatisfaction behind. The new Church appears to be a cave of Adullam, into which all who are "discontented or in debt or distress", ecclesiastical or otherwise may betake themselves. It hardly promises to promote unity and peace among the present existing churches' (CE Editorial April 1899 in Wilson & Perrot [ed.] 1972:155).

It is interesting to note that Stewart realised that an Ethiopian church provides a refuge for the 'distressed' of whom there were many in the prevailing circumstances in South Africa, and perhaps this was one of its main attractions compared with the mission churches. He felt that 'division is the weakness of the Africans in Church and State' (Wells 1908:292). If this is true than blacks may have taken as their example the Scottish Presbyterian churches capacity for disruption.

4.4.4. Ongoing 'Disruption'

Passing reference has been made to Mzimba's ongoing attempts to establish relations with the Free Church of Scotland. Following the Union in 1900 between the FCoS and the UPCos, a number of dissenters, often referred to as the 'Wee Frees', remained in a continuing Free Church of Scotland. They took the view that, since the Union, they were the true inheritors of the 'Disruption' of 1843 and, therefore, entitled to its property. They took an action to the House of Lords and were awarded 'control of the "heritage of the Disruption"', ie. its money and property' (Brock 1974:404) [5].

In 1904, this issue began to affect the Cape as the question of property was raised in South Africa and Mzimba saw an opportunity to capitalise on it. He believed that in view of the House of Lords' judgment the PCA would fall heir to the property of the legal Free Church. This led, at least in part, to 'the great Secession' of 1905-1906 which seriously affected the UFCoS mission, especially the congregations of Somerville, Idutywa, Burnshill and Pirie. It is interesting to note that in its early years, the PCA grew as the result of proselytisation rather than missionary and evangelical endeavour (Millard 1995:219). Burchell (1979:135) accuses Mzimba of regularly attempting to divide congregations of the FCoS Mission though many remained loyal despite his intense efforts (Minute of Presbytery of Kaffraria, 19/11/1904, Lennox Papers, UFH). One small instance reveals that in the wake of the Mzimba Secession, two visitors to Mgwali from the Ethiopian church led to twelve families and one elder leaving the congregation (Foreign Mission Board of the UPCoS meeting, 29/5/1900).

Mzimba also believed that, in the circumstances, Lovedale would also pass to the PCA, especially after Stewart's death in 1905. However, he failed in his attempt to unite with the continuing

5. This decision was later reversed by a Royal Commission.

Free Church and become one of its ministers. This was the result of a desire for respect and property but it was a falsely based expectation and, in itself, seems unlikely to have caused the secession of such great numbers in 1905-1906. It is more likely that an inexorable process was underway that was wider than a purely ecclesiastical incident for blacks 'would seem to have shared a common experience in those years of profound discontent and anti-white feeling which became articulated in different ways' (Brock 1974:409).

4.4.5. Assessment

The 'disruption' caused by the Mzimba secession had an impact on mission policy only to the extent that it highlighted grievances which had existed for some time arising out of previously implemented policy. It showed that, to a large extent, blacks were no longer prepared to accept a subservient role in ecclesiastical affairs in the Presbytery of Kaffraria, though the fact that other secessions occurred indicates that this was somewhat more than Shepherd's temporary localised crisis (1940:245). This was so even despite the fact that the move towards being a 'three-self' church came from within that section of the mission which, more than any other, had made positive moves in this direction by allowing greater freedom of expression to its black ministers (Burchell 1979:129-130). There was no secession in the northern Kaffrarian Presbytery in the Transkei, possibly because of the lesser restrictions on black progress in church affairs.

Therefore, it is difficult to agree with Burchell's (1979:144) view that the secession:

'prompted a total re-thinking of Scottish mission policy' though 'it underlined the need for increasing flexibility and accomodation in this policy as well as the initiation of new strategies'.

Any influence the Mzimba Secession had on Scottish Presbyterian mission policy was, at best, indirect even in the long term though it provided the catalyst for change. Where it did have a direct influence was amongst missionaries in the mould of

Henderson and Lennox who perceived the necessity of change in altered circumstances.

The secession provided an opportunity for blacks to think through the implications of the issues raised by the causes of the 'disruption' and the way forward. It presented a similar opportunity to the protagonists of missionary advance to reassess their role in mission hitherto and their possible changed role in the future though they did not take up the opportunity. Certainly, in the first instance, the missionaries reacted to the crisis [6], for a crisis it was by trying to secure their property - hence the Supreme Court actions. Perhaps money and property played too great a role compared with the resolution of broken relationships which are never healed through court cases. The same might be said of Mzimba's followers' reaction though they acted out of a position of comparative poverty of resources. But it also may have caused the missionaries to reconsider where their prime loyalties lay and take appropriate action. Their inability to listen to blacks allowed them to think that there was only one way to advance the Gospel - their way without modification. They seemed wedded to an 'adapt or die' philosophy. Yet, they were supported by a number of blacks who disapproved of Mzimba's action, eg. Robert Fine and James Maqabela (Burchell 1979:133-134).

The charge of racism against the seceders is grossly unfair when viewed against the bulwark of white racism. The successful solidarity displayed by whites must have seemed an attractive vision. Yet whites do not seem to have taken account of the need for unequal relationships to change. It is possible to understand the hurt caused to missionaries

2 Bosch's comment is helpful here drawing on the thought of K Koyama (1980:4): 'The Japanese character for "crisis" is a combination of the characters for "danger" and "opportunity" (or "promise"); crisis is therefore not the end of opportunity but in reality only its beginning, the point where danger and opportunity meet, where the future is in the balance and where events can go either way (Bosch 1991:3).

feelings, which issued forth in anger and bitterness, by seeming ungratefulness; it is unfortunate that they failed to comprehend the hurt they had inflicted and continued to perpetrate albeit with possibly altruistic motives. The concept of the 'failure of love' is instructive for our purposes here for:

'The root cause common to the entire movement of independency may therefore be seen in this single failure in sensitivity, the failure at one small point of the version of Christianity brought in by the missions to demonstrate the fullness of the biblical concept of love as sensitive understanding of others as equals, together with the dawning African perception from the vernacular Scriptures of this failure' (Barret 1968:269ff. in Walls 1996:112)

The Presbyterian Church of Africa was not a nine day wonder, despite its remaining a comparatively small church in terms of numbers. By 1902, Mzimba claimed 6,500 members and 20,000 adherents along with 12 ministers from Cape Colony to Rhodesia, attracting people from other denominations and other tribes, while the UFCoS mission had 16,044 members and 8,182 adherents. The 1970 South African official statistics estimate that 49.2% of all South African Christians are members of African Initiated Churches. The PCA seems to conform to Walls' (1996:114) view that 'some [AICs] even claim fidelity to a particular form of missionary tradition as their *raison d'etre*'.

Ultimately the matter is about freedom, freedom to choose what kind of ecclesiastical structure in form and content best expresses the inner nature of the person concerned and best fosters that person's and communities' spiritual development as part of their total lifestyle as part of the growing Kingdom of God. It has been said of the PCA that 'The importance of Mzimba's church lay not in its organisation but in its independence' (Brock 1974:385).

Thus far, we have set the scene in South Africa for the discussion of Scottish Presbyterian church mission policy and have established the Mzimba Secession of 1898 as an appropriate

starting point. We turn now to trace the development of that policy and its culmination in the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church in South Africa in 1923.

CHAPTER 5 SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MISSION POLICY

5.1. Mission Councils

The history of Scottish Presbyterian church policy during the period 1898-1923 was largely influenced by a minute of the FMC of the FCoS of October 1864 relating to South Africa which stated:

'That the ordained European missionaries reared in the colony or sent from this country be constituted into a Missionary Council for the regulation of the affairs of the Mission' (Brock 1974:438, Appendix A:2):

ie. Mission Councils were formed for 'the maintenance, administration or independence of our Mission in South Africa' ('Our Mission in South Africa' MS 14849, Cory Library). This minute had its origin in Alexander Duff's [1] visit to Kaffraria and the recognition of a need for change in the organisation of the Mission arising out of confusion which emanated from an earlier decision that 'all matters connected with the management of the mission in Kaffraria devolve upon the Presbytery'. This, of necessity, included the affairs of missionaries. The implication of the 1864 minute was that Presbytery should keep to its 'proper functions', ie. discipline, where relevant; that general policy should be determined solely by whites in the Mission Council; that all bodies involved in the mission - Presbyteries, Mission Councils, Financial Board and Educational Board of the Seminary - should communicate with each other concerning areas of mutual interest that fell within their remits; and that each should relate directly to the FMC on all matters requiring approval or confirmation. It had become clear that, from an early stage, some means of conducting the affairs of the Mission would have to be arranged in order that mission policy could be devised and executed.

1. Convener of the FMC.

Here, it may be helpful to recall that Scottish Presbyterian church mission policy was handed over to the churches formed as the result of the 'Disruption' by mission societies. From 1843 until 1923, the South African Mission was under the direct control of the FCoS, the UPCoS and, from 1900, the UFCoS and was responsible to General Assemblies in Scotland. This made it different from churches whose mission work was always done by mission societies.

However, with the move to operate with a Mission Council, it is strange that, in a presbyterian structure, discrimination should extend not only to blacks but also to the European laity except medical missionaries (18/12/1901, First meeting of the Mission Council of Kaffraria, Minute Book 18/12/1901-17/1/1917, Lennox papers, UFH), which included all female missionaries and church members who were good enough to serve the Mission in many ways and were, perhaps, better able to deal with its administration and finance than ordained white ministers. It is also noteworthy that the hierarchical presbyterian structure was bypassed. Was it not possible for South African Presbyteries, meeting regularly, as happened following the inclusion of the Presbytery of Kaffraria as a Presbytery of the FCoS in 1857, and the subsequent formation of a Synod and other Presbyteries, ie, in the Transkei (Van der Spuy 1971:13), to carry out the functions delegated to Mission Councils? Had this been the case blacks would have been eligible contributors to the development of mission policy and probably its most able interlocutors. The South African Presbyteries were courts of the UFCoS and to have had any real influence, it would have been necessary, and not at all impossible, for all members, black and white, ordained and lay, to have had access to the General Assembly meeting annually in Scotland.

In fact, the minute referred to was not enacted immediately. It was held in abeyance until Dr James Stewart arrived in South Africa. The formation of Mission Councils confirmed that Scottish Presbyterian church policy was not 'the product of an indigenous organisation' while it was 'informed certainly by those on the spot' (Brock 1974:24) who were white. There was a

significant difference between the FCoS mission in South Africa and other missions which were largely autonomous, eg. London Missionary Society, with less distinction made between black and white ministers. The FCoS was, therefore, less flexible.

A further minute of the FMC was agreed in 1866 which confirmed the FCoS' support of the three-self principle for it was felt appropriate that the mission church should be self-propagating because as soon 'as native congregations are formed, the care of them ought as speedily as possible to be consigned to the native pastorate' (:439). Missionaries were, therefore, to be pioneers 'for the native congregations [were] to be in time delivered over to additional native pastors' (FMC Minute, 27/10/1866 in Brock 1974:38). This would entail, of course, the training of an indigenous ministry. Brock (1974:61) questions the inability of blacks to achieve greater power in the Mission because between 1881 and 1901 there were no Mission Councils to hamper their development; there were black ministers in the Mission but they formed a minority in Presbytery. Blacks, in most instances, supported the appointment of missionaries to charges due to poverty in congregations which could not support black ministers and the lack of a central stipend fund. They, in turn, had the support of the missionaries in opposing union.

Self-support implied growth towards financial independence. This led to a failure of policy in this regard. The FMC pressed the issue of self-support in relation to the authority of white missionaries. Don, Presbytery Clerk of Kaffraria, argued that self-support implied self-government and called this 'evil' (Don to Smith, 4/9/1886, NLS 7797). The Presbytery opposed the challenge of self-government and, unfortunately, the FMC did not pursue it to its logical conclusion. FMC policy with regard to the issue of union of Presbyterian bodies was consistent in the pursuit of a three-self church but whether this issue could best be resolved in the formation of a multi-racial or black church would become a very contentious issue.

Following their formation, Mission Councils were disbanded in 1881 having failed to find a relevant role. They were reintroduced in 1901 (under Act II, 1901 of the General Assembly) with the prospect of forming a black church (Brock 1974:57; Burchell 1979:148). Only missionaries were members though the membership was later widened. However:

'to maintain the distinct functions and independence of local Presbyteries and Native Churches it is inexpedient that pastors and office-bearers of Native Churches should be members of Mission Councils unless in exceptional circumstances' (cf. Act I of 1917 in Rules and Methods of Procedure of the FMC, 20/2/1923, RPCSA Church Office, Umtata:3-4).

This was a direct insult to blacks who were to be heritors of a white devised plan whose timing on the formation of a black church would be outwith their control. The Councils would be equal in authority to Presbyteries: 'it is desirable that the Mission Councils and the Presbyteries of the Church stand on the same footing (Minute 1103, FMC, 24/8/1908) but subsequent history would prove the Mission Councils to be more powerful. They would, in theory, have no formal connection with the sending church, except having been established by it. The only direct contact would be between missionaries and the sending church (Brock 1974:57).

This changed in 1901 with the passing of Act II of General Assembly (FMC Minute 71 of 23/7/1901) which changed the composition of Mission Councils to include: all the missionaries from the Home Church, in the field, ordained and medical; the minister and one representative elder from each European congregation within the bounds; agents and friends of the Missions in the field nominated by the Mission Councils and approved by the FMC. These Councils were to have 'full Presbyterial powers'. So, from this time, whites dominated the advancement of mission policy in communication with the FMC of the UFCoS and the way it was worked out in the field. It was their perceptions of the context in which they lived and worked which influenced and determined policy formulation in Scotland. From the beginning of the twentieth century, missionaries' relationship with the UFCoS was regulated by Mission Councils

rather than Presbyteries ('Our Mission in South Africa':4-5, Henderson Correspondence, MS 14849, Cory Library). Burchell (1977:51) refers to a meeting of the Synod of Kafraria held in 1900 where a decision had been taken not to exclude white missionaries. This decision relates to suspicion which had been present prior to and was probably exacerbated by the Mzimba Secession of 1898 and was taken as a result of the 'counsel of moderate Africans'. We are left wondering who were the immoderates and what proportion of the Synod they represented? What were their objectives and have they been suppressed or submerged? With the advent of 'white Mission Councils [suspicion] remained and, consequently, a call was made to clarify their functions in the mission field' beyond 'the regulation of the affairs of the Mission' (FMC of the UFCoS, October 1864 in Brock 1974:438: Appendix A.2).

Mission Councils were, therefore, the result of a clear policy of strengthening the relationship of missionaries and the sending church as well as the desire to prepare for the development of an independent black church.

A statement of FMC policy arose out of the need to appoint a successor to Rev J Lundie at Malan Mission in 1913. When the Kaffrarian Presbytery of the PCSA recommended the appointment of a black minister, Rev SW Njikelana, the Transkei Mission Council sought guidance from the FMC which stated that the Missionary-in-Charge was equivalent to a Superintendent under the Mission Council, and, as pastor of the congregation is in 'an interim arrangement' until 'the young growing Native Church finds itself'. If that time has arrived, according to the FMC, let Presbytery approve a call to a pastor whose work will not be related to the Missionary-in-Charge, Malan Mission, who will 'advise and assist him in every possible way'. Referring to General Rules 8 and 9, the FMC states that: 'the missionary is to aim at organising his converts into one or more congregations until a native pastor has been called'. Such congregations are to be formed into a Presbytery or connected to an existing one - 'their powers to be carefully respected by Mission Council'. Here is a clear delineation of spheres of

influence. When Mission Council 'is of the opinion that the time has come in any part of the field for constituting a congregation', Presbytery is responsible for the act with Mission Council's approval. Therefore, the relationship of Presbytery to Mission Council is crucial. Thus, a Missionary-in-Charge has to be clear about his relative powers - the general supervision of mission work and as assessor on a Kirk Session of which the pastor is Moderator. It seems clear that while the respective authority is clear, there was considerable potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the regulations especially when those concerned are both members of a Presbytery and a Mission Council as was the case with the missionary but not the black minister whose only channel of communication was his Presbytery.

When a congregation feels able to engage in evangelism itself, and the Mission Council agrees, it should petition the FMC to withdraw the missionary. This means that powers of decision and action were in the hands of missionaries who might disagree on the desirability of removing one of their number or even themselves! The FMC was aware that difficulties might arise in the application of principles of policy (FMC, 29/4/1913, Minute 2681). FMC policy was not implemented as speedily and effectively as it might have been in this regard for by 1905, Lovedale had only produced ten black ministers (Mission Council, 3/2/1905, File 'Mission Council, 1902-1905', Lennox correspondence, UFH).

This was important because the Mission Council came to rival the Presbytery as an alternative locus of debate for all those involved in promoting the aims and objectives of mission. The Mission Councils' Chairpersons and Secretaries were to have powers and duties akin to those of Moderators and Clerks of presbyteries in the UFCoS, and it was they who had powers to decide when new Presbyteries should be established. (Rules and Methods of Procedures of the FMC of the UFCoS, RPCSA Church office, Umtata:4-5). The Mission Councils had the power of Presbyteries with regard to missionaries, eg. discipline. This was necessitated by 'the maintenance of Presbyteries of the

Home Church in the mission field... hindering their development or union with churches formed by kindred missions in the same field' (Our Missions in South Africa, 1902, MS 14849, Cory Library). While missionaries continued to be members of presbyteries, they also had another venue for promoting their views. In theory, the Mission Council was a temporary expedient during the period that the indigenous church was being established 'providing a strengthened connection for the Scottish missionaries with the Home Church' (Burchell 1977:42) [2]. One might be led to wonder what was the need for a 'strengthened connection' at a time when the role of missionaries was envisaged as declining? The pastoral care of its members was a specific role of the Presbytery which appeared to be sidelined. It is clear that Mission Councils adopted a self-perpetuating role for they favoured the creation of new black parishes while white missionaries would continue to control the mission (Kaffrarian Mission Council, Minute 241, 18/1/1922, 1917-1930, Lennox correspondence, UFH). This would become a continuing source of tension as long as Mission Councils existed.

Missionaries were very keen to maintain the FCoS connection. Yet, the separation of institutions like Lovedale from Presbytery control aggravated an already tense situation. The institutions were developing rapidly and were draining financial and personnel resources which could have assisted in the development of conventional mission and evangelism work. This, among other things, caused difficult relationships between missionaries, eg. those who worked in institutions and those in extension work, and even between those who worked in different institutions; those who represented different church traditions, cf. UPCoS and UFCoS; those who represented more traditional views, eg. James Stewart, and those 'younger' missionaries, eg. Henderson and Lennox; and personality issues. Most of the problems concerned issues of power.

One area where Mission Councils accumulated considerable power

2. In various forms they survived until 1981 in South Africa.

was in the control of property and finance and in this they were considerably superceding their original remit. In addition, these Councils were expected to play an ever decreasing role in church life and the fact that the opposite happened became an irritant to blacks who saw these white Councils becoming the only official channel to the Home Church (Burchell 1979:174) which saw no need to transfer property to the young church (:175). The Secretary of the Churches Act Commission and the law agents of the two churches (FC and UPC) recommended that 'all grants and lands to Mission properties in Cape Colony are secured to the church or to the Mission, as such, and not to separate congregations' (FMC, 26/6/1906, Minute 560). Earlier, the Transkei Mission Council, in considering a matter of raising cash for mission outbuildings, had affirmed: 'they gladly accepted the principle of the Native Churches taking an increasing part in self-help, but felt that this should rather be for the support and extension of evangelistic work, church buildings' rather than for the missionary's home. This occasioned the FMC being asked what kind of self-help was envisaged but no response is evident.

Instead of making separate grants to congregations, the FMC agreed to allocate funds to the Kaffrarian Mission Council in the first instance, with reports back to the Committee of monies given and work carried out (25/9/1906, Minute 631, FMC). This was in accordance with a statement made by Henderson which was recorded by Lennox (Lennox to Henderson, 24/5/1901, Letterbook of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, Lennox correspondence, UFH):

'The purpose of having the Mission Councils apart from Native Presbyteries which can control the entire funds sent out for mission work from the Home Church, and which can appoint assessors to the Native Presbyteries, giving these assessors less or greater powers needed, is nothing new'.

Yet, Lennox claims this method has been in operation for two generations and is well known to the FMC. In addition, titles to property were secured to the General Trustees of the UFCoS. Thus, control could be exercised over black congregations and

ministers, especially at a time where threat of secession was present [3].

In the area of demarcation of congregational boundaries, the Mission Councils superceded the powers of the Presbyteries, eg. in the case of the Kaffrarian Mission Council determining the boundaries arising out of discussion of the incorporation of Zoutspansberg into the Mission (FMC, 26/9/1911, minute 2155:6).

Mission Councils even acted independently of one another and this could cause confusion in the Mission, eg. over spheres of interest as can be seen above. A report of Deputies, Dr A Miller and Mr Wildridge, stressed the desirability of joint meetings of the Kaffrarian and Transkeian Mission Councils but no specific proposal emerged. Their conclusion was that 'We are satisfied that the main lines of policy and the general forms of enterprise are wisely adapted to the needs of South Africa' (FMC, 24/10/1911, minute 2164). This is strange considering the need for mutual consultation in the matter of church policy. However, notwithstanding this, joint meetings did occur, eg. as reported to the FMC on 25/6/1912 (Minute 2417:1,4). Here the matter of the transfer of Rev J Davidson as a Mission Council responsibility is discussed along with the discussion of the joint issue of a Handbook in co-operation with the PCSA. The FMC responded that they cannot denude themselves of the right to initiate proposals of any kind when they seem called for'. This indicates tension between the FMC and the Mission Councils in the area of policy formation. Eventually, the union of Mission Councils became an issue, eg. in the matter of the transfer of Mgwali congregation. The FMC recommended union to obviate problems concerning the lack of unity in policy and organisation. The Transkei Mission Council concurred. The FMC agreed to the transfer despite the Kaffrarian Mission Council's concerns about the manner in which no account was taken of Mission Councils' interests in the proposal concerning union (FMC, 29/4/1913, minute 2681).

3. Subsequent history shows that Mission Councils accrued power in financial and property matters.

The power of Mission Councils is revealed clearly even in the period preceding the formation of the BPCSA where, in January 1921, Henderson submitted a detailed statement to the Mission Council for approval concerning the state of property, the use of land and the extent of the boundaries of mission territories (Minute 309, 2/2/1923, Mission Council, 1917-1930, RPCSA Church office, Umtata).

5.2. Formation of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa

The origins of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) [4] are to be found in the disparate 'colonial' congregations and Presbyteries which grew up in South Africa during the nineteenth century. Some were connected with the FCoS, others with the UPCoS, while still others were independent foundations. A draft basis of union had been prepared in 1880, but nothing came of this proposal (Report of Committee on Union between the Free & United Presbyteries of Kaffraria, 1884, Ac1971/Ag2, Cullen Library). Between 1892 and 1897, a number of these congregations and Presbyteries met together in 'Federal Council' to consider uniting to form one church and agreed on a common basis of union, which was consummated on 17th September 1897. The church had forty three congregations with 15,000 black members. By 1902, it raised £541 for missions and received aid from Scotland amounting to £53,600.

From its inception mission work was segregated. Extension work amongst whites was the responsibility of the Colonial Committee while work amongst blacks was carried out by the Mission Committee. The fears of those who resisted union were thereby justified (Ac 1971/Ag2:8). There was no reference to the need for Mission Councils, most probably because mission work was controlled by a white dominated General Assembly which communicated directly with the FMC in Scotland (Ac 1971/Ag2:9).

At a meeting held in March 1895, the Colonial Committee of the FCoS communicated its wish and hope for union 'especially in

4. Also known as the South African Presbyterian Church.

connection with the interest which this church has always had in the Christianisation of the native races, and the consolidation of the Christian communities in South Africa' (4th Federal Council, East London, July 1895, Ac 1971/Ah1.1-1.2., Cullen Library). While this view was sincerely held, it may display a certain naivety with regard to the developing political situation of the time with regard to racism. This would become a recurrent problem in the perceptions of those in Scotland as missionaries were able to 'exploit' their ignorance (eg. James Stewart, see below). Scotland was convinced that the best way forward was to create one united church including all races for when union occurred the Foreign Mission Board of the UPCoS reported to its General Assembly in 1898 expressing the hope that all presbyterian congregations would soon participate in the united church (van der Spuy 1971:13). The FCoS General Assembly also endorsed the union.

However, FCoS enthusiasm for union was the result, at least in part, of a desire to reduce its financial outlays with regard to the South African situation: 'the Foreign Mission Committee accepted an organic connection with its missions only with reluctance and constantly worked to break this link' (Brock 1974:27). Of course, this policy was opposed by missionaries, ie. 'those on the spot'. Policy prior to 1897 had been to weaken the connection of missionaries' links with the Home Church; this led to the development of a black church being impeded. Policy regarding union in the aftermath of 1897, strengthened this connection and especially with the reformation of Mission Councils after 1901, and eventually led to the development of a black church.

While the Presbyteries of Kaffraria (FCoS), Transkei (FCoS) and Adelaide (UPCoS) approved the union, they felt unable to participate in it due to 'present difficulties' (in van der Spuy 1971:32). These became clear during the First General Assembly of the PCSA which received a minute of the FCoS Synod of Kaffraria which refused to unite despite the views of the FCoS. It was:

'unable to enter into the proposed union at present in consequence of the want of acquiescence on the part of the native congregations in two presbyteries, and in view of discussions which have arisen among Europeans on the subject of the native vote in Church Courts.... [which required] First, that some method be devised of adjusting the balance between Colonial and Mission Churches, which shall be satisfactory to both races; eg, that a majority of white and a majority of black, separately and conjointly, be necessary to pass a proposed measure into law; or that, in view of future eventualities, the proportion of votes in both races in the General Assembly be strictly defined and preserved. Second, that there be a final Court of Appeal in certain questions be carefully defined. (Proceedings of the First General Assembly, PCSA [1897], Ac 1971/Ah1.1.:6-7, Cullen Library).

Such a court would of necessity have to be external to the church and have greater powers than it. It seems clear that the race issue and lack of trust became problems at a very early stage in the life of the PCSA and were foreseen by those who wished to remain outside the union.

The General Assembly felt that these objections were:

'Not deemed sufficient to prevent the consummation of the union....1) that the application of Presbyterian principles will obviate difficulties as to the balance between Colonial and Mission churches; and 2) that the matter of a final court of appeal in certain questions has been adequately dealt with...in the draft Constitution, and which has now been adopted by the General Assembly as part of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa' (Ac 1971/Ah1.1.:26-27, Cullen Library).

This view was unanimously held. The race issue was dealt with either before or after the union; the result was clear for all to see. 'Presbyterian principles' can successfully support racism as can be seen from the separation of mission work into black and white approaches!

The reticence of the black congregations and Presbyteries is understandable in the light of the loss of blacks' rights at that time for they 'felt the greatest anxiety at losing their "imperial" connection' (van der Spuy 1971:34). They rightly

wanted a real and effective role in decision making which they had been granted, to a degree, by the Scottish missionaries. They were not prepared to give this up for the sake of union. Stewart supported the blacks and their anxieties that they would be denied rights on equal terms; that they would form a majority of the membership and that whites would never accept control by such a majority. Stewart was influenced by 'the feelings of the native ministers, the political and practical considerations of the day' (:35). Van der Spuy (*ibid.*) ponders the role of the Mzimba Secession in Stewart's conclusions. Did they perhaps represent a late conversion to Mzimba's views, were they a reaction to Mzimba with the ultimate aim of establishing a rival church to the PCA or were they an expression of concern that the circumstances meant that the time was simply inopportune? The evidence suggests that the last suggestion was the correct one. However, a black church would clearly provide greater scope for blacks to demonstrate and exercise their gifts.

5.3. Consequences of the Union

In 1897, the UPCoS mission Presbytery of Kaffraria entered the union which produced the PCSA with its missionaries still being supported from Scotland and its property still held in trust there. The FCoS Mission declined the invitation to join and created a Mission Synod of Kaffraria. The Natal FCoS mission retained a separate existence from the others. This created an anomalous situation where work and geographical areas overlapped. The situation was further exacerbated in 1900 when the FCoS and the UPCoS united to form the United Free Church of Scotland (UFCoS) yet their missions remained separate, one of which was an integral part of the PCSA and the other which was not, yet which had a measure of local self-government. DV Sikutshwa attributes the situation which arose:

'to the fact that at a time when the two sections of the population were at different stages of development - religiously, educationally and socially - it would have been quite inopportune to run European and African congregations exactly on the same lines; and the attempt to do so would have been

disadvantageous to both sections of the population' (1946:4).

While the first part of Sikutshwa's statement was true, the strange thing about this situation is that both had already been operating 'exactly on the same lines' in presbyterian polity (:4) and if there were to be disadvantages to whites what might these be apart from possibly not always getting their own way? The missionaries were convinced that separation in matters spiritual would be advantageous to blacks.

This was a situation which could not be tolerated for long and a resolution of the two views which had emerged, ie. a multi-racial church or a black church, concerning the future of the missions, had to be reached.

In 1901, and again in 1909, the FMC of the UFCoS supported the ideal of a multi-racial church though the missionaries were not forced to join the PCSA. James Stewart claimed that the church in Scotland did not understand the extent of the matter before them because the affair was 'beyond their power to settle', ie. relative to black and white. He asserted that there was a need for 'the growth of opinion and higher Christian practice' For him, the assertion of black power would lead to a 'collision of views due to difference of opinion, education or race interests and various other causes'. The opposite - non assertion on the part of blacks will simply produce:

'a hanger on to the wealthier white section - abject, inert, and lifeless, and without any of the spirit necessary for its right vocation, the extension of missionary work as soon as it has reached the position of self-support' (James Stewart addressing the FMC [1904]. BPCSA Souvenir Programme 1971. Lovedale Press).

It is interesting to note how Sikutshwa's views approximate to these, yet not surprising for one nurtured under missionary tutelage. When Stewart refers to 'the growth of higher Christian practice' is he talking about the development of blacks or, possibly, the conversion of whites, a change of heart in their attitudes, or perhaps both?

Stewart claimed that he favoured the establishment of a black church at some unspecified time in the future - a time 'reserved for a day beyond our own'. Such a church would be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating without European interference, each congregation taking responsibility for itself. On this point Stewart was criticised by some colleagues, ie. Auld, Mathieson and Ross, for his congregationalism. On the formation of a native church, Stewart believed that could be a natural progression arising from the secession of whites from the PCSA as blacks became the majority; Stewart was aware of hardening racial attitudes and their natural outcome (Wells 1909:290) as well as a devaluation of 'liberal principles in the political life of the country between 1880 and 1930' (van der Spuy:29) replicated in the church. In sum, Stewart was arguing in favour of the status quo for the foreseeable future.

Hewat (1960:185) notes that Shepherd in 'The Bantu' affirmed the aim of the formation of an independent church from the inception of the South African mission, free from foreign domination: 'The missions were but foster nurses for the rearing of an infant Church which would come to stand alone'. The GMCSA had accepted a principle that the 'formation of Native Churches is the true end of mission work' in 1904, a principle which it reaffirmed in 1906 (Jacottet, SAO, July 1907 in Wilson & Perrot 1971:378). Jacottet (:379) contended that the union of African and European was 'an alien growth in Africa' which 'could only tend to retard or to thwart a necessary or providential process'. Jacottet's views, while sincerely held, do not reflect the general opinion expressed in the SAO at that time by missionaries despite the views of the GMCSA. Perhaps this is due to his assertion that the Mzimba Secession demonstrated the strength of Ethiopian views held in the UFCoS missions and the PCSA that separatist feelings are best accommodated in a black church (:382). Brownlee J Ross (SAO, April 1908 in Wilson & Perrot 1971:389) responded that the motive for the formation of black churches comes from the idea of 'the Church as a nursery for Native patriotism'. He felt that missionaries were largely responsible for events:

'the makers and leaders of the Church - refuse to walk and prefer to talk. Hence the mere politician is ahead of them both in liberality of view and good works'. This comment originates in the context of a discussion with the church in Scotland concerning federation in church relations and is a damning indictment of missionary attitudes by a serving missionary!

This was not a new issue for the church in South Africa. The Dutch Reformed Church had resolved their issue in 1857 by allowing for separate worship for blacks and whites within the same church; a situation which was to change as time passed.

However, a different development occurred with the foundation of the PCSA which Hewat (1960:185) describes as 'African in outlook and environment' - an astonishing statement in the light of its subsequent history! It is also interesting to note that while Hewat gives some attention to the formation of the white dominated PCSA, she ignores the black Mzimba Secession and the AIC movement which was contemporaneously significant. Hewat's bias is clearly towards the non-racial as opposed to the purely black church option describing the former as the ultimate ideal, an apparently sound judgment, but one which pays little or no heed to the contemporary situation between blacks and whites or of the discrepancies in social, cultural, economic, political and educational attainments compared with Europeans.

In spite of the foregoing, the Convener of the FMC, Dr Lindsay, could claim in 1901 that the South African missionaries 'do not seem to have grasped the idea of a Native Presbyterian Church' (Brock 1974:49). This indicates that it was missionaries themselves who were obstructing development. It also confirms that this idea was already in the minds of the FMC as Lennox refers to this being the policy of three conveners (Lennox to Henderson, 24/5/1901 Letterbook of the Presbytery of Kaffraria 28/7/1898-14/4/1904, NLS 7799) so the policy was not even a new development. Lennox rejected this accusation through lack of available evidence: 'We on our part have been loyal to the

system we found in existence when appointed, and which we had no reason to believe was opposed by the Committee's [ie. FMC] general policy' (ibid.) The policy of the three conveners was in support of the development of self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating churches. Yet, a new method of achieving this was introduced in the form of Mission Councils.

Other missionaries also denied the charge but correspondence and subsequent events support Lindsay. Therefore, Brock (1974:50) claims with some justification that the Mzimba Secession was 'a judgment on missionary attitudes', at least in part. It is further claimed that the minutes of the FMC (1866) should have been implemented more rigorously (Smith to Henderson 27/7/1906. NLS 7799). These minutes relate to James Stewart's appointment to Lovedale in 1866 when the FMC declared its policy:

'So soon as native congregations are formed, the care of them ought, as speedily as possible, be consigned to a native pastorate... in time to be supported by natives themselves, while the Europeans should be free to press on to the regions beyond' (Wells 1910:289).

The projected ideal was that of a three-self church where extension work would be done by missionaries and consolidation of existing work by blacks. The missionaries turned this policy around, sending blacks to do the extension work while they busied themselves with consolidation, to the extent that, by the end of the nineteenth century, there had been no developments in FMC policy.

Union had been regarded as one solution to problems surrounding mission in Kaffraria, ie. duplicating personnel and resources and all the jealousies and animosities surrounding these issues, but some missionaries had rejected this as early as 1883 (Brock:50). Prior to union there were three presbyterian groups in South Africa - the FCoS, the UPCoS and the colonial congregations of white ex-patriates. It was assumed by the FMC that 'the union of Free Church and United Presbyterian missions would be effected as a matter of course once the Home Churches

had re-united'. It believed that the Church in South Africa, African or European, must become self-supporting and self-governing (:51).

While the Synod of Kaffraria favoured union, the Presbytery of Kaffraria moved against it (NLS 7798 in Brock 1974:52) on several grounds including the assumption of the immaturity of black congregations, the view that colonial congregations interest in mission was not a priority and the FCoS' encouragement of the development of a black ministry. The Presbytery view was that separation from the Church in Scotland would only serve to exacerbate present weaknesses and that colonial churches would be less concerned about blacks compared with the FC (Lovedale returns, 25/12/1896 NLS 7798) which favoured the growth of indigenous ministry and, therefore, there arose a desire to maintain the status quo (Burnshill returns, 15/1/1897, NLS 7798). The Burnshill Kirk Session declared: 'If the Foreign Mission Committee cannot see their way to establish a Native Church, they wish, as a Session and congregation to remain under the care of the Home Church through the Committee' (FMC, 25/10/1904, Minute 113). It is interesting to note that this was the strong response of blacks themselves (Don to Young, 1/3/1897, NLS 7798).

In July 1897, Synod resolved not to proceed with the union 'because of a want of acquiescence on the part of several of the Native congregations in both presbyteries' (Synod Minutes 19/7/1897, NLS 7798). The race issue was denied by the PCSA General Assembly but this was challenged by Don, Presbytery Clerk of Kaffraria. The Christian ideal is clearly a non-racial church, but the fear of domination is a real issue on both sides (Brock 1974:55).

At this time, Natal had no mission Presbytery and the FMC attitude was that it should join the Presbyteries of the PCSA. The missionaries believed that this would be counter-productive because, in their view, blacks would simply join native churches. It might be pondered the degree to which missionaries were in touch with blacks' feelings and

aspirations because the Mzimba Secession occurred (1898) despite rejection of the union of presbyterians in the PCSA (1897).

Mzimba opposed union with the colonial Presbyteries not surprisingly and, in 1898, two Presbyteries of the UPCoS entered the PCSA, a course of action favoured by the majority of FCoS missionaries despite opposition from the black membership of the FCoS mission, thus isolating the FMC. Subsequent union in Scotland between the FCoS and UPCoS hardly impacted on the situation. This led the FMC, in time, to consider the possibility of establishing a black presbyterian church. The practice of duplicating Presbyteries of a sending church prevented this from happening for some time.

In 1902, the Synod of Kafraria acceded to the FMC's wish for union with the PCSA, but in July the process was delayed due to opposition from Burnshill Mission where some feared the consequences of the withdrawal of the Mission. A year later, Synod delayed a decision for another year and in 1905, it discharged its Committee on Union. The following year, Henderson raised the matter of the formation of a black church and this led to the Synod agreeing in favour of the development of a black church in 1907. The General Interests Committee of the UFCoS determined that mission policy was the responsibility of the Mission Councils AND the FMC and its Africa Sub-Committee argued that the formation of a black church would necessitate a change of policy implying its disapproval of PCSA policy. It noted that this was a clear separation of policy from other evangelical churches with regard to the racial integration within mission churches. Therefore, it reaffirmed its previous policy.

The UFCoS, having resolved to promote union with the PCSA, was not prepared to allow missionaries to subvert their intention, at this stage anyway. The matter was referred to the General Interests Committee of the Church, which had dealt with the union of the Scottish churches, to follow up the resolution. The Convener of the Committee, Rev G Robson, wrote a letter to

missionaries in South Africa through Lennox in which it was 'recognised that it must be left to the brethren in South Africa (presumably white missionaries), who were conversant with the local circumstances, to decide for themselves as to the time and manner of carrying out the resolution' (15/1/1908, MS 10711, Cory Library). This would have been music in James Stewart's ear! However, it is clear that, at this juncture, no alternative courses of action were to be envisaged because the Synod of Kafraria had suspended discussion of the matter in 1905.

The General Interests Committee were concerned that insufficient consideration had been given to various points and they raised them with 'the brethren in South Africa' as well as being mindful of their obligation to discuss the matter further after discussions with the FMC. Robson was of the opinion that there was no reason to assume that there would be a change of policy regarding union with the PCSA or with the UPCoS missionaries who joined it. He further claimed that the Synod of Kafraria had made no representations to date concerning the formation of a black church. This came in the form of a rebuke: 'it does not belong to the Synod of Kafraria to determine "the policy of the South African Mission"', referring to Synod minutes of 1906, 1907. He further stated, 'The courts entrusted with the direction of the South African Mission in the Cape Colony are the Mission Councils of Kaffraria and the Transkei, which include all the missionaries and act in co-operation with and under the authority of the Foreign Mission Committee'. This is a classic statement of Scottish Presbyterian church mission policy. This statement was qualified by Robson's claim that his committee would not automatically veto decisions of the Synod as:

'It is obvious that within the Mission there are divergent views as well as important and varied interests requiring to be treated with the utmost consideration, and the Mission Councils must have a careful regard to these in advising on the policy of the Mission of our church. But it is to them that this function belongs'.

This seems to contradict the purposes for which Mission Councils were established. It also seems that certain powers have been arrogated to them which should rightly belong to actual courts of the church. However:

'The Act of the General Assembly of the Free Church (ix, 1893) which has been printed in the forefront of the Minutes of the Synod of Kafraria down to 1906 as the Act under whose authority the Synod met, and cognate legislation relating to Mission Presbyteries, were superceded by the legislation at the time of Union. The Presbyteries ceased then to be courts representing the Home Church, and their place in that respect was taken by the Mission Councils. The Presbyteries became, or were intended to become Presbyteries representing and supervising the congregation in the mission field, with the view of developing a self-governing and self-supporting church adapted to the requirements of the country.... it is difficult to see how the Synod of Kafraria can continue on an orderly basis without involving the setting up of another Church in South Africa of which it would be the Synod, and which, though federated with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa and the United Free Church of Scotland, would still have a distinctive constitution. Surely this is to be deprecated'!(ibid.):

although it became a threat at a later point when it appeared that a dispute involving the transfer of property could not be amicably resolved (Burchell 1979:187). While acknowledging that there are some who are not in favour of union and 'have also decided to set before them as their own the formation of a purely African Church. But this cannot be put forward as being the policy of the Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland'! (Robson, 15/01/1908, MS 10711, Cory Library) as it seems clear that little attention had been given to the arguments against union made on the basis of the peculiar situation which faced the Mission in South Africa. Burchell (1977:42) notes similar situations in Manchuria and Jamaica where local circumstances were sufficiently different from the situation in South Africa that the formation of multi-racial churches were less problematic.

Robson appeared to be wielding a heavy axe over the Synod of Kafraria by suggesting that its financial powers, relating to the payment of black ministers, could easily be accomodated

elsewhere. Concerning the missionary institutions, Lovedale and Blythswood, he claimed that since they were bodies of the UFCoS, they could not be represented in the Presbyteries of a black church and could have no official relationship with such or with the PCSA. Both would exist in federal relationship with the UFCoS and members of staff would have seats in the Presbyteries in whose bounds they were serving. He viewed dissension as a hindrance to the promotion of the Gospel:

'all should have as their common endeavour to safeguard our great missionary enterprise in South Africa as far as possible from further occasion of friction or division, and to promote its efficiency for the establishment of the Church of Christ in that land' (ibid.).

No one would argue with this, yet issue would continue to be taken with the best way to achieve the final goal of the Kingdom. The Synod responded by assuring the Home Church 'that the Synod's attitude in respect of the relations of the congregations to the question of Union remains for the present what it was prior to 1907' (Minute 15 of Synod of Kafraria, 9-12 July 1909, Lennox correspondence, UFH).

The time had arrived when the various options had to be given serious consideration for the sake of the future of the Mission.

5.4. The Two Option Policy

By the beginning of the twentieth century, two policies began to evolve.

5.4.1. The 'United Church' Policy

The FMC of the UFCoS were keen to promote their ideal of one church within which black and white would subsist happily on an equal basis. This, however, failed to take adequate account of the developing racial situation in South Africa: 'there is largely prevalent among the colonists a sentiment adverse to

association with the African native' ('Our Missions in South Africa' 1902, MS 14849, Cory Library:9). It was anticipated that the PCSA would build up an independent 'native' church in South Africa. It would seem that this was an unrealistic view as the result of the racist attitude towards blacks, the colonialist ethos of the church, the desire to maintain white power and authority and the early desire to unite with the Dutch Reformed Church.

While it was 'admitted by all that this is the Christian ideal. It is a direct effort to overcome racial differences by following the mind of Christ' (:9-10):

'The Committee... has no reason to anticipate that any detriment would ensue to the cause of Christ from the whole of the Native Church formed by our Mission uniting on an acceptable basis, as part of it has already done, with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa. While fully alive to the serious difficulties which always attend the mingling in one Church of those with antecedents so diverse as European colonists and the Native South African peoples, the Foreign Mission Committee believes that all such difficulties will be most happily overcome by being left, as far as possible, to be dealt with by the brethren in each of our Mission fields, trusting them to act in a spirit of loyalty to the one Lord and Head of the Church, and of kindly consideration and forbearance one towards another for His name's sake' (FMC minute 22/3/1904 in file Mission Council 1902-1905, Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:43).

This minute was agreed following representations by South African missionaries to the African sub-committee of the FMC in 1904. It moved against the sentiments expressed by James Stewart (already quoted).

Lennox, and others, opposed the concept of the 'incorporating union' of the white and black sections of the church. While this might appear more democratic, it does not necessarily lead to freedom of expression and the opportunity for development and leadership (Sundkler 1961:31-2). The formation of the PCA had made Lennox realise the inadequacies of colonial mission policy and also critical of it. In 1909 he could say:

'we offer the native church the finest product of our thinking and experience, while at the same time we remove from them the discipline of thinking out these questions in relation to their own traditional life.... We could do no greater disservice than to do all their thinking for them. They must take their responsibilities on their own shoulders.... They must cast themselves on the future in faith and must garner and use the lessons of their own experience.... They are not... to be reckoned failures' (Shepherd 1937:455 'The Separatist Churches of South Africa' in Millard 1995:223).

These rather innovative views were encapsulated in the only other option available for consideration.

5.4.2. The 'Native Church' Policy

In 1902, the paper 'Our Missions in South Africa', claimed that 'The Mission begins in order to create a native Church; the Mission naturally ends when the native Church has become self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating' (MS 14849, Henderson correspondence, Cory Library:1). This aim was consistent with the contemporary view of Protestant missions enunciated by Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson and Gustav Warneck who were the originators of the concept of the 'Native Church'.

From 1900, the FMC pressed for the formation of a native church in correspondence with missionaries, the word 'native' being synonymous with 'indigenous'. Theoretically, it might consist of people of all races though this was certainly not clear at the time. Rev J Lennox interpreted this to mean a 'black church'. Yet, he rejected Dr Lindsay's charge (stated above :119) because, he argued, that was the aim of missionaries like himself, to form a black church 'in harmony with the church's avowed policy' (Lennox to Henderson 24/5/1901, Letterbook of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, 28/7/1898-14/4/1904, Lennox correspondence, UFH). While accepting Lennox's integrity, it is not clear that all missionaries shared his view on this matter. This would raise the question of the indigenous nature of the PCSA when the term 'colonial' more clearly expressed its ethos.

Earlier, the Kaffir Express in June 1871 had stated that there had been little success in creating a 'three-self' church and optimistically projected a time:

'when all Native Churches in our colony and on our borders must be largely, if not altogether, supplied with pastors from themselves. The native churches must be stirred up more and more to realise and even to desire this coming state of things They cannot remain forever in the leading strings of the European church, and must endeavour to maintain and perpetuate themselves. And the sooner they begin to aim at this consummation the better' (in Burchell 1977:41).

This was an ideal explication of the 'three-self' theory but the question arises concerning who is to do the stirring up? It would appear that the FMC would see this as the role of its missionaries. Clearly, joining the PCSA would not achieve the end of severing 'the leading strings of the European church'.

The FMC policy, held prior to 1867 and maintained by Dr G Smith [5] was that vacant charges should be filled by black probationers although there was little active interest in this policy for in 1905 there were only 10 black ministers in the Mission (Smith to Weir 28/10/1904 in file 'Mission Council 1902-1905', Lennox correspondence in Burchell :41). FCoS missionaries worked through the Synod of Kafraria and remained outside the 1897 union, four members having voted in favour while ten, including Lennox and Mzimba, voted against. Yet, the views of blacks were not clear by 1904 from the black vote in the PCSA (Lennox to Stewart 28/2/1904, JW Jagger Library, D65/48,23A [ix]32 in Burchell:42).

The idea of a black Presbyterian church was favoured by both J Stewart of Lovedale and W Stuart of Burnshill along with others. This church would be composed of blacks and quite separate from the PCSA, for reasons which have been quoted above by James Stewart and others. In addition, Stewart stated:

5 Secretary of the FMC in 1904

'The South African Presbyterian Church is quite new. It will have enough to do to support itself for a long period to come. It has neither men nor money, nor the power of management which are necessary. It would be saying rather too much to maintain that it has either much missionary spirit or sympathy, or a missionary history or policy' (Lovedale Mission, South Africa [Edinburgh, 8/9/1902] in Burchell:43).

As has already been noted, this confirms that Stewart normally took the long view of progress in mission. Yet, he had support in Scotland from Sir William Dunn and Lord Overtoun, among others, who felt that Scotland was not in a position to formulate policies opposed by missionaries (Burchell 1977:43 n.28). Van der Spuy (1971:29) affirms Stewart as a 'realist' who 'knew the racial attitudes which existed in the South African situation'. This led to the conclusion that a black church was the only viable alternative.

Yet, Stewart was not so liberal that he derived any positive benefits from the vision of an independent church such as the opportunity for blacks to develop their own gifts in a situation where they had total responsibility for their actions and consequences. Nor was he keen to ordain blacks as per the wishes of the FMC concerning 'the elimination of the European and the handing over of all these older as well as new stations to native guidance and care' (Sundkler 1961:30). Stewart viewed this prospect with great foreboding: 'We know what will happen if this takes place' (Stewart to Roberts 26/12/1902, private collection of Roberts papers [Mr P van Lill] in Burchell:44).

Despite his support for a black church, Stewart was not confident that this was an imminent prospect. It was a case of 'not just yet' and 'the African would need the Anglo-Saxon alongside of him for the next 50 or 100 years'. His paternalism viewed missionaries as overseers (South African Native Affairs Commission, vol. iv:911, sec. 44980 in Burchell 1977:44). Stormont of Blythswood shared Stewart's attitude in this matter claiming that the older generation of

missionaries encouraged the belief among black ministers that the missions were their inheritance, and objected to the idea that missionaries should do pioneering work: 'they [blacks] want routine work and a fixed salary' (Stormont to Auld 18/3/1910. Cory Library MS 7352, Stormont papers). It is fair to say this from the position of being in receipt of a regular guaranteed stipend. Scottish missionaries had this as pioneers, blacks did not, and what stipends they did have were lower than their white colleagues (Millard 1995:222).

The opposite argument was presented by Henderson and Lennox who believed that missionaries had to occupy a continually decreasing role. Brock (1974:430) describes such as:

'There were few who managed to rise above... natural handicaps [ie. imposed by Victorian imperialist society], few whose imagination could so overcome contemporary prejudice and mores as to commend to their followers the adoption of alternatives'

They were 'typical of that younger generation of missionaries at the beginning of the twentieth century who were "filled with the ideals of a self-governing church"'. In saying this, Sundkler (1961:30) notes that their emergence coincided with the worst period of secessions. Burchell(1977:45) believed these two had confidence in the ability of the African to reshape Christianity in an original and meaningful way'. This came to be especially true of the Women's Christian Association (uManyano), formed in 1893, and the Young Men's Christian Guild (amaDodana). They based their case on the status quo where:

'The mission fields are passing into the hands of Native converts as pastors and officebearers. Christianity is beginning to take on a South African garb and adapt itself to the genius of the African people (Henderson to Smith, 7/1/1908, Cory Library, unclassified correspondence in Burchell 1977:45).

This is consistent with the view of Bredekamp and Ross (1995:1) that the process of Christianisation 'could only be carried to

completion by men and women from the African communities themselves' ie. mission was gender inclusive. Elphick (1995:17 in Bredekamp and Ross 1995) contends that from the beginning of the Christian mission 'African converts embraced some form of Gospel with enthusiasm and carried it, with or without missionary approval, to their families and villages, often to new regions altogether', citing the examples of C Kakkerkal and Ntsikana (:17).

The role of women during this period is important because of the part they played in the growth of African mission communities - 'In the teeth of opposition, they held on to a distinctive and fervent female group solidarity which helped to sustain them in times of personal and communal upheaval!' (Gaitskell 1995:212 in Bredekamp & Ross 1995). While the 1880s-1920s witnessed the 'real beginnings of numerical growth within mission communities' (:212) as well as secessions fronted by black leaders and pastors:

'the manyanos seem to have been part of a more general indigenisation of religious initiative, particularly round the turn of the century. Lay movements of various kinds mobilised Africans to evangelise or enthuse their own people for Christianity' (:212).

Mission boarding schools initiated the growth of a feminine elite (Donaldson 1985:5) - many married ministers and church officials and led to domination of the uManyano by ministers' wives who were excluded by gender from other forms of church leadership. In relation to male evangelical activity, Hastings (1979:265-6 in Gaitskell 1995:217 in Bredekamp & Ross 1995) asserted that manyanos offered a greater 'dynamic core' than male evangelists could. Perhaps it was such developments that encouraged Henderson (See quote above :130).

Henderson and Lennox exercised a strong influence on the Synod of Kafraria, the superior court of the former Free Church Mission. They believed that the autonomy of Synod was vital in the progress towards the evolution of an independent mission church. In 1920, Lennox described it as 'a true "Native

court"' (Lennox to Soga 27/11/1920, Commission on Union, Lennox correspondence in Burchell:45). For Henderson, it was a virtually independent organisation whose business was dealt with in good spirit.

Lennox was convinced that there was a possibility that 'the material of Native Christianity is... still so sufficiently plastic that it may finally set into a mould different from any of the recognised European patterns' (Report of the Proceedings of the Third GMCSA, July 1909:84 in Burchell 1977:45). Time would tell that this assessment was a little too optimistic in the light of some of the more conservative developments, eg. in worship, discipline and ecclesiastical dress. For him, white control stifled indigenous development. Missionaries would still be required in a distinctive church but in the role of 'advisers, not the devisers of policy' (:45). This was a vain hope in view of the continued existence of Mission Councils in the post-1923 period and the strong views of the personnel involved. Lennox preferred a more grass roots democratic approach and was critical of the Anglican experiment of incorporating the Order of Ethiopia into a multi-racial church: 'The whole system of Church government, all the regulations for worship, everything in fact which gives outward expression to the belief and permanent form to the Church is imposed from above on that which is below' (GMCSA, July 1909:88 in Burchell 1977:46). Consequently, he would never have agreed to a federal arrangement with the PCSA.

5.5. The Ongoing Effects of the Mzimba Secession

As has been stated above, we disagree with Shepherd's (1940) assessment that the Mzimba Secession had no significant impact on Scottish missions for it had an ongoing psychological effect on Scottish missionaries, especially James Stewart. Burchell (1977:47) is correct in saying that it 'contributed much to the turmoil, uncertainty and anxiety in the Scottish mission field particularly in the first decades of the twentieth century'. While it is difficult to assess the degree to which

Mzimba affected thinking with regard to future mission policy, he did do this having adopted a conservative view of the future of the PCA, envisaging a time when it might enter into an arrangement with another church, presumably the PCSA, after he failed to secure recognition by the FCoS: 'a time when, while we control our own church matters, there will be incorporation or federation with the Colonial Presbyterian Body' (SANAC, vol.11, sec. 10907:793 in Burchell 1977:47).

The threat of secession did not disappear once the Secession occurred. Referring especially to the missions at MacFarlan and Rainy, Lennox wrote to Lindsay of the FMC that 'Mzimba is unceasingly active in trying to increase his following by breaking up existing missions' (23/6/98, Letterbook of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, 28/7/1898-4/4/1904, Lennox correspondence, UFH). This was confirmed in 1909 in a communique on the FC mission:

'Since 1898...certain of the native converts have been unsettled by movements which have affected other missions in South Africa. In a very few of the outstations week-day and Sabbath schools work has been temporarily arrested, chiefly, it is understood, through the unsettlement of the population among which the schools are situated (Cowan & Dalmahoy to Simpson & Marwick, 3/6/1909 in file 'Synod 1909', Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:47).

The Native Affairs Commission Report of 1925, reported that anti-white feeling was attracting seceders who had been loyal to the missions of the sending churches until that time. Some of this had its source in black ministers meeting together in fraternals (Sundkler 1961:63).

In 1909, Henderson had sought an accommodation with Mzimba as the result of problems relating to land tenure, overlapping congregational boundaries and disputes concerning secession, but not, it seems, from a genuine desire for rapprochement! Henderson was correct in his estimation of the time and energy wasted in fighting one another compared what could have been achieved in trying to further the mission of the Kingdom, ie. in proselytising rather than evangelising, for this created a

bad public image of mission. Mzimba appeared to agree and promised to try to end 'this time of dissension and strife' (Henderson to Lennox 7/4/1909, in file 'Synod 1909', Lennox correspondence in Burchell:48).

Mzimba viewed the missionaries as directly responsible for the Secession because 'we generally see things in different (disagreeing) ways which introduces bad feeling and distrust' (Minutes of Presbytery of Kaffraria, 15/4/1898, Lennox correspondence, UFH). There were 'religious difficulties' plus a desire 'to work independently thinking that it might work better that way' (SANAC, vol.2, sec.10893, 10901:793 in Burchell 1977:48). So foresight might have prevented secession along with a willingness to hand over authority gradually as Henderson and Lennox desired. Mzimba could say, with justification, that 'Our experience is that the missionaries of the United Free Church are at present unable to understand the South African native or work with them. The minds of the Natives have been occupied with secessions and attempts at union' (Marks 1970:179). The same might be said of the missionaries.

The impact of secession on the Mission was such that Lennox (to JH Oldham 11/12/1922 in file 'Personal 1919-1922', Lennox correspondence, UFH) could comment on the years 1910-1922 as 'a period of no outstanding spiritual movement'. He claimed this on behalf of blacks but it is true also that missionary energy had been depleted by matters related to both secession and union. However, he did feel that advances had been made in race relations despite the fact that no settlement with the secessionists was achieved. It might be questioned whether this was the desire, or was this another attempt like Henderson's as noted above? Early in 1923, as the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa (BPCSA) approached, an attempt was made by Rev Njikelana to initiate a union consisting of all the black presbyterian bodies. This was judged by the missionaries to be too late (Lennox to Henderson 29/9/1922, unclassified Henderson correspondence, Cory Library in Burchell 1977:49). This would tend to support

the assertion that genuine rapprochement was not the real desire of the missionaries because this would seem to be consistent with their aims. In addition, it may be wondered if it is ever too late to proceed with Christ's aim that all should be one (John 17:21), even if such moves had been delayed until after the birth of the BPCSA, with a clear commitment to talk further on the matter.

It is necessary to consider the extent to which the Mzimba Secession directly contributed to the formation of the BPCSA. In 1937, a memorandum was prepared which stated that it was 'better to have formed a Bantu church' than to 'let a new sect rupture the work without let or hindrance' (compiled from notes from members of the SA Mission Council of the CoS in terms of Mission Council minute no. 312 of April 1936 and of Mission Council Executive Minute no. 10 of 10/10/1936. Document dated 14/2/1937, BPC Office, Umtata in Burchell 1977:49).

Burchell (1977:49ff.), in an attempt to be objective, considers influences other than the Mzimba Secession for the problems that attended the years between 1898 and 1923. One was certainly the desire of the FMC for a union between the mission churches and the PCSA. By 1907, this was causing dissension among black ministers and officebearers who favoured pursuing the spirit of the 'Basis of Union' (May 1900), ie. developing a 'Native' church predominantly governed by blacks themselves.

Rev R Mure, in 1908, argued that: 'The discussion of alternative solutions of the present difficulty in the presence of natives is calculated to bring about the very split we desire to avoid' (Burchell 1977:50). Secession had made the discussion about union extremely sensitive especially at missions like Pirie where it was felt the issue was being forced while other issues were being evaded. There had been no presbytery visitations for some time, finances were in a very poor state and records had not been kept for twenty years. Interference was likely to produce suspicion which might in turn lead to further secession and the main purpose of achieving the growth of a black church could be defeated. Mure

was concerned about missionaries' anxieties in the light of 'divisions between some of the missionaries and some of the Bantu ministers, and between the former United Presbyterian side and the former Free Church side of the Mission' ('Union', attached to Mission Council minutes 5/8/1908 on Mission Council minute, 1908-1915, BPC Office, Umtata in Burchell 1977:50). All of this had an unsettling effect on ordinary church members.

When the views of black ministers and officebearers were canvassed, it became clear that no change would be welcome if it altered relations with the Home Church and that included union with the PCSA. They were proud of their Free Church heritage in building up work amongst blacks during the nineteenth century and in virtually constituting it an 'Order' in the FC with blacks 'being trained to conduct business and to accept responsibility both in maintaining ordinances, and in sending the Gospel to the heathen' (Memorandum of Native Ministers and Officebearers, UFCoS Missions, SA, 26/9/1908, file 'Synod', Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:51). This policy had been ruptured by the Mzimba Secession.

UFCoS ministers (mainly white) and elders (mainly black) were not prepared to support union with the PCSA and those who were were motivated by their concern to maintain unity in their congregations. Rev E Makiwane, spoke out at a Presbytery meeting at Lovedale, claiming that if members were coerced into joining the PCSA 'they would lose them to the last man' (Report of Makiwane, 29/4/1908, file 'Synod', Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:51). Probably the only benefactor if this happened would be Mzimba if the FMC pushed its policy to its logical conclusion. In the end, it was perceived that:

'wisdom lay in allowing in the meantime that each section should continue to strengthen and consolidate all its efforts and forces just as they would have done if there was no question of Union being discussed, rather than allow any side to stand paralysed by the hope or proposal of Union' (Memorandum of Native Ministers and Office-bearers, 26/9/1908, file Presbytery [Synod] of Kafraria, Sundry correspondence 1/4, Lennox correspondence, UFH).

We may wonder at the degree to which missionary voices were suppressed in reaching this conclusion.

5.6. A Change of Plan

When Lennox spoke to the General Assembly of the PCSA in 1913, he proposed a plan which came to fruition in 1914. Along with Henderson, Makiwane, Knox Bokwe and Mama, Lennox was appointed by the Synod of Kaffraria to a joint consultation along with representatives of the PCSA. Their remit was to consider the possibility of formulating an agreement on ways of co-operating in the mission field 'so as to maintain the unity of the Church and at the same time admit of the native section of the Christian community assuming duties and responsibilities that are properly theirs' (Conference Report, 14/5/1914, BPC Office, Umtata in Burchell 1977:52). This was achieved in theory, but the status quo remained because:

'In the opinion of the conference the organisation of native Presbyteries and Synod would meet the existing situation.... The relationship of the Synod to the General Assembly should include the right of appeal, submission to the Assembly of reports of work, and consideration of questions arising from the relationship of the Synod with non-synodical areas of mission work' (FMC, 15/9/1914, minute 3155).

In addition there was to be mutual representation in each's highest courts. The FMC approved the outcome of the report. However, the position of the Presbytery of Kaffraria became anomalous as the result of the union of the UPCoS and FCoS missions. Missionaries in the Kaffrarian Mission Council were unhappy about Synod having property vested in its name rather than in the Trustees of the UFCoS. This arose out of fear of further secessions, fear of black control of property and an attempt to limit its power.

A further anomaly continued to be the existence of two Mission Councils in Transkei and Kaffraria. On behalf of the FMC, its Secretary, Rev F Ashcroft, questioned the possibility of forming one Mission Council on the grounds that 'this will be

as great [a] help as the one Native Church' (Ashcroft to Lennox, 22/9/1914, file 'Synod' 1914-1916, Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:52). However, because there was no initial enthusiasm in the Transkei Mission Council, the FMC hesitated to approve the union (FMC, 20/7/1915, minute 3514) though it advocated the desirability of devolving responsibility for specified areas to native pastors and of having one general Mission Council meeting annually with three sub-councils (FMC, 21/9/1915, Minute 3538:3,6). The Transkei Mission Council considered the proposal inappropriate and favoured the formation of sub-councils attached to Presbyteries (FMC, 16/11/1915, minute 3614:4). Its conservatism at this time may be noted from its attitude to the place of women in the church, which 'idea is neither practicable nor greatly desired'! (FMC, 21/12/1915, minute 3642:4) though it might be asked by whom?

The FMC approved the union of the two Mission Councils which became the Kaffraria Mission Council (21/3/1916, Minute 3746) in 1917 despite opposition from some Transkei missionaries, eg. Rev W Auld (FMC, 17/7/1917, minute 4151:5).

Clarification of the position of the Natal Mission Council concerning union was also considered necessary. It was prepared to unite with the Kaffrarian Mission Council but it expressed concern about being swamped by the greater number of missionaries and black members in the Cape. It argued for proportional representation and for the same in representative bodies. The Kaffrarian Mission Council had 24 missionaries and its area contained 15,379 members, while the Natal Mission Council had 4 missionaries and 6,490 members respectively (FMC, 20/9/1921, minute 5669). The FMC (21/3/1922 Minute 5904:1) asked them to reconsider on the point of proportional representation. The Natal Mission Council agreed on the conditions as stated (FMC, 16/10/1922, Minute 6166; 21/11/1922, minute 6194). The Kaffrarian Mission Council was pleased with the prospect and 'sees no insuperable barrier to union' (FMC, 17/4/1923, Minute 6407). This referred to differences of attitude in the Natal Mission Council to polygamy which was

more liberal and more accepting though it did not approve the practice. The place of the Natal Mission Council was not to be resolved until after the formation of the BPCSA.

As discussions advanced concerning the union of the two FMC's of the former FCoS and UPCoS, it was proposed that male and female members should be members of Mission Councils with equal rights as it was perceived that there was no need to separate work. It was the existence of two committees in Scotland that had necessitated a separation of business in South Africa. Mission Councils had been dealing with proposals dealt with by two committees 'differing in their point of view as is inevitable when one committee consists mainly of men and the other mainly of women' (FMC, 16/1/1923, Appendix: Report of Special Committee on 'Assembly's Remit on Amalgamation')! We may wonder why this was so for this was sexism at its most crass!

A further advance was achieved when the newly formed Kaffrarian Mission Council agreed that 'the time has now come in South Africa to invite certain outstanding natives to sit as members of the Mission Council (FMC, 16/7/1918, Minute 4397:1). This was, indeed, a significant move though it smacks to a degree of paternalism and the basis of how a person is deemed to be outstanding is not defined though, while not stated, it is obvious that missionaries as members of the Mission Council will do the choosing. Thus 'outstanding' might be equivalent to 'acceptable' and 'quiescent' in this sense. The Kaffrarian Mission Council proposed adding one member of the about to be formed Native Church to represent each Presbytery on the Mission Council 'and that it be the concern of the Council, as sanctioned by the Foreign Mission Committee, to devolve progressively upon the highest court of the Native Church the duties heretofore belonging to the Council'. This was remitted to the Africa sub-committee of the FMC to consult with other Mission Councils and report (FMC, 17/4/1923, Minute 6407:8). The Commission on Union (draft resolutions of "Committee on Relations with Other Churches", Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:54) refused to recommend this feeling that it was

a matter that could be discussed after the birth of the new church.

Arising out of the 1914 conference, Lennox had sought to address the problem of the relationship between the white and black sections of the Christian community. The situation required some degree of sensitivity for:

'It was easy to fail here, easy for the individual missionary to forget the temporary character of his mission office and to fail to shape his work in preparation for a day when the mission will be withdrawn and replaced by the permanent native church; easy for the church through a high sense of its Christian duty and a noble scorn of racial distinctions in the church, when we are one in Jesus Christ, to place black and white in a juxtaposition and professed equality of standing in the sight of God, in which the native Christians quite unintentionally but really shall be overshadowed and dwarfed by their European brethren' (Lennox to PCSA General Asembly, 20/9/1915, 'Synod 1914-1916', Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:53).

In this, Lennox was being farsighted. Apart from Henderson, few missionaries shared his vision. It was clear that neither union with the PCSA nor the establishment of a native church would satisfy everyone as Lennox was well aware:

'You [ie. the PCSA and its missionaries] have stood for the visible unity of all in one church. We have stood for the liberty of development of the Native Christian community which we believe was not sufficiently secured by your method. Each side had, I believe, been conscious that it lacked something and had not reached finality (ibid.)

Lennox was moving towards the 1914 solution of a synthesis of an independent synod with mutual representation where blacks would be free to work out their future and where contact would be maintained between black and white, allowing for consultation between Presbyteries and congregations. However, this would not alleviate the possible problem of white (PCSA) ministers dominating proceedings of Synod and intimidating black members. The PCSA, by this time had had twenty years of experience as a church plus considerable business expertise at

its disposal compared with black presbyterians who had none (TB Soga to Lennox, 15/11/1920, 'Commission on Union', Lennox correspondence, in Burchell 1977:54). Soga preferred the idea of union with other black churches, a point also mooted by Henderson (Draft of Committee on Relations with Other Churches', Henderson correspondence, in Burchell 1977:57). The Congregational Church was already talking to African presbyterians as well as to the PCSA.

During this time the PCSA continued to hope that union might be effected. As early as 1915, it had expressed a desire for closer relationships with the Synod of Kafraria and in 1916 approved a Draft Basis of Union which had been adopted by the Synod. On 18th September 1916, the General Assembly of the PCSA resolved to:

'instruct the Native Mission Committee to forward in every way possible the movement towards union of the Missions of the United Free Church of Scotland in Kafraria and Natal with our Church' (PCSA General Assembly Minutes Ac 1971/Ah1.3.-1.4., Cullen Library).

The Presbytery of Kaffraria declared such a step 'impracticable' and by 1919 there was still no agreement on, union despite the adopted view that 'an approximation to it has been attained' (PCSA General Assembly Minutes Ac 1971/Ah1.3.-1.4., Cullen Library); yet, there was still a hope that agreement might be achieved by May 1920. This was not to be probably as it was realised that it was a futile exercise at that point in the history of the missions' development in view of the degree of opposition which existed on the side of black ministers and elders in the missions.

This was the situation Ashcroft and Houston of the FMC came to South Africa to try to resolve in 1920. The story of their mission is recounted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6 THE FORMATION OF THE BANTU PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SOUTH AFRICA

6.1. Preparations for a New Birth

In 1920, two United Free Church of Scotland deputies, Rev Frank Ashcroft and Mr Andrew Houston, were sent to South Africa to deal with the issue of bringing together the two branches of the Scottish Mission in South Africa. Burchell (1977:55) points out one innovation in the approach adopted by the Deputies: 'they came prepared to listen to the demands of these [black] ministers' and this may have been the actual catalyst for the resulting change of policy with regard to establishing a black church.

During his visit, Ashcroft addressed the 1920 General Assembly of the PCSA in support of uniting the missions. As a result, Rev J Pollock of the PCSA proposed that:

'This Assembly in view of the strong desire of the United Free Church of Scotland,... to have the congregations connected with their missions in Kaffraria and the Transkei united under one ecclesiastical authority, agrees to give the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana full power to decide on the question of union with the Synod of Kaffraria, leaving for future consideration the relationship to be established between the enlarged body thus formed, and this Presbyterian Church of South Africa' (PCSA General Assembly Minutes 20/9/1920, Ac 1971/Ah1.3.-1.4., Cullen Library:225).

In unanimously agreeing to this proposal, the PCSA appointed members to attend a Conference at Blythswood Institution on twentieth October 1920. Also present were representatives from the Mission Synod of Kaffraria, the Presbyteries of Kaffraria, Mankazana and Natal, and the Mission Council of Natal. This Conference was called to resolve the anomalous situation which had arisen over the existence of the two separate branches of the UFCoS mission and the deputies urged accordingly. They had already come to the conclusion that the relationship with the PCSA could be dealt with at a later stage because it was no

longer considered a vital part of the issue of having one mission entity to deal with.

In their Report of 21st December 1920 to the FMC (15/2/1921, minute 5386, referring to minute 5298, Appendix 1:4)) they stated that their views were 'evidently in parts not quite welcome to all the missionaries'. They reported that there were 15,000 members in the mission church and that the period of expansion was over. Surely, this must mean geographical expansion and not numerical though even that might have been contested! The deputies felt that the areas evangelised could have seen greater success had they been 'more homogeneous and more limited in extent'. Too much development had been carried out at the whim of individual missionaries without sufficient control and the formation of a strategy (Appendix 1:3).

They considered that the Mission Council had failed in this regard because of 'lack of union in the Mission between the missionaries formerly belonging to the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church'. In their view the situation had improved, but they also believed that 'control in the future must be with the Native Church speaking through its Ecclesiastical Courts and not with the Mission Council'. It was their opinion that this was the result of the development of competence in the black ministry and eldership (1:4).

They highlighted the problem - the Mission Council which they had hoped would be the unifying bond of their South African missions 'proved unequal to the task, torn as it was, by controversies over the question of our union'. They also commented on the 'highly unsatisfactory state of affairs in Natal where overlapping was much in evidence'. Union with the PCSA had not achieved significant benefits eg. blacks were not happy with the discussion of colonial church business being forced on them. The Deputies reported that the General Assembly of the PCSA was:

'evidently mainly concerned with the work of the colonial congregations.... not a suitable supreme court for the Kafir congregations, nor a useful Assembly for the Kafir ministers, who would be much

more at home in a united synod of their own' (Report of Deputies, 21/12/1920, PR 3983, Cory Library:8).

There was also the memory of failed negotiations in the recent past. On the other hand, separation from the Synod of Kafraria had produced great problems.

The Conference resulted in a 'new and bolder' proposal to unite the Synod of Kafraria and the Presbytery of Kaffraria which would take over much of the work previously carried out by the Mission Council. The place of missionaries was an issue and it was felt that the FMC should express its mind on the appointment of missionaries with the Mission Council and new appointments should be made jointly between the Synod and the Mission Council, with the ultimate aim of reducing the number of missionaries in parish appointments. However, the Deputies recommended that missionaries be full members of the enlarged Synod. The new body should be responsible for evangelism and the withdrawal of missionaries should begin. The strength of anti-white feeling was acknowledged along with the lack of unity among missionaries which was impeding the growth of the Mission. The Deputies considered their proposal to be proactive: 'to meet the desire for more independence by such a scheme as we suggest seems to us to be true Christian statesmanship' (Report of Deputies, 21/12/1920, PR3983, appendix 1:5, Cory Library). Their aim was 'to give increasing responsibility to the Synod with a view to forming, as early as possible, an independent, self-supporting Church' and 'the Mission Council should entrust as much business to it contenting itself with confirming arrangements made by it unless they seem so detrimental as to compel interference', ie. the missionaries' modus operandi! The problem was that the Mission Council was largely ineffective as an administrative unit. Here, an elevated position and role for the Synod is envisaged, including the establishment of central funds, training evangelists, the supply of students and the production of a simplified creed. For the first time, account was taken of the suspicion black members had for the Synod due to not

being represented on it. This was an early example of positive discrimination.

The same policy was to be applied in Natal which was not, at this juncture, strong enough to replace the Mission. The Presbytery was not well developed and was too small to sustain withdrawal. It was acknowledged that such withdrawal would simply benefit the Ethiopian church.

It is interesting to note that in their report, the Deputies seemed to have little knowledge or understanding of the implications of the Mzimba Secession on their arrival in South Africa:

'It is disappointing to hear that a large proportion of the [Lovedale] congregation seceded under Mzimba about twenty years ago... which should never have occurred. The tendency to divide over comparatively small matters has been the curse of our missions in South Africa' (Report of Deputies, PR3983:2, Cory Library).

This assertion displays little knowledge or understanding of the situation in which the Mzimba Secession happened or of its consequences either ecclesiastically or politically [1]. By the time of writing their recommendations, they had become much more aware of the situation arguing that too rapid withdrawal of the mission in Natal would lead to much of the work done disappearing and 'the bulk of our converts would pass into the Ethiopian Church, with its strong anti-white feeling' (Report of Deputies, PR3983:Appendix 1,12:9, Cory Library).

The missionaries divided over the deputies' proposals concerning the formation of an independent black church. Revs J Lundie, W Stirling and the Aulds believed the establishment

1. The same lack of understanding is revealed later in the same report when the Deputies commented on the riot at Lovedale in 1920. They were unable to understand the connection between the 'strength of racial antagonism..., traces of which were evident to them even within the Christian Church' and what they described as 'largely a domestic matter.... no doubt inspired by the new political feelings so prominent in the native press' to which they were susceptible' (Appendix 1, Riot 1:10).

of a black church reflected a racial attitude (rough draft of Blythwood Conference, file 'Commission on Union', Lennox correspondence in Burchell 1977:54). Rev J Auld was subsequently nominated and declined the office of Moderator of the General Assembly of the BPCSA for this reason. Rev TB Soga favoured a black church for black people. Shepherd ('A Difference in Methods' in Wilson & Perrot 1971:676-7) claimed:

'It became manifest in the conference that union was desired by the whole Synod and by the Native ministers and elders of the Presbytery of Kaffraria, forming a large majority of that body, but that some of the older members of the Presbytery were unwilling to abandon an ideal to which they had clung during many years, with the approval of the Home Church'.

The views of the majority prevailed and a Commission on Union was established with Rev James Henderson as Chairperson and Rev John Lennox as Senior Clerk. In working towards the union of the two strands of the mission, the Commission considered:

- the name of the proposed new church - the United Presbyterian Church of South Africa;
- membership of the superior courts, especially the place of missionaries;
- the relationship between the new church and the PCSA which was to be one of federation with each being represented on the General Assembly of the other by six members;
- the date of the union, which was set as 4th July 1923;
- Mission Councils should cease to exist or should have black representation on them.

An important issue was the relationship of the Scottish missionaries and black ministers 'who have not been a spiritual force in the Church nor excelled in any way in administrative work' (Henderson to Ashcroft, 28/8/1922, Henderson correspondence, Cory Library) yet wanted unrestricted freedom. WM Eiselen (in Schapera [ed.] 1934:73 in Sundkler 1961:36) argued that 'contact with a population of White Christians has raised the quality and lowered the quality of Bantu Christians'. It was agreed that missionaries would have an equal place in the black church 'for the present', but that

their contribution would decrease in time and that their envisaged role will become purely advisory' until 'they will no longer be required' (Lennox to Oldham, 11/12/1922, 'Personal 1919-1922, Lennox Correspondence in Burchell 1977:55). In a multi-racial church there would be no guarantee that blacks would enjoy equal rights and status in reality, whereas in a black church none would be specifically excluded, and where the question of control would be uppermost, especially in relation to the role of missionaries. While there was parity between Scottish missionaries and ministers in Scotland this was not the case with black ministers.

Hinchliffe (1974:31) has suggested that 'there is a direct connection between this insistence on standards and the decision to create an independent Bantu Presbyterian Church in this century'. This was a significant factor but only one amongst others. If the problem was that of differentials in levels of training and attainment, these would also exist in the PCSA for in neither solution to the situation was there parity, eg. in stipends. Ordination would lead to parity in the Mission, ie. black ministers would, in theory at least, be eligible to be called to charges in Scotland. But,

'it was the tradition that black missionaries should not have all the rights and privileges of their white colleagues. Black clergymen would remain, for the whole of their working lives, subordinate to the white ones who might sometimes be quite young and inexperienced. Education might be regarded as the source of long term solutions. In the short term it seemed only to increase the tensions and frustrations'.

One can imagine how secessions to form AICs occurred for such approaches 'provided so little scope for the emergence of a really indigenous Christianity' (:36,37).

This problem was caused and exacerbated by the social and political circumstances of the country: 'granting full autonomy to a Native Church was something completely new in South African society' (van der Spuy 1971:41). All of this occurred in a situation of unease where the development of the Scottish

mission in the period 1898-1923 could be destabilised. FMC policy had aggravated this situation though it did respond to the developing situation despite its intended policy of promoting union with the PCSA stated in 1901, and again in 1909, and in spite of the reaction of black ministers in 1908 against the idea of a multi-racial church (Burchell 1977:55).

Listening to the views of black ministers and elders was a priority of the 1920 deputation for the blacks concerned were educated people of some standing in the community and they had remained faithful to the Mission during, and in the aftermath of, the Mzimba Secession. It might be considered whether the formation of a black church was a form of appeasement or of thanks for faithful service?

In 1921, the FMC supported its Deputies and their resolutions and reversed its previous policy of forming a multi-racial church. The Deputies' opinions originated in the realisation that the two mission organisations had to be united to present a united front for mission and bring about unity amongst missionaries themselves. The Deputies argued, in line with Stewart's view, that the issue was a practical one to be resolved in the field and not a theoretical one to be dealt with in Scotland. Union with the PCSA produced no substantial benefits and separation from the Synod of Kafraria caused problems in a homogeneous area where two organisations were operating. There was a need for 'An authoritative supreme court of their own... in which the African ministers would have a real voice' (BPCSA Souvenir Programme, 1971). A united church is necessary for evangelisation of the entire area with suitable regional divisions and one practice and procedure. It was agreed that the General Assembly of the UFCoS and of the PCSA were not appropriate bodies for blacks to relate to easily.

The Deputies' resolutions included a note of the growth and development of the black church with a well trained ministry and eldership 'anxious' to undertake evangelism which, until this time, had been under the control of the Mission Council,

and the location of missionaries which was still to be done by Mission Council. One might wonder if there is a contradiction here between the agent and the appointee in terms of who would be likely to be appointed if there were to be both a suitable black and a white missionary available for appointment. They further advocated a reduction of missionary powers as the natural result of the above, of only appointing new missionaries in exceptional circumstances, and also reducing numbers of missionaries as suitable blacks become available (Sikutshwa 1946:60). This represented a novel move towards the formation of a 'Native' church and a greater sharing of responsibility with blacks (cf. FMC, 15/2/1921, Minute 5386, 'South Africa - Report of Deputies').

A special meeting of the Mission Council was called on 30th March 1921 to consider a response to the proposal of devolution of power to blacks (cf. FMC, 23/3/1921, Minute 5518). It aimed to challenge this process which would culminate in blacks assuming complete power of their own church affairs, despite reservations concerning the timing (Rev D Frazer to Henderson, 12/6/1922, unclassified Henderson correspondence in Burchell 1977:56). The view of missionaries was that, resulting from the failure to promote the union of the missions with the PCSA, the FMC adopted a reactive, rather than a proactive, role. The work of the Deputies, according to some missionaries, enabled the FMC to begin financial retrenchment (reply to FMC minute of 18/2/1921 in documents of BPCSA, Umtata in Burchell 1977:56).

However, certain things had to be taken on board. The Mzimba Secession had seriously disrupted the mission and had the potential for further destabilisation. The work of an independent Synod of Kafraria and discussions which had already taken place in 1910, prefigured an independent church. Blacks themselves grew to prefer the option of a black church.

6.2. Consummation of Union

6.2.1. The First General Assembly of the BPCSA

The convocation of Presbyterian missions met at Lovedale on the evening of 4th July 1923 with Rev PL Hunter in the Chair. After Rev J Lennox gave a brief historical survey of the events leading to union, the uniting missions tabled reports. The Synod of Kafraria resolved to convey to the new church all of its properties; the Presbytery of Kaffraria tabled the disjunction certificates of all in the Presbytery with the exception of Rev J Lundie of Malan, along with the disjunction certificates in favour of the Presbytery from the PCSA. The Presbytery of Mankazana tabled its disjunction. And it was reported that the Mission Council of Natal had not been able to meet and would report subsequently. The membership of the new body amounted to 25,000 souls.

Rev W Stuart of Burnshill was then unanimously elected Moderator of the General Assembly [2] and formally constituted the gathering and gave his Moderatorial Address. He commented that the coming together of the UP and FC missions with the Mission Council of Natal was 'a forward step in the line of natural development' and a result of 'earnest and prayerful deliberation, full and careful consideration of the many interests involved and persons specially concerned'. The highest office was open to blacks 'as it ought to be', so the new church retained the concepts of equality and parity. 'The Church of Christ is for any and everyone... irrespective of nationality, colour or tongue' (Rev W Stuart, Moderatorial Address at 1st General Assembly, BPCSA, General Assembly Minutes:39), though van der Spuy (1971:45) believes that this remark would have been more appropriate in the context of a united church. Many would disagree with this assessment (see below). Nonetheless the BPCSA 'was placed in a paradoxical

I. Sundkler (1961:32) is wrong in his claim that Rev Y Mbali was the Moderator of the first General Assembly of the BPCSA. He was the first black Moderator in 1925.

situation for while it claimed universality and colour-blindness, its very name, composition and future relationships proclaimed something different'. This was a rather negative view for it was open to all as many missionaries and a few non-missionary church workers discovered. Often it was the missionaries who proved the truth of the statement for having served their working years in the BPCSA, many retired into the service of the PCSA! [3].

Rev J Lennox was appointed Senior Clerk and Rev M Sililo of New Scotland, Natal, Junior Clerk. Thereafter, a number of representatives of other churches brought greetings to the General Assembly as did a number of tribal chiefs 'to congratulate the Presbyterian Missions on the step they had taken and to stimulate the newly formed Church to greater and nobler efforts for the spiritual uplift of the African races' (Sikutshwa 1946:12). The FMC conveyed the Extract Minute recording its satisfaction with the completion of negotiations for union.

In loyal addresses to the King and the Prime Minister there are references to the current situation in the country: 'unrest and bitterness so widely manifest in the social and political life of the world' and to moves being made 'to improve the relations between the different races in the land' that demonstrate the context in which the birth of the BPCSA has occurred and the church's social and political concern (BPCSA General Assembly, 1923, Minute 26:46).

6.2.2. The Name of the Church

In dealing with the name of the new church, Sikutshwa is extremely circumspect. Prior to the formation of the Church, the agreed name was 'The United Presbyterian Church of South Africa'. Sikutshwa does not even mention this. He refers to

3. cf. 'Swiss missionaries have upon retirement, not only left the EPCSA/SMSA to join local white churches (Maluleke 1995a:19).

churches being named after their founders, ie. the retention of the designation 'Presbyterian' or 'Rabe'. However, he suggests that the name of the church has to be seen in the light of attempts at a solution of the 'Native Problem' and avoidance of 'political tactics' (Sikutshwa 1946:13). Perhaps he comes nearest to the truth when he declared the importance of avoiding a name which is too similar to that of another church ie. the PCSA. Here there possibly could be confusion. In fact, the PCSA objected to the proposed name of 'United' church. Its General Assembly had 'agreed to facilitate a Native Church in federal relationship with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa and that the name of the proposed new body failed to make this clear and further would lead to confusion in the public mind' (PCSA Blue Book, 18th September 1922:34). 'Public mind', of course, would have meant white mind! (Ac 1971/Ah1.3., Cullen Library).

The final choice of name was 'The Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa', proposed by the Commission on Union and adopted by a large majority over six votes cast for 'The United Presbyterian Church of South Africa'. So it was clearly designated a black church - a good thing to make it clear that it was African, but a bad thing because of the racial connotation.

6.2.3. The Role of Missionaries

The place and function of missionaries had to be speedily resolved because, at the time of union, there were still many serving in South Africa and keen to continue doing so. It was agreed that the following should have seats in the higher courts of the Church:-

- ordained ministers in pastoral charges;
- ordained missionaries appointed by the General Assembly 'with the view of giving all necessary advice and assistance, but they shall leave the conduct of business as far as practicable to the native members (Plan of Union of the UFCoS, section on Administration of Missions, para, 6; minute 41,2(a) of General

Assembly, BPCSA, 1923 in Sikutshwa 1946:14). This area was problematic because no checks and balances were built in to limit the missionaries' exercise of power. It was going to be as difficult for them to accept a reduced role as it would be for black ministers to assert themselves. This was especially true when there had to be a debate about the status of Native assistants in courts of the Church before it was resolved to admit them to higher than associate status;

- theological tutors;
- representative elders from each congregation or mission.

6.2.4. The Pastoral Care of the Church

In the first instance, seven presbyteries were formed for the care and supervision of the work of the Church - Kaffraria, Mankazana, Transkei, Griqualand East, Umtata, Natal and Zoutspansberg. Initially it had been planned to unite the Presbyteries of Kaffraria and Mankazana, but this was considered premature at the time, though they were united later.

The business of the Church was dealt with by seventeen Committees - Life and Work, Finance, Board of Trustees, Welfare of Youth, Education, Training of Theological Students, Evangelists, Temperance, Statistics, Publications, Church Extension, Creed and Formulae, Presbyterian Hostel Fund, Preparation of Loyal Addresses, Relations with the Mission Council of Kaffraria, Representatives to the General Assembly of the PCSA and Committee for Work amongst Lepers at Emjanyana. This demonstrates a high level of organisation and extensive interests both in church and community. The new Church adopted the 'Practice and Procedure' of the UFCoS.

With regard to pastoral charges, it was felt that mission stations should be upgraded to full status as pastoral charges when they 'reached a stage of maturity to manage satisfactorily their financial responsibilities' (BPCSA General Assembly 1923, minute 53:31). Black ministers were to be paid by their

congregations. The question arose concerning non-payment due to financial stringency. If this occurred, supplements would be paid from Assembly funds. This posed a potential problem because the stipends of missionaries were secured and poorer congregations were put in the position of becoming beggars.

One matter which remained unclear was the relationship of the General Assembly to the Mission Council of Kaffraria. This was another potential problem area and a joint commission was appointed to consider the matter.

6.3. Assessment of the Decision to Form a Black Church

From its inception, the BPCSA was viewed in different ways. Some considered its formation too spontaneous and without sufficient groundwork and preparation. This can hardly be true when Burchell (1979:144-145) suggests that one initiative in favour of forming a new church was the result of the desire to reward the loyalty of black ministers and members in the face of antagonism from Mzimba's followers in addition to the fear of further secessions. Yet, if this is true, then the initiative took twenty five years to come to fruition!

Others considered it an expression of black consciousness that would achieve harmony (Rev JW Househam, BPCSA General Assembly, 1923-1938, minute 185); yet others considered it another secessionist church (Chief Native Commissioner of Natal to Lennox, 12/6/1923 and reply, file 'General Assembly', Lennox correspondence, UFH). This would have been the first secessionist church which was formed as the result of lengthy negotiations and the full assent of the sending church! Yet, the BPCSA was the only African church to have a voice in the 1923 Native Affairs Commission, while 'the Commission showed that in church matters, the South African government considered the voice of the missionaries more important than the voice of the indigenous church' (Millard 1995:96-98). So it was not an AIC in the usual sense of the term. Then the BPCSA was ignored

in the work of the 1925 Native Affairs Commission on AICs (ibid.).

Shepherd (1971:89) concluded that it was 'the natural development of the hundred years of South African missionary work carried on by agents of the Churches in Scotland' though this opinion was not shared by all as we have seen above.

Burchell (1977:57) claims that the establishment of the BPCSA was a compromise which allowed for the retention of substantial links with the Home Church and for the development of closer links with the PCSA. It also allowed for the Home Church to continue to exercise authority through powers committed to the Mission Council of Kaffraria. Union with the PCSA would have placed severe financial constraints on the mission part of any union and may have led to withdrawal of support from Scotland on the one hand and further disruption in the form of secession on the other. The possibility of further union was never rejected.

Brock (1974:60), in an attempt to evaluate the progress of the BPCSA, comments that 'ecclesiastical separate development in the political circumstances of South Africa since 1920 have not given much scope to the Bantu Presbyterian Church and it has not proved itself a particularly inspiring example to follow! One might wonder by which standards she is making this assertion? It is important to raise the question of 'separate development' again because at no time were whites ever debarred from membership of this church. However, those who wished to be a part of this experiment had to be aware that it was a black church they were associating with and not a body which provided an opportunity to exercise control over black people. Further, from its earliest times, the BPCSA has had a so-called coloured constituency. It might also be said that if the history of the BPCSA has not provided an 'inspiring' example to follow, then this must be due, in part at least, to the fact that it continued to be dominated for many years by the sending church through its Mission Councils and missionaries.

The BPCSA has provided one 'workable answer to mission problems and tensions' (Burchell 1977:57) which provided 'an independent African church in South Africa, controlling its own affairs and becoming ultimately free of white control and having, along with autonomous government, a federal connection with the Home Church' (Sikutshwa 1946:6). This is a fair comment although, at the time, the church was not free of white control either in terms of finance or personnel while the Mission Council continued in existence. But, it might also be considered a belated development in the light of the inability of the FMC to discover and come to terms with the total South African context in which the moves for the establishment of a Black church originated. It was a reactive development which had its roots, at least in part, in the growth of the AIC movement whose origins were clearly traceable to the wider South African situation of the time. However, the Church of Scotland was prepared to accept the consequences of the mission policy professed by them and other Protestant missions in making the first experiment of an autonomous and segregated black church.

In the face of all this, the young church faced a number of problems including the need to secure its financial arrangements, the challenge of the political climate, its development within its own peculiar cultural milieu, the formation of a distinctive liturgy, musical tradition and theological expression, its internal responsibilities, the need to establish clear control of the appointment of overseas personnel and problems in its relationships with other reformed and particularly presbyterian bodies, especially the PCSA and PCA. This was a challenge which it had to respond to in the years following its birth.

Burchell (1977:60) is correct to a large degree in his assessment that 'the missionaries claiming superior understanding of the South African situation, had contrived to deflect the wider purpose of the Home Church and had foiled their efforts to introduce a policy which claimed to ignore racial difficulties'. However, it was the realisation in Scotland that there was a difficult situation which required to

be tidied up that led to the decision concerning the Deputies' visit to South Africa in 1920 which was the ultimate catalyst which brought the new church to birth, which church post-1923 remained 'under the guidance of the white church [UFCoS]. Independence could, therefore, only be obtained by establishing an independent church' (Millard 1995:293).

CHAPTER SEVEN SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter attempts to summarise the topic and draw conclusions about Scottish Presbyterian Church mission policy during the period, 1898-1923.

7.1. Summary

This dissertation has traced the course of Scottish Presbyterian Church mission policy in South Africa during the period 1898-1923. In this pursuit, account has been taken of recent developments in historiography, the origins of mission in South Africa traced back to the sixteenth century Scottish Reformation, the wider South African context in its various dimensions, the origins growth and development of the African Initiated Church movement, in which the Mzimba Secession was a significant event both within the total South African context and the Scottish Mission as well as the development of mission policy itself which culminated in the formation of the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa in 1923.

Chapter One sought to uncover the aims and objectives of this period in the development of mission policy as a particular aspect of mission history which occurred in a panoramic South African context as part of the growth of all creation towards its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God in which, throughout human history, humanity has been called and invited and challenged to participate, so the distinction between subjects and objects of mission must necessarily fall away since mission is truly participatory and the ministry of all is recognised. In the South African situation, black people did not simply respond by accepting what the mission offered wholesale, but adapted it and challenged it where appropriate.

The aim of modern historiography is to produce a more critical and comprehensive approach to events and their significance by emphasising the role and contribution of the hitherto 'silent'

participants, in this case black South Africans. This laudable aim, however, is often subverted as the result of a dearth of sources. Yet, because this study encompasses an aspect of missiology it draws insights from other related disciplines to render it more inclusive of all dimensions of the period focussed upon. The issue of ideological commitment is considered for all the participants were committed to a clear vision of the future and how it might be achieved. For our purpose, a shift in ideological perspective has been necessary to elevate the role of blacks in this process.

Chapter Two traced the history of the Scottish Presbyterian missionary enterprise from its latent beginnings in the sixteenth century and its vicissitudes until the beginning of the nineteenth century when the impact of the 'voluntary' societies began to be felt as they stimulated the churches to take action. They motivated the churches to take up the cause of world mission officially in 1824. The 'Disruption' of 1843 was a watershed in Scottish Presbyterian Church mission history and was a source of stimulation and of the problems which beset mission policy during the period of this study. While missionary activities are recorded in great detail, not so the significant contribution of black people many of whom received their education and training at FCoS institutions and were at the forefront of interaction with their South African context.

Chapter Three examined the South African context in its various dimensions. Theologically, missionaries emerge as a group severely constrained by their western value systems shaped by the Enlightenment which posed a great threat to indigenous society and culture, especially in its religious expressions. In ecumenical terms, the transplanting of denominational structures hindered concerted evangelistic action and the emergence of indigenous Christianity. In the sphere of society and culture, lack of understanding and interest on the part of missionaries led to expressions of superiority and the consequent systematic attempt to destroy local culture rather than consider accomodating it appropriately. Education played

an important role in this process. The relationship of missionaries to the political dimension of the South African context was both direct and indirect. This was a time of significant events in South African political history which displayed the growth of a spirit of resistance and protest arising out of disappointment within a situation of conquest and colonialism which increasingly was expressed in politically racist acts and had serious consequences for blacks, eg. the South African War and the formation of the Union of South Africa, both of which led to a consideration of the 'Native Question' which was dealt with by the South African Native Affairs Commission to the detriment of blacks, some of whom responded by forming the South African Native National Congress. Others followed other channels of protest. The land and labour issues had already emerged in our examination of the political dimension but they were politico-economic matters at heart as can be seen from the political and economic implications of the 1913 Native Land Act. The economic plight of blacks certainly worsened during the period under consideration and led to numerous protests, some of which had clear religious overtones as the distinction between the secular and sacred realms became blurred in the same way as missionaries' involvement in political as well as ecclesiastical affairs did.

We saw in Chapter Four how the Mzimba Secession occurred in the context of the completed conquest of South African blacks, encroaching colonialism and the beginning of a period of protest and resistance coupled with a developing African nationalism. African Initiated Churches, especially for our purposes in their expression in Ethiopianism, were an ecclesiastical response from within the situation that could not be easily expressed in the secular sphere. It was a contextual form of self-expression which incorporated cultural and traditional religious values that missionaries denigrated which gave opportunities for development of lay people, including women. Individual secessions resulted from a rejection of white domination and discipline in church life, and were a result of the political climate of the period.

Mzimba's movement went far beyond missionary expectations. Missionaries were quite unable to see the wider implications of their actions and policies or their consequences in either the secular or ecclesiastical domain. To black people they appeared to be operating with different standards for themselves. In a direct sense, the Mzimba Secession did little to alter policy or make missionaries look at themselves, their motivation and methods of operating. However, the Secession offered an opportunity to both sides in the conflict to rethink their positions and act accordingly for the benefit of those they sought to serve as well as for the sake of the Kingdom.

Mission policy was examined in some detail in Chapter Five. The role of Mission Councils was problematic insofar as they were meant to be bodies which would facilitate the growth of the Mission towards the formation of an independent church. They were self-perpetuating exclusive clubs which prevented blacks, women and certain members of the male laity who were white having a voice in the formulation of policy, and in being prepared to take over the organisation and administration of their church. This can be seen in their very gradual approach to the training and appointment of black ministers. They operated more like mission societies funded from overseas than an authentic part of a growing church. UFCoS Mission Councils were even independent of one another.

Following the union which produced the UFCoS in 1900, the powers of Presbyteries were reduced as Mission Councils were reintroduced. This was a potential problem area as one body was dominated by whites and the other by blacks. Beyond the area of personnel, Mission Councils had considerable authority in dealing with property and finance - another potential minefield for racial misunderstanding.

Despite the union of the FCoS and the UPCoS in 1900, an unsatisfactory situation ensued with the continued separation of the missions of the two churches. Various solutions emerged. It was not considered feasible to maintain this separation on a long term basis though many missionaries seemed

content to leave matters as they were vis-a-vis the continuation of their power through the authority of the Mission Councils, having realised union with the PCSA was not a viable option. Policy makers in Scotland favoured the option of a multi-racial church, ie. the PCSA formed in 1897. This was considered to be the ideal solution but it was an unhelpful proposal which took no account of the racial situation as it was developing. It was feared that in the aftermath of the Mzimba Secession, pursuance of this policy option would lead to further disruption of the Mission. Moves in this direction led to strife within the Mission as missionaries adopted different stances, although blacks were completely in favour of remaining outside the PCSA union as the result of fear concerning the severance of links with the UFCoS. Coercion was likely to lead to further secessions and this at a time when Mzimba was still active and effective in drawing members away from the Mission. FMC policy would lead to the same end as relations with the PCSA were problematic.

There was little real desire for rapprochement with the Mzimba movement. Rather, the solution of practical problems in the field were a priority and so the only other option became a viable alternative to the growing effects of the Mzimba Secession - the formation of an independent black church.

But before this option became a reality, tense relations between the FMC of the UFCoS and the Synod of Kafraria ensued as the case was made for retaining strong links with the sending church in Scotland and independence from white control. In this black ministers and elders were vocal in their opposition to union with the PCSA, their views were strengthened by the political situation and the practicalities of union in the situation. It was considered unlikely that blacks would be given scope for development in a union of the nature of the PCSA.

Chapter Six demonstrated the culmination of the development of Scottish Presbyterian Church mission policy in the formation of the missions into the BPCSA in 1923. Its development was long

in coming to fruition but, between 1901 and 1909, when the FMC reaffirmed its commitment to union with the PCSA, and in 1923, an inexorable process had begun. These decisions, coming relatively soon after the Mzimba Secession of 1898, show that either the full impact of the Secession had not yet begun to be experienced and understood in Scotland, though by 1909 it had had its worst short term effects, and/or that there was little comprehension of the sensitivity of the situation in which mission policy had begun to evolve. Otherwise, it is unlikely that it would have taken until 1923 to initiate a new policy. It can be claimed, to a degree, that the Secession was the result of FMC policy because so little scope for development had been given to blacks.

As has been seen, the Secession had little direct effect on policy but it did have several indirect effects. Among missionaries and blacks in the Mission there was a fear of the effects of ongoing secessions. The Secession had seriously disrupted the work and morale of the Mission. Many blacks were criticised for the stance they adopted against the Secession, eg. Rev E Makiwane of Macfarlane. The Secession and various secular forms of protest and resistance showed blacks that they could take control of their own destiny in a situation of white domination and achieve results as in the 1908 Memorandum of black ministers and elders in the Synod of Kafraria. In time, there arose a desire to reward faithful blacks for remaining in the Mission by establishing an independent church.

The UFCoS decision to send Deputies to South Africa to investigate the situation and make recommendations was a forward step arising out of the awareness that the situation could only be resolved in South Africa. This was the first direct involvement blacks had with the UFCoS and it was significant in that the Deputies were keen to listen to the views of blacks themselves. They became critical of some aspects of the mission work carried out to date, eg. unsystematic mission outreach, the failure of Mission Councils to achieve FMC policy with regard to union with the PCSA in addition to the failure of the PCSA to achieve what had been

expected of it, divisions among missionaries, and became realistic about the degree of anti-white feeling which existed as the result of the developing understanding of the impact and consequences of the Mzimba Secession, alongside racism against blacks. The Deputies adopted a pro-active stance in proposing the transfer of Mission Council powers to the Synod of Kafraria with a view to the formation of an independent black church, and towards this end, a Commission on Union was set up as this option became the only viable long-term alternative. Missionaries, who in the past had been able to take advantage of the lack of awareness of the detailed situation in South Africa on the part of the FMC and were perhaps responsible for keeping them in the dark about all the possibilities in the context, took up a reactive position in the Mission Council accusing the FMC of changing policy as a means of beginning financial retrenchment - an unfair and unwarranted claim because it did not happen.

To be fair to the missionaries they had long held to a traditional view of mission and their role in it, were fearful of change and of the possibility of the failure of the work built up over long periods of arduous labour as a result of the formation of a new church. It is a pity that only a few saw this development as a great opportunity to express their faith in the result of those same labours!

In 1921, the FMC altered its long held policy concerning union with the PCSA. This move to grant autonomy to the Mission was a courageous step which was taken after full and due consideration in a volatile political situation. Blacks were ready and enthusiastic about the recognition of their progress to date and the faith placed in them to realise their potential for forming a three-self church. And so, on the 4th July 1923, the BPCSA was constituted an independent church which maintained links with the UFCoS and had the possibility of developing relations with the PCSA.

Numerous views exist concerning the decision to establish an independent black church from the opinion that it was a racist

act to that which considered it a bold act of faith in the ability and potential of blacks to govern their own ecclesiastical affairs. It certainly was the result of an emerging black consciousness in the sense of a developing awareness and desire amongst blacks in their ability to take control of their own affairs (cf. the rise of the AIC movement and especially the Mzimba secession). But it was not ssecessionist because it did not disrupt the mission; rather it was the fulfillment of the early stated intention¹ of the Scottish Mission in South Africa (cf. Shepherd 1971:89). It might be claimed that the process took too long and was a late response arising out of practical necessity, considering that the mission was established in 1824 and the Mzimba Secession occurred in 1898.

Nor was it a compromise (Burchell 1977:57) for it was a clear alternative to union with a white dominated PCSA. It was workable and independent to a degree but the continued existence of Mission Councils limited both its independence and the freedom of blacks to act without restraint and pursue their own policies and make their own mistakes and successes.

7.2. Conclusion

Scottish Presbyterian Church mission policy in South Africa, from its inception, prefigured the formation of an independent church. As time progressed during the nineteenth century, that aim seemed to recede as generations of missionaries faithfully carried out their mission in the way they considered best for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among black South Africans. However, in the process, they brought all their western values and presuppositions about the superiority of Christian culture to bear on what they considered to be a primitive context. Yet, as their work both in evangelism and education resulted in the emergence of a group of educated black people, there was a reluctance to entrust and share responsibility to and with them. Their power in the non-indigenous Mission Councils which

were imposed without consultation with blacks enabled their role, as well as that of Councils, to be self-perpetuating. In this way the role of the courts of the church were subverted and the views of blacks were suppressed until they took courage in a time of protest and resistance to express their views cogently, and request that their views be taken seriously and acted upon that they might play their full role in the journey towards the Kingdom of God.

If we consider the work of Mission Councils in a little more detail, we note that they were essentially conservative bodies which could easily obstruct progressive ideas. Because they were relatively autonomous they were not compelled to consult with those who would be affected by the consequences of decisions they took. Their comprehensive control of all matters related to missionaries enabled them to avoid being responsible to the Presbyteries in whose bounds they served. One of their purposes was to develop fellowship amongst missionaries and this made them even more exclusive.

In terms of their composition they were even more exclusive - white, male and, for the most part, ordained. Proposals for change came late in our period of study. Ultimately, the composition of Mission Councils left much to be desired.

It is important to consider whether or not Mission Councils were necessary in the first place. Early in their history they fell into disuse and were reintroduced with the specific purpose of facilitating the development of an independent black church in addition to dealing with conditions of service relating to missionaries. It is doubtful if the Mission Councils performed any better than Presbyteries had done in this regard vis-a-vis the decision to establish them, to make up for any deficit in Presbytery supervision. The Deputies' report in 1920 highlighted the failure of Mission Councils insofar as they had created a 'them' and 'us' mentality between black and white ministers and this was evidently supported by FMC policy. The BPCSA which grew out of the Scottish Mission actually became subordinate to the Mission Council after 1923

as the result of its control of finance and missionary personnel. Its independence was restricted, therefore, by the control exercised by the UFCoS through the Mission Councils.

Because Mission Councils were exclusive they were able to exist without taking any great account of the views of blacks which were possibly not expressed in Presbytery as the result of 'intimidation' by missionaries who 'knew better' but understood less. The position was worse in the case of women who were not represented in any courts of the church. Little had been learned from the active role women performed, even in leadership positions, in the Scottish 'voluntary' societies or in the growing uManyano movement. The lay organisations in the church offered scope for development and leadership which found no easy or official recognition in the church.

We would reject Brock's (1974:60) criticism concerning the BPCSA being an example of ecclesiastical 'Separate development' and not an 'inspiring' example at that, on the grounds that this was the first independent black church of its kind to be formed and would ask if its actual development has been any less distinguished than many churches with a longer history and more varied experience? Its progress should be judged by the criterion of faithfulness to the mission of furthering the Kingdom of God for it is called to be faithful to the values of the Kingdom rather than successful by the standards of this world. Despite the lack of sources from the black community, the fact that the Mission grew prior to 1923 and the Church has survived ever since its formation bears witness to the many faithful blacks who carried the Gospel enthusiastically throughout their wider community.

In the final analysis, despite reservations about the ability of blacks to handle their own church affairs, the birth of the BPCSA was a triumph of realism in the South African context.

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NOTE:- I was unable to verify a number of the references in Burchell (1977) due to the lack of a cataloguing system in the Howard Pim Library at the University of Fort Hare. Several of the references could not be traced in the papers at the Cory Library, Rhodes University. None of the references to documents in the RPCSA Offices in Umtata could be traced. The material there has been neither filed nor catalogued and a number of items have disappeared without trace since the references found in Burchell' work (1977).

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