

**THE SWISS MISSIONARIES' EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVOUR
AS A MEANS FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA (1873-1975)**

by

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I declare that "The Swiss missionaries' educational endeavour as a means for social transformation in South Africa (1873 1975)" is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B M C Masumbe', is written over a horizontal dashed line.

B M C Masumbe

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SUMMARY

This research traces the developments in Europe that led to a rush for foreign missions in different parts of the world, with specific reference to South Africa. It describes the operations of the Swiss missionaries in South Africa from 1873 to 1975. This study also evaluates the motives for the evangelization of the African masses, and contradictions that existed in the relations that missionaries had with proselytes during the period under review. The sterling contributions of black evangelists in this period are demonstrated. It cannot be denied that the Swiss missionaries did a lot of good to the indigenous populace of South Africa — the importance of their services at Lemana Training Institution (1906) and Elim Hospital (1899) are indelibly inscribed in our historiography. They should also be applauded for their response to the plight of the Shangaans, who had for reasons unknown to the researcher been by-passed by other missions during the "scramble for mission fields". But the missionaries also had their shortcomings, for instance their failure to induce the state to remove capital punishment from the statute books. They may nonetheless still continue to be used by the present government of South Africa to assist in carrying the social transformation process forward.

Key terms

Social transformation; formal education; informal (home) education; traditional customs; Christian norms and values; mission stations; outstations; Christian marriages; relapses; Christians; heathens; *lobola* (bride-price); mission statutes; interdenominational conferences; conversion; rivalry; *Plakkerswet* (Squatter Act); differentiated education; social Darwinism; circumcision; initiation schools for boys (*ngoma*) and for girls (*vukhomba*); social alienation; imperialism; capitalism; subsistence economy; Third Year course; preparatory schools; Penal Reform League of South Africa.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Summary	vi
Key terms	vi
List of illustrations	xiii
 CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	 1
1.1 Introduction	
1.2 The aim and rationale of this study	
1.3 Delimitation of the field of study	
1.4 Limitations of the study	
1.5 Assessment of source material	
1.6 Methodology used in this study	
1.7 Literature review	
1.8 Explication of concepts used in this study	
1.9 Structure of the study	
Conclusion	
 CHAPTER 2: THE GENESIS OF THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA	 30
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 The first volunteers in Lesotho	
2.3 The Basotho evangelists and the Shangaans — a relationship that led to the enlightenment of the Shangaans	

- 2.4 The Swiss pioneers' problems with the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (South African Republic / Transvaal Republic)
- 2.5 The Swiss missionaries' attempts to clear the misunderstanding between them and the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek
- 2.6 The Swiss missionaries' new application for permission to work in the Zoutpansberg District
- 2.7 The annexation of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic by the British (1877)
- 2.8 Formal education and the social transformation process
- 2.9 The Swiss Mission's philosophical outlook vis-à-vis the French missionary traditions: theory and practice
- 2.10 The need for the Swiss missionaries to adapt to the demands of their newly founded mission fields
- 2.11 Summary and conclusion

CHAPTER 3: A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE SHANGAAN-TSONGA PEOPLE

87

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Early contact with Europeans along the east coast of Mozambique
- 3.3 The Tsonga people and their culture
- 3.4 Portuguese influence on the Tsonga people
- 3.5 The marauding entry of Soshangane (Manukosi) and his Zulu impis into Mozambique, and the consequences it had on the local tribes

- 3.6 The disintegration of the Gaza kingdom and the influx of Tsonga refugees into the erstwhile Transvaal Republic
- 3.7 How Joao Albasini became the chief of the Shangaan-Tsonga people
- 3.8 Settlement in the Zoutpansberg District
- 3.9 The Shangaans' economic system
- 3.10 The Shangaans' loss of economic independence
- 3.11 The shangaans' system of government
- 3.12 changes in the way of life of the Shangaans — a general perspective
- 3.13 The Shangaans' system of education during the pre-colonial era
- 3.14 Summary and conclusion

CHAPTER 4: EXPANSION OF MISSION WORK INTO AREAS WHERE THERE WAS A NEED FOR EVANGELISM

134

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The early years of the Swiss Mission in South Africa
- 4.3 Valdezia Mission Station
- 4.4 the first years of Valdezia Mission Station (1875-1878)
- 4.5 Branches of Valdezia Mission Station
- 4.6 Mhinga Mission Station (1899)
- 4.7 Elim Mission Station — the beacon and nerve centre of the Swiss Mission's social transformation process
- 4.8 Tragedy caused by deadly African diseases

- 4.9 The intransigence of Chief Njhakanjhaka
towards social transformation and the
subsequent founding of Elim Mission Station (1879)
- 4.10 The outstations dependent on Elim Mission Station
- 4.11 The extension of evangelism into Mozambique
— a minor digression to demonstrate the growth
of Elim Mission Station (1881-1926)

Chapter 5: THE ROLE OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

184

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Cultural variations and social
transformation
- 5.3 Educational aims set by the Swiss Mission
- 5.4 Educational institutions introduced by
the Swiss missionaries in their mission fields
- 5.6 Schools and educational institutions
charged with the tasks of liberating the
indigenous populace from ignorance
- 5.7 Steps to improve the educational status
of African men and women
- 5.8 The role of the Lemana Training Institution
as the mecca of tertiary education in the social transformation process
- 5.9 Formal education vis-a-vis the land question
- 5.10 Africans' opinion regarding social transformation
- 5.11 Summary and conclusion

Chapter 6: THE SWISS MISSIONARY INFLUENCE IN THE PROVISION
OF HEALTH CARE AND NURSING

249

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 The role of hospitals in the transformation
process —an attempt to rid society of
superstitious beliefs and practices through
formal education and the Scriptures
- 6.3 Medical aims and methods of the
Swiss Missionaries in Southern Africa
- 6.4 Attempts to clarify Europeans' allegations that Africans were the only persons
wallowing in superstition at the time when missionaries entered the different
parts of Africa
- 6.5 Education for the effective delivery of primary
health care in the Swiss mission fields
- 6.6 The origin of the nursing service in
the swiss mission fields
- 6.7 The training of African nurses at Elim Hospital
- 6.8 The question of medical education and the
training of blacks in South Africa — the case of connivance between the state and
the missionary hierarchy in the exploitation of the indigenous populace
- 6.9 Summary and conclusion

Chapter 7:	AN APPRAISAL OF THE SWISS MISSIONARIES'	
	EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVOUR AS A MEANS FOR SOCIAL	
	TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (1873-1975)	278
7.1	Introduction	
7.2	The socio-economic development of blacks	
7.3	The Church and the land question	
7.4	The Swiss missionary society's aim to produce apolitical citizens to minister to the needs of the Church and the State	
7.5	Evangelistic tenets versus hard core traditional values in the Swiss mission fields	
7.6	The endeavours of the Swiss missionaries to refine the new religious beliefs of Africans	
7.7	The deliberate distortion of historical facts for the sake of religious and imperialist expediency	
7.8	The role of the Swiss Mission in South Africa regarding respect for basic human rights	
7.9	Moral education and the promotion of eurocentricism by the Swiss missionaries	
7.10	The maintenance of elitism through the formation of professional associations and the holding of consultative meetings	
7.11	Concluding remarks	
	Bibliography	302
	Questionnaire	324

ILLUSTRATIONS

Following page 341

Maps

1. The Swiss Mission in South Africa
2. The Roman Mission's sphere of activity
3. The Roman Mission in the Northern Transvaal
4. South Shona Missions

Photographs

1. Joao Albasini
2. Mr EN Matjokana
3. The Reverend Jakobus A Machao and his family
4. The Reverend DC Marivate
5. Mr Henri Etienne Mahawani
6. James (Jim) Shimungana
7. Mr and Mrs Samuel Makhubela
8. King Nghunghunyana
9. King Nghunghunyana in exile
10. Chief Njhakanjhaka before his conversion
11. The Mbenyane family
12. Zebedea Mbenyane
13. Mr Abraham Mavanyisi and his son Isaac
14. Abraham Mavanyisi in his old age
15. The Hutwen church
16. The Right Reverend Abel de Meuron

17. Dr PH Jaques
18. Sunday school children listening to a sermon
19. Miss Anne Hauser
20. Dr Jean Alfred Rosset
21. Dr Eduardo Mondlane
22. The Reverend François Coillard
23. The Reverend Arthur Grandjean
24. Henri-A Junod

CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

When we look at education in South Africa, it may seem that the state always took a keen interest in the education of all citizens by providing them with proper physical resources like classrooms, as well as enough financial and efficient human resources. Unfortunately, even today that kind of near-perfect state is not yet the case in our education. But if we are to go back on a fact-seeking journey into our history, with particular interest in the development of education for blacks, we should never forget that what we witness today, owes its origins mainly to the different missionary societies — "before 1953, mission schools provided almost all of the education that was available for blacks. During the 1950s under apartheid education, most of these schools closed down. But that hasn't meant the end of the church's involvement in education" (Christie 1992:67).

Missionaries throughout the African continent saw education as an indispensable vessel for Christianizing and civilizing "natives" in the territories that were brought under their influence. The indigenous populace had to be educated so that they also could "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Cuendet 1949:1).

From 1875 the Swiss Missionary Society deployed its missionaries and evangelists to work among the Shangaan people far and wide in the erstwhile North-Eastern Transvaal where this study is mainly grounded. Even before this time, some form of civilization or Christianity had dawned upon those Shangaans who had accepted the rule of Chief Joao Albasini (see photograph 1). He had sown some seeds, as it were. But the germination of civilization in the form of the spreading of the Gospel among the South African Shangaans started with the efforts of Evangelists Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane who were left at the Klipfontein farm by the Revs Paul Berthoud and Adolphe Mabile in 1873.

Joao Albasini, a Portuguese national, only expended the Shangaans' labour and did not provide them with formal education. He made them guard his fortress, hunt elephants for his prosperous ivory trade, and develop his farm to turn it into a real pleasure garden, arguably the finest of its kind in the district. They built a beautiful house for him on a strategically chosen height from where he could see friend or foe approaching from any direction. They further modernized his estate by building a dam with canals to provide water for his farmhouse and fields. Albasini and his wife wholeheartedly supported missionary efforts from his Piesangkop residence, about five kilometres east of Elim Hospital. But his support for missionary work among his subjects was mainly based on his socio-economic and political interests, and not primarily aimed at the general welfare of his subjects (De Vaal 1982/83:12).

According to De Vaal (1953:35-39), Albasini's farm Goedewensch was the centre of ivory trade between the people of the north-eastern parts of the erstwhile Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek and the people of the Mozambican coastline. Albasini used to send his Shangaan subjects to collect merchandise from different quarters in Mozambique. The surplus was kept in his shop and sold at exorbitant prices to customers. Although Chief Joao Albasini had a school for his children, and had appointed Mr Jonker van Nispen, a Netherlander, as a teacher, he made no effort to provide education for Africans. Only his own (nine) children were prepared for the rigours of life, and by implication, to take their rightful places in the new socio-economic order. All this lends credence to the assumption that Joao Albasini, who was the Portuguese Vice-Consul in the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek and Superintendent of the native tribes in the Zoutpansberg District, was only expending their labour for self-aggrandizement. The government also benefited from his personal wealth, because he sponsored the state whenever it was in financial difficulty, such as when it was locked in battle with Makhado, king of the Venda, for the control of the Zoutpansberg District. De Vaal also refers to situations where Shangaan war-generals such as Munene Pandeka, Manungu (N'wa-Manungu) and Ximixoni (Simswane) were sometimes sent on military expeditions against enemy tribes, especially those that were at

loggerheads with the erstwhile Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek. For instance, Albasini sent an *impi* under Generals Manungu and Ximixoni to Makapanstad (Mokopane) to assist Commander-generals Marthinus Wessel Pretorius and Pieter Potgieter to avenge the massacre of Voortrekker families in transit from the Zoutpansberg District to Lydenburg between 1853 and 1854. General Potgieter was killed by the Bapedi warriors on 6 November 1854, and his body was recovered by Paul Kruger who later became President of the ZAR (De Vaal 1953:20-21).

Prior to the arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the Zoutpansberg District, the Shangaans were apparently not yet exposed to Christianity and formal education. But they were conversant with the operations of the European system of government through their experience of Chief Joao Albasini's tutelage over them. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of the Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr and the Berlin (Luthern) Mission of the Revs Carl Beuster and Erdmann Schwellnus were concentrating their efforts on the Boers and the Ba-Venda. It would appear that the DRC later expanded their mission to include blacks (Phillips 1950:6, Van der Merwe 1950:25-26, cf Machao 1922:1-2).

According to what Rev JA Machao (see photograph 3) recorded in his writings in the 1920s, the Dutch Reformed Church was mostly active in the urban areas. In Johannesburg, black Christians who belonged to this church received massive support from the Boers who represented the majority of this establishment. Such financial support as would be made available to blacks was spread over construction work, education, salaries and other necessities. Black priests were treated with great respect by Europeans who belonged to the DRC. If motorists belonging to this denomination should spot a black priest walking along the road, they would offer him a lift, and usually invite him to preach to the black labourers who worked on the adjoining farms. The influence of the Dutch Reformed Church also spread to the rural areas of Louis Trichardt, where a Mr Stefanos (Stephanus) Mukolitao was appointed as evangelist. He was responsible for the black section of the church who lived and worked on the farms around Louis Trichardt, Mapani and Sawutini beyond the

Makandu mountains (probably the Zoutpansberg or Nzhelele mountains). He was provided with a Scots-cart to traverse these vast areas. Although Rev Machao bemoaned the Church's exclusive use of Afrikaans-speaking preachers, he applauded the DRC for having taken such a gigantic step ahead of other churches towards the advancement of the indigenous populace. But such accolades came with some reservations whether the Dutch Reformed Church would be able to carry on with its proselytizing efforts for any length of time among the African population, considering its racist attitude towards non-Europeans. Rev Machao's misgivings should be read against the denominational jealousies of the times under review. The Swiss missionaries feared that the Dutch Reformed Church's popularity would lead to the erosion of the Swiss Mission's influence in the Zoutpansberg District, and they tried to prevent any possible defections from the Swiss Mission Church with negative comments against the DRC (Machao 1922:2, cf Tlou 1975:183-203).

Those who are not disposed to give due credit to blacks, regard the establishment of the first mission station of Valdezia in 1875 as the genesis of the Swiss Mission's Christianization endeavours among the Shangaan people. This is not correct. The real beginning of evangelism among the Shangaans was in 1873, when evangelists Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane were left at Klipfontein by the Revs Paul Berthoud and Adolphe Mabilie, who went back to Lesotho to report on their abortive mission to evangelize the Bapedi of Paramount Chief Sekhukhuni. In explaining why the sterling performances of the black evangelists were ignored by some missionaries, Mathebula (1989:7) said the following: "It is surprising therefore that contemporary committees of this church (Tsonga Presbyterian Church) reckon the year 1875 as the start of mission work amongst the Shangaans. This is obviously due to the fact that they do not want to give due credit to evangelists from Lesotho who were, incidentally, blacks. It should however be noted that the pioneer missionaries did not shrink from that, hence the silver jubilee of this church was celebrated on 17 August 1898 (not 1900) at Mamukeyane".

Rev Mathebula's revelations are helpful in correcting the distortions and omissions of the past. Black evangelists were just as proficient as the missionaries were in the execution of their ecclesiastical tasks. It is only fair and honest to put their efforts into the correct perspective. So intense were their proselytizing efforts, that one can safely say that without their tireless output and initiatives, the Swiss Missionary Society might not have been as successful as they were in the field of social transformation in South Africa and its surrounding areas.

1.2 THE AIM AND RATIONALE OF THIS STUDY

The aim of this study is to describe the Swiss missionaries' educational venture to promote social transformation in South Africa in the historical epoch 1873-1975. This will be endeavoured by means of data that has been collected pertaining to this era.

This study does not intend to present itself as an exhaustive and comprehensive investigation of the whole field of missionary education. Its aim is to add yet another perspective to what of late has become a very fascinating subject, namely the investigation of the role that the Swiss missionaries played in shaping society through their educational endeavours. In presenting the argument, the researcher takes into consideration contributions of other scholars who have already researched this field from their own vantage points. The dissertations of the following researchers are noted in this regard:

- (1) Mabunda, DC. 1995. A historico-educational survey and evaluation of Swiss missionary education at Lemana. MEd dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- (2) Manganyi, MJ. 1992. The genesis and development of Religious Education as a school subject in Gazankulu. MEd dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

- (3) Pienaar, CL. 1990. Mission education in the North-Eastern Transvaal: the Swiss Mission and Lemana 1906-1948. BA hons thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.
- (4) Maluleke, ST. 1995. A morula tree between two fields: the commentary of selected Tsonga writers on missionary Christianity. DTh thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- (5) N'wandula, CZ. 1987. The Swiss Mission in South Africa: a critical review of its educational practices among the Tsonga people of the North-Eastern Transvaal (1899-1954). MEd dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Research in Swiss Missionary education in South Africa is crucial and relevant in this period of social transformation, because to ignore it might mean that mistakes that were made by these clerics at that time, could be repeated. We perhaps need to regard their practices, and those of the colonial administrators, as barometers in the reconstruction of our education system. What should be done is to select the good and discard the bad, so that one may end up with an education system that will enhance the self-image and the personal worth that people experience. It will furthermore inspire consumers to become committed to doing what is good for society in general, namely nation-building, reconciliation and reconstruction, broadening of knowledge in its varied forms and establishing democracy in our country. History is intertwined with the present and has a bearing on the future. Furet, as quoted by EG Kruger in *Educare* 19(1) and 19(2) (1990:86) rightly says: "History (of education) is inseparable from an understanding of the contemporary (educational) world — a world that supplies history (of education) with questions and *raison d'être*."

As if to add to what has been enunciated above, ISJ Venter in Kruger's book entitled *Education: past, present and future* (1986:5), gives the following description of this part-perspective: "(It) involves a consideration and description of the education phenomenon as it occurs from a time perspective — in other words, the object of study of the discipline is

investigated in terms of the three time dimensions of past, present and future. An attempt is made to shed light on the working relationship between time on the one hand, and education, the educator and the one being educated on the other". Venter is of the opinion that life and education are inextricably bound to time, which presupposes that the formulation of educational policies is also time-dimensional. It could therefore be said that the experiences of the past inform the present educational practitioners as to how they should go about formulating policies that will serve as catalysts for national development. It is on the basis of sound educational policies that learners benefit from formal education, and eventually become able to develop their latent potentialities. Education arms its consumers with life-skills that serve as stepping stones to decent lifestyles. It has the capacity to turn children into useful members of society later in life. In missionary circles education produced the black elite who were to play leading roles in the conversion of their kith and kin in the interest of the church of Christ.

1.3 DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

The field of study of this research is borne out by the research topic: **The Swiss missionaries' educational endeavour as a means for social transformation in South Africa (1873-1975)**. This topic is favoured for its broad coverage of the Swiss missionaries' enterprises in South Africa, namely evangelical duties, the provision of medical and primary health care, as well as the provision of education and training that covers a variety of human needs. The topic further enables one to realise that the Swiss missionaries, like missionaries of other denominations of the same historical era, were not just proselytizing a particular group of people such as the Shangaans. Their aim was to convert all people who attended their educational institutions and church services.

The proclamation of spheres of influence or target groups was intended to promote harmonious working relations among missionaries of different denominations rather than serving as a ploy to exclude some tribes from partaking of the glory that Jesus Christ

brought to all people or nations who believed in Him. Their view was that rivalry and friction in the mission fields had to be avoided at all cost, for failure to do so would be tantamount to stooping down to the lowest rung of the social ladder normally reserved for pagans. Missionaries therefore had to form agreements about which tribes they were to convert, to obviate situations that might lead to conflict. The desire to spread the Word of God to all people who had not yet heard of it, was the main reason why the Swiss clerics expanded their missions beyond the Spelonken (Zoutpansberg) District to include the erstwhile Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and other parts of South Africa, especially during the 1880s and 1890s. The first incursion into the defunct Southern Rhodesia in collaboration with the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society's crusaders, enhanced the Swiss Mission's stature among religious societies operating on the African continent. This explains why they received felicitations from almost every angle. Their sojourns into Zimbabwe went as far as Zimuto near Victoria. Participants in this "scramble for the African mission fields" during the pioneering years included Messrs Asser Segagabane (Sekgakgabane), Jonathan Molepo, Bethuel Raditau representing both the Swiss Mission in South Africa and the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, Basutoland - (Lesotho), and Messrs Gabriel, Simon, Jefta, Michael and Petrus Buys representing the Dutch Reformed Church, Goedgedacht, which was situated not far from Louis Trichardt. These Black Evangelists were under the leadership of their mentor, the Honourable Rev Francois Coillard (see photograph 22) of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (Basutoland/Lesotho). The "Buys Brothers" were the descendants of the famous Coenrad de Buys and his Khoi-khoi, Xhosa and Ndebele wives. Although the mission to the land of the Shona was unsuccessful owing to political instability in areas like Zivi and Zimuto where the Ndebele and Shona people were locked in battle, the areas were nonetheless earmarked for future mission development once the dust had settled (*The South African Outlook*, 1 December 1926:260, Beach in Dachs 1973:27-33, Twala in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, December 1923:4).

While the Shona people were prevented from receiving the Word of God by circumstances beyond their control, the Hlengwes of Hlengweland seized the opportunity with both hands. Their territory, though extremely hostile to European missionaries on account of malaria carrying mosquitos, hot weather conditions and severe shortage of water, offered better prospects for educational and spiritual development. These ideal conditions for opening up outstations, especially during the 1890s, were mainly due to good rapport that had been established with the tribal chiefs by the pioneering missionaries and their African collaborators, the Tsonga evangelists (Z Mbenyana "Ka wena *Nyeleti ya Mišo*" in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* December 1921:3, M Mbenyane, "Ka Mhinga" in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:24, cf Rev Paul Rosset's "Ka Mhinga" in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* September 1899:34).

While Hlengweland does not bear the mark signifying the co-operative ventures of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Paris-Sotho and the Swiss Mission Churches (see map 1) it was nonetheless explored as part of the broader strategy to gather all Shangaan-Tsonga people under the wing of the Swiss Mission. The Mugabe-Zimuto religious explorations initiated by the Honourable Rev Hofmeyr, had encouraged the leadership of the three Churches to consider sending priests up north to evangelize the Shona or Karanga people, and they unanimously carried out His word. The missionary explorers were so fired up to carry out their mission, that even the military attacks of Field-cornet F Grobler on Zimuto's people, whom he accused of stealing his livestock, could not put the missionaries off track. It was only after Gabriel Buys, one of their men who identified with Groblers' belligerent actions in 1883 had been killed, that the mission's movement to the northern parts of Zimbabwe was halted. This partisanship by one of the missionaries' men had removed whatever trust the local people had in the men of the cloth, and the missionaries were forced to quit temporarily, but with clear indications that they would be welcomed again in the future. The next phase of the Swiss Mission's educational endeavour in areas like Matabeleland and Mashonaland were in the form of teachers who crossed into these territories in search of livelihood. Some of these teachers eventually became naturalized citizens of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and they returned to South Africa only once in

a while to visit their relatives (Twala in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, December 1923:4, Mr D Maroleni in a letter to the Superintendent of Lemana Training Institution, 10 April 1956).

This study seeks to examine the Swiss Mission's three-pronged approach (a triangular approach involving interaction between the church, schools and hospitals, in the interest of social transformation) to educating the indigenous populace in South Africa about how God would like them to conduct their affairs. The study does not deal with knowledge acquired only inside the four walls of a classroom. On the contrary, education was freely distributed to all in many circumstances. It was provided by the church during religious sermons, by nursing schools, it was made available during workshops, in hospitals, and there was even impromptu education in the wards while patients received medical treatment from doctors.

This research project compels the researcher to briefly incorporate the Swiss missionaries' civilizing influences in Mozambique. It made no sense to the clerics to evangelize only the minority of the Shangaan-Tsonga people who were spread throughout the former North-Eastern Transvaal after the Nguni invasions of the 1830s when many of them were forced to flee to South Africa and the neighbouring African states, and to ignore the majority of these remaining people who were actually starving in their country of origin. In the study of the Swiss missionaries' proselytizing efforts, any comment about the exclusion of the Mozambican Shangaans is rather superficial, because of the fact that they and their brethren in South Africa exchanged visits on a regular basis, and they were toiling and living together in the urban areas to which they were attracted by the dominant capitalist economic system. The missionaries themselves apparently considered the whole of the Mozambican mission fields as the "provinces" of their South African missions, particularly Elim Mission Station (Rev B Terrisse's "Activities of our mission in the district of Lourenco Marques", in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1952:18-19, Mr R Lombard's "A glimpse of life in the compounds on the Rand", in *The Tsonga Messenger*, April-June 1952:12-13).

Having said that, the researcher must not be misconstrued to be stating that Mozambique forms a major component of this study — Mozambique is regarded here as a peripheral outpost that was dependent on the Swiss Mission in South Africa for the smooth running of its religious programs. The incursion into Mozambique should be construed as an effort to enable the reader to fully appreciate the Swiss Missionary Society's enterprises, as well as to discern to what extent the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society's statutes still had an impact on the missionary practices in South Africa and Mozambique. The ties established in those early years of 1860-1869 when the first recruits from Switzerland were deployed in Lesotho by the Free Church of the small Canton de Vaud situated in the French-speaking western part of Switzerland, were still strong (Brookes 1925:5-6, Phillips 1949:2-4).

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A problem that was experienced in the research of this project, is that topical data pertaining to the performances of the Swiss missionaries remained untraceable. If it does exist, it probably would be in the form of documentation in French and Portuguese, languages that the researcher does not have a working knowledge of. To reach a completely clear and comprehensive point of completion was therefore somewhat curtailed in terms of the accessibility of some parts of the research data, and to what extent the material that was available could be interpreted and incorporated into the final report. Other inhibiting factors were:

(a) Inheritance of valuable information

The collection of valuable documents that was bequeathed to the Shangaan nation by their mentors, the Swiss missionaries, is not complete. Although the William Cullen Library at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg was entrusted with the custody of documents pertaining to the Swiss Mission, it cannot claim to house all documents that

relate to the Swiss missionary activities. The same applies to the Provincial Archives in Giyani, the capital of the defunct Gazankulu bantustan, and also to the National Archives in Pretoria. The researcher endeavoured to research all the documents at his disposal in order to try to compensate for the stated hindrances.

(b) Damaged documents

Certain documents are no longer legible due to constant perusal, relocation from one area to another, and poor technology at the time of printing. In many instances, one finds that the paper used for typing is of an inferior quality and the print is often illegible. All these had a limiting effect on the researcher's work.

1.5 ASSESSMENT OF SOURCE MATERIAL

External and internal criticisms were applied in order to establish the accuracy, genuineness and reliability of data collected from the libraries and archives.

1.5.1 External validity

This entails the analysis of data with the view to determine the degree to which the documents or information procured is genuine and valid when generalized to other situations or populations. In this instance, the methods used by the Swiss missionaries in their educational practices were found to be reliable and in concord with the approaches of missionaries of other denominations both inside and outside the country. Documents used in this study in many cases bore the signatures or names of the Swiss missionaries or their converts, as well as the names of places under their jurisdiction, and the researcher had no reason to doubt their authenticity. Even if one were to have some doubts about the genuineness of certain documents, these reservations are completely deleted by a plethora of letters, circulars, memoranda and reports issued by the successive governments and

other stake-holders who had or still have a vested interest in the educational advancement of nations. All these documents attested to the good work the Swiss missionaries were doing in South Africa, individually or collectively (Bailey 1987:70, McMillan & Schumacher 1993:172-174).

One such testimony to the good work of the Swiss is the following: "In the interesting brochure, admirably printed and illustrated, that Professor Edgar H Brookes has written on the fifty years of work in South Africa completed in 1925 by the Mission Suisse Romande, he has a challenging introduction. He maintains that "from every point of view the evangelization of the Bantu is imperative", and "never has there been a more hopeful moment for missionary activity within the Union of South Africa" (*The South African Outlook*, 1 December 1926:260).

Professor Edgar H Brookes was a man of stature. He was at one stage attached to the University of Pretoria as an educationist. His felicitations to them on the occasion of the Swiss Missionary Society's anniversary of fifty years of operations in South Africa, was one among many that were issued by people of diverse social standing. One of these figures was Dr DF Malan, the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa (DF Malan, "Message to the Swiss Mission in South Africa" in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1950:4, Prof EH Brookes, The Racial question in the light of Christian teaching, in *Christian students and modern South Africa* 1930:185).

1.5.2 Internal validity

Internal validity is the extent to which researchers can deduce that parts of instruments used in their studies, such as questionnaires or even tests, measure the same characteristics that they intended to measure in their investigation. Internal validity has to do with the reliability, accuracy, and the precision of the meanings of statements made by the respondents to the research questions posed by the investigator. In this study, all the data

was produced by the missionaries themselves, or by people who had received missionary education. Even the secondary sources were found to reflect the genuine experiences of missionaries, or of those people who studied at mission schools during the period under investigation. The secondary sources used in this study were found to have been produced as objectively as possible by their authors (Bailey 1987:70, McMillan & Schumacher 1993:172-174).

1.6 METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS STUDY

This is mainly a qualitative or descriptive study. The research seeks to describe Swiss missionary education over the historical epoch 1873-1975. In his description of Swiss missionary educational practices, the researcher will occasionally make references to quantitative investigation, but that does not mean that the research is quantitative in nature. Whatever figures will be employed in this research, are there to summarise data or at best to facilitate the comprehension of Swiss missionary education and its concomitant civilizing influences during the period under review. For instance, the inflow of pupils into the school system, their upward mobility through different standards when they passed examinations, the allocation of marks in the different subjects and the rate at which they dropped out of the school system, are better explained by means of figures.

Before writing the research report, the investigator visited libraries and archives to procure primary and secondary sources. The researcher did not disregard oral evidence deemed to be relevant to his study. This includes the information gathered from respondents that were incidentally met along the coast of the Indian ocean during a visit to Maputo, Mozambique in 1997. But such information or evidence had to be checked for authenticity against the varied mass of data on the principles, content and methods of Swiss missionary education, which the researcher accumulated from documents since 1995. Books about missionary societies and their educational practices were perused to search for commonalities or variations in the provision of black education during the missionary era. It would appear

that the interdenominational conferences that were held from time to time helped in the cross-pollination of religious ideas on how to handle the Africans so that they also could serve the Lord and share in His Glory.

The perusal of literature about other missions was not a futile exercise. In fact, such references played a major role in shaping this study, because the church of the Swiss Mission did not isolate itself from other churches or bodies with a vested interest in the education of the indigenous races. The Swiss Mission benefited a lot from other missions that operated in Africa and beyond. The relationship with other missions strengthened over the years — so much so, that there was hardly any seminar or workshop that would be held without the Swiss Mission sending its nominees to such gatherings. Other missions benefited as much as the Swiss Mission did from them. What the different missions had, was essentially a co-existence characterised by the spirit of mutuality and the reciprocal exchange of religious information that had a bearing on the social upliftment of the indigenous peoples of Africa, who were perceived to be still "stumbling in the dark" (the Rev EW Grant in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1950:7, *The South African Outlook*, 1 July 1949:98).

Because the researcher regards education as the key to social transformation, he made it his task to assess the role played by the church, the school, and by health services (mainly hospitals) in educating the African masses, as he realised that ignoring the latter two would result in an incorrectly reduced reflection of the scope of Swiss missionary educational activities, because they were in fact carried out by the combined actions of the three institutions working in unison, with the same purpose in mind.

The above view is fully supported by the Rev FA Cuendet (1950:9) when he said: "After the church and the school, the hospital is the third branch of missionary activity. Does it need any justification, since the Master said to the twelve, on sending them out: 'Heal the sick', and Himself gave them such an example? True, some may object: their methods were

different from those used in our medical stations; apparently they employed no medicine, they did not go through long and costly studies, they did not erect hospitals with all their different departments, and they did not fill them with certificated nurses. All this is required today; but the Master's order is being carried out even if it is in a different form".

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is the product of the perusal of a plethora of literature relating to the Swiss missionaries' educational endeavours as a means to bringing about social transformation in South Africa (1873-1975). Beside the literature consulted, oral evidence was obtained from the beneficiaries of Swiss mission education, and this has been of inestimable value to this undertaking. Some of the individuals interviewed for the purposes of this study, had a taste of mission education as far back as 1927.

The main data constituting this research project however came from the primary and secondary sources of information which have been acknowledged throughout the text, and listed in the bibliography. The primary sources of information are letters, newspapers, magazines and books written by the missionaries or their charges who were educated or taught at the mission schools. Thus the works of the Revs FA Cuendet, D P Lenoir, E Creux, P Berthoud, A Grandjean (see photograph 23), HA Junod (see photograph 24) and other benefactors, rank as important sources on which this study is grounded.

Among those of other Swiss missionaries, the Rev HA Junod's publications were of exceptional importance. His anthropological works are virtually encyclopaedic in the sense that they cover almost everything pertaining to the Shangaans, who were the people the Swiss primarily sought to convert and civilize, so that they could abandon their pagan lifestyles and lead Christian lives. Rev Junod wrote two authoritative works: *The Life of A South African Tribe, Vol I: Social Life* and *The Life of A South African Tribe Vol II: Mental*

Life The importance of these two books is succinctly explained by Junod himself (1962:1) as follows:

"In the first volume of this work, I have tried to give a description of the social life of the tribe by depicting its customs in relation to the individual, communal and national life. In the second volume I shall consider its mental and spiritual life, its literature and music, its religion, magic and morality. The agricultural and industrial life will afford a transition from the one to the other of these subjects; this belongs primarily to the social manifestations of tribal life, but the imagination displayed by sculptors, weavers, potters or 'potresses' brings it also into relation with the mental life of the tribe. I do not however pretend to draw a sharp line of distinction between these two domains, as mental life is reflected in the social customs, and the social idea strongly dominates the mental life of the tribe". The secondary sources represented by dissertations, theses and other reference material were weighed against data in the primary sources to articulate the extent to which the Swiss contributed to social transformation in South Africa during their tenure.

1.8 EXPLICATION OF CONCEPTS USED IN THIS STUDY

1.8.1 Social transformation

This refers to a radical change in people's traditions, their way of doing things as far as their social environment and social institutions are concerned, of which education is the most important (Ngobeli 1996:68). The above writer further draws a line between social transformation and reformation to avoid confusion of the two concepts. She views reformation as the improvement of a phenomenon in shape or form while retaining its basic structure, character or nature. Social transformation refers to a complete change of people's social structures, behavioural patterns, education system and social formations as a result of contact between different cultures. In the context of this study, the "super" culture of European missionaries with its highly developed technology dominated the "lesser"

cultures of Africans to such an extent, that some of the indigenous cultural elements became extinct. The social transformation process implanted by the Swiss missionaries brought about what Ngobeli (1996:68), refers to as "a complete change of the education systems, economic systems, religious systems, social structures, beliefs, values, attitudes, norms, expectations, needs and interests...". Yet this change didn't affect all members of the main target-group, the Shangaans, as it was mostly at the mission stations and outstations where the observance of the statutes were rigorously and vigorously enforced. The heathen villages remained submerged in traditional customs.

1.8.2 Impi

This means "a body of Zulu warriors". In this study the term is used to refer to any body of warriors belonging to any indigenous tribe that is under a proper command structure (Masumbe 1997:9).

1.8.3 Shangaan-Tsonga people (Machangana-Vatsonga)

This double-barrelled name refers to the same group of people inhabiting the erstwhile North-Eastern Transvaal and Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) during the Swiss Missionary era and are still found in these territories and parts of Gauteng, mainly for economic reasons. The appellation *Shangaan*, which is usually (but not always) linked up with *Tsonga* to form the *Shangaan-Tsonga* tribe, probably came about as a result of Soshangane, the war-general of the Ndwandwe tribe in Zululand, whose conquest of the Tsonga people of Mozambique in the 1830s forced them to scatter in different directions. For the purposes of this study, *Shangaan-Tsonga* or *Vatsonga* or loose concepts *Shangaans* or *Tsongas*, shall mean the same group of people on whom this research is mainly focused (Kriel & Hartman 1991:16).

1.8.4 Tonga people

Tonga refers to a separate group of people (tribe) who lived around Inhambane (Mozambique) during the 18th century, who assisted the Portuguese colonists when they were attacked by the Tsonga people. Their language was known as *Tonga* as opposed to *Tsonga* (Xitsonga) (*100 Years of Tsonga Publications*, 1883-1983:1-3, Junod 1962:16).

1.8.5 Magwamba / Makwapa / Makoapa

This refers to the Shangaan-Tsonga people, and was used by the Ba-Venda, Basotho, Boers and Swiss missionaries alike to refer to the Machangana-Vatsonga people. There is no unanimity about the origin of these terms. Their origin is based on speculation, with some people contending that the names were given to Shangaans living at Spelonken (Zoutpansberg District) or Mozambique owing to Gwambe, the first man to whom certain groups of Shangaans trace their descent. Some think that the Shangaans could have derived the name from Chief Gwambe who ruled over the Gwambe clan in Gazaland not very far from the Chopiland border in Mozambique. It must however be stated that the terms Magwamba / Gwambas / Makwapa or *S'gwamba* / *Xigwamba*, in reference to the Shangaan language or people, do not find favour among contemporary Shangaans (Junod 1962:143, 349).

1.8.6 Formal education

This refers to education taking place in the school setting. This type of education is characterized by interaction between professionally trained teachers (educators) and learners, with the aim to enabling the latter to realise their full potential and eventually be able to contribute to personal and national development (Mphahlele 1972:91-92).

1.8.7 Informal education

This type of education takes place in the home setting and is usually, but not exclusively, provided to children by their parents. Unlike formal education, it does not necessarily instil reading and writing skills. It is mainly concerned with the transmission of cultural norms and values to the younger generation (Mgadla 1986:63-67, Manganyi 1992:2)

1.8.8 Initiation schools

These schools serve as centres for introducing boys and girls to the demands of adulthood in all its varied forms. The site of the initiation schools that were attended by boys was the bush or forest, hence the pseudonym "bush schools". Girls' initiation schools (vukhomba) were held in selected compounds within the villages, in contrast to the initiation schools for boys (ngoma) that were held outside the villages. Secrecy and seclusion are however the common features of both schools, especially with regard to the uninitiated (maxuvuru). Initiation schools for boys (ngoma) and girls' initiation schools (vukhomba) were an affront, not only to missionaries, but eventually also to some of the chiefs and their subjects who accepted Christian teachings along with their traditional ones (Magadzi 1924:2, Junod 1962:71-178).

1.8.9 Native(s)

Persons born in a specified place or country (The Little Oxford Dictionary of Current English 1994:421).

1.8.10 Commandos

Members of a group of soldiers specially trained for carrying out quick raids in enemy areas (*Oxford advanced learners' encyclopaedic dictionary* 1992:720)

1.8.11 Proselytes

Persons who have been converted from one set of religious, political and economic beliefs to another (*Oxford advanced learners' encyclopaedic dictionary* 1992:720).

1.8.12 Blacks

This is an aggregate or umbrella term referring to people who are not white or European. Disaggregate concepts like coloured, Indian, and African may feature in this study so as to explain issues in their historical perspective rather than sanctifying their usage (Masumbe 1997:6).

1.8.13 Curriculum or curricula

- (1) A course of study in one subject at a school or college
- (2) A list of all the courses offered by a school or college
- (3) Any program or plan of activities (*Collins English dictionary*, 3rd edition. Latest reprint 1991).

Gunter (1979:135-142) defines a curriculum as "a number of subjects or areas of knowledge, each of which has its own syllabus: examination subjects as well as non-examination subjects, compulsory subjects and optional subjects, each having its prescribed and simplified content appropriate to every standard, together with the time to be spent on each every week".

This narrow definition of the school curriculum, as Gunter frankly admits, projects the school curriculum as an instrument employed to introduce the rising generation (learners/pupils) to the accumulated experience, knowledge, culture, traditions, values,

beliefs, expectations, needs, interests and norms of their own nation in particular, and others in general; "especially kindred nations".

The school curriculum could be viewed as the core of the teacher's functions and he/she must prepare subject matter based on syllabi derived from it. The teacher, as a matter of fact, has to prepare and systematically present subject matter in a way that will evoke active participation from learners who must apply, or relate the knowledge gained, to everyday life.

The school curriculum, viewed from a broader perspective, embraces other human activities taking place outside the classroom situation, such as sports, school societies and concerts, cultural festivals, eisteddfods and other school functions. It also includes interpersonal relations and the general tone and atmosphere that should prevail in the school. These secondary school activities together with the primary school activities that occur inside the classroom or laboratory may be regarded as the core of education and teaching — remove one of them and you will have some warped personalities who may not advance the national culture nor behave normatively (Gunter 1979:37).

1.8.14 Compounds

Compounds provided accommodation for mine workers or other workers. These housing accommodations were characterized by overcrowding, the appearance of a junkyard created by mixed assortments of abandoned or semi-derelict objects like bicycles, utensils, benches, bunks covered with blankets and sheets, weapons for use during skirmishes, and the ever-present cans and containers bubbling with African beer (Terrisse 1950:18).

1.8.15 Locations and/or Townships

Places on the outskirts of towns and cities where migrant workers lived, usually with their families. These poorly endowed habitats were characterized by rows of asbestos-roofed houses disparagingly called "match-boxes" by some people. Black workers commuted back and forth from their places of work on a daily basis — to and from these often crime-infested living areas (Masumbe 1997:8).

NB: Meanings of other concepts are explained in the text or as footnotes on the appropriate pages.

1.9 STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

This study is grounded on three major themes:

- (a) The implantation of Christianity in the areas inhabited by the Shangaans in South Africa, which also resulted in the transformation of the lives of other population groups through the efforts of the Swiss Mission Church.
- (b) The establishment of schools in areas that were occupied for ecclesiastic purposes. Schools were viewed as the means to converting and civilizing the indigenous populace.
- (c) The introduction of Western health services, mainly in the form of hospitals, in order to distance the indigenous populace from their superstitious beliefs and practices and also from consulting traditional healers — the so-called quack doctors. Missionaries believed that once the tribal communities had noticed the efficacy of Western medicine, they would begin to allow their children, especially girls, to be trained as professional nurses, and in doing so, they would enhance the process of social transformation.

The above themes are intended to guide and shape the researcher's arguments throughout the course of the study according to the following chapters:

CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This chapter informs the reader about the steps constituting the researcher's investigations. It takes the reader through the aim and rationale of the study, the limitations of the study, the assessment of source material, the methodology employed in the study, the extensive literature reviews, and the explication of concepts used in the study.

CHAPTER 2 THE GENESIS OF SWISS MISSIONARY WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

This chapter deals with the commencement of the Swiss Missionary enterprises in South Africa. It also covers the hostility of the erstwhile Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek towards the French-speaking Swiss clerics, who were mistaken for the Paris Missionaries, who allegedly fomented problems between the Free Staters and the Basotho nation by arming and morally supporting the latter. The founding of Valdezia and Elim Mission Stations in 1875 and 1879 respectively, were important milestones in the history of the Swiss Missionaries.

CHAPTER 3 A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE SHANGAAN-TSONGA PEOPLE

It does not make sense to talk about the transformation of the essence of a people while possessing no knowledge of their culture and historical development. This chapter is intended to provide the reader with a modicum of the Shangaan-Tsonga people's historical background. It will endeavour to cover some aspects of their first contact with the Portuguese explorers along the Indian ocean in Mozambique, their later contacts with the

Portuguese colonists, and the conflicts that erupted between them — then the entry of the marauding Nguni warriors into their territories, and the consequences thereof. The exposition of these events will form the crux of the information that this chapter wants to provide. But it was the entry of the Swiss missionaries into the Zoutpansberg District that put the Shangaans on the road to Western Civilization, which was characterized by formal education, the concept of money as economical medium, and above all, Christianity.

CHAPTER 4 EXPANSION INTO OTHER AREAS WHERE THERE WAS A NEED FOR EVANGELISM

This chapter surveys the growth of the Swiss Missionary enterprises since the founding of the two first mission stations, Valdezia (1875) and Elim (1879). But it does not end here. It also covers the explorations carried out by Josefa Mhalamhala into his country of birth, Mozambique, in the early 1880s, which culminated in the founding of several mission stations in a country inhabited by a vast number of the Shangaan-Tsonga people, who together constituted the Swiss missions' main target group. This chapter also contains information about the establishment of other mission stations and outstations within the erstwhile north-eastern Transvaal, for instance, Shiluvane (1886), Mhinga (1899), Hutweni at Makuleke (1890) and Dzombo in the defunct Southern Rhodesia's Hlengweni, also in the 1890s. It should be noted that even though Mozambique doesn't constitute a major part of this study, the Swiss clerics' proselytizing efforts were such that it was well-nigh impossible to draw a line of distinction between Mozambican and South African Shangaans, because socio-economic imperatives brought them together, especially in the Witwatersrand area. Blood-ties also dictated that they be catered for on the same scale. It should also be noted that the first Swiss missionaries knew of the existence of the Shangaan-Tsonga people in Mozambique as a result of the number of Mozambicans who frequently visited their relatives in the Zoutpansberg District. These contacts aroused the need for the establishment of branches of the Swiss Mission in Mozambique (Rev Bernard

Terrise, "Activities of our mission in the district of Lourenco Marques", in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1952:18-19, Rev S Malale, *Report ya ka Mhinga*, 1936).

CHAPTER 5 THE ROLE OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Formal schooling was an indispensable component of missionary activity throughout Africa. Evangelization without the concomitant spreading of literacy to the uneducated masses, was perceived to be not effective enough. The people who were being evangelized were unable to digest what they were taught in church, because they did not know how to read, and therefore could not read the Scriptures for themselves and to one another in the comfort of their homes.

The Swiss missionaries believed that for people to be efficiently and deeply transformed, schools had to be established to teach the indigenous people to read and write from an early age. This explains why the different missionary societies established schools at a time when the successive governments in South Africa were not worried about providing formal education to native Africans. This mission education (Christian education), changed the behavioural patterns of the indigenous populace to such an extent that they started to systematically move away from their traditional customs. They embraced the Western culture that was characterised by an economic system that was based on money as medium of exchange, and all the social changes implicated by that economic system (capitalism) as opposed to their age-old traditional economic system based on bartering. They accepted the Christian religion and the parliamentary system of government, and partly abandoned their traditions of ancestor-worship and chieftaincy.

Formal education was a means by which they could enter the white man's economic system, especially during the industrialization of South Africa following the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley (1870) and the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand (1886).

This chapter concentrates on the establishment of different categories of schools by the Swiss missionaries with the purpose of providing skills to the indigenous populace, so that they could fit well into both the secular (materialistic) and religious (Christian) worlds (Davenport 1987:93, 146, Bill 1951:32-33).

CHAPTER 6 MISSIONARY INFLUENCE ON THE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE AND NURSING

One of the principal tasks of the missionaries was to combat superstitions connected with the causes of illness and death among the pagan communities. This was cause for concern among the Swiss missionaries, because they believed that no real civilization would be able to take root and grow in an atmosphere of mistrust, bickering and revenge attacks among the people who were to be proselytized. For this reason, missionaries set up hospitals next to the mission stations to free heathens from superstitions and exploitation by the traditional healers, or quack doctors as missionaries preferred to call them. Where funds didn't permit the establishment of fully-fledged hospitals, dispensaries and clinics were founded to cater for the health needs of Africans. Missionaries also encouraged them to abandon their traditional practices. The need for African collaborators to help in the provision of medical care and nursing led to the establishment of nursing colleges. This chapter deals with the treatment of diseases, the creation of health awareness, the establishment of mission hospitals and the training of personnel, with national development in view.

CHAPTER 7 AN APPRAISAL OF THE SWISS MISSIONARIES' EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVOUR AS A MEANS TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (1873-1975)

In this chapter the researcher will attempt to highlight the impact of the Swiss missionaries' educational endeavours to promote social transformation in South Africa. The Swiss

missionary enterprises were extensive, covering socio-economic and political issues. The latter two aspects are incorporated because when one deals with society or social issues, one is inevitably faced by the economic and political realities of a country, and when this occurs, one has to make choices about being on the positive, negative, or neutral side. The Swiss missionaries wanted to be viewed as belonging to the neutral category, on the basis of Switzerland's non-involvement in the scramble for African colonies. But this neutralist stance was questionable, considering the Swiss missionary hierarchy's advice to the state about matters of policy, especially in native administration. The Swiss missionaries' double agenda in their mission fields is exposed by both the primary and secondary sources of information consulted for the purposes of this research project. While they were primarily concerned with the evangelization of the African masses, they also felt that they were most adequately qualified to advise the state about when political decision-making should be extended to the black majority of this country.

CONCLUSION

What will follow in the ensuing chapters, is an in-depth coverage of the Swiss missionary enterprises in South Africa. The researcher will try to show that the two first mission stations, Valdezia (1875) and Elim (1879) served as springboards for the expansion of Swiss missionary activities into different parts of South Africa. The Swiss missionary enterprises served to civilize the indigenous populace in many ways at a time when the government stuck to its laissez-faire policy as far as black education was concerned. The Swiss missionaries' transformation efforts were equally beneficial to the European race, especially towards the north of Pretoria where there were no medical practitioners to speak of. The Europeans of these regions covered long distances to receive medical treatment at Elim Hospital. Even before the arrival of Dr Georges Liengme, the Swiss medical missionary in South Africa, the pioneer missionaries in the persons of Rev Paul Berthoud and Rev Ernest Creux were treating the sick on the basis of their rudimentary training. This research project is set to reveal that social transformation as carried out by the Swiss

missionaries was an all-encompassing process embracing both black and white, and was not exclusively meant for the African population. This implies that drunkenness and the commission of immoral acts so glibly condemned by missionaries, were prevalent on both sides. The only noticeable difference between the two races was that the negative side of the affairs of Europeans were mostly hushed to lend credence to the popularly held notion that the indigenous races of Africa needed spiritual upliftment to help them to rise above their pagan practices and be governed by Christian norms and values. Weird stories about Africa and her peoples were an important means of attracting donations from companies in many nations in order to sustain the cause of social transformation.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENESIS OF THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The activities of the different missionary societies in Africa, Asia and some other places in the world owed their origins to a cultural ferment that was taking place in Europe. In their Master of Arts dissertation, "Mothers and daughters: the training of African nurses by missionary nurses of the Swiss Mission in South Africa" (English translation), 1996, University of Zürich, Egli and Krayner are of the opinion that this interest in foreign missions originated in Great Britain and later spread to Germany and Switzerland. This revivalist movement was essentially a religious movement, aimed at spiritual renewal and the deepening of religious life, which, in the view of the proponents, left much to be desired. Consequently, religion in Europe had to be freed from corrupt practices akin to those that caused a schism within the Roman Catholic Church, namely materialism, wrong beliefs and greed. Christians had to be guided concerning how they had to live in accordance with the wishes of Jesus Christ the Lord. Converts had to devote their strength to the service of the Lord in Europe, Asia and Africa.. Protestant theology had to be rooted in liberal individualism, "strong commitment to self-construction and self-improvement through rational, self-willed duty" (Egli and Krayner 1996:11).

What the above implied was that all individuals, without looking over their collective shoulder, had to have the personal commitment to strive towards self-improvement by means of devoted labour at home (Europe) and abroad, where the Word of God had not yet been spread. Individuals had to make a strong commitment to do their utmost to eradicate paganism, human degradation, poverty and exploitation by teaching the Gospels wherever they would be posted. By so doing, the missionaries would experience personal satisfaction and fulfilment for having obeyed the command of the Lord and having done their utmost to extend His Kingdom. In Switzerland, the spirit of renewal was led by a prominent professor of theology, Alexandre Vinet (1797-1847) at the Académie de Lausanne. Even before this man made his mark, the Swiss Canton de Vaud apparently experienced some stirring of missionary zeal in the 1500s (Cuendet in

The Tsonga Messenger 1949:6). However, such awakenings were intermittent. According to Maluleke (1995:6), the first society of the small Canton de Vaud was founded in 1821, but it was short-lived. In 1826, the Evangelical Missionary Society of Lausanne was founded, but it suffered the same fate as the first missionary society of Canton de Vaud. Before its demise however, the Lausanne Missionary Society had made its mark sending missionaries from Canton de Vaud to the Sioux in North America to evangelize the heathens in 1834. By the time of its closure, followed up by its school for the training of missionaries in 1836, the Lausanne Missionary Society had some converts in North America, and they were bequeathed to the American Board (Maluleke 1995:6).

According to ST Maluleke's doctoral thesis, "A Morula tree between two fields: the commentary of selected Tsonga writers on missionary Christianity", University of South Africa (1995), and Egli and Kraye's dissertation mentioned earlier, Alexandre Vinet's theological outlook and robust stance was shaped by the politico-religious philosophies of the French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau and the English philosopher, John Locke. Vinet believed that the Church had to be freed from the stranglehold of the state and do what it was qualified to do without any interference. He was completely convinced that, in the interest of individualism and freedom of choice, nobody should have absolute authority over another human being. Church membership, according to this professor of theology, was dependent on individual confession and conviction, rather than direction from someone with authority, or from the state. Vinet fought for the liberation of the church from the cantonal state of de Vaud so that it could freely formulate its policies and advance the teaching of Christ to all people who believed in God and His Son. Although Vinet died prematurely in 1847, his philosophy lived on to be propagated by the likes of Rev Paul Berthoud and Rev Ernest Creux (Maluleke 1995:6-7; Egli and Kraye 1996:12).

Another Swiss cleric who contributed to the spirit of renewal, especially among the youth, was Rev Louis Bridel of the Free Churches of Switzerland, whose *Union Chretiennes* attracted the students doing theological studies at the Académie de

Lausanne. These young people participated in this youth-movement's religious activities which prepared them for missionary work in some far-off countries. Rev Louis Bridel's sermons induced the youth to participate in charitable deeds and to be selfless in their service to the Lord. Berthoud and Creux's thirst for missionary work in Africa, or wherever the Church would see fit to send them, was the result of these encounters (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1949:3).

The Free Church of Canton de Vaud was founded in 1847, but the aim of starting foreign missions was not soon to be realised. Two of the reasons cited by the church authorities for refusing to set up foreign missions were:

- (1) lack of funds to sustain foreign missions
- (2) fear of igniting rivalry with the friendly missions that had started foreign missions such as the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and the Basel Mission. Such rivalries would stifle the development of a fledgling mission, which in its state of development would be dependent on the moral and material support of the established missions (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1949:14).

The immediate concern of the Church was to collect funds from friends of the mission and other donors, to spread the Gospel of Christ in Switzerland or Europe, to hold conferences or workshops that led personnel into the religious activities of the mission, and the recruiting of young people who would serve as the future leaders of the Free Church of the western part of Switzerland, which was French-speaking. Co-operation with other churches was indispensable during this phase of development, because the young church could not manage properly without the cross-pollination of religious ideas. Because the Church's inability to set up foreign missions was unacceptable to the youth, they continued to put pressure on its leaders to do something about their desire to venture into the unknown countries to spread the Word of God (Phillips 1949:4). This pressure finally paid off. The authorities' earlier refusal was revoked, and the first missionaries from Canton de Vaud were sent to the Paris Evangelical Missionary

Society (PEMS) that had been on duty and active in Basutoland (Lesotho) since 1833. Its apparent success in the Mountain Kingdom, as Lesotho is popularly known, endeared it to the Free Church's leadership. The first group of missionaries released to PEMS included the Revs Adolphe Mabilie, Paul Germound, Louis Duvoisin and D Frederick Ellenberger, who entered Lesotho in 1859, 1860 and 1861 respectively (Brookes 1925:5-6, Maluleke 1995:7 *The South African Outlook* Vol LVI 1926:260). A certain missionary, the Rev Henri Gonin, joined the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in 1869. His entry into the service of the DRC is inexplicable as this church was not classified as one of the allies of the Free Church de Vaud. Only the Basel Mission and the Paris Mission were regarded as "friendly churches" by the Free Church (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1949:4).

2.2 THE FIRST VOLUNTEERS IN LESOTHO

When they sent their first volunteers to the foreign mission service, the Free Church of Canton de Vaud decided on the Paris Mission for the following reasons:

- (1) The Paris Mission's impressive track record was well known to the Basotho nation, and it was therefore felt that the young missionaries would be in good hands.
- (2) The French missionaries spoke the same language as the young missionaries from Canton de Vaud in the western part of Switzerland.
- (3) The mission statutes of the Swiss Mission and those of the Paris Mission shared some commonalities; for example the banning of polygamy, drunkenness and lobola, to name but a few.

Over the years, the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Basutoland had built itself a good reputation, which was threatened only by the border wars between the Basotho and the Free State Boers. They hoped that all the positive factors plus their sharing of the French language would enable the recruits to quickly learn the Sesotho language, as instructional manuals in French had already been prepared by the early missionaries

who streamed into Lesotho after 1833. The Revs Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux came into Basutoland imbued with Prof Vinet's individualistic approach to church matters, namely a social theory that favoured free action by individuals. They insisted on the free initiative of Christians as opposed to the inclination of the French pioneers to intertwine religious duties with those they felt were owed to the secular state, but this was seen as a minor matter that did not seem endangering to the relationship between the two breeds of clerics. The Swiss missionaries adjusted so well to local conditions that the arrival of Berthoud and Creux served to enhance Adolphe Mabile's visionary approach to missionary work, much to the benefit of the French missionary pioneers (Maluleke 1995:9-11, Davenport 1987:150).

The Morija Mission Station to which the Revs Berthoud and Creux came in 1872 was situated "some thirty kilometres to the south-west" of Thaba Bosiu in Basutoland (Lesotho) (Ramahadi 1987:3). This centre had a good supply of water, which the founders needed for household use and agricultural purposes. The area was spacious and endowed with all the attributes that the founding fathers, the Revs Eugene Casalis and Thomas Arbousset, deemed necessary for a mission station. There was enough space for the church, schools and other important buildings as well as enough agricultural land. Morija became the educational centre for the advancement of the African population towards careers in the ministry, teaching, agriculture (farming), industry and nursing. Later, upon starting its autonomous missions in the erstwhile Transvaal, the Swiss Mission sent its church workers for training at this nerve centre of Western civilization (Ramahadi 1987:3, Cuendet 1950:24).

In 1873, the Swiss missionaries, who did not have a problem serving under the Paris Mission, but were nonetheless intent on establishing their own mission, left for Sekhukhuniland in the northern region of South Africa at Morija. This branch of missionary activity was to be under the auspices of the Paris Mission in Basutoland (Lesotho). For some time the Northern Sothos had requested to be evangelized and this opportunity presented itself in 1873 when Revs Paul Berthoud and Adolphe Mabile and a retinue of Basuto evangelists were commissioned to answer this call. But

paramount chief Sekhukhuni balked at having his subjects evangelized by the missionaries from Lesotho. At almost the same time a decision had been made that the Transvaal missions would be run by the Free Church of the small Canton de Vaud because the Paris Mission would no longer be able to run two missions in both Lesotho and Sekhukhuniland. The Free Church accordingly obliged. Thus, after the setback of Sekhukhuniland, the missionaries proceeded further north until they reached the Dutch Reformed Church's headquarters at Goedgedacht near Louis Trichardt, and were advised by Stephanus Hofmeyr to try and negotiate with chief Joao Albasini, whose Shangaan subordinates had not yet been evangelized by any mission. For their part, the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries were operating among the Boers (Afrikaners) and the Basotho nation, while the Berlin Mission of the Revs Erdmann Schwellnus and Carl Beuster were evangelizing the Ba-Venda (Vha-Venda) nation. The Berlin Mission (Lutherans) also worked among the Bapedi and the men who set up missions among the Northern Sothos of the defunct north-eastern Transvaal were Alexander Merensky and Albert Nachtigal. In the Sibasa-Tshakhuma Lutheran missions, there was a devout Venda Christian by the name of Johannes Mutshaeni, who was an important figure behind the successes of the Berliners (Eerwaarde Van der Merwe in *The Tsonga Messenger* October-December 1950:26, Maluleke 1995:10-13, cf Du Plessis 1911:330-331).

Upon securing permission from Joao Albasini to work among the Shangaans, the two missionaries, Berthoud and Mabile, left Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane (Sekgakgabane) on the farm Klipfontein (later Valdezia), which they had bought from Mr John Watt, and returned to Basutoland to report on their abortive trip to Sekhukhuniland (Creux in *Nyeleti ya Mišo [Morning Star]* February 1921:1, *Rejoice* 1975:2).

2.3 THE BASOTHO EVANGELISTS AND THE SHANGAANS — A RELATIONSHIP THAT LED TO THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF THE SHANGAANS

Evangelists Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane did not remain idle on the farm Klipfontein. They laboured to the full extent of their experience. But much of the work done on the farm amongst the Shangaans is credited to Mr Eliakim Matlanyane for reasons that are not hard to understand. Mr Asser Segagabane did not remain for a long time at Valdezia, as the farm later became known. He crossed the Limpopo River into the present-day Zimbabwe to evangelize the Banyai people (also known as the Karanga people). In 1874, the Swiss Missionary Society was founded by the Free Church of Canton de Vaud. The founding ceremony took place in April 1874. But even after the founding of this missionary society, the Free Church did not see fit to sever ties with the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society as the experience of the latter was crucial in the mammoth tasks such as evangelization, and provision of education and health care in the African mission fields, so as to get rid of the superstitious beliefs and practices prevalent among the indigenous people. The PEMS remained nurturing its "daughter", the Swiss Mission, for a very long time and a line of communication was kept open so that the latter could consult the "mother" whenever problems surfaced. The Swiss Mission's personnel were trained in Lesotho and many of its publications were printed at the Morija Printing Works in Basutoland for many years. Not even the establishment of the Sasavona Publishing House and Booksellers in Braamfontein, Johannesburg could wean this daughter from her mother, for many books continued to bear the stamp of the Paris Mission's Morija Printing Works, Lesotho, alongside the name Sasavona (Gelfand 1984:61, Maluleke 1995:11).

When Rev Paul Berthoud, accompanied by his missionary friend and colleague, Rev Ernest Creux, returned to Valdezia on 9 July 1875 after a long journey that started on 16 April 1875, they found that Evangelist Matlanyane had laid a firm foundation for the formal establishment of a mission station. He had started a school, catechism classes were offered and he had converted Lydia Shihlomulo in 1874. She had gone through very bad times when her husband rejected her after she had lost her children. So, the

foundation was there, and what was needed was the injection of capital for formal schools to be constructed, and other mission stations and outstations founded, so that westernization could entrench itself among the indigenous populace. The missionaries did not arrive alone at Valdezia. They were accompanied by Mr Bethuel Raditau and his family, as well as Mr Jeremiah Tau, the son-in-law of Matlanyane and his wife, Mrs E Matlanyane and their children. They were all there to join their breadwinners, and the families of the Revs Berthoud and Creux. As this visit was to mark the formal start of the evangelization of the Shangaans, the missionaries brought along enough cattle, goats, sheep and various kinds of fowl with which they hoped to demonstrate to Africans how to practice agriculture and stock farming. To avoid rivalry between them and the Lutherans, it was formally agreed that the Swiss missionaries would concentrate their efforts on the Machangana-Vatsonga people, while the Lutherans would continue proselytizing the Vha-Venda people, as well as the Bapedi (Northern Sotho) people, who lived in the north-eastern areas of the former Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (*Rejoice* 1975:18-20).

2.4 THE SWISS PIONEERS' PROBLEMS WITH THE ZUID-AFRIKAANSCH REPUBLIEK (SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC / TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC)

The Swiss missionaries first secured permission from the then Deputy State President of the ZAR, Gen Piet Joubert, to avoid problems with the state once they had established themselves in the Spelonken or Zoutpansberg District. Permission was duly granted by Gen Joubert. It was done on behalf of the State President, the Rev Thomas Francois Burgers, who had gone to Holland (The Netherlands) to seek funds for the construction of a railway line linking his landlocked Transvaal state with the Portuguese-owned Delagoa Bay harbour in the Portuguese East Africa colony (Mozambique). Gen Joubert found no reason to refuse the Swiss permission to work in the Zoutpansberg District, because the Lutheran and Dutch Reformed ministers were already in the area without any formal permission (Du Plessis 1911:331-332).

On his return from Holland, President Burgers saw things in a different light. Now he suddenly demanded that the Swiss missionaries should obtain permission to operate

among the Shangaans in the Zoutpansberg District, or stop working there. Because the Swiss had seen the Dutch Reformed and the Lutheran ministers working in that same district without any hindrance from the governing state, they responded somewhat unwisely to the prompts of the state president by replying that "under the circumstances it was impossible for them to cease preaching the Gospel" (Du Plessis 1911:332). Such a response was bound to result in an equally negative retort from the government, for it confirmed the fears that president Burgers had about the French-speaking clerics in his country. He had no doubt (and this was a mistake) that the French-speaking missionaries were the brethren of the very same missionaries who caused a lot of problems in the Republic of the Orange Free State by finding common cause with the belligerent Basotho warriors of King Moshoeshoe of the Mountain Kingdom (Basutoland). President Burgers wanted to prevent a situation where his Boer Republic would suffer the same fate as that of the Republic of the Orange Free State in the 1850's when it had to fight debilitating wars against the Basotho nation (Mathebula 1989:3).

According to Ramahadi (1987:3), King Moshoeshoe of the Basotho nation welcomed the Paris Evangelical Missionaries Eugene Casalis and Thomas Arbousset and their carpenter Constant Gosel, for security reasons. Firstly he wanted them to help him ward off his enemy tribes. Secondly, an alliance with people who had knowledge of the lifestyle of Europeans would be advantageous to the Basotho in the event of hostility or the outbreak of war, because like them, the Boers were also crop and stock farmers, and they therefore posed a growing threat in their increasing quest for land. "Moshoeshoe was overjoyed to see the missionaries. He showed them the devastation caused by wars, told them that they were welcome and that the country was at their disposal. This kind welcome won Casalis over completely" (Mrs E D Ramahadi in "The Aims of Religious Education in Lesotho", M Ed Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1987:11). The way in which they were welcomed caused the Reverend Casalis and his colleagues to reciprocate by defending the country covertly, especially because they were put under the impression that the land was now at their disposal to do with as they pleased. It is important to note that this land deal later led to bitter wars

between the Free State Boers and the Basotho. The Boers blamed the French missionaries for being partly responsible for these wars (Davenport 1987:61, 148-154).

The suspicions of the Boers as represented by their State President were not unfounded considering the events that took place between Basutoland and the Orange Free State, and the concomitant repercussions. Ramahadi's historical account, though somewhat outside the scope of this research, nonetheless does shed some light on how the French-speaking missionaries were viewed by the ZAR and the white inhabitants of the OFS. In the Orange Free State territory, the missionaries were seen as supporting the Basotho in their fight against the Boers of the Free State. But on their part, the Basotho suspected their missionary allies of conniving with the white enemies of their nation. Such accusations were hurled back and forth, especially when the party doing the accusing was on the losing side (Ramahadi 1987:11).

The relationship that existed between the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society's ministers and those of the Swiss Mission, may have prompted President Burgers to put them under the same spotlight in the 1870s. The Swiss missionaries were French-speaking and came from Basutoland, a festering sore in the hearts of the white Free Staters of the time, from where the missionaries ventured into the Zoutpansberg District, with the Shangaans as their target group for evangelization. The Zoutpansberg District was not peaceful at the time. The Makhado wars were raging, and the people of Sekhukhuniland were up in arms against the selfsame Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek. King Makhado Ramabulana of the Vha-Venda did not recognise the authority of the erstwhile Transvaal Boer Republic, and paramount chief Sekhukhuni had an army that was superior to the Boer army. The fact that Sekhukhuni had proven that Burgers' forces were not invincible must have served as an inspiration to Makhado's men (Maluleke 1995:15).

The situation was volatile. The French-speaking Swiss missionaries had come to evangelize in the Zoutpansberg at a time when President Burgers was trying to maintain political stability and win back the faith of his people after embarrassing the state

finances. At another time and under different circumstances, there might have been no response needed other than that which was directed at the Swiss clerics. President Burgers felt that he had to do something to obviate a situation where his Boers would go down the same route as the one that the Free Staters had to go in the 1850s and 1860s, and the only option that was acceptable to him was to expel the Swiss missionaries (Du Plessis 1911:332-333).

Mathebula (1989:3-4) is of the opinion that the Swiss missionaries were treated with hostility because they were suspected of aiding the Pedi in their fight against the defunct Transvaal government just like their Paris brethren helped the Basotho of Moshoeshoe in their fight against the Orange Free State in the war of 1858 and other following conflicts.

President Burgers' response might not be found entirely at fault in the context of the political fermentation that caused the ruin of the Voortrekker town Schoemansdal by the rampaging Makhado forces (Tsedu in *Sowetan* 5 March 1998:13). But in so far as President Burgers' fears could be regarded as not genuine, his hardline attitude and approach toward the Swiss missionaries, even before establishing whether they were Paris missionaries or not, should be mentioned. Had he tried to establish that first, the whole issue might have passed without creating a crisis, as their bona fides would not have been in doubt. The entry of the Swiss missionaries into the Zoutpansberg District should have been viewed as a catalyst to facilitate the social transformation of the indigenous populace from their heathen and belligerent state to modernity with its attendant features of civilized norms, Christianity, respect for law and order and good neighbourliness. Missionary education with its Christian emphasis, should have been construed as an indispensable weapon to dissuade the pagan communities from regarding warfare as an instrument for solving social problems. President Burgers should also have realised that the addition of the third missionary society that was poised to evangelize every possible person who had not yet been evangelized, was a blessing to his state, because even though not everybody was going to accept conversion, the situation would be far better than when no people were proselytized at

2.6 THE SWISS MISSIONARIES' NEW APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO WORK IN THE ZOUTPANSBERG DISTRICT

The members of the Valdezia Mission Station were well aware of President Burgers' anger over the Swiss missionaries' curt response to his prompts, and in an attempt to save face, they tried to present a fresh application requesting permission to evangelise the Shangaans of the Zoutpansberg District. But by this time, the President of the ZAR had had enough of treating the recalcitrant missionaries, as he perceived them, with leniency. He ordered Veld-cornet Grieve of the Spelonken District to arrest the Revs Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud. But Veld-cornet Grieve ran into difficulties, because the police officers who were supposed to arrest them, refused to do so. They did not want to apprehend the people who were their doctors — the missionaries had access to medical knowledge and supplies, and provided the whites of the Zoutpansberg District with medical practitioners and medicine. An unnamed Portuguese national volunteered to arrest the two missionaries and transported them by Scotch-cart to Pietersburg, where their fate was put in the hands of the Magistrate Detlof Maré. He released them after five weeks without any formal charges having been laid against them. Had he delayed their release, he would have been confronted by 22 protesting Boers calling for the release of their doctors (Creux in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* 1921:2). (My translation).

2.7 THE ANNEXATION OF THE ERSTWHILE TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC BY THE BRITISH (1877)

The vendetta that President Burgers had against the Swiss missionaries was short-lived. It ended with the annexation of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic by British forces in 1877. In a pretext to further their imperialistic aims, the British posed as the protectors of the Pedi people, who were allegedly being persecuted by the Boers. Although the Boers were still not on good terms with the Bapedi of Paramount Chief Sekhukhuni, the actual hostilities between them had already ended in 1876 when the Boers were ignominiously defeated by Sekhukhuni's forces and a peace gesture had been exchanged between the two warring nations (Davenport 1987:91&159). These political developments are of particular significance to the Swiss' missionary activities in the

Zoutpansberg District, because the ZAR's distrust in these clerics nearly put an end to their educational activities. The annexation of the Transvaal Republic by Sir Theophilus Shepstone and his British forces in 1877 was welcomed with a sense of great relief by the Swiss missionaries, because now there was the prospect of a friendlier president being appointed in Burgers' position (Davenport 1987:91&156-161, Creux 1921:2).

After the annexation, the Rev Ernest Creux captured the mood in the Swiss mission camp as follows: "We, together with the first converts, returned to Valdezia elated by the turn of events. We said: God has truly shown His love for the evangelization of the Tsonga people." The Rev Creux continues: "The British ruled until the year 1881 when they were defeated by the Boers at the battle of Majuba, and forced to abandon the Transvaal. Paul Kruger became the new president of the Transvaal, and he did not persecute us" (Creux in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* August 1921:2). (My translation).

The above exposition encapsulates the agony through which the Swiss missionaries went after their arrest in 1876. The takeover of the Boer state by the British got rid of the stumbling-block in the path of social transformation in South Africa. Had the Swiss missionaries not been steadfast, they could easily have left the country without evangelizing the Shangaans, and one shudders to imagine how very long it might then have taken them to see the dawn of civilization, given the lax attitude of the state when it came to the provision of native education during those years.

2.8 FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

2.8.1 Education as a means of entry into the Christian world

Missionaries, regardless of their controversies and denominational boundaries, were the embodiment of western civilization during the years when state policies did not provide any education for Africans. Missionaries belonging to different religious households or denominations raised funds to establish schools, dispensaries that grew into clinics, and eventually hospitals that treated different diseases. Apart from the primary purpose of

providing health care, their treatments also helped to fight against superstitious beliefs relating to the causes of diseases. Churches were the initiators of social transformation. As was the case with health care, the missionaries were in the first instance responsible for spreading the Christian faith far and wide, but they also took upon themselves the responsibility to initiate the process of empowering the African people with literary skills, by starting to teach them to read and write. Christian mission schools served as beacons for social change well into and beyond the Bantu Education era that had its beginning in 1953 (Saayman 1991:29).

Formal education was by no means meant only for children. Adults who were keen to develop along Western lines were allowed to partake of Christian education. Their education was seen as something like a bonus that would contribute greatly to the transformation of the heathen masses. Schools were therefore established in most inhabited areas, such as reserves or rural areas, and in compounds and townships in urban areas where the people lived who were attracted to the towns and cities by the new economic system introduced by the Europeans. In rural parts of South Africa and Mozambique, the Swiss missionaries erected so-called conventional schools that were attended by children of school-going age only. In urban areas there were conventional schools as well as "night schools". These schools catered for those migrant workers who had not had the opportunity to receive formal education in their youth. These people wanted to learn how to read and write in order to keep in touch with loved ones back home, often very far away, but for many of them the most important reason to get educated, was to be able to read the Bible by themselves. They wanted the ability to read and interpret it to other, usually older people, who were not able to do so because of their illiteracy. For many people, reading skills facilitated debate about religious issues during occasions set aside for such matters. But formal education by itself was not enough to usher them into the Christian world. Converted Christians had to complement this by observing the mission statutes. They were expected to abandon traditional customs like payment of lobola, they were not to send children to initiation schools, not to indulge in the use of intoxicating substances like beer (*byalwa*), marula beer (*vukany*) and to avoid other prohibited substances and practices (Rev JA Machao

in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, November 1921: 3-4. Cf Rev CM Maphophe in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, October & November 1921:2).

In their civilizing missions, the missionaries were convinced that the native was "neither a devil nor an angel but a man" with passions similar to those of Europeans. "Change the course of education pursued in forming his character and he loses all the peculiarities which render him an object of dread or of sympathy to his detractors and panegyrists" (Ashley 1980:35).

According to the missionaries, therefore, the kind of "education" that had thus far turned the native into a superstitious savage — someone who was perceived to be indolent, polygamous, drunken, warlike and a dogged worshipper of the ancestral spirits, was the informal system of education (home education) and they saw it as their God-given duty to obliterate this culture with all its traditional values, and replace it with formal education. They firmly believed that as soon as the natives started to receive formal education, they would progress up the social ladder en route to civilized standards. Most missionaries were convinced that Africans were tenanted by many kinds of inherent social evil that could only be removed by formal education and Christianity (Maswanganyi in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* November 1923:3, Rev CM Maphophe in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* November 1921:2).

In Saayman's view (1991:36) Africans at that time were not to receive the same education as the Europeans, but only a modicum of it, so that they should not become a threat to the white race. Even so, the education they received enabled them to be more effective than their missionary mentors in spreading the Word of God. However, their efficiency should not be ascribed only to the education they received, but much rather to their deep cultural knowledge of the people they were working with, as well as their proficiency in the languages of these people of Africa, both of which were obviously greater than that of the European missionaries.

According to Van der Walt, Christian education had both positive and negative results on its consumers. On the positive side, mission education produced the African middle class that was articulate in socio-economic and political issues, and possessed the civilized norms and values that were expected of them by their mentors. They also served as collaborators, spreading civilization among their kith and kin. On the negative side, mission education caused social alienation in the sense that there was a reciprocal exchange of hate between the educated and the uneducated natives. The few educated natives despised the uneducated masses for not being amenable to social change, while the latter scorned the former for having forsaken their traditional culture in pursuit of the European way of life (*xilungu*). Contemporary analysts see Christian education as having transformed Africans at the expense of having turned the majority of them into a servile labour force that invigorated the capitalist economic system. Education is also seen as something that whetted the indigenous populace's appetite for expensive European goods that they could not afford. By not casting their desire for these things aside, many Africans were immersed in perpetual servitude as cheap labourers without ever attaining economic independence. Van der Walt cautions against making criticisms without considering all the evidence pertaining to mission education. He calls for an approach based on interpretation and balance (hermeneutical approach) to the study of history in order to appreciate the good deeds of missionaries during their tenure (Van der Walt 1992:220-221). There is no doubt that mission education was essentially laying the foundations for civilization in Africa. Swiss mission education seems to be attracting criticism because of the racist premises on which it was based in those days. Black people were not expected to serve in white communities. Their education did not qualify them for such positions. Instead, the black elite were urged to be of service to their own communities by sharing their knowledge of the Scriptures with people who had no knowledge of God. A sense of duty marked by industriousness was to be the hallmark of the new African's outlook on modern life (Pienaar 1990:11, Kuschke 1908:14).

The Mission stations established by the Swiss missions were the nerve centres for the civilization of the African people, with the Shangaans as the main target group. They

were assisted by the outstations which had the same goals as the mission stations when it came to the provision of education, spiritual upliftment and the provision of health care. Outstations had school buildings and churches, and dispensaries that could take care of minor ailments. Individuals who made use of the educational and other services provided by these institutions moved up the social ladder, and were consequently not judged according to the same scale as those who did not avail themselves of mission education. The educational and other interventions of the Swiss missionaries created new social classes, namely the converted Christians (*vakreste/majagani*) and non-converts (*vahedeni*). The converted Christians saw themselves as occupying higher positions than the non-converts in society (Maluleke 1995:124-126).

The three institutions, namely the school, the church and the hospital, complemented each other in the field of social transformation. Whereas the school's main task is understood to be the inculcation of reading and writing skills (literacy), it would often be found doubling up these functions with the promotion of hygiene and health awareness which are normally the functions of hospitals, clinics or health centres and their staff. By the same token, the function of the church would also be performed by teachers whose teacher-evangelist courses sufficiently prepared them for such tasks. This arrangement, strange as it may seem, was a good one, because in this way all the areas that were earmarked for development were provided with education, health care and the Gospel. Without these services, development would have been a strange phenomenon indeed. In fact, some missions tried to infuse versatility into their personnel with the aim of striving to accommodate these varied needs or services. For instance, the Swiss Missionary Society sent the Revs P Berthoud and E Creux to Edinburgh in Scotland for lessons in English and rudimentary training in medicine before they were sent to Southern Africa. This was to equip them with skills for teaching, treating diseases and preaching. Although their training was mainly based on preaching, they had to be equipped with the skills to teach people who were drawn from a traditional background how to read and write and to interpret the Gospel (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger* July-September 1949:15).

The skills they had in dispensing medicine enabled them to win converts at a time when Western medicine was virtually unknown in most parts of Southern Africa. By the time the first missionary doctor arrived in the person of Dr Georges Liengme, the Swiss Mission had already built a good reputation for itself between Pretoria and the Limpopo River, and was poised to cross over to the Zambezi River (Cuendet 1950:61-62).

2.8.2 The role of formal education in the mission fields

Formal education served to liberate the African masses from the enclosed world of superstitions, traditions and folklore that were kept alive by oral communication, and introduced them to a new form of communication that was not restricted to the spoken word. During that period, this new world characterised by the written word, was mostly peculiar to Europeans. This new form of communication that missionaries of different church denominations wanted to share with the indigenous races, was directed at converting them and ushering them into the new social order where Christianity and the new system of government were the normal and accepted way of life. Literacy enabled both the converts and their missionary mentors to maintain a new form of relationship that was absent in the traditional world, and that could not easily be countenanced without formal education. Formal education was therefore a means to substituting traditional culture with the super-culture upheld by the white missionaries (Murphree 1976:3-4). Saayman (1991:30) describes this cultural change as follows: "Mission schools were therefore generally viewed as beachheads of Christian civilization in pagan territory, which had to help in vanquishing pagan culture, not in propagating it."

The above elucidation indicates why Eliakim Matlanyane had seen it fitting to establish a school in Valdezia upon being left by the Rev Adolphe Mabile and the Rev Paul Berthoud during their first exploratory visit to the defunct Transvaal in 1873.

Matlanyane was quite aware of the fact that without formal education, the chances of making a success of his religious enterprise were very slim. The catechism classes and the literacy programmes he ran, were a means of effecting social changes in people who had for centuries been under the spell of heathenism. By arming his charges with

reading and writing skills, interspersed with the singing of hymns, he would not only make the Gospel accessible to the converts, but also enable African people to digest the Scriptures in the comfort of their homes, and even to pass on the knowledge that they had gained to their own people who were still illiterate. Where funds did not permit the construction of standard classrooms, the shade of trees served as breeding grounds for converts. These were later followed by temporary structures and eventually proper buildings (*Rejoice* 1975:20).

When Berthoud and Creux returned to Valdezia, they were elated about the excellent work that had been done in their absence. Now they were able to build on the firm educational foundations that had been laid by evangelist Matlanyane. He had been able to do this because of the education he had received at the Morija Pastoral School, Basutoland (Lesotho). Nowhere in the annals of the Swiss missionary history at Valdezia are any other developments recorded for that specific time. There is only a reference to 1875 as the year in which missionary work started in Valdezia, which Mathebula (1989:7) dismisses as a ploy to deny black evangelists the credit due to them for their work prior to 1875. Rev Berthoud and his colleagues used the capital that was available to build formal schools, churches and dispensaries. The latter were the forerunners of the Swiss missionary hospitals which are discussed in chapter 6 of this study.

2.8.3 The nature of the change that formal education was striving for

Formal education did more than merely purvey literary or book knowledge. It was aimed at providing skills to the indigenous people so that they could play a crucial role in bringing about socio-economic and political development. But entry into mainstream politics was not encouraged by the missionaries. What was encouraged was the acquisition of industrial skills, teaching and preaching proficiency in the interest of extending the Kingdom of God. Christian education had both a formal and a hidden curriculum. The formal curriculum consisted of a list of subjects or learning activities that were written down on paper and were immediately known to the parties involved in

the teaching-learning situation. The hidden curriculum, on the other hand, consisted of the knowledge people got almost indirectly, such as when they were exclusively taught elements of Western culture, so as to deculturize and make them loyal or governable. Ashley (1980:35) defines the hidden curriculum as the opposite of the formal curriculum. In other words, this sort of curriculum complements the intentions embodied in the formal curriculum, represented by the lists of subjects offered at school or different standards or grades by introducing things like acceptable eating habits, work habits (ethics), discipline and so forth to learners. Thus social clubs like the Pathfinders (Boy Scouts) and Wayfarers (Girl Guides) and their concomitant junior ranks like the Trackers and Sunbeams, served the purpose of withdrawing children from heathen practices and encouraging them to live by Christian norms and values. The uniforms instilled discipline in their wearers to the point where they would not even contemplate doing something for which they would be admonished by the missionaries. The hidden curriculum, other motives aside, served to introduce children to that which was considered good and acceptable within the community and society at large (Gunter 1979:137).

The hidden curriculum was important during the missionary era as a form of digression from the formal subject matter that dealt with the things that Christians had to know about the civilized world. The new generation of Africans were expected to be devout Christians both in theory and in practice. Gunter (1979:137) talks about secondary school activities that were essentially part and parcel of the hidden curriculum, namely cultural festivals, school societies and concerts, eisteddfods and various sports with codes aimed at instilling good habits and attitudes in children.

During the missionary era, cultural change implied uprooting everything that had anything to do with the traditional culture, namely traditional education, communalism, and the manner in which goods and services were allocated. These had to be replaced by the new Western way of life. Traditional culture was seen by missionaries as highly exploitative, especially when it came to the female sex, where women had to toil in the fields and do almost all the household chores while the men relaxed, often not doing

much more than sitting drinking beer in the sun or the shade, depending on the weather. The collective execution of tasks such as ploughing the fields, roofing the huts and working at other projects in the communal setting, was seen as the promotion of laziness on the part of some people who chose not to share in the execution of these duties. The missionaries preferred individualism in the acquisition of wealth. According to them, people had to stand on their own feet, so that those who did not "do their duty" in compliance with the new order, would be glaringly conspicuous, and be labelled as loafers. Mission education was seen as an important catalyst for social transformation, for it served to illuminate in a new light those rights which were made inaccessible to women by their men or male counterparts. Christian education served to liberate women from servitude, thus ushering them into the social world where they could enjoy the same rights as men in socio-economic and political spheres, albeit that these kinds of changes were seen in terms of the long run. The perception of the Swiss missionaries was that the church had to guide women by means of the mission statutes about what was good and what was bad for them. Practices like the payment of lobola, polygamy, adultery, witchcraft, and brewing of beer that resulted in drunkenness were outlawed by the Swiss Mission Church and all Christians had to abide by these statutes (Maphophe in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* October 1921:2).

Christian education provided women with the necessary skills to turn them into useful people in the civilized world with its Christian values and the dominant capitalist economic system. The educational institutions transformed them from illiterate tradition-bound women into westernized housemaids, cooks, teachers, nurses, and at a later stage, even priests. A woman who had accepted Christianity but was married to a polygamous husband had to sue for divorce as Christianity and polygamy were seen as incompatible. Similarly, a man who had embraced Christianity but was still the owner of businesses and had many wives, had to part with all his wives except one, and abandon his businesses lest he be plunged into sin or distracted from serving his Lord in a proper manner (Pienaar 1990:2, Ramahadi 1987:50, cf Berthoud in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1921:2).

2.8.4 Co-operation between the Swiss mission and the government in providing formal education

Social transformation is a very complex process. It needs co-operation among various structures for it to be able to bear the desired fruit. Among all the structures and stakeholders that have some or other vested interest in it, the contributions made by the state are of crucial importance. In no civilized country can the state afford to remain in the background, expecting non-governmental organizations to provide formal education on its behalf. The process of social transformation has to be state-driven. It is the government's responsibility to provide what is necessary for the education of its citizenry on the basis of the resources it has to set aside for this enormous task. Other stakeholders should enter the fray only after the state has formulated policies and has provided the physical, financial, and human resources that will ensure the smooth running of the education system. Physical resources are things like classroom accommodation, chalkboards et cetera, while financial resources refer to the funds (money) that should be set aside for the normal functioning of the school system. Human resources are the teaching and administrative personnel that ensure the delivery of proper services by the school system (Module 5 Study Guide: certificate courses for distance education practitioners 1997:63, Saayman 1991:29-31).

At a time when successive governments in South Africa adhered to their *laissez-faire* (non-intervention) policies, churches of various denominations assumed the responsibility of providing formal education to the indigenous populace. They built schools with funds from various donors, and managed them so as to ensure that the African people were Christianized and introduced to modernity. During the time when the state practised its policy of non-involvement in black education, the Swiss Mission chose to educate and civilize the Shangaans with funds from the Swiss Mission Board, from friends of the Swiss Mission and generous grants from Swiss industrialists who were doing business in South Africa and elsewhere. When state funding eventually became a reality in the early 1900s, it was provided under certain conditions. The missions were expected to follow curricula that were acceptable to the state, which

meant that there were to be more industrial training courses than academic studies (Nwandula 1987:59, Pienaar 1990:45).

Missions saw government funding as crucial and indispensable for their enterprises because they had been operating under extremely difficult conditions due to lack of funds prior to state subsidization. They had to spread their limited financial resources over education, and evangelization as well as the treatment of diseases, which formed part of a wider campaign to eliminate superstitious beliefs and practices. With the state's partial involvement in the provision of native education, missionaries felt that they would be able to annex more territories to cultivate and sow the seeds of Christianity. But the acceptance of state funding meant that churches had to sacrifice or compromise some of their principles, for example non-racialism in the provision of formal education. The Swiss Mission seemingly had no problems with the state's segregated policies, because it was destined to develop a differentiated system of education in South Africa. They therefore accepted government funding in the spirit in which it was given, because it would in their view accelerate the pace of enculturation and acculturation in the areas under their jurisdiction. Describing the conditions that forced missions to co-operate with the state in the provision of black education, Ashley (1980:35) puts it as follows: "Because of the difficulty encountered in converting people from the traditional to the Christian universe, the missionaries were prepared to co-operate with the government in carrying out policies that were aimed at effecting large-scale change ..."

This intervention by the state was long overdue and could not be refused by the different churches because they were operating on land that was under the trusteeship of the state. Furthermore, churches needed the help of the state in policing areas where westernization was opposed to the point of burning down church-buildings and schools. Churches did not have their own security personnel to guard their educational institutions against arsonists. The existence of co-operation between churches and the state would greatly facilitate dealing with those Africans who resisted the Western schools of the mission societies by "setting fire to the buildings where classes were

held", and it would also help in persuading those individuals who avoided schooling, to avail themselves of formal education (Patterson 1992:11). The Transvaal government's partial intervention in the provision of black education (1903) in the form of grants-in-aid for subjects like needlework, carpentry and industrial or agricultural training, should not have induced churches, the Swiss Mission included, to kowtow to the state's racial-inspired policies with regard to the provision of education. Churches would have done well by propagating educational policies that would have enabled their African proselytes to develop their latent potentialities optimally in an education system unfettered by racial prejudice (Pienaar 1995:45).

The Swiss Mission remained mute with regard to the educational policies of the erstwhile Transvaal, or tacitly supported them because they were in tandem with its statutes. For the record, the Swiss Mission was also in favour of an educational system that had the provision of manual skills to Africans in mind, because the Swiss considered them to be too lazy to do anything meaningful for themselves. From the year 1906 onwards, therefore, the Swiss Mission's relationship with the government was most cordial. To illustrate this point, in a letter written to the Rev WEC Clarke, Secretary to the Education Department and First Inspector of Native Education in the Transvaal, the Rev DP Lenoir, principal of Lemana Training Institute had the following to say: "Our mission is in sympathy with the efforts made by the government to impress upon the native mind the importance and moral value of manual labour, and to offer to pupils in training institutions an opportunity to be developed in some measure of industrial knowledge and skill" (Lenoir 1906:2).

These pronouncements of the Rev Lenoir about education were applicable to the Swiss Mission's Rikatla Training Institution in Mozambique, and by implication, also the primary and secondary schools. No missionary within the Swiss Mission establishment would speak of education without mentioning the desirability of turning Africans into industrious people who could be of great service to their own communities, to the industries in the growing towns and cities, and to the agricultural industries that were a common sight in the as yet underdeveloped but fast changing rural parts of South

Africa. The grants-in-aid offered by the government were very helpful to the church, because it could thenceforth increase its mission stations and outstations in the name of the Lord. Such funding would make it possible for the church to train more African collaborators who would in turn spread the Gospel to the remote areas where missionaries could not manage to do so. To the Swiss Mission, African teacher-evangelists were important appendages to the clergy because they were more intimately familiar with African conditions, completely at home with the indigenous culture, and much more readily accepted by their own people. By strategically positioning these converted Christians to the fore in this way, they were bound to win more converts for society, not only from the Shangaan ethnic group, but from other tribes as well. African Christians could, to borrow Saayman's words, "evangelize much more efficiently than Western missionaries, but these evangelists had to receive at least a modicum of education, and so mission schools were essential" (Saayman 1991:36).

It is therefore clear that since its inception in 1875, the Swiss Mission saw as its task the social transformation of the African masses, particularly the Shangaans, through education, evangelization and the provision of health care wherever they were within the borders of South Africa, Mozambique, and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe (Büchler in a letter to the additional native commissioner, Bushbuckridge, dated 11 January 1938, cf Rev Lombard in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1952:13).

With the Swiss Mission pursuing educational policies that were essentially similar to those of the state, the government was unlikely to fail in investing subsidies into the church's educational initiatives. All that the church(es) had to do, was to ensure that only a modicum of European education was provided to the black race so that they could become "artists, carpenters, builders, or plumbers" — or handy practical teachers who would keep on producing cheap labourers for the mines, railways, industries and even farms. The idea of training Africans in higher thinking skills was not favoured by the state or the Swiss Mission, as this would serve as a recipe for conflict between black and white in the dominant agro-industrial economic system (Nwandula 1987:53-54 cf Pienaar 1990:45).

The above policies were characteristic of the Swiss Missionary Society since its genesis. The Rev Dr HA Junod (see photograph 24), who was seen by some to be the church's greatest thinker, was convinced that a uniform system of education for the inhabitants of South Africa would spell disaster for the country, because black and white were not equally gifted. According to him, white people were by far the intellectual superiors of black people, and to place them on an equal academic and educational level, would cause the black people to suffer brain haemorrhage. The Swiss Mission used this way of thought as justification for a differentiated system of education in South Africa. It is interesting to note that such notions were shared by eminent persons outside the Swiss Mission. People such as Dr CT Loram, who was an adviser on native education to the Union Government, and the Rev WEC Clarke, Secretary to the then Transvaal Education Department and First Inspector of Native Education, come to mind in this regard. Even the Eiselen Commission of 1903 advised that Africans should be trained for cheap labour in mines, on the railways, in industries and on farms. Rev WEC Clarke even went so far as to spell out what he had in mind for blacks in a paper entitled "Teach the Native to Work" (Pienaar 1990:45 cf Nwandula 1987:5).

From the pioneering years the Swiss missionaries' educational initiatives did not seek to give Africans the opportunity to receive education of the best quality, as their principal aim was to win converts who would be of service to the church. This explains why the church leaders were content with granting their proselytes only a modicum of education. To them, the educational policies formulated by Sir George Grey, who was the Governor of the Cape Colony (1854-1861), were still relevant in the 1870s and beyond. This explains why the Swiss missionaries still toyed with the idea of establishing some industrial schools in the 1950s when the Bantu Education system was introduced. The emphasis in the Swiss mission stations was that everyone within the African communities should use their hands for the glory of the Lord. The system of education at the Swiss mission schools was no different to that of Lovedale College during Rev Dr James Stewart's principalship from 1867. Stewart, like the Swiss missionaries, also talked of "daily manual labour of some kind for all who are not apprentices or engaged

in other work... the object is not the value of their labour, but the principle that Christianity and idleness are not compatible" (Wilson 1983:8). This system of education was implanted almost without any variation at the Swiss mission schools, and it turned Africans into hewers of wood and drawers of water with no highly developed skills to sell in the capitalist economic system. With the type of education Africans received at mission schools, they could not harness control of the sophisticated technology that was in use in the mines, the railways and the manufacturing industries where the government felt they were required as manual labourers.

But Pienaar suggests (1990:5) that the Swiss missionaries had no real power to influence the state to draw up better curricula for natives. She criticizes Nwandula for regarding "Swiss Mission education practices as being at odds with the Swiss Mission's liberal political outlook". What Pienaar seems to overlook is that Nwandula's remarks stem from what the Swiss missionaries wrote in circulars, memoranda, letters, reports and articles appearing in their mission newspapers or magazines, all of which are now stored in libraries and archives. These form today's primary sources, and Nwandula made an informed analysis of these documents in his studies for his MEd dissertation. Pienaar (1990:5) rightly asserts that "government intervention in mission education in the form of financial assistance, accounted for the type of education offered at Lemana and other mission schools". It should be pointed out, however, that the state seemed to have too much trust and confidence in the abilities of the missionaries, because they were expected and relied upon to educate and transform the natives into loyal, law-abiding, sociable and industrious people, capable of doing service to their communities and society at large. This should explain why it took such a long time for the state to assume partial and eventually absolute control of education for the natives. Even before the state took over the responsibility for black education, it highly praised the sterling work done by the Swiss missionaries in the sphere of social transformation. In the researcher's view, if missionaries were in favour of real education for Africans, they should have fully exploited the state's confidence in their ability to transform the Africans. But it was not a case of the state that was playing an obstructive role in the missionaries' proselytizing efforts — the missionaries themselves advised the

government on the educational policies that should be followed in black education. Mathebula (1989:17) sums up the Swiss Mission's educational policies succinctly when he says that "the Swiss Mission, because of working amongst one homogeneous tribe, saw no wrong in perpetuating tribalism. Hence later on when her schools were taken over by the Bantu Education Act, this church never resisted." This was yet another avenue that the Swiss church should have used to express her displeasure at the erosion of her charges' right to quality education. The Swiss Mission's response to the questionnaire sent to the different churches was conformist rather than showing concern for the welfare of Africans in matters affecting their future educational needs. Instead of lobbying for the improvement of education for Africans, which continued to lag behind that of Europeans and other whites, the Swiss Mission showed concern for the retention of Calvinist ideals on which Bantu education was based anyway (Masumbe 1997:50).

2.9 THE SWISS MISSION'S PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLOOK VIS-À-VIS THE FRENCH MISSIONARY TRADITIONS: THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Swiss missionaries' educational policies in South Africa can be traced to those of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, which was their foster mother. *The South African Outlook* (1 December 1926:260) describes the genesis of the Swiss Mission and its traditions by referring to this Society as the child of the Paris Evangelical Mission since 1833. What this means is that the Swiss Mission's philosophy and operations were based on the mission statutes formulated by the foster mother, namely the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) from the moment the latter launched its missionary activities in Basutoland (Lesotho) in 1833. Thus, by the time the Swiss Missionary Society was founded in April 1874, its autonomy was just nominal, while in reality, it remained under the tutelage of the Paris Mission in Basutoland. With this subordinate status intact, it should not be difficult to understand why each time the Swiss Missionary Society initiated programmes in its mission fields, it sounded as though it was the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society that was running them. The reason was that there appeared to be little or no differences in the statutes that were meticulously enforced by the Swiss and the French missionaries in their spheres of influence in South Africa and Basutoland (Lesotho). They had similar views in their

banning of lobola, polygamy, superstition, initiation schools where boys were circumcised, girls' initiation schools, adultery, drunkenness and so forth. Even the Honourable Reverend Abel de Meuron (see photograph 16) (1916:3) admitted that the church laws that the Swiss missionaries were implementing in South Africa and Mozambique where most of their mission stations were, were directly transplanted from Basutoland.

When one looks at the society to which Africans were being led, one is further struck by the similarities in the operations of the Paris and Swiss missionaries on the one hand, and those of France as a colonial master on the other. In both instances, the society and way of life into which the indigenous people were being thrust was dominated by European cultural practices in the socio-economic and political spheres. In both cases, one notes some disparities in the sense that Africans were still being put in a situation where they were always in short supply of knowledge that would enable them to compete with their European counterparts on an equitable basis for positions that might be available in the socio-economic and political spheres. These discrepancies were the result of education policies based on master-servant relationships (Murphree 1976:3). According to Murphree, educational policies based on these premises deprived the black races of leaders who would guide them in their relations with Europeans in the difficult transition from their traditional customs to effective adjustment to the new social system with its attendant restrictions. Murphree does not suggest that missionary or colonial education did not produce leaders among the African population. On the contrary, he seems to suggest that the number of Africans who had the good fortune of receiving formal education were thinly spread among African communities, and were alienated from their kith and kin due to social stratification that went hand in hand with mission or colonial education. This social engineering had the effect of leaving the white oligarchy in control of the African majority. Swiss missionaries seemed to have emulated the theories and practices of the French, for their education system appeared to encourage social stratification. In terms of the mission statutes, people who had received a modicum of western education, had to leave their villages to go and reside with their fellow-Christians at the *Xitasini* (mission station) because as converted

Christians they were likely to plunge into sin again if they were to continue living with the heathens (*vahedeni*) in the villages situated on the outskirts of mission stations (Mabyalane in "Muti wa Vakriste [Xitasi]" 11 May 1949).

The Swiss Mission's creation of social hierarchies on the basis of a person's Christianization and level of education had both positive and negative consequences. On the positive side, the realisation that formal education was a means to securing a lucrative job and higher social status, induced parents to send their children to school. But then the negative element could enter when they first tasted the European way of life, and such children were lost to heathenism. Another negative aspect of Christian education was the alienation of such Christians from their own people and culture, represented by the emergence of terms like *majagani* (converted Christians who had received mission education) and *vahedeni* (non-believers or heathens) who were despised by the African elite (Mabyalane, 11 May 1949). The trickiest thing about mission education was that missionaries did not hide the fact that the purpose of the education they provided was to further social change, but when Africans strove to attain formal education, they still found themselves far from reaching the rung on which Europeans were, due to differentiated education. This does not imply that the Swiss missionaries' education system was worthless. To say that, would be to blatantly overlook the facts. The Swiss missionaries did a marvellous job in virtually all the areas they touched, and there is a lot of evidence to vouch for this reality. All the people who were exposed to their teachings and upheld these teachings, enjoyed a relatively high standard of living compared to those who scorned education or had no opportunity to receive it. The defects of the Swiss Mission's education lay in its lack of openness and inability to allow learners to enter into careers that required higher intellectual skills, such as engineering. But it was certainly not so defective as to fail to give learners skills in "lesser" careers like teaching. Maswanganyi (*Nyeleti ya Mišo*, March 1923:3) saw formal education as a key to life. He believed that education provided an individual with the key to enter any sector of life. Accordingly, a person without formal education was facing a number of problems in a world that was increasingly being swamped by Western technology. It is interesting to note that in his treatise Maswanganyi did not

refer to any educational institutions other than the Swiss Mission's Lemana Training Institution. This implies that Swiss Missionaries acquitted themselves well of their allotted tasks in ensuring that the Africans abandoned their traditional way of life in favour of moving to modernity.

According to the late Rev EFC Mashava who was one of the beneficiaries of Swiss education, the Christian fellowship that existed between the Swiss and the Africans, particularly the Shangaans, led to the production of leaders who progressed to occupy important positions in different spheres of civilian life. But like other people who benefited from mission education, he believed that there were several areas where the Swiss Mission's policies needed improvement. He was critical of the Church's tribalist and nationalist tendencies mirrored by the name "Tsonga Presbyterian Church", which to the outsider projected it as a church exclusively meant for the Tsonga or Shangaan people. He did however add that all the other missionary societies were also concentrating on evangelizing only one or two ethnic groups, but like the Swiss Mission, they would not reject anyone from whatever ethnic group who wanted to be led to salvation by their preaching. He lauded the Swiss for giving the Shangaans a sense of human dignity through their churches, educational institutions, hospitals and a publishing house, namely Sasavona Booksellers and Publishers, Braamfontein, where the Tsonga writers could put their literary genius on display (Rev EFC Mashava, "The role played by the church in the building up of the Tsonga Nation" in *Rejoice* 1975:6-7).

The Swiss missionaries' failure to produce some progressive educational policies in their transformation efforts, could be traced to the French connection that they had, and some outside influence that was realised through interdenominational conferences, which no missionary society failed to send representatives to. The French people's educational policies are better illustrated by a quotation from Mr Albert Sarraut, Minister of Colonies in France, that appears in Murphree (1976:6). The researcher will only cite the three broad aims of the French education system with regard to France's West African colonies. The French saw education in Africa as serving the following objectives:

- (1) the improvement of colonial production value by raising the level of intelligence and skills of indigenous workers
- (2) setting free, and raising above the masses of labourers, the elite of collaborators occupying positions such as technical staff, foremen or overseers employed or commissioned by the management of industries, farms or even government departments
- (3) training personnel who would compensate for the numerical shortage of Europeans, and satisfy the growing demands of the agricultural and industrial enterprises of colonization

None of the above policy objectives was absent from the policy documents of the Swiss Missionary Society's enterprises in South Africa and elsewhere. It would appear as if the Honourable Albert Sarraut included the Swiss' needs when he delivered his policy speech — judging from the manner in which the latter managed their education system. Without pre-empting what the ensuing chapters will cover in greater detail, it is important to point out that like the French, the Swiss missionaries aimed at creating an African middle class, or what Sarraut fervently refers to as "the elite of collaborators" who would not only supplement the missionary workforce and encourage their fellow men to abide by the laws of the country, but go an extra mile, supervising their kith and kin to produce wealth for the colonialists. The educational institutions set up in the mission fields had to instil the love for menial labour in Africans, because Christianity was not compatible with laziness. The Swiss Mission was aware of the fact that for it to succeed in its evangelical crusades, it had to cement relationships with other bodies that also had a keen interest in the social upliftment of the backward and uncivilized races of Africa. It was this cross-pollination of ideas that would literally water the tree of God, so it could ultimately bear the desired fruit. Wilson spoke about this matter when she said: "Christians cannot isolate themselves: they necessarily reach out towards others. They did so in the first century AD, and every revival of faith leads to a fresh outreaching" (Monica Wilson in *The South African Outlook* Vol 113 1983:7-8).

2.10 THE NEED FOR THE SWISS MISSIONARIES TO ADAPT TO THE DEMANDS OF THEIR NEWLY FOUNDED MISSION FIELDS

2.10.1 The missionaries' principal task in the mission fields

The missionaries' principal tasks in the mission fields combined evangelical and educative activities. Africans who had to be converted were illiterate as a result of the state's lack of interest in educating the indigenous populace. For religious services to have an impact on their Shangaan proselytes, the Swiss missionaries had to establish schools where children could be given instruction in reading, writing and numeracy. Africans had to know God, and for the sermons to make a lasting impression on them, they had to have the ability to read and interpret the Bible on their own. It was through Bible study that the heathen communities would develop a sense of duty towards God and His creations on earth. The African population had to be taught that the route to salvation and everlasting life, was via the acceptance of Jesus Christ the Saviour. People had therefore to desist from their traditional worship of ancestral spirits, and were to worship only their Creator and His Son. The Bible had to serve as the primary guide to life as it should be lived by Christians on earth. People had to know that they were surviving on earth not by their wits that surpassed that of any other creature on earth, but because of the will of God that wanted them to be there and to survive according to His Word.

One of the tasks that missionaries had to perform without delay was to produce reading sheets and catechisms. They also had to translate the Bible into the Xitsonga language, because the belief that all natives in the northern parts of the former Transvaal were proficient in the Sesotho language had been proved to be false. But the first Xitsonga Bible was not to be published until the year 1883. Even then it still showed traces of the orthography of the Sesotho language (*Rejoice* 1975:20-21, Wilson 1983:7-8 cf Du Plessis 1911:331-332).

2.10.2 The need for teaching industrial courses at school and instilling love for manual labour among those who were to be proselytized

Closely connected to the spreading of the Gospel of Christ among the African communities, was the need to liberate Africans from indolence. Missionaries across all the denominational boundaries were shocked by the seeming inability of Africans to do anything meaningful for themselves. The Swiss missionaries were therefore intent on instilling a culture of industriousness among the pagan communities, and this noble ideal could only be realised if the school system incorporated industrial courses in its curricular package. But this loading of curricula with industrial courses was not confined to the Swiss education system only. Missionaries labouring in different parts of Africa structured their education system along the same lines. Tlou, in an article dealing with missionary education in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) that forms part of Berman's work *African reactions to Missionary Education* (1975:190) mentions gardening and agriculture, building, carpentry, leatherwork and home economics as some of the subjects treated at schools. Wilson (1983:8) cites agriculture and carpentry as the subjects done by pupils since the inception of Lovedale in 1841 in the Eastern Cape. Training in masonry, carpentry, wagon-making and blacksmithing was only introduced in 1856 through the insistence of Sir George Grey. Printing and book-binding were added in 1861 in the industrial school's curriculum. Ever since their arrival in the Zoutpansberg District, the Swiss missionaries had been dreaming of an industrial school that would offer as many manual courses as funds would permit. Even before having industrial schools to offer training in the above departments, they did not waste time in giving their charges basic training in this direction. The late Rev Marivate (see photograph 4), in recounting his early years at school, remembered being taught woodwork, book-binding, gardening and many other industrial courses by the Rev Paul Rosset of the Swiss Mission in whose house he grew up (Marivate in "To the Study Group at Elim Hospital", 15 July 1975:I). Thus one of the things that made training in manual work inescapable to some youths, even though there were not many of them in terms of numbers, was the fact that some lived in missionary residences under the guardianship of missionaries. Such contacts or co-existence as the Reverend DC

Marivate and before him, his mother had experienced during their youthful stages, were bound to have moulded their behavioural patterns along the lines that were acceptable to their missionary mentors (Marivate 1975:I).

2.10.3 The value of industrial courses in life

Industrial courses exposed individuals to those skills that were regarded as the keys to glorifying Jesus Christ's name. Without them, the missionaries' civilizing missions were handicapped. Christ's name could be effectively glorified through prayer and what was done by the hands, and not through idleness. The priceless gift that all missionaries wanted to give to the natives in their care, was instruction in manual work, because it formed the basis for self-reliance and self-sufficiency. It reduced the dependency syndrome which seemed to be deeply entrenched in the African way of life. So important were industrial courses, that teacher-trainees who failed in any industrial course in the Lemana training institution's examinations, would not proceed to the next level or receive a certificate until all the requirements had been satisfactorily met (Schedule "B" Native Teachers' Training Institution [undated] p 2).

All these measures were adopted in a quest to transform the natives to a point where they would be of service to the church, the community and society at large. The missionaries were so serious in getting rid of the African's indolence, that when women were seen labouring in the fields while men were sitting doing nothing, they took it as exploitation of the womenfolk. It did not strike them that the African culture determined that there were certain forms of labour that had to be performed by a given sex. They did not appreciate the fact that each sex had a particular duty to perform in traditional societies, and that when the time came for the execution of that task, the persons supposed to do such tasks would voluntarily stand up and exert themselves in the performance of those tasks. To them, men placed enormous responsibilities on women while expending their energies on promiscuity and its attendant proliferation of offspring. That such tasks as the defending of communities against enemy attacks, building of cattle kraals, construction and roofing of huts, and many other duties were

exclusively meant for the male folk, did not occur to them, or if it did, it did not strike them as important. What they had in mind was that education had to have a strong leaning towards instilling love for any and all menial tasks, so that the new generation of Africans could live up to the Christian norms of industriousness, and would strive to be an asset to the community in which they lived (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger*, March 1950:8).

2.10.4 Segregated schooling for Africans and Europeans

Because the Swiss missionaries were opposed to co-educational instruction for Europeans and Africans for reasons mentioned earlier, they thought that it was only proper to have separate schools and curricula for the two population groups in order to spare the less gifted Africans the mental strain of having to cram in subject matter for which they had little, or no understanding at all. The Swiss mission schools differed from the Rev W Govan's Lovedale College established in 1841, where blacks and whites attended school together and had the same subjects until 1867 when Rev Dr James Stewart became the new principal, and replaced Rev Govan's policies with his separatist policies. Rev Govan believed that Europeans and Africans had to be schooled together for entry into the same work environment where they would work towards the same goals, namely national development (Gelfand 1984:41).

Rev Govan's tenure at Lovedale was lauded by the progressives and condemned by his detractors. Yet, his integrationist policies promoted real social transformation as it was through integration with the European culture that Africans were to be acculturized and fitted into the modern way of life. But Dr Stewart believed that Africans had to "slowly work their way up" to where Europeans were, under the sympathetic guidance of European educators who were intellectually superior to their African counterparts. His view was that the Europeans' intellectual superiority was the result of centuries of hard work. Dr Stewart was ably assisted by the Anglican Church's Dr. Henry Callaway, a medical missionary in Natal, in propagating the policy of differentiated education for Africans. The Swiss missionaries had a lot in common with the Rev Dr James Stewart

of the Free Church of Scotland, because the Rev Ernest Creux paid him a courtesy visit on his way to Basutoland in 1872 where he was to join the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, and where he became a lecturer at the Morija Normal School. According to Lucie Phillips' account in *The Tsonga Messenger* (1949:16), Rev Creux spent a few days with Dr Stewart at Lovedale in the Cape, where he "was given some hints and good advice by the kindly director of this institution". It should therefore not be too surprising that the Swiss missionaries talked so glibly about the intelligence quotient of Europeans in comparison to that of Africans. The sound advice that the Rev Creux received during his stay at Lovedale might account for the strengthening of the Swiss missionaries' unshakeable belief in Social Darwinism during their stay in the Zoutpansberg District where they had two mission stations, namely Valdezia (1875) and Elim (1879). Even the educational policies that were implemented at the Swiss Mission's key institutions, such as Lemana Training Institution near Elim Hospital, and Rikatla Training Institution in Mozambique, could be traced to this dialogic encounter between the Revs Stewart and Creux (Phillips 1949:16).

In a move that seemed to be inimical to the Rev William Govin's policies at the Lovedale Institute, the Rev Samuel Jaques of the Swiss Mission maintained that early missionary education "had taken it for granted that the background of the African child was more or less the same as that of the European child", hence a uniform system of education was introduced at some mission stations. But upon realising that "the surroundings of the native child, the atmosphere in which he grows up, the facts of his daily experience are very different from those of the European child", it was decided to formulate an education system that would not be foreign to him (Rev S Jaques in *The Tsonga Messenger*, January-March 1951:5). In another move designed to frustrate any shift towards integration between black and white, the Rev HA Junod wrote a strongly worded letter to the superintendent of education in Pretoria in December 1902, in which he objected to common examinations being introduced for Europeans and Africans. His main reason for objecting to this move was probably the belief that had become firmly entrenched in missionary circles — that natives were intellectually less gifted than

Europeans. The thought was that it would therefore be suicidal on their part to be forced to write the same examinations as the European students (Nwandula 1987:36).

2.10.5 The Swiss missionaries' views regarding English as a medium of instruction

According to Rev HA Junod (1962:618-619), the Swiss Mission had for years adopted a system whereby pupils were taught their native grammar, namely Xitsonga. This was taught at the Swiss mission schools for natives, probably from 1875 which marks the beginning of their missionary activities in South Africa. But after the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) the erstwhile Transvaal government started showing great interest in native education, thereby moving away from its *laissez-faire* policy.

From approximately 1903, it was ruled that English was to become the sole medium of instruction at native schools. This meant that African children were expected right from the two substandards A and B, to grapple with the English language that they had never heard before in their lives. The Swiss Mission, through its theoretician the Rev HA Junod, was highly critical of this compulsory usage of English as a medium of instruction without recourse to the vernacular. The Swiss Missionary Society favoured a system whereby pupils would be taught English through the medium of their mother tongue, instead of being thrown in at the deep end. According to them this system would make it easy for learners to understand the meaning of English words and improve their proficiency in the new language. Another advantage of the system that the Swiss were proposing, was that the African languages would be preserved for posterity in this way (Junod 1962:616).

The use of English as the sole medium of instruction after the Anglo-Boer War seems to have been Sir Alfred Milner's social construct directed at promoting British imperialism in South Africa. Milner's reconstruction regime wanted to ensure the dominance of the British element, politically and culturally, at the expense of the Dutch language and culture. Instruction through the Dutch language at government schools, and most probably also at mission schools, was outlawed. Sir Alfred Milner himself

maintained that "Dutch should only be used to teach English, and English everything else" (Davenport 1987:227).

But the Swiss Mission's Rev HA Junod had serious misgivings about the exclusive use of English in schools, even at sub-standard levels. He viewed such educational policies as disadvantageous to rural children, whose only contact with the English language was at school. To him expecting native children to answer questions using self-constructed sentences at sub-standards A and B was tantamount to promoting rote learning. According to him, the danger of this was that "children would be quite content to repeat in a mechanical way a number of words they do not understand properly as long as they fancy that this makes them more similar to the white man" (Junod 1904:2-3).

The Rev HA Junod's treatise was not without merit. Part of its merit was the quest to preserve the African languages. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. The exclusive use of the English language at schools would not only stifle the development of the indigenous languages, but would lead to their extinction, as had indeed happened in the United States of America, where blacks have lost their African culture and language(s). But where the Rev Junod seemed to err, was in associating language acquisition with intelligence. Black learners would initially experience difficulties in mastering the English language, as they came into the school milieu with knowledge only of their mother tongue, and this was a knowledge and vocabulary that could only describe common childish matters in the vernacular, but that did not mean that they did not have the potential to ultimately succeed equally well in the higher developed areas of thought and learning, where European children were making such good progress. The Swiss missionaries seemed to be oblivious of the fact that it was more exposure to good teaching and better methods that were needed to make African children succeed, not simply the use of their own language to teach them the English language. There are children in our era who are based in the rural areas, and who attend elite schools in towns like Louis Trichardt where they are taught without recourse to the vernacular, and yet they do quite well at school (Junod 1904 in a Memorandum to the Superintendent of

the Education Department, Fabian Ware, Esq, and the Inspector of Native Schools, Rev WEC Clarke, Pretoria).

2.10.6 Efforts at canvassing support for the establishment of an industrial college for the Swiss Mission children

The Swiss missionaries' educational initiatives were bearing fruit in all the areas where they had established schools to give instruction to heathen children, with the ultimate aim to convert them to Christianity. According to the Reverend HA Junod (1962:613), the acceptance of schooling by the black people was such that children and young people, and even men of twenty or thirty years of age, would leave their flocks in the fields to go to school to learn reading, writing, and arithmetic. This phenomenon was not only evident in the rural parts of South Africa. Even those people who had flocked to the mines of Johannesburg to fend for their families, attended evening schools (night schools) where with strong, work-hardened fingers unaccustomed to these tasks, they struggled to write letters on slates under the watchful eyes of a missionary or a native helper.

But education for natives was seen as a subject that had to be handled with great care in order to help rather than injure the black mind (Junod 1962:613). Rev Junod felt that the most rational thing to do for the fragile black mind, was to adopt seven principles of native education, which would facilitate rather than inhibit the evolution of the backward native from a world of superstition to modernity with its glossy characteristics of Christianity, rationality (science) and good-manneredness. The seven educational principles which the Reverend Junod considered as the key to transforming the indigenous people were the following:

- (1) The teaching of the vernacular as the foundation of the whole education system applicable to natives.
- (2) The teaching of a European language (in this context English) was to be based on oral instruction rather than the mechanical way or rote learning.

- (3) Arithmetic had to be considered a key subject in its capacity to develop the still dormant reasoning faculties of natives.
- (4) The teaching of vernacular grammar should serve as a means of developing the sense of classification among young pupils.
- (5) Teaching native children elementary science should serve as a means of combating notions of witchcraft and other superstitions. Such elementary science would fill the gap created by the lack of instruction received at home about common scientific facts pertaining to their environment — something that white children had in abundance.
- (6) Industrial training was the first necessity for the black races, and even though they seemed to be highly gifted in this domain, it had to be developed as far as possible, so that graduates could rise above cheap unskilled labour. The first priority should preferably be to teach Agriculture, and every school should have its own experimental garden subsidized by the state.
- (7) Native education had to give a prominent place to religious and moral instruction that was so crucial in the social upliftment of a race whose moral character left much to be desired, and whose religion was unrelated to the kind of morality that was peculiar to Christian communities (Junod in *The Life of a South African Tribe Vol 2: Mental Life* 1962:620-621).

Of all the above educational principles, this sub-section will concentrate on the Swiss Missionaries' concerted efforts to have a comprehensive industrial school established for the children of the Swiss Mission. This need is covered by principle number 6 above, which should be read against principle number 5 in order to appreciate why the members of the Swiss missionary hierarchy were so enthusiastic about raising funds and securing the support of the government for the setting up of the proposed industrial school. The Swiss Missionary Society was from its inception hampered by inadequate funding and always understaffed, but they were fired on by the burning ambition they had to convert the great multitudes of Africans to Christianity. This should explain why the mission had to train its own manpower to serve its evangelical, educational and medical needs in the mission fields in the interest of social transformation. The

availability of an industrial school would ensure that the mission would be dependant on its own manpower for its construction needs such as the construction of school, church and hospital buildings. The provision of industrial skills to the indigenous populace was a key facet of social transformation in South Africa, especially if one kept in mind the fact that Africans did not have the means to enter into jobs for the highly skilled in the modern sectors of the economy. As far as the provision of primary health care and formal education was concerned, the mission was satisfied, because the necessary training institutions were available and operational. But when it came to comprehensive industrial schools or technical schools, the society had none. Although institutions like Lemana and some primary schools such as Shirley offered industrial courses, they were a far cry from anything that was able to meet the enormous demands involved in training people for skilled labour to a level that would make them into self-reliant individuals (Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger* January-March 1950:8, cf Native Teachers' Certificate Examination 1912:1-2).

The need for industrial schools to liberate Africans from indolence was first mooted by the Rev Ernest Creux, who emphasised the gravity of the matter and the immediate need for someone to do something concrete about it, when he introduced the first plough in the Spelonken District (Brookes 1925:15). As the years progressed, other missionaries also became quite vociferous in their call for the establishment of an industrial college for the Swiss Mission children. The Rev FA Cuendet earnestly tried to raise and develop the idea of setting up an industrial college after the visit of Dr CT Loram, a strong proponent of industrial instruction for native children in the 1920s. The publication of the Phelps-Stokes Report in 1923 emphasized the need for an education system adapted to the mentality, needs and aptitudes of Africans (Cuendet in *Marungulo ya xikolo xa Lemana* 1924-1925:1-2). (Cf Cuendet's *Report ya Lemana - Lemana Annual Report* 1923-1924:1 Pienaar 1990: 46-47).

Another missionary who wanted to produce artisans and craftsmen at Lemana Training Institution if the college were to ever have a comprehensive industrial department, was Rev AA Jaques who had twice served as principal of the college. He believed that if the

Lemana institution could be upgraded to include several industrial departments, it would result in the production of such an amount of adequately trained technicians that they would be proportionate to the increased need of the native population to be able to compete with the emerging stream of comparatively highly qualified white entrepreneurs managing the industries and farming sectors (Rev AA Jaques in a letter dated 7 December 1944, cf Shimati 1954:60-61).

But the calls for help that were made by the Revs Cuendet and Jaques did not bear any fruit. The Rev Cuendet wrote several letters to Dr CT Loram pursuing actions to follow up the promise made by the latter with regard to the establishment of an agricultural college to cater for the needs of natives in the Spelonken District. Rev Cuendet was especially moved by the letter received from Dr Loram in which he condemned those who were academically minded, thinking in terms of the schools rather than in terms of life as it would be lived by natives in the reserves. According to Dr Loram, what was needed in a fortunate district such as the Zoutpansberg which had fertile soil, was "a large plot of approximately five acres, cultivated in the very best manner with the common foodstuffs of the people, so that it may stand as an object lesson to all natives who visit the station, to show them what your splendid soil with its fine water supply can produce. I shall do my best to get the government to establish an agricultural school in the district, but what I have suggested above should be for the school pupils and the teachers to achieve" (Dr CT Loram's letter to the Rev FA Cuendet, 22 November 1923).

After Rev Cuendet's failure to induce the state to establish an agricultural college for the Swiss Mission Christians, Rev René Bill of the Shiluvane Mission Station also tried. Unlike Rev Cuendet, Rev Bill tried to secure funds from the state's coffers through Senator JD Rheinhardt-Jones of the South African Institute of Race Relations. After waiting in vain for a response to chief Muhlabi's application for the construction of an agricultural school for his subjects, Rev Bill made enquiries on behalf of the chief. The prospective school was to offer industrial training to boys with academic qualifications ranging from standard five to six (grade seven to eight) who were not keen to pursue the teaching profession or nursing career. The main aim was to diversify fields of study.

But teacher training institutions were no longer keen to accept learners with these qualifications as they were not equal to the demands of the Native Teachers' Certificates when they were allowed to undergo training without secondary school education. Rev Bill's proposed curriculum for the school, if it were ever established, would be as follows:

(1) AGRICULTURE: One year course

Course content: Learning about gardening, soil and tillage, the improving of soil, tree planting, poultry and cattle.

(2) CARPENTRY: One year course

Course content:

- (a) Providing for the needs of farmers: fabricating yokes, axe-handles, mattocks, picks, plough-beams, repairing of wheels, ladders and other implements or equipment.
- (b) Providing for household needs: doors, frames (doors and windows), tables, chairs, benches, cupboards, mats and baskets and other domestic needs.

(3) BUILDING: One year course

Course content: Learning about brick making, bricklaying, plastering, whitewashing, painting and repairs.

(Rev René Bill's letter to Mr JD Rheinhardt-Jones of the South African Institute of Race Relations, 19 August 1937:1-2)

It is interesting to note that the Rev Bill planned to use indigenous workers who were trained at the Swiss Mission schools, or at other churches that were amicable to their cause, to give instruction to the learners. But the agricultural department had to be managed by demonstrators from the Native Affairs Department (NAD) who had to visit the students twice or three times a week to assess their progress and to give tips to the instructors. But even before the state responded to the application, Rev Bill introduced carpentry for the standard six (grade eight) boys with effect from January 1937, with himself as the sole instructor. The fact that no mention was made of female students may be attributed to the fact that the above courses were viewed as being for the male folk, while girls had to be encouraged to pursue nursing. The fact that domestic science which is a subject that many a girl would have been keen to choose was not phased in, is mind-boggling (Bill 19 August 1937:1-2).

2.10.7 The social status of Africans in the new social order designed by the Swiss missionaries and colonists

Although the Swiss missionaries' education system was designed and premeditated to be of racist nature, it was not entirely skewed and disadvantageous to the indigenous African populace. While it sought to maintain the segregation that had been part of South Africa since Jan van Riebeeck arrived at the Cape on 6 April 1652 with his Dutch settlers, it cannot be denied that it did ameliorate some of the problems that the native population had to contend with in a country that was witnessing rapid change in the socio-economic, political and religious spheres (*The South African Outlook* 1 December 1926:260).

The system of education introduced by the Swiss missionaries was continually revised and developed and the curricula enriched to cope with new needs that arose in the passing of time, as they continued their endeavour to enhance the living conditions of the indigenous people. For instance, Shirley Primary School, situated about 3 Km to the south-east of Elim Hospital along the Giyani tarred road, had her curriculum broadened to include several industrial courses in the interest of equipping the African children

with marketable skills. As Shirley Industrial Primary School was developing, other educational institutions run by the Swiss clerics were growing apace, and the rural areas from which these children were drawn were not static. Parents were gradually responding to the clarion-call to adapt or be swamped by the socio-economic and political changes that were engulfing the entire South Africa. Those broad aims spelt out by the Rev HA Junod, namely that the Swiss Mission was out to develop the minds of the Africans and to make them useful members of their own communities and society at large, were indeed being realised (Junod 1904:1, *The South African Outlook* 1 August 1950:112).

The social status of the Africans developed apace with every effort the missionaries out in the field were making to their benefit. The beneficiaries of mission education were assuming positions of leadership within their communities, and indications were that a return to the pre-missionary era would be difficult to most converts, as the *xilungu* (Westernization / European way of life) was conquering traditional value systems. As early as 1 December 1894, Valdezia and Elim mission stations already had between them 377 adult Christians connected with their churches. In Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) the three stations of Lourenco Marques, Rikatla and Antioka had 919 communicants and catechumens, while the sixth station, situated at Shiluvane in the Bokgakga area close to Tzaneen, within South Africa had 32 Christians (*The Christian Express* 1 December 1894:183).

Considering that these statistics represented gains registered within 19 years of the founding of Valdezia, the first mission station ever to be launched by the Swiss missionaries, these developments were indeed a milestone in the history of the clerics from the small Canton de Vaud in the western part of Switzerland. The numbers augured well for the future development of missionary work in South Africa and Mozambique. Although there was as yet no sign that the Swiss missionaries' educational influences would spread over the other learning areas like medicine, mining and mineral prospecting, engineering, nursing and commercial farming by Africans, the

prospects for the transformation of their life-styles looked very bright (Van der Poel 1934:14-18).

Mr AE Mpapele, one of the teachers who had received training at Lemana Training Institution, acknowledged the contributions of the Swiss clerics, though he was not entirely satisfied with some of the educational policies they implemented in their domain. He bemoaned the fact that segregated schooling deprived African learners of the opportunity to pursue careers that would effectively increase their social status and bring them personal satisfaction. This lack of diversification in native education drove many a brainy child to crime. He referred to many promising pupils who were good in Arithmetic and English but became the *amalaitas* (incorrigible thugs) in cities like Johannesburg. They went about looting, breaking into houses, swindling migrants of their hard-earned wages and sending terror down the spines of decent people, and all this because of the frustrating effects of unemployment. Mr Mpapele blamed it all on the segregation policies of the Union Government and the ill-fated advice of educationists like Dr CT Loram, who held industrial instruction to be the panacea for economic ills, while all it brought was constant headaches (Mpapele in *Native Education*, paper delivered at the First South African Vacation Course, Mariannhill 1928:14-15).

Mr Mpapele was not the only person to note the hypocrisy of missionaries. Another beneficiary of mission education, known as JT Muaki, noted that the Swiss missionaries had done a very commendable job by educating the Shangaans, the Venda and the Bapedi without discrimination. This person was also full of praise for the training offered to the first converts who went to the Morija Training Institution in the late 1870s for their professional training. Upon the completion of their teacher-evangelist courses, these early beneficiaries ploughed back to their own communities the knowledge they had gained in their training and education. They had all the qualifications that the missionaries regarded very highly, namely carpentry, bricklaying, agriculture, mat and basket weaving, shoe-making and mending, and so forth. But the prominent unsolved problem was still that very few of the graduates were securing the positions for which they were trained on the Reef where the Colour Bar Act was

intensely applied. Muaki urged the members of the Swiss missionary hierarchy to consider the establishment of a comprehensive industrial college that would perhaps make the skills acquired by graduates more marketable in the cities, or even enable them to create their own employment by producing goods that would match industrial products in quality, so that they could earn enough to maintain a higher standard of living (JT Muaki in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* (The Morning Star), January 1924:4).

The Union Government's failure to respond positively to Muaki and the Revs Cuendet, Jaques and subsequently Bill's prompts, seemed to have been inspired by the 1915 Third Report of the Council of Education dealing with native education, which indicated that some whites "were entirely hostile to Africans receiving literacy instruction, and that their education was to be entirely on different lines" (Nwandula 1987:37).

With the government having accepted these findings, it was doubtful as to whether the constituency which Muaki claimed to represent would ever receive a positive response from the Church Synod of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, which seemed to have run out of ideas to convince the state of the need to establish a comprehensive agricultural college for Africans which would incorporate the other industrial departments that they needed. Much to the chagrin of its providers, mission education remained unfailing in its important task of bringing about social transformation. From its genesis it had served as a building-block for raising the African elite who would not stand for further "suffering in silence" as it were. They unashamedly voiced their concerns about the direction that native education had been forced to take. Their inputs were directed at missionaries who were expected to live up to the Christian dicta: "Love the Lord God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30-31 *The Holy Bible — New International Version* 1986:47).

But from the side of proselytes there were clear signs that the Gospel of Christ was gaining root. The Shangaans in both Mozambique and South Africa had indeed

embraced education and all its ingredients, and were compassionate in their dealing with their missionary mentors. During times of happiness, they were there to express joy, and during times of sorrow, they expressed grief. For instance, after the First World War (1914-1918) and the signing of the Peace Treaty of Versailles (1919), the African Christians knew that the war had left a trail of devastation in Switzerland and France, whose nationals had brought civilization to the Shangaan nation. The African leadership through the hand of the Reverend Jonas Maphophe issued a circular to all congregations in Mozambique and South Africa, asking them to donate monies towards alleviating poverty and homelessness brought about by the Great War in Europe. These donations were, in the words of Rev Maphophe, meant to show the sufferers that the Christians in South Africa and Mozambique cared about their benefactors (Rev J Maphophe in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* March 1924:1).

The message that all these Christians were sending to both benefactor and beneficiary was loud and clear. The message was that the Africans' march on the path of social transformation towards modernity was dependent on Christian (mission) education. Mr Willem Saayman (1991:35) spoke a mouthful when he said that the people of Asia and Africa were unlikely to attain "modern civilization" without Western education. Western education was viewed by this scholar as superior to any other form of education, because it had the capacity to rid backward nations of the impediments which precluded them from reaching civilized standards. Education has the capacity to promote human progress characterized by individual freedom, autonomy and economic prosperity. Freedom and individual autonomy create situations where people are endowed with or display rationality in their actions and put a very high premium on scientific modes of explaining the reality around them, as opposed to superstitious notions that are prevalent in traditional societies.

The above exposition puts the developments into context that took place within the Swiss mission fields during the early years of the pioneers' settlement in South Africa and Mozambique. The missionaries did not only spread Christianity and education within the territories they had annexed for Christ. On the contrary, they also brought

relief to the indigenous people in times of drought, floods and man-made disasters such as hardships caused by warfare and the attendant homelessness (Rev G Henrioud in the Antioka Station Report 1922:1). In the socio-economic field, especially the agro-industrial world, missionaries were making notable advances in educating the African people, but "the insufficient funds for ploughing and irrigation" seemed to undermine their efforts. Another problem was lack of faith in their charges' capacity to make it in spheres where high cognitive skills were required, because they kept on complaining about blacks "whose mentality is slow to understand and ignorant of its own interest" (Rev L Cattaneo in the Antioka station Report 1924:5). But despite doubts of the indigenous populace's mental capabilities, missionaries continued to express their opinion that schools of agriculture, trade schools and nursing schools were something that needed testing on the African continent. True liberals of the likes of the Rev William Govan of Lovedale College who believed that blacks had to "be enabled to take their place alongside Europeans not only in the office of the ministry, but also in the various positions in society, secular as well as ecclesiastical" had been toppled by Social Darwinists who were spread over all church denominations, including the Free Church of Scotland, where Rev Govan's star shone brightly between 1841 and 1867 as principal of Lovedale College (Ashley 1982:56).

The Swiss Mission's transformation efforts were spread over all areas of life. There was hardly any area in which they believed themselves to be less capable than others to make their mark. They were involved in education, the spiritual upliftment of the heathen masses and the treatment of various types of disease. They prayed for and treated the mentally deranged people of Weskoppies, carried the Gospel to the leper population of the Pretoria Leper Hospital, and taught the Word of God to the condemned prisoners of the Pretoria Central Prison, impressing on their minds that God loved them even though they were at the point of being executed by the authorities. Even in the latter task which was full of controversy, the Swiss missionaries wanted to go down in history as the champions of basic human rights (*The South African Outlook*, 1 August 1950:113, Junod 1958: 20-25).

The Swiss missionaries' aim in the educational arena was the creation of "a certain genre of student — obedient, rational, clean and sensible, and with a working knowledge of the world around them" (Pienaar 1990:61). But education as it was provided by the Swiss missionaries was structured in such a manner that the African elite would not forget the distance separating them from the common masses, and were "carefully not invited to forget the distance separating them from their European masters" (Murphree 1976:10).

2.10.8 The role of the church vis-a-vis the state and its citizenry

The church's role in society over the years has always been an active one. It had to educate with the view to convert its charges to Christianity during the years of the state's *laissez-faire* policy as far as the provision of native education was concerned. The church also had to mediate in the event of social conflicts, encouraging warring factions to solve their differences peacefully. The Swiss Mission's Rev Ernest Creux, in collaboration with Rev Carl Beuster of the Lutheran Church (Berlin Mission), acted as mediator in the conflict between King Makhado of the Venda and the Boers of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). King Makhado did not recognise the authority of the Boers over his subjects and consequently refused to pay the taxes levied by the ZAR on his subjects. These events led to the outbreak of conflict and the eventual destruction of the Voortrekker town of Schoemansdal in 1867. In the ensuing conflicts, especially the one of 1883, Makhado threatened to drive out the Shangaans whom he accused of siding with the Boers against his own people. The prospect of the Shangaans being ejected out of the Zoutpansberg District would spell doom to the Swiss missionary activities in the area, hence Creux was persuaded to enter into serious talks with the belligerent leader (Masumbe 1997:13, Tsedu in the *Sowetan*, 5 March 1998:13).

Missionary involvement in Africa is seen by some contemporary analysts as not having been entirely neutral. Some missionaries were persuaded by the imperialist states to take sides. In this case missionaries would double up their roles between the churches they served on the one hand, while serving the interests of the state on the other. In

cases where missionaries identified themselves with the interests of both the church and the state, they would evangelize the heathen masses in a way that would ensure that their charges remained apolitical, thus posing no threat to the colonial regime. Where African territories were not yet colonized, missionaries prepared for colonization by calling on the imperialist states to send soldiers to protect their gains against some rival powers. Missionaries also had the ability to blunt opposition to the colonial administration by setting claimants to chieftainship against those they did not like. Where missionaries endeared themselves to the state authorities, they won title deeds to the land and accumulated personal wealth (Mondlane 1983:39-40, Maluleke 1995:12-13, cf. Van der Walt 1992:222).

In his assessment of the Swiss missionaries' transformational efforts, Rev DC Marivate noted that they had done a lot of good to the Shangaan nation, even though they could have done some things better. On the positive side, Rev Marivate lauded missionaries for training Africans to become ministers, teachers, nurses, musicians, and for considering other careers which contributed a great deal in the social upliftment of Africans. Starting from the humble beginnings at Valdezia where they initially implemented one of the church buildings as a school, the Swiss managed to lay a firm foundation for social transformation that spread throughout South Africa, Mozambique and to a lesser extent Zimbabwe. In Valdezia, which was the first mission station ever to be established by the Swiss missionaries, Marivate recalled how he was taught by good missionary teachers such as the Revs Paul Rosset, Aristide Eberhardt, Henri Berthoud and Miss Martha Grand and a group of African teachers that included his father Mr Cornel Marivate, Messrs Frank Hlaisi, Stina Makhalelisa or Ramakuwele, Stefani Furumele, Rev Samuel Malale, and later Mr Azael Solomon Tsongainwe, a good musician, who received his professional training at the Swiss Mission's short-lived Teachers College of Shiluvane, Thabina in the Tzaneen District (1899-1905). Rev Marivate's negative comment about the Swiss missionaries was that they were very strict people who punished students and teachers who dared attend the *swigubu* (traditional dance characterised by the stamping of the ground with bare feet by men, intermittently joined by women in colourful dresses who swerved their hips to the tune

of drums [*ku thawuza*]). (Rev DC Marivate in the speech to the study group meeting at Elim Hospital, 15 July 1975, cf Rev DC Marivate's speech to the European meeting: Elim Hospital 4 April 1973:1-2).

2.10.9 The extra-curricular activities of the Swiss mission education system

Evangelism to the missionary societies that operated in Africa projected itself as the principal task, but linked to it were other objectives such as the spread of mass literacy and civilization. Thus the Swiss education system sought to create an African middle class that would serve as collaborators spreading the New Faith to the heathen masses as well as new behavioural patterns that were thus far unique to the European race. The missionaries believed that once the Africans had been introduced to European products, they would voluntarily accept Western schooling that served as a means to climb up the social ladder that had been brought about by modernity, and simultaneously be converted to Christianity that was inseparable from formal education (van der Walt 1992:222).

Apart from formal curricula, the Swiss missionaries introduced extracurricular activities such as wayfaring, pathfinding and music suited for the different occasions (Miss M Grand in the Lemana College December 1934, Rev DC Marivate in To European meeting: Elim Hospital 4 April 1973:I-V). It is noteworthy that Rev Marivate attributed his creativity in composing songs to missionary influence. At Lemana Training Institution, he was taught by Mrs H Thomas how to compose songs. She also taught him how to write songs in staff notation and how to play the harmonium. Besides college training, the Zoutpansberg Joint Council of Africans and Europeans, which was an inter-cultural organisation under the directorship of Mr HS Phillips, fostered love for music. Mr Phillips staged competitions where those who distinguished themselves won prizes. One particular significance about the Joint Council was that the eisteddfods fostered love and mutual understanding between Africans and Europeans. The fact that the director encouraged participants in the eisteddfods to be innovative and original in their compositions, contributed a lot towards producing African composers of whom

Rev Marivate was one of the shining stars. It was just unfortunate that this social intercourse between Africans and Europeans did not translate into a point where Europeans and Africans could be schooled together, free from racial barriers (Marivate 1973:I-V).

The socialising role of pathfinding and wayfaring cannot be overemphasized. According to LM Forrest in *Evangelism: the message and the methods* (1932:140-141), associations such as these and the Student Christian Association (SCA) set standards as to what should and should not be done by Christian children, and it also encouraged debate about the Scriptures among European and African students attending the colleges. Pathfinders and Wayfarers rendered services to God, gave definitive scripture teaching at Sunday schools, cut off Christian girls and boys from the fun and excitement of the heathen world, for example dancing and yelling like backward heathens. Hymnal singing, action songs and choruses enriched the way of life of Christians and what was more, glorified the Lord. Physical exercise also shaped the characters of growing children so that they would not plunge into the pool of laziness characteristic of their heathen parents and/or grandparents. Such associations helped to blunt the effect that heathen cultural activities would otherwise have on Christian children if the church had nothing to offer (cf Rev DC Marivate's address to the European meeting: Elim Hospital 4 April 1973:II, Rev ML Martin in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1950:16).

2.11 Summary and conclusion

The Swiss Mission's involvement in the setting up of foreign missions was the result of pressure from its young ministers. This pressure was intensified by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society's inability to administer its prospective Transvaal missions. The latter forced the Free Church of Canton de Vaud to carry out the explorations that led to the eventual founding of Valdezia Mission Station (1875) and subsequently Elim Mission Station (1879) (Du Plessis 1911:330-131).

The initial reluctance by the Free Church to establish foreign missions was attributed to lack of funds to sustain such missions, and the fear of souring up relations with friendly churches like the Paris Mission and others that were already operating in Africa and Asia. The lobbyists who finally vanquished the Synod of the Free Church of Canton de Vaud, comprised of Rev Creux and Rev P Berthoud. Before the Church Synod decided to set up its own missionary society to deal with foreign missions, some ministers had been sent to the friendlier Paris Mission so that they could quench their evangelical thirst to minister unto the heathens of Basutoland (Lesotho). This group included the Revs L Duvoisin, Paul Germond, Adolphe Mabile and DF Ellenberger who joined the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society between 1859 and 1861 (Brookes 1925:5-6, Maluleke 1995:7). One missionary, namely the Rev Henri Gonin, joined the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in 1869 even though the church was not classified as an ally of the Free Church of Canton de Vaud (Phillips 1949:4, Cuendet 1950:8).

The arrival of Rev Ernest Creux in Lesotho in 1872, followed by the Rev Paul Berthoud, marked the beginning of the end to the Free Church's non-involvement in converting the people of the countries of Africa and Asia. Before the Revs Creux and Berthoud were sent to Basutoland, they were enrolled at the University of Edinburgh for instruction in English and rudimentary medicine so that they could acquit themselves well in the new territory into which they were being thrust. Missionary work without these qualifications was difficult (Phillips 1949:15). In April 1874 the Swiss Missionary Society was established following the explorations of Rev Adolphe Mabile and Paul Berthoud in 1873, which culminated in the purchase of the Klipfontein farm from Mr John Watt, the Scottish trader, on which the Valdezia Mission Station was founded in 1875 (Maluleke 1995:20, *Rejoice* 1975:2).

The founding of a missionary society by the Free Church confirmed that it had a final break with its *laissez-faire* policy as far as evangelizing the heathen masses of Africa was concerned. It also bound itself to give moral and financial support to the missionaries who would go abroad, out of the funds donated by its allies, because

failure to do so, would see the missionary enterprises withering like a tree planted in parched and unfertile soil.

The founding of Valdezia Mission Station, even though it was followed by a brief spell of the persecution of missionaries in 1876 by the officials of the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, was an important milestone in the history of the Swiss Missionaries. It marked the genesis of a period of great success in the foreign mission fields because four years later Elim Mission Station came into being, followed by great expansions within South Africa, Mozambique and to a lesser degree the north-eastern part of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), where one would find Dzombo (*Dzombyeni*) outstation. This outstation was placed under the Mhinga Mission Station for it was situated on the opposite side of the Limpopo River next to Hutwen in the land of the Makuleke people. More details pertaining to the Swiss missionaries' transformation efforts should be laid bare by the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER 3

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE SHANGAAN-TSONGA PEOPLE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is probably impossible to survey a people's cultural evolution without focusing on their historical background. An exposition of the Shangaan-Tsonga people's history, albeit brief, will enable the reader to comprehend why they so wholly embraced social transformation in the way that it was introduced by the Swiss missionaries, along with the benefits accrued from their participation in the transformation process. Social transformation seems to be two-dimensional in the sense that it may either be accepted or denied. In all the areas where the Swiss missionaries operated, their transformation ventures were mostly enthusiastically embraced — in particular by the Shangaan-Tsonga, but in general also by most of the other indigenous people. (Ember and Ember 1977:293, Brookes 1925:10).

The principal instrument that the transformation agents were intending to implement to bring about social change in uncivilized nations was formal education. They saw formal education as the medium that had the most powerful capacity of fostering socio-economic and political change among primitive societies. In the first instance, education was to be used as a means with which to evangelize the African masses. Education could provide individuals with reading and writing skills that enhanced the depth of their understanding of the Scriptures, because they could now read for themselves what they had only heard as the spoken Word of God before. Furthermore, because they were now beginning to master this new skill, they were able to disseminate the message of salvation to their illiterate fellows while still continuing with their own learning process, and that is exactly what the missionaries had in mind. Literacy made people free to hold communion with God anywhere and everywhere — in the comfort of their homes, at work before starting with their daily tasks, before having meals, and in every sector of life during times of joy or misery. Education was seen to be the first and most important step to empowerment — it enlightened the indigenous populace to such an extent that they could be gradually introduced in a comprehensible way to their changing new world with its strange and

sophisticated technology and its economic structures that were very different to what they were used to. Education took its consumers on a journey, and their ultimate destination was the mastery of the operations of the centralized system of government and the military power that is inherently concomitant with economic development and centralized authority. But education also had the covert aim of encouraging the African masses to abandon their age-old customs in favour of Western civilization (Wilson: "Missionaries: conquerors or servants of God?" in *The South African Outlook* March 1976:40-41).

The Shangaan-Tsonga people's history, barring other migrations, is mainly traceable to Mozambique. It is in this territory that they lived according to their traditional customs. This chapter will among other things look at their education, economic pursuits, social organization, political systems and the religious beliefs that they maintained before social conflicts drove many of them into the erstwhile Transvaal. Although information about the earlier periods of their development is scanty, this did not inhibit researchers from sketching the history of this tribe/nation according to the few sources that were available (Rev B Terrisse in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1952:18-19)

3.2 EARLY CONTACT WITH EUROPEANS ALONG THE EAST COAST OF MOZAMBIQUE

The Tsonga people along with the Nguni of the Eastern Cape coastal areas, and the Khoi-khoi of the Southern Cape, are reputed to have been the first indigenous people to have met with the early European explorers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Portuguese records translated by researchers reveal that by the middle of the seventeenth century, there were long-established kingdoms/chiefdoms of Tsonga and Ronga people in the area around the then Delagoa Bay (Maputo). These kingdoms or chiefdoms extended southwards and inland from the sea. The Rev Henri Phillippe Junod, in his book *Matimu ya Vatsonga ni ya van'wana vaaki va matiko ya Afrika wa Vuxa-Dzonga 1498-1650* (History of the Tsonga people and other residents of South-East Africa 1498-1650), speaks of *terra*

de boa gente (the land of the kind people) as having been the domicile of the Tsonga people (Junod 1977:28-32). The Tsonga people were reputed to have built their homesteads along the banks of the *Rio do Cobra* (Copper River), where they lived according to their traditional customs, namely ancestral worship, informal education as a means to imparting culture, subsistence economy like work parties labouring in exchange for goods and the bartering of articles such as ivory, to name but a few customs (*100 Years of Tsonga Publications*, 1883:1-2 Anonymous).

When Vasco da Gama and his crew travelled as far as the Inharrine river after discovering Natal in 1497, he came into contact with the Tsonga people. Evidence of this contact, together with elements of the Tsonga culture, were discerned from his diaries by scholars. To illustrate this point, there is the evidence of the findings of people like Dr Eric Axelson and Prof PEH Hair, who in their investigation of "the kind people" (the Tsonga people), corroborated the findings of Rev HP Junod and Andre Fernandes of the Jesuit Missionary Society. Joao dos Santos, the Dominican priest, reached the same conclusions as the Rev Junod (*100 Years of Tsonga Publications* 1883-1983:1-2).

According to Dr Eduardo Mondlane (1983:26-27), the formal colonization of Mozambique by Portugal took place after the so-called Berlin Conference (1884-1885), which ruled among other things that no territory would be regarded as belonging to any state, unless effectively occupied. Portugal was therefore forced to send a number of her nationals to the territory to consolidate her grip on the land and to ward off would-be rivals. This occupation of Mozambique, or Portuguese East Africa, as it was then called, transformed the territory from the status of a half-way house in the trade with the East, into a colony with a peripheral Colonial Administration. Traders, soldiers and police officers flocked to the territory in order to earn a living, the equal of which they would not have been able to attain in Europe at that time (Mondlane 1983:26-27, Smith and Nöthling 1985:141).

The Portuguese traders, like the early explorers, exchanged goods with the indigenous populace along the coast, and eventually also did their bartering business deeper into the interior. These crafty traders obviously benefited much more than the natives did in their business transactions, because due to their illiteracy the Tsonga people and other local tribes were often not conversant with the value of the goods that were offered for trade. These contacts with Europeans played a very significant role in altering their way of life — each successive year differed in many respects from the previous one, especially with regard to their growing hunger to attain modernity, because their understanding of the new cultures that were invading and changing their lives so rapidly, was developing apace with their experience of it. Some Portuguese traders who ventured inland doubled up their roles, and apart from looking for more trading possibilities, they also acted as spies for the Colonial Administration, informing them about the strengths and weaknesses of the indigenous populace, and revealing the profiles of the traditional rulers to them. The Portuguese also made good use of other European settlers to gather intelligence information, so that when the need arose, soldiers could be deployed inland to quell whatever insurrection would erupt. Missionaries with their liberal and philanthropic outlooks were indispensable in fostering loyalty to the Colonial Government through their meticulously prepared sermons. It may even not be an exaggeration to say that the Christian Faith served as a lullaby to the unsuspecting native population. The formal education system introduced by the missionaries largely served the interests of the European farmers and rulers by laying strong emphasis on personal improvement — the good that could be gained via industrial labour, and on the Gospels that encouraged converts to strive for everlasting life in the hereafter by delivering their personal best in their present existence (Mondlane 1983:26-27).

Perhaps the role of the church in promoting subservience is better illustrated by the pastoral letter from Cardinal Cerejeira of the Roman Catholic Church, recognised as the State Church, when he said: "We try to reach the native population both in breadth and depth to (teach them) reading, writing and arithmetic, not to make 'doctors' of them... To educate

and instruct them so as to make them prisoners of the soil and to protect them from the lure of the towns, the path which with devotion and courage the Catholic missionaries chose, the path of good sense and of political and social security for the province... schools are necessary, yes, but schools where we teach the native the path to human dignity and the grandeur of the nation which protects him" (Mondlane 1983:59-60).

Although the above statement was issued by a Catholic official with regard to a Portuguese-held colony (1960), these words mirror the proselytizing activities of the Swiss Missionaries in South Africa, who incidentally also served in Mozambique along with the Catholics and churches of other denominations. Their educational policies, supported by rhetoric, did not deviate from this paternalism throughout their tenure in South Africa.

That these similarities in matters of policy should exist, is hardly surprising, because there was a spirit of mutualism among all the different church denominations that caused statutory differences to be shelved in favour of religious expediency. This explains why history enthusiasts that have vested interests in Christian education in Africa, are so often confronted by similarities in school regulations, whether they are analysing the activities of the Catholic Church, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Paris Church, the Lutheran Church and, for the purposes of this study, the Swiss Mission Church. Whatever differences one detects, are negligible to say the least. Missionary activity in Africa was essentially a co-operative venture.

It is in recognition of this stark reality that the Rev EW Grant, President of the Christian Council of South Africa, once said: "The catholicity which has always characterized the Swiss Mission has strengthened with the years. Its relations with other missionary societies have been most cordial and brotherly. It has found happiness in the fellowship of others and in its turn is regarded by them with sincere affection and regard" (EW Grant, *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1950:7).

3.3 THE TSONGA PEOPLE AND THEIR CULTURE

The Tsonga people got their first taste of European culture during the early Portuguese explorations. These contacts with explorers enabled them to exchange an assortment of goods like ivory, gold, copper, and even slaves, for European articles such as mirrors, knives and clothes. Having identified a fertile area for their trade, the Portuguese established trading centres such as Sofala which came into being eight years after Vasco da Gama had discovered the sea-route to India in 1497. Two years after the founding of Sofala trading station, Mozambique was proclaimed as a Portuguese sphere of influence. In 1544 Quelimane was added as another trading station, followed by Sena and Tete along the Zambezi river. The latter two were trading centres for gold. These economic activities necessitated the founding or proclamation of Delagoa Bay as a permanent settlement and the headquarters of Portuguese colonists in 1799. A governor-general was also appointed to look after the interests of the colonists and the metropolitan government. During the early years of colonial settlement, trade was weak and there were many fatalities owing to the prevalence of malaria-carrying mosquitos. The colonists didn't have a cure for malaria and their knowledge of its cause bordered on naivety, with some attributing it to decaying animal bodies that were swept out of the sea onto the beaches. But social transformation was not hampered by these obstacles, neither on the side of the natives nor the Europeans. The Portuguese settlers didn't have women travelling with them, and consequently it often happened that they married native women, resulting in the emergence of a caste group known as the mulatto that didn't enjoy the same status as children born of European couples. As far as trade was concerned, the Portuguese relied heavily on the support they received from the Vatsonga of Mpumoto, situated nearby the trade route (De Vaal 1953:1). (My own translation)

3.4 PORTUGUESE INFLUENCE ON THE TSONGA PEOPLE

Portuguese influence on the Tsonga people was minimal to say the least. The positive thing about the early contacts was the compilation of a list of the vocabularies of the Tsonga and Ronga languages as well as the Chopi language. The recording of peoples' lifestyles such as their clothing customs, food, agricultural pursuits and their physical appearances, though motivated by economic greed, formed the basis of Mozambican history. During the 16th century, the Portuguese were experiencing the most difficult time of their colonial history, and their rule over the Tsonga people and other tribes was maintained only by means of the superior weapons they possessed. The Tsonga people cherished their customs and liberties to such an extent that even the proselytizing efforts of the Catholics could not weaken them. The Catholics, who were regarded by the colonial administration as the bearers of the official religion, were seen by the Tsonga people as appendages of the oppressive state, and not worthy of much attention. They were merely tolerated rather than taken seriously by the indigenous populace. For this reason, very few people within the Tsonga tribe accepted Catholicism. According to Mr Henry Salt, quoted in *100 Years of Tsonga Publications* (1883-1983:3), the attempts of the Portuguese to push Catholicism down the throats of the citizens of Mozambique "proved as abortive as their schemes of conquest... (so much so that) Portuguese priests too often made nominal instead of real converts; and that their motives proceeded rather from an idle vanity of extending the list of their proselytes, than from any actual desire to benefit the individuals whom they pretended to convert".

The Tsonga people who were supposed to benefit from the Catholics' proselytization, grew weary of the priests' hypocrisy and eventually adopted a negative attitude towards their benefactors. Such attitudes were to be expected, for the church is not supposed to support despots but to protect victims of oppression and combat poverty, starvation, political oppression, murder, torture, economic exploitation, corruption, tribalism, sexism and the destruction of the ecology. This is done through the training of the masses of disadvantaged communities, to make them aware of the state's heinous deeds, and have them stand up for

their rights. The church is also supposed to identify the state's excesses and challenge it for redress. It is therefore not expected to become an extension of the government's torture machine (Theron 1993:43).

3.5 THE MARAUDING ENTRY OF SOSHANGANE (MANUKOSI) AND HIS ZULU IMPIS INTO MOZAMBIQUE, AND THE CONSEQUENCES IT HAD ON THE LOCAL TRIBES

During the eighteenth century, the number of the Tsonga people throughout the interior of southern Mozambique had expanded to such an extent that the Portuguese settlers at Inhambane (Nyembani) felt threatened by this multitude of black people. At one stage they were forced to retreat to safe areas of Mozambique for fear of being wiped out. The settlers only managed to return safely to their households because of support in the form of the timely arrival of reinforcements from the Tonga people who were in alliance with them. The Tonga people were a tribe different from the Tsonga in language and ethnographic features who lived in Inhambane in Mozambique at that time (Junod 1962:16-17). But the Tsonga people only suspended their attacks for a while. They later regrouped and resumed their onslaught during the early years of the nineteenth century. Once more the Tonga people who were the Portuguese's loyal slaves and allies, saved them from an ignominious defeat by driving the invaders out of Inhambane. During this turbulent period, the local inhabitants of Mozambique consisted of people who spoke the Hlengwe dialects of Tsonga, better known as the Chaukes or Mabasas who lived in the northern region; the Tonga group who lived with their Portuguese masters at Inhambane; the Chopi who lived to the south of Inhambane and the Tsonga and Ronga tribes of the southern parts of Mozambique (*100 Years of Tsonga Publications* 1883-1983:3-4). The warfare between the Portuguese settlers and their Tsonga foes had not yet reached catastrophic proportions. This was soon to be changed by the advent of Soshangane and his impis of gallant warriors to their settlements. This event occurred after the Mthethwa tribe defeated the Ndwandwe tribe in their battle in 1819. Soshangane, one of Zwile's trusted war-generals, fearing capture and subsequent

punishment by Shaka, the commander of the Mthethwa tribe's armed forces, fled into Mozambique via Swaziland accompanied by a great number of his stalwart Zulu warriors. They left a trail of terror behind them in the territories through which they passed, and sowed sorrow and destruction all along the way. On arrival in Mozambique they overran the Portuguese settlements of Delagoa Bay, Inhambane and Sena and eventually established the Gaza Kingdom (Muller 1977:498-500, *100 Years of Tsonga Publications* 1883-1983:4).

Upon subjugating the Tsonga, Tonga and other tribes in the region south of the Save River, Soshangane or Manukosi forced them to adopt the Zulu culture and language. The men adapted well to the new culture as they engaged in a flourishing trade with the people of Zululand compared to their female counterparts. To guard against slip-offs, Soshangane introduced a new political system with an elaborate hierarchical structure of status groups graded by lineages in which the Ndwandwe royal lineage had overriding powers over the Tsonga, Ndaue, Tonga, Ronga and other tribes. Soshangane's death in 1858 led to a power struggle between Muzila and Mawewe who were vying for their father's throne. This rivalry was debilitating to the Gaza Kingdom (Davenport 1987:67-68).

3.6 THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE GAZA KINGDOM AND THE INFLUX OF TSONGA REFUGEES INTO THE ERSTWHILE TRANSVAAL REPUBLIC

The death of Soshangane led to a war of succession between his two sons, Muzila and Mawewe. Muzila, unable to defeat his brother, fled into the erstwhile Transvaal republic with his followers, where he was accommodated by Joao Albasini at Beja near the present day town of Louis Trichardt. But Mawewe's tyrannical rule was unacceptable to the people of Mozambique. He was ousted from his throne and his arch-enemy Muzila returned to the country to take over the kingdom. Civil strife, the collapse of the ivory trade and the advent of the migratory labour system had taken its toll on the armed forces. With the migration of

men to the Transvaal gold mines, the Kimberley diamond mines and the Natal industrial areas, the army didn't have a steady supply of recruits. The pulling power of the diamond mines in the 1870s and gold mines in the mid 1880s left the Gaza Kingdom with a depleted force. As if this was not enough, Muzila died in 1884, an event that added to the country's woes. He was succeeded by his son, Nghunghunyane, whose rule was made no easier by the vengeful Portuguese settlers (Kriel and Hartman 1991:18, De Vaal 1953:57, Davenport 1987:67-68).

Explaining the events leading to the demise of the Gaza Kingdom, Mondlane (1983:27) indicates that where traditional authority had been strong enough, and the military machinery sufficiently powerful to resist colonial conquest, the Portuguese cleverly employed the covert strength of diplomacy to neutralize the powerful chiefs. They would send Portuguese "ambassadors" to the courts of traditional rulers to pay homage while they were actually studying the military prowess of their armed forces. After having studied the chiefs' armies and determined the strengths and weakness of the government, they made strategic attacks, using the stereotyped excuses of "provocation" or "protection of white settlers and/or missionaries" to explain and justify their actions (cf Sihlangu 1975:20-27).

The war against the Gaza Kingdom, which was the last of the traditional empires in Mozambique, was preceded in this way by the gathering of intelligence information and enough plausible pretexts for launching their attacks. The war that began in 1895 ended three years later with General Magigwane's death on the battlefield, and the capture and deportation of Emperor Nghunghunyane to Portugal. Nghunghunyane died in 1907 (Mondlane 1983:27, Kriel and Hartman 1991:19).

These wars were as disruptive as the previous conflicts had been. They caused mayhem and changed the social structures of the Tsonga or Shangaan people. The acculturation that ensued after all these wars and migrations, necessitated the establishment of alliances. The acceptance of Joao Albasini as the chief of the Shangaan-Tsonga people in the

Zoutpansberg District should therefore be read against the backdrop of the need for sustenance and security against enemy tribes or nations. No tribe enjoyed refugee status, hence the need for the signing of friendship treaties with other nations to ensure permanence in the living places of the tribes.

The destruction of the Gaza Kingdom through the actions of enemy forces came at a time when the Shangaans had lost their economic independence as a result of the collapse of the ivory trade, and the loss of large herds of cattle because of droughts and epidemics such as anthrax. All these factors turned the hitherto self-reliant and self-sufficient Shangaans into dependants of affluent Europeans like Joao Albasini, whom they followed up into the Zoutpansberg District (De Vaal 1983:9).

According to Mabunda (1995:44-45), there were two waves of the Shangaans' migration into the erstwhile Transvaal Boer Republic. To these two waves or phases identified by Mabunda, this researcher is inclined to add third and fourth phases or waves. The first group of Shangaans, in Mabunda's accounting of the events, left Mozambique in the company of Albasini in the 1840s. They left the territory due to fear of the Nguni invasions led by Soshangane (Manukosi) and a series of droughts that led to poor agricultural yields and starvation. The second group left Mozambique during the war of succession in the 1860s that was initiated after the death of Soshangane in 1858. The third group of refugees, in the view of this researcher, left Mozambique during the invasion of the Gaza Kingdom by the Portuguese colonial forces that started in 1895. But this does not discount any migration that might have arisen prior to the year 1895. The politics and economics of the time under review make it difficult to compartmentalise the migrations or relocations, because during that period people were always on the move for one reason or another. The fourth group of the Tsonga people to leave Mozambique was in reality a precursor to all the migrations highlighted above. Why this assertion? De Vaal (1953:2) put up a strong case in this regard for he speaks of Tsonga clans (*die Tsonga-stammetjies*) as having left Mozambique on trade missions "long before Manukosi's invasions. They were under the

leadership of the vastly experienced Hlekane, whose headquarters were between the Levuvhu (Rivhubye) and Vembe (Limpopo) rivers. They later relocated to Spelonken where Albasini found them when he arrived in the Zoutpansberg District in the 1850s" (my translation).

De Vaal's account doesn't seem to give an exact date as to when such trade missions started. But one reckons that this could well have been going on for hundreds of years, because in his commemorative lecture delivered at the University of the Witwatersrand in honour of Luis de Camoes, De Vaal (1982:6-7) maintains that Albasini "chose this particular spot as a trading post because it was next to an old footpath that had been used for untold centuries, and was well known as a trade route from Lourenco Marques to Sekhukhuneland, Zoutpansberg and on to Mashonaland".

The foregoing indicates to this researcher that there could well have been several other Tsonga traders before Hlekane and his party who established themselves along the Limpopo River or even deep into Zimbabwean territory, tracking elephants or guarding their wares. This is strengthened even more by De Vaal's assertion that Albasini and his Shangaan followers' trade routes stretched from the coast of Mozambique and criss-crossed through Pilgrimsrest, Ohrigstad, Magoboya's location, Tzaneen, and up to the present day Elim near Louis Trichardt. A second route stretched from Delagoa Bay (Maputo) through Modjadjisneck up to the chief trading centre on the farm Bellvue and subsequently to where Elim is today. From where Elim is situated, a third route traversed the farm Madrid that the Inhambane traders transformed into a trading depot. The fourth trading route was from Elim heading eastward through Mashaukop along the Punda Maria-Pafuri main road up to the Limpopo river and subsequently to the east coast (De Vaal 1953:2) (my own translation).

Thus Joao Albasini who was a late comer to the Zoutpansberg and an opportunist adventurer might have stuck to the same routes that his fore-runners, the Tsonga traders,

had used since time-immemorial in their trade with the people on the coastline of Mozambique, and possibly traders from the present day Zimbabwe as well. He probably could have made himself fit into the flourishing trade by offering to improve on the trade routes and security arrangements as he had all the necessary capital and technological skills to do that. The indigenous populace would eagerly have acquiesced to the deal because security was always a problem on these trade routes in those days. Many a trader was impoverished by robbers on these routes. This looting of merchandise probably necessitated the creation of depots manned by security personnel even before Albasini entered into the fray. The security guards kept a watchful eye on the merchandise assembled by the hunters, and would also escort ivory traders to and from the Mozambican coastline. It is therefore most probable that some villages might have sprung up next to the depots as people got used to the climate and their new habitat. The establishment of villages around the depots might have served the useful purpose of scaring off those people who craved ill-begotten wealth from looting the articles of trade so painstakingly assembled by traders from the almost impenetrable forests (De Vaal 1953:2).

3.7 HOW JOAO ALBASINI BECAME THE CHIEF OF THE SHANGAAN-TSONGA PEOPLE

Chieftainship is normally hereditary in the Shangaan tradition. This implies that when the chief dies, he is automatically succeeded by his eldest son. The line of succession of the Gaza Kingdom discussed under 3.6 above is indicative of the custom that held sway among most South African tribes and is still being upheld to this day. In cases where the heir was a minor at the time of the death of his father, the culture allowed for regency. This means that someone drawn from the royal house (*wa le ndlwini ya vukosi* or *vuhosi*), usually the younger brother of the deceased, would be installed as caretaker-chief (*mukhomeri* or *mukhomeli wa vukosi* or *vuhosi*) until the heir came of age to take his throne. But how does a European become a chief? Mabunda (1995:45) puts it succinctly when he says that the severe droughts of the 1840s that wiped out people, cattle and wild animals, drove the

Shangaans into the safe arms of Joao Albasini who nourished them and subsequently turned them into his elephant-hunters and labourers. They were provided with weapons to kill elephants, and skills to treat ivory and animal skins for the European markets.

This generosity towards and tutelage of the Shangaans attracted more and more refugees to Albasini's quarters, first of the Ntimane people from near the coast of the Indian Ocean, and then even from the Khosa people, and eventually from deeper into the erstwhile Transvaal. The Shangaans had a very high regard for Albasini. They called him their father, leader, provider, and most importantly, their Chief. All these appellations or designations were traceable to the sanctuary and livelihood that Albasini gave them at a time when they were staring death in the face, because Manukosi was not only intimidating them and sending fear and consternation down their spines, but also actually killing many of them with the sharp edges of his warriors' spears being thrust through their bodies. The prominent Swiss Missionary historian, the Rt Reverend Arthur Grandjean (see photograph 23) vividly explains the servitude of the people who later became his and colleagues' proselytes as follows:

"They served him (Joao Albasini) as they would have served a native chief: they gathered to his call, ploughed his fields, did all his work, carried his goods, and marched under his orders armed with guns he got in Lourenco Marques. They brought to him the first fruit of their crops and a foreleg of each large piece of game they killed. In certain circumstances Albasini judged cases, or ordered his troops about in the uniform of a Portuguese officer" (De Vaal 1982:9).

3.8 SETTLEMENT IN THE ZOUTPANSBERG DISTRICT

When he arrived in the Zoutpansberg District, Joao Albasini settled in a town that they called "*die Zoutpansbergdorp*" that was later renamed Schoemansdal after Commander-General Stephanus Schoeman, the successor to Commander-General Piet Potgieter in 1855

(De Vaal 1953:12). Albasini had a shop in town but it was soon closed due to the stiff competition from the English traders from Pietermaritzburg and Grahamstown whose goods outstripped those of the Portuguese in quality and popularity. It was only logical for Albasini to accept defeat in the Schoemansdal central business district and migrate to a new site where he was likely to flourish in his business enterprise. He chose a site south-east of Piesangkop (Riyonde) and in 1857 built his home on the farm Goedewensch. He spent the rest of his life on this farm as the chief of the Shangaans, elephant-hunter, trader and Superintendent of Native Affairs as well as the Vice-Consul of Portugal in the South African Republic or the defunct Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (De Vaal 1982:12).

During all these years the Shangaans remained attached to him and didn't contemplate severing ties with him. The tranquillity they enjoyed under his leadership seemed to have turned him into their naturalized chief, so to speak. They left Mozambique with him in 1845, and settled in chief Magashula's territory near the Kruger National Park, where Albasini had a four-roomed brick house built between Pretoriuskop and Skukuza. Mr Albasini expended their labour, and eventually trekked with them in 1853 to the Zoutpansberg District. Their subjection to his rule might have plunged them deeper into the socio-economic and political lifestyles of the Europeans. Their conscription into his armed forces introduced them to the new form of defence by means of modern guns, to which they were inducted through elephant-hunting. They might also have witnessed the Europeans' marriage ceremonies, for they were already under the tutelage of Joao Albasini when he married Maria Petronella Janse van Rensburg at Ohrigstad, around about 1845 or 1846. Although there is no evidence to suggest that they were in the company of Albasini when he and his bride stood before *Landdrost* (Magistrate) J de Clerq and two *heemrade*, L Nel and C Fourie for the marriage vows, they must have participated in the subsequent festivities. Heemrade were prominent citizens who assisted magistrates during the time when the Dutch East Indian Company reigned, also known as the Voortrekker period (Schoeman et al 1982:157). Albasini died a poor man on 10 July 1888 and was laid to rest on his farm Goedewensch on the spot where his office used to be. His wealth was probably

exhausted by his generosity to the ZAR and the salaries he paid his staff who manned an administration that seemed not to enjoy the official recognition of Portugal (De Vaal 1982:13-20).

3.9 THE SHANGAANS' ECONOMIC SYSTEM

During the pre-colonial era, the Shangaans' economy was mainly based on stock-farming and subsistence agriculture. A person's wealth was calculated in terms of the number of cattle he possessed as well as the agricultural produce that his fields yielded. Besides cattle, the Shangaans kept goats (*timbuti*), poultry (*tihuku*), and even pigs (*tinguluve* or *tihonci*). The object of cattle-farming apart from getting milk, was that they could be used during marriage transactions as the bride-price (*cuma* or *ndzovolo*), and for meat. With the introduction of the plough in many parts inhabited by the Shangaans after the arrival of Europeans, they were used for preparing fields for the planting of seeds. Rev Ernest Creux is reputed to have been the first man to introduce the plough in the Spelonken District. But crop-farming before the advent of Western civilization was unsuccessful because of poor agricultural methods such as lack of crop rotation, no spacing of crops, no use of fertilizers to enrich the soil with plant nutrients and so forth. Animal husbandry was practised by royalists and commoners alike, and on important occasions such as the the return of initiated boys from the "bush schools" it was not uncommon for those with livestock to slaughter some of the animals for the homecoming feasts. The initiated boys (*swigwamatshuku*) were not the only ones whose coming of age was celebrated. The initiated girls (*tikhomba*) were also treated in this way. These occasions, together with weddings, were duly celebrated with the slaughtering of animals, and the meat would be washed down eager throats with African beer. Sharing of food was an important virtue amongst the Shangaans because they believed, and correctly so, that a person can only enjoy life to the fullest in the midst of other people (*Munhu i munhu hi van'wana vanhu* or *Motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe* — a person is a person by means of other persons) (Junod 1962:46-48, Junod 1981:198-199, Brookes 1925:15).

The economic pursuits spelled out above were punctuated by a series of feminine taboos to prevent misfortunes such as death of calves, barrenness of soil and crop-failures. A woman's menses (menstrual blood) was considered dangerous to the herd in the sense that it could cause the death of calves and fully grown cattle, or abortions in cows. The crops were considered not safe if a menstruating woman should enter the fields. To avoid such calamities, women requiring cow-dung to smear the floors of their huts or courtyards, had to implore young girls who were still much too young to experience menstruation (*ku vona tin'hweti*) to collect it from the cattle kraals on their behalf. In the absence of girls the herd-boys passing by would be requested to help in this regard. It is interesting to note that these taboos formed part of the home education curricula as presented by both parents in each household to their children. But in certain subjects, especially those that have a bearing on (in terms of African culture) unmentionable parts of the body, it had to be members of the corresponding sex who had to bring that kind of subject matter home to children. Thus co-educational instruction was often avoided as children who were highly inquisitive would ask questions relating to issues that the father or mother would not be comfortable with. Besides crop-farming and animal husbandry, the Shangaans fished down the rivers, hunted wild animals and collected all kinds of wild fruit to supplement their food supply. Division of labour was common practice, and such tasks as hunting, fashioning tools and making cattle-kraals were reserved for men, while pottery-making, beer-brewing and the tending of agricultural fields was the women's speciality. But a woman who killed an antelope with her hoe while weeding crops wouldn't be reprimanded for overstepping the mark, as very few people would walk away from an offering of meat on the table (Junod 1962:47-152).

The question is; how viable were these economic pursuits? Agriculture and stock farming were rewarding economic enterprises as long as there was rain. During periods of drought, the wealthy could be impoverished overnight. Even game and wild fruit would be in short supply, and hunger would knock at the door of every household. The unfortunate incidents of the 1840s that drove the Shangaans from their life of opulence in Mozambique to a life

of servitude under Joao Albasini who "made them work for food and shelter whilst he 'reaped' the ivory brought him", is a case in point (Mabunda 1995:46).

3.10 THE SHANGAANS' LOSS OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

The drought conditions of the 1840s and the inter-tribal wars could be cited as the main causes of the Shangaans' loss of economic independence, something that they had enjoyed for centuries before this fateful date. Kriel and Hartman (1991:17) maintain that the westward migration of Tsonga groups from Mozambique over the Lebombo mountains to the north-eastern Transvaal had been inspired by the need for security, but one can certainly add food, or the lack of it, as an important factor. These groups, that probably had as yet not mingled with the Shangaans or the Nguni elements, settled in what later became the defunct Gazankulu homeland. The violent consolidation of the area between the Zambezi River and Delagoa Bay by Soshangane, coupled with the outbreak of the small-pox epidemic in 1838, might have contributed in the erosion of the Tsonga people's economic independence, and subsequently also their political independence. It was difficult for the Tsonga people to lead normal lives under conditions of war and starvation. Constant movement in search of safe places where they could live, made it difficult for them to tend to large herds of cattle or to work in their fields. Davenport (1987:68) encapsulates some socio-economic and political changes that took place in Mozambique as follows: "From 1860, however, the Gaza state went into decline, as its prosperity from ivory sales fell with the shooting-out of elephants and the growing dependence of the society on the proceeds of migrant labour to Natal, Kimberley and the Transvaal goldfields. It was involvement in the economy of the white-controlled states that eventually destroyed the Gaza Kingdom in the 1890s".

Whilst Davenport addresses the Mozambican situation here, which is outside the ambit of this study, it cannot be denied that the same thing was happening in various other parts of South Africa. The diamond and gold discoveries attracted Africans from the rural parts of

the country to the mining areas in search of fortune. These migrants travelled on foot to the diggings. They suffered many hardships and often walked for months before they reached their destinations. As the men were flocking to the mines, many women and some men who were not keen to go to urban areas took up employment on the neighbouring farms. Thus contact with Europeans was bringing about change of an unprecedented scale among the Shangaans in the socio-economic and political spheres. The arrival of the Swiss missionaries in the 1870s served to accelerate the pace of social transformation even further, for they introduced formal schooling which is an important catalyst for multifaceted change. With the entry of the Swiss missionaries, the Shangaans were pursued for educational and evangelistic purposes in various areas where they were situated in South Africa, such as in the mines, in prisons, in hospitals, on farms, in townships and in compounds. This was an important milestone in their history (Bill in *The Tsonga Messenger*, October December 1951:30-33. Junod in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July - September 1950:26-32).

With regard to having had a taste of the operations of the European system of government and such things as manual labour, one can say that the Shangaans living in the Zoutpansberg District had a fair share thereof even before the missionaries started their activities amongst them. Joao Albasini used his Shangaan subjects for constructing a dam and canals to irrigate his fields and also implemented them as bodyguards, construction workers to put up his house and other buildings and as tax collectors in the district. Through this exposure, the Shangaans were acquiring some new skills, virtually unknown to them before their association with their naturalized chief. According to De Vaal (1982:16), the Venda people were expected "to pay their hut tax with hoes, copper rods, sheep, goats, cattle and ivory as well as with cash. Should they refuse to pay, Albasini would exert pressure on them by means of his *Magwambi* impi called *Gouvernementsvolk* or *Gouvernementstroepen*". (*Magwambi*, *Magwamba* or *Makwapa* are appellations given to the Shangaans by the Sothos, Vendas and Boers. These derogatory denominations are resented by the Shangaans).

It is difficult to handle cash without numeracy skills. This probably implies that the Shangaans had more than common knowledge about accounting for those times, which enabled them to collect taxes correctly in the Spelonken District — something they couldn't have done if they were not familiar with the currency in circulation at the time. The foregoing suggests that even before the introduction of formal education in the district, the Shangaan people had rudimentary knowledge of the Western culture. What is not clear though, is whether they were liable for taxation, as the Venda people and other tribes were, to the defunct Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (South African Republic) or exempted from it by virtue of being "government troops or officials".

The role of the Shangaans in shaping the Zoutpansberg history was however not without controversy. Some analysts see their role as having been that of mercenaries who pandered to the needs of the erstwhile Transvaal Boer Republic. For instance, Mathatha Tsedu (*Sowetan* 5 March 1998:13), in eulogizing the heroic deeds of King Makhado Ramabulana in anticipation of the centenary celebrations of the founding of the town of Louis Trichardt in 1999, has the following to say about this ruler in the fight for the control of the district against the Boers of the ZAR: "Paul Kruger, the commander-general of the 400 troops specially brought in from Pietersburg and Pretoria to fight Makhado, ran away. He could not defeat Makhado even with the collaboration of Makhado's brother Davhana and other Shangaan and Swazi mercenaries. How many leaders of that time and now can boast of that?".

It is not the intention of this researcher to let this study gravitate to peripheral issues. Let it suffice to point out that other analysts who worked amongst the Shangaans of the Zoutpansberg District between the years 1867 and 1899, a period that forms part of Mr Tsedu's treatise, agree that it was indeed an era of political turbulence, the difficult governing of which was exacerbated by an intricate web of social relations and alliances. The Tsonga people who earlier had suffered the awful experience of being ejected from Mozambique by the rampaging forces of Soshangane, did not treat lightly King Makhado's

threats to expel them along with the Boers from the Zoutpansberg District. The situation demanded that they sought allies who would help them stem the tide, and the support they needed against the gun-wielding Makhado warriors came from the people who were also faced by the threatening muzzles of the Makhado guns, namely the Boers. According to Rev FA Cuendet (1950:27-28) Makhado's army suffered defeat, and lost fifty-eight men. But for him the fight was far from finished, for he continued to launch virulent attacks on his enemies from his mountain strongholds. In their roles as mediators, the continued efforts of the Revs Ernest Creux and Carl Beuster of the Swiss Mission and Berlin Mission respectively, eventually restored some peace in the region (Masumbe 1997:13).

Thus the Shangaans' military offensive against their fellow Africans should be understood in the context of people who had gone through terrible political problems, and were facing the prospects of having their newly attained peace and tranquillity dashed by a tribe that was decidedly bent on wiping out its enemies; the Boers, who certainly saw the Shangaans as their foes. But the plans of the Ramabulana people to attack the Boers and thereafter the Shangaans should not be interpreted as indicating that the Vendas and Shangaans were irreconcilable foes. On the contrary, there was co-existence between the two tribes outside these social conflicts. For instance, the death of chief Ramabulana in 1864 and the subsequent war of succession saw Davhana, the eldest son of the deceased chief fleeing to Tshivhase, Mphaphuli and eventually finding sanctuary in the Shangaan territory under the reign of chief Joao Albasini where he felt he was out of reach of his pursuer, Makhado Ramabulana, the youngest son of paramount chief Ramabulana. Davhana had been disavowed as the heir to the throne because of his impropriety with one of his father's wives. He was also accused of killing his aggrieved father by poisoning him, hence the succession laws were waived to allow Makhado to ascend the throne of the Ramabulana people (De Vaal 1953:74, Tsedu, *Sowetan* 5 March 1998:13).

It is not clear whether Davhana settled at Joao Albasini's Goedewensch farm or in chief Njhakanjhaka's territory. According to information received from Mr PA Miyen during an

interview in April 1999, Davhana was accommodated by chief Njhakanjhaka (see photograph 10) in his territory. This chief, who had previously accommodated other Venda refugees, was at first not keen to give Davhana any living space even though he was pleading: "*Mpheni ndi dzule!*" in his Tshi-Venda language (freely translated in English: Please give me a place to stay!). Mr PA Miyen who possesses a wealth of oral history that he received from his grandfather, stressed that it was upon being persuaded by his indunas to let Davhana stay in the country that the chief at last relented. He was assured that Davhana's stay in the country would do more good than harm to the Shangaans, because he would release intelligence information about his belligerent younger brother to the armed forces. De Vaal's reference to Goedewensch as a place of refuge for Davhana, might be because of strong biases from which history sometimes still struggles to free itself. The place given to Davhana after his pleas, was named *Mpheni* and is inside chief Njhakanjhaka's sphere of influence (Mr PA Miyen, April 1999: interview. Data also confirmed by Mr Egbert Miyen in a separate interview, April 1999).

Of particular importance for this study is the co-operation that existed in the educational arena between the Vendas under Davhana and the Shangaans. This co-existence led to the founding of the outstation of Tsofim and the Ribolla School under the Swiss Mission. This rapport was crucial, for it promoted goodwill among the inhabitants of Spelonken. The political turbulences of the Zoutpansberg District were solved through the application of the collective wisdom of the people involved in the fighting, by the preaching of the Gospel, and by education (De Vaal 1953:75, Cuendet 1950:27-28, Messrs Egbert Miyen and Patrick Arthur Miyen's contributions by means of questionnaires and interviews during April 1999).

The loss of the Shangaans' economic independence meant that they had to strive for education as a means to empower them to secure jobs with which to sustain themselves in the new economic set-up. Because education was a commodity that was provided by missionaries, and to be specific, the Swiss missionaries in terms of this study, its

acquisition was conditional — it was dependent on conversion. The co-existence between the Shangaans and the Vendas around the Ribolla Mountain led to the establishment of the Ribolla School in 1930. The school was built by Rev Paul Rosset assisted by the Hon Dr Jules Liengme or "Pado" (Padi) who owned the farm on which the school was established. The school's first teachers included Messrs Alfred Tlhavela, Edwin Nyesha Mahleza, H Shirilele, J Mathengane and F Sombani. In 1933, Mr EN Mahleza was sent to the Valdezia school where the teachers were inundated with work due to the rapid increase in the school's population. It took five years for the Ribolla school to be registered by the government. During this period, it was regarded as an offshoot dependent on the Valdezia school, and whatever resources it required had to come from that end. The registration of the school by the government in October 1935 brought some relief to the Valdezia school. The enrolment at the time of registration stood at 100 learners, which was a huge number during those years, because it was an uphill struggle to convince parents to send their children to school to prepare for their future. A lot of work rested on the shoulders of the missionary farmer Dr J Liengme and his wife, nicknamed Madumelani, who before her death in the 1920s, stressed the importance of education to the communities under her influence (*Valdezia Bulletin* October 1935, Rev S Malale and M Madzanu in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, May 1921:2).

Some farmers were keen to uplift Africans educationally, but others were affronted by the educational endeavours of the Swiss Missionaries. According to Mr SC Marivate (*Valdezia Bulletin*, November 1935:2), some Europeans were loathe to grant Africans the opportunity for education because they believed that they were progressing too rapidly in comparison with Europeans who had taken centuries to reach the level of education that they had attained in 1935. In his view, most whites would be content to see Africans receiving education, but not beyond the level of standard four (grade six). Perhaps the animosity that most white farmers had towards Africans acquiring education, stemmed from the fear that once educated, they would no longer be prepared to labour on farms. For example, the Emmaus school on the farm Ballymore near Elim Hospital was evicted for reasons only

known to the farm owner, Mr T Fitzgerald, on 10 October 1935. A missionary attached to the Elim Church had to hastily negotiate with Mr JS Henning, who agreed to accommodate the school and church on his farm. Learners had to hurriedly carry all the furniture and other property from the Ballymore farm and transfer them to the new site of four morgen that was allocated to them. The evangelist in charge, probably Mr Mbelengwa Motenda, started putting up a temporary structure to house his pupils and congregation, and work continued as though there had been no interruptions (Shimati 1954:30-32). Cases where farmers tried to stall the educational endeavours of the Swiss were numerous. They were prevalent throughout the erstwhile north-eastern Transvaal. More often than not they occurred with the tacit approval of the state, which under normal circumstances is supposed to maintain law and order and take the responsibility of providing education to all its citizens. Farmers often charged prohibitive rent for premises, with the purpose of having a pliable workforce that would minister to their economic needs at minimal costs (*Valdezia Bulletin*, October 1935, Matjokana [see photograph 2] in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* (March 1923:2, Rev R Cuenod in a letter to Mr JD Rheinallt Jones, SAIRR 27 March 1944).

3.11 THE SHANGAANS' SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

During the pre-colonial era, the Shangaan-Tsonga people had their own system of government headed by kings or chiefs. These were assisted by councillors in the administration of their territories. The position of king or chief was hereditary but not despotic. Every adult person within the tribe had a say in the government. The dawn of Western civilization in South Africa led to drastic changes in the traditional system of government, because traditional leaders were placed under the colonial system of government. They lost most of the powers that they used to have before the advent of colonialism.

(1) CHIEFTAINCY

During the pre-colonial period, the Shangaans' system of government revolved around the chiefs or kings (*tihosi*). They were assisted by a group of elders who constituted the tribal council. The position of chief or king was hereditary. Although the rulers represented the central authority, there was no exercise of despotic powers. The chief/king had to take the advice of his councillors, and if necessary also that of the villagers, before giving judgement on any issue of tribal importance. Judgement was made in the tribal court (*huvo/hubyeni*) where discussions took place. There were therefore semblances of democracy and the devolution of political powers within the traditional system of government, because traditional leaders were not supposed to ignore the will of the people in the different levels of the traditional system of government. This style of leadership was probably in line with the old saying: *Hosi i vanhu* (a chief is people). This implies that it is inconceivable to have a chief without subjects, or put differently, a chief who makes decisions unilaterally should not turn back and seek the opinion of his subordinates when things go wrong. When the chief/king dies, he is succeeded by his eldest son who must be trained and inducted into service by the elders who served in his deceased father's council as advisers. If he is too young to assume the position of leadership, his uncle may assume the throne until he comes of age. If the chief dies without an heir, his position may be filled by his younger brother. This also held for situations where prospective chiefs died before their enthronement (Kriel and Hartman 1991:39).

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHIEFS/KINGS

The responsibilities of traditional leaders were many, and varied from one tribal setting to another according to the ruler's innovativeness in council. But such differences were not so profound as to draw a tribe from the collective culture. Traditional leaders were what fathers are in every household. They had to act in a way that would ensure progress and the general welfare of their subordinates. They were the bearers of authority. They judged the

cases that were brought before them according to and in line with traditional customs. They distributed communal lands for residential and agricultural purposes, presided over initiation rites, rain dances, and feasts of the first fruit. They organized and accompanied military expeditions in their capacities as commanders-in-chief, were mediators between members of their tribes and ancestral spirits and so forth. But of all subordinates, those of the chief or the king's house (*va yindlu ya vuhosi/vukosi*) played the most important role in tribal matters. They could stand in for the chief/king when he was away on business. The traditional leader's advisers had to be people who were well-versed in tribal law, and were therefore not necessarily only drawn from the house of chieftainship or kingship, as this would debar gifted lawyers from the opportunity to be of great help to communities with their expert knowledge (Kriel and Hartman 1991:41).

3.12 CHANGES IN THE WAY OF LIFE OF THE SHANGAANS — A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

Contact between people of varying cultures inevitably leads to cultural modifications in the interest of socio-economic and political development. Usually the lesser culture finds itself with no option but to adopt elements of the dominant culture or super-culture. In South Africa, colonization led to a radical change from traditionalism to modernity. This implies that the European culture became the dominant way of life. The indigenous people had to adapt to the new socio-economic and political conditions of their changed world in order to survive aptly in the new world that was brought about by the advent of Western Civilization in Southern Africa. The earlier resistance in some parts of South Africa was crushed by the colonists and when the African population realised that it was no match for the Europeans with their modern weaponry, they adapted to the new order and strove to attain formal education and the Christianity that went with it, so as to share in some of the benefits that the Westerners had to offer the vanquished nations. This acculturation process did not entail a complete provision of the European cultural elements to the indigenous populace — the process was selective on both sides of the colour divide. Europeans were

only prepared to give Africans those cultural elements that they felt would not jeopardize their own social standings. The belief that Africans were intellectually less gifted than Europeans ensured that they were only given those cultural elements that would slot them into cheap labour in the capitalist economy that was dominated by Europeans. The indigenous population, on the other hand, was also selective in its acceptance of some aspects of the European culture. Africans were prepared to embrace the new technology, but they were more resistant to changes in religion and social organization (Ember and Ember 1977:293-294).

Africans were keen to embrace religion and formal education, but they would often find that Europeans were reluctant to give them the same kind of quality education that was open to white children, because the Europeans feared that they would lose some of their economic privileges if that happened. They therefore stuck to the screening process whereby the dominated people were given education that was always exact replicas of the European culture, but of lesser quality. The screening process according to George M Foster quoted in Ember and Ember (1977:294), would be either formal or informal. Formal screening was encountered when civil, military, or religious institutions deliberately enforced cultural change (acculturation). Informal screening consisted of those unplanned mechanisms or activities whereby personal habits of emigrants, for instance their food preferences, popular medicine, beliefs, hopes, and aspirations, were maintained in the new country. Both the informal and formal screening took place in South Africa. Civilians, the military, police and missionaries belonging to different societies acted as agents of change according to these processes. In areas where the Swiss missionaries operated, their influence together with that of the government was felt most acutely. The Swiss missionaries used their educational institutions, hospitals and churches to infuse their customs into the minds of the indigenous populace. The state used its officials to orientate Africans to the country's statutes. In the Spelonken District, the government had an over-zealous change agent in Joao Albasini who spared no time to introduce the Shangaans to

the military styles of Europeans, their agricultural methods, and their trade and tax systems (Kriel and Hartman 1991:32-44, Ember and Ember 1977:294, De Vaal 1982:16).

After an initial slow start, the formal education system eventually also found favour with the conservative natives when they gradually realised that they would be seriously disadvantaged in the new economic order if they did not have the necessary training. The jobs that were offered by the new culture required certain skills, and those without the skills that came with education were finding it ever more difficult to earn a living. The late Rev DC Marivate, who himself was a product of missionary education, illustrates the changes that were taking place as follows: "The more enlightened chiefs such as Mphahlele, Mphaphuli, Sibasa, Mohlaba et cetera, have erected what we may call tribal schools. More chiefs intend to follow suit. This is a sign which shows us that our people like education, and that the heathens will be conquered after all" (Rev DC Marivate, "What the community expects from Native Education", in "First South African vacation course", Mariannhill 1928:11).

It was not only the voluntary acceptance of Christian education that was responsible for bringing about social transformation in the reserves, but the state policies as well. The introduction of native commissioners and magistrates in the reserves also accelerated social change. The traditional leaders were becoming conscious of the fact that their failure to rid themselves of the veils that prevented them and their subordinates from taking advantage of the niceties of the Western world in the past, would disadvantage them further by eroding whatever political powers they were left with. To avoid this possibility, they set up more schools to give their children instruction in the secrets of the white men. They were determined that where they had themselves failed, their children would not. Enlightened chiefs such as Muhlaba of the Nkuna tribe, wanted to lead by example. They went in search of education so that upon completion of their studies, they could lead their people with the light of their knowledge. Although missionary and government influence had eroded much of their political power, chiefs like Muhlaba were still regarded highly by the church and

state and they were given the latitude to blend traditionalism with modernism, in contrast with areas without elite chiefs or traditional leaders (Shilubana & Ntsan'wisi 1958:164-167).

The change that was being impacted on rural life seemed irreversible. Mr Mushoti (Readyman) Shilobane, who was the son of a late chief and brother of a ruling chief, and by 1909 a student at the Lemana Training Institution, gave an illuminating description of the changes that were taking place in the tribal system of government in the *Lemana College Magazine* of April 1909. In his opinion, the chiefs were fast losing their authority over their subjects to the magistrates as well as the native commissioners that were deployed by the state in different parts of South Africa. Whereas in the past chiefs had all the power they wanted, they now had to share their power over the community with the magistrates and native commissioners. For some cases which in the old days had always been tried at their kraals, they now even had to seek the help of white officials, because these cases could not be heard in their own courts any longer. Where it used to be the age-old custom for their subjects to work their fields, build their huts and perform other tasks that in the past normally would have been done by them, the new economic system had now changed everything. The new economic imperatives required all men to sell their labour in the mines, on farms and in factories in order to buy Western goods and pay taxes. Chiefs who were known for their generosity to their subjects before colonization, had been reduced to the status of dependents, because in terms of "a rule fixed by the chiefs and their people, everyone who went to work in towns and cities, had to give their chief a portion of the money they had earned as soon as they returned. Sometimes it was the sum of one pound, sometimes ten shillings or sometimes only five shillings, according to what the size of their income had been. This was supposed to be the chief's food" (Shilobane in *The Lemana Magazine* April 1909:4).

The changes that were occurring in the traditional system of government were not only confined to South Africa. On the contrary, the same changes were noted by Mgadla

(1986:32-33) in his study of the Bangwato tribe of Botswana. After all the power had been given to the magistrates and commissioners, like in South Africa, the Bangwato chiefs were left with only the power to try minor cases, hold tribal meetings, interview people and visitors, hold ceremonies, convene a *pitso* (assembly) to pass tribal laws or discuss other important issues, allocate agricultural and residential land, and so forth. They no longer tried murder cases or handled the "foreign affairs ministry" as they had done before colonization.

Chief Phatekile Holomisa, President of the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (CONTRALESA), (*City Press*, 9 November 1997:17), blames missionaries for the erosion of the powers of chiefs because they supported the colonial government in South Africa. He says that the colonists' forays into the interior of South Africa enjoyed the wholehearted support of missionaries who presented themselves as men of God spreading the Good News and thereby introducing the indigenous populace to Western civilization. While evangelizing the African masses, the missionaries of different denominations denigrated African cultures and projected theirs as the only one worthy of being assimilated. African religions were condemned by them as pagan, and had to be replaced by Christianity. But Holomisa does not blame all missionaries for doubling up their roles by serving the Church of Jesus Christ while at the same time also advancing the cause of the imperialists. He does acknowledge that some did concentrate on spreading the Good News to Africans, accompanied by education. But there were some who accepted payment from the state in exchange for opiating the Africans with religious propaganda so that they should not see reason to revolt against the colonial government. These "messengers of peace and love" appeared to be very much in favour of the welfare of the indigenous race, and yet when the latter was infuriated by certain laws of the colonial government and took up arms against the state to ameliorate their conditions, these liberal-minded missionaries, instead of mediating, "actively took the side of the colonial forces in the wars of dispossession" (Holomisa, *City Press*, 9 November 1997:17).

The blending of the formal education system and the Scriptures therefore had the power that no words can fully describe in the field of social transformation. Such power managed to disarm even the most belligerent chiefs and kings that are mentioned in the history of the African continent, and of South Africa in particular. Even the hardliners like Makhado and Njhakanjhaka in the Spelonken or Zoutpansberg Districts who were said to be not amenable to social transformation, were eventually disarmed of their former selves. How? The answer can only come forth after a few further questions. How does one explain King Makhado's preference of guns to traditional weapons like spears and knobkerries in his displacement of the Boers of the Voortrekker town of Scheomansdal between 12 and 15 July 1867? And what is it that made the Voortrekkers show dissent to Reverend Nicolaas Jacobus van Warmelo when he implored them to stay put in Schoemansdal where many Voortrekkers, including his beloved wife, had already fallen? Mathatha Tsedu's treatise points to social change which enabled King Makhado to arm his "night-prowling soldiers" with guns he had acquired during his tenure as the Europeans' elephant-tracker. This researcher concurs that nothing but guns caused the death of Mrs Josina van Warmelo and others who fell by her side, and led to the subsequent exodus of the Voortrekkers to the Pietersburg town of Marabastad. It was nothing else than the social transformation that was ingrained in Makhado that eventually led to his demise in September 1895, presumably because of alcohol poisoning after he had a heavy brandy drinking session at Mr John Cooksley's shop in Lovedale Park in the Zoutpansberg District (Tsedu, *Sowetan* 5 March 1998:13).

Although Makhado's flirting with Western civilization can not be said to be the result of the influence of the Swiss missionaries, he was not entirely free from their influence in collaboration with the Lutherans (Berliners) during their attempts to end the gruelling wars. The mediating roles of Revs Creux and Beuster of the Swiss Mission and Berlin Mission during Makhado's wars, and the friendship he had with Mr Cooksley and with the elephant-hunters, count as some form of acculturation (Masumbe 1997:13, Tsedu in the *Sowetan* 5 March 1996:13).

Chief Njhakanjhaka of the Shangaans was initially averse to European influences, but in 1879 he at last allowed the Swiss missionaries to establish the Elim mission station, and eventually he also accepted Christianity, and received a silver medal at the church's silver jubilee held at Mamukeyane on 17 August 1898 (Mathebula 1998:7).

3.13 THE SHANGAANS' SYSTEM OF EDUCATION DURING THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

3.13.1 Introduction

The Shangaan-Tsonga people had their own system of education before the Swiss missionaries set up formal schools in their territories. This was home education (informal education) in which parents instructed their children in the cultural heritage that had been synonymous with these nations since time immemorial. Although literary instruction (reading and writing) did not exist in the Shangaan-Tsonga people's system of education, their age-old ways of oral instruction nonetheless produced individuals endowed with the necessary knowledge of traditional norms and values to exercise their cultural mandates correctly.

(a) Informal or home education

Education as a human phenomenon is prevalent in both the so-called primitive and civilized societies of the world. The only notable differences between the systems of education found in the two societies are that informal education is concerned with the instilling of cultural norms and values and is normally devoid of literary skills, while the aim of formal education is to instil reading and writing skills, is well-organised and manned by trained educators. Both systems of education are however concerned with socio-economic, political and/or cultural issues. In terms of this study, home education had to be superseded by formal education for the demonstration of how multifaceted

development took place. Shangaan parents taught their children norms and values upheld in the family, community, and society at large. This home education was vital because it enabled them to control the environment in which they lived. It empowered them with numerical skills, technological expertise, scientific knowledge, and very importantly, knowledge about their history (Mondlane 1983:58. Cf. Thami Mazwai *Sowetan* Wednesday 2 December 1998:12).

Parents had the responsibility to teach their children cultural values, so that they could preserve their own culture and pass it on to future generations. Children had to know how to fend for themselves by practising agriculture, keeping and tending livestock, hunting wild animals and gathering wild fruit. Inseparable from the latter was knowledge of the ingredients of certain plants, so that they should not eat poisonous herbs or fruit when they were out in the veld tending to livestock. The chief method of educating children was the story-telling method. Consequently, folktales were narrated in the evenings, chiefly by grandmothers when children were sitting around the fire. These lessons required the active participation of children so as to avoid drowsiness before the story was concluded. Folktales were indispensable in teaching morals to children, or even in dissuading children from loitering about far from their homes at night. Matters that were regarded as sensitive, required the separation of sexes. Both the mother and father had a fair share of educating their children within the family (Fokisi in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* August 1921:13).

The division of work among parents ensured the efficient delivery or presentation of lessons. Feminine roles like cooking, child care and doing the washing were assigned to women, while the men with their strong bodies were expected to hunt and to defend their communities. Home education was very important in the daily survival of the Shangaans as children had to grow up knowing their social responsibilities. While tribal laws and morals could be imparted by way of folk-tales, industrial work required emulation of adults as they were going about their tasks; in other words, learning through observance, and practising what they saw being done by their elders. The survival of African cultures was dependent

on informal instruction. Although home education was not as organised as formal education is, it was nonetheless systematic and revealed great expertise and wisdom (Gracie Madjamu in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* November 1922:5).

Madjamu lists the things that girls had to know as the following: "Pounding or crushing maize, cooking, sweeping, smearing cow-dung or mortar on walls or floors, washing, and other household chores" (Madjamu 1992:5) (my own translation). In the same article published in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, Madjamu refuted the allegation by the Swiss missionaries and other clerics to the effect that Africans were inherently lazy. She argued that a girl who displayed indolence was like that through lack of exertion and not something that was inherent to Africans, nor was it attributable to formal education. Her treatise was the result of conservatives' condemnation of formal schooling because they said it promoted laziness. She was supported in her justification of education by another writer from the Magwagwaza Mission Station, but this person also seriously criticized people who were fortunate enough to have received European education, and then shunned those who had not yet been exposed to mission education (anonymous, *Nyeleti ya Mišo* March 1923:3).

Another columnist identified only as JH Maswanganyi also emphasized the importance of formal education in its bringing about social change. But he or she did not negate or ignore informal education, which was seen as something that was arming boys with hunting skills that enabled them to come home "with a gazelle, a hare, guinea-fowl, honey and so forth" as additional food for family members. Formal education and in particular industrial instruction was seen by Maswanganyi as the key to multifaceted development. But he stressed that such education as was provided to blacks had to be sufficiently diversified so that graduates could fill many different key positions in life, not just teaching and the ministry. In advocating for industrial training, Maswanganyi was on the same plane as the missionaries who were his/her benefactors (Maswanganyi in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* April 1923:4). The three writers' concentration on the two systems of education contains important

lessons. Their articles show that a proper balance has to be struck between formal and informal education so that the indigenous African cultures can be preserved for posterity.

The propagation of European cultures at the expense of African cultures could only lead to the production of beings who would labour like caricatures under the excessively vain pretension of being fully Europeanized, while in reality they fell painfully short of what they had hoped to become. It is necessary for acculturation to occur, as no nation can afford to remain static in this era of globalization, but man should try to avoid the whittling away of indigenous cultures. African cultures must be developed, and development should include discarding some of the old practices that have little or no value, but those cultural elements that do not stifle social transformation like our *ubuntu* or humaneness should remain intact (Marolen, "Nhlamuselo" (preface) in *Garingani wa Garingani* 1989).

(b) Initiation schools

The Shangaans had special schools for the moral upbringing of children. These were institutions of higher learning in terms of the traditional culture. Any person who shied away from such schools was forever considered a boy or a girl never attaining adulthood. Boys furthered their home education at initiation schools (*ngoma/engomeni*) away from the village, that was derogatively known as "bush schools". Girls were enrolled at some selected compounds within the villages, mostly for their own security as they could not fight predators or marauders in the bush. These traditional schools are discussed under (1) and (2) respectively:

(i) Initiation school for boys (*ngoma*)

The bush was an ideal site for these schools as the singing in which initiates indulged teemed with foul language for the duration of the training course. One of the most important events for boys attending these schools was that they had to have their foreskins

cut off, partly for hygienic reasons, namely to avoid the accumulation of the disturbingly smelly whitish stuff in the furrow around the neck of the penis, but also for the reason of enjoying more satisfaction during sexual intercourse.

The initiation schools or "bush schools" provided sex education and instilled respect to all participants for the wonder of womanhood that was to be found in female partners. Of all the educational matters that were discussed in these schools, the most emphasis was placed on sexual relationships between graduates emerging from the circumcision schools and their future spouses. Sexual relations before initiation was strictly forbidden. It is interesting to note that a boy whose penis became septic after being circumcised, was accused of having fraternised promiscuously with girls or "eating forbidden eggs" before attending circumcision school and this was punishable in terms of the school rules. After they completed their training in initiation school and had been circumcised, sexual relations were encouraged, as boys were by then considered adults. Boys were put under strict discipline of a spartan nature. They had to remain naked for the duration of the course, their bodies covered in a mixture of white lime. They were tossed in water so that the mixture should afterwards stick to their bodies, and seeing that the schools were in session during winter, this covering of white lime (*nkwerha* or *khedi*) served as their only meagre protection against the cold weather. During their stay they would hunt wild animals, collect firewood, and eat porridge without relish as part and parcel of their tuition of disciplined lifestyles. They were forbidden to drink water, but their instructors could drink as much water and African beer as they wanted, and these instructors were also the ones who ate the delicious relish that were sent to them from home. Anybody who transgressed the rules, be it the initiates, their instructors, their educators (*vadzabi*), which included some very old men who lived in special compounds on campus, would have to endure great pain induced by pressing the fingers together as though in prayer and tying them tightly to sticks known as *timbuti* (goats). This act known as *ku mamisa timbuti* (to make someone suck the milk of a goat) would be performed by instructors or educators or even elders responsible for the sound management of the school. Everybody, including these older people, were exposed

to the possible danger of having to suck goat's milk. It was not uncommon for an elderly man to be heard screaming at the top of his voice because of his tortuous experience with the dreaded so-called "goats". Amongst initiates, the son of the chief or king was appointed as the operator of these goats. He was also the first person to feel the sharpness of the surgeon's knife as his foreskin was removed. He was known as *xitlhangoma* (he who must be the first to be initiated). Whatever happened at the "bush school" was considered to be strictly confidential, never to be divulged outside the context of the school (*ku boxa ngoma/tingoma*). Any transgression of this rule was punishable with a fine, normally in the form of cattle. One could discuss one's experiences only with somebody who has also been to the school, and never with uninitiated men (*maxuvuru*) or "boys" as they were called, even when they grew old and had grey hair. Any boy who dodged initiation school and the concomitant circumcision would eventually, as soon as the proper opportunity presented itself, be abducted to the college so that he could also be a man (*wanuna*). This stayed valid for many years, and could still be executed even when they were already elderly men with adult children (Junod 1962:71-94).

Besides the endurance and fortitude instilled in youths, the education provided at the bush school emphasized religiosity, and those on the programme had to assemble at a special place every day before dawn to worship an ancestor who represented the clan. At these gatherings, the boys were also taught some formulae by their instructors. The centre for worship is known as the *Mulagaru*. A very large pole was erected in the "yard of the formulae" and fixed in a hole, and a person masquerading as the ancestor would climb up the pole to communicate with the circumcised boys. This ceremony took place a few days before the school session closed. In ancient times, the session lasted for three months. The boys had to learn laws (*milawu*) that were presented in the form of poetry that teemed with Northern Sotho words. These law-poems, which were recited by initiated boys, was perhaps the only intellectual training that they were exposed to during their stay at the school (Masumbe, personal experience. Junod 1962:86-91).

- NB** (1) The researcher attended the initiation school in his home village of N'waxinyamani during his youth. As a graduate, he knows its curricula and the disciplinary actions meted out by management.
- (2) Presently the initiation sessions last only as long as the winter school holidays to allow graduates to receive Western education.

(ii) Initiation school for girls (*vukhomba*)

These schools are held in selected compounds within villages. Unlike the initiation schools for boys, they do not necessitate the construction of new shelters. But the initiation schools for girls do share some common characteristics with those for boys, namely secrecy. Not much is known about them because initiates are strictly forbidden to talk about what happens at these secret societies. What we do know is that during their training in these schools, girls are taught that they are expected to be humble and respectful to all their elders, including strangers, and caring towards all masculine needs, so that they should become good wives. Junod (1962:177) reveals that girls attending these secret societies were "exhorted to be very polite to all adults, and had to salute everybody entering the hut" in which they were accommodated. But they were not to reveal anything concerning their menses to men. This meant that girls had to lead clean lives, nursing their bodies and abstaining from sexual relations until they had graduated from their initiation schools, and could be courted for marriage. Junod (1962:182) also talks of a practice meticulously followed by every rural girl, namely the *mileve* (clitoris) custom. Although these practices have for ages traditionally existed under a veil of secrecy, some information has become known in these modern times. Girls who had experienced their menses for the first time would be assembled and put in a hut to undergo initiation. This *vukhomba* or *ku khomba*, also entailed tending the *mileve* so that during sexual intercourse their future partners in marriage could experience satisfaction. This custom was not only confined to the Shangaan tribe. On the contrary, it was prevalent in most South African tribes including the Pedi, Venda and the Nguni. Instruction at the girls' initiation schools teemed with feminine

taboos aimed at preventing defilement and early pregnancies, so that parents would not be cheated by malpractice of receiving the *lobola* (bride-price) from would-be suitors. Girls undergoing a course of training in womanhood were also taught the *milawu* (formulae or laws of the initiation school) which they had to learn by heart. To avoid divulging secrets to the uninitiated (*maxuvuru*), they were instructed to cross-question any person whose bonafides were in doubt about their knowledge as to what happens at such schools, and this included reciting the secret formulae. As far as tending the *mileve* (clitoris) is concerned, Junod (1962:182) declared that it was a very ugly practice, very immoral and utterly deplored by the Swiss Missionaries because it encouraged girls to concentrate on sexual relations instead of things that were much more important, and could have been very valuable to them, namely Christianity and formal education. Junod remains somewhat secretive about what the Shangaan women were actually doing to the girls in this specific part of the initiation process. One can only guess that the women were performing what sexologists refer to as the removal of the adherent hood from the clitoris so as to enhance a woman's sexual pleasure (Liewely-Jones 1978:17-18). Missionaries regarded this practice of the mutilation of genitals as superstitious and barbaric, and therefore decided that it should be banned and terminated by the Church. As a means to an end, they statutorily outlawed girls' initiations which were seen by them as the promotion of being abnormally obsessed with marriage, and even worse, the promotion of polygamous lifestyles and the resultant prolific procreation of children that were impossible for their parents to take care of properly because of their large numbers.

During the colonization period, some enlightened chiefs like Muhlaba Shilubana, who was a beneficiary of mission education, saw things differently. They were not keen to blindly abolish these cultural traditions. Muhlaba in particular thought it wise to strike a balance between traditionalism and modernity. Upon realising that the vukhomba ritual led to the death of many girl initiates during immersion in a pool of water which was an integral part of the girls' transition from girlhood to womanhood, he substituted the rigorous initiation custom for a ceremonial one, whereby girls coming of age would simply be declared as

such by elders. But one can guess that even here it was not merely a simple declaration of status; girls had to be oriented according to the norms and values befitting a properly brought up child (call it sex education in terms of modern parlance). But since fatalities during training periods in initiation schools were not confined to females, some reformatations were also introduced into the handling of circumcision during the initiation of boys. Any chief or sub-chief intending to inaugurate a "bush school" had to give notice to this effect well in advance, so that medical personnel could arrange for medical supplies and deploy themselves at the initiation schools to treat the wounds of the circumcised boys. Initiation schools had to be run in such a manner that the formal school system was not disrupted. Consequently, the lesser chiefs had to present their applications to their paramount chief who would in turn pass them on to the state officials for ratification and insertion in their itineraries. This modification by chief Muhlaba was in conflict with the Swiss Mission statutes which expressly banned initiation school for boys, but the Swiss missionaries could not have everything their way without jeopardising the cordial relations that existed between them and the chief and his subjects. Muhlaba did not want to alienate his constituency nor his missionary friends. He struck a proper balance between traditionalism and westernization (Shilubana & HE Ntsan'wisi 1958:164-165).

Chief N'wamitwa saw things differently. His view was that the traditional practices like the payment of lobola and initiation schools had to be abandoned completely, and that Western values were to be embraced instead. Anybody defying his exhortations would be liable to a fine. The Rev Ozias Magadzi tells of a feast that was organized by chief Mahlavezulu N'wamitwa at which the whole issue of initiation schools for boys and for girls, as well as all traditional superstitions, were banned, and an ox slaughtered as a token of this banning order. Chief Mahlavezulu's actions were obviously influenced by the Swiss missionaries, for he even bought a farm for which he paid £635.10, with each of his subjects paying £4 towards its purchase. For this, he had to endure criticisms from his conservative subjects who argued that land cannot be bought but is communally owned. The chief refused to be moved by his subjects' protestations, for like the missionaries, he believed that the energies

of his people had to be channelled into formal education and farming (agriculture) which were proposed to be the keys for national development (Magadzi in Mafumele ya va ka-Baloi (The Baloi clan's system of government) in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1924:2).

The process of social transformation had become so ingrained in the chief's mind that he even recruited teachers whom he treated with love and respect because they were responsible for socio-economic development. Christians had their own Christian induna in the person of Timoteo Khosa. Their cases could not be heard by the chief in the absence of this man (Magadzi in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1924:2). For their part missionaries ensured that N'wamitwa would never be without a minister or evangelist to promote Christian fellowship and formal education which was perceived to be an important catalyst in the tribe's progression to modernity. But like in other areas where the Swiss Mission in South Africa had set up mission stations and annexes or outstations, backslidings were rife among Christians who still found pagan practices irresistible. The Rev Ozias Magadzi (*Nyeleti ya Mišo* June 1921:2) tells about a faithful boy who accepted Christianity during the tenure of the Rev Jonas Maphophe and F Shiluvane, who became wayward and discontinued his schooling to defect to the initiation school and start smoking dagga, even though the laws were against these "evil" practices. In the end the boy who received his standard one (grade three) education at the local primary school, became mentally deranged as if God were angry with him for having forsaken Him. Rev Magadzi's assistance had to be enlisted to help restore his mental stability. This condemnation of traditional customs by the white and black missionaries was prevalent in all areas controlled by the Swiss during the historical epoch under review, and it is no exaggeration to state that the denigration of traditional customs still exists to this day among the detribalized Africans. The only difference perceptible between contemporary and ancient missionary condemnations lies in the vehemence with which such opposition is voiced. While Mr Gideon Mpapele could boldly condemn the defection of Elim primary school boys to the initiation school, leaving Miss Thelin's classes almost empty during the 1890s, the same could not openly be said today in certain villages, for the outcome would be too ghastly to contemplate. The underdeveloped

rural parts of South Africa have caught up with the mission stations and their outstations in terms of infrastructural development. Consequently, individuals speaking disrespectfully of certain cultural practices might be construed as undermining the chiefs' authority and this might backfire on them, because the hitherto backward rural parts of South Africa now also have schools, churches, health centres and offices that absorb a huge workforce (Mpapele in *Nanga ya Ba-Thonga*. August 1899:31).

3.13.2 The traditional system of education and formal education — the case of compatibility with Christianity

Before the advent of Western civilization, informal education was the only traditional determinating factor concerning the success or failure of an individual in life, because this system of education orientated its consumers with regard to all traditional socio-economic and political issues. By the same token, children whose parents were not able to give them the best informal education would experience problems in life when it came to the issues mentioned above. But contrary to all the hypocritical viewpoints of colonists and missionaries alike, Africa was not necessarily the only continent submerged in primitivity. Europe passed through the same phase with the only difference being modernization of traditional custom "by its scientists year after year" (Thami Mazwai in "Throwing off the yoke", an article published in *Sowetan*, December 1998:12).

This renewal and updating of European customs by scientists with the aid of formal education, accounted for the huge gap that existed between Europeans and Africans at the time of the encounter between the two races. But primitive as the Africans' cultural practices were, they did not lead to grinding poverty. If this were the case, Africans would have become extinct even before the Portuguese explorers came in contact with them along the southern coast of the Cape and eastern coast of Southern Africa. Africans had an education system of their own. They engaged in the ivory trade with other nations, including Europeans they met along the sea coast. Their education system was not devoid

of science and technology, and that explains why they were able to tap the mineral resources of this continent even before Europeans could venture inland from the relatively friendly sea-shores. Mazwai put it succinctly when he said: "In science it was overlooked that it was not by chance that huts constructed by tribesmen were cool in summer and warm in winter. It means that there was some logic, what is called science, in choosing grass for thatching and the design of the structure". Granted that these postulations be true, the missionaries of different denominations should have shelved their pride and integrated or coalesced the good of the African culture with the good of the European culture in the interest of national or social development. The refinement of the indigenous cultures would have promoted the image of Africans. The good deeds of missionaries were blotted by the demonizing of everything "that was African or native to Africa" by European missionaries and colonists (Mazwai 1998:12, cf. Mondlane 1983:58).

The history of mankind reveals that human culture thrives on things borrowed to update itself with the purpose to adapt well to the ever-changing social environment perpetually ignited by man's quest for a better life. Thus the civilization of the Egyptians since 4 000 BC was imported by Europeans as part of the onslaught to reach out for a better life where better communication would serve as a means to promoting socio-economic and political development. In a move to dispel the myth that was so rampant especially during the scramble for African territories, namely that Africa made no contribution to human development, and to enlighten those who seemed to have no clearer view of what Africa subsisted of, Dr Eduardo Mondlane had the following to say: "While Europeans were still living in primitive tribal societies isolated in the northern forest belt, North Africans were learning to control their environment, developing technology and science and forming a complex, settled society. They used mathematics to measure the land, to chart the movement of the stars and to design large and elaborate buildings; they invented some of the earliest techniques of mining, iron smelting and casting; they took some of the first steps in the medical sciences. It was this society that absorbed the first primitive Moslem invaders and by a cultural fusion created the advanced Islamic culture of Africa, from

which Europe gained many of the scientific ideas that made the Renaissance possible" (Mondlane 1983:58).

Mondlane acknowledges that North Africa could not singularly boast of an advanced material culture, as West Africa had built some of its cities long before the North Africans adopted Islam. The Congo and other parts of Africa engaged in considerable trade between themselves and the Middle East and India (Mondlane 1983:59).

These historical revelations are important for more reasons than one. They serve to contextualise and elucidate the educational advancements of the residents of Africa albeit in varying degrees. They serve to deflate the customary view held by some Europeans and Americans, namely that the African peoples made no contribution to human thought and development, and that whatever they had was worthless, hence the appellation of the "Dark Continent". Mondlane's treatise together with that of Mazwai, dispel the belief commonly held by most missionaries and colonists that centuries before the arrival of Europeans, Africans were without morals, had no culture worth mentioning in positive terms, and no real quality in their education. Lastly, Mondlane's *The Struggle for Mozambique* (1983:59) is pertinent to this researcher's study because it illuminates the history of the Shangaan-Tsonga people who were the main targets of the Swiss missionaries in their evangelical and educational campaigns. Incidentally, the Swiss missionaries also admitted that they together with their colleagues in the other missionary societies, were wrong in concluding that Africans (this includes the Shangaan-Tsonga people who are the focus of this historical review) were immoral, areligious and without the necessary quality system of education. This acknowledgement of the existence of *ubuntu* in Africans is in itself an admission that the home education as provided to their children by African parents, was superb. This was frankly acknowledged by the Rev Paul Fatton in the form of an address to the conference in 1932. But even as these facts were revealed, there was still a lot of subjectivity precluding missionaries from making a break with the biases of the past (Fatton 1932:57-58).

The role of missions should have been to create a climate of cultural exchange and social development rather than a partisan one. Real social transformation, as will be explored by the ensuing chapters, should be unfettered by racist policies. Put differently, it must have open education as its generator, so that in hindsight one can conclude either that mission or Christian education under the auspices of the Swiss missionaries played a significant role in enabling its consumers to tame the environment and improve their cultural norms and values — or has failed in empowering them to do so. Missionary education should therefore project itself as no enigma, and at the same time it should be free of controversy. Theron (1993:38) in his Doctor Divinitatis thesis submitted at the University of Pretoria, offers the following challenges or problems against which every mission in Africa ought to protect the unsuspecting masses, or those without the capacity to fight for their rights:

- unsafe water
- too little food
- little education
- no or insufficient health care
- no voice or power in decision-making
- injustice and exploitation in society

Admittedly, these were problems that were prevalent in South Africa during the historical epoch under review, namely 1873-1975 and it will be very interesting to note how the Swiss Missionary Society acquitted itself in its transformational ventures (Theron 1993:38-48).

3.14 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Social transformation takes place in a social context. It has to do with human interaction that is geared towards changing the mind-sets, attitudes, systems of belief, and practices of people when these have become outdated and practically useless because of the

introduction of a new and completely different social structure. Social transformation is bent on improving the way in which things are done. It is therefore grounded on the improvement of standards of living by encouraging participants in this process to advance towards modern ways of doing things in order to systematically replace old modes of solving socio-economic and political problems with new ones that are designed to be effective in this new cultural atmosphere. It is what one may in the context of this study define as the relocation from traditional cultural practices to modern functional approaches of European origin. The results of social transformation in the view of this researcher are gauged in terms of what has been (the old, the past) with regard to human survival vis-a-vis what the popular trends of today are (contemporary, present practices). This implies that to assess how far culture has changed over the years, we need to know how the people of the past lived before they were confronted by and interacted with the modern people who introduced their dominant new culture to them — this new culture with its mighty technology and formidable formal education.

Before settling in South Africa, the Tsonga people were the inhabitants of Mozambique. Obviously this assertion excludes the Tsonga people who might have entered South Africa from countries other than Mozambique. The Tsonga lived according to their age-old traditions before they came into contact with the early Portuguese explorers in 1497. They had their own education system (home education) economic system (subsistence economy) governmental system and legal system.

Apart from trading with the indigenous populace, the Portuguese authority over their adopted country was shaky. They could not subjugate the Vatsonga people who jealously guarded their sovereign independence, especially during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In these military encounters for the supreme control of Mozambican territory, the Tsonga people always gained the upper hand, driving out the Portuguese settlers from their settlements to places of refuge along the coast. A return to the settlements was always made possible by the arrival of reinforcements from Portugal and

the Tonga warriors who lived with their colonial masters at Inhambane. (Please note again that the Tonga tribe should not be confused with the Tsonga tribe which forms the core of this study, because the two were different in terms of language and culture as well as the geographical areas in which they were found within Mozambique). The arrival of Soshangane (Manukosi) from Zululand through Swaziland, led to the takeover of Mozambique after both the Portuguese and indigenous populace were humiliatingly defeated. It was during this period that many Tsonga refugees entered the erstwhile Transvaal under the tutelage of Joao Albasini. The death of Soshangane in 1858 led to the war of succession and this, together with economic pressures, eventually led to the disintegration of the Gaza Kingdom in the Battle of 1895, which culminated in Nghunghunyane, the last monarch, being taken prisoner by the victorious Portuguese. He died in exile in 1907 (*100 Years of Tsonga Publications*, 1883-1983:3-4, Kriel and Hartman 1991:18, cf Davenport 1987:67-68).

By the time the Gaza Kingdom collapsed in 1895, a number of Tsonga people had already settled in the then Transvaal for reasons ranging from economics to security from the belligerent tribes. These Tsonga people or Shangaans as they were interchangeably known after intermingling with the Nguni elements, were the first ones to be evangelized by the Swiss missionaries since the mid-1870s. The Gospel followed them to the urban areas where they took up employment in the mines and industries, as well as in European households (Brookes 1925:13-14).

This chapter is important for the reason that it takes the reader through the history of the Tsonga or Shangaan people and their contacts with other peoples. These contacts were vital in the broadening of their horizons. But it is the contacts with the Swiss missionaries that will at the end of this study demonstrate how far the Shangaan-Tsonga people have progressed in the process of social transformation.

CHAPTER 4

EXPANSION OF MISSION WORK INTO AREAS WHERE THERE WAS A NEED FOR EVANGELISM

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Free Church of the small Canton de Vaud was founded in 1847. Its aims were to organize missionary and prayer meetings, collect funds, enter into partnerships with several missionary societies, and to encourage young men belonging to the Free Church to become missionaries. The impetus to establish an autonomous missionary society came from these young missionaries who were members of the "*Union Chretiennes*", an association of Christians in Canton de Vaud, Switzerland. It consisted of students attached to universities and seminaries. These young missionaries offered to venture forth into foreign mission fields since the 1850s. The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho was the popular Church to which most of the young missionaries belonging to the Free Church were posted. The Paris mission's abandonment of its plans to expand its missions from Lesotho into the erstwhile Transvaal Republic in the early 1870s, came as a blessing to the overzealous youths eager to create a niche for themselves by spreading the Gospel to heathens. The arrival of the Revs Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud at Valdezia in 1875 was the result of the pressure brought to bear on the leadership of the Free Church of Canton de Vaud to establish foreign missions, rather than a matter of choice (Egli and Krayner 1996:13-14, Phillips in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1949:3).

During its infancy, the Valdezia Mission Station was faced with enormous challenges. As the first mission station for the Swiss Mission in South Africa, it had to convert heathens who in turn would help to spread the Gospel to their kith and kin, and would also assist in the further expansion of evangelism. The Valdezia Mission Station acquitted itself very well in this regard, because within four years from its inception, the Elim Mission Station came into being in 1879. These achievements, however, came amid great suffering caused

by the outbreak of epidemics and the inhospitality of the leaders of the defunct Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, who did not trust French-speaking clerics, because the Paris missionaries had apparently fanned the border clashes between the Boers of the erstwhile Orange Free State Republic and the Basotho people of King Moshoeshoe. After having overcome these initial problems, the Swiss missionaries went placidly about their tasks, and the society soon had branches in several parts of the former North-Eastern Transvaal, Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique), the Pretoria-Johannesburg industrial heartlands, Natal, Zululand, Welkom and Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). What follows is a discussion of the Swiss missionaries' transformative efforts with particular reference to the South African situation (*The Christian Express*, 1 December 1894:183, Cuendet 1950:53-55).

4.2 THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The early years of the Swiss Mission in South Africa were very eventful. Firstly the missionaries had to see to it that there was decent accommodation for them and their families in the form of housing. They also had to erect church buildings for religious services and build proper schools for giving instruction to children of the local pagans who had to be converted to the new religions. They had to establish rudimentary clinics in the form of buildings that could be used for the provision of primary health care, prepare fields that could be used for agricultural purposes, and take care of a host of other duties and provide services that had to be made available for the normal functioning of their mission stations (Cuendet 1950:34-36).

Secondly there was the question of learning the languages that were spoken by the authorities who governed the country at varying periods of their stay in South Africa, namely Dutch (later Afrikaans) and the English language, not to forget the Tsonga/Shangaan language spoken by their proselytes. The latter had to be mastered as expeditiously as possible, because their earlier belief that the tribe the missionaries were to

evangelize was proficient in Sesotho had been proved to be incorrect. Accordingly, the Biblical material that the missionaries had brought to Valdezia had to be translated into the language spoken by the Shangaans, namely Xitsonga or Xichangana. If there were people who were anxious to have the Word of God heard and accepted in their own language by the heathen communities, they indubitably were the Swiss missionaries, hence proper understanding of the Tsonga language was imperative. The same thing happened when missionary work was extended into Mozambique, because missionaries had to know the African languages as well as the Portuguese language in order to secure permission to evangelize in the territory (Brookes 1925:7-8).

4.3 VALDEZIA MISSION STATION

The need for missionary residences at Valdezia had to be treated with a sense of urgency considering the fact that the shelter left by Mr John Watt, the Scottish trader from whom the Swiss missionaries bought the Klipfontein farm, "consisted of a few rustic huts, and a small tin-roofed building which had served as a shop. Paul Berthoud and his family chose the huts, that were transformed into sieves after the first heavy rains, and Ernest Creux and his family occupied the little shop that became a real oven in the heat" (Phillips 1949:24).

The construction of the first houses required manpower, and this came largely from the Shangaans whom the Swiss missionaries sought to transform into Christians. The construction work undertaken by the missionaries gave the Shangaans the opportunity to learn a lot from them about their sophisticated way of building houses, and the planning that should precede it. We can assume that the modern way of constructing huts and houses (*tihayisi* — the Shangaan version of the Afrikaans and English words *huise/houses*) owes its origin to the first contacts with European missionaries and their white brethren. These contacts were beneficial on both sides. To the blacks the encounter provided skills that ensured a safe entry into the modern world, while missionaries gained more insight into the way of life of the indigenous populace, which ensured the successful introduction of

Christianity and its concomitant formal education system. The contact between the two races, especially during work-sessions, might have influenced the missionaries' decision to make industrial courses compulsory at their schools because of the belief that the indigenous race was inherently lazy (Phillips 1950:8).

Like in other parts of the African continent, the "missionaries came to South Africa as total experts, claiming that they had the competence to present comprehensive new definitions of reality to replace those that had previously been dominant among the native people (Ashley 1980:32)".

All missionaries, including the Swiss, believed in the inculcation of manual skills to natives so that those who acquired them could display them within their own communities, thereby attracting their kith and kin to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the converted populace.

4.4 THE FIRST YEARS OF VALDEZIA MISSION STATION (1875-1878)

Unlike other churches that experienced problems in entering black areas, the Swiss missionaries' entry into Valdezia was most cordially welcomed. The neighbouring Berlin (Lutheran) mission's Rev Carl Beuster expressed shock at the rapid progress made by the Swiss missionaries in Valdezia, as it had taken him and his colleagues five years to win the Vendas over to Christ's side (Cuendet 1950:17).

The rapid results obtained by the Swiss missionaries in Valdezia could be attributed to a number of factors. Firstly, there was the tireless efforts of Evangelist Eliakim Matlanyane and his colleague Asser Segagabane who were left in charge of the Klipfontein farm in 1873, after the abortive expedition to Sekhukhuniland. Although the Basotho evangelists spoke a language that was unfamiliar to the Shangaans of Valdezia, the fact that they were black could have counted in their favour, as people tend to relate easier with those they share certain things with, such as cultural elements. So the fact that the Gospel was being

preached by Africans, elicited a good response from the Valdezian Shangaans. The relationship structure between the two evangelists and the Shangaans was easy to forge compared to situations where white missionaries had to establish rapport with the indigenous races on their own, without the benefit of a shared background. The absence of the white missionaries might have been seen by evangelists as a golden opportunity to put the skills that they had acquired from them to the test. The relationship structure between the evangelists and the natives, whom they saw as heathens, was seemingly better than would have been the case with white missionaries. Furthermore, Valdezia was truly blessed because it had men who had served in the Kimberley diamond mines and in Pretoria, men who were the living evidence of the value of Christianity and formal education. By means of their demonstration of the skills that they had acquired, these men served as an example to their fellows that it was advisable not to shun Christianity if they were to take full advantage of the capitalist economic system and its attendant socio-economic and political benefits (Cuendet 1950:17-19).

The people who were mainly responsible for allaying the fear of the unknown that their own folk might have had, included the following people: John Songele (Shongele), Timoteo Mandlati, Yakob Mbizana Mabulele and his wife Alita. They were the first converts of the "missionaries". Mabulele who was an *induna* (headman), died in 1930. He had already accepted Christianity while working in Pretoria. John Shongele was one of Matlanyane's first pupils during his tenure as resident missionary of Valdezia. Mr John Shongele distinguished himself as an ardent Christian by refusing his mother's exhortations to perform rituals for his deceased father upon his return from Kimberley. This act won him the respect of his mentors, because to them it signified a move in the right direction (Cuendet 1950:17) (my own translation).

These early gains of the Swiss missionaries were celebrated in style in the years 1876-1877. In 1876 the first converts were baptized, and this was followed by further festivities that attracted the attention of even the heathens. By the end of 1876, the Swiss mission had a

total number of forty converted Christians (*Rejoice* 1975:19). The year 1877 matched 1876 in terms of progress in the evangelization of the heathen masses. Besides holding the Lord's Supper, to which the Rev Erdmann Schweltnus of the Berlin mission's Tshakhuma Mission Station, and the Rev Francois Coillard of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society were invited, and gladly attended together with their families and converts, the mission also baptized twelve converts in December of that year. Of these there was a handful of women married to men who had already been baptized in July 1877. Their marriages were solemnized by the missionaries to mark the couples' break with the past. The increasing number of conversions raised the number of Christians to 530 by the end of 1878. Among these converts were the Maphophe brothers, Jonas and Calvin, who had freed themselves from the clutches of their conservative father, and sought refuge at the houses of the Revs Creux and Berthoud respectively (Cuendet 1950:18-19).

4.5 BRANCHES OF VALDEZIA MISSION STATION

The growth of the Valdezia Mission Station since 1875 was measured in terms of its converts and outstations. The missionaries' failure to evangelize the Bapedi of Sekhukhuniland in 1873 was soon forgotten when they were allowed to evangelize the Shangaans of the Zoupanenberg District. But ironically, the Swiss mission's first stations were born amongst the very Bapedi people who were reputed to have initially shunned the teachings of the Swiss missionaries, albeit not under the same tribal chieftainship. The Swiss mission had short-lived mission stations at Molepo, where Josias Molepo was the evangelist, and at Mutle (near Mphahlele) and Dikgale (Mamabolo) where respectively Yonathan Molepo and a man known only as Daniel were the evangelists. These mission stations were forced to close as the Swiss missionaries could not give constant support and encouragement to the Christians, owing to the considerable distances between them and the Valdezia Mission Station. The Christians were ultimately forced to join other churches whose missionaries did not have any problem in frequenting their congregations. But the Bapedi were not entirely lost to the Swiss mission, because the Lemana Training Institution

later thrived on the good supply of students that came from Pietersburg and environs, not to mention other areas of Southern Africa (Cuendet 1950:17-18, Creux in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*, February 1921:1-2).

Other outstations where the Word of God prospered under the auspices of the Valdezia Mission Station included Barota under Mr Jeremiah Tau as the resident evangelist, Barcelona under Mr Bethuel Raditau, Kurhuleni, Malanyu, Pfukani and Tlangelani, to name but a few of them. What was interesting about these gains was that the missionaries were not only converting ordinary men and women, but were making serious inroads into tribal chieftaincy, orientating chiefs and headmen towards Christian norms and values. One notable breakthrough was the conversion of headman Manantswana and his family by the Revs Henri Berthoud and Chatelain at Kurhuleni. As if that was not enough, a large number of his subjects were brought under the influence of the Swiss mission church. A new church building was erected to replace the old one that was too small to cope with the ever-increasing number of Christians. In the field of education Valdezia and her annexes had impressive figures. Miss B Andemars taught 105 girls needlework and clothing skills at Valdezia, with the purpose of providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills to turn them into indispensable assets for their communities, prospective employers and husbands. The number of children attending school at the settlement of Valdezia grew to the point where Miss Andemars had to help the other five teachers three times a week with their duties. The total number of pupils at Valdezia, Barota, Kurhuleni, Malanyu and Pfukani was 410, requiring the services of eight teachers by the year 1899 (Rev S Malale, Valdezia, in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* August 1899:28) (my translation)

4.6 MHINGA MISSION STATION (1899)

According to the missionaries' correspondence, and their accounts of the work that was done by them and by their African collaborators, the Mhinga Mission Station was forestalled by Hutwen (Makuleke) and Dzombyeni (Dzombo) as far as Christianization was

concerned. Hutwen was established in 1890 within Makuleke, in the north-eastern corner of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic, while Dzombyeni which lay in the southern part of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was opened up for evangelistic purposes around the same period. Dzombyeni also known as Sengwe was not far from Hutwen and the pioneering missionary, the Rev Paul Rosset, was able to travel between Makuleke and Dzombyeni, prodding villagers to attend the inauguration of the Hutwen Church. As the Rev Rosset crossed the crocodile-infested Limpopo river into Dzombyeni, the Rev Chatelain and two female missionaries, Mrs P Rosset and Miss E Andemars, were decorating the church building on 8 July 1899 (Rev P Rosset in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* September 1899:34-35, Rev S Malale and Miyen Madzamu in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* May 1921:2 cf Rev Henri Berthoud's "Memorandum to the government of the Transvaal colony on the Swiss mission" 31 July 1901).

Besides these revelations, teacher-evangelist Mahlekete Mbenyane (see photograph 11) who was seconded to Dzombyeni through Hutwen on 11 November 1896 had the following to say regarding his journey: "We failed to stay there for a longer period because of the severe shortage of water and the illness which forced Rev Rosset to return to Spelonken in March 1897 to recuperate. Eventually, Rev Rosset who had fully recovered from his illness (malaria), returned to collect us and we left for Mhinga where chief Sunduza gave us a warm welcome. Thereafter, Rev Rosset went back to Spelonken, but he soon returned to the field again to spread the Gospel. What impressed me most was to see the work done in his absence, among other things the conversion of two boys. Upon his return, the number rose to four schoolboys" (M Mbenyane, "Ka Mhinga", *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:24). (*Nanga* is a high pitched African flute. The name of the newspaper *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* or *The Tsonga Trumpet* is derived from this instrument. The newspaper was published by the Rev Numa Jaques in Sunnyside, Pretoria for the Swiss mission converts. Cuendet 1950:54).

Mr Mahlekete Mbenyane's testimony demonstrates that African evangelists were as efficient as missionaries in spreading the Gospel. Even though they had received only a modicum of education, they were very much able to win converts for the church. Mr Mbenyane proved this point in the same way that Mr Eliakim Matlanyane did when he was left in charge of the Valdezia Mission Station — through innovativeness and dedication to his work (Rejoice 1975:19).

Although the Mhing station was founded after the Hutwen and Dzombyeni annexes, it outstripped the other two to become the headquarters of the Swiss mission in the north-eastern corner of the defunct Transvaal Republic or as it was then known, the Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek. The people of Mhing and environs were gradually shedding their traditional customs in favour of embracing Christianity. By the time the Mhing Mission Station hosted the 1921 church synod, the situation was no longer comparable to 1899 when the station was founded. Education had developed with giant strides, but even so, the missionaries still had a lot of work to do as far as realising their goal of freeing the community from superstitious beliefs was concerned. Delegates from Mpisane, Shiluvane N'wamitwa, Valdezia, Shikundu, Pretoria, Dzombo, Hutwen, Messina and Johannesburg, to name but a few places, were full of praise for the people of Mhing. The social transformation that had taken place was succinctly summed up by chief Nkhavi himself. Flanked by his headmen, he rose up from where he was seated under the *nkuhlu* tree (a shady tree with reddish seeds, very popular in areas where people suffer from the heat) where the conference was held, and said: "Indeed everything is going to change, hatred and warfare must come to an end, and love must triumph over everything!" (Chief Nkhavi as quoted in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* September 1921:2) (my own translation).

4.7 ELIM MISSION STATION — THE BEACON AND NERVE CENTRE OF THE SWISS MISSION'S SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

From the moment it was founded in 1879, the Elim Mission Station grew in an astonishing fashion as if to make up for its delayed birth. It even surpassed its sister station of Valdezia (1875) judging from the amenities that it had. The Swiss missionaries viewed Elim as the headquarters from which to go out and evangelize the Shangaans wherever they were, so that they could also "partake of the Salvation Christ offers to anyone who believeth in Him, who gives to their life a new orientation, who, with the help of the Holy Spirit, turns a new leaf, and a clean one" (Büchler in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1950:8).

Realising the potential that Elim had of becoming a very powerful mission station, the missionaries at Valdezia requested the Free Church of Canton de Vaud to purchase the Waterval (waterfall) farm from Captain Schiel, the Native Commissioner (Cuendet 1950:52). The church synod duly approved this transaction in 1878, and the Rev Ernest Creux relocated from the Valdezia Mission Station to start the Elim Mission Station in 1879. Before this, Evangelist Jonathan Molepo had been seconded to chief Njhakanjhaka's kraal in 1876 to secure permission for the creation of a mission station. This diplomatic posting was necessary, because chief Njhakanjhaka (see photograph 10) was known to be hostile to missionary activities, preferring to insulate his subjects' traditional customs. Upon settling at Elim, the Revs Creux, Auguste Jaques and Henry Mingard constructed houses for their families and buildings for church services, assisted by Shangaan labourers. Rev Creux also built a canal to provide water for household consumption and irrigation purposes. The land was very fertile, and water was never in short supply. Although the Rev Creux was inundated with work, he still found time to teach the heathens the Word of God, and how to read and write. Those who assisted him in his construction work were also the members of his classes. They were expected to go out and lure their relatives and friends to Christ's side (Cuendet 1950:20-21, Mabunda 1995:39-41).

The number of Christians at Elim increased tremendously as a result of visits to the homes of the local people. Every Sunday, Christian converts were sent out to call on villagers to attend church services held in the mornings and in the afternoons. Those who attended were taught new hymnal songs, they were told about the value that there may be for them in industrial work, they were taught how to read and write, all of which was seen as a means to entrench Christianity in the lives of the native people. Mrs Creux and Miss Wüthier were indefatigable in teaching African girls needlework and the art of making clothes, so as to overcome their perceived indolence. The indigenous populace had to be taught to make use of their hands to provide for their sustenance because it was intolerable to the Swiss that people could be starving in a land that was so extremely fertile and buzzing with swollen streams (Cuendet 1950:24-25) (my own translation).

4.8 TRAGEDY CAUSED BY DEADLY AFRICAN DISEASES

During the Swiss missionary's infancy, the clerics were troubled by African diseases like malaria and diphtheria that they had no cures for. Because of this, the Rev Creux lost his child, Jeanne Creux, while they were still in Valdezia. The Berthouds also had their share of suffering because of these diseases, and Mrs Anna Berthoud passed away in 1879. The Rev Paul Berthoud also did not have a clean bill of health, and was consequently allowed by the church synod to go on furlough to Switzerland. On their way to Switzerland, his son Emile Berthoud died in Pietersburg. He was laid to rest there. As if this was not enough, Berthoud's daughter died on their arrival in Pretoria and was buried there (Shimati 1954:6-8, Phillips 1950:7). A pitiful inscription was put on the girl's tombstone: "Adele — My last joy". The Creux family, who had already suffered the death of one child while still living in Valdezia was not spared further grief, because two more of their children, Jean and Valdo, died on 29 March and 29 April respectively in 1879. But even this train of consecutive disasters could not discourage the missionaries enough to prevent them from performing their evangelical duties. They stoically clung to their cause, and their resilience after all these terrible misfortunes rubbed off on their proselytes. For instance, one native mourner

was quoted as having uttered the following words at a funeral: "You, my father, you my mother, you are more truly my parents than those called by that name by others. These three graves of your children are proof of your love for our people, and will rise in judgement against those who will have rejected your teachings" (Phillips 1950:7).

These words, purportedly uttered by a native, show how far the indigenous races of South Africa were making a break with their "evil" traditions in pursuit of righteousness in their lives. The words also show how far Christianity and Western education had ingrained themselves in the hearts and minds of the African populace. As the agents of change were applying themselves to their God-given tasks on a daily basis, the indigenous populace was being persuaded to abandon savagery, superstitions, internal strife, polygamy, cannibalism, indolence, jealousy and hatred, all of which the missionaries, during the delivery of their meticulously prepared sermons, professed to be stumbling blocks in the road to eternal life.

4.9 THE INTRANSIGENCE OF CHIEF NJHAKANJHAKA TOWARDS SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION AND THE SUBSEQUENT FOUNDING OF ELIM MISSION STATION (1879)

It is important to mention that the progress at Elim Mission Station would not have been possible if chief Njhakanjhaka had stuck to his defence of traditionalism that had for four years frightened the missionaries to such an extent that it prevented them from entering his territory. The explanation of the reason why the Swiss missionaries were too scared to work in chief Njhakanjhaka's territory after the founding of Valdezia in 1875, is to be found in what Ashley (1980:36-37) says with regard to the Xhosa chiefs of the Eastern Cape during the colonial era: "chiefs referred to Christianity as a religion for old women and children, too childish to take seriously. Tribal ceremonies such as initiation, marriage, rain-making et cetera were exaggeratedly emphasized and often carried on within sight and sound of the mission stations".

Chief Njhakanjhaka was certainly no exception as far as this rule of conduct was concerned, if the difficulties that the Swiss missionaries expressed in their publications are anything to go by. So intense was the chief's opposition to social transformation and what he perceived as the potential defilement of his people's culture by missionaries, that the clergy at Valdezia thought it wise to send Evangelist Jonathan Molepo to his kraal to negotiate the setting up of their second mission station at Elim (Masumbe 1997:12, Creux in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1921:1).

Evangelist Molepo acquitted himself very well of his allotted task, and the Swiss missionaries were at last allowed to enter the Waterval (waterfall) farm for evangelical purposes in 1879. But chief Njhakanjhaka had not yet been persuaded to abandon his traditional customs, even though his territory had suddenly become the nerve centre and beacon of the Swiss missionaries' transformation efforts through his blessing (*The South African Outlook*, 1 December 1926:260, cf Creux 1921:1).

By 1882, Elim was showing great progress on the path of social transformation in the form of the consistently increasing number of Christians and schoolgoing children. The ferocity of the chief was also declining as this quotation from Shimati's booklet (1954:7-8) reveals: "To this day, you could not go and listen to the Word of God because of your fear of me. Let it be known from today that you will no longer be able to gossip about me before God, because I command those who are interested, to embrace Christian teachings" (my own translation).

It is gratifying to note that the chief did not only grant freedom of worship to his subjects. He went further, sending messengers on the very same Saturday that he liberated his people, to move from household to household calling on people to attend the church services the following day. He went on to surprise many people at Mamukeyane on 17 August 1898 during the 25th jubilee of the Swiss Mission in South Africa. On this day, when the jubilee was graced by the attendance of approximately 3 000 people, chief

Njhakanjhaka asked Mrs Creux to decorate him with white and red jubilee medals and thereafter delivered a lengthy speech in which he slated his horrendous past, of which the researcher will cite the following words: "Today, I submit myself to God. I implore to be taught everything about Him". His most trusted *Induna* (headman) Ntaveni, not to be outdone by his superior, also rose up and gave the following testimony: "Njhakanjhaka is not lying, he speaks the truth. I, Ntaveni, who for many years followed him in sin, do likewise: I submit myself to God today. I used to throw divination bones (*tinhlolo*) telling lies. I was the one who used to accuse people of witchcraft. Today I discard heathenism, and I submit myself to God" (my own translation).

The authenticity of these confessions and subsequent conversions is something beyond any contestation, at least from the perspective of the researcher. What is important to note, is that the Swiss missionaries initially had problems in entering the territory of chief Njhakanjhaka during the Swiss missionary society's infancy, and that when the doors finally opened, transformation flowed at an unprecedented pace and on a hitherto unseen scale, engulfing even the hitherto untouchable hardliners. This was in fact what the Evangelist (later the Reverend) Samuel M Malale, himself one of the Evangelist Molepo's first scholars and converts at Elim, celebrated in his speech. Rev Ernest Creux laid his hands on chief Njhakanjhaka to bless him. Mr Henry Mingard and a host of other speakers also shared in their own way. It is important to note that the missionaries were in the Spelonken District (Zoutpansberg District) to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the dawn of evangelism in 1898, and not 1900. This serves to acknowledge again the fact that Swiss missionary work really started in 1873 and not 1875, as many unsuspecting readers were made to believe (Mathebula 1989:7). The Elim Mission Station's achievements prior to 1900 are too many to enumerate. Let it suffice to mention that the Swiss missionaries were doing excellent work among the Shangaans, because "the new infant amongst the Tsonga was already performing its missionary task so well that the work done by the missionaries themselves, was often preceded by pioneer African catechists and evangelists" (*Elim: A mission station of the Swiss Mission in South Africa* undated p 3).

4.10 THE OUTSTATIONS DEPENDENT ON ELIM MISSION STATION

Elim Mission Station had all the facilities needed for socio-economic development, because the Lemana Training Institution, the Elim Hospital, a secondary school, primary schools as well as clinics and dispensaries were available to assist them in their societal needs. Elim boasted fifteen outstations and ever-expanding medical and nursing services. An ophthalmic hospital (eye-hospital) was added to the main hospital established in 1899, and was officially opened by Dr William Nicol, then Transvaal Administrator, in 1949. The duty of the ophthalmic hospital as spelt out by Dr Nicol in his inaugural speech was to help "those who stumble in the dark", meaning those who had lost their sight as a result of diseases that even the state's medical services as yet had no cure for (*The South African Outlook* Vol LXXIX 1949:98, cf Cuendet in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1950:13).

Of all the outstations dependent on Elim Mission Station, the researcher will only discuss two: Tshitandane (Louis Trichardt) and Shirley. But the activities of these two annexes will more or less represent also the activities of the other outstations, as there was a great measure of uniformity in the implementation of church policies.

4.10.1 Shirley

At the very beginning, Shirley outstation was initiated by the Rev Ernest Creux who started it off by conducting church services under the shade of an old tree, where he taught heathens what the Christian religion was all about. It gradually grew in stature, and in 1932 already had its own church building. It was built by Mr HS Phillips and his wife, who realised that the people of Shirley were receptive to the Christian message. Mrs L Phillips was the daughter of the Rev Ernest Creux. Her activities were the continuation of her father's dream of enlightening the community that was so averse to Christian education. When she invited children to tell them Biblical stories and to show them Biblical pictures, such invitations attracted even herd-boys, and when she and her husband realised what

potential there was for educating the natives in order to eventually teach them more about the Word of God, they decided to start the Shirley Primary School. From the first Sunday on 10 January 1931 when Mrs Phillips met the inquisitive young natives, her daily schedule kept her constantly on her toes as she moulded African children according to Christian education. The Shirley Primary School expanded its curriculum to the point where it became a fully-fledged industrial school offering domestic science, carpentry, shoemaking and repair, agriculture, beekeeping et cetera. An in-depth coverage of its civilizing influences is given in chapter 5 which deals with the provision of formal education. As for church or spiritual services, the Shirley parish never looked back, right from the time when it merely was Rev Creux's "old tree religious sermons". The fact that the church services were no longer conducted from the old tree since the establishment and inauguration of the Shirley Church in 1933, was inspiring even to those who were still on the sidelines (Shimati 1945:44-46, *Elim: a mission station of the Swiss* undated pp 5-6).

4.10.2 Tshitandane (Louis Trichardt)

According to Shimati (1954:42-43) the Louis Trichardt Church was actually started by Mr Tobia Hamula Baloyi, the younger brother of Mr Phineas Baloyi who lived among the Venda of Shikombane (Tshikombane). He was initially a resident of Elim, but relocated to Shikombane because of his love for woodwork. The area of Shikombane offered a variety of wood that was suited to his craft. The Louis Trichardt chapel was housed at Mr Shisimanyana's residence. Mr Shisimanyana and Mr Baloyi (carpenter) were responsible for holding the Christian community together at a time when the Revs Numa Jaques and FA Cuendet frequently visited the congregation. Whenever these clerics visited them, the community sat back and listened to their preaching, something that in itself was inspiring. But holding church services in private dwellings soon created problems, which caused some Christians to relapse to heathenism. In 1936 a wooden church was built and many returned. Even the relapsed members of the congregation slowly trickled back. Christians made contributions for the construction of a proper church building and Mr Elias Nkuna

and his son Samuel started making bricks. But no services were missed during the construction phase during the mid-1940s. The new church grew from strength to strength, and the arrival of the Reverend FA Cuendet upon his retirement in 1946, further strengthened the Louis Trichardt church, because he did not intend to remain idle. He still wanted to contribute to the educational development of the indigenous populace in collaboration with Messrs Alfred Shisimanyana and Tobia Hamula Baloyi (Shimati 1954:42-43) (my own translation).

4.10.3 Other outstations dependent on Elim Mission Station

The other annexes that were dependent on Elim Mission Station included Efrata, Emmaus, Mashamba, Manavela-Tiyiselani, Mbokota, Messina, Sikar, Ntshabalala, New Barota, Riverplaats, Tsakane and Spelonkwater. All these outstations were doing well in the educational and spiritual development of the African race. Work at the outstations was hampered only by the lack of physical, financial and human resources. But with the limited means the Swiss Mission had, and the human resource development program that was synonymous with the Lemana Training Institution, the future was full of promise. The problems facing the Swiss Mission in South Africa during the historical epoch under review, were aggravated by the farmers' reluctance to help in the educational development of Africans. From the look of things, farmers were not keen to donate monies that would assist in the construction of school buildings and teacher training institutions, as they believed that once blacks were enlightened they would not want to labour on farms any more. A striking example was when a Mr Swanepoel of the farm De Hoop demanded rental from petty chief Matsila for the school he built in 1918 under the auspices of the Valdezia Mission Station. This demand for £12 rental per annum was probably engineered by Reverend Erasmus of the Dutch Reformed Church who was earmarking the very same ground on which chief Matsila's school was stationed for his own purposes. Reverend Erasmus offered to pay £30 rental per annum for the use of the site for educational purposes. Mr Swanepoel was put in a tight corner, because it was through his blessing that

chief Matsila had established his school, which between 1932 and 1936 had two standard classrooms. By 1944 when the story about the Swanepoel-Erasmus dispute came into the open, the school was in the process of adding a third classroom built according to departmental specifications. Mr Swanepoel who was seemingly inclined to help his Dutch Reformed Church brethren rather than natives, approached chief Matsila with a new demand (Rev R Cuenod's Letter to Senator JD Rheinallt-Jones 27 March 1944).

If chief Matsila could raise the amount of £24 to rent the land every year, it would be enough to keep Rev Erasmus from seizing the plot for his own proposed school. The chief appealed to the Rev Rene Cuenod of the Swiss Mission at Valdezia for help in this regard, and the latter's letter to Senator Rheinallt-Jones seemed to have stopped Mr Swanepoel in his tracks (Rev Rene Cuenod's letter 27 March 1944 to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones, in connection with chief Matsila's complaint).

Elim Mission Station, like its sister mission station Valdezia, was making big strides on the path towards social transformation. This progress, achieved in a relatively very short space of time following its founding, prompted the Rev Ernest Creux to remark: "It would appear God is determined to destroy the shield of all those who refuse to worship Him. Chief Njhakanjhaka is still strong in his faith, and so is Ntaveni, his headman. Even some of their wives have accepted Christianity" (Rev E Creux in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* April 1899:15) (my own translation). But chief Njhakanjhaka was not the only person who valued Western education and Christianity. Other chiefs were also on the same path. For instance, chief Mashamba's wives were familiar figures in church, and possibly their husband as well. Another headman who according to Rev Creux had embraced Christianity was Ramokgopa (Ramokhopa), the son of Boy Ramokgopa who at one stage toured Germany with the Rev Reuter. By 1899, the number of schoolgoing children at Elim stood at 350. Some of the children came from very remote farms to receive education. All the credit for this growing demand for education was given to Rev Yosefa (Josefa) Mhahamhala for his tireless efforts. But Elim Mission Hospital had its own share of problems, first of which was drunkenness

that made people fail to abandon their traditional customs. This state of affairs prompted the Rev Creux to pass the following remark: "Drunkenness is what they cherish more than the Word of God" (Rev Creux *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* April 1899:15). Those chiefs who had accepted the Christian faith never failed to encourage their subjects to strive for education. For example, Ramokgopa who had acquired some modicum of mission education encouraged his subjects to follow suit. As a member of the royal house, Ramokhopa had to lead by example. He had to acquire education in order to understand the workings of the secular government in the transition from primitivism to modernity (Creux 1899:15).

4.11 THE EXTENSION OF EVANGELISM INTO MOZAMBIQUE — A MINOR DIGRESSION TO DEMONSTRATE THE GROWTH OF ELIM MISSION STATION (1881-1926)

4.11.1 Introduction

During the early years of the Swiss missionaries' stay in the Zoutpansberg District, they realised that the people they were transforming had relatives in Mozambique with whom they exchanged regular visits. It also turned out that the Shangaan/Tsonga people who were living in Mozambique represented the majority of these people. All these facts caused the Swiss missionaries to contemplate extending their missions to this territory, that had once been invaded by Soshangane (Manukosi) leading to the influx of Tsonga refugees into the erstwhile Transvaal (Cuendet 1949:7).

4.11.2 The transplantation of the Gospel into Mozambique

The Swiss mission's choice to lead the expedition to evangelize the Mozambican populace, was Josefa Mhalamhala who hailed from that country. His visit to his native country in 1880 elicited interest in the Christianization of the heathens who were submerged in superstition. In 1882 Josefa Mhalamhala, accompanied by two evangelists, returned to

Mozambique with the direct authorization to start a church that would be under the auspices of the Swiss mission in South Africa (Brookes 1925:15-16). Before his departure, Mr Mhahlamhala was given ministerial training at the Rev Creux's house in 1881. By the end of the year, Rev Creux was convinced that his student had mastered all that had to be assimilated, and duly ordained him as a minister. On his departure, he was given an amount of £40 (R80,00) and an assortment of gifts that would serve as provisions for the journey to Mozambique (formerly known as Portuguese East Africa) (Mabunda 1995:46, Cuendet 1950:32).

4.11.3 The strategic importance of Mozambique to the Swiss missionary society

Mozambique offered many possibilities as a mission field for the Swiss missionary society. In the first instance, it offered a chance to the Swiss missionaries to evangelize the majority of the Shangaan/Tsonga who had braved the invasions of Soshangane (Manukosi), in the territory along the Indian Ocean. Secondly, the delivery of correspondence and goods from Europe to both Mozambique and South Africa would be much quicker than when the Natal ports were used, and the clerics who were labouring in the two mission fields' communication with the metropolis would also be greatly facilitated (Cuendet 1950:30-31).

The missionaries were aware of the fact that the use of the Cape and the Natal harbours for imports and exports was fraught with nerve-racking delays which were stifling to missionary progress. Clothes and correspondence sanctioning or disapproving the commencement of certain projects in the mission fields, took many months to reach South Africa, and the opening up of Mozambique would be a remedy to this problem, as the latter was and still is accessible by foot from the Zoutpansberg District. Mabunda (1995:46) can hardly be faulted for saying that the above considerations "influenced Ernest Creux to send Josefa in 1882 to pave the way for the establishment of new Swiss missionary stations in Mozambique".

Before Josefa Mhalamhala set off for Mozambique in 1882, the Swiss missionaries had deemed it necessary to send a reconnaissance mission to Mozambique to survey the possibilities of successful missions into that country. This fact-finding mission consisted of Josefa Mhalamhala as the leader, Nyatsi, Hakamela Tlakula, David Marumo and Ephraim Majokane. They left in July 1881 and on their way to Mpfumu (Maputo) they taught the Word of God to the villagers living in the areas through which they passed. But chief Muzila adopted a hardline attitude towards the Gospel and dissuaded his subjects from listening to the messengers of God. Chief Magudu, unlike his counterpart Muzila, was very helpful and promised the explorers land should they wish to establish permanent mission stations in the future. This assurance by chief Magudu influenced the Swiss missionaries' decision to set up permanent mission stations in different parts of Mozambique upon Mhalamhala and his crew's return to the Spelonken headquarters in December 1881. Rev Mhalamhala left for Mozambique again in April 1882, ready to start missionary work together with his assistants in the territory (Cuendet 1950:31-32, Shimati 1954:8) (my own translation)

4.11.4 The real beginning of evangelism in Mozambique under the auspices of the Swiss missionaries

The Rev Josefa Mhalamhala returned to Mozambique in April 1882, accompanied by his wife Adele, his brother-in-law Eliaxib (Eliakim) and his wife Lois (Mhalamhala's sister), their daughter Ruth (Ruti), Eliezer, the grandchild of Rev Josefa Mhalamhala, as well as three other persons who served as assistants. Eliaxib and his wife Lois together with their daughter, had joined the Rev Mhalamhala after their conversion during 1881, and accompanied them to the Spelonken District to see for themselves the people who were reputed to have the Good News brought to their native country by their own minister (Mhalamhala) (Cuendet 1950:32-33).

The founding of mission stations in Mozambique was fraught with problems, despite the hospitality of chief Magudu. In the first instance, Mozambique was a colony ruled by Portuguese, who adhered to Catholicism, from which the Protestant Swiss broke away in the 1500s. It was therefore to be expected that the Swiss missionaries and their African collaborators would be in for difficult times, because they would be expected to abide by the same rules they were critical of when Protestantism originated. The most difficult rules were policies designed to retard the Swiss missionaries' educational and ecclesiastical programmes in the country, and the enforcement of Portuguese as the medium of instruction in schools as well as in church, albeit with minimal use of Xitsonga or Xirhonga in certain instances. Perhaps the most glaring obstructionist move felt by the Swiss, was the banning of Mozambican natives from receiving their teacher-evangelist training courses from the Swiss mission's Shiluvane Training Institution near Thabina in the Tzaneen District, the banning of instruction in Zulu, the language that was mostly used by the miners toiling in the Witwatersrand mines, and also accusations of poaching children from the Catholic schools or churches, to name but a few of the problems that they experienced. The language policy of 1930 was essentially directed at stalling Swiss missionaries in making progress with their endeavours. It also encouraged more use of the Portuguese language at the expense of even Xitsonga or Xirhonga, languages that had been synonymous with the indigenous populace since time immemorial (Rev B Terrisse, in *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1952:19, Cuendet 1950:35).

Rev Terrisse succinctly summed up the state's intentions as an effort "to hand over all the teaching to the Roman Catholic missionaries, who represented the official religion of the country" (Terrisse 1952:20). The government was doing all these things because it was almost exclusively at the Swiss mission schools that real learning was taking place, and this had developed to the point where children defected from the Catholic controlled schools to the Swiss mission schools where there was effective teaching. This explains why officials were accusing the Swiss of poaching children (*Rikatla Report* 1924:4).

4.11.5 Mission stations and outstations in Mozambique

Because Mozambique is the peripheral outpost of this study, the researcher will only give the reader a brief account of two mission stations: Antioka (Magudu) and Rikatla (Nondwane). What happened at the other mission stations that were spread throughout the country was more or less a replica of these pioneer mission stations.

(a) Antioka Mission Station (1882)

The station was founded in 1882 in honour of chief Magudu's request to have his country developed by the Swiss missionaries. Josefa Mhalthala and his family kept on teaching the Khosa people while Eliaxib headed for Nondwane in 1882. Chief Magudu's death in June 1885 created problems for the messengers of God as his son, Xongele, was still a minor and therefore not yet ready for the throne. Muchenyengwani or Mavabasa who was appointed as the regent was an enemy of the church. He first annihilated four of his predecessor's indunas (headmen) before turning to the ministers whom he terrorised, and he incited his followers to raze church buildings to the ground in 1892 and again in 1898. But the arrival of the Revs Eugene Thomas and Henri Berthoud strengthened the Christian community which stood firm against the forces of darkness (Cuendet 1950:29-35, Cattaneo's *Antioka Mission Station report* 1924:1).

During the early days of mission work, teacher-evangelists had to move from household to household to preach and to teach the people to read and write, because villagers were not keen to visit mission stations. Josefa Mhalthala managed to convert seven heathens during the first year after his arrival at Magudu. Missionary work was however seriously hampered by lack of physical, human and financial resources, while drunkenness, famine, floods, and superstitious beliefs added to the strain. The arrival of Yakob Mhalthala, brother of Josefa, relieved the pressure of their work. On 5 July 1887 a team comprising of the Rev Paul Berthoud and his new wife Ruth Junod, accompanied by Timoteo Mandlati,

Yonas Xilote, Khanyisa Mbenyane (wife of Zebedea Mbenyane). Madzive (Calvin) Maphophe and Mahlekete Mbenyane arrived in Mozambique after a journey that started on 4 May 1887 at Valdezia (Cuendet 1950:36, cf Cattaneo's *Antioka report* 1924:1).

The arrival of Mahlekete Mbenyane and his colleagues was a tremendous boost for the society's educational endeavour in Mozambique. The deployment of additional personnel meant that the Swiss mission was treating its new mission fields seriously.

It is worth noting that the names Mahlekete Mbenyane and Zebedea Mbenyane (see photograph 11) are not without problems in the evaluation of Swiss missionary educational activities in South Africa. Some researchers appear to consider the two as one person. For instance, ST Maluleke (1995:32) uses the names Mahlekete and Zebedea as though they refer to a single individual. Mabunda (1995:48), includes Zebedea Mbenyane as a member of Rev Paul Berthoud's travel party even though the source he quotes suggests that Mr Zebedea Mbenyane was already in Mozambique, and that he came to welcome the Rev Berthoud and his crew upon arriving in Mozambique, together with Josefa Mhalmhala, Eliaxib and other Christians (Cuendet 1950:37). Mr Mahlekete Mbenyane, who like Mr Zebedea Mbenyane came from Shikundu Village, in the present day the Malamulele District in the northern province, distinguished himself as a teacher-evangelist who travelled to Hutwen (Makuleke), Dzombyeni (Dzombo) in the present day Zimbabwe, and subsequently Mhinga, in the company of the Rev Paul Rosset, to set up mission stations during the 1890s. He left Spelonken on 9 November 1896 to join the Rev Paul Rosset at Dzombyeni (M Mbenyane's *Ka Mhinga* in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga*, June 1899:24). Rev S Malale refers to Zebedea Mbenyane as a person who had lobola problems with the Matias (probably the Matiyani family), was suspended from duty and replaced by Mr Mikea Mutsetwen (Rev Samuel Malale's *Report ya ka Mhinga*, 1917:II). In *Report ya ka Mhinga* (1928:4), Rev Malale said that Mr Zebedea Mbenyane (see photograph 12) was very old, that he had served at Mpfumu (Maputo), Spelonken and Sengwe (Dzombyen) and that he was in need of young blood to assist him. Rev Malale identifies Mr Mahlekete Mbenyane

as a person who defected to a Zionist church, begged for pardon, and was reinstated in the Swiss mission register as a member (Rev Malale *Report ya ka Mhinga* 1935:2, cf. Nozingele Z Mbenyane's *Shikundu*, in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* 1921:2). Even without the above evidence, Mr SR Mbenyane, a family member and a former principal of the Caledon school in the northern province, confirmed that the two, namely Zebedea and Mahlekete Mbenyane, were two separate individuals (SR Mbenyane vis-a-vis with Masumbe, 9 March 1999).

Du Plessis (1911:334) acknowledges that there was progress in the transformation of the lives of the Mozambican people. But he attributes the progress that was registered to the sterling efforts of the white missionaries, discounting the role of black teacher-evangelists. This is hardly surprising, given the paternalistic attitude of the whites that was the norm at that time. But it should be pointed out that by the time the white missionaries in the persons of the Revs Henri Berthoud, Eugene Thomas, Arthur Grandjean and the rest arrived in Mozambique, the black ministers had already laid the necessary foundation even though they did not have capital support (Cuendet 1950:29-35, Cattaneo 1923:1 and 1926:1-3).

(b) Rikatla Mission Station (1882)

Evangelist Eliaxib was warmly received by Chief Maphunga at Nondwane. The founding of Rikatla Mission Station went smoothly, because the Chief took a keen interest in the Christian Religion and was indefatigable in encouraging his subjects to accept conversion. This explains why the Rikatla Mission Station was ahead of the Antioka Mission Station regarding their number of converts. At a time when Josefa Mhalthala had seven converts, Eliaxib had ten under his belt. When the Rev Henri Berthoud arrived, he added two to make it twelve. These figures could be dismissed as nothing in terms of present-day standards, but during those pioneering years, just to convince one or two individuals to turn their backs on their gods was a big achievement, and no matter how few people were converted, they rejoiced about every one of them. People accepting conversion were

ostracised in heathen societies, so the church was thankful about the number of faithfuls it had (Cuendet 1950:34, Guye's *Rikatla Report* 1924:1).

But as was the case at the Antioka Mission Station, Christians at Rikatla did not have an easy ride in the tribal communities. Christianity was frowned upon by the indigenous populace who were so used to their traditional customs and heavy indulgence in *sope* (very strong beer). The Portuguese administration and the Roman Catholic Church's interference in the running of Protestant churches was just as pronounced at Antioka. Of all the factors causing concern, the *chibalo* (form of taxation equivalent to forced labour) in terms of which natives were drafted into national parks and public roads to work, caused the most concern. Those who hated the *corvée* system fled to the Witwatersrand gold mines to seek fortune. This exodus had the effect of leaving women as the only people to be proselytized by the missionaries. Other problems met by missionaries included recurrent droughts, famine and threats of tribal wars, for instance the one where the tribesmen of Mabota took up arms against the people of Nondwane (Guye's *Rikatla Report* 1923:1)

As far as backsliding into heathenism was concerned, there can be no better example than that of Jim Shimungana (see photograph 6), a prosperous businessman at Mpfumu, who owned a beer warehouse, had three wives and accepted Christianity at the time of the arrival of the Rev Paul Berthoud in 1887. He was helpful in the execution of church duties and this led to his baptism in 1889. But as Christianity is incompatible with polygamy, he was forced to cede two of his wives to two unmarried Christians. Jim (also known as James or Jimboy) had a very big problem, because he lived among pagans with unacceptable behaviour as far as Christianity was concerned. He fell from grace when he took to heavy drinking of *vukanyi* (marula beer) and seduced a girl, whom he was forced to marry. He was dismissed as the resident missionary of Tembe Mission Station. As if that was not enough to cause him grief, he lost his wife Abigail, whom he loved dearly, in 1920. By this time he had repented and had been reinstated in the church register of the Swiss mission.

But the loss of his dearest wife led to his demise in 1920 and he was laid to rest on 28 October 1920 (Rev Paul Berthoud's *Jim Shimungana*, in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1921:2).

Rikatla Mission Station might have had numerous problems, but educationally speaking, it was the beacon of Mozambique. From its lecture halls came men and women who contributed to the socio-economic and political development of Mozambique, even though the Swiss missionaries were not keen to nurture political consciousness. The tables marked A and B below, show how the Rikatla Training Institution was going about its educational tasks:

TABLE A

MISSION STATION	NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS AT RIKATLA
Manjacase (Mandlakazi)	1
Chikumbane	2
Guidja (Gija)	2
Antioka	1
Chichonqui	2
Rikatla	7
Lourenco Marques	1
American Methodist episcopal mission	1
GRAND TOTAL	17

(*Rikatla Report* 1923:5)

TABLE B

MISSION STATION	NUMBER OF ADMISSIONS AT RIKATLA
Rikatla	4
Chicumbane	3
Lorenzo Marques	3

Guidja (Gidja)	2
Antioka	2
Magule	1
Manjacase (Mandlakazi)	2
GRAND TOTAL	17

(*Rikatla Report* 1924:6)

The low enrolment at Rikatla Training Institution may be attributed to the Swiss mission's rigid rules concerning the admission of student teachers and the *chibalo* (forced labour) system that was so vigorously enforced by the Portuguese administration. Many of the pagan children who should have attended the Rikatla college, apparently failed to acquire the signatures of the white missionaries, or if they did, failed to pass the bridging courses at the *Rikatla Escola Preparatoria* (Rev HA Junod's *Shikolo sha Rikatla* in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1921:3) (my own translation) (see also Masumbe 1997:26). *Escola Preparatoria* was a preparatory school for entry into the teacher-evangelist courses. It was intended to cut off academically unfit students from the college system. Both Rikatla and Lemana had these schools introduced in 1921 (Junod 1921:3, Cuendet 1922:2).

4.12 THE FOUNDING OF THE SHILUVANE MISSION STATION (TZANEEN) — 1886

The Shiluvane Mission Station was founded in 1886. Its founding was directly linked to the return of the Revs Henri Berthoud and Eugene Thomas from Mozambique in 1886. The route taken by the Rev Henri Berthoud led him to Chief Muhlaba's kraal. The chief requested the cleric to consider setting up a mission station among his people. Upon talking to his colleagues in Valdezia, the chief's request was instantly forwarded to Switzerland where it met with a positive response. The Revs Eugene Thomas and Henry Mingard were consequently posted to Muhlaba's kraal to start missionary work among the Nkuna people. When the Rev F Thomas went on furlough, he was replaced by the Revs Abel de Meuron

and George Liengme. These two served Shiluvane Mission Station until they were recalled to Spelonken. The Rev A de Meuron was appointed as the resident missionary at Elim Mission Station while Rev Dr Liengme was given the task of constructing the Elim Hospital in 1898. Rev Thomas returned to Shiluvane in 1898 accompanied by Rev HA Junod who was to start making preparations for the establishment of the Shiluvane Training Institution in 1899 (Mabunda 1995:50-51, Junod's "Šikolo ša madzaha" in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:22-23).

Missionary work at Shiluvane and its environs was a resounding success because the chief supported it to the hilt. Chief Muhlabi was a strong proponent of social transformation. He was also active in persuading those who had doubts about the missionaries, to accept social change. Chief Maake (Speke) of the Bakgakga also abandoned his opposition to Christianity owing to chief Muhlabi's influence. This paradigm shift had important consequences for the territories of the two chiefs. Chief Maake's subjects were also to benefit from the educational projects introduced by missionaries. The entire Bakgakga-Shiluvane region was brought on the path of socio-economic and political development. Chief Maake's earlier hardline attitude was however not without cause. It was a well-known fact that in other parts of Africa, the introduction of Christianity was accompanied by the wholesale grabbing of land by the Bible-clutching men of God. It was therefore with a sense of patriotism that chief Maake initially opposed the entry of missionaries into his country. From Shiluvane, the Swiss missionaries ventured into chief N'wamitwa's territory and also proclaimed Mpisane and its environs as part of their spheres of influence. Mpisane was in the erstwhile Eastern Transvaal (De Meuron's "Bokhaha — Sikura Paska", in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* May 1899:19).

By 1899, Shiluvane Mission Station which was founded in 1886 had an impressive number of converted Christians. Among these was Timotheo Mandlati's mother. Chief Muhlabi was finally baptized on 25 December 1899 by the Rev HA Junod, which means that until then he merely supported the Christian religion, without actually being one himself. The

year 1899 also marked the chief's return to Thaba'Nchu Training Institution in the erstwhile Orange Free State where he was studying English, Dutch/Afrikaans and Sesotho, which he required for mastering the Scriptures as well as keeping contact with other nationalities for the benefit of his people who had to be led to modernity. During the school holidays, chief Muhlaba visited Lesotho, where he was struck by the way in which Christianity had been accepted by the Basotho. He resolved to encourage his people to accept Christian teachings so that there could be multifaceted development in his country (Mabunda 1995:52, De Meuron 1899:19).

Although amenable to social change, chief Muhlaba was not keen to abandon some of the traditional customs that had utility value. He preferred to take the middle course in controversial or sensitive issues during the assimilation of Christian norms and values. It is here that his diplomatic skills shone. He perceived himself as *nkanyi wa le ndzilekaneni lowu fanelaka ku rhoriswa hala ni hala* (loosely translated in English: a morula tree situated between two fields which drops its fruits to people on both sides). This implied that a political office-bearer need not take sides, but must relate well to all his/her subordinates, because taking sides was the cause of social alienation. Those whose customs were crucified would feel aggrieved and lose their veneration of the chief. A somewhat neutral or middle cause had the effect of holding both Christians and heathens steady on the long walk to modern civilization. For instance, traditional customs like lobola, initiation schools and polygamy were not to be entirely banned as expected by missionaries, but modified to suit the stages and conditions through which people moved to modernity. The chief himself was polygamous, a graduate of the "bush school" or initiation school, and a signatory to the lobola system. As far as initiation schools were concerned, the chief was critical only of the fatalities that occurred at Mhinga, where initiates died in large numbers and survivors were rushed to Elim Hospital with festering wounds caused by unhygienic circumcision methods. To avoid these fatalities, petty chiefs who wanted to hold initiation schools had to apply well in advance, so that their schools could be visited by qualified European medical doctors to perform the operations and safely remove the

foreskins. It was for his pragmatism and diplomatic skills that chief Muhlaba Shiluvane was respected by both the government officials, missionaries, and many other friends and foes alike (Shilubana and Ntsan'wisi 1958:89-164).

As if not to be outdone, chief Maake (Speke) of the Bakgakga also appreciated and welcomed the missionary education provided by the Swiss, thus effectively burying the hatchet of negativism towards Western influences. At a farewell function held in honour of the Revs Abel de Meuron and Georges Liengme that was attended by 500 people, among which were heathens, he said: "Fare you well, I thank you for leaving behind some porridge while departing with some, we shall remain eating" (Timotheo Mandlati, "Ta tikereke" in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:24) (my own translation).

Indeed the two clerics left behind some "porridge", because the formal education and the Gospel they had given to the indigenous populace would remain shaping their lives. Both the Nkuna, Bakgakga and any African for that matter, who had a thirst for education, would proceed to the schools established by the Swiss missionaries, namely Shiluvane Primary School and Shiluvane Training Institution for boys (1899-1905). The fact that the latter was designated as a school for the male folk was not a discrimination, as will become clear in the ensuing paragraph.

Missionary education was not acceptable to all the Nkuna or Bakgakga people. Perhaps this was in line with the democratic spirit in which chief Muhlaba ruled his people, something that may be interpreted as testing the efficacy of accommodating both the Christian and heathen choices — in other words the democratic spirit. The chief himself illustrated the different tastes that his subjects had quite eloquently when he said: "I am writing to inform you about a certain woman who is keen to follow Jesus Christ, but is being prevented by her husband. The husband says: "If you receive Christian teachings, I divorce you!" I then answered: if a person is keen to serve the Lord, I have no power to stop him/her". I then called on all village elders to help solve the problem, but they all answered: "We are

personally against Christianity; our children may, like yourself, get educated. When it comes to our wives and ourselves, we vehemently refuse to accept Christian teachings" (Chief Mohlaba Shiluvane's letter to *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* October 1899:39) (my own translation).

The above sheds some light as to why the Shiluvane Training Institution was known as *xikolo xa majaha* (boys' school). There seems to have been some reluctance in the villages to allow girls to attend schools because of the fear that they would be defiled (*ku hunguka* — to be made into prostitutes). Thus the children to whom the elders referred were probably boys. It should be noted that even the Lemana Training Institution that replaced the Shiluvane college as the training institution of the Swiss mission (1906) did not have female students until 1909 (Masumbe 1997:37). But despite all the opposition in some quarters to Christian teachings, chief Muhlaba was optimistic that Jesus Christ's power would triumph over social evils. This optimism came about owing to the pagans' willingness to make contributions or donations towards the construction of the church building. They, to the surprise of the chief, each donated £3 and one sheep in 1899. The new church that was built replaced the old fig tree, which initially served as a place of worship (Shilubana and Ntsan'wisi 1958:39, cf Mohlaba Shiluvane in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* October 1899:39, Junod's "Šikolo ša madzaha" in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:22-23).

4.13 SWISS MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE URBAN AREAS — A MISSION IN DIVERSITY IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

4.13.1 Introduction

Most of the job-seekers who flocked to the Witwatersrand lived in the mining compounds when they found jobs at the mines. They lived in overcrowded conditions with no privacy worth mentioning. Their European counterparts on the other hand, had decent housing

accommodation, where unlike the native workers, they lived with their spouses and children. Schools were also put up and recreational facilities provided for this race. The Swiss mission in South Africa sent out its European and black ministers to labour among the disadvantaged communities. According to Mathebula (1989:9) the first resident missionary to be sent to Johannesburg by the Swiss mission was the Rev Numa Jaques who established a church building at the Village Main. The Rev S Bovet arrived in the city of Johannesburg in 1907 to help spread the Gospel. The Rev Jaques had initially worked in Pretoria since 1897, where he started a newspaper known as *Nanga ya ba- Thonga* (Cuendet 1950:54-55). The pioneering missionaries in the mining compounds were to mould good character in the people by combatting sodomy through the Scriptures to a population that had to live without seeing their wives or girl friends for periods ranging from a year to even two years or longer. Migrant workers also had to be provided with industrial skills to maximize their productivity (Terrisse 1950:18-19, Lombard in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1952:14-15).

Mr. Sehlahla Sengoniama (according to Mr AB Sihlangu in his book *Ta ka Mpisane* this name was given to the Rev Max Büchler after he fought and killed a lion (Sihlangu 1975:71) notes that the Swiss missionaries did a lot of good for the mine-workers. They provided them with literary skills and a new system of communication. The basic education that they provided also enabled the workers to count their wages correctly, and enter into bank transactions. They were able to recruit more Christians, and by means of their example, improve the qualifications of the people, so that some of them also became preachers and even full-fledged ministers. The missionaries were the mouthpieces of the church that provided the people with information that they were encouraged to share with their kith and kin, especially during their holidays when they were back in the reserves, visiting their relatives (Sengoniama, in *The Tsonga Messenger* May-December 1953:28-30).

4.13.2 The locations and/or townships

Life in the townships was comparatively speaking better than that in the mine compounds. In the townships migrants lived with their families in asbestos-roofed houses disparagingly called "match-boxes". But schooling facilities for all of the children living in the urban areas were scarce and the state was not keen to provide such vital services. These children who were kept out of the system became criminals who caused most Europeans to be afraid to enter the townships (Terrisse 1950:20-21).

The Swiss mission in South Africa had many followers in the townships, because their personnel had been deployed in these crime-infested areas to teach the word of God. But if anything was making life unbearable for Africans in the urban areas, it was certainly the laws which restricted the indigenous populace to barren reserves. Those who could not make a living in the reserves, flocked to the towns and cities where they were confronted with the controversial laws that sought to keep them out of the urban centres. The pass-laws, Masters and Servants Act, the Land Act (1913), and a host of other draconian measures exacerbated social injustices, because their enforcement defied respect for the basic human rights of Africans. Social transformation as engineered by the Swiss was hampered by these abominable laws, because the prospective proselytes were constantly living in fear of being arrested by the police. These laws were discriminatory in the sense that their enforcers sought to punish Africans while exempting European offenders. For instance, the Poll tax had to be paid by any African who was 18 years of age, or apparently so. Europeans only had to pay tax upon attaining the age of 21, and then only if they earned an annual income of £300. In terms of the Masters and Servants Act, Africans were refused permission or the right to strike for higher wages. Offenders were punished, while an employer could terminate his labourer's contract at any time, without fear of being penalized (Xuma 1930:191-193, Mandela 1989:45).

4.13.3 The spreading of the Gospel throughout the urban areas

Enlightened Africans who had received a modicum of mission education took the initiative to teach their fellows the Word of God wherever they were in the urban centres. Mr EN Matjokane expressed shock at the poor and neglected manner in which the mine-workers at Randfontein were forced to organise themselves to share the Gospel. Mr Alfred Mathabela and Mr Timotheo Mathonsi were the leaders of the Randfontein congregation of the Swiss mission and they had secured accommodation at the Robinson compound for their religious services (Matjokane in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* December 1922:5).

The Swiss mission had deployed men in the urban areas, but its available manpower could not cover all the areas that had to receive Christianity. Where it could manage to do so, people were commissioned to serve as its ambassadors. The following men were part of this ambitious scheme: Messrs Alfred RF Baloyi, Principal at Orlando, Etienne A Tlakula, Principal at Payneville in Springs, Christopher K Mageza, Principal at Pimville in Johannesburg, Noel Nduna from Atteridgeville in Pretoria, Daniel P Marolen from Pretoria, Richard Ntsakisi Motau from Payneville, and Samuel J Baloyi who was a translator at the Native Affairs Department, Pretoria (Shimati 1954:63).

But no individual who consented to serve the Lord was allowed to own a business, because that would distract his attention from rendering his services fully to God. For instance, Mr Samuel Makhubela (see photograph 7) was a prosperous businessman in Alexandra before his conversion. After having been ordained as minister, he was enjoined to abandon his business and concentrate all his efforts on serving God (Büchler, in *The Tsonga Messenger* January-April 1953:9-13).

The consistent increase in the number of evangelists and black ministers was accompanied by a steady rise in church membership in the urban areas. Before the ordination of the Rev Samuel Makhubela, the Swiss Mission Church inaugurated a new church at Jabavu on 4

April 1951. About 1 200 people graced the occasion with their presence. The new church was built by means of funding by the Paris and the Swiss missions to cater for their followers, namely the Sotho and the Shangaan people. But other ethnic groupings were not barred from the church. The Paris mission was represented by the Rev Mabile and his family, while the Swiss mission was represented by the Rev Max Büchler and his family. The architect who generously designed the building, Mr Max Kirchfer, was also present accompanied by his family, and so was Prof DDT Jabavu after whom the township was named. Mr Kirchfer did not only design the building but saw to its construction without demanding a cent from the two churches (Cuendet, in *The Tsonga Messenger* July-September 1961:223). In Welkom a parish was established in 1949 for the gold miners, while Natal and Zululand had religious centres established in 1958 (*Rejoice* 1975:33).

4.13.4 The prison population and the Word of God

Christianity has to do with good moral behaviour and an exemplary lifestyle filled with Christian norms and values, and the desire to serve God and mankind. If there were people who yearned for the promise of the Above, the prisoners who were incarcerated because of so-called civilization, must have been at the fore-front. The Swiss missionaries ventured into prisons with the sole aim of putting these lost souls back on track. The Rev Ernest Creux seems to have been a pioneer in this regard. He felt that both the female and male prisoners had to be availed with the Scriptures so that they could ultimately be the bearers of Christian norms and values. Because many lawbreakers were driven into crime by socio-economic and political pressures, the clergy felt that the relevant structures had to be approached so that living conditions of native inmates could be improved by peaceful means. But the church had an unshakeable belief that formal education and the instilling of love for industrial labour would lead to peace and tranquillity, because those who landed in prison would emerge from it with marketable skills (Ernest in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1953:25-27, Phillips in *Shimati* 1954:3, cf Junod 1950:26-27).

The Union Government seemed to value the services of the Rev Creux, because in 1907 it gave him an office in the local jail so that he could do all in his power to redirect the lives of criminals. Mr Webb was brought into the fray as a lay preacher assisting the Rev Creux. When old age and rheumatism caught up with the Rev Creux, the Rev Charles Bourquin was sent to Pretoria in 1921 to succeed the old man. On 17 July 1929, the Rev Creux died at the age of 83, and his grave in Pretoria bore the inscription: "For 53 years a missionary and father in God to the native people". His wife joined him in higher service on 9 April 1939 (Shimati 1954:14, cf Junod 1950:27-29).

4.13.5 The Swiss missionaries and the leper population at the Pretoria Leper Hospital

During his tenure as the resident missionary in Pretoria, the Rev Ernest Creux always set aside time for visiting the "untouchables" of the Pretoria Leper Hospital. The lepers had to be provided with proper medical care and given the Good News, so that they could forget their suffering inflicted by the deadly disease. The patients had to be given the assurance that it was only life on earth that was fraught with trials and tribulations, but that life hereafter was full of happiness. More than a third of the hospital inmates were adherents of the Swiss mission in South Africa.

The patients at the Pretoria Leper Hospital were on the same plane with regard to their treatment by the Swiss as were the mentally deranged patients of Weskoppies. At Weskoppies in Pretoria, the missionaries were assisted by African ministers such as the Rev John Mboweni (Brookes 1925:12-13, Junod 1958:20 & 37).

4.13.6 The Swiss missionaries' social transformation and the issue of respect for basic human rights

The Swiss missionaries seemingly believed that Christianity had to permeate all facets of human life on this planet. This explains why they projected themselves as the watchdogs

over the violation of basic human rights. The missionaries did not fail to emphasize the respect that one should have for basic human rights in their school system, because they believed that Africans had to be transformed into worthy beings before God. They believed that the Bible should serve as the sole guide to life. But the Swiss mission in South Africa found itself placed between two worlds with regard to this contentious issue, namely the observance of basic human rights and the right to life that belonged to each and every human being. The manner in which the Swiss missionaries operated makes it difficult for the researcher to believe that they were really there for the speedy abolition of controversial laws such as capital punishment. For instance, how does one reconcile the honourable Rev Henri Philippe Junod's statement that his duty in the Pretoria central prison was to assist "natives and coloureds to the very last moment, when they plunged into the pit of the gallows" with what Christianity stood for? The church should have done better than to have its subjects seen as accessories to murder, which is in direct conflict with the Biblical injunction: "Thou shalt not kill" (Watson 1986:137).

The church should have cited conscientious objection in order to absolve itself from this controversial and somewhat contradictory position. The point the researcher is making is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to prove that one is not party to murder when one is regularly seen in the company of the hangman, entering and leaving the room in which the death machine is housed, even when one is holding the Bible. It is even more difficult to justify opposition to capital punishment when some people who committed heinous crimes did not receive the death penalty because they were white. The justice system should be colour-blind. Where there is a need for rehabilitation all citizens have to be considered. The disparities that existed in South Africa in the meting out of justice during the historical epoch under review, hampered the missionaries' endeavours to improve the living conditions of Africans. But missionaries shared the blame for the lack of improvement in black people's lives, because people of the church should be seen to be striving for social justice rather than to remain disaffected when the state oppresses certain sections of the

population (Junod in *Revenge or reformation? A Study of the South African prison system with special reference to Africans* 1947:6-15).

4.13.7 Changing the system from within so as to realise full social transformation

The Swiss mission's co-operation with the state in the administration of the native population that had flocked to the cities was seemingly inspired by the desire to influence change from within the system, so as to enable the African population to attain civilization. But as the Rev Henri Philippe Junod later discovered after "assisting two hundred and six natives and coloureds to the very last moment, when they plunged into the pit of the gallows", the state seemed to take comfort in the fact that it was being supported by men of the cloth, also known as the messengers of God. The researcher agrees with the Reverend Junod that "life and death are prerogatives of God, and the death of the victim of a murderer does not entitle the community to descend to the level of the criminal and use the same methods" (Junod 1950:31). But the continued presence of the Swiss missionaries next to the executioner seemed to make a mockery of their protestations.

Junod condemned capital punishment as "barbaric, antiquated, unpsychological, and above all, un-Christian". The government obviously could not be bothered by these protestations, and certainly did not take his condemnation to heart, as evidenced by the consistent rise in the number of Africans executed in comparison with the consistently lower number of Europeans that were put to death in the same way. Out of the 708 persons sentenced to death from 1 January 1931 to 31 December 1946 only 26 were Europeans. The amendment of the law in 1935 that allowed judges to have the discretion of passing another sentence than the death sentence did not help the natives either, because only two Europeans had been put to death by the year 1947. The remaining number of 24 Africans could have had their sentence commuted to terms in the reformatory which in the European Section of the Pretoria central prison could be equated to a stay at the university studying towards a lucrative career (Junod 1947:8).

The bias that existed in the South African legal system caused tremendous polarization in the South African society. It prompted blacks who bore the brunt of this vicious system to conclude that the laws of the land were not made for black and white alike, and that there were two Gods, one for whites who acted for the general welfare of his clientele, while the one for blacks was grossly inefficient, always standing by as his clients were trampled upon (Maxeke's *Social conditions among Bantu women and girls, Christian students and modern South Africa* 1930:115). Real social transformation should have been built on mutual trust and goodwill among South Africans of different cultural backgrounds and histories. The government should have been active in creating the right climate for effective schooling inside and outside the prison walls. The institutions such as the Baviaanspoort prison farm, which was regarded as a place for "European amenable cases and a kind of half-way house for long-term non-European prisoners", should under normal conditions not have received such a tag. On the contrary, it should have been seen by a caring state as a place open to all prisoners without any regard to skin pigmentation. It should have been seen as a place where the mind-sets of people who had gone astray had to be redirected to national development. The Reverend Henri Philippe Junod, who was the national organiser of the penal reform league of South Africa and the Honourable Justice, Dr FET Krause, should have prepared all of these black prisoners, and ushered them to lecture halls, so that upon leaving the prison, they could collectively lead the country to modernity (Junod 1949:20). But the government, which should have adopted a non-racial stance in educating its citizenry, as was indeed the international norm, was not acting correctly. Instead of accessing all prisoners with formal education, it chose to prepare Europeans for trusteeship over Africans rather than opting for partnership in the development of the country as a whole. According to Junod (1947:14-16) European prisoners had a library with all the necessary material for the various courses offered at reduced rates by a correspondence college. The student prisoners had a school-master who was most helpful in their studies. This explains why the students fared very well in the certificate, diploma and degree examinations with one student obtaining an MA degree while studying inside his/her prison cell (Junod 1947:15).

4.14 THE COMMENCEMENT OF SPIRITUAL WORK AT MPISANE, GRASKOP AND ENVIRONS

The Shiluvane and N'wamitwa territories provided the Swiss missionaries with an opportunity to move further eastward to the areas inhabited by the Hlanganu, Tsonga, Mapulani and Ngoni people. The Rev Jonas Maphophe who had been based at N'wamitwa since 1912, was sent to Mpisane in 1915 to start missionary work there (Sihlangu 1975:47-48). According to Cuendet (1950:56), the first evangelist to be posted to the area was Silas Mankelu. But the fact that no territory could be effectively annexed without an ordained minister, compelled the Swiss mission to send a resident missionary, and the Rev Maphophe appeared to be the right person for the job.

Graskop did not prove an ideal place for the Swiss missionaries' educational activities as it was inhabited by the Pilgrim's Rest and Sabie mine-workers. The labourers had no time nor taste for the Gospel after a hard day's work. The Swiss mission decided to relocate to Bushbuckridge where they had purchased some land. This move paid off handsomely, for within a relatively short space of time, the Masana Hospital came into being. Education also got to a fine start due to the influence of local chiefs who never ceased to encourage their followers to strive for Western civilization. The number of Christians increased remarkably and it was not long before the Lutheran Church accused the Swiss mission of poaching their prospective converts in violation of the agreement at the time of the latter's arrival in the Zoutpansberg in the 1870s. The agreement was that they would concentrate on the Shangaan people only, and refrain from evangelizing the Bapedi and the Bavenda people. The Swiss missionaries were also accused by some government officials who appeared to have a soft spot for the Lutherans or Berliners, of expropriating the land at the expense of other churches. But the Swiss missionaries stressed that they would continue educating and proselytizing anybody within their sphere of influence (Rev Charles Jacot's letters to Rev O Eberhardt, Lutheran mission-Lydenburg, and to the native commissioner, Bushbuckridge 25 January 1951. Cf letters to the chief native commissioner Pretoria from

the secretary for native affairs, Pilgrim's Rest District. Re-applications for church and school sites by the Swiss mission 11 June 1933).

The Central Government was apparently biased against the French-speaking Swiss missionaries, because unlike the Berliners, they were not proficient in the *Volkstaal* and were not keen to use it at their school. (*Volkstaal* is the Afrikaans language. The Boers [Afrikaners] were perturbed because the Swiss missionaries only used English as a medium of communication and instruction at schools instead of also using Afrikaans. Mathebula 1989:5, Masumbe 1997:28). The alleged bias against the Swiss missionaries' educational endeavour to promote social transformation in South Africa prompted the Rev Alexandre Auguste Jaques to react in a robust and somewhat unfriendly manner to Captain JC Ingle of Graskop's attempts to block social change at the Swiss mission stations or outstations. He rightly pointed out that no state in the world except the South African government ignored providing formal education to its citizenry, and that it was surpassed even by the Portuguese administration, who at least provided some form of basic education to its colonial subjects, albeit meagre. Reverend Jaques said the South African government's reluctance to provide native education stemmed from the belief that educated natives would be more troublesome than raw natives, something that had been proved to be nowhere near the truth elsewhere in the world. Historical evidence revealed that in Europe where such a belief had also been held in previous times, those that were excluded from the school system proved to be the ones who eventually committed the most heinous crimes and could ultimately be counted as the majority of the prison populations. Reverend Jaques pointed out that South Africa stood to benefit more in terms of economic growth by educating the indigenous populace than when it remained adverse to the expansion of native education (Rev AA Jaques' letter 21 January 1933 to Captain JC Ingle of Graskop).

The Rev Jaques' reference to the poor-white problem being solved through expending cheap black labour, smacked of racism at a time when even the so-called ignorant natives were clamouring for social transformation unfettered by the biases of the previous years.

To say that education would increase the buying-power of natives was tantamount to encouraging exploitation in the interest of emasculating the capitalist industries and their proprietors. The rural farmers would indeed benefit, because they would have markets for their agricultural produce, but attention had to be focused on the black farm-workers as well, so that they could have their own share of the loaf (Jaques 1933/01/21).

The above should not be regarded as lack of gratitude for what the Swiss missionaries have done for Africans, but as an attempt to highlight their shortcomings, so that these mistakes should not recur to haunt us in the future. Mr RV Selope Thema, the co-secretary of the Johannesburg joint council of Europeans and Bantu, put it aptly when he said: "We [blacks] are not a people without gratitude and without eyes to see those things that are for our good, therefore, while we speak of the things that press upon us, we do not forget that which is being done to help us move forward. In fact we speak of the things that oppress us, not necessarily out of bitterness, of which we may well have a great deal, but in order that Europeans of a fair mind and good will may join hands with us in working for our common improvement" (Selope Thema's article entitled "Land, industry, and the Bantu" in *Christian Students and Modern South Africa* 1930:170-171).

4.15 THE NEW VENTURE IN EVANGELIZATION — THE PENETRATION OF FARMING AREAS OF THE ERSTWHILE NORTH-EASTERN TRANSVAAL

The Swiss mission in South Africa was not dissuaded from educating Africans labouring on farms, despite the interference of the state that only allowed the church to run schools for as little as three months upon the payment of 10/6 (ten shillings and six pence), or the reduced rate of 3/6 (three shillings and six pence) (Captain JC Ingle in letters to Rev AA Jaques of the Swiss mission, Graskop, dated 30 January 1933 and 26 December 1932 respectively). Thus in the 1940s, the Swiss mission sent missionaries to investigate the possibility of establishing some mission stations for the farm-workers and their children

based along the Pretoria-Pietersburg railway line. The following was done for farm-workers:

(1) Pietersburg (1942)

An outstation dependent on the Shiluvane Mission Station was established. Initially church services were conducted from a rented hall, but due to its astronomical costs the Swiss mission constructed its own church building. The people of the Zebediela citrus estates remained without church facilities although there were many Shangaan people working on the farms. They were given the option of attending other churches as their places of work were off the main route (Rev RH Bill in *The Tsonga Messenger* October-December 1951 30-31).

(Pietersburg outstation was established as a result of constant appeals made by a man of Nkuna extraction who worked at the garage. He was from Shiluvane — Tzaneen).

(2) Potgietersrus (1943)

The Swiss mission established a church in 1943 and placed a teacher at the helm. The outstation was situated some 42 miles west of Potgietersrus on land purchased by the Native Trust. The area is known as Jakkalskuil (see map 1). The teacher placed in charge had the difficult tasks of both managing the school and spreading the Gospel. He/she largely succeeded in developing a vibrant Christian community (Rev Bill 1951:31).

(3) Warmbaths (± 1944)

There is no precise date for the establishment of the Warmbaths outstation. The researcher can only guess that it could well have been in the mid-1940s, judging from the fact that Pietersburg and Potgietersrus outstations were founded in 1942 and 1943 respectively. Warmbaths had a very diligent evangelist who despite having no hands, could use his stumps to "thumb" through the Bible, in this unique

way spreading the Gospel to his audience. He could not even walk but had the ability to hold his pen with his toes to write. Eventually, the department of public health heard of his woes and donated a wheel-chair through the Pretoria cripples association in 1949. This generosity increased the evangelist's mobility, which enabled this incredible person to enhance the growth of the Warmbaths Christian community even further. Naboomspruit and Nylstroom were not as fortunate as Pietersburg, Potgietersrus and Warmbaths, because the Swiss Mission Church had no resources to build their own churches for them (Bill 1951:32-33).

4.16 THE NORTH-EASTERN CORNER OF THE ERSTWHILE TRANSVAAL

.This is a territory adjacent to the Kruger National Park. It is where the Mhinga and Makuleke villages are that were explored by the Reverend Paul Rosset, Mahlekete Mbenyane and other missionaries in the 1890s. Mhinga that beat Hutwen (Makuleke) and Dzombyeni/Sengwe on the Zimbabwean side of the Limpopo River to the status of headquarters, was only established in 1899 after chief Sunduza Mhinga had requested the Swiss to work among his subjects (M Mbenyane, "Ka Mhinga", in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* June 1899:24, cf Rev Paul Rosset's "Ka Mhinga", in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* September 1899:34-35). (Mr Abraham Mavanyisi [see photographs 13 and 14] was a key-figure who assisted the Rev Paul Rosset in founding the Hutwen church [see photograph 15] at Makuleke in 1890).

The Swiss missionaries, who terminated their ecclesiastical activities at Dzombyen and the greater Hlengweland within the Zimbabwean territory on account of malaria outbreaks and recurrent droughts, could not stand the lobbying mounted by the Hlengwe people, who persistently asked for the restoration of what they were temporarily given in the early 1890s. Mr Zebedea Mbenyane was commissioned to go there to investigate the possibility of restoring the services at Dzombyen and its environs by the Swiss mission in the early 1920s. After visiting paramount chief Mukhombo, chief Shigalo Malure, Davata

Masingita, and an *inyanga* (traditional healer) by the name Sithoni (Xichoni), Mr Mbenyane was convinced that it was in the best interest of the mission and the communities that the services across the Limpopo River be resumed (Nozingele Zebedea Mbenyane's "Ka wena Nyeleti" in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* December 1921:3). Mbenyane's report about Dzombyen/Sengwe and the surrounding areas prompted the Swiss mission in South Africa to send him to the territory in 1923, where he was welcomed with open arms. The villagers even raised funds to build him accommodation and were also prepared to build a school and a church from donations made by the miners at the Messina copper mine and the Johannesburg goldfields. The church was built in 1925 and inaugurated in 1927 (Malale's "Report ya ka Mhinga" 1922:1-3, 1925:8, 1926:5 and 1936). Mr NZ Mbenyane served as an itinerant teacher-evangelist and was inundated with work, hence his clarion call to the youth to stop flocking to the Witwatersrand goldfields and to rather be of service to their kith and kin at Hlengweni (NZ Mbenyane in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* July 1921:2).

Missionary work at Dzombyen was not only hampered by the shortage of human resources in the form of teaching personnel, physical resources in the form of church and school buildings, but by poor financial resources and relapses to heathenism as well. The people found it difficult to abandon their traditional customs at Mhinga and her outstations. For instance, one Šivabyan (Shivabyani) Marivati, who was at one stage a student at the Shiluvane Training Institution under the Principalship of the Rev HA Junod, went to the initiation school despite his knowledge of the mission statutes which forbade Christians from attending heathen schools (Rev S Malale's "Report ya ka Mhinga" 1925:8). But despite these incidences, Mhinga and her outstations had important gains in the educational and spiritual spheres, as borne out by the reports issued by the Rev Malale from the period 1937. The rinderpest and malaria epidemics could not stop the proliferation of outstations under the wing of the Mhinga station, which included Hutwen (Makuleke), Salem, Hisekelani, Nyiketani (Thomo), Shikundu, Magomani, Botsoleni and Tshukumetani (Maphophe) to name but a few (Malale's "Report ya ka Mhinga" 1928:4 & 1936:1).

The Reverend Edmund S Mabyalani who succeeded the Rev Samuel M Malale as the resident missionary at Mhinga, reported the same kind of progress and minor setbacks, except for the proposed relocation of the Makuleke communities to make way for the Kruger National park's expansion as the only event that caused major setbacks with regard to church attendance. As far as the fight against superstitious beliefs was concerned, Mhinga and her outstations were fortunate in the sense that Dr RD Aitken used to pay the villagers regular visits to satisfy their medical needs from his base at the Donald Fraser Hospital, Sibasa District (Rev ES Mabyalani's "Report ya Kereke ya ka Mhinga na marhavi" 10 December 1946:1-4, cf Mabyalani's "Kereke: Mhinga na Marhavi" 1950-1951:1-6).

It is gratifying to note that the Makuleke communities which were devastated by the loss of ancestral lands have of late been rewarded by the new democratic government in South Africa, which, though not returning the villagers to their original lands, has concluded a deal with the people that entitles them to receive a part of the revenue of the Kruger National Park, to be shared with the National Parks Board.

4.17 NGOVE — A NEW OUTPOST IN THE MOPANI BUSHVELD

The Swiss wanted to create a Christian community between the Mhinga Mission Station east of Louis Trichardt and N'wamitwa station (Tzaneen). Animals had to be relocated to their own colony — the Kruger National Park. It was in line with this dream that negotiations were started with the local chiefs who accepted to have schools and churches in their tribal lands. Thus from the 1950s teacher-evangelists were deployed in the area known as Ngove Village for educative and evangelistic purposes. One of the people who were sent to Ngove Village was Mr Wilson M Shirilele. Besides performing teaching functions, the men and women deployed in the new mission fields were expected to spread the Word of God in church, the villages and at Sunday schools. Teachers were expected to be all-rounders. Their versatility had to express itself even in the building trades for it was

emphasized in missionary circles that Christianity is not compatible with indolence (Rev Max Büchler: "Ngove" in *The Tsonga Messenger* May-December 1953:20-222, Mr NC Makhuba: Face to face interview with the researcher as a supplement to the questionnaire completed by him during April 1999).

4.18 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Swiss missionaries' educational endeavours were extensive, because they were spread over all their institutions. This had to be so, because they laboured under the unshakeable belief that the Lord Jesus Christ was expecting them to cover all areas of life. They therefore strove to turn the indigenous populace into more respectable people than the caricatures they were when they were first introduced to, and tried to copy Western civilization. The different missionary societies all had their own target-groups and were consequently not expected to go all out and evangelize every tribe that they happened to contact. This was also to avoid rivalry in the mission fields, but the policy was seldom observed, and could be attributed to Jesus Christ's exhortation: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Cuendet's editorial comment in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1949:1-2).

The above injunction drove the Swiss missionaries to Mozambique, Zimbabwe, the goldfields compounds, townships, and to prisons all over the country through the Rev Henri Philippe Junod's penal reform league of South Africa, the farming areas, hospitals, and even the South African legislature, to try and improve the policies of the state. This sort of comprehensiveness in the pursuit of the Word of God often caused bitter exchanges between the Swiss Mission in South Africa and rival church denominations, especially the Lutheran or Berlin Missionary Society, which accused the former of poaching its proselytes. But the Swiss mission was not without allies in the execution of its

ecclesiastical tasks. Its most dependable ally was the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society in Lesotho. This society stood by its ally through thick and thin and had joint congregations with its protégé at the Jabavu township and the Welkom goldfields since 1949. At Welkom the two jointly requested the Anglo-American Corporation to allow them to set up schools, medical facilities and churches for their followers that were drawn from different ethnic groupings. Although the Anglo-American Corporation was inclined to favour the Roman Catholic Church, whom it gave the absolute right to run a hospital, schools and church-services for the miners (something that was surprising to witness in a Protestant country), the two churches strongly believed that they would ultimately secure permission to run their institutions in accordance with their mission statutes (Cuendet's "The inauguration of the church", in *The Tsonga Messenger* July-September 1951:23-25). On its own, the Swiss mission's influence was ever-present in every corner of South Africa. Some Africans even went so far as to invite the Swiss mission to set up branches in their own areas, for instance when the Church was invited by the Zulus of Zionist origin to establish branches in Natal and Zululand. The Swiss mission did eventually set up branches at Mtubatuba and Vryheid in 1958. By 1975 the two mission outposts had 1000 Christians in their books (*Rejoice* 1975:33).

Despite all the controversies associated with Swiss missionary work, it cannot be denied that they acquitted themselves very well in the spheres of social transformation. Their spiritual and educational practices, coupled with the provision of medical and nursing care, were well received by the African population. The Swiss mission's Rev H Guye correctly noted the Swiss missionaries' educational contributions when he referred to the African generation as gravitating from their traditionalism (*xintima*) to *xilungu* (European way of life). Even their spoken languages teemed with European words. Unlike their ancestors, they no longer had time for ploughing the fields, hunting game and doing all sorts of things that were peculiar to the customs of their parents and grandparents. The new generation of Africans divided their evenings between the cinema and native dances, rode bicycles, wore hats instead of the circle of black wax that was worn by their grandparents, purchased

guitars instead of fashioning traditional musical instruments, and had gramophones in their thatched huts (Rev H Guye's *Rikatla Report* 1924:1).

But the social changes encapsulated in this chapter were not the only ones noticeable in the hitherto backward societies. The school milieu to be discussed in the ensuing chapter appears to have been the nerve centre of Swiss missionary activities. The school with its formal education was hailed as the feeder of the church and the hospital, which means that the missionaries' transformation efforts would not have been likely to succeed without the provision of formal education.

CHAPTER 5

THE ROLE OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Formal education among the indigenous populace of South Africa owes its origin to the efforts of missionaries attached to different mission societies. Missionary societies were later forced by budgetary constraints to co-operate with the state in the provision of native education. State funding was indispensable for the smooth running of education, and by implication also the evangelizing of the African masses. Villa-Vicencio (1988:60) encapsulates this relationship as follows: "The missionaries needed the support of the government to succeed in their work, and the government, in spite of periodic quarrels with the missionaries, realized that missionaries were essentially allies in their cause, able to act as intermediaries, motivating blacks to play their part in the emerging economic order and incorporating them into the social milieu of the Empire". The relationship that existed between missionaries and state officials (imperialists) was essentially one of pretending that they were diametrically opposed to one another when it came to the administration of the indigenous populace, while their ambitions were essentially the same. Yet it was easy for the African population to get carried away by the philanthropic outlooks of the missionaries, only to realize at a later stage that the communal lands that they had owned since time immemorial, were never to be tilled without the consent of some resident magistrate. Missionaries were therefore covertly engaged in the policy of divide and rule, that saw the indigenous populace's patriotic feeling blunted and substituted by subservience to the Empire's needs. Missionaries took delight in the socio-economic and political changes that were taking place, because their proselytization efforts could hardly flourish without them. For their part they exacerbated social division by withdrawing their Christian converts from the heathen villages and granting them a few smallholdings next to the mission stations (Villa-Vicencio 1988:60-61, Mabyalani's Sermon 11 May 1949).

5.2 CULTURAL VARIATIONS AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION.

The Swiss missionaries preferred to retain less of the indigenous customs while inculcating more of the European culture. This was of course not unique to them, because missionaries of different church denominations were adhering to the same policy in other parts of Africa. Among the cultural elements to be retained were the African languages that were indispensable for the dissemination of the Scriptures. This explains why the Swiss missionaries translated the Biblical material they brought into the erstwhile Northern Transvaal when they realized that the Shangaans had no working knowledge of the Sesotho language of Basutoland (Lesotho). It is gratifying to note that the realization that the Shangaans were not proficient in Sesotho induced missionaries to provide the Xitsonga language with its own orthography. That missionaries were ill-prepared to live with customs that were considered an affront to the Christian religion, was evidenced by the banning of traditional dances (*swigubu*) boys and girls' initiation schools (*ngoma* and *vukhomba*) and many other customs that the reader will come across in this study. Eurocentric values had to take precedence over Afrocentric values throughout. For instance, missionaries without exception condemned "ancestor veneration, polygamy and tribal solidarity, and converts were obliged to turn their backs on corporate responsibility inherent in each of these cornerstones of African society" (Villa-Vicencio 1988:54-55). It must be remembered that corporate responsibility more than anything else proved a nightmare to the penetration of the African continent by Europeans of different persuasions.

The magistrates posted to the different magisterial districts found it difficult to maintain law and order if the kings and chiefs still had absolute power and command over their subjects. The missionaries preferred the principle of individualism to communalism, because it tied up with the new socio-economic order (capitalism) and individual profiteering. All Africans were expected to stand on their own feet and exert themselves to the task of survival. Hard work was compatible with Christianity while communalism was

compatible with laziness. The new generation of Africans attending mission schools had to be dissociated from heathen practices and be made accustomed to the Christian or modern way of life (Villa-Vicencio 1988:54-55, Berman 1975:25).

The Swiss missionaries invoked diplomacy to introduce Christianity in territories that were hostile to their religious faith. For instance, chief Njhakanjhaka (see photograph 10) was initially opposed to missionary influence. The missionaries sent evangelist Jonathan Molepo to go and negotiate with him as a fellow African with sufficient knowledge about the two worlds that were now meeting, namely traditionalism and modernity. This encounter in 1876 between the two gentlemen with totally divergent religious faiths, led to permission being granted to the Swiss clerics to establish the Elim Mission Station in 1879 (Cuendet 1950:17). Miyen adds another dimension to the chemistry of negotiations aimed at bringing about social development when he refers to Hlanganisa, one of chief Njhakanjhaka's trusted indunas (headmen) as having persuaded chief Njhakanjhaka to agree to missionary settlement that in his view would bring about multifaceted development to the territory. Hlanganisa's diplomacy was rather unique in the sense that it did not have the refined power of formal education, but depended entirely on the experience derived from the migratory labour system which, as it were, was now working for the benefit of the missionaries and the inhabitants of chief Njhakanjhaka's territory (E Mc Miyen's *Makumu ya Vutomi Byebyo* Tsonga novel 1979:1-2).

Chief Njhakanjhaka's delay in accepting missionaries after they had initially been warmly received in the neighbouring Klipfontein, or Valdezia as it was later called, might have contributed to the infrastructural development of Elim that later surpassed that of Valdezia. Missionaries might have wanted to show that the intransigent, yet calculative and imaginative chief Njhakanjhaka would have lost much had he continued with or stuck to his conservatism. The researcher ventures to make these comments because Elim mission station (1879) boasted of the Elim hospital (1899), the Lemana Training Institution (1906) and the status of being the regional headquarters of the Swiss mission in the northern parts

of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic, while Valdezia (1875) had no amenities or status even close to this magnitude (Rev Charles Jacot's Letter to the native commissioner in Bushbuckridge 25 January 1951. Cf Brookes 1925:12-15).

5.3 EDUCATIONAL AIMS SET BY THE SWISS MISSION

According to the Rev FA Cuendet's *Marungulo ya xikolo xa Lemana* 1924-1925 (*Report of Lemana Training Institution* 1924-1925), the Swiss mission's educational aims were as follows:

- (1) to develop mission schools, teacher-training institutions, schools to train ministers and evangelists, agriculturists and nurses
- (2) the mission church like other churches operating on the continent, wanted to provide the rapidly increasing indigenous populace of Africa with the necessary agricultural and industrial skills to obviate the possibility of starving to death surrounded by enormous natural resources like fertile soil and enough water for irrigation purposes

A closer look at the educational aims as espoused by the Swiss missionaries, reveals that these clerics fervently believed that Africans were inherently lazy and needed constant reminders that Christianity was incompatible with indolence. This belief in the indigenous populace's inability to work for themselves often went paired with the belief that Africans were intellectually less gifted, so much so that it would be cruel of the state and mission societies to extend medical or scientific training to them. It is this perception, as Prof PV Tobias correctly observed, that "constituted the most serious setback to medical education ... (and) has left us well over 30 years behind a point where medical education for blacks could and should have been. I am driven to believe that the government's policy, particularly apartheid in education, has set us back by at least half a century. We have fifty years to make up for, if the training of doctors suited in numbers and quality to the needs of

our expanding population is to be attained" (Tobias' Apartheid and medical education: the training of black doctors in South Africa, 1963:151).

Another point that the Swiss mission's clerics felt had to be plainly articulated to the indigenous populace, was their superstitious and pagan nature, that precluded them from reaching the same heights that were readily attained by their European benefactors in the sphere of civilization. But African analysts did not take kindly to the insinuation that blacks were atheists prior the arrival of the white missionaries in this country. For instance, the Rev James A Calata of the Church of the Province (1932:65) was emphatic in disputing this allegation: "this is true neither to my own race nor of any other African race that I know or have heard of. My own grandfather who was converted at an old age, left a very strong impression in my mind that he believed in the same God after conversion as before. I learnt this when he said prayers, for he used to speak to the One with whom the spirits of his ancestors lived. His religion was not Christianity, but a religion that in its code could in some respects be compared with the Jewish religion as expressed in Deuteronomy and Leviticus".

It is interesting to note that the Rev JA Calata expressed his thoughts or views in a conference attended by ministers of different churches and representing the main racial groups of this country, namely blacks and whites. The Rev Calata was not alone in expressing the falsity of the European views regarding the status of the African religion before the white scramble for African territories started (colonization to be precise). The Rev Paul Fatton of the Swiss mission had the same view and topic as the Rev James A Calata during the conference proceedings. In his delivery of the paper "The Gospel and the Bantu mind" the Rev Paul Fatton maintained that Africans had worshipped God long before the arrival of Europeans on the African continent. To quote him will eloquently put his argument in its correct perspective: "It is a truism to state that the mind of the Bantu is fundamentally religious, that the life of these people is founded on religion that is the very asset of manners, customs, relationships, tribal and private behaviour. Truly all acts are

determined or at least influenced by some religious belief, some prohibitive taboo or superstitious fear"(Fatton 1932:58). As if to make himself clearly understood by the delegates about whose religions he was comparing, the Rev Fatton went on: "In Europe as well as in America, we now hesitate to speak of a Christian nation because of atheists or what is still worse, because of indifferent people — in African society, until the advent of the white man, there was no atheist, all were believers" (Fatton's paper "*The Gospel and the Bantu mind*" that formed part of *A report of the eighth general missionary conference* 1932:58).

The Rev JA Calata and the Rev P Fatton's treatises both agree that in their ancestral worship Africans included the name God or Supreme Being who possessed power that could not be matched by those of ancestral spirits. The Supreme Being was the ultimate Provider of whatever the lesser gods were incapable of giving to the surviving members of communities. In both treatises one thing is clear, and that is ignorance about the presence of Jesus Christ the Saviour, or God's only begotten Son. This Saviour was introduced to Africans by the missionaries who set up the mission schools for the literary and spiritual empowerment of the indigenous populace. Mission education only contributed to the refinement of African religion, because as the Rev Paul Fatton states, Africans conceived God as "One who once dwelled amongst his children, but then fled, went away, because men were troublesome, disobedient, jealous, et cetera" (Fatton 1932:59). It is a general phenomenon among conservative Africans to mention the names of all known ancestors in their traditional prayers. Such prayers may end as follows: "We are still too young to know you all by name. Inform each other and share this offering (beer and snuff). Let there be good health in the family and a good harvest as well. Inform the most powerful God to send mercy on us, we need happiness!" Although Rev Fatton speaks of the degeneration of African morality and religion with the advent of Christianity, the spirit of *ubuntu* (*vumunhu*, literally translated into English as humaneness) that was characteristic of the pre-missionary era that still prevails in most African villages, but not in the urban centres

(Dr PH Jaques [see photograph 17] and S Fehrsen's *History of health care in South Africa* undated p10, Fatton 1932:58).

5.4 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS INTRODUCED BY THE SWISS MISSIONARIES IN THEIR MISSION FIELDS

The Swiss missionaries mainly used three major institutions to promote social transformation in South Africa — the church, the school, and the hospital. These institutions complemented one another in the mission fields. Whenever there was the need for intervention, even the least qualified person of the church, or maybe just an ordinary hospital worker, would step in to help by offering a prayer, although the situation may rather urgently call for medical expertise, but then that would also be provided. The idea was that prayer could make the sick feel better until medical help arrived. Ms Mavila Kwaiman emphasized during the interview conducted by the researcher on 10 December 1999, that it was not uncommon for health workers to visit heathens in their strongholds to educate them about how diseases could be effectively diagnosed and treated by the combined efforts of the missionaries and their African assistants. Works of charity extended to the heathen-folk often translated into a recruitment drive for the church of Christ, because after the successful treatment of the different diseases plaguing the indigenous populace, very few of them returned to their heathen ways. Ms Kwaiman cited as examples the sterling efforts of Ruth Mashamba, a mission-trained nurse whose tireless efforts against paganism paved the way for the introduction of a nursing course for African girls at the Elim hospital in 1932. She was a Valdezian Christian, born of devout Christian parents. Her selfless attitude to bringing about social transformation among the people of Elim, Valdezia and Tlangelani (Mudavula) will remain embedded in the minds of all the people who went through her hands, and those who read about her deeds long after her death in the 1990s (Masumbe vis-a-vis with Kwaiman in an interview 10 December 1999).

The churches and hospitals depended on the educational efforts of schools for the training of their personnel. All the beneficiaries interviewed for the purposes of this study, stressed the value of mission education and the curriculum that emphasized industrial courses, although some felt that missionaries should have provided more opportunities to the indigenous populace in the form of training given in science, technology and commerce, so that Africans could also contribute meaningfully to the development of the country's economy. Missionaries were not prepared to open up opportunities for the indigenous populace in highly technical education or in commerce, because they thought that Europeans would feel threatened by the prospect of losing lucrative jobs to Africans. Educational programs were consequently structured in such a way that blacks could only qualify for careers in the public sector and the ministry, while exclusive training was given very adequately to whites for jobs in the private sector (Rev ML Martin 1950:15, Tobias 1983:131-151).

5.5 THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SWISS MISSIONARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

5.5.1 The prison population's educational programmes

The Swiss missionaries wanted their school system to reach out to all their proselytes. They deployed staff in the cities, on farms, in townships, mining compounds, hospitals, and even in prisons. This was in line with the desire to provide education to all of the Shangaan people, which was their main target group. The Swiss missionaries regarded education as a catalyst for change, and other ethnic groups were not excluded from their educational endeavours and spiritual services, as could clearly be seen in the outreach-programmes that the penal reform league of South Africa offered to prisoners in the Cape, Natal and Free State prisons. The national organiser of the penal reform league of South Africa, Rev HP Junod, wanted all prisoners to receive spiritual counselling so that they could break with

the heinous deeds and enslaving habits of their past once they had accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour (Junod in *The Tsonga Messenger* 1950:32).

The aim of Swiss mission education to inmates was to create a spiritual home for prisoners, namely the church, and to provide them with varied skills that would enable them to secure good employment or even to create their own employment once they had completed their prison sentences. Education of a reformatory nature was indispensable to the disadvantaged communities, especially in view of the fact that the existing reformatories were exclusively meant for and only available to European offenders for rehabilitation purposes. The educational programmes initiated by the Rev Ernest Creux when he was sent to Pretoria, proved to be very helpful to the prisoners, most of whom were illiterate. By attending classes they were taught to read and write and other basic educational skills, but most importantly, they learned how to read and interpret the Scriptures for themselves and others as Christian converts (Creux 1950:25).

What started as educational programmes for male prisoners grew in stature to the point where the need for similar programmes was felt in the female cells also. Woman prisoners attended literacy classes where they were not only taught reading and writing but industrial courses like weaving and knitting too. They also learned how to sing hymnal songs and how to form and manage Christian women's associations, that proved to be the main pillars of Christian fellowships (Rev B Ernst *The Tsonga Messenger* May-December 1953:27).

5.5.2 The untouchables of the Pretoria leper hospital

The Swiss clerics did not see why the lepers or untouchables should be excluded from their educational and spiritual services. To do that would be to contravene their Lord Jesus Christ's orders to preach to all people. The Rev Beatrice Ernst mentions prayer-meetings that were held for these social outcasts who were literally staring death in its face. But the reading of the Scriptures and the saying of prayers never failed to uplift the spirits of these

sufferers, and they actively participated in sewing and knitting lessons on days allocated for such activities (Rev B Ernst's *Some aspects of work among native women*, *The Tsonga Messenger*, May-December 1953:27).

5.6 SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS CHARGED WITH THE TASKS OF LIBERATING THE INDIGENOUS POPULACE FROM IGNORANCE

5.6.1 School categories

Despite being debilitated by a lack of cash year in and year out, the Swiss missionary society used whatever paltry donations it received to run the following schools and educational institutions:

- (a) Primary schools
- (b) Secondary schools
- (c) Pastoral schools
- (d) Nursing schools
- (e) Training institutions

5.6.2 In-depth discussion of the different educational institutions

What follows is an overview of each of the categories of schools or educational institutions outlined above that acted as major catalysts for social transformation in the fields of the Swiss mission

(a) Primary schools

Primary schools served as preparatory centres for entry into the Christian, or civilized world. They marked the transition from home to the formal school system at a time when

preschools were unknown or not yet introduced in the Swiss mission fields. Primary school children received instructions in singing, reading, writing, numeracy, the acting out of plays (with the Christian plays being the ones preferred by clerics), and a host of other social activities that were considered important for the normal upbringing of children. Religious propaganda was eagerly spread among learners, so that they could grow learning to attend Sunday schools and to ignore heathen practices from a very age. From the outset learners were taught that the Bible was their sole guide to life as it should be lived by Christians. The missionaries believed that once the children had mastered some of the Biblical stories, they would be able to contribute in spreading the Gospel in their households, so that their cumulative efforts might cover the entire population (Cuendet 1950:23-34).

Enlightened chiefs like Mphahlele for the Pedi, Tshivhase for the Venda and Muhlaba for the Shangaan people, supported missionary societies by establishing tribal schools (Rev DC Marivate 1928:11). In *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* (April 1899:15), the Rev Ernest Creux vented his appreciation for the efforts of chief Njhakanjhaka and his headman Ntabeni, who from the moment they abandoned their heathen ways at Mamukeyane in 1898 during the jubilee celebrations, were still adhering to their new faith. But Rev Creux bemoaned the fact that not all of the chief's subjects had accepted conversion, as was evidenced by their continued indulgence in beer and their belief in superstition. The Rev Creux also praised the efforts of the Venda chiefs such as Senthumule, who took over from his deceased father Makhado Ramabulana in the area around the devastated and deserted Voortrekker town of Schoemansdal, not very far from the present town of Louis Trichardt. Senthumule bought the books (readers) for his subordinates, recruited teachers and commissioned the help of missionaries based at the Elim Mission Station in educational matters. It was not only Rev Creux who was thrilled by the support that chiefs in the Spelonken District gave to the Swiss Mission in South Africa (SMSA). Mr Gideon Mpapele in his article published in *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* (August 1899:31) applauded chief Senthumule, Rasengane, Ndhavane (probably Davhana), Mashamba and Njhakanjhaka for what they were doing for their subjects, including their attendance of the function held on 19 June 1899. All these

actions were in his view indications that past hostility between the two tribal groups was giving way to harmonious working relations in the interest of development and the expansion of Christianity.

(b) Secondary schools

The incapacity of primary schools to produce learners with the skills to cope with the ever-increasing demands of life, especially at the training institutions, led to the establishment of secondary schools. In the 1930s, standard 6 (grade 8) was the entry requirement to the so-called third year course (native teachers' course). This qualification did not even come close to enabling students to cope with the course content, let alone the work they would be doing at the schools where they would be posted. It is even true to state that by 1924 it was already evident that standard 5 (grade 7), which then used to be the entry requirement for the native teachers' third year course, was a far cry from being satisfactory to the authorities in their training programmes. The Rev FA Cuendet and his colleagues had even before 1924 already raised the entry requirements for the third year course from standard 3 (grade 5) to standard 4 (grade 6) when they realized that students could no longer cope with the new course structure. Right at the beginning, at the inception of the Lemana Training Institution on the Rossbach farm in 1906, standard 3 (grade 5) was the recognised entry requirement to this third year course, but that could not remain the case indefinitely (*Lemana Training Institution report 1921-1922*).

In 1922 the Swiss mission hierarchy decided to phase in the preparatory school (*escola preparatoria*) at both the Lemana and Rikatla Training Institutions. The Rikatla Training Institution was based in Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa as it was then called). This training programme was intended to help identify those students who were likely to fail the third year course even before they enrolled for it. The idea was to then give them the necessary academic support they needed to cope with the demands of the course, thus sparing them of the shame of failure and its concomitant frustrations. The preparatory

schools provided bridging courses or catch-up programmes that were designed to assist learners to gain the necessary "academic stamina" for the difficult native teachers' course. The perturbed parents and students strenuously opposed this innovation. They saw it as an attempt by the missionaries to keep black students at the college for a period of four years just to prevent them from earning a living in time to assist their parents. Many parents struggled to make ends meet, but missionaries seemed undeterred by their protestations because they believed in what they were doing, and they were not alone in their convictions because training institutions like Kilnerton had similar programmes (Rev HA Junod in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* February 1921:3, Rev FA Cuendet in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* December 1922:2, cf *Lemana Training Institution Report 1921-1922*).

(c) Pastoral or evangelist schools

(1) The quest to produce manpower for religious development

During the Swiss mission's early years, prospective church workers destined to serve among the Shangaans were sent to the Morija Pastoral School, Basutoland (Lesotho) for professional training. But this was very expensive, so the Swiss mission in South Africa decided to establish the Shiluvane Training Institution, near Thabina, Tzaneen in 1899. This institution was closed down in 1905 and replaced by Lemana Training Institution, Rossbach, and Rikatla Training Institution for the Mozambican Shangaans. The two institutions did not exclude people from other ethnic groups who were interested in their educational programmes. Training at both colleges was structured in such a way that both the secular and religious aims were realized by mission authorities. But this teacher-evangelism course was not popular with the state. The state argued that no individual could be equally good in both fields, and demanded the separation of the secular from the religious needs before such educational institutions could secure state funding. The establishment of a school for evangelists at Mamukeyane, situated between Valdezia and Elim

Hospital, can be seen as an attempt by the Swiss missionary society to implement the recommendations made by the state officials even though the course contents suggest that evangelists could still be drafted into the teaching-learning situation and be able to acquit themselves well of their allotted tasks. The new pastoral school was under the auspices of Lemana Training Institution. This school was inaugurated in September 1922 and had the following students in its register:

NAME OF TRAINEE	PLACE OF ORIGIN
1. Elias Mbowane	Mpisane
2. John Sibiya	Mpisane
3. Johannes Mukhombo	Mpisane
4. Enock Chabane	Mhinga
5. Fani Ntlhamu	Mhinga
6. Petros Shikuhele	Elim
7. John Mboweni	Elim (Mbokota)
8. Elias Matjokane	Shiluvane
9. Aroni Hlakati	N'wamitwa

(Rev FA Cuendet in *Nyeleti ya Mišo* December 1922:2).

In addition to the three nominees from Mpisane, Sihlangu (1975:62) mentions Charlie Mbowana, John Xitimela and Andreas Muzinyana as having been among the first group of students who received training at Spelonken, Elim in 1922. The Rev FA Cuendet (1922:2) lists the following four people as being responsible for giving instruction in evangelism at this pastoral school:

Miss Aline Bory

Rev Numa Jaques

Rev Aristide Eberhardt

Rev FA Cuendet

(2) The structure of the training programme

Despite the state's ruling to the contrary, the pastoral course was structured to accommodate the interests of the church as well as civil society, in other words, both religious and secular interests were served. The shortage of church personnel made it difficult for the Swiss missionaries to maintain the dual approach in the training of church workers. The curriculum consisted of the three R's, namely reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as Bible study. Then there were also industrial courses such as carpentry (woodwork), agriculture and geography. The school was however short-lived. *The Lemana Report* (1922-1923:2) reveals that the school was destined for closure by the beginning of November 1924. But after intermittent training work at this education centre, a three-year course for pastors was scheduled to commence by 1934, and it was agreed that students' families would be allowed into residences. The latter innovation was rather surprising given the missionaries' rigid statutes prohibiting correspondence between males and females within school premises (Grant 1932:36).

(d) Nursing schools

The need for the training of African nurses was prompted by missionary nurses' incapacity to effectively deal with the number of patients admitted at the mission hospitals. But missionaries remained unconvinced that African girls had the necessary potential to succeed in this field, because it required an understanding of science and the ability to do certain careful calculations. They were of the opinion that all Africans were severely handicapped in this regard. But eventually the Swiss mission in South Africa decided that introducing nursing courses would speed up the empowerment of African women by diversifying their fields of study. So girls who had passed Std 7 (Grade 9) at Lemana

Secondary School or elsewhere were allowed to enter for the nursing course (Dorothea Möller-Malan, in *The Tsonga Messenger*, April-June 1949:4-6).

(e) Training institutions

Higher education was a source of prestige in the modernised African communities, offering better employment prospects in the capitalist economic system. Educated chiefs commanded great respect from missionaries and state officials alike, because they were easy to work with compared to their conservative counterparts. Chiefs who had acquired Western education could modernise the traditional functions, thus making their thrones unassailable by traditional factions or the evolving modern factions by making full use of the courts. Missionaries were careful not to disturb friendly chiefs or evoke their anger in any way. For instance, as an incentive for more co-operation, the sons of chiefs were given education of higher quality than ordinary students (Berman 1975:25). The Swiss mission initially depended on the Morija Pastoral School for the training of its staff. But upon establishing its own colleges it ceased sending trainees to Basutoland to reduce costs. All students had to do industrial courses and receive instruction in the Scriptures so as to render them useful within their communities. A mission-trained teacher was a role-model within the community, an evangelist who would deputise without hesitation for the minister when he failed to show up, and would always remain dedicated to the teaching profession by thought and deed. Anything less than exemplary behaviour was scorned by missionaries, who happened to be employers as well (Mr PA Miye's response to the interview conducted by the researcher, 9 April 1999, cf Junod 1899:22-23, Möller-Malan 1951:7)

It is however necessary to mention pertinently that Mr PA Miye bemoaned the attitude of the Swiss missionaries who still refused to train Africans in the fields of medicine, engineering, geology and architecture, to name but a few. He wondered what sort of scientific research they had undertaken that strengthened their resolve not to extend

training to Africans in these important fields (PA Miyen's response in the interview conducted on 9 April 1999).

Dr Charles Daniel Marivate BA (SA), MB CH B (NATAL), M Prax MED (MEDUNSA) and NATIVE HIGHER TEACHERS CERTIFICATE, corroborated what many respondents had explained in their responses when he said that the Swiss missionaries were reluctant to encourage Africans to receive medical training because they believed medicine "to be beyond the reach of black people" while "teaching was the commonest career to follow" (Dr CD Marivate's response to a questionnaire delivered to him in April 1999).

The Swiss missionaries underrated the brain power of Africans to a point where they omitted mathematics and physical science from the list of subjects that had to be taught to students at Lemana College. It took Dr CD Marivate who had done both subjects at the St Peter's College in Rossettenville Johannesburg, to lobby them until they agreed to let him introduce "an experimental class" and the results were not disappointing (Dr CD Marivate's supplementary talk to the information provided in the questionnaire)

Dr CD Marivate's introduction of the science stream while still a teacher at Lemana might have gone a long way towards encouraging his siblings to pursue medicine. For instance, in the *Lemana Hostels Report* October 1957-September 1958, Mr RDC Marivate reportedly resigned from his teaching post to pursue medicine. What exactly the attitude of the Swiss mission was to the training of African doctors is not something that one can get in a detailed form from respondents or beneficiaries. Even missionaries themselves were cagey when it came to this sensitive subject, except for the written statements issued by think-tanks like the Rev HA Junod (Nwandula 1987:50-51). But some beneficiaries' statements do reveal some clues regarding the attitudes of missionaries in this regard. For instance, upon being questioned about circumstances that led to his career-shift from teaching to medicine, Dr CD Marivate would only say: "when by chance a medical career offered itself, I left teaching (which I liked very much) and embarked on a medical course. The

reason was that I wanted to break the family tradition. My grandfather and uncles and aunts were all teachers!" (Marivate's response to a questionnaire delivered to him in April 1999). The underlying truth about this statement seen in the light of his earlier comment regarding medical training for Africans, is that missionaries did not encourage Africans to choose medicine as a career because of their "incapacity" to deal with subjects that required highly developed thinking abilities and skills.

The Rev HA Junod was more than forthright regarding where he thought Africans should feature in the new socio-economic and political order when he said the following: "We would like to see it (Native Education) helping to form characters amongst them, and characters who would not turn their new acquirements into selfish means of elevating themselves or of making money, but use them for the benefit of the whole tribe, trying to raise their people from barbarism into a higher state of morality and culture" (Rev HA Junod's *The place of native languages in the system of native education* 1905:2).

Accordingly, if Africans were to discover that they could achieve success in medicine they would "feel encouraged to go to the towns and prefer the society of white people to the intercourse of their own nation" (Junod 1905:9). There is no doubt that the late Dr HF Verwoerd's apartheid or separate development policy owed its origins to the pre-1948 years, if the Rev Junod's philosophical pronouncements are anything to go by.

5.7 STEPS TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF AFRICAN MEN AND WOMEN

Conservative parents were principally not opposed to the education of boys, but in general they certainly were opposed to the education of girls. According to the views of most parents, girls were susceptible to prostitution, especially when they got exposed to European influences. Formal education was considered to be the most defiling cultural element ever to emerge from the European race. But this opinion that was held by conservative parents, was in marked contrast with that of the African elite who saw formal

education as a vehicle that would bring about development among the indigenous populace, and would ultimately lead to better living conditions for all who were educated. In the view of enlightened Africans, unschooled parents were retarding development by arranging early marriages for their children, particularly as far as girls were concerned (Rev DC Marivate 1928:11).

Another problem that contributed to the lack of progress in the heathen villages was that children who should have been attending school, were expected to look after livestock such as goats, cattle and in some cases sheep. Some, especially boys, were expected to seek employment in towns and cities, so that they could help support their parents and siblings. Many conservative parents did not feel obliged to send their children to school to attain professional qualifications. Missionaries viewed this as a challenge that had to be met head on by them, and they had the full support of the African elite in this matter. This explains why articles sent to the newspapers, such as *The Valdezia Bulletin* (later known as *The Light — Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga*), *Nyeleti ya Mišo* (The Morning Star) and *Nanga ya ba-Thonga* exhorted Africans to abandon their traditional customs and strive for formal education and Christianity (Hlaise in *The Light — Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga* 1936:3, Marivate 1928:11).

Conservatives felt that missionaries were hypocritical to expect them to abandon their traditional customs and adopt foreign customs. To them polygamy was a source of prestige, and a family blessed with many children, particularly girls, was considered wealthy because that meant a lot of income from *lobola* (bride-price). The importance of boys was that they were the ones who would continue the line of descent after the death of their parents. In royal families they were the future chiefs or kings. The kissing custom of the Europeans was also frowned upon. To Africans, girls who kissed other persons, especially members of the opposite sex, were regarded as prostitutes (*madlakuta/tingenji*). Anything likely to dash the economic value of children was scorned by parents. Rev Marivate cited the case of a woman and her polygamous husband who paid for the education of their children only to

see them vanish like vapour upon completing their studies. This happened at a time when their wages should have been a source of pride to their parents. And at the same time, the heathens who did not educate their children were enjoying the fruits of their obstinacy, in spite of what the Swiss missionaries said. This disillusionment made the disgruntled woman to swear never to set foot in church again in retaliation to what Christianity had done to her and her family (Marivate 1928:11).

Missionaries were however never deterred by such minor setbacks. They felt that with more effort all traces of heathenism would be nipped in the bud. According to them, the best method of introducing Christianity was by moulding the characters of children while they were still young. The introduction of social clubs like the Pathfinders and Wayfarers would help keep children on track. The younger children attending primary schools and the lower levels of secondary schools also had social clubs that were commensurate with their stage of development. These clubs were known as the Sunbeams for the young girls (a variation of the senior girls' Wayfaring club) and the Trackers (a variation of the senior boys' Pathfinding club). The Rev DC Marivate had undergone the necessary training in Great Britain to manage these social clubs and his services were required countrywide (J Masuluke in *The light — Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga* 1937:3-4, cf PMJ Shimati's article in *The Lemana College Magazine*, December 1934:3

5.8 THE ROLE OF THE LEMANA TRAINING INSTITUTION AS THE MECCA OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION PROCESS

5.8.1 Introduction

From the moment Lemana Training Institution opened her doors to learners in January 1906 on the Rossbach farm, there was no doubt about the enormous responsibilities that it was going to have to bear. As a substitute for the defunct Shiluvane Training Institution

(1899-1905), the Lemana Training Institution had to provide professional training to the teacher-evangelists who would assist the Swiss clerics in extending the Kingdom of God.

According to Mabunda (1995:72) the college started with the following as staff- members:

The Rev DP Lenoir	principal
Mr Jules Dentan	industrial teacher
Mr Jules Pochard	provisional teacher who was brought in to replace Miss Jeanne Jacot who suddenly left for Switzerland "on account of pressing family matters".

The relocation of the Lemana Training Institution in 1922 to a more spacious site near Ramaru settlement allowed for more work to be done. Additional schools were established and incorporated into the training institution, namely, the Lemana Junior Practising School, the Lemana Industrial, and Lemana Secondary School/Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School. All these facilities necessitated the introduction of more subjects designed to accelerate the socio-economic development of the indigenous populace. Lemana Training Institution and her fledgling schools started to experience a consistent increase in their student-numbers, their number of teachers, and inevitably also an increase in their number of problems (Mabunda 1995:101-109, cf Rev R Cuenod's letter dated 1936/02/05 to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones, *Lemana Training Institution Report* 1945:2-3).

5.8.2 College curriculum at Lemana

Lemana Training Institution's curriculum mirrored the missionaries' philosophical outlooks such as the instillation of the Christian religion to the indigenous populace, industrial labour as opposed to academic work, principles of individualism, self-reliance, self-sufficiency and gradualism, especially in matters pertaining to political decision-making for the African race. The training institution's curriculum did not differ much from the primary

school curricula as religious awareness and diligence were considered to be the only keys that were necessary for the African people's development (Masumbe 1997:15-16, cf Mr HS Phillips' letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs 23 September 1942, and a pamphlet entitled "Shirley" — Agricultural and Industrial Primary School for Natives, Anonymous and undated).

Emphasis on agriculture as an industrial course presumably stemmed from the fact that Africa was regarded as a continent with enormous natural resources such as fertile soil and enough water, and yet its people were starving due to their indolence. Africans had to be given instruction in agriculture so as to inculcate love for manual work, so that they could produce enough food for themselves. In his letter to the additional native commissioner in Louis Trichardt, the Rev AA Jaques seemed to regard industrial courses as the panacea for the indigenous populace's socio-economic ills. He put it thus: the students of this institution (Lemana) are taught among other things, hygiene, agriculture, gardening, carpentry and other kinds of manual work, all of which should enable them to be of practical use to the native population among whom they will be sent out as teachers of primary schools" (Rev AA Jaques' letter to the Additional Native Commissioner in Louis Trichardt 31 August 1937).

Industrial courses were truly indispensable for the indigenous populace, but there was something extra the Swiss missionaries wanted to achieve from native education, and that was cheap manual labour to sustain the growth of the emerging white farmers and industrialists. The Rev AA Jaques stressed in a letter dated 21 January 1933, that the state should sponsor native education because it was the means to stepping up the buying-power of natives, which in its turn would boost white business and eliminate the poor-white problem (Rev AA Jaques' letter 21 January 1933 to Captain JC Ingle of Graskop).

Mr SC Marivate, when he wrote to *The Valdezia Bulletin* (January 1935:3) had no illusions about formal education's capacity to unlock the African people's potential and set them on

the road to modernity. His problem was that according to his thinking, the African people could not develop to their full potential unless they were given the opportunity, and therefore an atmosphere conducive to such development first had to be created before it would be possible to take place. The problem with the Union of South Africa at that time was that Africans were condemned as intellectually inferior to the white race, hence the segregation that was enacted keeping the different races apart. Marivate seemed to clamour for a uniform system of education when he said: "How are the Bantu to get the much needed capital? They toil hard but the pay they receive in return is disappointing. It has been and it is being proved that given equal opportunities the Bantu have the means to compete with any other human being in any trade or profession" (SC Marivate's *Why the Bantu do not progress*, unpublished article in *The Valdezia Bulletin*, January 1935:3).

5.8.3 The relationship between primary schools, secondary schools and the Lemana Training Institution

Primary schools were initially the direct feeders of Lemana Training Institution. Learners who had passed Standard 3 (Grade 5) were eligible to do the Native Teachers' Course (Third Year) and qualify as teacher-evangelists at schools run by the Swiss mission or other churches. The entry requirements for the Native Teachers' Course were raised until the need was felt by the Swiss mission to establish a secondary school that would adequately prepare learners for the demands of the teachers' course. For an in-depth discussion of the circumstances that led to the raising of the entry requirements for the teachers' course at Lemana Training Institution and elsewhere, look again at the above section; 5.6 (b): Secondary schools. The Rev R Cuenod's *Lemana Annual Report* from November 1934 to October 1935 is helpful in this regard: "Year after year, our newcomers are younger, because parents send their children to school earlier, and because they pass more easily than before from standard to standard, thanks to improvements in the method of teaching. On the other hand every year proves to us again that the Std VI examination is not sufficient as an entrance examination for the Normal College, as some of the students have

not received the necessary preparation to follow the lessons fruitfully (Rev R Cuenod *Lemana Annual Report* November 1934 to October 1935:2).

According to a pamphlet entitled *Facts concerning Lemana Training Institution* (17 August 1966:1) standard 7 (grade 9) was added to the Lemana Training Institution in 1933 to augment the preparation that was available to learners for the Native Teachers' Course. Six students (learners) were enrolled for this course. Afrikaans was also introduced. The six students passed the standard 7 (grade 9) examinations, and by 1934 standard 8 (grade 10) was introduced (*Facts concerning Lemana Training Institution* 17 August 1966:1). The above facts indicate that from 1933, primary schools became the direct feeders of Lemana Secondary School while the secondary school in its turn passed on its learners to Normal School/College as Lemana Training Institution was also called. The secondary school was also the feeder of the Elim Hospital Nursing College that was founded in 1932 with seven student nurses in its attendance register (Egli and Krayner 1996:28-29, Lambercy's facts concerning Lemana 1966:1, cf Rev AA Jaques' letter dated 31 August 1937 sent to the Additional Native Commissioner, Louis Trichardt).

Lemana Training Institution did not only have harmonious relations with the Swiss Mission's primary schools and secondary school. On the contrary, it had sound relations with other missions' educational institutions and would readily admit their students, subject to verification of the genuineness of their papers, and their moral integrity. Missions shelved their rivalries in favour of the social upliftment of what they regarded as backward and superstitious natives. The numerous correspondences found in the files of different Missions attest to what the researcher is talking about (letters dated 2 March 1955 and 10 February 1955 from DC Mogotsi, Principal of Sir Thomas Cullinan Memorial Institution, Olifantsfontein on the admission of students from his school at Lemana, cf letters dated 15 March and 6 September 1955 from Mr WM Masuluke of Olifantsfontein Pretoria on the same subject). It is not the intention of the researcher to exhaust the patience of readers with the contents of letters from various individuals on the impact of missionary education

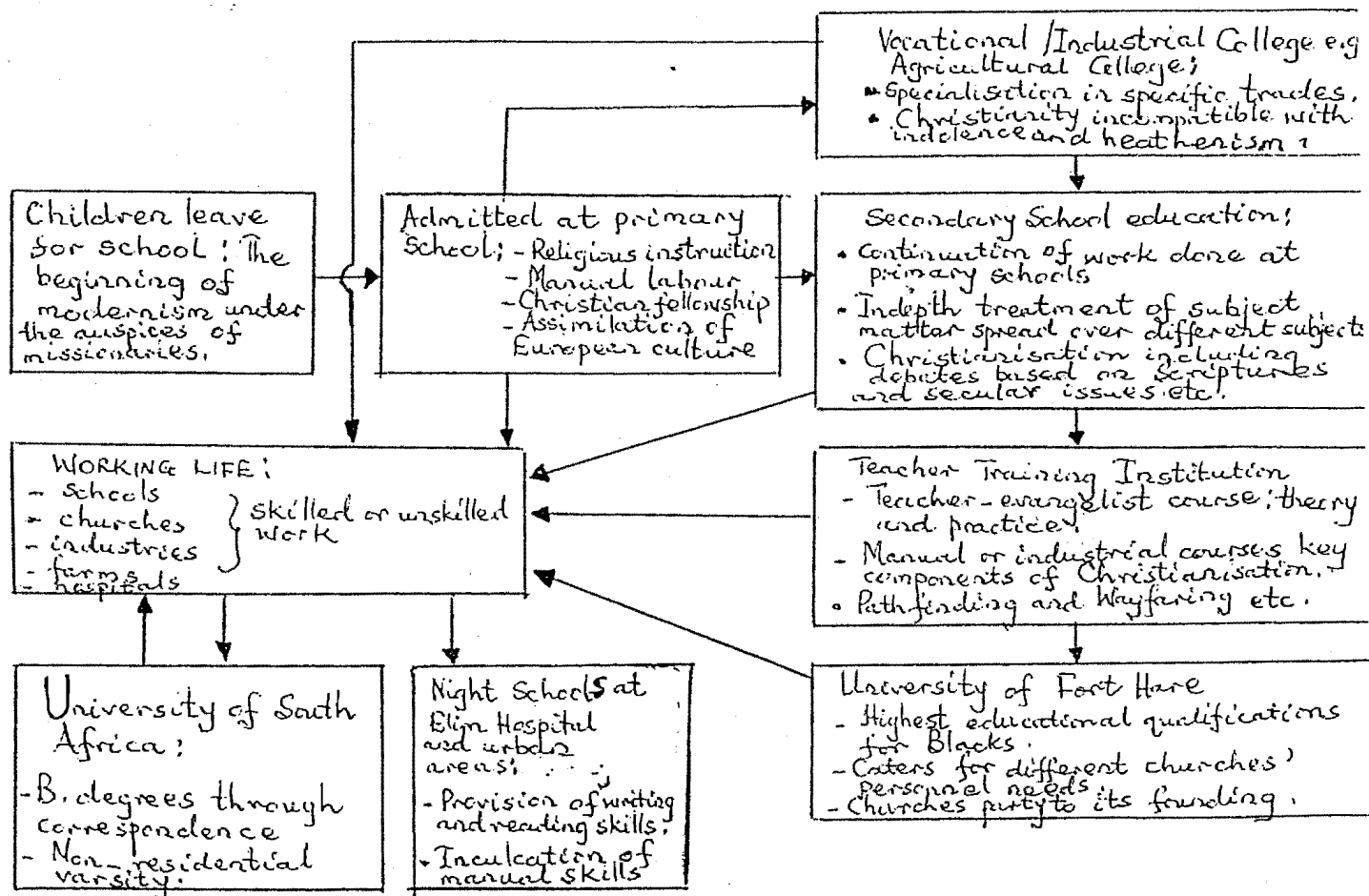
in South Africa on its consumers. Let it suffice to mention that the flow of students from one institution to another was meticulously monitored and transfer letters and examination results checked for authenticity by the managements of educational institutions. Teachers, both black and white, were not immune to this meticulous checking (Rev R Cuenod's letter to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones 21 February 1935:1-2).

5.8.4 The aims and objectives of primary schools compared with Lemana Secondary School and the Normal College (Lemana Training Institution)

(1) Introduction

Swiss missionary education was grounded on the evangelization of the African masses so as to enable them to partake of the glory of God. But this system of education was structured in such a way that both the secular and religious needs were served by schools and colleges (training institutions). For this reason primary schools, secondary schools and training institutions within the Swiss mission fields were interwoven in their approach to education. They had to complement each other for the production of an industrious Christian community that would shun traditional customs and adhere to civilized norms and values. But co-operation among the different Swiss mission schools and colleges would not be enough to produce well-rounded and efficient individuals who would serve the broad interests and aspirations of the Swiss Mission in South Africa (SMSA). For this to be rectified the authorities had to co-operate with other church bodies or even arrange for exchange-programmes to provide their proselytes with the knowledge and skills required for developmental purposes. Since the Swiss mission was not alone in this respect, an interdenominational arrangement was already in existence allowing students from different missions to enrol at any training institution for special courses that were not available in their regions. A combination of moral, industrial, religious, agricultural and physical education was provided at mission schools to mould good character in individuals, who would minister to the needs of the different churches, communities, colonial

administrations, and the dominant capitalist administration system that submerged the traditional subsistence economic system. The transition of children from the Swiss mission from their home-milieu through the school system to adult life, and its attendant socio-economic and political responsibilities, is illustrated by means of diagram 1.



The arrows show the different career paths or possibilities in the transition from the home setting characterised by traditional customs to modernity with its Christian norms and values.

It is impossible to describe in the available space the different relationships that existed among all the Swiss mission schools and colleges. The researcher has selected a sample consisting of one primary school, a secondary school, a normal school, a vocational or industrial college, an agricultural college and a night-school. An effort will also be made to indicate or describe the relationship that existed between the Swiss mission schools or colleges and other educational institutions beyond the Swiss mission's sphere of influence, for instance the University of South Africa and the University of Fort Hare. Institutions such as Fort Cox and Amanzimtoti in the Eastern Cape and the present day Kwazulu-Natal respectively, will not be shown by name in the diagram, but the reader should regard them as falling under the category of vocational or industrial colleges as in the diagram above. An effort will also be made by the researcher to show how individuals serving as teachers, ministers and persons in the building and agricultural trades improved their academic and professional qualifications when they realised that the Swiss mission in South Africa was doing very little to encourage its members to enroll at existing universities for higher academic qualifications, or to send students abroad on scholarships

(2) Shirley primary school

This primary school was responsible for the provision of industrial skills to many Africans. Its curriculum was designed in such a way that learners who passed through its classrooms emerged with varied skills needed by the industries and farming areas. Such skills would be to the mutual benefit of the mission, learners, the public sector (state or government) and the private sector (capitalist industries). The Shirley school's early history is discussed in chapter 4. The idea of setting up an industrial school at Shirley came from the Rev Ernest Creux who wanted to instil love for menial labour in the indigenous populace. The suffering of the Africans, in Creux's view, was the result of their inability to do work for themselves using the hands that God had given them. Although he never accomplished his dream, his daughter Mrs L Phillips felt that she and her husband had to continue from where he had left off. Expressing how her father had felt about the establishment of an

Training in industrial work at Shirley school was intensive, and stretched over four years. The aim was to produce artisans whose services would be valued by employers, or if self-employed, by the customers who would buy their manufactured articles. Mr Phillips, being the mentor-in-chief, was always available to give whatever assistance was required by the learners. He would among other things allow them to do their practical classes on his farming lands, give them shoes to mend, or broken furniture to repair. For many of them the practice sessions were enjoyable as they increased their professionalism and their mental sharpness, creativity and marketing of finished products. Those who qualified for certificates or diplomas were advised not to seek employment in the towns and cities, but to serve their own communities, the mission, farms, neighbouring towns like Louis Trichardt, Pietersburg and Tzaneen, or stay put at home manufacturing goods for sale. Missionaries and colonists were averse to the migration of large numbers of job-seekers to the towns and cities because this would cause unhealthy competition between blacks and whites, resulting in the state's failure to deal effectively with the so-called poor-white problem (Elim: A Mission Station of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, undated and anonymous p 6. (*Shirley Agricultural and Industrial Primary School for Natives* Anonymous and undated. Cf Rev AA Jaques' letter to Captain JC Ingle of Graskop 21 January 1933).

Mission education made provision to enable learners who lacked funds for secondary or normal school education to enrol at some vocational or industrial colleges belonging to other missions or the state. Missions also started night-schools for Christian workers. Those who had already started working were therefore not entirely lost to education as they had the chance to acquire literacy and improve their social standing. Mr Phineas Mthombeni of N'waxinyamani village is a product of the Elim Hospital night-school (Masumbe vis-a-vis with Mthombeni in an interview 27 November 1999. Some upgraded themselves until they attained university degrees or other higher qualifications. Those who chose not to attend trade schools could resume their schooling upon collecting or saving enough money until they accomplished the native teachers' course (Third Year). It is

gratifying to note that migrant workers were never lost to the church, save for a few who wanted a break from the stern and controversial mission statutes that seemed set against idle frolickers who wanted to have a little fun also. With regard to technical education, an example was embodied in Mr Henri Etienne Mahawani (see photograph 5) of Mambedi, Valdezia who went to Amanzimtoti in Natal for training in carpentry. He spent a number of years specialising in roofing and wood-carving. After qualifying, he took up employment with Dr RD Aitken at the Donald Fraser Hospital in Sibasa. He was the one who roofed this hospital. While working at the Donald Fraser Hospital he bought himself a motorbike that he used to visit his family in Mambedi, Valdezia. Mr Mahawani also served at the Shirley school as an industrial instructor and was nicknamed "Mr Gauge" because of his uncompromising attitude towards learners who either lost their measuring tools or were sloppy in their industrial work. Among the younger generation who went through his hands while he was still at Shirley school, is Mr Edward Khaume Masutha whose work at Waterval Small Industries near Elim Hospital is a marvel to watch (*The Light — Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga* (formerly *The valdezia Bulletin*) April 1936:4, Masutha, vis-a-vis in an interview with the researcher at Waterval Industrial Units, May 1999).

Another Valdezian who upon completing his primary education went for further training beyond the borders of his province was Mr AJ Masunga. (He quoted his age as 87 years at the time of the interview, and did not live long thereafter. He was called for higher service by his Creator, but his generosity can hardly be dissociated from this study.) He completed his diploma in agriculture at Fort Cox, Flagstaff, Eastern Cape. Besides his interest in agriculture, Fort Cox offered him all the luxuries that an impoverished learner like him could previously only have dreamed about, such as free blankets, bathing soap, and towels, and laundry-workers who would do all the washing and ironing without expecting or ever accepting a tip. Upon completing his diploma, he served at different places — Muhlaba, N'wamitwa, Dzimaulu (Rambuda's Location), Thabina in the Tzaneen District, and finally Komatipoort, all together a cumulative time-span of forty years (AJ Masunga in an interview conducted in April 1999)

**(3) Lemana secondary school, subsequently renamed
the Douglas Laing Smit secondary school**

This secondary school was established with the purpose to provide the kind of education to learners that would prepare them for life as it should be lived in a Christian world subscribing to the capitalist economic principles. Another reason why Lemana Secondary School was founded, was to replace the primary school qualifications that fell sadly short of allowing or empowering the learners that were admitted to the Native Teachers' Course at the Normal College to cope with the subject matter, let alone pass their examinations. The aim of the Swiss Mission in South Africa was to equip learners with life-skills that would enable them to adapt to the socio-economic and political changes that were swamping society (Rev R Cuenod *Lemana Annual Report* November 1934 to October 1935:2-3). Lemana Secondary School also had to act in consent with the other mission schools to produce loyal and law-abiding citizens. In their operations, schools had to consider the needs and priorities of the Swiss mission in South Africa (Rev FA Cuendet's circular 14 October 1941 sent to the mission schools).

According to the Rev René Cuenod in a letter to the Chief Inspector of Native Education, Transvaal Native Education Department, 10 March 1936, Lemana Secondary School was due to start with its work effective from July 1936 during the new term. In a separate letter, 19 August 1936, the Rev FA Cuendet confirmed to the Transvaal Education Department the initiation of the standard 7 or Form I class at Lemana in July of that year. The curriculum as tentatively drawn up by the Lemana Managerial Staff was presented as follows:

- (1) English A
- (2) Afrikaans B
- (3) Mathematics
- (4) Vernacular

- (5) History
- (6) Geography
- (7) Agriculture (for boys)
- (8) Domestic Science (for girls)

But the introduction of secondary education in the Spelonken District was not without problems. There seems to be a general tendency among researchers and laymen alike to believe that the Swiss mission only had one secondary school, namely the Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School that was attached to the Lemana Training Institution. For instance, Mr DC Mabunda (1995:106-107) indicates that there was one secondary school, namely the Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School, that he rightly says was "finally established in 1942 and registered with the Transvaal Education Department and was attached to Lemana Training Institution". Although he does indicate that from 1936 there had been a need for secondary classes, which were approved in 1937, the reader may be led to believe that no secondary school existed between 1936 and 1941, but that there were only secondary classes (Mabunda 1995:106). In A Lambercy's pamphlet entitled "Facts concerning Lemana Training Instituton" (17 August 1966) it is indicated that standard 7 (grade 9) classes were introduced in 1933 at Lemana Training Institution (vide sub-section 5.8.3 of this study). A letter dated 31 August 1937, forwarded by the Rev AA Jaques to the Additional Native Cornmissioner in Louis Trichardt, refers to a pamphlet that was enclosed therein for easy reference by the recipient or addressee. This pamphlet appears to be the one entitled *Lemana Training Institution* that gives the history of the institution and most importantly indicates that "in 1936 it was found necessary to open a secondary school" (*Lemana Training Institution* anonymous and undated p2). It could well have been that secondary school classes were started in 1933 in order to enable girls to qualify for entry into the nursing profession at the Elim Hospital's Nursing College that was founded in 1932, as well as to equip those students who intended to register for the native teachers' course with a knowledge-base that would satisfy the selectors or authorities who were no longer keen to admit students on the basis of only their primary school qualifications. Egli and Krayner

(1996:28) have the following to say regarding the entry requirements for the nursing course: "In 1932 the school published its conditions of admission: The training course of three years was open to African women of at least 18 years of age and at least 8 years of school education". Eight years of school education is equivalent to standard six (grade eight), which was also the standard requirement for admission to the Lemana Training Institution. When requirements were raised to standard seven for entry at the Elim Nursing School, the same applied for the teachers' course. (Dorothea Möller-Malan's "Lemana" in *The Tsonga Messenger*, April-June 1949:5) (my translation). In his letter on 31 August 1937, the Rev AA Jaques refers to grants that should be made payable to the Lemana Building Fund, suggesting that the Native Affairs Department could give £800-£1000 that would be supplemented by contributions from natives for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings. All these facts as well as Rev Jaques' acknowledgement that there were girls whose main aim of attending the secondary school was to enter the school for nurses, bear testimony to the existence of a secondary school prior to the Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School. Its main problem was the absence of buildings, because of the absence of funds. Mr EA Mageza, a former chief school psychologist at the defunct Gazankulu education department, who is today more than 80 years old and retired, attested to the existence of what he calls the Lemana secondary school that was founded in 1936. According to him the school shared the buildings of the Lemana Training Institution, and he maintains that the old Lemana Secondary School "died" around 1939 to 1940, when Dr WWM Eiselen, the then Chief Inspector of Native Education, made Afrikaans a compulsory subject and stressed that black teachers had to enrol for Form I, which was regarded as equivalent to the standard six level which most of the students in the secondary school had already passed while attending primary schools. Many parents and students found the decision harsh, and they thought that it was calculated to make blacks stay at school for 13 years, while their white counterparts spent only 12 years in school before they went to university (Mr EA Mageza in an interview with the researcher in April 1999).

(4) Lemana Training Institution

(a) Introduction

The Lemana Training Institution was to the Swiss mission and its proselytes the top centre for higher learning, the ultimate level that students should strive to reach in this missionary education system. Those who failed at secondary school level and did not have the zest to persevere, went looking for work. Many of those who failed their teachers' courses also left to find employment because they were not up to repeating the courses. The successful completion of a course was a wonderful achievement, and a source of great happiness for the achiever as well as the Swiss mission, because it meant additional manpower to spread the Gospel far and wide. To be trained as a teacher always meant being equipped for church work as well (Rev ML Martin, *The Tsonga Messenger* 1950:14-15). The Swiss mission in South Africa simply did not have enough personnel to enjoy the luxury of distinguishing between educative and ecclesiastical tasks. All their trained personnel had to have the versatility that would allow them to fit into any task that had to be performed in the interest of social transformation.

(b) Efforts to make graduates of the Lemana Training Institution more productive

The Swiss mission hierarchy was generally satisfied with the quality of the work that was done by graduates during the society's early years, but as time went by, the succeeding generations of students delivered work that was less satisfying. This led to the establishment of preparatory schools in the early 1920s, both in Mozambique and in South Africa, to help select student teachers that would become worthy servants of the church. But missionaries at times put the blame for the poor results at the schools on African teachers who indicated that they had difficulties with the subject matter that they had to impart to learners. The Lemana Secondary School and subsequently the Douglas Laing

Smit Secondary School were seen as future preparatory grounds where prospective student teachers would be made ready to enter normal school (Rev Jaques quoting SG Organe and GH Wilsenach's recommendations in a letter to the Chief Inspector of Native Education TED Pretoria 1943:1-2).

The allegations that African teachers were not equal to their tasks were not unprecedented. The Rev FA Cuendet had previously made such remarks in reference to the primary school teachers who were allegedly passing ill-prepared learners on to the normal schools, which caused them to struggle to pass their first years of study at the college. These damning allegations were made in a letter to the secretary of the Transvaal Education Department, dated 22 August 1922. It is interesting to note that even though the Rev Cuendet phased in the unpopular preparatory school at Lemana in 1922, he was still not satisfied with the performance of trainees or serving teachers by the year 1941, hence he visited several schools under the jurisdiction of his circuit for professional support aimed at putting things right (Cuendet's "Circular to teachers of the Swiss schools" 14 October 1941).

(c) The Lemana Training Institution's luminaries

The Lemana Training Institution may not have performed to the level the missionaries were anticipating, but that did not qualify it for the tag of "underachiever". The institution produced leaders who acquitted themselves very well on both the international and local scene. Some were deployed into the ministry, schools, the government, mission hospitals within the country, while some sought employment in the neighbouring African states such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland. The private sector also drew its labour-force from Lemana Training Institution. It is not the intention of the researcher to enumerate all the people who regard or regarded the institution as their Alma Mater, but to choose just a few from Elim Mission Station. Some of the people will naturally feature in different sections of this study to illustrate what sort of a jewel the

Lemana Training Institution and her component departments were when it comes to nation-building or social transformation. The ensuing table will illustrate this point.

Table D

Name of individual	Place of Origin	Station in life	Source of information
Mr OW Mahange	Elim	teacher, school inspector	JS Shimati's <i>Xihlovo xa Elim - Mati ya Vutomi</i>
Mr CK Mageza	Elim	teacher, principal, businessman	do.
Mr EA Tlakula	Elim	teacher, principal, and co-editor of <i>Valdezia Bulletin</i>	do. Cf copies of the <i>Valdezia Bulletin</i>
Mr SJ Baloyi	Elim	translator at the Native Affairs Department, Pta	do.
Mr ARF Baloyi	Elim	teacher and principal	do.
Mr DP Marolen	Elim	teacher	do.
Mr EN Motau	Elim	teacher	do.

NB: Read the above against sub-section 4.13.3 of this study. Some of the people quoted above have since died, but their deeds are still luminous.

(*Xihlovo xa Elim - Mati ya Vutomi* by the late JS Shimati 1954:63 with a minor amplification of the details by the researcher).

The above list is far from comprehensive as it is all about Elim's residents who upgraded their academic qualifications to the level of BA by 1954. It should be noted that other areas had people who went further than the B-degrees to qualify for Masters and Doctoral

degrees. To include them here would not only be tedious, but would limit space that should be used to enunciate more about the Swiss missionaries' social transformation efforts.

Some of the people who were schooled at Lemana Training Institution and her appendages are still active to this date. Some are supposed to be retired, but they have decided man should not retire like a redundant steam-engine that ends up as a rusting heap of scrap. The spirit of man roars on, mindful of the countless avenues where his experience and

knowledge may be of use to others, especially to the youthful energy rising up behind him.

When they realised that the present generation no longer cares for the aged, many of the Lemana graduates formed what the researcher may describe as "the corps of the aged".

These people are still conspicuous in church as elders. It is also gratifying to note that some of the people who studied and eventually taught at Lemana Training Institution, have

during the tenure of their missionary mentors, proved that the often held belief that blacks were intellectually less gifted than whites, was far from the truth . This has been proved to

all and sundry by some ex-Lemanians who moved from teaching to the medical field and

other related careers. Dr Charles Daniel Marivate is an outstanding example, but there are many others. This diversification of fields of study was good for socio-economic and

political development. We can only bemoan the fact that missionaries did not realise that black people are just as capable as any other person provided they are given a fair chance.

But it was not for lack of knowledge that the missionaries acted the way they did, because many Africans had demonstrated their potential by qualifying as medical doctors abroad.

There was for instance a man named John Mavuma Nembula, who was sent to the United States of America to help with the typesetting of the transcription of the Zulu Bible. Upon

the completion of his task, he chose to remain there to study medicine in the 1880s. He

qualified as a medical doctor in 1888 and returned to Zululand where he taught physiology and hygiene at Adams College and eventually became the first African to hold the rank of

District Surgeon when he was placed in charge of the Msinga District. Although this relates to the American Board Missions' activities and not the Swiss Mission per se, the contextual

relevance thereof can hardly be disputed, especially when we evaluate the Swiss clerics'

negativism when it came to the training of African doctors (Gelfand 1984:50-52, Mabunda 1995:109).

These developments proved that the predictions made by the Rev H Kuschke in 1908, were wrong. He said that by the year 2000 there would still be no black person who has reached the same academic heights as the Europeans. Black people were proving even before the delivery of his speech at the annual conference of the missionary council in 1908, that the indigenous populace were gifted enough to make a success of their educational endeavours regardless of the races they were studying with. On the female side Cecilia Makiwane became the first African nurse to be registered with the Colonial Medical Council the very same year that the Rev H Kuschke of the Berlin Mission delivered this speech. It should be noted that the Colonial Medical Council examinations were the same as those taken by the European nurses. This implies that Dr Neil Macvicar who advocated for the training of African nurses was vindicated when he expressed confidence in Africans' capabilities when he said that they had "the necessary qualities and character to respond to this training" (Gelfand 1984:74-75). He might have added that Africans did have the aptitude to make it in other complex careers as well, such as the medical, engineering, architectural, geological and many more. But even though he did not go this far, the Rev H Kuschke's treatise (1908:14-15) suffered many blows in the years leading to the year 2000, which was the apex of his prediction regarding the European race's continued supremacy. The racist perceptions uttered by missionaries of different denominations were unfortunate, as they were the ones who were supposed to preach the gospel of love and good neighbourliness to their proselytes. Their failure to do this, on certain occasions was a blot on Christianity. JE Casely-Hayford, the Ghana-nationalist and product of missionary education, quoted in Berman (1975:31) was right in describing missionaries as meddlesome and bent on driving African cultures to extinction, so as to make Africans as hypocritical as their European benefactors in their repudiation of the indigenous cultures. Missionaries were adverse to wise counselling such as that made by Nana Annor Adjaye, a devout Christian who is quoted in Berman (1975:31) as saying that he "could not believe in

a Christianity that spells denationalization" but would gladly embrace "a Christianity that preserves the best in the social institution of the people". People entrusted with social transformation should indeed have opened up the education system for all and not have designed some system of education that exacerbated underdevelopment. For national development to be able to take place, the younger generation must be exposed to a system of education that has a strong bias on quality rather than quantity. Besides all this, missionaries should have striven for a system of education that sought to harness the skills of the schooled for the benefit of the entire citizenry in South Africa.

(d) The relationships among the teaching staff of the Lemana Training Institution

(i) Introduction

Teaching as a profession must have an ethical code of conduct that should be observed by all serving teachers. In fact, teaching should be synonymous with exemplary conduct and community service. Teachers should be self-disciplined and exercise initiative to promote development. The education they received should serve as a catalyst for social transformation. Dr S K Matseke, in his article "We need competent and willing teachers" (*Sowetan*, October 14 1999: 12) discussed the behavioural patterns that should be displayed by teachers when he defined professionalism as "a character or spirit of behaving according to the rules of particular training. It is a method of behaviour of a professional as distinguished from the behaviour of an amateur". Although methods of training staff may differ, there is one common denomination in all teaching professions, namely to be of irreproachable character at all times, whether you are in or away from your operational area. In other words, teachers (and this is equally true of nurses, medical doctors, pharmacists or any professionals you may think of) must not be sociable and helpful only in the school milieu, and be unapproachable when their help is needed outside the school premises or activities. In this sub-section, the behaviour of the black and European teachers at Lemana Training Institution will be surveyed to determine how far they tallied with

Christian norms and values as contained in the mission statutes. Students will also be put under scrutiny on the basis of available data to see how far they were adapting to the changing conditions in society.

(ii) Black and white teachers' relations in the educational upbringing of students

Education cannot be regarded as effective in bringing about social transformation unless it empowers students with norms and values that are upheld by society. Education should alter the behavioural patterns of humans to change them from an old or uncivilized state to new or modern behaviour patterns associated with civilization, and capable of solving the everyday problems of today's society. Education should invariably lead to better living conditions by promoting creativity, efficiency in the execution of societal functions, economic well-being, production of sociable and caring individuals, and what is more, workers who will always be prepared to work for the improvement of their own culture in the face of contacts with the "super cultures". Education should merge the vital elements of both the "super" and the "lesser" cultures for the common good of the citizenry. Social transformation should define itself as an inclusive process serving the interests of the entire citizenry. It should not be bent on serving sectional interests. The paternalistic policies enforced at Lemana Training Institution during the missionary era did not always meet the objectives spelt out above, and this explains why the African teachers raised their objections to the manner in which management went about their managerial tasks (Oldham and Gibson 1931:45, 56-53 cf Groves 1958:166).

African teachers were not opposed to trusteeship per se but they were utterly against eternal trusteeship and paternalism over their affairs that was still prevalent even after they had assimilated much of the European culture. They felt that trusteeship and paternalism should eventually translate into African personnel who have input in the running of the college that is on par with that of their benefactors. But management was not convinced that African teachers had reached a stage where they could lead their own people with any

measure of efficacy without missionary supervision. This explains why African teachers were blamed for learners who failed their tests and examinations in primary schools and in Lemana college. It was customary for clerics to blame Africans and their traditional customs for whatever shortcomings there were, even when they occurred in a milieu dominated by European teachers where the African teachers were non-participant observers. While the underachievement of the first years at the college was blamed on the inefficient primary school teachers, the African teachers attached to Lemana Training Institution were blamed for not doing enough to mould students in accordance with Christian principles (Rev AA Jaques in a letter to the Secretary of the Transvaal Education Department 26 February 1942, Masumbe 1997:32).

African teachers did not accept all the blame lying down. They spelt out their grievances in a memorandum dated 18 April 1945 entitled "Reply to complaints re negligence of duties on the part of the African teachers of Lemana institution". The African teachers raised the following issues:

- (1) Being blamed for neglecting the supervision of evening studies even though each class had its own supervisor who ensured that there were no disruptions during study sessions. These class-prefects (supervisors) were under the auspices of the head-prefects and had recourse to the boarding master or principal in the event of problems they could not solve on their own.
- (2) Not having any defined role to play in sports but being expected to watch the proceedings from the sidelines. African teachers believed that they were being turned into fools in front of the students they were teaching in class.
- (3) (a) Being compelled to believe that subjects brought forward for discussion during staff-meetings required their full co-operation and participation, and that their views would be taken into consideration when policies were

formulated, while in essence they were expected to endorse the decisions made at some board meetings which did not enjoy the presence of the African elite. As an example the teachers cited the decision to abolish the afternoon studies at the Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School (Lemana Secondary School) which, even though strenuously opposed by the African teachers in view of the benefits that the students accrued through these studies, was allowed to stand.

- (b) The fact that many decisions made at staff meetings where Africans made many weighty inputs were not being implemented. This failure to implement the decisions made by the African teachers reinforced the perception that African teachers were merely tolerated instead of being accepted as equal partners in the education of the teacher-trainees. One issue that did not go down well with the African teachers was the refusal by management to implement the suggestion that the Form I students (grade 8) should be given a test at the end of the first quarter of each year to detect their weaknesses in time for remedial purposes. This timely assistance would spare students the agony of failing the examinations at the end of the year, because support by their teachers would have increased their knowledge base sufficiently to be able to make it at the end of the year. The absence of constant evaluation had the inherent danger of inducing learners to rest on their laurels believing that they were knowledgeable, only to discover their weaknesses when the final examinations took stock of what they had done throughout the year. It was therefore totally unfair of management to frown upon the proposal of this innovation whilst still bemoaning the high failure rate at the normal schools and the college, which after all was the reason why the preparatory school was started way back in 1922, namely to assist those who were likely to fail the examinations if allowed to enrol for the teachers' course without proper pre-training. The

preparatory school served as a bridge leading to the teachers' course. Its task was to make up for the deficiencies of primary-school education.

- (4) The fact that African teachers were not being informed of certain important matters that have a bearing on their work. For instance, students were expelled even though it had been unanimously agreed that such drastic measures would not be embarked upon, without the concurrence of the black teaching staff. This caused great concern to those who were critical of the controversial mission statutes. Students were quite often expelled from the college on account of issues which, even though they were of a serious nature from the secular and Christian point of view, should have been properly investigated or verified. Mabunda (1995:93) gives an example when he refers to the expulsion of Alfred Mogoboya who had smoked tobacco and drank alcoholic beverages, visited the girls' hostels at night or during preparation time, and boasted of having sexual intercourse with one of the girls. Correspondence with girls other than one's siblings, or indulging in alcoholic drinks was strictly prohibited at the Swiss mission schools (See Masumbe 1997:26 and appendix C2).
- (5) The African teachers also complained about their social status at the Lemana Training Institution as well as at the secondary schools, which was no better than that of their students — in fact, it was worse. In contrast to their African teachers, students had a lot of say in the running of their affairs, while their black mentors could only watch proceedings from the sidelines (Reply to complaints re negligence of duties on the part of the African teachers of Lemana institution 18 April 1945).

An in-depth survey of the African teachers' grievances reveals that they had quite ample intelligence to defy the missionaries' description of the indigenous populace as intellectually inferior to their European counterparts. The way in which they articulated their grievances smacks of diplomacy interspersed with intelligence that should have been pushed to its apex by education of high quality, which was unfortunately the exclusive

privilege of the European race. The obnoxious and vexing educational policies of the missionaries were in one way or the other responsible for causing the state to dilly-dally with educational reforms that would have accelerated social transformation in this country without the need of shedding blood. Yet, despite the modicum of education they received, blacks were able to demonstrate enough brain power in what they wrote. It seemed that they were able to counter the racist speech that Rev H Kuschke delivered at the annual conference of the Transvaal Missionary Council (1908) to the effect that by the year 2000 the black race still would not have risen to positions of authority in government, church, school, universities and other spheres of life where Europeans would serve as their subordinates (Rev H Kuschke, Berlin Mission, 1908:14-15).

(e) Relations between the white teachers and the management of the Lemana Training Institution

Like their black counterparts, the European teachers had their own share of problems with management. They complained about high housing rentals, unfair labour practice and unhygienic conditions in the houses allocated to them. Management also had complaints against certain white teachers who were accused of laxity, sodomy and backstabbing those in authority. Some of the allegations were quite shocking to hear, seeing that they were coming from an educational institution filled with people who professed Christian ideals. These revelations emphasised the fact that social transformation can never be a one-way process. It has out of necessity to be a two-way process. Missionaries had to transform the Africans' way of life and copy the good of the indigenous cultures to remain irreproachable. The revelations also pointed out that when Christian norms and values are espoused, they should be strictly adhered to in practice, otherwise people who are compiling inventories of deviant behaviour would be stunned by the inconsistencies they might find. Their observations of the reality they are faced with, will determine for how long or short a time they are going to adhere to their religious faith (Mr SB Fleming's two letters dated 18 June

1923, sent to the management of the Lemana Training Institution, of Miss Violette Leresche's letter of complaint about accommodation, 4 February 1966).

The point the researcher wants to make here, is that missionaries frequently complained about their proselytes' failure to stick to their religious vows, while their own lifestyles revealed serious violations of mission statutes. For instance, Mr SB Fleming allegedly had an insatiable lust for boys as sexual partners. One of the boys he recommended for admission at Lemana lived with him in his hut and was constantly sexually abused by him. The result of this abuse was that the boy's mental health deteriorated so badly that management eventually described him as a dunce whose performance in the classroom left much to be desired. He failed his examinations and was subsequently banned from the college. Apparently perturbed by the loss of his partner, Mr SB Fleming made several overtures to Ariknus Manyapye from Tshakuma, whom he enticed with money, but he was effectively checked when the boy threatened to make his abhorrent behaviour public (letter dated 25 June 1923 from Lemana to Mr JC Johns, the Inspector of Education).

That this was a very shameful incident was evident to the Lemana Training Institution management, as could be discerned from the following letter: "All this is very sad and such a situation has been an accursed thing amongst us. It is very sad too for the poor fellow who is maybe more to be pitied than to be blamed ... many others depend on the treatment he receives " (letter to JC Johns). Ariknus Manyapye's rejection of Mr Fleming's overtures may be attributed to both the African culture and the Scriptures which condemn sodomy with the contempt it deserves. The fact that Manyapye rebuffed Mr Fleming proved beneficial to him, because it served to protect his dignity, and it won him the applause of the missionaries who were his future employers. As a sort of a bonus, it also enabled him to pass the native teachers' certificate examinations of 1923 along with his classmates, namely Paul Mamabolo, Henri Manaka, Manase Mpelo, Edward Rakgole, Catherine Sono and Jonas Thema (native teachers' certificate examination 1923 third year, Lemana Centre). Had Manyapye fallen prey to Mr SB Fleming's evil suggestions, he would certainly have

gone the route of the poor boy who suffered such mental pain that he failed the examinations and was banned from the college (anonymous letter to Mr Johns 25 June 1923).

Mr SB Fleming's ghastly deeds did not escape the ears of his wife, who confided what she had heard to the Lemana management. Perhaps these revelations made by different persons spurred the management to write a letter to Mr JC Johns to warn him of the danger of Mr Fleming who was allegedly heading for the Albasini School, of which Mr D Dinney was the principal. Mr Fleming's scandalous behaviour whilst at Lemana might have been the cause of his resignation on 18 June 1923, and every possible precaution was made to save children possible embarrassment wherever he would attempt to secure a post. (Mr Fleming's letter dated 18 June 1923, cf anonymous letter to Mr JC Johns, Inspector of Education, regarding Mr Fleming's obnoxious behaviour).

It must be pointed out that Mr Fleming never had harmonious relations with the Revs PT Leresche and FA Cuendet. They believed that Mr Fleming's claims for money paid in excess for accommodation was far from honest. It was only after the Rev AA Jaques had refunded him that the two ministers realised their mistake concerning Mr Fleming's claim for reimbursement and subsequently tendered their apologies. But relations between them had deteriorated to the point where Mr Fleming appeared not completely willing to accept the apology in the same spirit that it was given, as could be discerned from the following: "I accept your explanation and 'excuses' offered ... since you ask me to believe ... I, in turn, ask you to do the same ... to believe me. If I have been led in error by what I considered competent authority, I regret (that) very much and I offer 'mes excuses'. It is in this mutual Christian spirit of 'forgive and forget' that I wish to terminate" (Mr SB Fleming's letter dated 18 June 1923).

This bad blood between people responsible for bringing light to those who were purportedly still groping around in the darkness, is rather surprising to say the least. One

would expect men of the cloth to be the last to sink to such levels. Under these circumstances, one might indeed wonder what quality that was still worthy to emulate the proselytes would be able to find in their mentors. But the fact that the Fleming-Leresche-Cuendet debacle was one amongst many controversial incidents, shows that the missionaries were facing a very stiff test in their transformative efforts. It was difficult to civilize the Africans while so much time and effort had to be spent on reconciling the differences that existed between the African teachers and management on the one hand, and between management and the European teachers on the other.

Lemana Training Institution was at times like a festering wound that was robbing the bearer thereof of much-needed sleep. The Rev René Cuenod put it strikingly when after enquiring about the health of the addressee of his letter, Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones, he said the following of Lemana Training Institution: "Here we are struggling along, trying to give satisfaction to a staff rather difficult to please, wanting ever more and better buildings, and to a Board in Switzerland which is ever shorter of funds... I do not know if you remember when I talked about the difficulties my predecessor had had here, before I was put in charge at Lemana. I think I have had more than he ever had. If it had not been for the constant support of Mr Liebenberg who was well able to judge the rights and wrongs of the case, I would have resigned long ago. Now the younger members of the staff have at last been compelled to admit that I was not such an incapable (person) as they were led to believe, and that has eased my position" (Rev Cuenod's letter dated 5 February 1935 to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones of the South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg).

The Rev Cuenod had European and African teachers as well as students who were strong critics of his administrative skills. Miss AH Cousins was apparently his fiercest critic, accusing him of mismanagement and placing the interests of the students above those of the teachers to buy their favour. What was surprising was that not all the students appeared happy about that, so they were at times restive, especially in the mid-1940s. Students appeared to regard their representatives as management's lackeys and were not prepared to

take their word about their circumstances (Masumbe 1997:32). But Miss Cousins who appeared to heap scorn on Rev Cuenod's managerial style was ironically duly recommended by Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones as a person with vast experience and above all, one who was suitably qualified, because she had the required BA degree as well as an HED. She had the proper Christian upbringing, taught at Tigerskloof and at the American Board Mission, Mount Selinda, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and as if that was not enough, she was also the daughter of the deceased CW Cousins Esq, who served as Secretary for Labour at some stage. The Cousins were residents of Tzaneen in the erstwhile Northern Transvaal. Rev Cuenod seemed to admire her as a teacher, describing her as "very suitable, and I must thank you again for having suggested her name to us" (Rev R Cuenod's letter to Mr Rheinallt-Jones dated 21 February 1935).

Mistrust and backstabbing among the white teaching staff knew no bounds as the missionary authorities lost touch of the exemplary (Christian) lifestyles that they should have been displaying to their proselytes. In 1954, that is, a year after the passing of the Bantu Education Act (1953), Mr WD Malan wrote a memorandum to the Lemana Board recommending the reshuffling of the normal school staff. The Rev Miss (later Dr) Marie-Louise Martin's holding of a double post as full-time missionary and teacher attached to the college, was seen as disadvantageous to the students she was teaching because of her absence from duties for long spells while she was tending to business connected to her ministry. Mr W Endemann, the Principal of the Lemana Training Institution, did not appreciate Miss Martin's interference in his management functions, backstabbing, and shirking her responsibilities by attending conferences instead of her classes (WD Malan's memorandum to the Lemana Board 1954-04-09, cf W Endemann's letter to Mr M Prozesky, Regional Director of Bantu Education, 1955-12-13, Rev E Mashava's Swikombiso swa vun'anga bya Dyondzo ya Vukwembu (D Th degree) in *Mahlahle* (*Morning Star*) vol 15 July 1963:1). The foregoing sufficiently indicates that man is fallible, and hence the mission teachers who were supposed to uphold Christian principles

at all times were often found at the wrong end of the mission statutes, leaving their proselytes stranded without spiritual counselling.

(f) Students' relations with management — a paradigm shift from the earlier attitudes

(i) Introduction

Students at the Lemana Training Institution at first had a very high regard for missionaries, so much so that they did not question their authority over them. But this state of affairs seems to have been true only during the institution's early years, namely 1906 to 1912. From 1913 onwards, students had the guts to challenge management with regard to the supply of food, clothing, reading material, administration of the college, supplies of soap and hymn books. The ensuing section will try to elucidate why this was the case. The survey will of necessity be focused on the students' behavioural patterns at the time when the normal college was on the Rossbach farm as well as when the new site at Ramaru was occupied in 1922, when the state had ruled that the training institution must be situated at a site where it would have enough space for a practising school and other facilities (Cuendet 1950:35, Masumbe 1997:24).

(ii) Early developments in the students' protests for humane treatment by management

Formal education seems to broaden people's intellectual capabilities to the point where they do not fear to face or even to cause problems, because this is the way in which they aim to solve them. This quest for solutions to social problems is found even among the illiterate masses, but it is not sufficiently backed up by knowledge of what finds expression in the European realm to trigger a lively debate based on the intelligent comparison of living conditions. Consequently, during Lemana College's early years, students seemed not to be

too critical about the management of everything, because they had not yet gained sufficient knowledge about the cultural milieu in which they lived. They might have had some complaints which they failed to raise for fear of chastisement and attendant dismissal. But as knowledge of the European cultural milieu and the behavioural patterns of its proprietors became a known fact, students were apt to complain about what we may consider to be trivialities. All that the students required was humane treatment, for example, the exclusion of *xirhidzi* (soup made of powdered peanuts) from the college menu. They also challenged the paternalism that prevailed at Lemana while they did not forget to complain about the things that their benefactors ought to have regarded as prerequisites for their evangelism, namely the hymn books and Bibles, and also soap (cleanliness is next to Godliness) a tiny piece of which they received only twice a month, and which was described by the petitioners as not enough to wash even a handkerchief. From 1913 when the Lemana management ignored the list of things presented to it (food, soap, administrative reforms et cetera) by the striking students, the intellectual abilities of these students appeared to increase by leaps and bounds invoking corporate leadership which was an anathema to many a missionary. The Shangaan students showed solidarity with the students from Mamabolo who were not accustomed to *xirhidzi* as relish when they went on strike in 1915. The feeling was that bad food was eroding the popularity of the college as a centre for higher learning. The students included the grievances of the earlier years when they rose against management in 1915. It is interesting to note that the Shangaan students who were the brains behind the 1915 strike, handled their demand for meat as though the students from Mamabolo, near Pietersburg, on whose behalf they were staging the strike, were the only ones who would consume meat, while they remained on their diet of *xirhidzi* (peanut soup). This practice of students to question the manner of doing things became a common phenomenon in the ensuing years (Complaint by the students of Lemana Training Institution entitled "Eka vafundisi ni ka vakulukumba va Tikereke ta Swiss Mission" 1915).

The political developments of the 1939-1945 period (Second World War) saw the change in the articulation of students' grievances. Students were becoming more radical in their attempts to force management to introduce what they saw as meaningful changes in the administration of the college. They wanted a students' representative council elected by a popular vote. The council co-opted by the authorities was regarded as toothless, because the students' grievances were always swept under the carpet, instead of being redressed. But management still stuck to its old habit of regarding students' grievances as not serious enough to spend time on that should be expended on the more important matters of transforming the socio-economic and political conditions of the indigenous populace. The fact that the youths who were clamouring for changes in the administration of the college were part of the communities they set out to serve in the first instance, seemed to elude them. This could be discerned from the contempt with which complaints regarding decent food that should be served in the hostels were dismissed: "You always find among them (students) a certain number who refuse to eat this or that sort of food. Some do not eat pork, others do not eat beef, others again object to milk or certain kinds of vegetables. There was even one who objected to bread for his breakfast. All these idiosyncrasies and whims make of course very difficult the task of those who have to supply and prepare the food" (*Lemana Training Institution Annual Report 1945:2-3*).

But by 1946 the attitude of management seemed to have shifted from mere contempt to a degree of understanding of the students' complaints. Nowhere is this clearer than in the Rev AA Jaques' comment after the 1946 strike: "One should not be too surprised at these acts of violence. African student youth is in a state of instability, it is subject to all sorts of influences, and is easily worked up and led by a few agitators. These last few years an epidemic of strikes and disturbances have gone through nearly all institutions in South Africa. The famous Lovedale was closed for several weeks as a result of serious troubles that made it necessary to call in the police. 150 students were put in jail and were sentenced by the magistrate with various penalties. We are indeed thankful that our troubles at

Lemana have not been greater than was the case" (Rev AA Jaques in *Annual Report of Lemana Training Institution* 1946:3).

Although the Lemana strike was dismissed as something not serious enough to cause too much damage, management resolved to punish the students and regretted that they had not acted sooner and with less mercy against the 1945 strikers. To make up for lost ground, the students were expected to pay for all the damage caused during their strike-action in 1945. It is interesting to note that though Lemana College was co-educational, female students were not expected to pay anything. This exemption from paying for reparations was not extended to students from the reserves even though management had concluded that the troublemakers were the students from the urban areas (*Lemana Annual Report* 1946:3-4).

(g) The place of history in the school curriculum during the missionary and post-missionary era

(i) Introduction

Before the advent of Western civilization in this country, African history was transmitted from generation to generation by old men and women or anybody who had "sucked" it from their elders. With the introduction of formal education, home education which had been the means of transmitting cultural norms and values from one generation to another grew weaker and weaker through suppression by both the missionaries and colonists. Today there are very few "narrators" left, even in the remotest villages that have had the least taste of urban influence. Children are more and more removed from the traditional customs which they regard as belonging to the "dark ages". Those who were in control of education, namely the missionaries and the colonists, were not keen to present African history as truthfully as it should be told. The reason was that they had their own agendas and aims to realise. Missionaries failed to propagate large parts of the indigenous cultures for fear that their principal objective — evangelization, would be seriously undermined.

To commend the deeds of chiefs and kings was equally distasteful to the colonists who were their protectors in their mission fields. Colonists wanted "African leaders such as Hintsa, Sekhukhuni, Moshoeshoe, Adam Kok, Makhado, Ngungunyane, Nyamela, Langalibalele, Bambatha and Queen Manthatisi" to feature as blood-thirsty tyrants in our South African history, whose activities had to be shunned by the younger generation (Motsoko Pheko's "Boer war had nothing to do with the Africans" *Sunday Times* October 17 1999:24).

(ii) Missionary goals versus imperialist ambitions concerning education

Missionary endeavours in the field of education were not detached from the state's policies. But there were minor differences that could be noted, such as the fact that the missionaries' principal objective defines itself as the conversion of the heathen masses to Christianity. But this objective could not be optimally realised without providing formal education to the pagan communities. Pagans had to be taught to read and write so that they could learn to fathom the Scriptures. The state was not concerned in an overt way with the Christianization of the heathen masses in the first instance, but it did derive some benefits from missionary efforts, because the people that were Christianized by missionary enterprises, were to become the future citizens of the country. So the benefits that were accrued to the state by means of Christianity were realised indirectly, because they were manifested in the form of good, law-abiding citizens tutored and indoctrinated in missionary institutions, the primary ones of which were the church, schools and hospitals. The state therefore took the keenest interest in what was happening in the school system. This was indeed the case even during the early colonial years of laissez-faire policies in South Africa. Missions would carry on with their education of native Africans, but they did take into consideration the laws of the country at a time when the government was still averse to providing education to the natives. The state did eventually subsidize education on condition that secular subjects like industrial courses and European languages also be taught by the missions (Pienaar 1990:61-62).

Although the Rev HA Junod and his colleagues were against "suffocating" the indigenous cultures, and did a lot of groundwork to provide the Xitsonga language with its own orthography, their policies at times worked against the very cultures they purportedly wanted to promote. The outlawing of traditional customs such as polygamy, lobola, initiation schools and work parties (*matsima*) to name but a few, were contradictory to the extreme (AE Mpapele's article entitled: "The Late Dr Henri A Junod" *The Valdezia Bulletin* August 1934:1, cf Berman 1975:30-33).

The beneficiaries of mission education were seemingly not aware of the subjective manner in which historians such as the late Rev Dr HA Junod recorded African histories. If they were, they chose not to mention it, because such negativism would cost them dearly in terms of employment opportunities and the concomitant promotions to senior ranks. Missionaries were educators, employers and officers proclaiming redundant posts. They would not take kindly of criticisms. This lauding of missionary efforts without due regard to their shortcomings repeated itself with regular monotony throughout the missionary era. For instance, Mr AE Mpapele falls into this trap in his obituary of the deceased Rev Dr HA Junod by describing him as a man of "an extra-ordinary mind and one that was not biased at all. He had to seek truth in all his researches" (Mpapele 1934:1).

Mpapele's description of the deceased missionary begs no category other than the one given by the researcher because in the same article, he (Mpapele) admits that he never met the Rev Dr HA Junod while he was still alive, but solely depended on the information he received from his former teacher and later the Rev I Mavanyisi, the son of Abraham Mavanyisi, who founded the Hutwen church at Makuleke. His other source of information included the books written by Junod himself and other authors who knew him (Mpapele 1934:1).

N'wandula seems to have a different view of Rev Dr HA Junod's personality from the one given by Mr Mpapele above. Nwandula sees the late Junod as a person who was

contradictory in his approach to native education. Contradictory in the sense that he would at times advocate for education that would give Africans and Europeans equal opportunities in terms of training and development. But his liberalistic posture would not remain constant. He never ceased emphasizing the importance of industrial instruction and manual training for Africans, while Europeans were encouraged to acquire education of a higher nature. Africans were viewed as cheap labour in the capitalist economic system. In one of his letters to the Rev WEC Clarke, Junod appeared to have discarded his liberalistic outfit, as he advocated for giving African boys and girls the training that would enable them to take their proper places in life when they left the school system. All he was in favour of was a differentiated system of education for natives (N'wandula 1987:25-26).

But what was the differentiated system of education? What was its value, if it did have any, for the African population? Prof Phillip V Tobias (1983:150) did shed some light about its manifestations or viewpoints when he said: "I want to counsel very strongly about the dangers of segregated education, whether segregation is compulsory (as in South Africa) or volitional. There is evidence both from the American and from the South African experience, that segregated education is unequal. The most obvious danger of the segregated system of education is that inferior universities would be provided for black students".

Differentiated education in South Africa strove for the indoctrination of viewing our history for blacks and whites in two separate ways. This education proposed servility as something that has been cut and dried for the indigenous populace by virtue of their low intellectual endowments. Evolution from this social rung could only occur through the acquisition of a modicum of formal education, that would lead to better social positions. For whites, history meant the study of the continued dominance of Europeans in the social transformation process. True to their paternalistic ways, Europeans still saw themselves as the liberators of the ignorant African masses from drunkenness, irrationality, savagery and tyranny, so that they could establish their own governments in their own territories.

Economic survival had to be based on Western culture patterns only. This analogy is especially relevant to the manner in which history was presented to black learners in this country, both by colonists and missionaries. For instance, what is it that a reader can make of the following narration? It was presented by the Swiss missionary Dr Georges Liengme as quoted in *The Christian Express* (later *The South African Outlook*, 1 December 1894:183): "Gungunyana's people are not free from the charge of cannibalism. Lately 10000 men and between 2000 and 3000 women and children in strange costumes went through the royal dance in the king's presence. Nothing could be more savage. Alas! Human sacrifices were not lacking. It is the custom on the last day for a young boy and girl to be killed. At night near sunset a young ox is brought by the people of the king's household into a tiny closed kraal. An eager fight is begun between them and the animal, which they must, without any weapon, simply by the strength of the arm, harass, throw down, disembowel, and kill. When they have dispatched the animal, they bring, wrapped in reeds, the bodies of the two children who have been sacrificed. The flesh of the victims is mingled with that of the animal. Then all the young boys are seized and brought, willingly or by force, into the kraal. Some of them escape unwilling to eat human flesh; others eagerly accept the invitation".

How far these stories were true is anybody's guess. But it should be noted that the cash-needy missionary societies had literary geniuses whose tasks included weaving stories and photographing their main targets to enable would-be sponsors to understand just how huge the tasks were that missionaries were shouldering in the "Dark Continent" (the African continent as fervently described by colonists and clerics). The story about King Nghunghunyana (see photographs 8 and 9) might have been concocted in the interest of religious expediency. An account by the Rev FA Cuendet, also of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, might shed some light in this regard: "The subject of this issue is the person of the Ngoni chief Gugunyane. It is not a very actual one, but it is nevertheless interesting from a historical point of view. In the first place because our Mission has been connected with this pontentate; and secondly because of the point of comparison it gives us, when we

consider what is the development of the Native people today. And it is in this last fact that we find something actual" (Ngoni is the correct appellation for the Xitsonga language, because Nguni is more inclined towards isiZulu and sister languages). (Rev FA Cuendet's Editorial Comment, in *The Tsonga Messenger* April-June 1951:11, cf Egli and Kraye 1996:46).

The most compelling force in the transformational endeavours of missionaries, it will be noted, was to get the African people to denounce their cultural heritage and national heroes who were seen as affronts to the dawn of Christianity and imperialism because of their rugged sense of patriotism. Yet it must not be deduced that this warped presentation of African history was an act confined to the missionary era. To do that is to miss the point, because history textbooks still in circulation in this country perpetuate this myth. They still reveal a high degree of omissions or misinformation. For instance, Davel DL et al, *History in Action* standard 6 (grade 8) (1986:97), describe Queen Mathatise of the Batlokwa tribe as being "of enormous stature with a single eye in the middle of her forehead, and some of her warriors were reputed to be cannibals"!

The biased manner in which history was presented as a school subject over the centuries places a heavy and yet an appreciable responsibility on objective white and black researchers to rewrite our national histories in a manner that will foster critical reasoning, and what is more, promote national unity and reconciliation, as well as socio-economic and political development. In this regard the Honourable Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma exhorts us all to strive for South Africa's Inclusive History (Deputy President J Zuma's "South Africa's Inclusive History" *Sowetan* Tuesday October 12 1999:8).

5.9 FORMAL EDUCATION VIS-A-VIS THE LAND QUESTION

Formal education cannot be dissociated from the land question. The schools whose teachers are responsible for giving instruction to learners are built on land. The learners need sufficient space for playing soccer, netball, rugby and many other games that are indispensable for their optimal development. All these things explain why land has for centuries been interwoven with formal education. The Swiss missionaries placed a high premium on land grants for the proper execution of their transformational tasks. They needed land for hospitals, churches and the cultivation of school and home gardens at educational institutions like Shirley Agricultural and Industrial Primary School, the mission stations and outstations (Phillips in a letter to the Secretary of Native Affairs, Dr DL Smit 23 September 1942, EW Lowe's letter on behalf of the Chief Native Commissioner Northern Areas 26 January 1940:1-2 directed to the Secretary for Native Affairs, Pretoria).

The agricultural training provided at the Swiss Mission schools, though lacking the scientific depth available to the European race, was nonetheless appreciable, because it introduced a new dimension in soil cultivation. They were familiarized with crop rotation, application of fertilizers to improve production, the marketing of agricultural produce, agricultural economics and accounting on a limited scale, and other innovations that were hitherto unknown in black circles. The quest to instil the love for tilling the soil stemmed from the missionaries' perception that the indigenous people were too lazy to do something worthwhile for themselves, and it was because of these facts that mass-starvation was prevalent. The visit by educationists like Dr CT Loram, the Advisor to the Union Government in matters pertaining to native education and that of Dr Jesse Jones, appeared to have whetted the appetite for the establishment of an Agricultural College for the Swiss Mission children in the 1920s, because the two believed that industrial labour was the panacea for the natives' socio-economic ills (Rev FA Cuendet's *Report ya Lemana* 1923-1924:1, cf Rev FA Cuendet's *Marungulo ya Šikolo ša Lemana* 1924-1925:1-2).

Rev FA Cuendet wrote several letters to Dr CT Loram reminding him of the pledge he had made during his visit to Spelonken, namely to support the Swiss Mission in its scheme of establishing an Agricultural College for Africans, particularly the Shangaans who were the church's main target group. The proposed school/college would be dependent on the Lemana Training Institution for educational expertise. Although the Rev Cuendet seemed to have a wide network of contacts, including a certain RW Thornton Esq, to whom he wrote a letter on 20 January 1930, in which he lamented: "Since you have been in Lemana in the middle of October last, we have heard nothing more about our plans to open a school of agriculture". It appears that the scheme never materialised (cf Rev FA Cuendet's letter to AS Thornton Esq, also of Pretoria 28th August 1929).

What the Mission secured for itself in the Elim area, next to comprehensive training in agriculture for Africans, was the appointment of an "agricultural demonstrator" - a person who would demonstrate methods that lead to successful agriculture. This acquisition, which came at short notice, was duly appreciated. Like the English say: "half a loaf is better than no bread" (Rev René Cuenod's letter to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones, SAIRR 21 February 1935).

The Swiss missionaries' relentless efforts to secure an agricultural college was continued and partly realised by the Rev René Cuenod who was anxious to grant Chief Muhlaba's request to have an agricultural college for his subjects at the Swiss Mission's Shiluvane Mission Station in the Tzaneen District. The Rev Bill was planning to build the school on unused farms belonging to Mr Britz of Politzi and Mr Beaton. The school would serve the interests of both Chief Muhlaba and Chief Maake of the Bakgakga tribe (Rev R Bill, letter to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones 19 August 1937). But the Rev Bill never got the agricultural college he had hoped for. So he extended the curriculum of the Shiluvane Primary School to include industrial courses (see sub-section 2.10.6 of this study).

The fact that the Rev Bill had to negotiate for the use of white-owned land indicates how far the colonial government had expropriated land through the Native Land Act of 1913 and 1936. Dr Motsoko Pheko views the Native Land Act of 1913 as an unfair piece of legislation aimed at disempowering Africans by "allocating only seven percent of the total land surface to Africans to starve in the 'Native Reserves' " (Pheko's "South Africa must not honour 'colonial wars,'" *Sowetan*, Wednesday 13 October 1999:10). But as if aware of its treachery, the state added a further six percent to make the total land allocation for Africans 13 percent. This allocation was still a far cry from satisfactory to the needs of Africans who constituted a majority of 80% of the population in South Africa (Pheko 1999:10).

Land hunger made a mockery of Swiss missionary attempts to impart agricultural skills to the native population because even if they were to acquire some agricultural skills, they would not be able to subsist on agriculture, because of the scarcity of farming land. Although the black elite in Valdezia and Elim owned some smallholdings and had title deeds to them, the same could not be said of the majority of black South Africans who had to make ends meet in the barren communal lands they occupied. They had to sell their labour to the capitalist farmers or industries in the towns and cities. This land hunger prompted Mr EA Tlakula to write an article entitled "When shall we own farms?" Mr Tlakula enunciated what many may consider a valid point when he said: "...settlement in the land in the days of changed conditions demands some right of ownership, and the question that arises therefore is, can we sufficiently earn our lives when we possess no land?" (Tlakula's "When shall we own farms?" *The Valdezia Bulletin*, draft article 4 July 1932:1-4).

Mr Tlakula was well aware of the racist laws that prevented blacks from owning large farms. He simply acquired a smallholding at Elim and advised those with enough capital to do so individually or collectively through the formation of companies. To him the purchase of land, no matter how small, was a sound investment, because money put in banks was susceptible to depreciation in value. Evictions from the so-called European farms could in

his view be avoided by buying smallholdings (Tlakula 1932:1-4). Mr AE Mpapele, who was the co-editor of *The Valdezia Bulletin* (later *The Light - Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga*) alongside Messrs Tlakula and DC Marivate, also supported the idea of buying smallholdings, for the same reasons as those advanced by Tlakula (Mpapele in *The Light - Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga* 1937:1-2).

Dr Jean van der Poel lambasted missionaries for creating the false hope that agriculture was the panacea for socio-economic ills. To him agricultural training or industrial training as it was at times called for the sake of inclusivity, had produced no notable results since it had been introduced in 1865 when an assessment was made in the 1930s regarding its efficacy. Differentiated education for blacks was in his view the cause of agriculture's failure to lift Africans from economic deprivation. Dr J van der Poel seemed to believe that the exposure of the indigenous populace to the same education system as that received by Europeans, coupled with the restoration of arable land, would enable them to shed their poverty, which in most cases was attributable to the greed of their European benefactors. This implies that agricultural and land reforms had to go hand in hand with the reconstruction of the mind-sets of those who were responsible for the social upliftment of the Africans, because genuine social transformation depended on the goodwill and the selfless way in which the givers (propertied benefactors) helped their charges actualise themselves (Van der Poel 1934:15-22).

5.10 AFRICANS' OPINION REGARDING SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The writings of the African elite in newspapers and magazines suggest that they viewed formal schooling as the key to social transformation. Africans who realised how far modernization had submerged traditional customs, encouraged their kith and kin to co-operate with missionaries so that they could survive in the dominant capitalist economic system and the new world that it brought in its wake. Traditional customs like early marriages, polygamy, traditional dances, heavy drinking of native beer resulting in habitual

drunkenness, among other practices, were considered as elements that had to be obviated by all who yearned for social advancement. For instance, Mr Paul Edison Hlaise appealed to Shangaan parents to outgrow and relinquish their age-old way of life of urging their children to start working and to marry at an early stage. They should rather encourage them "to undergo training as agriculturists, builders, and carpenters, and also pursue higher professions such as doctors of science, of medicine and of Divinity, so they could render maximum service to the Vatsonga, and by extension, the nation as a whole (Hlaise, in *The Light - Ku vonakala ka Vatsonga* [formerly *The Valdezia Bulletin*] 1936:3). Mr Hlaise cited Afro-American doctors like Booker T Washington and Morton who got married at the ages of 30 and 35 respectively, as people whose behaviour had to be emulated. But what Mr Hlaise seemed to be oblivious of in his encouragement of his fellow Africans to strive for higher education, was the fact that the doors of learning remained closed to Africans in the noble professions he was citing, namely, science and medicine. The state's rejection of a donation amounting to £65 000 from the Rockefeller Foundation towards the erection of a Native Medical School was indicative of the state's diseducation campaigns during the period under review (Van der Poel 1934:22).

5.11 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Missionaries across denominational boundaries used schools as principal instruments for bringing about social transformation in this country before the state abandoned its laissez-faire policy with regard to the provision of (native) education. Schools taught reading and writing, that was so indispensable in the expansion of mission work, and the production of a workforce that would be in tune with missionary aspirations. Along with schools, there were churches and hospitals, health centres and/or clinics, depending on the means at the disposal of missions, that assisted or complemented the work done at schools to promote social transformation through the provision of education that was based on the mission statutes, and to a limited degree the colonial government's needs.

Missionaries dissuaded Africans attending their schools from indulging in politics with the view to produce citizens who would be pliable and subservient to the needs of both the churches and the imperial government(s). Among other things, churches would ensure that Christians would be removed from the cauldron of heathenism to go and live at the mission stations where the cool breeze of Christianity prevailed, so that they might stay on course and not revert to paganism (Mabyalani's sermon entitled "Muti wa Vakriste" (Xitasi) 11 May 1949). But missionary operations usually produced the direct opposite of pliable and subservient people of the church and the colonial government. The rigid and controversial mission statutes, backed up by the equally repressive government laws, fanned the fires of political activism at institutions like Lemana Training College. Thus from 1913 up to and including 1946, and most likely beyond, Lemana's student population would no longer suffer in silence. They revealed missionary excesses, called for decision making in the running of their college and the improvement of living conditions. This small scale political ferment, especially in the years 1913 to 1946, led to greater political maturity which the late Rev DC Marivate later addressed in these concluding remarks of chapter 5. Part of the elements that led to the reawakening of the student population, was the paternalism and hypocrisy of missionaries who failed to present themselves as irreproachable role models. Here the researcher is addressing allegations of sodomy, factionalism, mudslinging, the shirking of educational responsibilities and the retrenchment of staff-members as a means of enforcing authority. All these left the students with no role models worthy of emulating, but merely to live by the dictates of their peers (W Endemann's letter 13 December 1955, cf anonymous letter to Mr JC Johns, Inspector of Education 25 June 1923 about Mr SB Fleming's alleged immoral acts).

Despite these mishaps, Lemana Training Institution continued exercising her transformative role among the indigenous populace, preparing them for the demands of life. Her sterling work in the sphere of social transformation did not pass unnoticed by all those who went through her lecture halls. It is gratifying to note that some of the ex-graduates of Lemana Training Institution went on to make their mark on both the

international and local scene. The late Rev DC Marivate reminds us of the illustrious deeds of Lemana and her graduates in the face of colonial domination and repressive legislation when he says the following: "I am one of those who kicked. Today we stand shoulder to shoulder with the other Bantu tribes. We have our own Prime Ministers and our other ministers. All of them or nearly all of them are products of the Swiss Mission in South Africa. What about Mozambique, who do you think was instrumental in bringing about the freedom that our brothers and sisters enjoy today? Mondlani! A product of the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (Swiss Mission in South Africa). He was against bloodshed. He did not want war. But his ideas triumphed" (Rev DC Marivate in an address entitled "To the study group meeting at Elim Hospital" 15 July 1975:IV).

A closer look at Swiss Mission education reveals that it was not free from hypocrisy, because tendencies like imperialism, bias, racism, tribalism, divide and rule, and separatism still prevailed. Marivate's reference to "our own Prime Ministers and other ministers" is characteristic of the racist policies of successive governments in this country that wanted to force the indigenous populace to develop along ethnic lines. It should be noted that although some blacks opposed these racist tendencies that were supported by the majority of missionaries, there were many who got entangled in the political web that had been so meticulously laid by the state, and they served in the structures that were created. The Swiss Mission's change of name to Tsonga Presbyterian Church (as if the church was exclusively meant for the Shangaan/Tsonga people, even though it had many members from other ethnic groupings), is testimony to its support of racist policies. If not, the researcher is yet to be provided with a convincing explanation.

Missionaries played a very significant role in modernizing and developing Africa, but there are certain things they should have done with more care, such as refraining from wiping out African cultures. Culture is the life and soul of a people, their source of pride and means of identification in the midst of other peoples. While culture cannot remain static forever, other cultures should not take advantage of it and force it into extinction. Cultures should

try to benefit by borrowing from one another. It is logical that lesser cultures will adopt more elements from the super- or dominant cultures than vice-versa, but they should still always strive to retain their individuality. Missionaries of various denominations defied these norms by trying to induce Africans to despise their cultural heritage as heathenistic, lowly and barbaric, and wanted to convince them that it should be abandoned completely in exchange for the European, and especially the Christian cultural realm. This Europeanization process, it must be noted, only served to turn Africans into caricatures in their attempts to emulate the European cultures (Casely-Hayford in Berman 1975:31, Adjaye in Berman 1975:31. Cf Pienaar 1990:118, Tutu in Villa-Vicencio 1988:56).

CHAPTER 6

THE SWISS MISSIONARY INFLUENCE IN THE PROVISION OF HEALTH CARE AND NURSING

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between formal schooling and the health services is not immediately perceptible. Yet a closer look at the operations of the missionaries of different denominations who did duty in this country during the colonial era will reveal that schools, churches and hospitals worked in unison in promoting social transformation in South Africa. Their *modus operandi* differed slightly, but their principles, aims and objectives were basically the same. The objective of the three institutions, namely the church, the schools and the hospitals, was to combat heathenism in all its various manifestations, so that South Africa could become a highly-developed country, adhering to Christian norms and values. Accordingly, the disruption of the harmonious working relationship among churches, schools and hospitals would seriously undermine social transformation. The grip that the *tin'anga* (traditional healers) had on the indigenous populace was envied by missionaries and seen as an affront to Christianity. All superstitious notions embedded in the minds of the indigenous populace therefore had to be annihilated by the combined strengths of clerics spread over different denominations, and in due time by their Christian converts as well. For their part, the *tin'anga* were held in high esteem within their own communities and were seen as people endowed with supernatural powers who could drive out malicious forces from villages by using their *mirhi* or *mifututu* (magical herbs). The expert knowledge of traditional healers was invoked when warriors went on military expeditions. Any army that would venture forth into the enemy camp with spears or bodies that had not been smeared or sprayed with *muti* (*murhi*) was thought to be endangering the lives of the entire regiment. Describing the magical powers of the *tin'anga*, Gelfand has the following to say: "they could suck pieces of bones, skins of animals, ashes, goats dung et cetera out of the bodies of the sick" (Gelfand 1984:32-37).

6.2 THE ROLE OF HOSPITALS IN THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS — AN ATTEMPT TO RID SOCIETY OF SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES THROUGH FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE SCRIPTURES

Although mission hospitals were not primarily established to serve as conversion centres, they had a very big influence in this vital task. It was difficult for the missionary doctors and nurses just to tend to the symptoms of the sick without doing anything further for their continued well-being. They felt that they had to explain to these people what the causes of their diseases could be, and what preventive measures should be taken, as well as to start to educate them by indicating and demonstrating that traditional medical practices were actually exacerbating the prevalence of their diseases and suffering. It is mainly in these instances where hospitals doubled up in their activities, and literally usurped the role of churches, to wit, conversion. Day-patients and in-patients in the hospitals were fed with the same propaganda, namely the abundance of life that Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour provides to all who believe in Him. Part of the strategy used to good effect by doctors and nurses to recruit members was being empathic, sociable, caring, courteous and selfless in their interaction with patients (Liengme 1906:64).

6.3 MEDICAL AIMS AND METHODS OF THE SWISS MISSIONARIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Georges Liengme, the pioneer missionary doctor from Switzerland, described the hospital's task as an act of mercy and evangelization, but also as a place of education for the natives in order to make them happier and more useful (Liengme 1906:78). Dr Liengme could have gone further to include the European race which in terms of his book was not excluded from the services rendered by his church. Evidence reveal that even before his arrival, Europeans were being treated by the Revs Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud who had received rudimentary training at Edinburgh University, Scotland. They also received counselling around the abuse of liquor and the hazards thereof (Creux, in *Nyeleti ya Mišo*

(*The Morning Star*) February 1924:4 & March 1924:1). Liengme aptly described the role of Elim Hospital as "to sympathise with the pain of those who suffer, to have consideration one for the other" (Liengme 1906:65). Next to giving charity to both the white and black patients, the quest of the missionaries was to inspire them to have a rational means of healing, as well as to shy away from superstitions and sin. All patients had to seek the light that only Jesus Christ could provide in times of joy or sorrow. Historical evidence further reveals that there was no hospital north of Pretoria up to Zimbabwe, and all the sick had to be treated at Elim Hospital, and before its founding, at the "Old Mill Health Centre". With no doctors in this vast territory, it is certainly no wild assertion to mention that both whites and blacks in the region might have resorted to the use of medicinal herbs to cure diseases (Jaques and Fehrsen undated).

6.4 ATTEMPTS TO CLARIFY EUROPEANS' ALLEGATIONS THAT AFRICANS WERE THE ONLY PERSONS WALLOWING IN SUPERSTITION AT THE TIME WHEN MISSIONARIES ENTERED THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF AFRICA

Missionary writings mainly painted a gloomy picture of the behavioural patterns of native Africans during the scramble for the evangelization of the indigenous populace, but this researcher will prove the contrary, and reveal the bright side of their culture with the aid of the writings of some clerics. The missionaries sometimes concentrated on the speck of sawdust perched in a brother's eye, while paying no attention to the planks in their own eyes. They were saying to them "brother, let us take the speck out of your eye", but they did neither notice nor admit that they had planks in their own eyes (The Holy Bible New International Version Matthew 7:3-5).

The Rev Paul Fatton of the Swiss mission in South Africa was one of the exceptional clerics who refrained from adopting a "holier than thou" attitude when assessing the behavioural patterns of Africans. He maintained that Africans were, contrary to missionary

writings, highly religious at the time when Christianity was first introduced on this continent. Africans were in his view not inclined to do anything without asking for the blessings of their ancestral spirits, and then especially also of the Almighty (God) whom they conceived to be the Provider of everything. They may have been wrong in concluding that God once dwelled in the same household with his children, only to move away to the sky or some secluded place, because of the disobedience of his offspring. Rev Fatton admits that missionaries hesitated talking to the majority of whites in Europe and America about Christianity because of the prevalence of atheists, and what was even worse, indifferent people. But as for Africans, indifference only crept in when civilization was introduced by missionaries and colonists. Before this, all Africans were believers, with no sign of atheism among any of them. They were all worshippers who offered prayers to their ancestral spirits and the Supreme God. Their religion consisted of the very essence of good manners and customs, and was part of a culture of friendly relationships in their tribal and private behaviour (Fatton 1932:58-59).

It should be noted that the Rev Fatton was not alone in exposing the hypocrisy of missionaries with regard to the African Religion. In a separate study conducted by the Rev SS Dorman (denomination unspecified) in the 1920s, in which he compared European with African religion, he came to the same conclusion, namely that most Europeans were paganistic by the 1920s. According to the Rev Dorman education was going to take long to eradicate superstitious notions in whites who continued to practice witchcraft, sniff out witches, use irrational ways of treating diseases, and banishing or burning people suspected of practising witchcraft. But Dorman noted that both the Europeans and Africans were fearful of malevolent forces against which they would fortify themselves by seeking the expertise of witchdoctors who had undergone the necessary training and had extensive knowledge of the medicinal properties of plants that could be used to cure diseases. Witch doctors were also approached to ward off malevolent witches or wizards (*valoyi*). Experts who had the ability to cause diseases or misfortune such as crop-failure or even death, were

undesirable outcasts who had to be banished from society, or in Europe, even lynched (hanged without a trial) (Dorman 1925:5).

In South Africa, or to be specific, the northern region of South Africa, it is only recently that the burning of witches (*valoyi*) has become a noticeable phenomenon. For instance, Mr July Hanyani Ximitanhlolo Mphahlela Chauke of N'waxinyamani Village, Northern Province, was burnt beyond recognition on 10 August 1997 by rampaging youths who accused him of causing a spate of deaths within his household and close family. In South Africa the killing of people by burning, or to use the popular terminology, "necklacing", was common at the height of the anti-apartheid struggle. People who were identified as police-informers were made to wear car tyres around their necks, the tyres would be filled with petrol, spilling over onto them, and they would be set alight to die a horrible death. In search of more victims after the defeat of the apartheid system, the youths turned to the so-called wizards or witches as their new targets (The Commission on Gender Equality's mouthpiece entitled *Imbhokodo*, "Witch hunts haunt Northern Province" 27 March 1998).

Dorman (1925:5), does not question the effectiveness of African herbs when they are used by trained experts, but it becomes dangerous when there is a lack of scientific determination of the strengths of prescribed medicine, because that could aggravate existing ailments, or cause fatalities. Such lack of outright condemnation of the medicinal expertise of the African doctors (traditional healers) goes a long way to prove that the latter could have excelled in the treatment of certain diseases, especially when we consider the fact that missionary doctors were newcomers to the continent, and consequently had to conduct extensive modern scientific research before they could discover their own effective cures for such diseases.

6.5 EDUCATION FOR THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN THE SWISS MISSION FIELDS

Mr KG Cameron as quoted in Gelfand (1984:20) is of the opinion that the missionaries' principal task in the mission fields was to spread the Gospel with the aim to convert the heathens to Christ's Church. The hospital personnel attached to the mission hospitals also had to ensure that the Word of God reached the patients that were admitted to these life-saving centres.

Rev Beatrice Ernst of the Swiss Mission in South Africa saw mission education also as the provision of opportunities for illiterate women to enter into Christian fellowships, and to render assistance to people who were less privileged, both in rural areas and urban centres. In the urban areas these women took up some normal kind of employment to supplement their husbands' wages, and then as part of their Christian duties, they still had to find time to care for orphans, visit hospitals to care for the sick and offer prayers to them, while in the meantime they themselves were being educated by learning to read and write. Women improved their level of education with the aim to become professionals in their own right, and progress up the social ladder. But Christian women had to abide by the laws governing the Swiss Mission's Women's Associations, such as not drinking or brewing beer or helping in its distribution. They had to participate in all the activities of the church, and always with special emphasis on caring for the sick in hospitals. Their educational activities included knitting, sewing and doing all the other industrial courses for the glory of the Lord. Women also played an important role in redirecting the lives of those serving terms in prisons (Ernst's "Some aspects of work among native women" *The Tsonga Messenger*, May-December 1953:25-27).

6.6 THE ORIGIN OF THE NURSING SERVICE IN THE SWISS MISSION FIELDS

Primary health care started in accompaniment with the provision of medical care as soon as the Revs Paul Berthoud and Ernest Creux had settled in Valdezia in 1875. As the missionaries were attending to the sick, the female European missionaries assisted them in providing health care, and nursing the patients. These women would act as optometrists, wound-dressers and dispensers of medicine. The consistent increase in the number of patients after the founding of Elim Hospital in 1899, made it difficult for the wives of missionaries and unmarried female assistants to cope with the inflow of patients. There was as yet no desire in Swiss missionary circles to recruit African girls to undergo training, because the indigenous populace was thought to be intellectually not gifted enough to handle the scientific intricacies that were involved. Consequently, the missionaries thought it unwise to draw African women into this medical sphere, because it would be too hazardous to their patients. The first Swiss missionary doctor in the person of Georges Liengme had presumably stuck to the type of nurses that were used by his predecessor at the Old Mill, Rev Ernest Creux, who had been based at Elim since the establishment of the Elim Mission Station in 1879 (Cuendet 1950:61, *Elim Hospital annual report*, 1 April 1968 to 31 March 1969).

6.7 THE TRAINING OF AFRICAN NURSES AT ELIM HOSPITAL

6.7.1 Introduction

It has already been remarked that the Swiss Missionaries believed that Africans lacked the intellectual capacity or potential required for a medical career, or to do a nursing course, and so the training of African girls at Elim Hospital was left in abeyance until 1932. It was not only the missionaries who didn't have confidence in the indigenous learners' potential to succeed in the medical world. The ruling oligarchy surprisingly followed suit when they

turned down the Rockefeller Foundation's offer of a donation of £65 000 earmarked for the establishment of a native medical school (van der Poel 1934:22). The Ministry of Education (almost incredibly) refused to accept the sponsorship, because they thought it could possibly interfere with the domestic affairs of the Union. This was their sole reason for not accepting this enormous foreign funding. But according to Mr SC Marivate, the reason why native education was not improved during the historical epoch under review, is that black education (especially in the medical sphere) had to be left as it was until such time as a better system that was more suited for their brain capacity and their needs could be formulated (Marivate in *The Valdezia Bulletin*, November 1935:2)

Marivate was prophetically accurate in his postulation that these controversial policies that were formulated by state officials were the cause of social alienation in black circles, and that reconciliation would be unachievable for as long as Europeans scorned the mentality and intellectual potential of black people.

6.7.2 The condition of native education vis-a-vis economic realities in the country

In Marivate's view, shared by this researcher and countless others, native education as it stood then, was at variance with economic realities in the country. Marivate's words in this regard are still relevant: "White and black are destined to live side by side in this country. One is dependent on the other. Why then should they be educated differently? How can they be educated on different lines, and live in harmony? Such a system shall only increase the ill-feeling between the two races" (Marivate 1935:2).

It is puzzling to note that while the Swiss Mission in South Africa was not at ease with the idea of training nurses drawn from the African community, the Free Church of Scotland had for a long time already been moving in this direction with their proselytes. Cecilia Makiwane had been put on the programme in 1903 at the Victoria Hospital in Lovedale in the eastern Cape, and by 1908 she was the first black nurse to be placed on the register of

the Colonial Medical Council. Dr Neil Macvicar succeeded where most of his peers or contemporaries feared to tread, because he did not subscribe to the view that "blacks were incapable of assimilating any form of higher education" (Gelfand 1984:142, 44-75, 275-276).

6.7.3 The commencement of training courses in nursing at Elim Hospital (1932)

When Drs JA Rosset and Odette Rosset-Bedez arrived at Elim Hospital in 1933, the training course in nursing had already been inaugurated the previous year. The two however added a new dimension to this nursing course that was destined to grow under their tutelage for many years. Dr Jean Alfred Rosset (see photograph 20) was the superintendent of the hospital, and his tenure was characterized by rapid development in the administrative, medical, nursing and educational spheres. As far as the provision of physical resources was concerned, a number of buildings and much equipment were added during his term of office. The erstwhile Transvaal Provincial Administration introduced the grants-in-aid scheme, according to which state funding had to flow into hospitals in corrolation with the number of African patients admitted free of charge. This innovaeion saw to the rapid increase in the number of African patients being consulted at Elim Hospital, as can be seen in the following statistics:

TABLE E

YEAR	AFRICAN PATIENTS	EUROPEAN PATIENTS	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
1901	178	87	Gelfand 1984:142
1905	431	164	Georges Liengme 1906:69-70
1968	14 121	281	Gelfand 1984:142

6.7.4 Medical care for patients with eye diseases at Elim Hospital

Next to tuberculosis and syphilis, diseases resulting in blindness were the most troublesome in the country at the time. The Union Government spent massive sums of money in its efforts to cure these diseases. Both the state and mission hospitals were called upon to help stem the tide by trying to find cures for these debilitating diseases. Educational programmes such as teaching people hygienic procedures like general cleanliness and avoiding coming into contact with filth, helping them to understand and overcome malnutrition, urging them to discontinue superstitious practices, and aiding them to improve their poor housing conditions, were some of the strategies that were applied to combat the causes of these diseases. An ophthalmic hospital was built at Elim to help "those who stumble in the dark" to quote the words of Dr William Nicol, the Transvaal provincial administrator, in his inaugural speech in 1949. Dr Odette Rosset-Bedez, who was an eye specialist, was in charge of the new ophthalmic hospital (*The South African Outlook*, 1 July 1949:98, cf Cuendet's "Historical sketch on medical work in the Swiss Mission" in *The Tsonga Messenger*, April-June 1950:11-13).

Dr O Rosset-Bedez had twelve to thirteen assistants under her supervision and did outstanding work in improving or sometimes completely restoring people's eyesight. The training of ophthalmic nurses to serve at the Swiss Mission owed its origins to these humble beginnings (Cuendet 1950:13, Gelfand 1984:142).

6.7.5 The "need" for separation between black and white patients at hospitals and educational institutions

There seems to be no valid reason why the indigenous populace had to be separated from Europeans other than racism. European patients that were admitted to hospitals perceived Africans to be so backward as to cause discomfort of an unimaginable scale when placed in the same wards as the civilized whites. The mission authorities seemingly acquiesced to

this state of affairs, because it was mainly the revenue of European patients that was sustaining their hospital. The most apparent reason for whites' refusal to mix with the indigenous populace was "the customs, the filthiness and the social habits of the blacks... (which was) an alarming question, not only for the native population, but for the white families who all have native servants in their service, either to look after their children or for various household chores" (Liengme 1906:64, cf Gelfand 1984:230).

As to the exclusion of Africans from European educational institutions, the missionaries felt that it would be suicidal for the intellectually deprived natives to be placed in the same class as the intellectually gifted Europeans. The differentiated system of education was seen as the best option, because it would save the indigenous learners from mental strain that could possibly be accompanied by consequences too ghastly to contemplate. The Rev Samuel Jaques put the Swiss missionary educational policy in no uncertain terms when he said: "Shall we leave the young native, who is easily dazzled by European education, but has yet little judgement, to be educated in a secular atmosphere? The experience of European countries is there to show in practice that secular education has often — if not always — proved to be the same as 'anti-Christian'. This experience has been costly enough, and disastrous enough, in the northern hemisphere, not to be repeated here" (Jaques' "Education: a good or bad thing?" in *The Tsonga Messenger*, January-March 1951:4).

6.7.6 The aims and objectives of the nursing-course training programme

Swiss nursing education was grounded on the following aims and objectives:

- (a) to produce African nurses who would be able to help the Swiss missionary nurses to cope with the increasing demand for nursing care at the Swiss hospitals, to wit, Elim, Shiluvane (Douglas Smit Hospital) and Masana

- (b) to produce a workforce of qualified black nurses that would not only serve the African communities, but would be excellent role models to the conservatives among them who were loath to give up their traditions, and maybe most importantly, to fully qualify themselves to be ready and able to take over the reins in the nursing realm and reign in their own cultural domain among their own people once the Swiss nurses' contracts expired, and they would have to return to their own country
- (c) to produce a workforce that was familiar with the cultural stereotypes of the people and persuade the hardliners to forego traditional customs
- (d) to have a Westernized nursing staff that would serve as transparencies for notions of diligence and industriousness. Courses in industry would ensure the production of exemplary role models. Dr George Liengme, the founder of Elim Hospital, saw work as "the basis of all serious development to teach the black to be useful. Through many outside works, such as building and housekeeping, we are exercising a constant and beneficial influence on the natives. We are trying to instil in them the habit of regular work, of cleanliness, while at the same time communicating a new energy, new ideas with moral and religious notions" (Dr Georges Liengme 1906:79, cf Egli and Krayner 1996:26-27).

6.7.7 The first group of student nurses to enrol for the nursing course at Elim Hospital

According to Egli and Krayner (1996:28) the Elim Nursing College started with six students who had been encouraged by missionaries and teachers to take up this career. To get recruits during those years was no simple task because cultural stereotypes dictated that caring for the sick was a task to be undertaken only by grey-haired women. They were the midwives who normally assisted with the delivery of babies. According to traditional lore,

young girls who touched blood or nursed sick people would have misfortunes later in life, possibly in the form of bearing still-born babies (Egli and Krayner 1996:29). All the initial problems were eventually overcome, and the program got off to a fine start. These problems included the following:

- (1) The communities' negative view of nursing education.
- (2) The missionaries' lack of proficiency in English, which was the language that they were going to use as the medium of instruction at the college.
- (3) Strict instructions to the medical superintendent to cut down on expenses — something that would unavoidably affect the training of the nurses.

This commencement of the training program for nurses fulfilled the ambitions that had been long held by Dr Max JA des Ligneris to train African nurses, an ambition that ran on the rocks during the middle of the 1920s. Swiss missionary nurses volunteering to serve at the mission hospitals had to go to England for a course of training in English before they could start work at the hospitals of their choice (Egli and Krayner 1996:25-28).

6.7.8 The performance of student nurses in the examinations set by the South African Nursing Council

(a) Introduction

At the beginning, the performance of student nurses in the Nursing Council examinations left much to be desired. The *Elim Hospital Annual Report* (1951:4) illustrates the position as it was then: "The results of the examinations attempted during this year have not been very satisfactory. For the preliminary examination, 16 candidates out of 21 managed to get through, but in the final examination only one out of ten passed". These poor performances confirmed the commonly held perception by Europeans that blacks were failures in the scientific domain. This perception was so strong that the Nursing Council was

contemplating excluding Africans from its examinations. The situation was so serious that the Pietersburg Hospital, where similar problems were occurring with students, was no longer enrolling African female trainees for these examinations, and it seemed that nothing could prevent the Nursing Council from carrying out its threats.

(b) An attempt at explaining the reasons for the high failure rate.

The reasons for the high failure rate in the nursing examinations are not immediately perceptible. Part of the blame might be placed on the lecturing staff's lack of proficiency in the English language, the medium of instruction at the College. If the teachers had problems in expressing themselves in the language by means of which subject matter was delivered, one could hardly expect the learners to do better. There was a lack of communication. Learners had no "delivery van" (language) to transport the "goods" (factual information) to the examiners, and they fell by the wayside (cf 6.7.7 above). The requirement of standard 8 (grade 10) that was expected of student nurses who wanted to enter for the nursing course, was a noble idea outwardly, but it did not solve anything on the practical side, because the learners were still up against teachers who were mostly not proficient in the English language. Even if the authorities were to raise the entry requirements for the nursing course to standard 10 (grade 12), the Swiss Mission in South Africa would still find it difficult to secure the services of English educators. All of this meant that the Swiss Mission had to offer attractive contracts to teachers from England, and also broaden the system to ensure that learners who wanted to enrol at the Nursing College, arrived there with the necessary aptitude for mathematics and physical science that they had derived from their studies in secondary schools. All the hullabaloo about black learners lacking mathematical and scientific competence that was indispensable for success in the nursing profession was not helpful to the process of social transformation, and should have been replaced by a policy bent on teaching mathematics, physical science and other ancillary subjects to black learners (*Elim Hospital Annual Report* for 1952:4, cf Egli and Krayner 1996:31).

Nursing consists of both theory and practice. It calls for the availability of reading matter, especially that of a scientific nature such as biology, physical science and mathematics, and familiarity with experimentation which may be equated to practice (learning by doing) within the laboratories or even hospital wards. It seems that Elim Hospital lacked a library that was well stocked with books to increase the knowledge base of student nurses. It was only in the late sixties that they started to build a library, as could be discerned from the following statement: "The first phase of a project to increase the recreational facilities for our nurses has been the establishment of a lending and reference library. This now consists of some 100 books on professional subjects and approximately 120 works of fiction and non-fiction" (Elim Hospital's 73rd *Annual Report* for the period 1 April 1968 to 31 March 1969:9). One can mention several factors that contributed to students' failure in the South African Nursing Council examinations, but space does not allow to do that here. Having said this, it might be illuminating to avail readers with statistical data extracted from the Annual Reports of Elim Hospital by means of the table below:

TABLE F

ACADEMIC YEAR	TOTAL INTAKE	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES	NUMBER OF PASSES	% PASS	NUMBER OF FAILURES	% FAIL
1950	45	8	5	62,5	3	37,5
1951	21	21	16	76,2	5	23,8
1952	37	9	9	100	—	—
1953	51	7	7	100	—	—
1954	53	7	7	100	—	—
1957	65	18	17	94,4	1	5,6
1958	80	22	21	95,5	1	4,5
1959	20	20	20	100	—	—
1960	90	17	12	70,6	5	29,4
1961	24	24	16	66,7	8	33,3
1962	19	19	14	73,7	5	26,3
1963	8	8	7	87,5	1	12,5
1964	15	15	13	86,7	2	13,3

The above statistics were drawn from Annual Reports of Elim Hospital for the years reflected under sections marked nursing activities. They do not include the other Swiss Mission hospitals of Shiluvane (1943) and Masana (1944) (Gelfand 1984:231-233) whose statistics the researcher was not able to lay his hands on. During Elim Nursing College's infancy, there seems to have been contentment with the Hospital Certificate issued by the Mission authorities, which was obtained by five of the six students who started with the college in 1932 (Egli and Krayner 1996:30). The seventh student who was the only Tsonga-speaker, was dismissed after her first year of study because of insubordination (Egli and Krayner 1996:29). The reason why this researcher thinks student nurses appeared to be satisfied with the Hospital Certificate and fearful of the Council examinations, stems from the fact that very few candidates (officially known as nurse probationers) had the courage to enrol for the examinations which would ensure registration with the SANC. Readers need to look at entries for the years 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1957, 1958, and 1960 to understand what this researcher is talking about. But judging from the statistical data above, one may say that Elim Hospital adjusted well to the demands of the SANC examinations, because the pass rate at the college (Nursing School) was 60% on the average. Of course the number of entries for the SANC examinations may not be meaningful unless they are subtracted from the total intake to find out how many students felt that they were not ready for the SANC examinations. But the possibility exists that many a student might have liked to enter for the SANC examinations, but was somehow prevented from doing so due to the gate-keeping mechanisms practised by missionaries. Missionaries were known to be very cautious and strict in their selection of candidates for the nursing and teachers' courses. There was always some reason for that. Part of it was that Africans had to be under supervision lest they go astray if they went on their own. Another reason was that though mission hospitals enjoyed some autonomy in the running of their nursing colleges, they had to administer their courses in accordance with the policies of the South African Nursing Council. For instance, in the 1940s and 1950s, the SANC made some scathing remarks about conditions at Elim Hospital which no balanced person would overlook. The conditions that were revealed through these accusations included the lack of

discipline and proper supervision over student nurses on night duty, who were also expected to assist in child deliveries. Overcrowded conditions also resulted in the accumulation of dirt, and there were only six toothbrushes per ward, which had to be shared by all patients after being rinsed in Dettol in the name of hygiene. These appalling conditions led to the relegation of Elim Hospital to the status of a second-class training institution. This meant that their trainees had to spend an extra year before being capped in contrast to first-class training institutions. Matron Gabrielle Guye had to spend much time attending to these damning remarks made by Inspectress MG Borchard of the SANC before the Council agreed to reinstate Elim Hospital to its original first-class status in 1952 (Egli and Krayner 1996:75-79. For "The stringent Elim Hospital nursing college code of conduct" read Egli and Krayner 1996:66-67).

6.7.9 Staff development to meet the needs of patients who were increasingly fascinated by Western medicine and nursing care

(a) Introduction

It is interesting to note that by the 1950s, management at Elim Hospital had outgrown some of its racist outlooks, and granted black nurses some measure of responsibility. This was surprising seeing that this was the era of institutionalised apartheid. But the authorities always had their reasons for this kind of paradigm-shift. Dr JA Rosset, who was the Superintendent of Elim Hospital at the time, maintained that the shift in policy was desirable "to relieve the shortage of sisters" (Rosset's *Elim Hospital Annual Report* 1 April 1958 to 31 March 1959). He hoped that the three "Bantu" Staff Nurses promoted to the full status of Sisters would be inspired by the gesture and would even prove that they were worthy of the trust that had been placed in them and in this way encourage management to appoint more and more "Bantu" sisters (Dr JA Rosset, Elim Hospital's 63rd Annual Report, 1 April 1958 to 31 March 1959).

(b) The in-service training programme, and promotion of nurses

From a face-to-face interview with retired Matron Mavila Kwaiman (Hlungwani) at her house in Waterval on 10 December 1999, it emerged that the three African nurses who were promoted to the rank of Sister, were Sheila Moila, Emelina Mkhabele, and herself. This event occurred on 25 February 1959. There is no doubt that this was a joyous occasion for her and her two colleagues who received their training together on the basis of the Junior Certificate (JC) with effect from 1950. Other nurses that were trained there and whose names she could still recall, were Annah Masekela, Rachel Radebe, Charlotte Mtebule (nee Chihau) and Emy (Emily) Baloyi (Researcher's face-to-face interview with retired Matron Kwaiman of Elim Hospital, Waterval Township, 10 December 1999. Information served as a supplement to the questionnaire completed by her in April 1999).

The nurses to whom confidence was shown by the authorities of Elim Hospital, lived up to the expectations of their benefactors. They epitomised Christian norms and values and ensured the transplantation thereof to their charges in the interest of social transformation. The zeal and fire-power of professionals like Mavila Kwaiman against paganism still lives on, fanned by their regular presence in church within the constituencies of Elim, Waterval, Valdezia and Mambedi.

Social transformation is sustained by staff development and capacity building. Without well-oiled in-service training programs, social transformation can hardly yield the results that society yearns for. Elim Hospital and her sister hospitals unveiled training programs geared towards meeting the needs of patients suffering from various diseases, as can be seen in following table:

TABLE G

NAME AND RANK OF NURSE	NEW QUALIFICATION PURSUED	SOURCE OF INFORMATION
Sister J Rambau	Due for training in Psychiatry (Mafikeng)	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1970-1971:8
Sister Rachel Tlakula	Selected for Diploma in Nursing Education — Durban. (Information received from Mr JHM Khosa on 4 December 1999 revealed that Ms Rachel Tlakula has obtained her Doctorate)	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1970-1971:8, cf report for 1973-74:12, indicating her successful completion of the course and secondment to the teaching post at the Nursing College
Sister L Baloyi (N'wa-Marhule)	Left for post-basic course in Ophthalmic nursing	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1971-1972:8, cf report for 1972-73:9 indicating her successful completion of the course
Sister L Baloyi (N'wa-Marhule)	Enrolled for diploma in Hospital Administration at UNIN-Turfloop	Elim Annual Report 1 April 1975 to 31 March 1976:14
Sister Rebecca Maboko (Tutor of nursing assistants)	Study leave for Diploma in clinical care, administration and instruction — Edendale Hospital	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1973-1974:12 by Acting Matron Mavila Kwaiman, cf report on nursing activities by Matron Gabrielle Guye for 1974-75:14 where it indicates her success in the examinations
Sister Mavila Kwaiman (Sister Tutor and Acting Matron)	Study leave for post-basic course, Diploma in Hospital Administration, 18 months — Kalafong Pretoria	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1974-1975:14, interview with the researcher — 10 December 1999

Sister Emily Tshabalala	Enrolled for National Diploma in Public Health Nursing — Garankuwa, Pretoria	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1975 :14, cf report for 1975-1976:14 indicating her success
Sister ECN Masingi (At the time of her death on 22 July 1999 she was Matron of Elim Hospital)	National Diploma in Public Health Nursing — Mmadikoti Technikon, Seshego Diploma in Nursing Administration — University of the North (1979) BA — University of Venda (1988) BA (Nursing Science) — Unisa (1995)	Funeral programme of the late Edna Cynthia Nkhensani Masingi — Gezani Funeral Services Giyani do.
Sister Muriel Miyen (Mrs Muriel Kganakga)	Enrolled for Paediatric Nursing — Kalafong Hospital Pretoria	Elim Hospital Annual Report 1 April 1975 to 31 March 1976:14, cf interview with retired Matron Mavila Kwaiman 10 December 1999
Matron HS Mpapele	Clinical Nurse Instructor, Diploma in Nursing Administration and Community Nursing Science — Medunsa	Questionnaire completed by the respondent in April 1999
Matron E Madale	BA (Nursing Science) — UNISA	Questionnaire completed by the Respondent in April 1999

The information presented above does not even come close to embracing all of the nurses who rendered excellent service while at the same time improving their professional qualifications, but it does give an indication of the state of affairs at that time, when the Swiss missionaries' transformation efforts were mainly aimed at elevating African nursing personnel to the point where they could be of service to their fellows. It is gratifying to note

that where some defects in the training programs or the methods of mission hospitals were identified, experts were roped in to assist student nurses and serving nurses to cope with their studies. For instance, Mr JHM Khosa, a resident of Elim who is a social worker by profession was drafted into the teaching department at Elim Nursing College, where he was responsible for giving instruction in psychology and sociology to serving nurses and learner-midwives from May 1970 (Matron G Guye's Report on Nursing activities, Elim Hospital 1970-1971:8).

Some of the nurses who were taught psychology and sociology by Mr JHM Khosa rose up the academic and social ladders to become strong pillars for social transformation. A few names should be mentioned here: Minah Koma (Mokwele), BA (Nursing Science), LLB student and director of the health centre at the University of the North; Dr Nelly Manzini, Director Central Region Pietersburg; Dr BL Khoza lecturer at the University of the North; Thandi Dhamini, Manager of Lifecare Evuxakeni, Giyani; Dorothy Nkadimeng Sekhukhuni, Manager of Lifecare; Dulcy Hlungwani, Manager of Tiyani Health Centre Hlanganani; Ethel Madale, Matron at Elim Hospital, and Mrs JV Mufamadi, Regional Director of Health Giyani (researcher's interview with Mr JHM Khosa at his residence in Elim 4 December 1999).

6.7.10 The plight of the long-term patients at Elim Hospital

The health workers attached to Elim Hospital reached out to everyone who needed their attention. When they did not have the time to render essential services to patients and other people who were in need, volunteers from the surrounding villages were summoned to help in carrying out their educative and supportive tasks.

(a) Children in the isolation block

A Sunday School was run by nurses for these children. Nurses also set aside time to visit children in the village. A start was also made to teach children reading and writing, to obviate a situation where they would miss out on education during their stay at Elim Hospital. The Swiss clerics attached so much importance to the education of the children that a permanent teaching post was applied for and granted by the state (Dr JA Rosset's *Elim Hospital Annual Report 1956-1959:8*).

Respondents contacted during the compilation of this report separately confirmed that Ms Friedah Mageza and Mrs Rinky Masia, the wife of Mr P Masia, now residing at Malamulele, taught at the "Isolation Block School" (Masumbe vis-a-vis with JHM Khosa in an interview 4 December 1999, Masumbe vis-a-vis with M Kwaiman in an interview 10 December 1999).

(b) Adult patients at Elim Hospital

These patients were provided with industrial skills such as basket-weaving, glove-making and shoe-making, so that when they were released from the hospital they could market their skills or produce items for sale on their own. The idea of providing those who were likely to be disabled for the rest of their lives with industrial skills of this nature, was aimed at making them self-supportive, and less dependent on others, because this kind of dependence was the cause of depression that could lead to grave consequences (Rosset *Elim Hospital Report 1958-1959:8*). The department for occupational therapy was under the directorship of Mrs H Hotz, who left Elim Hospital after many years of fruitful service, to join her husband in Pretoria (Dr PH Jaques *Elim Hospital Report 1966-1967:6*). Mrs JE Borle who had served all along as an assistant, took over the directorship of the occupational therapy department, and at times received massive support from Miss Anne Hauser (see photograph 19) who was an all-rounder in the delivery of social services,

having been trained in Switzerland as an evangelist, bookkeeper, social worker and an occupational therapist, and who had taught at Lemana, Shirley, and Masana, as well as in her home town of Zurich, Switzerland (Dr PH Jaques *Elim Hospital Report* 1968-1969:2, *Elim Hospital's 65th Annual Report* 1960-1961:8, *Elim Hospital Annual Report* 1 April 1972 to 31 April 1973:14-15).

(c) Elim Hospital's Night School

This was an indispensable centre responsible for opening up the eyes of those who took up employment at Elim Hospital as unschooled individuals. Mr Phineas Mthombeni of N'waxinyamani Village confirmed in an interview held on 27 November 1999 that he attended lessons there from 1953 to 1956. He left school after he had passed standard four. Some of those who attended the school included his late brother Mackson Mthombeni, Abel Xingwangwa, Steven Matamela and Mr Masaka. Besides literacy, people were taught glazing and painting, among other things. Ms M Kwaiman cited Mr Yingwani Baloyi of Shirley as one who had acquired some knowledge of electricity through the non-formal education available at Elim Hospital. She remembered some of the volunteer-teachers who had taught reading and writing, namely Mr PA Miyen (Masumbe vis-a-vis with Kwaiman, interview 10 December 1999).

(d) Spiritual services for patients

The main source of power at mission hospitals was prayer. This was what enabled them to keep on with their never-ending tasks of assisting their patients, revitalising and treating them in all the ways that they could to regain the highest possible standard of health. Praying and ministering to the sick was initially the responsibility of missionaries, but as the indigenous populace grew enlightened in the spreading of the Scriptures, they were more increasingly charged with these tasks. The Rev I Mavanyisi, the son of Abraham Mavanyisi, who was one of the founding fathers of the Hutwen Church, served his time at

Elim Hospital until he retired from the pulpit. He was replaced by the Revs JF Bill, S Khosa and Evangelist P Nghatsane (Dr PH Jaques's *Report for the Year*, 1 April 1966 to 31 March 1967:6).

6.8 THE QUESTION OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AND THE TRAINING OF BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA — THE CASE OF CONNIVANCE BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE MISSIONARY HIERARCHY IN THE EXPLOITATION OF THE INDIGENOUS POPULACE

This is a controversial subject, because it was taboo both from the side of the state and missionary societies to train African medical practitioners. There was hardly any transformation carried out by the Swiss clerics in this regard. Although the missionary Dr Max JA des Ligneris was in principle not opposed to the training of African doctors for the Swiss mission fields, the lack of support, both moral, material and otherwise from his colleagues caused his dreams to remain just dreams confined to the 1920s. But his plan to train African nurses came to fruition in the early 1930s when "bedside nursing" was introduced as an experiment. Bedside nursing essentially amounted to practical training given to aspirant nurses in the hospital wards. This type of training helped to demystify nursing as a profession, and it elicited interest that Ruth Mashamba exploited to the full when she encouraged villagers to grant permission to girls to undergo training in 1932 (Egli and Krayner 1996:27-28, M Kwaiman in an interview with the researcher 10 December 1999).

The Swiss missionaries' lackadaisical approach to academic education, particularly concerning scientific knowledge, was not without problems. Retired Matron Mavila Kwaiman was an outstanding educator of midwifery students from 1965 at the inception of the course until the 1970s when her sterling efforts earned her a managerial post. She mentioned that the reluctance of the missionaries to train African doctors backfired on them when they suddenly woke up to find an enormously large number of African patients

yearning for medical attention. Unable to cope with the workload on their own, they made African nurses perform minor medical functions in the operating theatre, which added to the strain caused by their already very long workday, namely from 6 am to 8 pm. (Ms Kwaiman vis-a-vis with Masumbe in an interview 10 December 1999).

Duties that were cited by Ms Kwaiman that were outside the normal ambit of natives in the nursing profession at that time, included the insertion of intravenous drips to patients, making incisions (minor cuts) and performing anaesthetic work in the theatre (Kwaiman vis-a-vis with Masumbe in an interview 10 December 1999).

The gravity of the matter at Elim Hospital and her sister hospitals was confirmed by Dr PH Jaques in a recent article when he referred to the way in which Switzerland discouraged expatriate doctors from working in South Africa in the apartheid era, and how they rerouted possible recruits to other countries. This led to Dr Jean-Blaise Jaccard and Dr PH Jaques manning the entire hospital on their own, with professional nurses acting as assistant surgeons (Dr PH Jaques *Elim Hospital 1899-1999 — The difficult years*, December 1998:2).

The Swiss Missionary Society's inability to initiate a training-programme for African doctors whose sheer numbers would have eased the situation by penetrating even the rugged rural parts of South Africa, is inexplicable. It would appear that throughout its tenure, the Swiss Missionary Society never had plans to train Africans for highly technical careers or medical-related tasks, save the nursing profession that came at a belated stage. The resignation of teachers like Mr RDC Marivate from Lemana in the late 1950s to pursue medical training, was bemoaned instead of being applauded as a career-shift directed at relieving the crying need for more medical doctors. The Swiss hierarchy chose to ignore the fact that superstition and drunkenness which they feared would cause inflammation of the brain, gout, dropsy, apoplexy, delirium tremens and kidney ailments among the Zoutpansberg residents in the 1870s and beyond, could only be effectively controlled if

Africans and Europeans were given equal opportunities to develop the country socially, economically, politically and otherwise (Creux's "Byalwa bya šilungu byi sungule rini etikwen ra Spelonken?" When was European liquor introduced at Spelonken? *Nyeleti ya Mišo* (The Morning Star) February 1924:4 & March 1924:1).

6.9 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Education as an intrinsic part of the development of civilization, has in this country for centuries been linked to other social services like religion, politics, medicine and economy. This chapter reveals that education as a human practice was not free from political manipulation, even though it was run by supposedly apolitical missionaries of different denominations. Missionaries, and for the specific purposes of this study, Swiss missionaries, adhered to a three-pronged approach of bringing about social transformation in their missionary domain — they used churches, schools and hospitals to foster change in the culture of the indigenous people. But since the Swiss missionaries did not operate in a political vacuum, they had to abide by the limitations of the state laws in providing education in South Africa. Nursing education was also not exempt from state control.

Although Swiss missionary education was decidedly racist, they managed to render excellent service to their clientele. The Swiss missionaries' medical enterprises were so popular that they attracted people from as far afield as Bulawayo in Zimbabwe and Welkom in the erstwhile Orange Free State. Although the Swiss missionaries were intent on bringing about social transformation that would see Africans acquire civilized standards and forgo their traditional lifestyles, they strongly believed that their charges were incapable of assimilating any form of higher education. To spare them from mental injury, they were to be taught manual work or encouraged to take up softer intellectual careers like teaching and the priesthood. This was unfortunate for it robbed the country of skilled manpower in the key sectors of our industries such as in engineering and mining. Missionaries ought to have done better in this regard. The Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa

Thiong'o was more than forthright in his analysis of mission education when he said: "Imperialist pretences to free the African from superstition, ignorance and awe of nature often resulted in deepening his ignorance, increasing his superstitions and multiplying his awe of the new whip-and-gun-wielding master. An African, particularly one who had gone through a colonial school, would more readily relate to the Bible with its fantastic explanation of the origins of the universe, its 'divine' revelations about the second coming and its horrifying pictures of hell and damnation for those sinning against imperialist order" (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986:67).

Missionaries would in the view of this researcher have done a lot of good by building on what was already there, rather than seeking to rid African society of the natural science that saw them treating a number of diseases including those that were claiming the lives of Europeans (M Kahn in *The Sunday Times* 5 March 2000:19). African medicine was the most effective cure for African diseases at the start of colonization in this country. So effective were African herbs that even Jan van Riebeeck and his crew who arrived at the Cape on 6 April 1652 "made extensive use of this knowledge" (Dr PH Jaques and S Fehrsen, undated).

This informal science was based on practical and theoretical knowledge that was orally imparted to initiates by experts who worked from their homes and had forests that served as natural laboratory centres. But the knowledge of herbs and the medicinal properties of plants was not the exclusive possession of these so-called experts. On the contrary, tradition also dictated that knowledge should be shared, to ensure that each villager would be empowered to treat minor ailments without calling on the experts who usually demanded a fee in the form of a fowl, a goat or a cow, depending on the nature and seriousness of the disease. The skill to treat minor ailments was an integral part of traditional African home education (informal education, if you prefer). The treatment of diseases by what missionaries derogatively referred to as "quack doctors" was not devoid of science albeit in a crude, natural state. All that missionaries should have done was to

unlock the latent potentialities of the indigenous populace instead of condemning them as academic misfits whose brains were likely to burn out under the strain of highly theoretical subjects such as mathematics and physical science. Had there been the will-power on the part of missionaries to find out what the natural intelligence of Africans could be capable of, we wouldn't have the serious shortages that we today experience in the fields of medicine, engineering and other specialised fields. Informal science that was grounded on home education, and on traditional oral instruction by means of the mother tongue, proved to be invaluable before the advent of Western civilization. Missionaries and colonists ought to have developed African medicine, for there seems to be no major difference between it and Western medicine, as Mr Michael Kahn has observed when he said that African medicine "encompasses learning by doing, careful observing, trial and error, sifting and checking" (Kahn in *The Sunday Times* 5 March 2000:19). These are attributes that replicated themselves with regular monotony in the formal schooling system that the missionaries and colonists introduced at a later stage. It is difficult to detect the clerics and the colonists' motives for supplanting home education other than creating a European caste that would be highly skilled, and would have the privilege of subsisting on the labour of the inferior black caste, which apart from being under-skilled because of the effects of the differentiated system of education, would accept their situation as having been determined by God and therefore beyond man's manipulation. Differentiated education has only managed to create the disparities that still exist between black and white today — in rural and urban areas as well as in social and economic spheres. The new democratic government's recruitment of Cuban doctors for posting in the rural areas, that has met with fierce opposition in some quarters, was apparently directed at addressing the shortage of medical doctors in the *bundu* (wild or distant places) which is attributable to the past governments that favoured sectarianism rather than collectivism. Civilized societies need to strive for unity in diversity so that there could be the growth of economic prosperity, and a sound health-care system that is buttressed by an equally efficient education system, and an effective bureaucracy of peace and tranquillity. These are elements that are indispensable for social transformation to develop from carefully thought out policies that promote the

establishment of egalitarianism while diminishing the chances for factionalism to subsist. The next chapter, chapter 7, seeks to give the reader an appraisal of what this research work is all about, namely "The Swiss missionaries' educational endeavour as a means for social transformation in South Africa (1873-1975)".

CHAPTER 7

AN APPRAISAL OF THE SWISS MISSIONARIES' EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVOUR AS A MEANS TO SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICA (1873-1975)

7.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous six chapters bear testimony to the Swiss missionaries' educational endeavour as a means for social transformation in South Africa within the historical epoch 1873-1975. In this demarcated period, the sterling performances of the Swiss clerics within their mission fields are reflected on the one hand, while on the other, the contributions are shown that were made by the black evangelists towards changing their own people's customs. The black intelligentsia served as role models in the mission and outstations and their works were not unknown within the heathen villages. The interaction between the black evangelists and their missionary mentors saw the penetration of some territories that were known for their hostile climates. For instance, while the incursion of the vast territory towards and surrounding the Victoria Falls was thwarted by inter-tribal conflicts, Hlengweland in north-eastern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) was stricken by the rinderpest epidemic that killed all the bovines in all the affected areas around 1896, and left missionaries without oxen to pull their wagons. In addition to these problems, there were a series of droughts, malaria outbreaks, and the Limpopo River crocodiles that unnerved many a missionary who had the zeal to work in Dzombo and adjacent areas. At one stage the Rev Paul Rosset and his family were forced to abandon their new mission, Dzombo, and covered a distance of over 200 kilometres back to Elim on foot because of the hardships that left many people dead (Dr P H Jacques' *Elim Hospital 1899-1999: The Difficult Years* December 1998:1, cf chapter 1 subsection 1.3 of this study).

The hardships of the mid-1890s did not dampen the spirits of the Swiss missionaries and their black assistants. These incidents merely made people like Mahlekete Mbenyane and

the Rev Rosset beat a temporary retreat so that they could plan new strategies on how to tame the Hlengwe territory. But a return to Hlengweland was left in abeyance for a considerable length of time, which prompted the inhabitants of the territory to approach the missionary hierarchy in order to find out why they were left on the sidelines while the Shona/Karanga people were being evangelized by other missions. The Swiss Mission responded by sending Mr Zebedea Mbenyane to go and revitalise the Dzombo Mission in the early 1920s (See Chapter 4 sub-section 4.6 and 4.11.5 of this study).

It should be noted that Swiss missionary successes in the above territory, particularly Mozambique and South Africa, would not have been realised if the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (Basutoland) had not asked the Swiss Mission to take over after it had become evident that conditions would not favour the PEMS's expansion beyond the territory it had occupied since 1833. It must also be stated that the north-eastern parts of the erstwhile Transvaal Republic, Hlengweland in Zimbabwe, and vast territories of Mozambique would equally not have been civilised by the Swiss if King Sekhukhuni had not grown weary of missionary efforts to such an extent that he snubbed the Swiss clerics when they approached him for space to set up their missions. The monarch resented the manner in which the Berlin Mission's Revs Alexander Merensky and Albert Nachtigal meddled in his country's political affairs by supporting his brother Mampuru in their rivalry for the throne left vacant by Sekwati, their father. His alleged utterance that: "I have enough white missionaries, I require no more dogs", is indicative of a person who had discovered the double-standards and hypocrisy of missionaries doing duty in South Africa during the period under review (Maluleke 1995:12).

This rebuff by Sekhukhuni towards the Swiss clerics was a blessing in disguise, because it caused them to explore further, and eventually led them, by courtesy of the Rev Stephanus Hofmeyr of the Dutch Reformed Church, to Chief Joao Albasini's Shangaan subjects, who at that stage had nobody to teach them the Word of God (see chapter 2 sub-section 2.2 of this study). The settlement of the Swiss missionaries in the Zoutpansberg District led to the

founding of great institutions like Lemana Training College (1906) and Elim Hospital (1899). The latter was indispensable in the process of social transformation for "In earlier times when this part of the Transvaal was still untamed, Elim was an oasis to everybody, European and non-European. Here the greatest love, dedication and care was bestowed on them for illness and adversities that overtook them" (Dr MDC de Wet Nel during the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Elim Hospital 1969). (The original meaning of the word "elim" is oasis).

A summary of the Swiss missionaries' activities will now be given under the following headings:

7.2 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BLACKS

It cannot be disputed that the indigenous populace were wallowing in superstition and ignorance before the advent of Christianity and formal education in this country. It can also not be refuted that the Swiss missionaries did an enormous amount of groundwork to put the indigenous populace on the road to modernity during their tenure as transformation agents in this country and its neighbouring territories. What is challenged is the notion that the European missionaries are the only persons who deserve to be eulogized for having laid the foundations for our civilization. There is enough evidence to show that the black evangelists like Eliakim Matlanyane and Asser Segagabane, who were stationed at Valdezia in the period between 1873 and 1875, were as competent as the missionaries who left them behind to man the fort while they went to Morija in Basutoland to report about their abortive mission to evangelize the Bapedi of Sekhukhuniland (Masumbe 1997:10-11). The literacy projects they initiated during the absence of their missionary mentors effectively prepared the indigenous populace for full-scale transformation. While other missions had to start from scratch to train people to help spread the Gospel of Christ, the Swiss Mission operated on a different scale, because it had personnel drawn from the African community who had volunteered to venture forth into South Africa from

Basutoland to spread the Word of God. It is saddening that most people are oblivious of the evangelistic skills that the volunteers had already possessed, even prior to entering the Shangaan territories. For instance, the late Rev EFC Mashava applauded only the Swiss missionaries, and gave no credit to the black evangelists when he said that the Swiss clerics had produced "teachers, writers, composers, poets, doctors, nurses, professors, ministers of religion and of state, policemen, lecturers, clerks, businessmen and many others, who are serving the Tsonga and other peoples" (*Rejoice* 1975:7).

Contrary to all the false eulogy bestowed upon them, the Swiss missionaries were prepared to train their African pupils only up to certain predetermined levels, and were loath to educate them to fulfil higher ambitions like becoming businessmen or doctors, due to their obsession with social Darwinism and its racist connotations. Encouraging blacks to develop their entrepreneurial skills to higher, more admirable levels, was seen by missionaries as tantamount to inspiring them to wallow in worldliness, which to them was of course totally incompatible with people who claimed that they were serving the Lord. As for training in medicine or related careers, the Swiss missionaries believed that the head of an African was apt to crack under the strain of highly technical education. These fields of study were in the opinion of the Swiss missionaries and their colleagues of other denominations, meant exclusively for the "brainy European race". This explains why even nursing was only introduced 33 years after the founding of Elim Hospital in 1899. The late Rev Mashava's claim that the Swiss missionaries played a role in the training of African doctors is yet to be validated by further research in the field of education that was under their auspices during their tenure. Evidence at the disposal of this researcher reveals that the Elim Nursing College, founded in 1932 when seven black girls were recruited, thrived despite the barrage of criticisms heaped upon it, and the threats of closure because "the students lacked potential in subjects requiring highly developed thinking skills (see chapter 2 sub-section 2.10.4 and chapter 6 sub-section 6.7 b).

As for the severe restrictions imposed on black Christians to prevent them from becoming prosperous businessmen, one needs to be reminded of the closure of the business of Rev Samuel Makhubela, who was a resident of Alexandra Township north of Johannesburg, and the Rev Jim (James) Shimungana's businesses in Mozambique (see chapter 4 sub-section 4.13.3 and 4.11.5 b).

7.3 THE CHURCH AND THE LAND QUESTION

According to Pienaar (1990:25), the Swiss missionaries articulated their converts' grievances regarding the private ownership of land, and also about taxation. She refers to the Rev Ernest Creux's advice to the South African Native Affairs Commission of 1904 when he encouraged the state to grant the black elite land rights so as to "make the natives obedient and attached to the country". This initiative by the Rev Creux tied up with the Church's policy of discouraging natives from seeking work in the cities, which would leave the white farmers without a cheap and dependable labour force. The vigour with which the Rev Creux applied his manual labour policies was vividly demonstrated when he personally introduced the first plough to the natives in the Spelonken District (Brookes 1925:15). His policies were carried further by the Revs FA Cuendet and René Bill in the 1920s and 1930s respectively (See chapter 2 sub-section 2.10.6 of this study). But such land rights as were granted to the black elite did not stretch beyond the smallholdings that they owned. The effects of the South African Native Land Act of 1913 that granted Europeans more than 80% of the country's arable land, and the South African Native Trust Act of 1936, which although it supplemented the 6% stake given to blacks in 1913 with 7% to make the total land value owned by them 13%, was a far cry from satiating the land-hunger that existed at the time (Davenport 1987:338, cf Mr JC Mashila's letter dated 25 August 1939 to Mr JD Rheinallt-Jones of the SAIRR about the Valdezia-Mambedi black-owned "farms", cf Mr EA Tlakula's "When shall we own farms?" discussed in chapter 5 sub-section 5.9 of this study).

Mr EA Tlakula's article appears to suggest that though the Swiss missionaries tried hard to lobby for the amelioration of the natives' problems, successive governments in South Africa continued to refuse lending a favourable ear to their pleas. Although the missionaries did not induce the state to repeal the obnoxious land acts, they and their converts managed to win a number of battles. Among their victories was preventing the intended eviction of the Elim-Valdezia communities together with the Elim hospital to Boltman in the Malamulele District in 1969, to make way for the Venda people. This move was initiated by Dr MDC de Wet Nel, the ex-Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, and former Commissioner-General for the Venda and Tsonga National Units, and supported by the then minister of Bantu-administration and development, and of Bantu-education, Mr MC Botha. The proposed evictions were relics of the *Plakkerswet* (Squatter's Act) (1887) passed by the erstwhile Transvaal Boer Republic's *Volksraad* (parliament) (Dr PH Jaques 1998:1-3, and Elim Hospital Annual Report for the period 1969-1970 (5-7) cf Marivate 1975:IV).

7.4 THE SWISS MISSIONARY SOCIETY'S AIM TO PRODUCE APOLITICAL CITIZENS TO MINISTER TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH AND THE STATE

The Swiss missionaries did not object officially when their proselytes expressed dissenting views in newspapers and magazines such as *The Valdezia Bulletin* and *The Lemana College Magazine* or during debates. The proselytes were careful not to be seen as suggesting that they could do without the civilizing effects brought about by their Swiss benefactors and by the imperial state. Consequently, freedom of expression had to be accompanied by the responsibility of observing certain limits, lest they lost their social and economic privileges that flowed from their two principal employers. Missionaries believed that the extension of franchises to natives had to be executed concomitantly with a process of evolution that would take centuries to complete.

This paternalistic attitude of trusteeship over the lives of Africans, that was reinforced by the mission statutes, soon met with some resistance from the students studying at Lemana Training Institution. As the years passed, African teachers eventually realised that it was not worthwhile to suffer in silence and to just remain meekly subservient. The student strikes of 1913, 1915, 1924, 1945 and 1946 and the African teachers' petitions to become part of the Lemana management in 1945, bore testimony to the political maturity that had been attained by natives. This show of political maturity ironically defied the predictions of the Revs HA Junod of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, and H Kuschke of the Berlin Mission, who postulated that Africans would not reach intellectual or political maturity until the dawn of 2000 AD (Pienaar 1990:24, see chapter 5 sub-section C (3) of this study).

7.5 EVANGELISTIC TENETS VERSUS HARD CORE TRADITIONAL VALUES IN THE SWISS MISSION FIELDS

Culture may be viewed as a commodity that is inseparable from man. The more you suppress it, the more it manifests itself even during inappropriate moments when one would rather try to hide the shortcomings of your culture than have people gazing at the mess caused by its leaking valves. The foregoing epitomises what was finding expression in the Swiss mission fields on the side of both the benefactors and beneficiaries.

Missionary educators and the black elite experienced the effect of these "leakages" as their hypocrisy was exposed, much to their resentment. Even though the Rev HA Junod and his colleagues pretended otherwise, Swiss missionary education was aimed at eroding traditional values in the Europeanizing process that was aimed at producing a new African elite (Pienaar 1990:9&26). As missionaries laboriously went about their tasks, the latent tension that existed between the benefactors and beneficiaries because of the suppressing of traditional customs, revealed its true colours in the form of the violation of mission statutes. The SB Fleming incident at Lemana Training Institution was a shame to the missionary authorities. It was also a disgrace to the learners. They were left in a confused state, and did not know any more what traits of their mentors they were to emulate, because

some of these mentors were at times known to be committing the sin of sodomy. Elim Mission Station's black elite had their own share of problems. But even though the data is available, the adulterous lifestyles that were characteristic of the historical epoch under review will not be revealed here, because of a lack of space. Missionaries were not only hypocritical to the extreme in outlawing traditional customs like lobola, polygamy, and other cultural practices, but also wrong in their assumption that by forbidding these practices they were going to attain better lifestyles for Africans, because these suppressions bred the very things they detested. This is not to suggest that sodomy and adultery should have been condoned. But preventing Christianized boys from marrying heathen girls even before the Swiss Mission in South Africa produced their own Christian girls was ludicrous to say the least. This showed that the transplantations of rules from some far-off territories, without adapting them to fit in with the conditions of the receiving countries, were not helpful at all. Fortunately, the missionaries realised their mistake and waived this rule. They allowed converted boys to marry heathen girls and to pay lobola to their parents until such time as the Mission would have its own Christian girls. But this only came to be after the missionaries had already thrown themselves into controversy, which did not much help to demonstrate their professed rationality (Revs S Malale and N Jaques' *Ta Ndovolo - Leti kaneriweke Ntombanini wa Valdezia siku ra 4 July 1911* — Issues pertaining to lobola as discussed at a meeting held in Valdezia on 4 July 1911).

But what was the evil attached to polygamy and the payment of lobola? Is there any culture so sacred as to cause the extinction of other cultures or selected cultural elements in favour of totally abandoning the old to adopt the new? The researcher's answer is a qualified yes, and an equally qualified no. Yes, it can be accepted if it has been proven that a given cultural element has outlived its relevance in society as a whole. Relevance in this context is synonymous with usefulness. No culture can afford to remain static if it wants to improve the quality of its living-conditions. But it is also understandable that some of the traditional customs would remain valuable to their proprietors, and if they are able to produce valid reasons for the retention and conservation of said customs, then the answer is

no — it should not be accepted as a complete replacement of all elements of the old culture. Africans valued the customs of *ndzovolo* or *lobola*, (payment for a bride) and *tshengwe* (polygamy) for their ancient importance in tribal communities. A father who had many boys and girls was happy because boys would continue his line of descent when he was no more, support him when old age had caught up with him, and also defend him against adversaries. Similarly, all married or unmarried mothers placed a high premium on girls as they were a source of building new relations with neighbours or even foreigners. When high-profile marriages were concluded between foes by royal houses, enmity quickly dissipated, giving way to goodwill. Lobola that was demanded when marriage contracts were concluded was a safeguard against divorce and the suffering of what was generally regarded as the weaker sex. A man who had to pay dearly for his wife with cattle or money, would true to tradition, explore all avenues to put things right with his estranged wife before he would start contemplating divorce. Polygamy was tied up with tribal security in African communities at a time when wars were the order of the day. Chief Njhakanjhaka (see photograph 10), who gave missionaries of Swiss extraction numerous problems before he allowed them to set up the Elim Mission Station in 1879, married the N'wa-Ramabulanas (daughters of King Ramabulana of the Vendas) in order to guarantee his subjects' security against attacks from the Ramabulana people. He had other wives and concubines for the same reason. It is important to note that other chiefs and kings were as polygamous as Chief Ramabulana for similar reasons. Polygamy was good "insurance" for succession, security and producing as many able-bodied young men as possible for military purposes. (Elim-Shirley Community File on the history of Chief Njhakanjhaka, file 12/3/5/2-2 1/2 report dated 16 May 1993).

The meaning that missionaries attached to the custom of *ku lovola* or *ndzovolo* (payment of the bride-price or "buying a wife") begs clarification, because it denigrates African cultures. Missionaries' obsession with the suppression of indigenous cultures often precluded them from fairly judging the merits of the cultural practices of Africans, as can be discerned from the following excerpt from the writings of Dr CP Groves: "The English term 'bride-price'

that is usually employed, is unfortunate in the sense that it suggests the purchase of a wife, which in traditional African custom has definitely not been the case. Among the Southern Bantu the vernacular *lobola* is now used by most writers — an African term for an African custom is always safe. What the practice actually consists of, is the transfer of certain articles (usually in the form of cattle among the pastoral peoples) from the bridegroom's family to that of the bride, usually in instalments, which when it is completed, corresponds as a public act to the sealing of a civil marriage contract in the West. The transaction demarcates the union as a marriage and confers on all the children that may be engendered from it a certain status within society. The conception of purchase in this connection is as repugnant to the African as to the Western mind. To Africans the practice has served in stabilizing the marriage by giving at once a reasonable guarantee of good treatment of the wife by her husband and of dutiful regard for her husband by the wife. The acceptance of an economic system based on money has distorted the function of the practice" (Dr CP Groves' *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* 1958:218).

Groves shows great understanding of the indigenous cultures, a quality that is sadly missing in most missionary writings. Instead of vilifying these cultural traditions, he notes how rich they were in promoting harmonious relations among neighbours, determining heirs, resolving differences with foes amicably, and many other benevolent properties that most missionaries chose to ignore. The missionaries' abrogation of certain traditional customs left many Christian converts with an invidious task. Having adopted the Western way of life, they did their best to act like Europeans, but the cultural patterns ingrained in their blood often balked at fully accepting it, and sometimes quite resentfully revealed that this was not yet something of their own. The banning of *ndzovolo* (bride-price) and *tshengwe* (polygamy) in the Swiss Mission fields clearly illustrates the contradictions spelled out above by the researcher. For instance, the Rev Josefa (Yosefa) Mhthalmala gave his daughter to Mr Thomas Pato without receiving a cent as *lobola*, as was duly expected of him by his church (the Swiss Mission). But as ministers of religion were not the best paid individuals at the time, he secretly knocked at the door of the Patos

demanding lobola for his daughter, apparently in a bid to supplement his meagre wages, but actually to satisfy his deeply ingrained sense of cultural fairness and justification. As could be expected, such underhand tactics to override the stringent mission statutes were exposed, and the Rev Mhalmhala was severely reprimanded by the hierarchy of the church. There are numerous catalogues of these cultural clashes and contradictions, but space has to be reserved for the analysis of other aspects of Swiss missionary endeavours to promote social transformation in this country and elsewhere (Rev Abel de Meuron 1916:2-3, Tlhavela 1949).

7.6 THE ENDEAVOURS OF THE SWISS MISSIONARIES TO REFINES THE NEW RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF AFRICANS

Missionaries entered the African continent with a clear-cut programme of action in mind, namely to educate, Christianize and civilize the indigenous populace so that one day they could be the full bearers of European norms and values. These lofty goals were to be realized through the dissemination of the Scriptures and the erosion of all traditional African customs. A paternalistic approach to the conversion and denationalization of Africans was inevitable in modernizing Africa. Although Africans' way of life clearly showed that whatever they embarked on had to be preceded by prayer or offering, these virtues were ignored as missionaries of different denominations condemned Africans as backward and atheistic. But a careful digestion of some of the African elite's writings and those of some enlightened missionaries, reveals that the indigenous peoples of Africa were religious even before the advent of Christianity and colonialism. The Rev James A Calata's analysis of the spiritual outlooks of Africans contained in an address entitled: "The Gospel and the Bantu Mind" discussed in chapter 5 sub-section 5.3 reinforces this perception. Even the Rev Paul Fatton of the Swiss Mission in South Africa, who shared the same title with the Rev JA Calata at the eighth general missionary conference held in South Africa in 1932, agreed with him that Africans were deeply religious before missionaries came to these shores (see chapter 6 sub-section 6.4). It can however not be refuted that the

missionaries' arrival on this continent did contribute to the refinement of the belief systems of Africans through the introduction of the Bible and other reading material. Missionaries also did a lot of groundwork in introducing Jesus Christ into Africans' worship. Prior to the arrival of missionaries, the One who was held to be above the ancestral spirits in prayer, was God the Almighty. As for the insinuation that Africans were highly superstitious people, the Rev SS Dorman did not agree that only they could be accused of this. He revealed in his research published in the mid-1920s that Europeans believed just as strongly in witchcraft. Considering the witch-hunts occurring in Europe, he doubted whether they would be so quick to respond to the same kind of alien education to wipe out their superstitious notions, as was in effect expected of Africans (see chapter 6 sub-section 6.4).

It is gratifying to note that at the time when the above was happening in Europe, it was not the African custom to murder wizards and witches that had been detected. True to the spirit of *ubuntu* (humaneness) no blood of people with malevolent power was to be shed. Such people had to be banished from their homes to go and live in some remote territories where they hopefully would live in peace with other people. It is only recently that we note with displeasure the burning of the so-called witches in different parts of South Africa, particularly in the Northern Province.

7.7 THE DELIBERATE DISTORTION OF HISTORICAL FACTS FOR THE SAKE OF RELIGIOUS AND IMPERIALIST EXPEDIENCY

Missionaries presented history in a way that furthered their own interests as well as satisfying the tastes of the imperialists who occasionally sponsored their projects. It is no exaggeration to say that the manner in which history as a school subject was being presented, dovetailed snugly with the divisive policies of imperialists. Most missionaries whole-heartedly subscribed to the policy of divide and rule. They demonstrated just how articulate and meticulous they were in propagating this enfeebling policy by creating the

so-called mission villages (*switasi*) to which all Christian converts (*vakriste vakreste*) were shepherded to obviate their ostracization by the heathens (*vahedeni*) in the pagan villages (*evahedenini*). These resettlement schemes caused serious social alienation among the Africans. Christians and non-Christians within the same families or groups were drawn apart, severing cultural and blood-ties that had been permanent and safe for generations before the advent of Christianity, mainly because these new Christians were indoctrinated into accepting all they were told by missionaries unconditionally and without really thinking about it. Non-converts saw their converted siblings, peers and former friends as hypocrites in the mould of their missionary mentors.

The demonization of African leaders like Nghunghunyani, Makhado, Langalibalele, Manthathise and countless others, was part of a wider campaign to drive a wedge between these rulers and their subjects, so that these underlings could look up to missionaries and colonists as their saviours from the oppressive rule of their potentates. Missionaries also posed as the ones who liberated the African race from grinding poverty (Cuendet 1951:14-18, cf *The Christian Express* (later known as *The South African Outlook*) 1 December 1894:183).

Great care should be taken under the new democratic system of government in South Africa so as not to subject history to the manipulations it had suffered in the past when it had been so deftly juggled to serve sectional interests. History as a school subject should strive for inclusivity. It should engender in learners creative minds that seek to discover the truth about our dim and distant past as we throw our minds into the future, trying to visualise what we think it should look like from our present vantage point. History must untangle itself from the biases of the past. We cannot as a nation embark on this historical journey to real social transformation while we continue to identify with old practices that served to empower the minorities at the expense of the majority. This can only serve to destabilize the nation-building process.

Historians writing for a democratic South Africa should strive for inclusive history and refrain from squinting at our history with half-closed eyes. To do this would be to insult and enrage those whose history would because of this, remain negated or even worse, ignored on the sidelines of life. For instance, such wars as the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) affected the lives of all South Africans and yet historians only reflected Britons and the Boers as actors in its epic scenario. Fortunately evidence has surfaced to indicate that the war was fought by Africans and other races as well, and therefore it is today aptly called the South African War. Inclusivity in historiography serves to highlight human weaknesses as well as its strong points, so that in the end the strong points should be used to improve human living conditions. Similarly, behavioural patterns that led to interracial hostilities in the past need to be recognised, identified and recorded as objectively as possible to prevent the possibility that they might imperil us again in the future. We all need to contribute to the rebuilding process or the re-formulation of our history. As we embark on this important task we perhaps need to take heed of Prof Willie Esterhuyse's pertinent inquiry: "Must black and white sting each other to death? Or should each listen to the voice of reason from the other side?" (Esterhuyse, *Sunday Times* November 10 1985:29).

The researcher believes that we indeed need to listen to one another's voice of reason as we move into the new millennium, because if we go back in history to settle old scores, the consequences of our contest will be too ghastly to contemplate. The Honourable Deputy President of South Africa, Mr Jacob Zuma's words are pertinent in this regard: "...it is important to acknowledge the struggles and sacrifices made in the name of liberation, both by Boer and black, and to try to understand the historical forces that led to these ongoing confrontations. We need also to learn the lessons that they impart — that distressing as our past may be, it is a shared past that excludes no South African. The stories that are written and those that have been passed on from generation to generation through a vibrant and informative oral tradition must find themselves in our collective memory of the war and of our history" (Zuma's "South Africa's inclusive history" *Sowetan* 12 October 1999:8). (Although the Honourable Deputy President Zuma was here referring to the Anglo-Boer

War or the South African War (1899-1902), the researcher feels the information is relevant to any other war fought by South Africans during the colonial era).

The foregoing suggests that social transformation is by nature an inclusive process. It should of necessity involve a wide range of stakeholders — businesses, churches, communities, leaders of different standings, academics, and even foreign governments who at varying periods of our history were co-responsible for the making of our civilisation. Churches may open their archives and also contribute in the objective and systematic reformulation of our national histories. Businesses and foreign governments may assist to fund this rediscovery of our history, because without proper funding the project may well be described as a non-event (see chapter 1 sub-section 1.4 (a) to (b) regarding some of the bottlenecks encountered in qualitative research.

7.8 THE ROLE OF THE SWISS MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA REGARDING RESPECT FOR BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS

Missionaries are expected to lead the fight against any violation of basic human rights by the state functionaries, the corporate world or any agency within their operational areas. They should never allow themselves to merely stand by and watch as human rights are trampled upon, nor assist the reigning authorities to realise their objectives in unacceptable ways. The Swiss missionaries wanted to go down in history as people who led the fight against the violation of basic human rights, such as the right to life by challenging the state's obsession with capital punishment. The Swiss clerics believed that the death penalty was not a deterrent to crime and would have liked the state to have adopted other forms of punishment that would have encouraged criminals to turn over new leaves. They saw spiritual counselling and the development of skills as civilized ways of reforming the minds of criminals. The Swiss missionaries visited the prison population with the purpose of promoting their literary development and to assist in mending their psychological maladjustment through spiritual counselling. The Penal Reform League of South Africa

that was founded by the Rev HP Junod, had the daunting task of convincing the authorities to remove capital punishment from the statute books. But as it turned out, the Swiss clerics turned out to be spectators of executions, or worse still men of God who had to encourage their converts to meet their fate before the hangman could pounce on them. It is questionable whether the Scriptures condone being an accessory to murder. But what the researcher knows is that God emphatically said: "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). The mere presence of missionaries at the Pretoria Central Prison might have strengthened the hands of executioners who might have said "after all, we are not alone in this dirty work, we have in our midst some high ranking clerics!" For the condemned men and women it must have been an agonising experience to hear their missionary mentors encouraging them to prepare for the plunge into the death pit instead of trying to find mitigating circumstances that might be considered to lessen their culpability, or even fight for their release or remission of sentence on the basis of their newly found faith. Perhaps citing conscientious objection to being present in the "death room" would have been another option. But this never occurred, because everybody including the Honourable Rev HP Junod who was the National Organiser of the Penal Reform League felt theirs was a noble cause.

The Rev HP Junod and his colleagues had all the ammunition to challenge the state's high-handedness. He mentioned that "genuine petty offenders" were being locked up in the cells. This, together with the statistics that showed great disparities between Europeans and blacks when it came to executions, and the fact that the legal system was "based upon not only retribution, which is biblical, but retaliation and revenge" were facts that should have been raised with the state to repeal the death penalty. It is even more perturbing to note that even when the judges were given discretionary powers to waive the death penalty, it seems that they exercised this privilege to spare white lives while poor natives were hanged (see chapter 4 sub-section 4.13.7 for statistical data pertaining to executions cf Rev HP Junod's *The Swiss Mission and the Prisons*, in *The Tsonga Messenger* October-December 1949:19).

Another progressive step that the Swiss Mission in South Africa ought to have taken, was extending educational opportunities to prisoners on an equitable and non-racial basis. Education can be defined as a human right as opposed to a privilege, hence it should be extended to the entire citizenry. But in the historical epoch under review only the white prisoners enjoyed this right to the full, for they had all the necessary educational support in the form of a permanent teaching staff, inter-library facilities, a full-time manager, and textbooks. The state officials could also assist them when they intended to register with correspondence colleges or universities. It was therefore not surprising that some of them attained Masters Degrees as they seemed to be living in a comfortable campus rather than serving out jail terms.

7.9 MORAL EDUCATION AND THE PROMOTION OF EUROCENTRICISM BY THE SWISS MISSIONARIES

Missionary education across denominational boundaries was geared towards instilling good moral behaviour in Africans as they were regarded by clerics as backward and uncivilized savages. Many Africans acquiesced to this paternalism as Christian education offered better prospects for employment and better living conditions in the modern economy (capitalism) that replaced subsistence farming. But some of the black elite found the traditional customs too powerful to abandon and consequently fell foul of the stringent mission statutes. For instance, Petrus Morobi, an evangelist that had been attached to the Berlin Mission's Tsoale outstation since 1890, became one of the victims of the stringent statutes. The Rev Fritz Reuter of the Berlin Mission had to seek the help of the Revs HA Junod and LP Vautier to help trace Petrus Morobi who had absconded from the punishment given to him in terms of which he had to render community service for a specified period before he could have his evangelist certificate back. Morobi was reportedly heading for the Shiluvane Mission Station under the Rev Junod of the Swiss Mission in South Africa. For years Mr Petrus Morobi had been sweet-talking women into having adulterous relations with him, assuring them that it was not a sin. They only realized that it was a sin to commit adultery after the

matter had come into the open when three women, of whom two had succumbed to his prompts, (the third had refused) had simultaneously reported the matter at the Medingen Mission Station (Berlin Mission, near Tzaneen).

It is interesting to note that even Petrus Morobi's brother Joel, who was also an evangelist, had violated the statutes by marrying a second wife — an act punishable by dismissal from the church. He was also unwilling to serve punishment, and he went away with his half-brother (Fritz Reuter's letter to the Revs Vautier and Junod 22 November 1906). In another letter dated 29 February 1912, the Rev Reuter stressed to the Rev Thevvz of the Swiss Mission that unless Petrus Morobi repented and served his full punishment, he was not going to get back his evangelist certificate, nor would he be reinstated as a full member of the Berlin Mission. The same conditions were apparently made applicable to Joel Morobi whose recalcitrance was of the same category as that of his half-brother. The Berlin missionaries' letters to the Swiss Mission were indicative of a church that had experienced serious violations of its statutes and was desperate in canvassing support in order to curb the waywardness of its members who were portraying the society in a very bad light to neighbouring missions. Thus the pleas directed to the Swiss missionaries were not only aimed at sparing women of being taken advantage of by these sex exploiters, but in the first place to save the Berlin missionary clerics from further disgrace. The two churches temporarily ceased their denominational rivalries, something that had been a common phenomenon in the mid-1870s and the 1890s in the Zoutpansberg District and the Modjadji-N'wamitwa areas, to stand together and face what they considered to be "a common threat" to their evangelism. But when the "common threat" was no more, they reverted back to their rivalry as was indeed the case in the Bushbuckridge area and environs in the 1930s (see chapter 4 sub-section 4.14).

7.10 THE MAINTENANCE OF ELITISM THROUGH THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND THE HOLDING OF CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS

Christianity defines itself on a convert-heathen continuum. In the absence of this continuum Christianity is essentially undefinable. Missionaries harped on the wickedness of the heathen world to make Christianity attractive and acceptable as a way of life. They structured their education systems in a manner that would facilitate the growth of Christ's Church on earth. Social clubs like the Pathfinders, Trackers, Wayfarers and Sunbeams were structured in a way that would make it possible for the church to indoctrinate the youths into believing in their otherness and intellectual dominance over the heathen-folk.

Whatever social intercourse Christians had with non-converts had to be permeated by the glorification of God the Almighty and His Son, which also had to be artistically merged with the vilification of ancestral worship as well as their pursuance of indigenous lifestyles. Missionaries were very crafty in their formulation of educational policies, because at the end of the day their purpose was to produce elite groups that would collaborate with them, and in so doing expand the Gospel even further and wider. Perhaps the efficacy of mission education in bringing about social transformation during the colonial era is best articulated by the late Mr Etienne Penyisi Ndhambi's letter dated 7 March 1955 to the Superintendent of Lemana Training Institution, that partly reads thus: "if each teacher works on his/her own way and does not come into contact with other teachers he/she in the long run becomes degenerated professionally, spiritually and intellectually". Christian education, as might be noted, succeeded in creating fellowships that in turn led to mass-literacy, even though the high rate of illiteracy had at the time not yet been adequately tackled. Mr Ndhambi's follow-up letter dated 29 March 1955, addresses what should indeed be done by professional bodies with regard to introducing teacher-trainees to their future spheres of operation when he suggests introducing final-year students to the erstwhile Northern Zoutpansberg Branch Union of the Transvaal African Teachers Association (Ndhambi's letter to the Superintendent of Lemana Training Institution 29 March 1955). Such contacts

would help them to explore their future fields of work as well as their professional ethics, and would provide them with opportunities to cross-pollinate ideas on a wide range of subjects pertaining to life, so that they should not abuse their noble profession (Ndhambi in a letter dated 7 March 1955 to the Superintendent of Lemana Training Institution, cf chapter 5 of this study, sub-section 5.7).

7.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Swiss missionary efforts were nearly nipped in the bud by the combined actions of the leaders of the erstwhile Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek, (ZAR) that distrusted French-speaking clerics, and the Berlin Mission, that was averse to competition from other churches. But once the necessary rapport had been struck with its adversaries, the Swiss Mission in South Africa grew from strength to strength establishing several branches within the country and beyond.

The realisation by the ZAR that the Swiss missionaries were not the same people as their French-speaking counterparts who belonged to the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society, Basutoland (Lesotho), although they were co-operating in their mission work, paved the way for multifaceted development both in the socio-economic and religious spheres. Institutions such as Elim Hospital (1899), the "Old Mill Health Centre" (1896) and Lemana Training Institution (1906), became the nerve centres for social transformation in the northern parts of South Africa. The arrival of the first missionary doctor in the person of Dr Georges Liengme from Mozambique where he was declared *persona non grata* by the Portuguese authorities in 1897, also accelerated the pace of social transformation, which allegedly started in 1875 when the Swiss clerics officially started their mission work in this country (see chapter 6 sub-section 6.6 cf, Phillips' "Their letter to the Synod" in *The Tsonga Messenger* July-September 1949:1415, *Mirror* 17 September 1999:11).

The Swiss Mission did not only render excellent service in education and health-care. It also made its mark in other spheres of life. For instance, their agricultural output was phenomenal to say the least. But as far as the fight for social justice was concerned, the Swiss Missionary Society fared badly, because the state could not be drawn into abandoning capital punishment, even though the Penal Reform League chaired by the late Rev HP Junod, assisted by the late Justice Dr FET Krause tried very hard to convince it to do so in order to keep up with the changes of time. Capital punishment only ceased to be applied in South Africa with the advent of the new democratic government headed by the African National Congress in the 1990s (see chapter 4 sub-section 4.13.7 of this study).

Although the Swiss missionaries did a commendable job by establishing educational institutions like Lemana Training Institution (1906) and the Elim Nursing College (1932) that were followed by a plethora of other centres of learning, there were many areas that were left floundering outside the educational mainstream, for instance the so-called "heathen villages". It is here where the Swiss clerics should have paraded their skills and increased their followers to the glory of the Lord. Their identification with the policy of differentiated education still does not convince many a researcher that they were as progressive as they would have liked people to believe. If their hearts really were filled with love for Africans, they should have shown it by opening up opportunities for the indigenous populace to develop their latent potentialities in such diverse fields as engineering, medicine, architecture, geology and commerce to name but a few professions or careers. But instead of doing this, they indulged in racist rhetoric that branded Africans as intellectually less gifted than Europeans, so much so that their heads would crack under the strain should they be subjected to the complexities of mathematics or any scientific subjects. It is here that Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid and segregated schooling, who was assassinated by Dimitri Tsafendas on 6 September 1966, might be spared of being declared the sole proprietor of Bantu Education (1953). The seeds of Bantu Education had already been sown long before his premiership, and the reason why many believe he was the father of separatism, is attributable to his uncanny intellect to

institutionalize racism. The Swiss missionaries along with other clerics had been preaching separate and unequal education for black and white for over two decades before 1900 (Nwandula 1987:68-69, cf Barron's "Obituary of Betsie Verwoerd" *Sunday Times* March 5 2000:20, cf Brink's "The sad life and mad times of Tsafendas" *Sunday Times* 7 May 2000:24).

Swiss missionary education strove to produce the black elite whom they hoped would champion the cause of social transformation while remaining apolitical for the better part of their lives. The feeling in missionary circles was that political consciousness had to be preceded by intellectual maturity, and that, according to them, would take black people at least a century to attain, if it were calculated from the early 1900s. The late Dr HA Junod preferred a policy of gradualism to one of speedy enfranchisement of the indigenous populace. Africans had to acquire a modicum of education that would enable them to indulge in tribal politics — a precursor to mainstream politics. Swiss missionary education was tailored to prepare Africans for life hereafter. Secular life had to be led within a Christian atmosphere, in which Europeans were reflectors of high values (Pienaar 1990:24).

But political consciousness among blacks refused to be piloted by the policy of gradualism formulated by the Swiss missionaries. The clamour for pedagogic support and the demand by students for decent food at Lemana Training Institution in 1913 and 1915 were signs of greater things to come. By the 1940s the grievances of the students showed greater political maturity. The coalescence of ideas from students drawn from different cultural backgrounds, made this political ferment possible. Thus the "kicking" to which the late Rev DC Marivate referred in his address to the Elim study group at their meeting on 15 July 1975, can be traced to debates at Lemana Training Institution. It was a "kick" directed at the system that sought to oppress rather than empower Africans politically. But the struggles waged by the ex-Lemanians were not detached from Scriptural influence. Provision had been made for it to remain securely connected, as the Swiss clerics had

ensured that the Tsonga Bibles and other evangelical reading material published at the time, continued to make the gospel accessible to the masses. Even the plethora of African churches that have emerged over the past decades in the Shangaan-dominated areas, cannot claim to be free from Swiss influence, because most of the hymn books and Bibles that the members of these congregations are clutching in their hands, still bear the stamp of the Swiss mission in South Africa. Where this is not the case, many of their priests were schooled under the tutelage of educators who received their training at the Swiss Mission's Lemana Training Institution. It is the same college that produced nationalists such as the late Dr Eduardo Mondlane (see photograph 21), Frelimo (Mozambique) and Dr Alpheus Manghezi from Chavani Village, who fought for the demise of Apartheid together with other nationalists within the African National Congress (Rev DC Marivate 1975:IV, NC Makhuba's response to a questionnaire April 1999).

The Swiss missionaries' undoing in the field of social transformation was their obsession with the insulation of white privileges, that saw them training Africans to predetermined levels — a step that impacted negatively on the development of skills. It is perhaps here that many researchers (this one included) find it difficult to absolve the Swiss clerics from complicity in the obscene, if not blasphemous strategic vision by past regimes in this country "to destroy the brain, the mind and the very soul of our people" — to borrow the words expressed by Dr PA Motsoaledi at the UNESCO conference in Moscow in 1996 (Motsoaledi's keynote address at the Unesco conference 1 to 5 July 1996:1). Swiss missionaries do not seem to have entertained the thought of availing their African proselytes with highly technical education, from the moment they officially commenced with their missionary activities in South Africa, to the moment they pulled out, leaving their enterprises or institutions under both the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (TPC) and the defunct Gazankulu bantustan in 1976 (Dr P Robert's "Mission Hospitals in the Transvaal" *Rejoice* 1975:36-38). But even after they had left, the strong bonds between the Swiss people and the Shangaan people remained intact. It is not uncommon to hear masters of ceremonies at some important functions acknowledging the presence of Swiss

representatives. The centenary celebrations of the founding of Elim Hospital are one among many feasts that was graced by the Swiss representatives (Egli and Kraye 1996:93&101, cf *Mirror* 17 September 1999:11-12).

In conclusion it is perhaps pertinent to quote the educative words contained in the *History of Education* (HED-HOD-C tutorial letter 103/1997) sub-titled "Supplementary study material" which read thus: "The way we are now is the result of how we have chosen to think in the past. The way we will be in the future will be the result of how we choose to think now. Some thoughts strengthen us; others weaken us. It is our choice whether we empower ourselves with our thinking or whether we enfeeble ourselves" (Prof Elsa Kruger et al, University of South Africa 1997:4).

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NB: Other respondents chose to remain anonymous.

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POSTSCRIPT: PRIMARY SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THIS STUDY

- (1) The William Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, curators of
 - (a) Swiss Mission in South Africa's records;
 - (b) The JD Rheinallt-Jones Papers, South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR);
 - (c) Records of the South African Institute of Race Relations and details pertaining to other missions or enterprises.
- (2) Elim Hospital Museum, near Louis Trichardt, Northern Province.
- (3) Northern Province Archives, GIYANI.
- (4) The National Archives, Pretoria.
- (5) The DC Marivate Archives: University of South Africa, Pretoria.
- (6) The HA & HP Junod Archives: University of South Africa, Pretoria.

1. What type of school did you attend?
 - (a) Government primary school.....
 - (b) Farm School.....
 - (c) Mission School.....
2. At what age were pupils expected to start their schooling?
 - (a) Strictly 7 years.....
 - (b) 6 years was also okay.....
 - (c) Education authorities were not strict with age restrictions.....
3. (a) Nature of primary school curricula:
 - (1) Highly religious
 - (2) Religious with secular (worldly) emphasis
 - (3) Strong bias towards insisting on industrial skills

- (b) What additional comments would you like to give regarding the nature of the primary school curriculum you have indicated above?

Briefly:.....

- (c) List of subjects taken at primary school level:

1.....4.....7.....
 2.....5.....8.....
 3.....6.....9.....

4. Managing discipline and governing the school was ensured by:

- (a) Usually corporal punishment
 (b) Temporary exclusion from school activities.....
 (c) Self-discipline was the norm.....

5. Was there parental involvement in the education of pupils?

Yes.....

No.....

6. (a) In your opinion, did school activities prepare learners for life as it would be lived in the communities from which the learners came?

Yes.....

No.....

- (b) Was the school curriculum designed in a manner that would enable learners to contribute to the growth of the capitalist economy?

Yes.....

No.....

- (c) Briefly explain your answer.

7. How was truancy dealt with at the primary school which you attended?

- (a) a day's labour at the vegetable garden.....
 (b) sjamboking was the right tonic.....
 (c) the matter was simply ignored as if nothing had happened.....

8. Was your school only attended by people from the neighbourhood who were Tsonga-speaking?

Yes.....

No.....

Briefly indicate other population groups or persons admitted at your school and why the authorities were comfortable with such admissions:

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. What role did the following extra-curricular activities play in shaping your life?

- (a) Sports in its varied forms

.....

.....

.....

.....

- (b) Choral music

.....

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.....

.....

10. Were there Boy Scouts and Girl Wayfarers at your primary schools?

- (a) Boy Scouts: Yes.....

No.....

- (b) Girl Wayfarers: Yes.....

No.....

11. (a) What was the role of the Boy Scouts in shaping the learners' personalities?
Briefly explain:

.....
.....
.....
.....

(b) What was the role of the Girl Wayfarers in shaping the personalities of female learners? Briefly explain:

.....
.....
.....
.....

(c) What teachers were responsible for organising learners' participation in these social activities?

Boy Scouts:.....

Girls Wayferers.....

12. (a) What other social activities were organised for the learners?

Explain

.....
.....
.....
.....

13. In your view, was there any link or connection between home education and school (formal) education?

Explain:

.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Looking back, do you feel the educational authorities could have made the type of education you received better than it was?
 Yes.....
 No.....
15. Did you find school life enjoyable at that time?
 Yes.....
 No.....
16. What were the things that made the school setting an enjoyable place?

17. To what extent do you feel missionary education is missed today?
 Briefly explain:

18. (a) Do you know of any primary school within the Swiss Mission's sphere of influence that was a comprehensive industrial school?
 Yes..... No.....
- (b) What was the name of the school?
 Specify.....
19. If yes, what were the things produced by learners? Specify the items

20. (a) In your opinion, did the industrial courses serve any useful purpose in the later life of learners?
 Yes.....
 No.....
- (b) If your answer is Yes, what was the value of these industrial courses in life?

21. Do you know of certain individuals who earned a living by virtue of their industrial skills?
 Yes.....
 No.....
22. Did the people who came from the industrial primary school (18. b) secure jobs in the industrialized cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria?
 Yes.....
 No.....
23. If your answer for 22 above is yes, specify names or areas where there was a great demand for the services
- (a) Names of persons:

- (b) Areas where skills required

SECTION B: SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

1. Did you attend a state or mission controlled secondary school?
Mission school..... State school.....
2. If you have attended a mission/church controlled secondary school, would you describe the curriculum offered at your school as
 - (a) religiously inclined
Yes.....
No.....
 - (b) a combination of religious and secular subjects
Yes.....
No.....
3. In your opinion what principal aim did authorities have in formulating their curriculum? Please explain briefly
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
4. Was there any continuation of subjects done at primary school level when you reached your secondary school?
Yes.....
No.....
5. If no, what new school subjects did you do at secondary school level?
Specify
.....
.....
6. Did the secondary school subjects lay any foundation for entry into professions

like commerce, medicine and engineering?

Yes.....

No.....

7. If your answer for 6 above is "no" what do you think was missing in the secondary course package? Specify subjects that you think would satisfy requirements for entry into the above professions

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8. Did learners/students have supportive services like school guidance and personal counselling to make them aware of possible careers they could aim for according to their talents, abilities and interests?

Yes.....

No.....

9. If your answer to the above is no, do you think the omission of guidance as a subject at your secondary school was a deliberate act on the part of the authorities to deny students the opportunity to be enlightened about what careers to choose?

Yes.....

No.....

10. If your answer is yes, please elaborate further about why you think the authorities excluded guidance and counselling.

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SECTION C: MEDICAL TRAINING

1. Did Swiss missionary education lay the necessary foundation for black people to enter the medical profession?

Yes.....

No.....

2. If your answer is yes, please elaborate to support your statement

.....

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.....

.....

3. What attitude did the Swiss missionaries have towards traditional healers?
Please describe briefly

.....

.....

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.....

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4. Did the Swiss missionaries make any efforts to instil love for the medical profession in their charges?

Yes.....

No.....

5. If your answer is yes, please describe briefly how this love for the medical profession was aroused in the area in where you, your family or friends lived

.....

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.....

6. If your answer is no, please indicate what reasons the missionaries used for not encouraging blacks to enter the medical profession

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7. Considering where you are now, do you think you could have made a better career choice if there had been guidance and counselling services provided?

Please give a brief opinion

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SECTION D: NURSE TRAINING

To be completed by nurses, active or retired

1. What were the selection criteria for a student nurse or a nurse in training in your time?
- (a) Interest in the provision of primary health care, good conduct and a minimum qualification of standard six or even lower.....
 - (b) Interest in the provision of primary health care, good conduct and form one or form two as academic qualification.....
 - (c) Interest in the provision of primary health care, good conduct and Form three, or a standard ten (matric) certificate.....

- (d) All of the requirements in (c), plus a baptismal certificate issued by the Swiss mission
2. How large was the enrolment number at the time of your training as a nurse?
- (a) less than 10 trainees.....
- (b) approximately 10 to 20 trainees.....
- (c) approximately 20 to 40 trainees.....
- (d) more than 50 nurse trainees.....
3. What qualifications were received by nurse graduates at your time?
- (a) a hospital nursing certificate.....
- (b) a Nursing Certificate or Diploma issued by the South African Nursing Council.....
- (c) a Nursing Certificate or Diploma issued by the British Council.....
- (d) all the above (a+b+c).....
4. In which period did the training of African nurses begin at Elim Hospital?
- (a) between 1899 and 1916
- (b) between 1917 and 1929
- (c) between 1930 and 1945
- (d) between 1946 and 1954
5. During your professional training were there males interested enough in nursing to join the profession?
- Yes.....
- No.....
6. In what period was the midwifery course first introduced at Elim Hospital?
- (a) between 1917 and 1929
- (b) between 1930 and 1945
- (c) between 1946 and 1954
- (d) between 1955 and 1960
7. Were the following training programmes for nurses available at the two other Swiss Mission Hospitals namely Shiluvane and Masana, that was established

mainly for the Shangaan tribe?

- (a) Hospital Nursing Certificate yes..... no..... unsure.....
 (b) Genaral Nursing Diploma yes.....no..... unsure.....
 (c) Midwifery Diploma yes..... no..... unsure.....

8. What efforts were made to combine theory with practice in your professional training?

- (a) nurse trainees were drafted into wards where they were exposed to the demands of nursing such as wound-dressing, bathing patients, distributing tablets et cetera.....
 (b) daily visits to villages to provide health-care to the people who needed their attention, and to nurse the ill.....
 (c) Both of the above (a+b).....

9. (a) The Lemana Training Institution was the largest college in the erstwhile Northern Transvaal. To your knowledge, were people from the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State and the rest of Transvaal all coming there for admission to be trained as nurses?

Yes.....

No.....

b) Were people from the Cape, Natal and Orange Free State inclined to enter the Nursing College at Elim Hospital after obtaining the necessary academic qualification at Douglas Laing Smit Secondary School (Lemana)

Yes.....

No.....

10. If yes, did they take up employment at Elim Hospital and her sister hospitals, namely, Shiluvane (Douglas Smit) Hospital or Masana Hospital?

Yes.....

No.....

11. Did African nurses get training in eye-diagnostics and the treatment of eye diseases prior to 1949?
- Yes.....
- No.....
12. Where were they trained?
- Hospital
- city
13. After the establishment of the Ophthalmic Hospital (eye-hospital) in 1949 at Elim, was the necessary training to diagnose and treat eye diseases immediately provided to African nurses?
- Yes.....
- No.....
14. When training in the diagnosis and treatment of eye problems was not available at the Ophthalmic Hospital at Elim, where were interested students sent for training?
- Specify place
- Please describe (a) the roles of black nurses in the Eye Hospital and (b) how much control they could exercise when the missionary optometrist was away
- (a).....
-
-
- (b).....
-
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-
-
-
15. Elim Hospital has its own chapel. Could you briefly explain the reason to have one when the Elim Church is not very far from the hospital?
-
-

.....

16. As people who could be described as products of missionary education, were you at any stage in your career expected to teach the Gospel of Christ where you came from when you went home, or in training at the hospital before the commencement of your daily duties?

Yes.....

No.....

17. Did you attend the morning devotions with patients at the hospital?

Yes.....

No.....

18. What arrangements were made for bed-ridden patients or the infirm who could not walk to the chapel? Please describe briefly

.....

19. What impact did 16 to 18 have on your lives as employees of the mission and on the patients? Please describe briefly

.....

20. If history could repeat itself, would you like to return to the old order as it was in the Swiss Missionary era? Please give a brief opinion

.....

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21. If you did not like that era as it was, what changes would you suggest be made to the old system of missionary control of life in the schools, the church and in hospitals before you would be willing to return there? Please describe

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SECTION E: TO ALL RESPONDENTS

Please supply the supplementary information required hereunder. You have the option of whether or not you would like to have your name published in the final report of this study.

Please indicate in the appropriate space

Yes, my contribution should be acknowledged

No, my name should not feature in this study

(a) Your name

(b) Your age: (1) between 50 and 60

(2) between 60 and 70

(3) between 70 and 80

(4) between 80 and 90

(c) Schooling years:

(1) Primary school 19..... to 19.....

- (2) Secondary school, private study or correspondence 19..... to 19.....
- (3) Institution where JC or matric was done.....
- (4) Professional training 19..... to 19.....
- (5) Nature of professional training.....
.....
- (6) University training
.....
.....
- (d) Did you have a career shift in your life, for instance where you first trained as a teacher and then switched to another profession where you felt more comfortable
.....
.....
.....
- (e) Do you know of any other products of Swiss Missionary education who became influential people in society? Please specify their name(s) and station in society
.....
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.....
.....
.....

Thank you very much for setting aside your precious time for the purpose of completing this questionnaire.

Yours sincerely

Benneth MC Masumbe

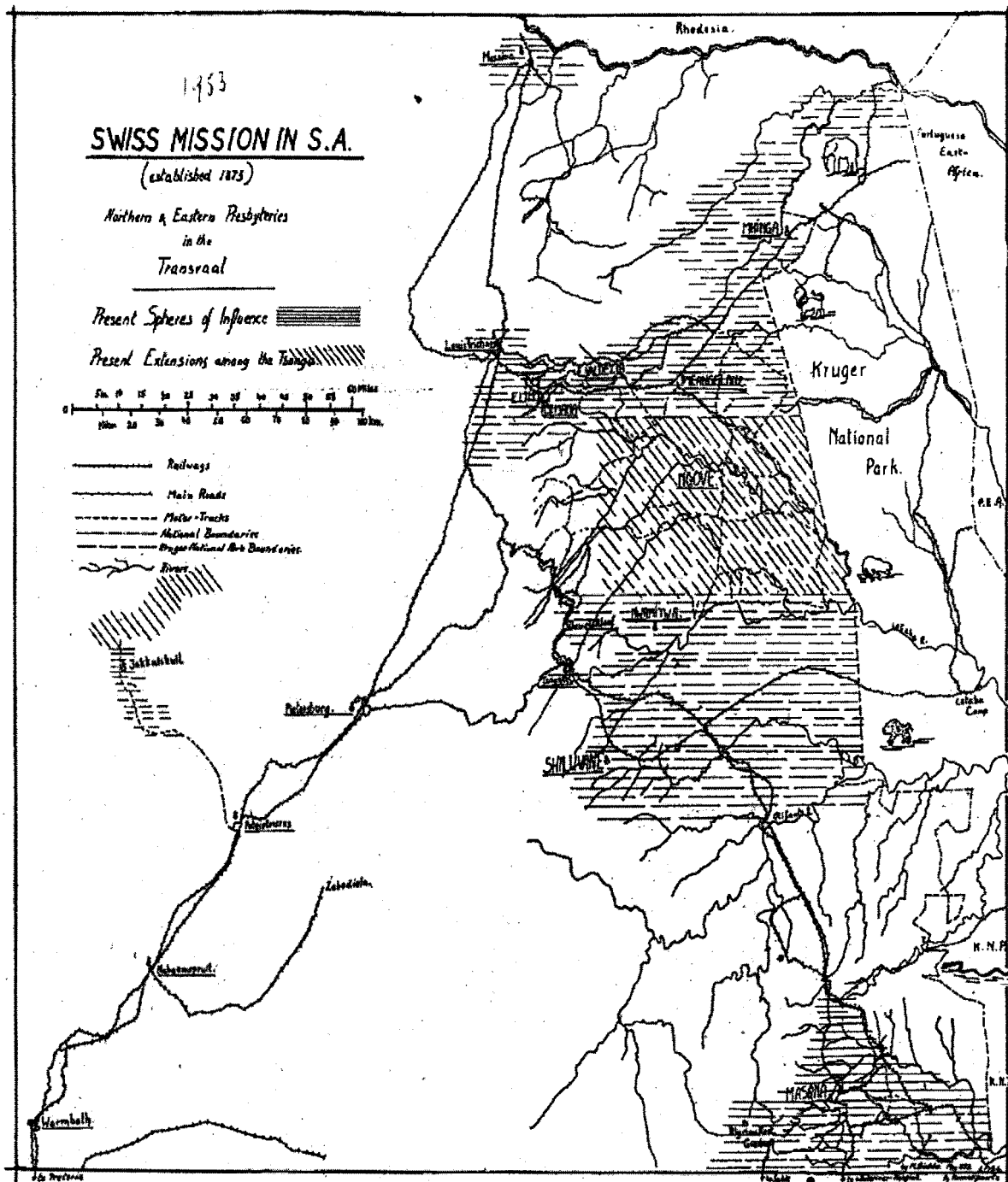
N'waxinymani Village

0/0 PO Box 410

ELIM HOSPITAL

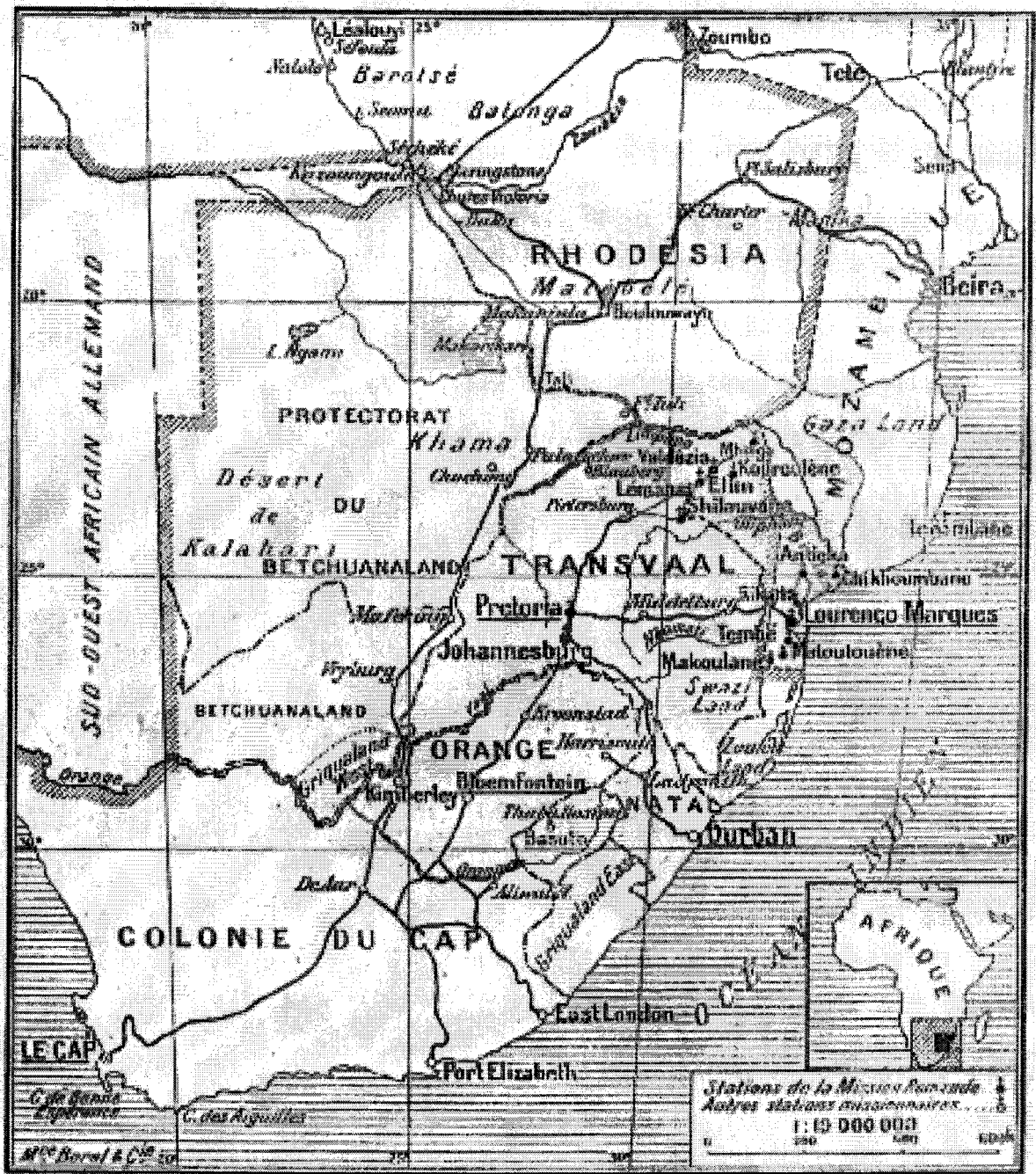
0960

NB: If there is any other information you might have that you think has a bearing on the civilizing influences of the Swiss Missionaries, but that you were unable to include in this questionnaire because of a lack of space, please feel free to include it as an annexe, large or small. The information may relate to your Christian upbringing during the Swiss missionary era, or the experiences that you or your family or friends might have had. The information should ideally pertain to educational, religious, spiritual, medical, and social work issues, the agricultural area, and trades like carpentry, housecraft (domestic science), and bricklaying, to mention but a few of the industrial courses that instilled love for menial labour. Let us pray that ultimately all human action may come together in peace and harmony, to culminate in the glorification of His Name.

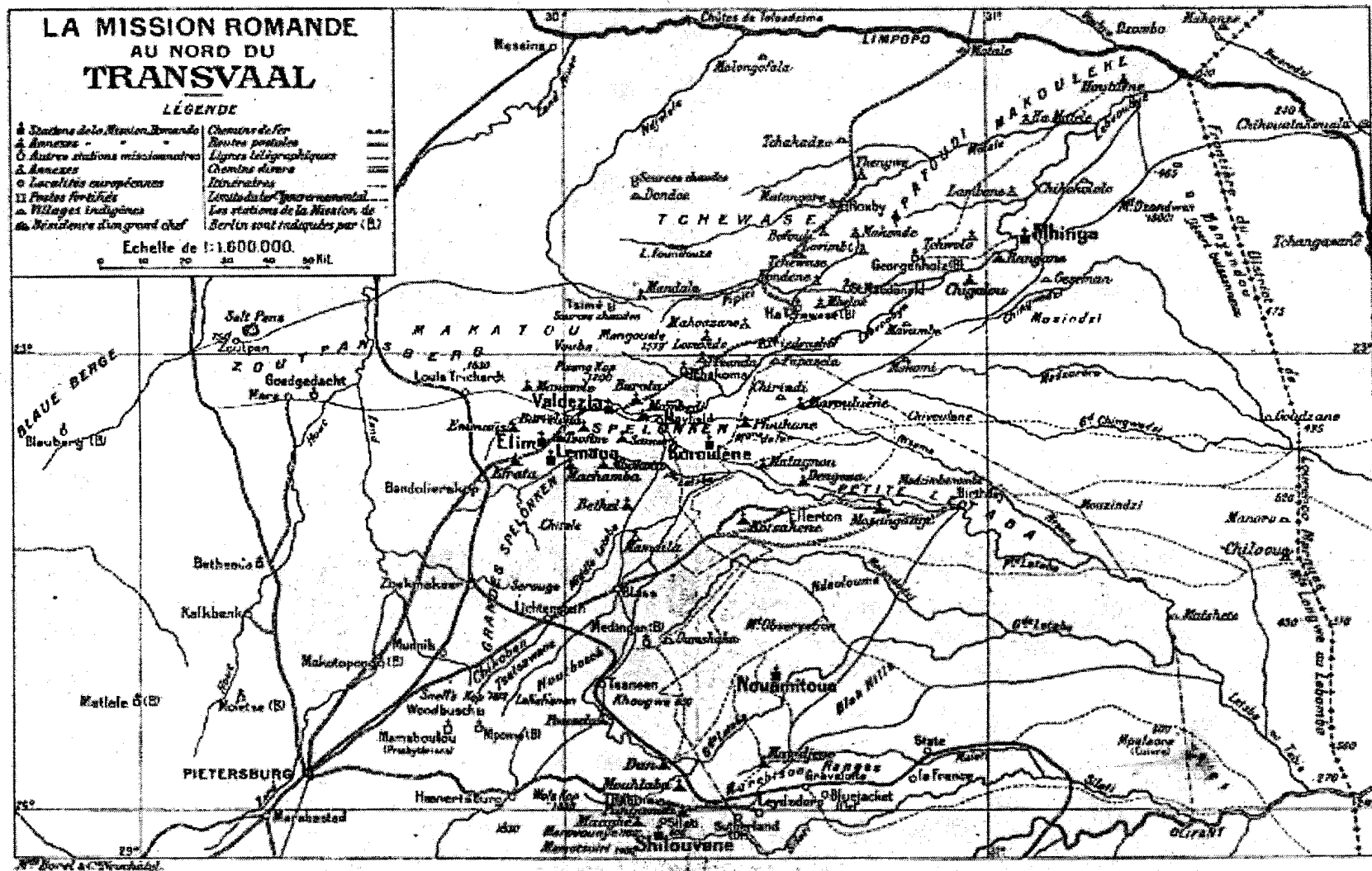


Map 1: The Swiss Mission in South Africa

Map 2: The Roman Mission's sphere of activity

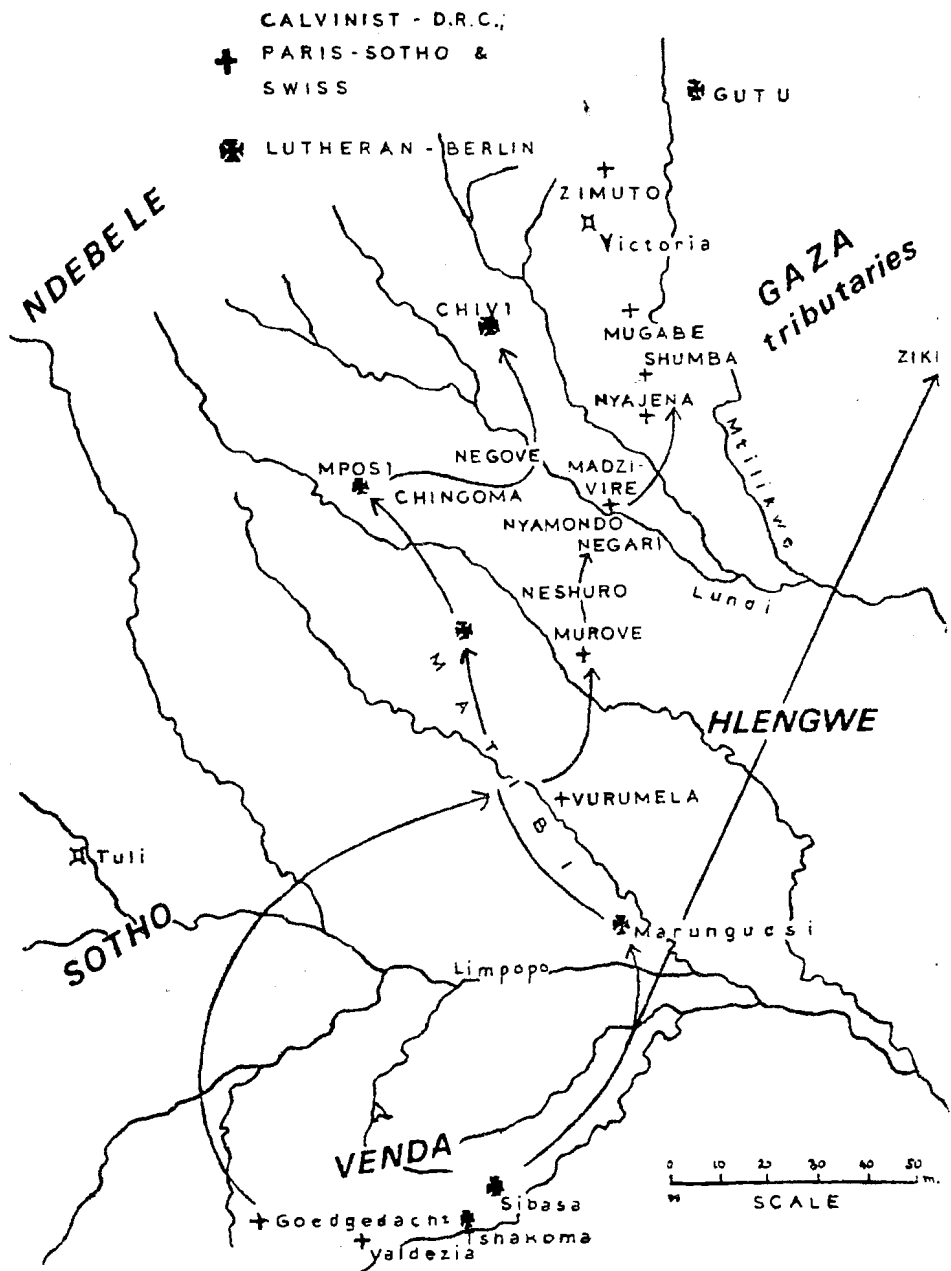


CHAMP DE LA MISSION ROMANDE



Map 3: The Roman Mission in the Northern Transvaal

S. SHONA MISSIONS



Map 4: South Shona Missions



Joao Albasini (1813 - 1888)

Photograph 1: Joao Albasini

Source: Kriel, JD & Hartman, JB. 1991. *Khindlimukani Vatsonga: the cultural heritage and development of the Shangana-Tsonga people*. Silverton: Promedia:17.

The Light

(Ku Vonakala ka VaTonga)

"FORMERLY THE VALDEZIA BULLETIN"

Vol VII. No 62.

VALDEZIA, FEBRUARY 1936.

PRICE 3d.

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2/6 a Year.



Mr E. N. Matjokana.

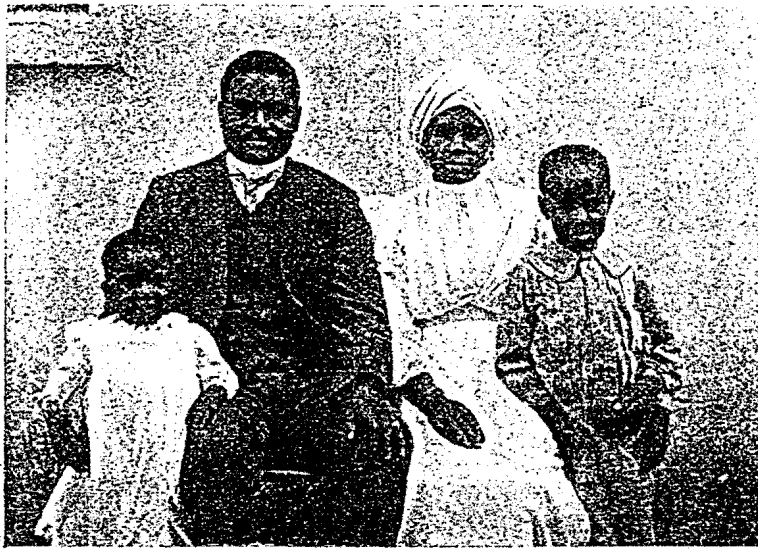
Photograph 2: Mr EN Matjokana

Source: *The Light* 7(62), February 1936.

BULLETIN

DE LA

Mission Romande



L'évangéliste Jakobus Machaou (futur pasteur indigène) et sa famille.

Ce Bulletin paraît tous les mois. Il est distribué gratuitement aux donateurs et souscripteurs de la Mission Romande.

LAUSANNE. — GEORGES BRIDEL & C^{ie} ÉDITEURS

Photograph 3: The Reverend Jakobus A Machao and his family

Source: *Bulletin de la Mission Romande* 27(342), September 1914.

THE VALDEZIA BULLETIN

EDITORS- D. C. MARIVATE, TLAKULA and MPAPELA.

P.O. Louis Trichardt, Transvaal

Vol. V No. 60.

THE VALDEZIA BULLETIN, No. 60, NOVEMBER, 1935.

PRICE 1s.

"Reg. at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper"

2/6 a Year.



D. C. Marivate. The Editor

Photograph 4: The Reverend DC Marivate

Source: *The Valdezia Bulletin* 5(60), November 1935.

The Light

(Ku Vonakala ka VaTonga)

"FORMERLY THE VALDEZIA BULLETIN"

Vol VIII. No. 64.

VALDEZIA, APRIL, 1936.

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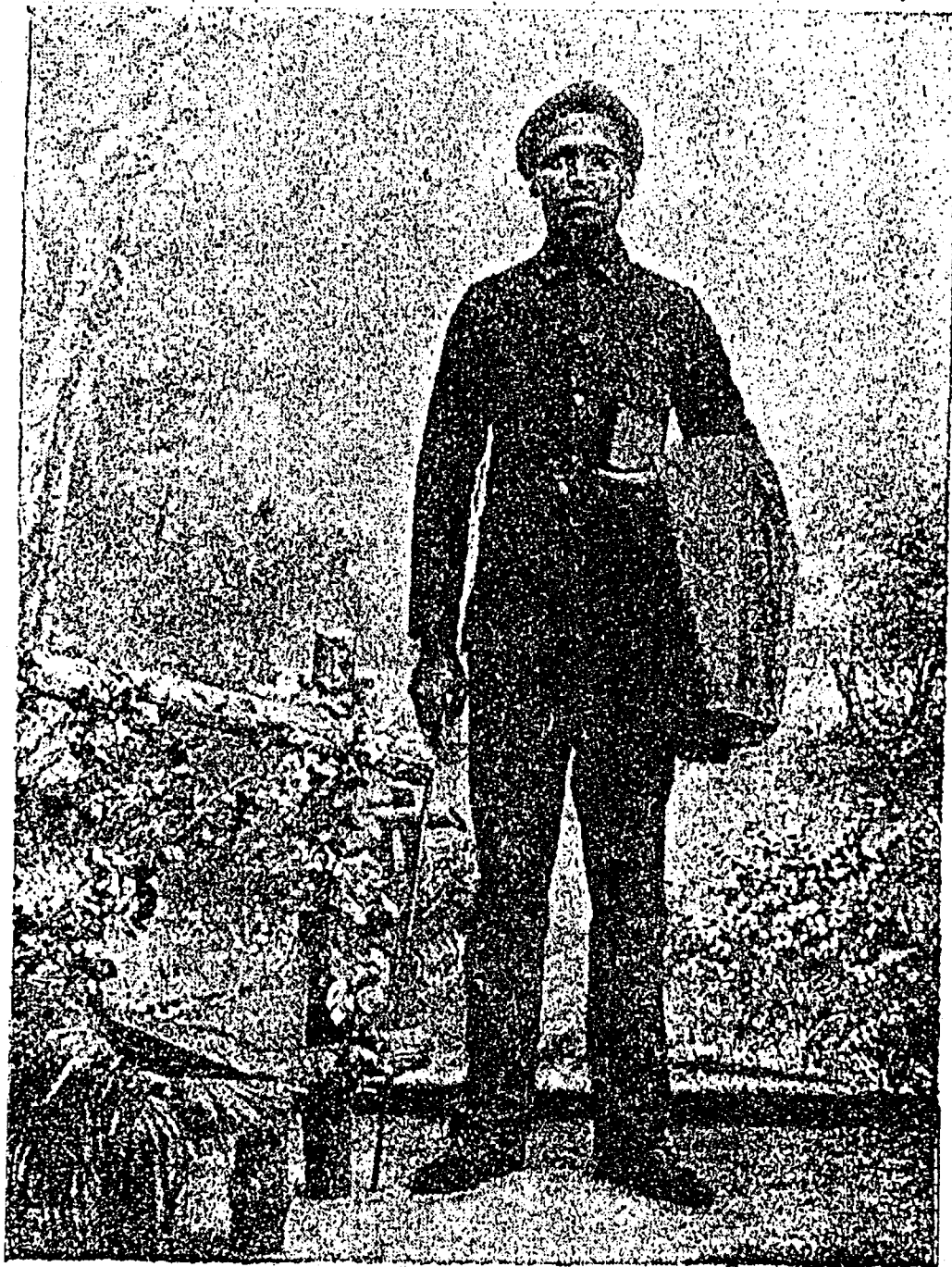


Photograph 5: Mr Henri Etienne Mahawani

Source: *The Light* 8(64), April 1936.

BULLETIN
DE LA
MISSION ROMANDE

TOME XII. — N° 147. — Juin 1898.



Photograph 6: James (Jim) Shimungana



Photograph 7: Mr and Mrs Samuel Makhubela

Source : *Bulletin de la Mission Suisse* (630), March-April 1949.



Nghunghunyana in exile - probably shortly before his death in 1907.



Photograph 8: King Nghunghunyana

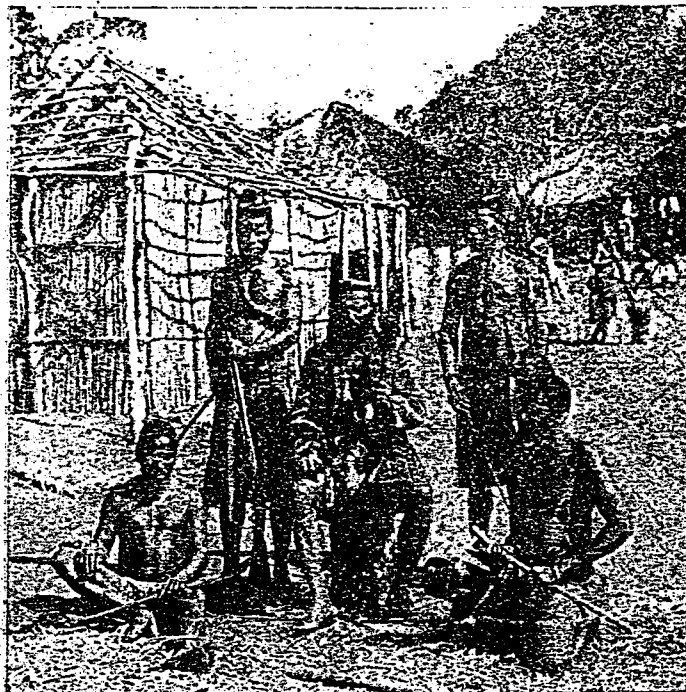
Source: *The Tsonga Messenger*, April-June:14.

Photograph 9: King Nghunghunyana in exile

Source: Kriel, JD & Hartman, JB. 1991. *Khindlimukani Vatsonga: the cultural heritage and*

BULLETIN
DE LA
MISSION ROMANDE

TOME XII. — N° 152. — Novembre 1898.



Njakandjaka avant sa conversion.

LAUSANNE. — GEORGES BRIDEL & C^{ie} ÉDITEURS

Photograph 10: Chief Njhakanjhaka before his conversion

Source: *Bulletin de la Mission Romande* 12(152), November 1898.

BULLETIN

DE LA

Mission Romande



Zélie

Marguerite

La famille Mbenyane.

Ce bulletin parait tous les mois. Il est distribué gratuitement aux donateurs et souscripteurs de la Mission romande.

LAUSANNE. — GEORGES BRIDEL & C^{ie} ÉDITEURS

Photograph 11: The Mbenyane family

Source: *Bulletin de la Mission Romande* 23(287), February 1910.



Zébedée Mbenyane.

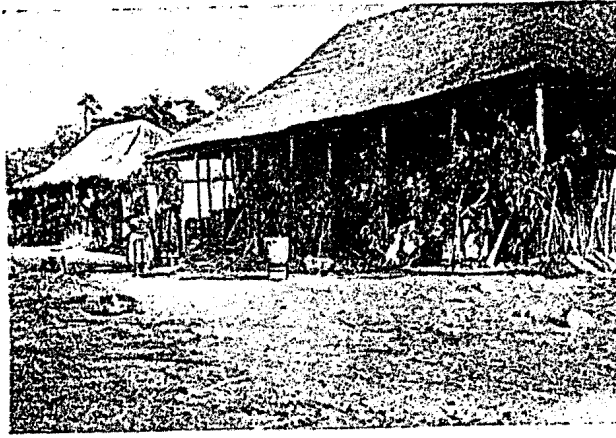
Photograph 12: Zebedeia Mbenyane

Source: *Bulletin de la Mission Suisse* (567), July-August 1939.



Photograph 13: Mr Abraham Mavanyisi and his son Isaac

Source: Rosset, P. Abraham Mavanyici. *Actualités missionnaires*, no 6. Lausanne: La Mission Suisse Romande.



Photograph 15: The Hutwen church

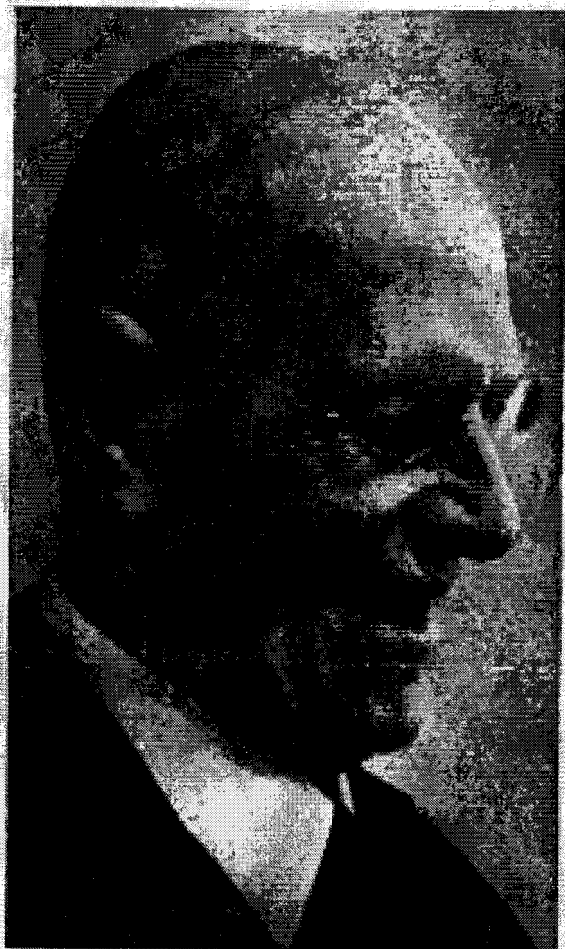
Source: Rosset, P. Abraham Mavanyici. *Actualités missionnaires*, no 6. Lausanne: La Mission Suisse Romande.



Photograph 14: Abraham Mavanyisi in his old age

Source: Rosset, P. Abraham Mavanyici. *Actualités missionnaires*, no 6. Lausanne: La Mission Suisse Romande.

† Abel de MEURON (1871-1954)



Photograph 16: The Right Reverend Abel de Meuron

Source : *Bulletin de la Mission Suisse*, July-August 1954:100.



This photo shows: The Honorable Minister M. C. Burke and Mrs. Burke, and the Honorable Dr. H. D. C. de Wit Nel, Commissioner-General of the Vreda and Tanga groups who is shaking hands with Dr. F. H. Jaques, the Medical Superintendent, while Mrs. Jaques, Mrs. Ross and Mr. F. D. Ross, Chairman of the Hospital Board and Master of Ceremonies, wait their turn to welcome the Consul.

Photograph 17: Dr PH Jaques

Source: Elim Hospital Annual Report, 1969-1970:7.



Photograph 18: Sunday school children listening to a sermon

Source: *The Tsonga Messenger*, July-September 1950:35.



Photograph 19: Miss Anne Hauser

Source: *Elim Hospital Annual Report, 1972-1973:14-15.*

Photograph 20: Dr Jean Alfred Rosset

Source: *Elim Hospital Annual Report, 1972-1973.*



De la brousse africaine à l'élite universitaire

On se souvient sans doute qu'après son bref passage en Suisse, en automne 1950, M. Ed. Mondlane retourna pour quelques mois à l'Université de Lisbonne. Il se rendit ensuite aux Etats-Unis, où il poursuit à l'heure actuelle, au collège d'Oberlin, dans l'Ohio, ses études sociales en vue de son futur ministère dans l'Eglise africaine du Mozambique. Nous sommes heureux de publier ci-dessous le témoignage qu'un missionnaire américain a rendu récemment à celui que l'on connaît chez nous sous le nom de Chitlangou. — Réd.

Photograph 21: Dr Eduardo Mondlane

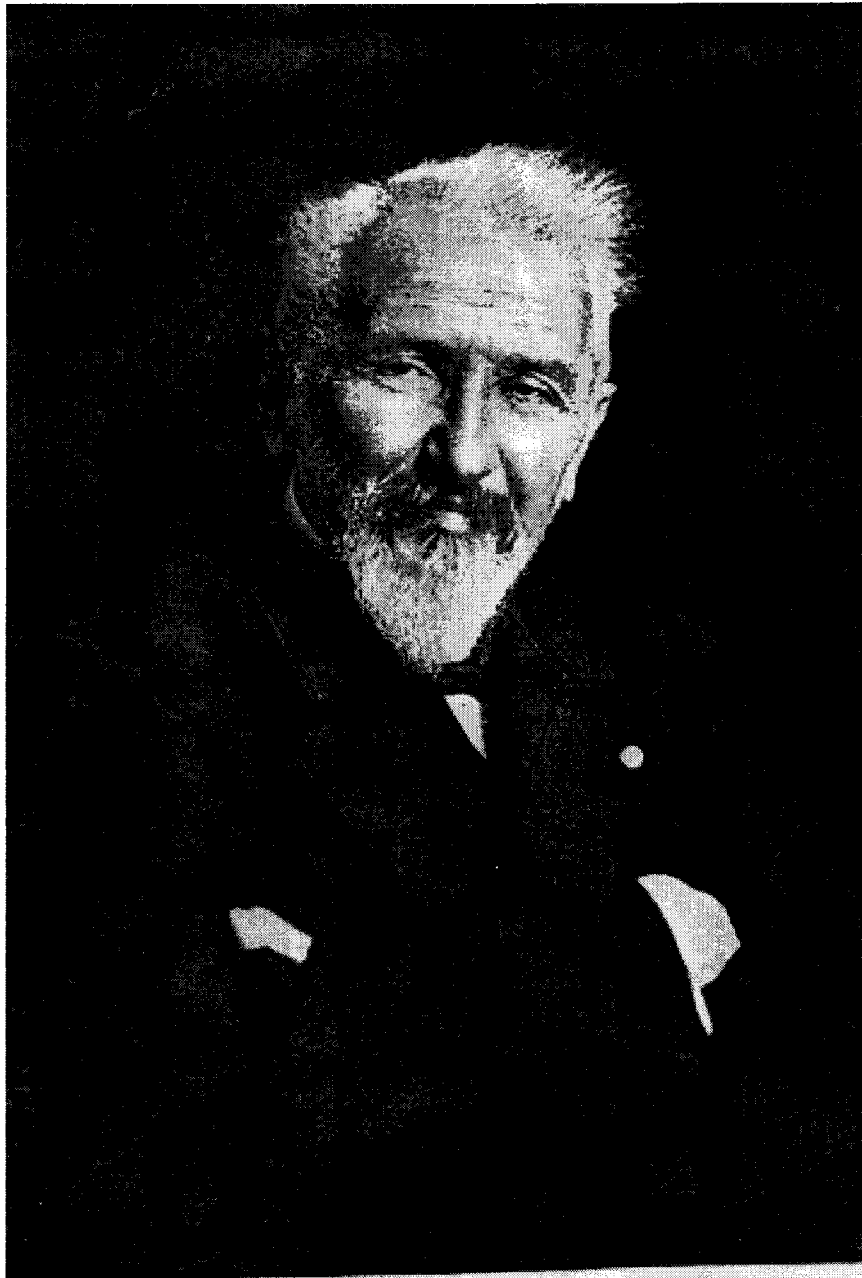
Source : *Bulletin de la Mission Suisse dans l'Afrique du Sud*, January-February 1953:322.



Photograph 22: The Reverend François Coillard

Source: Shillito, E. 1923. *François Coillard: a wayfaring man*. London: Student Christian Movement.

Photograph 23: The Reverend Arthur Grandjean



Source:

Rambert, J.

Arthur

Grandjean:

Secrétaire

Général de la

Mission Suisse

dans l'Afrique

du Sud.

Lausanne:

Mission Suisse

dans l'Afrique

du Sud.

ARTHUR GRANDJEAN

Secrétaire général.

(1860-1930.)

Photograph 24: Henri-A Junod



HENRI-A. JUNOD

Source : *Bulletin de la Mission Suisse*, July-August 1934.